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# ***The Ladder***

## ***a Lesbian Review***



August, 1967

# **purpose of the** *Daughters of* **BILITIS**

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

- ① Education of the Lesbian, enabling her to understand herself and to make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic, and economic implications - by establishing and maintaining a library of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public meetings on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by providing the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group.
- ② Education of the public, developing an understanding and acceptance of the Lesbian as an individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices - by public discussion meetings and by dissemination of educational literature on the Lesbian theme.
- ③ Encouragement of and participation in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.
- ④ Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposing and promoting changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group through due process of law in the state legislatures.

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# *THE LADDER*

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# WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Dorothy Lyle

In the February, 1967 issue of *THE LADDER* I wrote about the disparity between wages for men and women doing identical work in various fields, and how this affects the lives of most of the lesbians in this country.

Aside from the damage done to us by this unfair and unreasonable situation, there is a series of other financial handicaps which add the proverbial insult to injury in our lives.

We are all without representation in many ordinary daily facets of our lives. The legally single woman, which includes, of course, almost all lesbians, is unjustly taxed, receives prejudicial treatment in the purchase of homes or other property, insurance, and odd items such as airline fares.

I live in one of the largest cities in the Midwest. For the last several weeks I have talked at length with local realtors, insurance agents, local Federal tax representatives, and local airline agencies, and I have discovered an amazing wealth of stacked decks which discriminate against lesbian couples and single women. (It can be understood that much of this discrimination automatically falls on the male homosexual as well, though this will not be covered here.)

When John and Mary Doe choose their new home in suburbia, they have

a choice of possible loans. The two government sponsored loans, F.H.A. and M.C.I. are available with 90 percent of the cost of the property provided, leaving them to provide 10 percent of the cost as down payment. Or, if they choose to do so, they can have a conventional loan from a private company and pay 20 percent down with an 80 percent loan. If John is a veteran, they can use this type of loan (easily granted to BOTH male and female veterans who qualify and one of the few loans NOT prejudicial by sex.)

However, when Alice and Sally pick their home in suburbia most of this choice so automatically available to all heterosexual couples just disappears. They are almost never able to obtain FHA or MCI financing, and this isn't even a set policy or a written rule. The government agencies involved simply scrutinize all female loans and few are passed, regardless of the financial solvency of the individuals, their positions, salaries, etc. This leaves them only the conventional loan. But, when Alice and Sally apply for a conventional loan, their application will be much more carefully examined and, as a matter of course, they will be asked to supply a double down payment. This is 40 percent of the cost of the property. If they can

swing this amount, they will be granted (in most cases) their loan of 60 percent of the cost. I asked the four realtors who gave me this information (each told virtually identical stories) why such disparity? Each offered the same reasons (and each mentioned that this was "their personal guess"). They felt that the loan companies tended to look upon any woman under 45 as a poor risk, since she might marry, become pregnant, and suffer a loss in income. In each case I countered with the obvious question: "What if one or both of the women were over 45 and obviously solvent, well placed and without marital histories of current past years?" They all indicated that this would subject the women to another scrutiny, based on age and health (for fear they might die before completing the obligation).

All of the realtors consulted were pleasant and helpful. Yet, all of them were frankly discouraging, making it clear to me (in my guise of potential home buyer) that the financing would not be easy, simply because I was talking in terms of two women purchasing a home.

Insurance, a vital and necessary adjunct to modern living, is set up in widely varying ways. Life insurance is the only form of insurance frankly favorable to lesbian couples (males die earlier and life insurance is based on actuarial statistics only.) This means, of course, that life insurance is really stacked against the homosexual, and fair only to heterosexual couples.

It is a different story, though, in the more common health insurances where premiums for a man and wife

seldom total HALF the cost of premiums for a lesbian couple. The heterosexual couple has a double advantage since the male premium is much lower than the single female's to begin with and most companies tack on the wife and kiddies' for a very small fee.

Home owners' liability insurance and fire insurance is a mixed bag. Most companies do not have different rates set up as to the sex of the owners or occupants of a home but many simply won't insure homes where the ownership is all male or all female. Several of the companies in my area, when contacted on a fictional premise, simply said they weren't interested. I finally found one helpful soul who told me that such households were thought of as unstable and that fire and liability damage was more likely. I asked him if he referred to any particular type of household. Sure enough, he was thinking in terms of young people and drunken brawls, yet he readily admitted that this same sexual prejudice would apply to a household of two sixty year old women!!!!

Late in April, 1967, my friend and I went to another Midwestern city to attend a convention. We flew via Braniff International Airlines both ways and both paid full fare, coach class. As a matter of curiosity, I obtained the rates from Braniff for our trip if my friend could have flown as husband and I as wife (very appropriate under the circumstances, since she had to attend the convention and I merely accompanied her). Since we left on a weekday and returned on the weekend, my fare would have been 2/3 full fare going and 3/4 full fare re-

turning. The difference, for us, would have been \$25 . . . not a whole lot . . . but it is \$25 and something to think about.

It is a well-known fact that the legally unmarried male and female taxpayers today bear the brunt of our Federal Income Taxes and State Income Taxes. This is particularly true where wages or salaries make up all or most of their income.

The most unfair item, by far, in this article, and the one with the most serious consequences, is the tax treatment of homosexual couples. My income, for example, is far less than my friend's income. If she could claim me as a dependent and we could file jointly, we could have cut 31 percent of our Federal Tax bill in 1966. For some of you this figure is smaller, but some of you pay as much as 36 percent more tax each year because you cannot legally file with your mate.

Added to this is the series of benefits (insult on injury clauses, as a friend of mine calls them) which spur the rabbits of the world on to produce

more and more children. If we had a dearth of population it might be justified to penalize those who were not producing and reward those who were. This is hardly the case, since it won't be much longer before the entire world will be hard put to feed its face. It is ridiculous and horrifying to reward people for producing children.

On a broader scale, we all know that the so-called middle class of our nation is the most discriminated against, whether heterosexual or homosexual. The benefits of poverty are the increasing "Big Brother laws," which feed, house, clothe, insure, care for and heal the lower classes. The upper class has legal loopholes to slip thru from the standpoint of taxation and the necessary income to make the rest of the problems outlined in this article simply humorous. For the middle class, there are no legal loopholes and no helping hands. For the middle class heterosexuals the benefits noted in this article exist. For the middle class homosexuals they do not.

Look out for the steam roller!!

## THE SHAPE OF LOVE

Jody Shotwell  
Part 4

4-Saturday, 9:30 A.M.

When you come in to the apartment, Angel and Scott are sitting together on the sofa, looking at comic books. Angel's bedclothes are heaped, as usual, on the floor. Today you ignore them.

"Good-morning!" you chirp.

"Mom, where've you been. I'm hungry," Scott complains.

"Have a nice walk?" Angel asks. She is wearing her night shirt over her jeans.

"Wonderful! It's an absolutely marvelous morning." That wasn't very clever, but the tone was bright. It should set the mood. You bustle into the kitchen, humming, "O, what a beautiful morning . . ." You interrupt yourself to call, "Scrambled or soft-boiled?"

Angel follows you. "Just coffee for me. Unless you're going to eat--"

She perches on a stool at the counter, looking full of things to tell you, opening her mouth and closing it again, watching you.

"No, I think I'll just have coffee." You have to keep talking. Hold it off as long as possible, whatever it is she is going to tell you about her evening with Ilga.

"Oh, I went up to the cathedral, finally. I must start painting immediately."

You glance through the door to your canvas, leaning against the wall in the dining room. The background color is dry, the arches sketched in with charcoal.

"Are you going to paint?" you ask.

"Guess so." Angel is working on an abstract, fraught with symbolism. There was something alarming about it, a calculated preciseness, unlike anything she has attempted before. A kind of planned madness, less comprehensible than the formless splashes she usually perpetrates. You accepted the previous painting readily enough because they mirrored the groping (or what you fancied to be the groping) stage of her art. This current thing isn't groping. There is a positive statement in it, but positive in a language you do not understand. Still, you can't quarrel with it. Not the way you quarreled with the few bits of poetry she wrote.

"Darling, you've written some pretty words here. But, what does 'Running brook between the stars' mean?"

"Does it have to mean something?"

"Well, yes. Everything you say should mean *something*."

"It does mean something—to me."

"Well, would you tell me? You see, it isn't often one can read a poem and have the poet right at hand to ask, 'What does this mean?' Most of the time we have to wonder, or try to guess--"

"What's wrong with that?" She was touchy.

"Nothing wrong with it. If that's the most we can do. But sometimes an obscure phrase can throw us completely off the track. Guess there's just something in me that needs to have things clear--"

But you didn't come through clear to Angel. She snatched the thing away and you felt a failure somewhere. In yourself. It came at you in many ways. You do have, truly, moments of sanity, when you seek justification for this relationship. Angel was so young. So ridiculously young, so that only in the role of mentor can you find any vindication. You are older, more experienced, and therefore, you must teach.

But Angel rejects your teaching, along with your age and its significant attributes. She grants you the gift of youth regained. But it's a Trojan Horse of a



gift, because it bears within it the weapons to destroy everything your years have bestowed. You fell into the intoxicating trap eagerly, for who among us wouldn't sell part of his soul to turn back the clock?

It wasn't spoken, ever, at any time. It was insidious, really. At first she did sit at your Socratic feet, a most humble acolyte, a loving and earnest pupil. It was as such she took you to meet her mother; for in what other guise could she possibly introduce you?

That apartment. Your first step through the looking-glass, into Wonderland.

"Mother's nervous about meeting you. She'll probably act silly--"

Marian Linden wasn't silly. A bit fluttery, perhaps, but warm and lovely. Lily let them in. Funny, black Lily who adored her mistress and her Angel-baby.

Angel's mother sat in the living-room, her knitting on her lap. You felt an immediate tenderness, sensing the frantic moments before you arrived, and whatever it was she endured before she decided to sit there, knitting. When she stood up to take your hand, she was tall and slender. Ash-grey hair, smooth over her head, madonna-fashion, and her voice light as a child's.

"Oh, my, you *do* look like Angel's godmother! Angel said you did. Angel, get the picture of Auntie Jane. No, wait. I think I know *exactly* where it is." And she was at the side-board, rummaging in a drawer. "Now, where did I see that? Lily, did you take those snapshots out--oh, no, here they are!"

And before dinner was served, you saw pictures of Aunt Jane and Uncle Jim, and Daddy, and of Angel at every age from two weeks to sixteen years.

"Oh, and here are some poems Angel wrote when she was just a little girl. Angel tells me you write poetry. I think that's just wonderful. Oh, I know you're going to help Angel so much! Really, it's so wonderful of you to take an interest in her . . ."

And you are prickling with guilt, while Angel says, "Mother, will you stop babbling and relax? Julia's probably bored to death!"

Marian Linden, looking suddenly like a naughty child, uncertain and appealing. You said of course you weren't bored, and you read the poems and admired, and then Lily announced dinner.

From where you sat at table, you could see the city lights, like golden beads scattered on a dark blue carpet. Some at rest, and some moving in a fluid string, the cars on the expressway making a magic of light. And inside, the spacious luxury of the apartment, beautifully appointed. And you wonder about Angel, who left all this, time and time again, to live in squalor. To scratch and scrounge for sustenance. Fled, not to freedom and the search for Self . . . nor to the privilege of living on spaghetti in a garret for the sake of independence. But just to merge her life with others on the parasitic fringe, for what she thought was love.

Going from dependence to enslavement, from one kind of helplessness to another.

Over the second cup of coffee, when Angel left the room to change her clothes, Marian Linden turned to you.

*Continued on page 22*

# PLAYBOY PHILOSOPHY

## -- NO BUNNIES

Members of the Daughters of Bilitis, still filled with the Easter spirit, were disappointed to find that none of the famed Playboy "Bunnies" accompanied Anson Mount, public affairs director for the magazine, when he spoke at the March 29th meeting of the Council on Religion and the Homophile in San Francisco.

Mr. Mount, like so many others in the mass media field, assumed that the homosexual per se was male. He operated thus on the further assumption that male homosexuals, being what they are, would hardly be interested in the feminine pulchritude and attributes of the "Bunnies." So he concentrated his remarks on philosophy, an obviously masculine interest--especially as it relates to the law.

But all kidding aside, Mr. Mount did an excellent job of clarifying the more serious program of the Playboy organization in its efforts to promote and secure a sane ethic for Americans. He referred first to the Playboy Forum, a column in which readers and editors debate the issues as well as reflect upon the social, ethical, religious and legal problems of society.

Mr. Mount also explained the Playboy Foundation, which CRH recently became aware of when the Foundation contributed funds to help finance transportation for participants in the London conference on "Church, Society and the Homosexual" held last

August. The Foundation is particularly interested in legal cases which will test some of the Playboy ideas in the courts, but find that clear-cut cases without any side issues are difficult to come by. At the present time the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research is undertaking a detailed survey which has been underwritten by the Playboy Foundation.

The Playboy Philosophy is concerned with the protection of private sexual behavior by consenting adults, whether they be heterosexual or homosexual, the director said. Laws in this area of behavior were religiously inspired and have no place in a secular democracy, he stated, and went on to cite the U.S. Constitution as guaranteeing the separation of Church and State. Yet many of our laws are not based upon that premise, but come from old ecclesiastical anti-sexual dogma to which many citizens do not subscribe. They represent the greatest Church-State invasion of personal freedom. To Mr. Mount this is the same thing as if the Jews forced passage of a law to make it illegal to eat pork.

"As a result the concepts of sin and crime have become mixed and confused--and there's a hell of difference between the two!" he declared.

Playboy claims that sexual behavior per se is neither moral nor immoral. It is the business of the individual and

his personal religion and most certainly not the business of government. This view is shared by many present-day religious leaders, Mr. Mount said, and a panel including nine denominations will discuss sex and religion in the June issue of the magazine. Unfortunately religious leaders are more enlightened than the laity, he added.

Mr. Mount also referred to the Model Penal Code proposed by the American Law Institute, which has taken the position that private sexual adult behavior can be of no harm to the secular interest of the community.

The fundamental question is the protection of individuals in private affairs, the Playboy director reiterated and then went on to name the "affairs" prohibited by law:

Fornication - heterosexual intercourse between two unmarried adults, which according to Kinsey statistics, involves 90% of all adult males and 50% of the female adults, who reportedly engage in premarital intercourse. Penalties range from a \$10.00 fine in Rhode Island to \$1000 and one year in jail in the state of Georgia "because of the hodge-podge of laws in the 50 states."

"There is practically no other culture where non-married coitus is outlawed," Mr. Mount indicated.

Co-habitation - habitual sexual relations between unmarried persons, or "sequential fornication." Oddly enough, penalties for this offense are much more severe, the magazine director pointed out, despite Christian concerns and encouragement of deeper personal relationships. Apparently promiscuity or "one night stands" are

less offensive to religious lawmakers.

Adultery - sexual intercourse by married persons outside of marriage, more often referred to as cause of marital failure rather than the result of marital failure which it reflects. Out of 50 states, 44 have specific statutes against adultery, the penalties ranging from \$10.00 fine to \$1000 and five years in prison. It is estimated that 50% of all married males are guilty of this "crime."

"Few people pay attention to these laws, and if they were enforced, most people would be in jail. When enforced, law enforcement is arbitrary and capricious. This brings about disrespect for law," Mr. Mount stated. Enforcement in many cases is used as a blackmail weapon or to discredit political figures, he added.

Sodomy - the catch-all statute called the "abominable and detestable crime against nature," which was originally against anal intercourse, but now includes anything but the "missionary position." Examples would be anal intercourse, oral-genital contact, necrophilia, bestiality, and mutual masturbation. There is no distinction made between married or unmarried offenders.

"It is impossible to calculate how many people violate these sodomy statutes without even knowing it," the magazine director pointed out. "These laws are clearly unconstitutional, an invasion of privacy, and Playboy Foundation has pledged to support a good test case."

Mr. Mount went on to cite various cases which have come to the attention of Playboy through the Forum. He said that Playboy makes an award of

\$5000.00 each year to the person doing the most to update and change our antiquated sex laws. He referred to the first amendment of the U. S. Constitution which states there shall be no law abridging freedom of speech and the press. Hugh Hefner, Playboy's Philosopher, like Justice Black of the U. S. Supreme Court, holds that this means what it says - no law.

"Many psychologists agree that even hard-core pornography does not cause anti-social behavior, but is actually very often a safety valve against anti-social behavior," Mount pointed out as a prelude to Playboy's position that no law should be extended to the exchange and possession of said materials by adults.

He said that the Playboy Forum had received many complaints, particularly from homosexuals, about postal censorship of first class mails. Nobody was selling anything; it was merely a private exchange of correspondence, which, ironically, if published in a book, could have been appealed on the basis of other socially redeeming material in the letters. Through its Forum, Playboy gathered data on hundreds of such cases which involved "no trial, no jury, verdict guilty, no job" and suggested to the Postmaster General that his employees "should stop reading dirty books and start delivering the mail." The letters were also brought to the attention of Senator Edward Long, a Congressional committee chairman, and eventually postal inspectors were ordered to discontinue this practice.

"It is in these ways a vigilant and concerned press can have influence.

Playboy, with its 4 million circulation, will continue and will take on bigger targets, such as legislation and the philosophy of law enforcement," Mr. Mount pledged.

The Playboy director deplored the police practice of constantly arresting espousers of unpopular causes or political foes on catch-all charges of loitering, blocking the sidewalk, obstructing traffic, etc. The ideal, he said, would be for the police to enforce the law humanely to the welfare of the citizenry. The best we can hope for, he figured, would be that they would at least stick to the law, but they aren't doing that. Officers have somehow taken hold of the idea that their job is to uphold and enforce the morality of the community, especially sexual morality. Being moral police is the same as being political police, Mr. Mount pointed out, and very dangerous to our society as a whole.

He said that he had the shocking experience recently of viewing a training film for young officers in which they were directed to think of themselves as the moral guardians of the community and of anyone who deviates from the missionary position as a potential criminal.

The moralists think of freedom as anarchy, but true freedom breeds responsibility, understanding, honesty and empathy. "One of the problems with the law is legalism," Mount said, "and the same holds true with theology."

He took the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," as an example. Don't kill - except for war, self defense, capital punishment, etc. There are always exceptions, but in legalism there are

no exceptions. The judge is supposed to mitigate the law, but this doesn't always work.

Playboys and "Bunnies" are a serious business, the audience concluded. Even the females grasped the philoso-

phy. But it still would have been nice if Mr. Mount had brought along a real live "Bunny" or two . . .

-Del Martin

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## MY LOVE LIES SLEEPING

*My love lies sleeping, gone from me a little while,  
Pictures of me still behind closed eyes,  
Her cupped hand filled with kisses  
Kissed before she left me.*

*Tread softly, Night, my lover dreams  
Of amber eyes, pink bitten mouth,  
Curved palms full of silver kisses,  
Melting jewel-toned kisses tasting of fire.*

*Joy-winged heart, ache full of love,  
I cannot sleep . . .  
This white sweet delight still bubbles my blood,  
Spills out in little breaths of remembered taste,*

*Salt-skin taste, live-tongue taste, mouth-full-of-wine taste,  
White wings of birds soar as the sweet singing flame  
Lifts us high! Dear God!*

*Plummet back to earth.*

*Returning, she sleeps, and I watch my love  
With her velvet mouth full of unspent kisses,  
Silver-toned kisses that taste of fire,  
And her dreams of me with my amber eyes . . .*

Claire Dunn

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CAIN

### A Comment about Caring

by Marilyn Barrow

I work, on a part-time basis, for a business college in a mid-western city, as an educational counsellor. We have a basic staff of about thirty persons, excluding the teachers. There is a certain close relationship inevitable in so small a group. With the exception of myself, I know of only one employee who is overtly homosexual. We will call him Bill, since that is his name. Bill is in his late twenties, about 5'9" tall, and mildly chubby. He has dark hair, dark eyes, a very deep voice, and a winning, friendly personality. He is very bright, and works very hard but he is, like many intelligent people, quite lazy basically.

We work in separate quarters and I did not know him well before his accident. In fact, we had only met three times, and then quite casually. I did not know he was homosexual, but as it turned out, he had guessed quite accurately about me.

Three weeks ago, or so, I overheard some of the women in the office talking about a terrible accident. Asking what had happened, I soon learned that Bill had been badly hurt. It seems that while he was driving through a very respectable area of our city, early on a Saturday evening, he was attacked by several boys, and beaten very badly. His car was turned over,

literally, and he was robbed of the \$14 he was carrying. He was badly bruised, his head was split open, and his right eye was gouged out of his head.

Last week, in a group, I heard a report of what had happened from him. It was a hazy story, and I wondered about it to the extent of asking him (tact is not what I am famous for) bluntly just how much he remembered. He looked at me, with his left eye, and promised me that I would have the story some day. The next morning he came into my office, sat down, and asked me if I did not have some idea of what happened. From his tone, I realized at once that yes, belatedly, I did know.

It is not a new story. Stopped at a light, the man in the car next to him gave him the eye, indicating that he should follow him. Bill did, why is not important, since all parties concerned were adults under the law. Two blocks further on, near a park, the man stopped the car. Bill parked behind him and got out of the car. As he neared the back door of the car in front of him it flew open and two more (or possibly three) men jumped out, instantly joined by the driver. They beat him half to death, and then, just for the exuberant joy of it, turned his car over and broke out the windows



with the same bloody tire iron they had used to gouge Bill's eye out with.

There are several morals to this story. One of them is that truth is uglier than fiction. Another is that Bill ought to have known better, but he didn't, really, and since it was the first time in some substantial years of life that anything like this happened to him, there was no real personal lesson of the past to draw upon.

There is also the conventional moral which quickly springs to mind. It is very easy to say that he asked for it, bought it in advance. Quite probably people ought not to pick up strangers, or let themselves be picked up by strangers. But saying it, and thinking it, and even knowing it doesn't change the basic fact that this is one kind of happening that won't stop even if several hundred Bills lose an eye. It is a sexual fact of

life. The reason men don't get picked up by women who then beat them up is a silly simple one—without help they aren't strong enough, and there are male-female pairs who practice just this same approach on heterosexual men.

By this time you are wondering what in hell this is doing in your favorite Lesbian magazine, since EVERYONE knows this problem doesn't affect women, has nothing to do with Lesbians, and is not, MY DEAR, our responsibility. I too agree that the boys must fight their own battles, and that they have plenty of space in the male homophile press to do so... but as to responsibility, well....

"And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

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## The Pre-Posthumous Memoirs of a Splendid Cat

To be sure, the birthday went on as planned. I had some very special food which pleased me and I made every effort not to show my pleasure so that until this very day, my girls are still trying to make up for the whole thing. The thing is this: They have a friend who has a cat. This man (I think this a heterosexual couple) has built a house for his cat. It has all sorts of rooms and exits and entrances. Now, I ask, is this anything to let me know about unless I can expect a similar arrangement? Ply me with trout almondine, stroke my elegant white whiskers... but come through with something special.

It is not too bad to be my age. I was nine last birthday. In nine years I have been able to watch my girls do all sorts of mind-changing. Sometimes I have helped them with their decisions. I have had to make quick value judgments

about some of their guests.

Just last week I was talking to my friend, Zeke. He is an underprivileged fellow who lives next door. I told him about one of our parties and ever since then I have had to be very careful to keep him from invading our kitchen. His folks are quite dull. They have a bunch of little children who tend to hold him in odd positions and he has to put up with this sort of thing in order to maintain his "happy home." Give me a couple of girls any day. They have good sense about pets.

Last month when my picture was on the front of the magazine, a lot of hostility was generated in the neighborhood. I am, perhaps, not the most beautiful cat around here, but I absolutely insist that I am the smartest. After all, show me a picture of anyone of these characters on a national magazine cover.

Sandy has got some sort of idea of late that this magazine is going to get better and better. She has been off for hours at night talking to some printers and I think that this issue is supposed to reflect some progress. All along I have told her that if she is going to go to the trouble of printing it at all, it ought to be first-class. I guess she finally paid some attention to me and talked to her Board about it. I think from what I have seen of the plans that we are really getting to where I can hold my head up around the neighborhood and say, "this is my publication."

I have been sitting on a manuscript for some time now that must be very good. I understand that it is by a very famous author and that it will be starting in the October issue. I have blessed it with my presence and it is well sat-upon. I am also told that I cannot continue to sit on the fiction and poetry because Gene Damon is going to judge that from now on and she has a couple of cats who sometimes communicate with me, but I am not sure of their taste. I will have to wait and see. If they are good, you may be sure I will have something to say about it. You will notice that with this issue I have become a member of the "staff."

I have had a lot of mail from other cats and even some dogs. I cannot personally answer each letter, but I want to say "thank you" and to tell all of you "furs" that we have to stick together to keep these people in line. For example, Sandy had a very dreary picture for the cover this month, but I chewed on it and forced her to use the wonderful Jane Kogan thing and I hope you all appreciate my efforts. (If Jane has a cat, she might just permit some communication.)

If you like the new format, please send your letters of appreciation to me for I am the only true optimist and honest critic. I simply will not put my paw-print to continuing shoddy work.

Kindest personal regard to you and all of your humans.

BEN CAT

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### *Fabulous!*

The Bibliography is ready!

It is better than we had  
thought it would be.



# LESBIANA

by Gene Damon



Something very exciting may happen between the day of the writing of this column for the August issue of *The Ladder*, and the end of the publishing year, 1967—but it will have to be special to remove Sarah Kilpatrick's novel, *Ladies' Close*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1967, from the top of this year's list. Chloe Whitehead is 38 years old, a schoolteacher in a girl's school in England. Her psychiatrist, consulted because she cannot sleep at night, recommends a leave of absence away from her school. Her doggy looking headmistress kindly arranges the leave for her, and she is tucked away, for an indeterminate time in a group of cottages called, with rather heavy symbolism, *Ladies' Close* (the end of said ladies, not their proximity to one another). In this presumably peaceful atmosphere, away from her major love in life, her work, she is to "get well." A leggy, unkempt brat from the school, professing great love for her, follows her to the Close and manages to wangle a way of living with her for the summer. Emmy is an engaging enough child, but it is to the untouchable, unreachable, Laura, that Chloe gives her affection. Laura is the wife of a drunken bum of an artist and they occupy a cottage near Chloe's. There is little action in the book, as Chloe contrives to keep Emmy out of her bed (and out

of the beds of all of the mates in the neighborhood) and to woo, distantly and removedly, the lovely Laura. Along the way we learn that Chloe's sleeplessness is due to the loss, the year before, of Caro (Caroline) an older student with whom she has had an idyllic love affair, abruptly terminated by the intervention of Caro's family—and not, as the psychiatrist has thought, her formal virginal status. Chloe succeeds with Emmy, arranging at the end an approximately suitable marriage for her—and fails with Laura, which is to be expected, and drives home, announcing to herself and the reader: "My work waited for me there, and my pupils. Some day perhaps I shall have a cat or a dog. Within the rules, we may each have our satisfactions." Those readers who do not agree with Chloe's passive resignation, particularly since the author tells us that she is only 38, hardly old enough to consign oneself to the grave of sexless life, will be irritated by the book, as I was. But it must be read, and it has moments of terrible beauty, for Sarah Kilpatrick is a magnificent writer.

Movies and moviemakers are, apparently, endlessly fascinating to novelists, and each year we have a few novels about that demi-world. *The Trojans*, by Wirt Williams, Boston, Little, Brown, 1966, is one of the bet-

ter novels devoted to the subject, though a quick bare bones report on the plot will make it sound much like all the rest. There are the stars, and the making of an epic movie on foreign soil, and the nervous and neurotic, etc. Margaret Dayton, the star, is pursued by the wife of her director, Sylvia Korbin, who is a repressed Lesbian. The hero of the picture, Mace Garrett, has a past life which includes being started on his road to fame by former wife, Helene, a Lesbian—and there is the usual mention here and there of the male homosexuals. The most important scene concerns Sylvia's forced recognition of her Lesbianism, and her love for Margaret, and Margaret's surprisingly kind reaction. Good of kind.

A bit of French fluff, *Hot Hands*, by Ange Gabrielli, Berkley, 1967, has come out here as a paperback original, though it was a hardback in France. It is a typical French novel. Marc takes his girlfriend, Odile, to the beach, hoping to warm her up. They meet the much older Mona, who has ideas which include both of them, but particularly Odile. It is well enough written but like puff pastry, insubstantial.

*Bonnet Brigades*, by Mary Elizabeth Massey, N.Y., Knopf, 1966, is, despite that nauseating title, an excellent study of the women who took part in the Civil War, on both sides. A good deal has been written about women in the Civil War, but nothing which surveyed the entire picture with such detail. Miss Massey is Professor of History at The South Carolina College for Women, and she

has an impressive educational and teaching background. Her book is one of a long series called "The Impact of the Civil War" which was commissioned by The Civil War Centennial Commission. Professor Massey covers the home front, the camps themselves, the camp followers, the transvestites, and the various women who were spys. The transvestites, as might be expected, had a great many widely varied reasons for going to war. Some wanted to follow a husband or lover, and chose disguise as the best method. Some wanted to be men, of course, and others simply wanted the adventure. An important portion of the book discusses the nurses and doctors; the changes made in the medical profession because of the war, which allowed many women into these two professional groups. Another professional group that was radically changed was teaching, and women were used in ever increasing numbers during the Civil War years. Miss Massey is careful, of course, to do no speculating about the various Lesbians she includes. She does mention the famous Sarah Emma Edmonds (also known as Sarah Emma Edmonds Seelye and Sarah Emma Edmundson) who passed as Private Franklin Thompson for some time undetected and who was undoubtedly homosexual, and Jennie Rodgers, who posed as Private Albert D. J. Cashier successfully. Jennie, in fact, lived all of her life as a man, wasn't discovered until she was in an accident in 1911. She died in 1915 in the Soldiers and Sailors Home in Quincy, Illinois. Undoubtedly the only woman to grace the establish-

ment as a veteran in those times. This is an entertaining book, written in a sufficiently lively style to hold the attention of those who would not normally choose history for pleasure reading, and it is an essential title for those particularly concerned with women in history.

It is pleasant to be able to include in this column a book by an author who was awarded the National Book Award for his first novel, and was nominated for the same award for his second, and pertinent, title. Walker Percy's *The Last Gentleman*, N. Y. Farrar, 1966 and London. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1967, is an odyssey to innocence. Bill Barrett, a Princeton educated young Southerner, is a spiritual brother to the prowling hero of his first novel, *The Moviegoer*, a man who is involved more in his own ambiguity than in the world around him. He becomes the companion of Jamie Vaught, a young boy dying of leukemia, and thus a pseudo part of Jamie's family. His sister, Kitty, becomes something of a love interest for Bill, and she, in turn, is the love object of her sister-in-law, Rita. It is all very involved, and never becomes resolved. For our purposes here, this is a minor, albeit well done, novel.

A little known paperback original, *Blackmail, Inc.*, by Robert Kyle, first appeared in 1958, from Dell Books, and has now been reissued by them (March, 1967). This book has been listed in various sources as minor male, which it is, but it is also a minor Lesbian title. The not particularly exemplary Lesbian plays an important role in the plot. This is a fair mystery in the hard-boiled school. Nice to

waste an evening.

With some justification, the policy of not concerning ourselves with items of interest to male homosexuals, must be broken for a moment. Don Holliday has created a really delightful book, *Sex and The Single Gay*, Leisure Books, 1967, which is an obvious takeoff from *Sex and The Single Girl*. The wonder is that the book has real value. In fairly easy to read terms it covers every aspect of ordinary life for the male homosexual. How to dress, how to walk, talk, cook, plan and run a household, budget an income, etc. etc. There are just enough campy asides for laughs, but not too many. Someone should do something just like this for the young Lesbian, since some of us could use a little sprucing up. Many ordinary aspects of life need talking about in homosexual terms. Heterosexuals do not have the franchise on day to day problems and the "self-help" books designed entirely for a heterosexual audience have little practical use for homosexuals.

For you history-biography bugs, there are two new biographies about Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough and her love affair with Queen Anne and Anne's later attachment to Abigail Hill. These are: *Rule of Three: Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough and Her Companions In Power*, by Iris Butler, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1967; and, *Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, by David Green, London, Collins, 1967. Both are worth reading, though the Butler book is the better researched, the more scholarly and rewarding of the two. The Green book is more

sensational, but it is the best put together and the better illustrated. In any case, it is becoming an old story since so much is being written about these three and their influence on English history. As one reviewer put it: "Gibraltar would not be British, and the Low Countries might be French, if Queen Anne had not been in love with the Duchess of Marlborough."

The March, 1967, issue of the periodical, *American Book Collector*, is full of goodies. The minor Lesbian novel, *Lesbia Brandon*, by Algernon C. Swinburne, has been published several times, first in London, by Falcon Press, in 1952 and then in the United States by Farrar, Straus, in 1962 (in both hardcover and paperback). All of these editions have been known to be incomplete, because some of the original manuscript was missing. The missing pages have been located by a rare books librarian in N.Y. None of the missing portion has any bearing on the pertinence of the book, but it is good to know that it is now complete (or rather, that future editions will be complete).

The other item in the magazine of interest here is an article by William White called, "On Collecting Dirty Books: Some Notes on Censorship." It is a very well-handled plea for the right to publish, not defending filth, but pointing out that freedom of choice is the primary concern. Most university libraries and very large public libraries are likely to have this periodical and the article is worth looking up and reading.

For those who like their sex-life served raw, the 1966 title, *Ecstasy and Me*. by Hedv Lamarr. has been

reprinted by Fawcett Crest, 1967.

It is ironic to announce this next reprint, right on the heels of the Lamarr inanity, but it appeals to my macabre sense of humor. It is also worth noting that the publisher involved is the same, and it may well be that the profits from Miss Lamarr might help finance this title which must be considered a public service in the field of literature. Frank Wedekind, 1864-1918, German playwright and actor, is credited with practically beginning German expressionism in the theater with his two major plays: *Earth Spirit*, 1899, and *Pandora's Box*, 1903. There is substantial Lesbian content in both of these plays, which, no doubt, has helped keep them obscure outside of certain literary circles. The two plays were translated into English and issued in England sometime during the 1950's by the London publisher, G.T. Wray, in a volume entitled, *Five Tragedies of Sex*. Now they have made their apparent debut in this country as a Fawcett Premier paperback original, 1967, with the title, *Lulu Plays* (named after the main character in the plays, Lulu). Those of you who have Jeanette H. Foster's *Sex Variant Women in Literature* on your shelves ill want to look up all the Wedekind references in the index and read up about these works—and then go and buy the book.

Lesbians keep popping up in the sort of books where they wouldn't have been included a few years ago. I suspect it proves we have always been around, just not always mentioned. Robert Carson, in his saga type history of a Los Angeles family,

*The Outsiders*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1966, includes a fairly substantial Lesbian character. The novel covers the years 1880 to the present time, and records the events in the lives of the Brennan family. Cassius Brennan, Jr., son of one of the founding brothers, and surrogate son of the other brother, Lucius, his uncle (or possibly his real father), falls in love with Dr. Alice Chambers, a practicing physician. He pursues her relentlessly, and does not fully understand her relationship with Sarah, a woman some 10 years older than Alice, who lives with her. The man wins the battle, unfortunately, but it is made quite clear that Alice is not in love with him and marries him for reasons of her own (not disclosed to the reader). The interesting facet of this novel is that these events, which are ancient history by the end of the novel, are related with increasing frankness as each new, and more sophisticated, generation grows up.

*Dink's Blues*, by Marilyn Hoff, N. Y., Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965, 1966, is a rather unusual college novel, dealing more with inner reactions than external events. Primarily the story of the relationship between the awed narrator, one Sarah Lodge, and her roommate, Diane (Dink) St. Clair. Both of these gals exhibit mighty proofs of their heterosexual orientation, but they are, none the less, very very attached to each other. Sarah, in fact, specifically tells Dink that she is in love with her, and Dink gently turns her aside. Sarah's interior monologues are the interesting portions of the novel. Your Aunt Goody Two Shoes might not get the point, but you, dear

reader, will, most certainly.

Reprints continue to increase with many old Lesbian items, some quite rare, being issued again. Dorothy Richardson's enormous novel series, *Pilgrimage*, has been issued in London, by Dent, 1967. This contains her pertinent novel, *Dawn's Left Hand*. Unhappily this one has to be called variant, since there is no specific physical intimacy between the heroine, Miriam, and her friend, Amabel. However, this is one of those very intense novels, and the temperature gets pretty high in some of the scenes. Pick this up, if you don't have it.

*The Exquisite Corpse*, by Alfred Chester, N.Y., Simon and Shuster, 1967, is a dreadful disappointment. Mr. Chester produced a fine collection of homosexual short stories in his *Behold Goliath* (five pertinent stories included, all male in emphasis), and I eagerly looked forward to this novel. Certainly the book features a rather weird Lesbian household, fashioned on a Biblical parable, and it is also full of male homosexuals, but the writing is over the brink. It may just be too experimental for the reading audience to understand. In which case, one wonders just what audience Mr. Chester had in mind. You have been warned.

For those of you keeping track of each year's records and growth, 1967 is shaping up to be one of the best years yet. Because of normal publishing delays, this column for August is being prepared in early May, and already there are 28 new hardback titles for the yearly report. If things keep up . . . who knows?

# CROSS CURRENTS and Miscellany

A Review of *SOLDIER IN LOVE* on NBC's  
Hallmark Hall of Fame, April 26, 1967  
by Vern Niven

T.V. GUIDE's Close-Up billed this "... an original drama about a unique royal friendship." Well, that much certainly is true, since Queen Anne was quite ardently in love with Sarah Churchill, the first Duchess of Marlborough, and a number of books have been written about this rather consuming passion and its effect on English history.

Joyce Hall of Hallmark Cards, one of this country's living philanthropists, has consistently provided the finest quality entertainment on his program, Hallmark Hall of Fame, and from many standpoints, he did not fail this time. Jean Simmons, playing Sarah (by far the role with the most meat) was excellent. Claire Bloom, remarkable for her physical beauty, seemed too lovely for the gross Anne, even with the grotesque makeup.

Much credit is due author Jerome Ross. His drama is as vital and important as a Broadway play (indeed, possibly more important than many of them). Working for a television audience, he has managed to retain enough of the homosexual implications in Anne's attachment to Sarah, and yet he was subtle enough to leave the innocent in bliss. If there are points to quarrel about, one of them would be his portrait of Abigail Hill, the woman of good but poor family who was made Chambermaid to Queen Anne by her cousin, Sarah, and who, ultimately, displaced Sarah in the Queen's affections. He has made her a shrewish moron, and that could hardly have been the case, since Queen Anne was not easily fooled. It took a brain like Sarah's to make an ass of her, however willing she was to be duped by the beautiful and desirable Sarah.

Those of you who missed this the first time around will want to watch for a possible re-run of the program. For a more complete biography of the woman, see the article, *MRS. FREEMAN AND MRS. MORLEY*, in the November, 1964 edition of *THE LADDER*.

(This program has been scheduled for a repeat showing late in 1967 or early in 1968.)



# READERS RESPOND

Dear Editor;

Some words which have appeared under the pen of Del Martin have been the greatest words of our time, introducing the most comprehensive and exalted vision of the human personality. Unfortunately, in the June issue of the LADDER, Miss Martin's vision falters... Who can always sing of Zion in a strange land?

The Cross-Currents editorial contains three points which I concede as obvious and not requiring further comment:

1.) Public media in our patriarchal society views male homosexuality as a greater social threat than female homosexuality.

2.) Some members of S.I.R. prefer to spend some sectors of their social lives apart from women.

3.) Lesbians should participate in the fight for improved civil rights for women.

Let us now clarify some of the other matters:

Do not confuse male eroticism with male homosexuality. Eroticism and sex, both homosexual and heterosexual, occupy a prominent position in our culture—discussions of homosexuality and religion almost immediately proceed to demonstrate to what extent our theology has deteriorated into a mere fertility cult—but I am not sure which offends me more, the banal, supine sex of the soapsuds ads, to which I am constantly exposed, or the tea room scenes, which I can avoid. Some day adults must learn to say "No. I do

not belong to the Pepsi-generation."

"No. I do not care for wash room sex."

Another thing seems clear to me; Lesbians are a minority, not by declaration of the male homophile organizations, but because of the lesbian's preference for a member of her own sex as a love object. This preference has yet to find approval by any considerable segment of society but it is accepted, at least in principle, by the male homophile groups.

In general, our sick society does not have the ability to tolerate harmless differences such as homosexuality. Therefore, before sending my \$5.00 to Miss Freidan's group, I would require some token of good faith that they would accept my sisters as happily as they would accept my money. Let us not hasten to join a majority to do evil.

Let us speak now of women. Why has the majority failed its call to greatness? Mostly because it has failed to delve into the guts of things. The girls have not learned to do, but only to applaud... or whine. Women have grown too accustomed to spectator sports. Those women who want more than a Cracker Jack toy must "send in" more than coins and box tops for their prize. Nowhere in our society have women played a more prominent role than on the credentials committee of the National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations. The excellence of this committee's final proposals is an example of feminine concern for quality and fairness. Each woman on that

committee is so prominent in her own field or organization that her distinguished service on the committee can in no respect add luster to her personal stature. It is true that a profound amount of discussion was prelude to the committee's final report. Is it not a tenet of the Daughters that discussion and exploration of the ramifications of each issue is essential to the quality of a decision? It is im-

modest and unwise to suggest that D.O.B. can, now or ever, dispense with dialogue. If dialogue be the hallmark of a debating society, it is also the glory of a democratic society, one which exalts the value of the individual and her right to contribute meaningfully to her own life—and ours.

Very truly yours,  
Meredith Grey

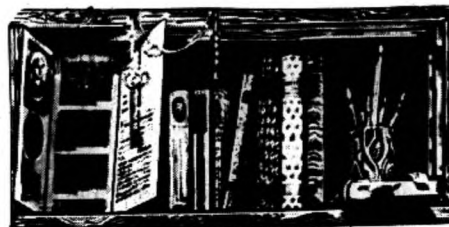


## THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE a bibliography

By Gene Damon and Lee Stuart

AN ALPHABETICAL LISTING BY AUTHOR OF ALL KNOWN BOOKS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, IN THE GENERAL FIELD OF LITERATURE, CONCERNED WITH LESBIANISM, OR HAVING LESBIAN CHARACTERS.

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"Oh, Julia, you just don't know how good you've been for Angel. When I look at her now, I can't believe my eyes. Do you know how long it's been since I've seen her dressed in anything but dirty old dungarees? That dreadful girl, that Vivian . . . do you know her?"

And your guilt for now assuaged, because at least you give and do not take, you answer, "Yes, I know her."

"I can't understand it. I never will. What power did she hold over Angel? Angel was nothing but a slavey to that girl. Julia, you don't know how my heart's been broken!"

You reach out and take the mother's hand for a moment. "But it's all over now. Try to forget about it."

"Do you really think so? You don't think she'll go back to her, ever?"

"No, I promise you. She'll never go back."

You felt genuine fondness for this lovely and uncomplicated woman. What ever your guilt, you wanted to cherish and protect her from hurt and sadness. You were an imposter, but only because of Marian Linden's innocence. Her love for you made your duplicity doubly hard to tolerate, and yet you wouldn't want to lose it. She made of you a confidante, and still, a second child. You felt, in a sense, the way you did, standing sometimes at the window of that apartment, looking down through the trees in the Square to the Lilliputians walking there. So, when you walked there, you saw yourself in two different sizes, bigger than life, as you felt at the window of the penthouse, and smaller than life, one of the Lilliputians. No, it was even worse than that. You were in a house of Crazy Mirrors, coming at yourself, going from yourself, in a dozen different directions. You were the dignified Miss Julia, greeting clients at the shop. Mother Julia, ironing Scotty's shirts late into the night. Julia, the Kid, being kissed off, along with Angel, by Marian Linden, and whizzing off to New York for the weekend. Running hand in hand with Angel through Washington Square. And finally, Julia, the beloved. Encircled, invaded, by the fierce, the tender, the permeating love of Marian Linden's problem child. Julia, the receiver of rosebuds and kisses. Not for much longer, it seems. Not for any longer, at all.

And this is how it happened. This is how you tasted of the Fountain of Youth, and in it, lost with the abandoned years, their garnered treasures. Including the right to be Socratic. Falling from the pedestal into the sandbox. And belonging, really neither on the one, nor in the other.

But you scarcely noticed it at first, your descent. You were living in a new dimension, surrounded by an atmosphere you never even dreamed of. Only now and then, as when Angel snatched away the bit of poetry, did you mourn your loss. Then you knew that even in the sandbox, there was no common language between the young and not-so-young. You tried to break the barrier. You never stopped trying. You said, when she snatched away the poem, "I'm sorry, Angel.

But I can't help believing that the purpose of art is to make form out of chaos. I'm not satisfied that holding a mirror up in front of things as they are, is art. An artist should in some way be able to *explain* things. We're surrounded by things as they are. The function of an artist is to invest a meaning into it, somehow . . ."

But she didn't seem to know what you were talking about. She is imaginative, as this painting she is working on now certainly demonstrates. But it's a carefully planned and executed kind of grotesquerie. Almost as if she is saying, "I don't like things as they are, so I'm going to make them worse."

You look at her now, sitting at your feet, paint brush stuck between her teeth as she studies her canvas. Still enchanting to your eyes, with her freckled little face and her tousled bronze hair. And you know that this elfin thing about her is a snare, and that she uses it. Just the same, your heart twists, that you are losing her.

Scott is off to his piano lesson and the place is quiet except for the music on the F.M. You sit in your accustomed spot at the end of the sofa, your canvas propped up before you on the coffee table. The pressing need you felt to get to your painting has already dissipated. You have mixed your colors and made a few desultory strokes with your brush, trying to remember again how the sunlight hit the arches. But you aren't really thinking of arches or sunlight, but only how to maintain your equilibrium.

"Did you still want to go up to the Sparrow tonight?" Angel asks.

"Do you?"

"Well, yes. If you do."

But you look at her, sharply. You know that she doesn't want to go at all. Not with you. That suddenly, after almost a year of not wanting to go anywhere without you, of not wanting to depart from you for a minute, she has departed from you. She is gone from you at this moment as surely as she will be gone from you after this day.

You have a fleeting thought. Shall I let her off the hook right now? But no. Let her wriggle until she frees herself . . . or until I free her. No later than the end of this day and night.

"Would you like me to call Ginger and Tracy?" you ask. "Perhaps they would meet us there." It was a sudden inspiration. Make a party of it. Throw in a couple of other people, to ward off the silence. Just in the event your act goes sour.

"Oh . . . all right. I'll call them."

You are surprised, momentarily. It was so unlike Angel to offer to make a telephone call. Almost immediately you understand. Angel says, "I'll call them from the bedroom." She pops her brush into the jar of turpentine and jumps up.

You are about to say, "Why don't you call from here?" There is a telephone beside you on the lamp table.

But you don't say it because you know there is another call she wants to make. Privately. You don't have to overhear it to know what she will be saying,

and to whom. "I'm sorry, Ilga, but I do have to go out with Julia after all."

When she returns she says, "Ginger and Tracy will meet us there about ten."

She kneels again before her painting in a kind of reverie. You look at her, but she is lost, far out.

"Oh, damn," you say. "We have marketing to do. Shall we go now?"

In silence, you clean your brushes and put the canvasses away.

#### 5-Saturday, Noon.

Patterns are disaster. You form patterns with some one person, and when they are broken, you are adrift. Patterns, rituals, routines. We are the creatures of them. When we have them by ourselves, we are eccentrics. When we have them with others, we are plotting our own destruction.

Like now. Pushing the cart up and down the aisles of the supermarket, while Angel darts here and there, grabbing the accustomed items from shelves, and you know you are once again to be shaken by a pattern.

You think of the first time you went shopping without Ron after you sent her away. You didn't anticipate the wave of nausea that swept you as you took hold of the cart handle and started up the first lane. You thought of Ron, always beside you, every Saturday morning. Always clowning; getting behind and walking lockstep, her arms around your waist until you protested, "What will people think!" Snatching kisses and running away, and sneaking back to steal another kiss on the nape of your neck. Teasing you, making a lark of the monotonous business of marketing.

Julia and Ron. Always everything together. Like David and Jonathan. Or Ruth and Naomi. Or ham and eggs. Combinations difficult to sunder. Rituals devastating to relinquish. Somewhere in the back of your closet there is a white shirt. On the tail of the shirt is written, "Julia and Ron" with a heart drawn around it. A whim of Ron's one day and it would never wash out. The shirt should have been destroyed long ago. But you couldn't, and you are bad as Steffi. Steffi, who wrote to you after Ron died, "I am gathering all of her little trophies together in one place. You and her other friends may come up and see them when you wish."

Oh, so sick, you thought. A shrine to Ron. Angel, reading Steffi's letter, laughed. "Do you suppose she'll burn candles there every night?"

You laughed, too. Knowing all the while that you have your own shrine to Ron. That a candle burned inside of you that is taking, Oh God, longer to extinguish than you can bear.

"Much of what we think of as love is really an association with some childhood longing."

Philip was speaking about Ron and what it was that captured and held you when every illusion was destroyed. The big old house where she was born. Ron, when she told you about it in those first days, created a royal palace wherein

lived her Queen Mother, her father, the King, and the little princesses, Veronica and Ethel-May.

"How I wish I had known you then!" Ron said. "You'd have loved our house. There was a fireplace in every room, even in my bedroom. On cold winter nights my father would build a fire for me. And when everybody was asleep, I used to sneak down the back stairs to the kitchen and get cookies and milk. I'd sit in front of the fireplace, sometimes nearly all night, and have a little picnic, all by myself. Oh, Julia, how I wish I'd known you then!"

And as she talked, you were no longer Julia, but a little girl named Ron. Your longing was not to have been *with* her, but to have *been* her. To have lived in that palace with your lady-mother and your royal father.

But when you saw it, when the day came that Ron finally took you up there, to that big house in that little town, it was a sad palace. Uninhabited and falling into disrepair. Still, it was the place, nevertheless, of your childhood longing, and perhaps Philip was right. You looked back through Ron's memories and saw this house as it once was. The broad veranda looking out over the grassy lawn, and the ancient oak where still remained the splintered and rotten wood of Ron's tree house.

"When I was little, I spent most of my time up there in that tree," Ron said. "From there I could see all the way up Elizabeth Street. I'd watch for my father to come home every evening."

And she would paint the scene for you, in that way she had that made you a part of it. The father, no longer in the uniform of Air Force colonel, but never losing his smart bearing. Coming home from work, driving up the graveled path, and Ethel-May, all ribbons and ruffles, running to meet him and be swung up in his arms. And Mother, coming out on the veranda and offering her cheek to be kissed. But up in the tree-house Ron would wait. Wait, until her father would knock on the trunk of the tree and call, "Anybody home?"

Then she would come down, blue-dungareed legs first, and stand there, shyly. No kisses for Ron, because that embarrassed her. She was ecstatic enough when he tousled her hair and said, "Hi, butch!"

"How can you remember so much?" you asked. "You were only five when your father died . . ."

"But I do, just the same."

And even when the time came, when you learned the span of Ron's imagination, you went on being a part of those times. Real or fancied, that childhood was the one you wanted. You, Julia, child of a lace-curtain merchant, born into mediocrity, had dreams more wistful than the dreams of a slum-child. In your city house above the store, you had longed for rolling hills and trees outside your bedroom window. For dogs and horses and fireplaces. Even for the dashing and romantic father who had died so young.

The later picture Ron superimposed upon his image, the scorn and bitterness she sometimes heaped upon his memory, didn't impress you or change you at

all. You listened, almost angry, when she described him as an eagle who'd abandoned his wings to win glory at the banquet table.

"What did you expect of him," you asked. "The war was over long before you were born, Ron. He had a family to consider."

You were standing by the graveside in the little cemetery not far from the big house. Flags, placed there on some recent holiday, hung dirty and wilted on Jerome Starr's grave. You looked at the dates on the headstone, her father's and her mother's.

"Ron," you said. "Both of them were thirty-nine when they died." And suddenly a strange thought occurred to you. A thought so powerful you voiced it, almost against your will. "You will die when you are thirty-nine, too, Ron." And then you looked at her, aghast at what you'd said.

It was a day you had quarreled, bitterly, all the way up to Royale. Ron was drinking and she had promised she wouldn't. You had just nursed her through another illness and she had come out of it, stuffed with vitamins and feeling wonderful and vowing never to drink again. But half-way along the trip, despite your protests, she stopped and bought a bottle. You were furious and despairing and all of the things you'd been over and over again.

But, to your involuntary prophecy, Ron only laughed and said, "It'll be a miracle if I live to be thirty-nine." She just made it. No more. And your prophetic words are but a small part of your tortured memories.

You'd already served your apprenticeship in Hell. Some of us need this trial by fire before we are sufficiently hardened. You are one of them. The warnings of those who went before you are useless. Joan said it when she saw you in danger at the beginning.

"I had my bout with Mephistopheles. Must you have yours?"

But her warning was too late. And in any case, you would not have heeded. You didn't listen, because you were already immersed, engrossed, involved—blindly and irrevocable in love.

"Don't you know she destroys everything, everyone she comes in contact with?"

"But why, how? What does she *do*?"

"It isn't nearly so much what she does, as how she *is*. She tortures. But in such a way that you wind up thinking you did it all yourself. In a way, you do. Because of her. But, God-damn it; she always comes out of it lily-white."

You thought Joan was speaking out of her own bitterness and hurt. Out of her own sickness.

"Is it true? you asked Ron.

"Of course it isn't true, Julie. I can't understand what Joan is trying to do to me. It must be her sickness. You can't image what a wonderful person she was before she got sick." And Ron's eyes grew tender and sad, and you would have to think that she was, in spite of what Joan said, a fond and loyal friend. Condemned unjustly, out of Joan's derangement and jealousy. In your love-baffled

mind, brilliant, volatile Joan became the villain, victim of her own distorting illness.

What you didn't know, until later, was how much of it was Ron-sickness. Not until you caught the disease yourself. Not until this malignancy was in your own bloodstream and you were almost fatally hooked.

Once Joan said, "When you've had enough, I want to be the one to pick up the little pieces and make you whole again." But when that day arrived, Joan could not pick up the little pieces. Her voice had been a voice crying from the wilderness where she was still entrapped.

"Ron has to keep her satellites," Philip said. "She'll never let go of any of them."

And you were merely the newest one, revolving around her. Brilliant when her light fell on you, lifeless when it didn't.

Where were you, Julia? Where was the pride and self-containment you so dearly cherished. The Julia you thought you were would be satellite to no one. She would shine with her own light, trace her own path. Act, not eternally; eternally react.

But everything is a reaction, you cry out against your own accusation. Life throws a pebble into our pool of consciousness at birth, and all we do from then on is fight against the troubled waters. Or go resistlessly around in circles. So, it isn't a matter of acting or re-acting, but whether or not you do battle. And you were a fighter—until Ron.

"You insist upon thinking of her as a femme fatale," Philip said. "She isn't, you know."

"Then," you say, desperately. "Why does she affect so many people the same way? Why does everyone who ever loved her, love her still? Hate her and love her still? Why does she drain our strength, drive us to things we never thought ourselves capable of?"

Philip shakes his head. "Somewhere, all of you suffer a common sickness. Or a common need. Your Ron is a catalyst. Fundamentally innocent, you know."

Yes. Innocent as a poison is innocent. Deadly only when taken. But you couldn't stop taking. Even when your veins were choked with the poison of jealousy and enslavement. Even when you rose in rebellion and cast her out. Because when you did, everything stopped except the love. And that was the deadliest of all.

And now, with Angel beside you, pushing the shopping cart with you for the last time, you know why it is you cannot wait. You know why you cannot bleed more than just a little while, and why, for Angel, there could never be a second chance.

6-SATURDAY, 1 P.M.

On the way home from the market, you sing. Singing in the car was something you'd started that very first night Angel drove you home. Gay, and still full of the long evening, you asked her to turn on the car radio. But it was broken, so you



sang, to her delight. The radio remained unrepaired and you've been singing in the car ever since. Sometimes Angel sang along with you in her ridiculous monotone that sent both of you into gales of laughter.

Today you sing foolish things. Nothing of any significance. Lovers always have significant songs. You and Angel have a few, and these you do not sing today. In time to come there will be plenty of music to be sad by. Will she be sad, too, when she hears them? Just a little, perhaps? Thinking of this, you remember that night at Jimmie's Piano Bar, when, for the first time, you listened through a certain tune and there was no pain. For the first time, there was no pain. On this night you knew that you had, at last, relinquished one more dearly-held grief.

Dearly-held grief. It's true, it's true. Grief is something hot and strong among the ashes of a lost love. When we begin to feel the ashes cool, we hold tighter to the grief, so that everything is not lost. So that we are not buried, with our love. Then, when a new love, or something that passes for love, rises out of those ashes, we may surrender the grief. On that night at Jimmie's, you said to Angel, for the first time, "I love you." You said it with a kind of wonder. They are the magic words that roll away the seal upon your tomb. Behold, you seem to say, I breathe and live again!

How long was it since you had breathed an untroubled breath? Sometimes you grope back, back, to remember the beginning with Ron. Surely, surely, there must have been some happy, easy times? There must have been something for the love to grow on, to feed upon, so that it had the strength to endure what it endured. Try to remember. But when you do, you remember only small islands of joy ringed around by turbulence and pain. Surrounded, and then invaded, swamped, so that nothing remains to be seen of the joy, nothing remembered. Reach back to the first day she came to you, when you went into her arms and felt the end of the world in her embrace. A portentous feeling? But you didn't think of it that way, then. You felt, instead, that you'd found what you had sought, that there was nothing more in life you wanted. Even that day, a sign, and you were blind to it. Ron made love to you, and afterwards she brought a slim bottle of liquor out of her jacket pocket.

"You didn't have to bring that," you said. "I think I have something here. Left over from last Christmas." And you went to the cupboard and got down the bourbon. About an ounce of it, in the bottom of the bottle. Ron looked at it, and then at you, quizzically. She laughed. "Darling, thank you," she said. "But there isn't very much, is there?"

"Well, it's enough for a drink. I don't want any." And she took it and kissed you and drained the bottle and then opened her own bottle.

Forever after she would tell this little story about you, always with tender glee. Chortling about your naivete. "My sweet, innocent Julia!"

You were, indeed, naive. You thought an alcoholic was a falling-down drunk. A skid-row character, begging for handouts. When Ron told you, that very day, that she was an alcoholic, you didn't believe her.

"But I've never seen you drunk," you argued. "Not once, in all of those evenings at Joan's."

"You don't have it exactly right, Little One," she said. "You've never seen me sober. That's a fact," she added, over your protest. "I haven't been sober for a year."

"You mean—you are—drunk—now?"

"Not drunk. Drinking. No blood in my veins, darling. Only alcohol."

"But why? Why!"

She shrugged. "Why do some people have tuberculosis? And some diabetes?"

"But it isn't the same!"

Nor did she ever convince you it was the same. But from that moment you had taken your first step in the labyrinthine depths of the alcoholic mind. The long, dark and circuitous road to nowhere. Drawn in, pulled along, by whatever the aura was that Ron exuded, more potent than any liquor could ever be. You plunged in, drunk with nothing but your little savior complex, to save the unsavable. And almost lost yourself along the way.

But what about the happy times? Think back upon those few and precious hours, rare and sparkling gems hung on the chain of your despair. Those Saturdays when Ron arrived, still in her flying clothes, bearing steaks and bottles of champagne. And always one red rosebud for you. Scott would be stowed away in the country with his grandmother, and the day was yours alone.

There would be champagne cocktails before dinner and champagne with dinner and after dinner. And you would get giggly and Ron would say, "I don't know how you do it. This stuff is like ginger-ale . . ." But she'd be content with it and you were thinking, perhaps she won't need whiskey any more—

And after the steaks, you would relax, close together on the couch, and the television on to Ron's favorite detective story. But the closeness became more important than the detective story, and you never saw the end of a single one, because long before the end you were lost in each other, entirely.

And sometimes later you would move into the bedroom, with the champagne in an ice-bucket on a table beside the bed, and only your cigarettes lighting the dark. And Ron would talk, talk, talk. It was then you heard about the big house in the small town of Royale, and the mother and the father and the child Ron used to be. Sometimes she was talking still while you, warm and happy, drowsed within the circle of her arms.

But that was only for awhile. For a short, beautiful while. Can you remember how the idyll ended? Was it when Joan reappeared? When Ron tired of champagne? Or did both of these things happen at the same time? Why, casting back into the torturous depths of the months and years that followed, do you remember with such anguish just one particular day? A summer day, and rising early in the morning for a drive down to the island. The week before, the two of you had taken Scotty down, but this time was for just you and Ron. It was all arranged. Mrs. Cochran came at eight o'clock in the morning and Ron



soon after in her old convertible with the top down.

"Darling," she said, "We'll have to stop back at my place. I forgot my tool kit and we might have some trouble on the way."

When she pulled into the driveway just beneath her kitchen window, the telephone was ringing. She dashed in and when you waited for what seemed a long time with the hot morning sun beating on your head, you followed. Got inside the door in time to hear her say, "Maybe I should come up there. I could be there in an hour."

And your heart closed down. Ron was saying, "All right. I'll wait for you here, then."

She turned and saw you standing there. "Julie, I'm sorry. It's Joan. She's upset about something. She wants to talk to me."

"Suppose we hadn't come back?" you said, when you had found your voice. "What then? She would find someone else to talk to—"

"That's beside the point." Ron's voice was sharp and cold, for the first time. "I did come back, so—"

"Ron," desperately, "You could have told her you had plans—"

"Julie, you ought to know I'd never let Joan down when she's in trouble."

"But what about me? What about . . . ." You had to stop so that she wouldn't see you cry.

Where was your anger, Julia? Your honest rage that might have been the better thing than the withering, crumbling hurt. Why could you not have screamed at her, reminded her that Joan's upsets were old, familiar things? That you were sure Joan had chosen just this time to prove a point—and that this was her opening thrust.

But anger is a laggard. Hurt, with you, is always there, waiting to be felt. So now it sent you stumbling blindly from Ron's apartment, twisting from Ron's arms that would have held you. You walked, almost ran, the blocks to home, composing yourself only long enough to dismiss Mrs. Cochran with some excuse and half the day's fee.

There were other days like that afterwards. Days and days, when Joan, failing to sever you from Ron, was driven by some demon of her own to help with your destruction. But through it all, through the years to come, the happy times, no longer unalloyed, the torments and the futile efforts to escape, the love burned on. You were a battleground with everything destroyed except that invincible banner of your love for Ron.

And so you must admit that from the beginning, Angel was short-changed. Not coldly and not secretly. You declared yourself a fortress, impregnable to her or any one. A shell, with nothing more inside to be plundered.

But when she rooted close against your ramparts, throwing tendrils up, searching, creeping, and finding crevices at last and breaking through, you surrendered.

"You'll love me some day, I know you will," she said.

You lay in her arms beneath the blankets in the unheated beach house. An impulse to see the winter sea brought you down here this November afternoon, long after Marian Linden closed the place up for the season.

You walked a little on the crusted sand, watched the dark, wild ocean until your teeth chattered with the cold. Then, returning to the house, Angel found some canned soup in the cupboard and you changed into warm robes and took the bowls of soup into the bedroom.

Soup finished, Angel said, "Let's bundle!" And you curled up close beneath the covers, until soon, warmed inside and out, both of you cast off the robes.

"This is bundling," you teased—but then her eager kisses and her ardent body (now in these few short months, filled out and grown almost voluptuous) drew you along, until your passion equalled hers.

But, unaccountably, with the last, long and ecstatic spasm—with the "Darling, darling!" bursting from your lips, just at that moment, came a thought of Ron. Tears, uncontrollable, sobs, unrestrained—and Angel leapt with fury out of bed.

"You're still thinking of her!" she cried.

"Everytime I make love to you, you think of her. I thought it would have stopped by now—"

You wanted to tell her—It *had* stopped, It *had*! You were sure it was over-gone forever. You can't explain what happened now. Some truant recollection, forcing through. Some sudden and unwanted memory of those other arms and lips—

But Angel leaves the room. Leaves you weeping. Lost in some kind of limbo between a love you want to feel and can't, and a love you cannot ever have again.

The house is silent, only for your weeping. Soon you get up and in a kind of daze you find your clothes and start to pull them on. And now you have a vision of Ron's face, and her dazzling Irish grin, triumphant even in her grave—and think, "You've won again, Ron."

You sit down on the bed and struggle with the laces of your sneakers, and suddenly Angel comes in and sweeps you back and holds you tightly in her arms.

"Baby, baby!" and she is crying, too. "I'm sorry. Don't cry, please." She takes your sneakers off and all the clothes you have put on, and tucks you back beneath the blankets and crawls in beside you. Then she said, "You'll love me someday. I know you will."

And wrapped in the warm cocoon of Angel's tenderness, infant-curved, depleted, you thought for just that little time that perhaps someday you would.

Now you know that there was more to conquer than your exhausted heart. Angel's strength was sapped in laying siege, and for the occupation she had no resources. She filled your life with laughter and the happy pastimes of the young. But where you were already drained, she drained you farther still. Against your need for self-possession, your hunger for the garnering once more of your own intrinsic self, she threw up barricades. Her love had tentacles that

wished to grasp and squeeze and merge your very soul with hers. Your little wonder-land began to darken with the shadows of the tightening web. And you were frightened. You had all you ever wanted to have of enslavement with Ron—but that, at least, was enslavement by your own desire. Ron is gone and you had breathed free air, however burdened over with grief. You wouldn't relinquish, and so you have to fight. A more tangible issue than the ghost of Ron was not long appearing.

"How many ways do I have to share you?" Angel cried. "It's enough I have to share you with Scott and your job and everything you do. But—"

"Angel, Philip is my friend. He's been part of my life for a long time."

"He's your crutch. You're dependent on him. Emotionally dependent."

"It seems strange to hear you speak of emotional dependence, Angel. I never knew anyone more emotionally dependent than you—" You couldn't help saying it. For this is the thing you've been battling against for months now.

"But only on you, Julie—because I love you. People in love are supposed to be close. But you run to Philip, you tell him everything. He's a crutch!" she repeated.

"Angel," sharply. "Philip is a crutch when I need a crutch. He's the best kind of crutch—He is teaching me how to stand alone."

—Just as I have been trying to teach you, you wanted to say. But you were weary of this quarrel because now it had become a recurrent thing. And because you'd tried and failed, and now you sounded, even to yourself, like a shrew.

"I don't see why you have to see him every single week."

And suddenly the whole thing was ridiculous. You were quarreling childishly with a child. You had to bring an end to it.

"Angel, I'm going to have to make myself very clear. I intend to visit Philip as I always have. I don't want to hear any more about it."

"So I'm left out. I'm like-nothing."

"You took yourself away, Angel. You know you did."

She had. In the beginning, on the nights you visited Philip, you took Angel with you. Philip made an exception of Angel as he had never made an exception before: Not for Ron, not for anyone. Their little closed circle was opened to take Angel in. She sat at your feet at Philip's house, for long evenings, listening, sometimes even finding things of her own to discuss.

"Well—I couldn't stand the way he analyzes everything, everyone. Everybody's just a little frog, for him to dissect."

"That isn't true. Philip analyzes only what's given to him for analysis."

And suddenly, there's a kind of dawning. You remember, suddenly, that last visit, and Angel disturbed about something concerning her mother. Had Philip come too close, you wonder? Did he touch on something too sensitive? For it was after that night Angel began her campaign against him. The next visit was preceded by something approximating a tantrum. You went, nevertheless, without her. And without her from then on. She pouted, sulked, even wept. After several weeks she stopped, but she was never reconciled. Philip's name brought a cold, closed expression to her face.

(Continued next month)

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COVER

Photo in black and white of a painting by Jane Kogan. Miss Kogan's works are on exhibit in the East. They are colorful and they are expression of great talent. We regret that we cannot reproduce them in full color in THE LADDER.