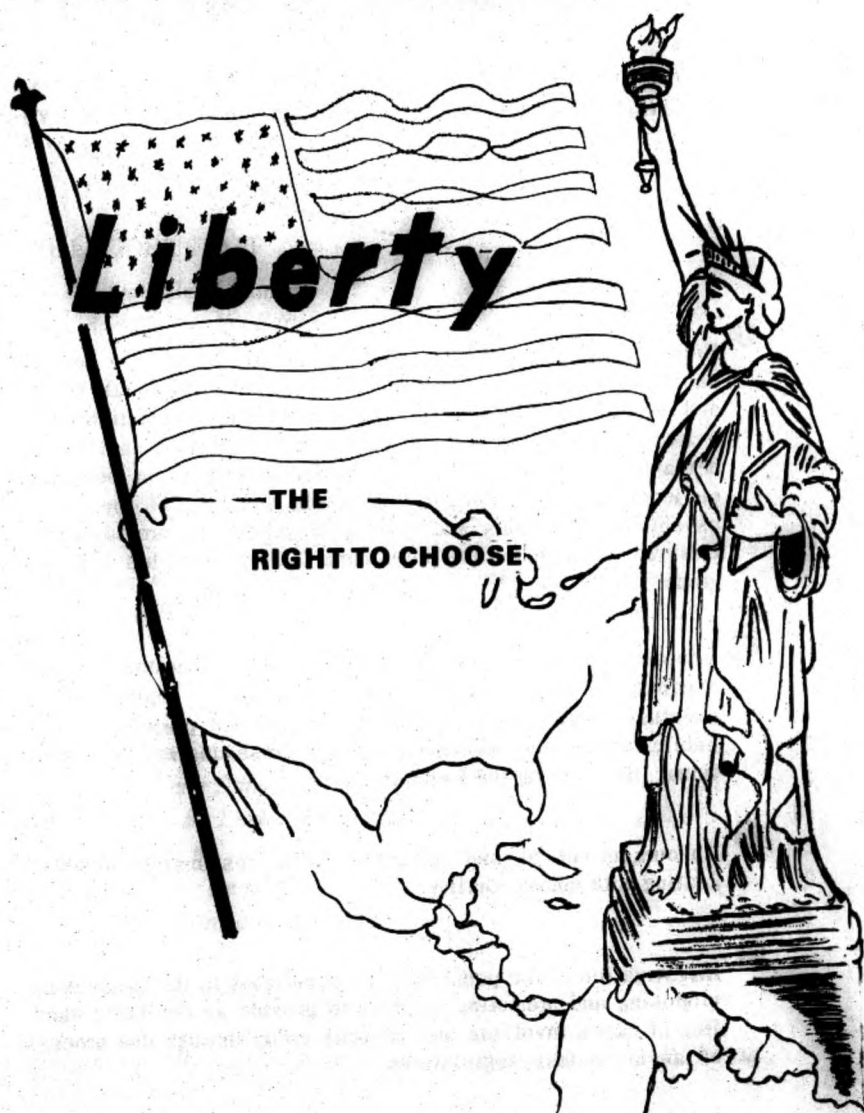


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The Ladder ***a Lesbian Review***



JULY 1968



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.

Published monthly by the Daughters of
Bilitis, Inc., a non-profit corporation,
1005 Market Street, Room 208, San
Francisco, California 94103.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER IX

JULY 1968

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CAROLINE, FROM FIRST TO LAST—THE LIFE OF MAZO DE LA ROCHE

by Marilyn Barrow

Thanks to increasing frankness in literature, we are beginning to get a few honest biographies—particularly of literary lights. It would be a pleasure to report that Ronald Hambleton's recent biography of Mazo De La Roche belongs in that brave group. Sadly, it does not. However, reading it lead to my reading of Mazo's own little heralded autobiographical efforts, and by adding them to Mr. Hambleton's portrait in MAZO DE LA ROCHE OF JALNA, a very telling picture is formed.

Miss De La Roche was deliberately one of the least "public" of authors. She was shunned in her own country, supposedly for her "English" bias. In turn, she loathed the United States, though it was here that she had her greatest success. She enjoyed lying about her personal life to such an extent that it is nearly impossible to separate truth from fancy. She is more erroneous legend today than human being.

She was born January 15, 1879 and died July 12, 1961. She was an only, and a lonely, child. She did not begin her professional writing career until relatively late in life. Her first novel, POSSESSION, was published in 1923, when she was 44 years old. Just four years later she received the \$10,000 Atlantic-Little, Brown award for JALNA, the first in the famous Jalna series, with which she is identified.

The critics, at least after JALNA

was published, considered her writing beneath criticism (this was not justified, however, it just happened that way). Before she began the Jalna series, she had written several novels and was considered one of Canada's better writers in the naturalistic vein.

The \$10,000 which gave her the material freedom from worry that she desperately needed, may also have shaped and directed her career. Some feel it may have trapped and killed her talent.

During the 1930's, Mazo was a very popular writer. Times and interests change, and she was, in a sense, a World War II casualty. Except for a steadily dwindling coterie of fans, few paid any attention to her during the last 20 years of her life. In view of this, we do owe Mr. Hambleton a debt for taking the time to research and write about a subject he well must have known would attract little interest.

The real history of Mazo De La Roche began with her seventh year when she first met her cousin, Caroline Clement. Caroline was also an only child, and worse, she was orphaned. Mazo describes her first meeting with Caroline in her autobiography, RINGING THE CHANGES, as being the most important day in her life. From that time on, these two were to live together until the death of Mazo in 1961.

In a chapter entitled "A Partnership In Life," Ronald Hambleton

states that Mazo felt she owed her life and her writing almost entirely to Caroline. He goes on to say: "Caroline Clement was almost Mazo's other self. These two dissimilar, but perfectly atuned persons, lived one of the most unusual and certainly most productive partnerships in the history of literature. Its length alone, over seventy years without a separation longer than a few months, and those at long intervals, distinguishes it from an association like the Wordsworths, its fruitfulness from that of Swinburne and Theodore Watts-Dunton, its completeness as a family from that of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas for Mazo & Caroline brought up two adopted children, and Caroline Clement was never used as a persona as Gertrude Stein used Alice B. Toklas."

During the years that Mazo was struggling to get started as a writer, Caroline held down a clerical job. After the award for JALNA, Caroline was able to quit work and simply act as housekeeper (a function she had always performed in addition to her working full time). From 1928 to 1938, Mazo and Caroline lived outside of Canada for the most part, primarily in England. In 1930, while on a trip, they learned of the death of friends which left a little girl, 2½ years old, and a 13 month old baby boy orphaned.

Mazo was 51 years old, much past the age usually associated with adoption. Caroline was just slightly younger (her age is not known). Mazo raised heaven and earth doing it, but with the aid of one of her publishers, she put up the necessary arguments as to character and means and got the two children.

With the exception of her popular success during the 1930's, little of ex-

citement happened to Mazo De La Roche. She and Caroline lived quietly, had few friends, and certainly no close friends. They raised their two children (both are married and have families of their own now). Mazo was shy, and very quiet. Her one outward expression of temper was to refuse to go anywhere when Caroline was not also automatically invited.

What a different pair these Canadian Ladies of Llangollen were, despite the tremendously similar basic relationship. One wonders what literary history will make of them 100 years from now?

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LESBIANA

by Gene Damon



A SPOT BIGGER THAN GOD, by Madeleine Riley, London, Gollancz, 1967, is a crude comedy about two girls whose major pursuit in life is two unlikely men. Along the way they amuse themselves by pretending to be Lesbians, sometimes privately, but more often in public. Not as funny as intended, but no judgments presented either.

Here is one I missed, **THE DARK TRADE**, by Anthony Lejeune, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1966 (reprinted by Lancer Books, 1967, with the title changed to, **DEATH OF A PORNOGRAPHER**). This is a run-of-the-mill spy story, with a rather different and charming heterosexual love story as a sub-theme. Among the nasties encountered by the hero is a gang of leather-jacket females in Paris, presided over by a nightclub owner, one Madame Jave. Nothing special.

English readers complain they cannot find the books I review (even the English titles). I apologize, but I do make every effort to mention U.S. books published in England, and English books brought out over here. I cannot keep up with the British paperback market. Robert Somerlott's, **THE FLAMINGOS**, out here in 1967, is out in England now from Hutchinson (London), 1968.

Robert Kyle's novel, **VENUS EXAMINED**, N.Y., Bernard Geis, 1968, is getting the standard Bernard

Geis reception and promotion. It's a grand snow job they do to sell these. They aren't half as dirty as you think they are going to be, and some of their titles have merit enough to make you wish they'd lay off the "crud" buildup. Kyle's book is a rather moralistic study of the type of institutional look at sexual response that has been making headlines these past several years. It is moderately well-written, never vulgar, not particularly sexy, and ends with the conclusion that it is best to stumble along in the dark. I do not share the author's conclusions, even slightly. Sex education, properly handled, might well free our society of many of its hand-me-down hangups. There is one woman who involves herself, after hours and incidentally, with another from the "institute," and this leads to a brief, abortive, Lesbian seduction. It is entertaining enough reading, since Mr. Kyle has been freelancing his way along the pulp route for many years, and knows most of the tricks. Try it.

THE MIDLING, by A.L. Barker, London, The Hogarth Press, 1967, is a collection of four episodes in the life of Ellie Toms. When first met, at 9, she is busy goading a wet lump of a girl cousin into "heights of glory" (as seen by Ellie). In the second section, during her teen years, Ellie falls in love with Laura Coyne. This is a superlative account of all

of the world's Ellies and all of the world's Lauras. We have met both, and been one, all of us. Ellie is bright and inventive and sure of herself—except with Laura, who is brighter, lazier and so sure of herself that the world seems to move aside to let her pass. Very good portrait of that aching first conscious hopeless love. A.L. Barker, by the way, is Audrey Lilian Barker, born 1919. Some of her prior works (primarily collections of short stories) have appeared in the United States since 1948. So far, those I have examined have not proved pertinent, but she has a way of writing about women, and youth that many will find appealing. Try your library for the older works and hope for this one on this side of the ocean.

It is far too early in the year (from my viewpoint) to name probable best books in our field for 1968, but surely one of the best will be **HORACE SIPPOG AND THE SIREN'S SONG**, by Su Walton, N.Y., Morrow, 1968 (London readers note: this came out in 1967 in your country, make your bookdealer look it up for you).

If you could take a literary hat and throw in fairly equal parts of Robert Nathan's poignant fantasy, Iris Murdoch's complicated relationships, ditto Ivy Compton-Burnett, the laughter in the wings of life as seen by Noel Coward, and sauce provided by the turned on, tuned in world of today's young, you might come up with something close to **HORACE SIPPOG AND THE SIREN'S SONG**.

When Horatio Plantagenet, who lives in a run down castle in Scotland, marries a mermaid, Ulessa, and sires four children, Ian, Cynthia, Drake and Lucy, there is let loose on the innocent world a whirl-

pool of emotional relationships. The children seemingly inspire love (universal, multisexual and instant) everywhere. But they also act as dangerous catalysts and inspire less heartening things, such as suicide. When Cynthia goes to school, first Lacington Ladies College (where the games mistress is named Miss Lesbit) she becomes the object of worship of proud, beautiful "K" (Katherine). Somehow this turns K into the desired object of a whole gaggle of girls. K commits suicide when her affair with Cynthia is broken up by the school authorities. But K goes on, in memory, influencing the lives of all of the rest of the girls, as they move on to other schools (St. Sexburga's, for example). It might seem that all this would be sufficient for a plot. However, I have briefly sketched less than one tenth of the action. This is, sincerely, the first novel I have ever read where the dramatis personae listing in the front of the book seems justified. There are, at least, 50 prominent characters, and perhaps 20 of these play vital roles. Su Walton has an astonishing imagination and a delightful talent. She was only 20 when this book was written, her first novel. Very like looking through special lenses at the real world, not the pink of fantasy, nor the red of horror, but something in between.

Brief mention here of a very unusual male title, **PLACE D'ARMES**, by Scott Symons, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1967. This was published in a deliberately disguised form, as a travel book. It is not, but rather it is, and it is also a hymn of praise to Canada and a votive offering to homosexuality as a way of life. Very beautifully written, frankly sexual, and highly recommended to those with wider reading horizons

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than the usual limitations of this column. (Suggest writing directly to the publisher, since this is hard to get in the United States. Address is 25 Hollinger Road, Toronto 16, Canada, and the cost for paperback is \$2.50 and cloth (hardback) is \$6.00.

Something special for both mystery (spy) fans and regular readers, **TELL NO TALES**, by Gina Day, London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1967, N.Y., Stein and Day, 1968. This is the first spy novel I have come across to feature a female protagonist, with the exception of Modesty Blaise. Our heroine here, Diana Dale, eclipses the lot of them, male and female. She is sexier than Modesty (and prefers girls) and lonelier than that poor spy who really didn't learn to come in out of the cold. James Bond can move over, and leave room for Miss Day's girl, Miss Dale. Diana works for "our side," British version, and is less a spy than an eliminator of spys. Her adventures (bloody, bloody, bloody), along with liberal shots of personal life, make interesting reading. Don't deprive yourself.

Count Robert de Montesquiou lived from 1855 to 1921. In one sense he is the spiritual father of male homosexual literature, since he served as the prototype for three of the most famous literary homosexuals. In 1884, Joris-Karl Huysman's **A REBOURS (AGAINST THE GRAIN)** appeared, and the hero, Duke Jean Floressas des Esseintes, was modeled on Count Robert de Montesquiou. Later he was the model for Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray, in **THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY**, and finally, his good friend Marcel Proust made him immortal by fashioning him as Palamede de Guermandes, Baron de Charlus, in **REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST**. He

also served, less nobly, in several literary blasts, including as Jean Lorrain's hero, Monsieur de Phocas, in the novel of the same name. He was the fabulous **PRINCE OF AESTHETES**, and is thus best immortalized by sensitive biographer, Phillippe Jullian, in **PRINCE OF AESTHETES: COUNT ROBERT DE MONTESQUIOU, 1855-1921**, N.Y., Viking Press, 1968. (First published in France in 1965 and published in England by Martin Secker and Warburg, London, 1967, under the title, **ROBERT DE MONTESQUIOU: A PRINCE OF THE NINETIES**).

This is a remarkable book, filled with literary lore that is priceless and, for the most part, previously unobtainable or rather obscure. As is true of a certain type of homosexual male, Count Robert did not dislike women, either heterosexual women or Lesbians. He had a number of platonic relationships with women and was a close friend to many of the famous Lesbians of his time. This biography discusses too many of these women to even attempt to list them all. Some of the more prominent include Princess Edmond de Polignac (who was a Singer, of the sewing machine corporation family), and Baroness Deslandes (earlier Countess Fleury, later Princess Robert de Broglie, and originally a daughter of U.S. industrialist, Oppenheim). Also Baroness Deslandes, and her girlfriend, Comtesse d'Orsay, served as models for Ronald Firbank's wilder Lesbian tales. Phillippe Jullian also cites Duchess Elisabeth de Clermont-Tonnerre (memoirist); Mme. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, famous as a poet, and as one of Natalie Clifford Barney's many lovers. Romaine Brooks, one of Renee Vivien's loves;

Anne Morgan, daughter of Pierpont Morgan, who was a sort of child in the household of Elisabeth Marbury, business woman and art patron of sorts, and her life-long friend, Elsie de Wolfe, the notorious Lady Mendl. (There is also some reference to another of Elsie's friends, Baroness d'Erlanger.)

In all, for those who care at all about this period, it is a must book. One gets the impression that a number of the daughters of wealth in early U.S. industrial history were Lesbians, and were living in France. (Poor Lesbians stayed home, that is the answer.)

I do not like to have to recommend books that are very poorly written. However, **TITANS AND KEWPIES: THE LIFE AND ART OF ROSE O'NEILL**, by Ralph Alan McCanse, N.Y., Vantage, 1968, is of interest because it is the only biography of this woman (that I've been able to locate). McCanse is incapable of analysis, so he makes no attempt to relate her behavior to her Lesbianism, but despite his deadly style and the boring structure of the biography, it is a must for fans of Rose O'Neill. (If you are not familiar with Miss O'Neill and her Lesbian literature contributions, I suggest you look her up in Jeannette H. Foster's **SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE**, N.Y., Vantage, 1956. And, while on the subject, for those of you who write to me for further information on older Lesbiana, this book, by Dr. Foster, is the thing to own. You cannot begin to comprehend the field without this book. In its original review in **THE LADDER**, Marion Zimmer Bradley called it the "cornerstone" of any library of Lesbian literature. The proof of this is that it is just as true in 1968 as it was in

1957.)

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT, by Foster Gunnison, Jr., Hartford, Conn., Institute of Social Ethics, 1967, is a 37 page pamphlet that manages to cover, very briefly, the general history of homosexual organizations in the United States and their broader goals. It is very well written, but not nearly detailed enough. (For a more comprehensive, though now badly out-dated look, see **HOMOSEXUALS TODAY—1956, A HANDBOOK OF ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS**, edited by Marvin Cutler, Los Angeles, One, Inc., 1956.)

We are being blessed by increasing numbers of titles dealing with very important years in literature, vaguely 1875 through 1935. Most of what was happening then happened in France and England, though many of the involved were Americans, at least by birth. While it is not true today, there was at that time a freedom, particularly in France, for literary and artistic expression that simply could not be countenanced in Puritanville, U.S.A. Many gifted male and female homosexuals, looking for freedom in life as well as literature, escaped our shores and blessed France with their presence. **LADIES BOUNTIFUL**, by biographer-bookman W.G. Rogers, N.Y., Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968, is about women who acted as angels for various literary and artistic geniuses. Before the days of grants and gifts and awards and overall university sponsored largesse, writers and artists born without silver spoons simply starved to death, or, luckily, met with one or more of the **LADIES BOUNTIFUL**.

James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Pablo Picasso, composer George Antheil, dancer Isadora Duncan, sculptor Jo Davidson, the list is endless, all these and many more could not possibly have achieved their artistic ends without the help, money, time, labor, given gladly, by the bountiful ones.

On a grander scale, much is owed to the women who began specialized magazines, the "little" magazines that now have become literary legend, and Mr. Rogers celebrates three of these women in particular, Harriet Monroe, founder of *POETRY*, and Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, the guiding lights of *THE LITTLE REVIEW*.

For our purposes here, Mr. Rogers has served well a second aim. He devotes one long chapter to Natalie Clifford Barney, an American poet and helping-hand to many literary lights, including Remy de Gourmont. He is very frank about her Lesbianism, where many before him have been obscure (and he has a real ball pointing out the foolishness of treading cautiously around Miss Barney who has been trumpeting her Lesbianism for years). Miss Barney is in her 80's and is still alive, still living in Paris (as far as is known). With the exception of the preiodical *ADAM: INTERNATIONAL REVIEW*, which devoted Number 299, Year XXIX, 1962, to Miss Barney, entitling the entire issue, "The Amazon of Letters: A World Tribute to Natalie Clifford Barney," not much has appeared about her in England or the United States, and certainly not much that spells out her orientation. Her most interesting connection, of course, is her relationship with Renee Vivien. This love affair (undoubtedly the

most important for each of these women) and others, are covered by Mr. Rogers.

There are incidental passages of interest. He documents, over again, the bisexuality of Mabel Dodge Luhan (known for many things, primarily for her artist-writer colony in Taos, New Mexico, and her financial aid to D.H. Lawrence). He points out facts that would indicate Caresse Crosby was bisexual (that's news to me, I haven't seen that in print before). He names Wanda Landowska, the famous harpsichordist, as a Lesbian (again, a "known," but previously unprovable fact) and adds further information to the scattered bits available concerning Annie Winifred Ellerman, who cannot be blamed for calling herself, simply, Bryher. Her marriage to Robert McAlmon, writer and well-known homosexual, was instigated by her to escape her family, and was a "white marriage," one of convenience only.

Mr. Rogers is very generous in his section on Margaret Anderson, and her friend, Jane Heap, though not as frank here as he is with most of the women. No explanation for reticence (not one of his strong points) is given. It is the fashion just now to castigate Anderson, and to consider her as having had no taste. W.G. Rogers avoids that pitfall, and remembers the many thousands of good things she did for writers and, especially, poets.

Best of all, Mr. Rogers is a good writer. He manages to be both honest and compassionate, something not too often seen these days. The portrait section is a lulu. I can only explain its predominant interest here by saying that had I been asked to choose the photos for this section, I would not have dared duplicate his choices. You will enjoy this book,

even if half the named greats mean nothing to you, the book lives, has humor and love in it.

Reviewers are often accused of kindness beyond the call of duty when it comes to dealing with first novelists. Coleman Dowell's first novel, *ONE OF THE CHILDREN IS CRYING*, N.Y., Random House, 1968, creates such a mixed response that it is difficult to know how to approach his work. He writes beautifully, has full control of his language, knows about people, about emotional response, about his subject matter (a miserable unhappy family group). Yet with all of his ability, this novel does not work. It is, in part at least, tedious and dull. He cares, obviously, about his story. He tells it meticulously. Sometimes he would have aided his art by being less careful, and it is sad to say so.

There are six children in this family. They are all grown, at least physically, and all have gone away from home, except for Erin, the spinster sister, who has stayed behind to care for the father and mother. The death of the father, a profligate bastard beyond any form of love or caring, brings the six together, along with their assorted wives, husbands, children.

There is Priscilla, who is quite mad, and her husband, patiently being destroyed. There is Robin, who is loved by his sister, Erin, far too well. He is a drunkard, and the most lovable of the lot. There is Spur, repressed homosexual, married with two sons. One of Robin's sons, Buck, is homosexual, and lives out a fantasy love affair with his restrained father. There is Rhoda, frigid, unyielding, who has managed so well, her husband, her world. And, for our interest, Millicent, who is least seen,

and an odd exception for the family in that she is kinder, gentler than the rest. She is a Lesbian, but we are told little about this from the standpoint of her background, except for her father's repeated attempts to rape her during her teen years. She is a model, and successful in her career, though not happy in her personal life.

They come together, they hold a funeral, they fight or love as their natures indicate, and they drift away, and that is all of it. It is, perhaps, in the complete hopelessness of the presentation that the novel fails. It is not quite believable that even in this unhappiest of unhappy families, no one person "made it," as a lover, as a human being.

It may be that novels dealing with the tag ends of society often seem to be more successful, more realistic, than those dealing with the middle and upper classes because so few people connected with the general world of literature have any real first-hand knowledge of the dregs of life. *THE PASSION PLAYERS*, by Edmund P. Murray, N.Y., Crown, 1968, deals with a group of strolling players in the little towns of Texas. They are a motley crew in life, and they are passing off a bogus version of the famous Oberammergau, complete with Salome and the dance of the seven veils. The leading figures, Jesus and Judas, played by Coit Harwood and Hoyt Lovelace, respectively, play out a personal feud on and off stage. The tension from this gives the novel much of its bite, but the majority of the action is off-stage and in-bed. Jackson Travis, an aging homosexual, plays Herod (which somehow seems fitting type casting). There are as many "problems" as people, or more, since some have a big bag to carry. There is Tippy O'Neill, who has been playing the

stag route, and her lover, Mother Ann, the lady wrestler (an embodiment of all the caricatured dykes of history), and a woman called Jewel, Harwood's wife, who plays Salome, and yearns, a little, for Tippy. It is not pleasant, but the man seems to be telling it like it is. You'll believe it while you read it, and you'll finish it if you start it. He writes well, with little humor and a very tight pace. There is passion in his ugly world, as

fittingly described by his title.

One quick note. A number of the novels that fall into this column by virtue of their subject matter have this year been first novels. Many of them are excellent, or, at least, better than average trys. We hear too much about the death of creative writing, and this kind of year is a good omen for those of us who believe a world reduced to mere factual reportage would be pretty boring.



LOVE'S FLOWERS

The wounds of last night's kisses
moving under my clothes like open mouths
cry out to me. They cry out for your murder.

It shall be. Before you leave me,
before these sucking mouths wither and crack,
you will be dead for me. I will feel nothing.

The heart survives by killing and by dieing
in the hacked harvests of its images.

All summer long there will be crying,
a choking and rasping, mouth after wound,
bloom after strangling bloom.

Then, when you go,
one eternal and malignant poppy
will burn in snow.

by, Lorita Whitehead

(Editor's Note: Lorita Whitehead, author of the poem, "Love's Flowers," is the "Lori" of the poem, "Unhappening," which appeared in the June, 1967 issue of THE LADDER.)

A MAN'S WORLD

Part 1

by Jan Addison

Jerome Ashburn walked out across the National Gallery's broad granite terrace shrugging on a topcoat and whistling absently between his teeth. 'Drunk with beauty,' he thought taking Constitution Avenue recklessly against the light, wasn't just a professional word-slinger's tag, it was this light-headed light-struck state that saw all bright objects edged with color. In the Paris days one good canvas in a dealer's window used to do the trick, mornings especially on the way out for coffee. Now it took the whole Mellon gallery. And the same empty stomach, maybe, for damned if he hadn't forgotten lunch! But there was no time now, it would have to be a sandwich on the train.

Hiking along through the watery sunshine he kept his eyes half unfocused and held hard to the images still behind them—Rubens, Renoir, Gauguin, all that warmth of color and life—but it wasn't much good now. Was it ten years of New York's galleries and exhibits that dulled the keen edge, or Alix graying the whole works over for him like a cobweb? Cold sober at all shows, Alix, from Wally Pierce's crashing color to the wartime German hoard of old masters, but still trailing him around to the lot of them hunting meat for her precious Gallery Strolls. And then after all feeding her suckers the gospel according to St. John Ruskin or any other smooth talker she could memorize. But she earned regularly, didn't she? And was anybody allowed to forget it!

At the station plaza a long run of the dove-and-peacock trolleys held him up—here was a city, now! It let an artist design its street cars—and then a honey-blond in an astrakhan jacket stopped beside him, and he took inventory and let his eyes say what he was thinking about her.

The look she gave him was Alix over again and he snorted. . . . The time she caught him slipping out to the Vertes private showing and whined, 'This is the only thing we do together any more, Jerry.' But when he'd started to adjust that complaint the obvious way she'd been so outraged she hadn't spoken for a week. That was the trouble. If there'd only been healthy rows and hot reconciliations they'd

have worried along somehow, cat and dog life maybe but still a life. It was weeks of the damn superior St. Nitouche act that sent a man out on other hunts, and not for art. He saw her again in her astrakhan, eyeing him across the width of Elkin's office. One cool calculating dame, Alix, out for a place in Westchester County and for nothing else. He hoped the next guy she caught wanted it too. Himself he could use a real woman for a change.

The clock in the station brought him up sharp. One minute to make it! His watch must be slow or he was drunker than he thought. Dodging through the crowd he sprinted down the long flight to the lower level and along the track to the first open vestibule. The porter was just picking up his stool.

"Where to, sir?"

"Richmond. Coach."

"Get on here and walk through. Four cars ahead."

He swung aboard as the train began to move and stood panting on the platform. Damned close shave. Suppose he'd missed this one after letting last night's go without him. A second wire to this old girl could just about queer things before she ever set eyes on him. He took off his hat, ran his fingers through the damp hair on his forehead, and then breathing more normally began to make his way through the swaying coaches as they blacked into the tunnel.

Third was the club car and he reached it just as it slid into daylight. Half way down the car he saw a face his artist's eye recognized before his mind could put a name to it. He hoped he could pass unnoticed, it was no one he wanted to talk to, but the prominent grey eyes lit on him, the impudent mouth broke into a grin, and half rising though not too steadily the fellow let out a crow.

"Jerry! By golly if it isn't old Ashes! Sit down, fella, sit down, join us."

Then he got it. Carter. Journalism. There'd been a semester they'd sat up half the night over beer and cartoons for the Ringtail.

"Hi, Cart," he said, not sitting. He couldn't afford an afternoon of club car drinks with a pocket full of bills for Sandra and God only

knowing how soon this unseen old party would come up with a first payment—if the deal went through.

But Carter was blind to signals, introducing him after a fashion to the bald little coot beside him, bawling "Sit down and order! Forget they quit serving across the river?"

Perspiring, thirsty, suddenly empty to his boots, he dropped his case and coat on one chair and slumped into the other. One good drink and then beer and a sandwich, he could run to that much.

Carter got in ahead of him. "Waiter! Another here and two over there, he's gotta catch up with us. No argument, old horse, expense account. On our way home from a press conference. This is on the Richmond Daily Banner."

"Long may it wave!" Jerry began to be cheered. "I'm bushed. Been gallery-prowling since this time yesterday. Planned to spend just the afternoon but one good taste got me worse than one drink after a cure. Made this train by the skin of my teeth."

The questions he saw in Carter's eyes were put off by the arrival of the drinks. Two whiskeys in front of him and plenty of ice and soda, and in half an hour he was well caught up and had heard all about the press conference and high life in Manhattan. Too bad he never came to the bright lights fresh himself with a swindle sheet in his pocket. He was half way through his sandwich before Carter got back to him.

"What's your line now? Not cartoons, I'd know about that."

"No. Just Art."

"Who you with?"

Jerome Ashburn grinned, remembering days when that question wouldn't have made sense. Now it did, and how. "On my own. Illustrating, some free lance advertising, portraits when I can get 'em."

"Money in it?"

Damn him! "Oh, not bad, How about you?" He shifted the subject before alcohol got him bragging what his copy work brought in. Because that would raise the image of him with easel set up before some Salome and maybe a gallery tour of schoolgirls gawping over his shoulder and giggling. But it was one way to eat without being chained to a desk.

Carter pulled out a handful of snapshots. Big suburban bungalow, big this-year's car, and lined up in front the Little Woman, Junior, and a spindly chick of a girl Peewee (of all obscenities.) Then the little bald man—Ed was the only name that stuck for him—flaunted a handsome warhorse of a female, and a cottage at Virginia Beach with her show-

ing all she could, and another little plucked banty.

Well, he could match that well enough. He laid out the old snap of Alix before her mouth had set in the down lines—she'd liked that because the sidewalk cafe on lower Fifth showed behind her—and her latest of Sandra at the school gates, in the De Pinna outfit that wasn't paid for yet. "Nine years old," he said. She looked twelve, which usually made him mad but now somehow gave him a lift.

"Well, well!" Carter's heartiness sounded pretty thin. "And where's this lordly estate I see showing?"

"Not guilty. Some snob's paradise Alix picked for the kid. New York school system's the best in the country, but not good enough for Us. Corrupts our accent, doesn't teach us to curtsy. Hell!"

Carter brayed with relief at not being out-classed, but Ed winked. "That's telling 'em, just like me and Coralee, I mean not to her face." He leaned back and tittered.

"Yeah. Tell 'em to their face and you end washed up. Like me and Alix. Heard I was a free man again, Cart?"

"Lord no, Jerry! Say, I'm sorry to hear that."

"Save the tears. I'm not. No artist ought to marry."

"No man ought to marry," came unexpectedly loud from Ed. Through the laugh that spread beyond their table Carter ordered more beer. Jerry refused. He mustn't arrive hazy.

"Then where you off to now?" Carter asked with an eye on the approaching tray.

"Don't know exactly, maybe you can help, you're a native of these parts." He pushed across a heavy gray gentlemen's size envelope, face down to show its engraved flap.

"Uplands, Tolman, Virginia." I know Tolman all right, little way station below Richmond, lots of old estates around there. What's cooking?"

"Go ahead, read it." Jerry leaned back and watched Carter worry out the pages bristling with handsome very black script. Ed craned vaguely and Carter read half aloud with slow care:

My dear Mr. Ashburn,

I have followed your work with interest for several years, and know that you occasionally paint portraits if the subjects interest you. I am bold enough to hope you may be willing to do one or two for me.

Ours is an old Virginia family of which there is an unbroken pictorial record for three centuries—

(An unprintable sound from Ed)

and as I am the last of the line and unmarried I must add my own if it is to be added. I should like to do so before I have passed the age for being at all paintable, and I also want the portrait of a cousin who has been my companion for many years.

Naturally I cannot expect you to answer such a request on the strength of correspondence alone. I wonder whether you would be willing to pay us a visit so that we may discuss the business at first hand. No expenses of the trip to devolve upon you, of course. As we are not too close to any town where you could find pleasant accommodations, you would be our guest both during this tentative visit and while you were at work, if you should undertake the commission. Would you be gracious enough to let me hear your reaction to this perhaps unorthodox proposal?

Most sincerely yours,
(Miss) Paige Courtney.

He finished with a long whistle.

"Know her?"

Carter shook his head. "This state crawls with Courtneys and Paiges, like with Clays and Carters—"

"But the Courtneys speak only to God," Ed inserted with wicked meekness.

Carter cursed him amiably. "Don't know a damn thing about this particular setup, but sounds like it might be a right cushy proposition—if there aren't bugs in it."

"What kind of bugs?"

"Oh, could be a mouldy grange six jumps from the end of nowhere, everybody batty as a Charles Addams cartoon. Or a couple of starved old maids out to catch 'em a man for a spell at any price—"

"God, you ghoul! But I'll settle for the last. I can handle anything in the shape of woman—if the night's dark. And paint her up next day in arsenic and old lace so she'll love it."

"Sure, more power to you, old son. But don't forget she's Miss Engraved Uplands Courtney."

Jerry shrugged. "Worst comes to worst, I still get me a free weekend in Virginia. What can I lose?"

Houses were flashing past the windows with regularity. "Richmond, friends." Ed began to deal with getting up from his chair, moving rather like a mauled mouse. "Hope we get home before we pass out."

"Let me hear how it turns out, Ashes—Daily Banner, don't forget." Carter aimed a parting shove at his shoulder as he passed. "And don't play for peanuts."

Jerry waited for them to be out of sight

before collecting his own belongings. Here was where he moved into the chair car. Having a daughter at a snob's paradise up the Hudson taught a man to arrive in style. Without tips from Carter.

The afternoon was waning as they pulled out of Richmond, his liquor was wearing off, and he looked out bitterly at the soft sentimental landscape. Willows weeping thin green mist, highlights of peachbloom above old orange grass and shadows in lavender. Christ, why couldn't a man have the west, Mexico, strong light and hot color, live women to paint! Instead of withering old virgins and pastel scenery fit for greeting cards. One of these days he'd get the hell out of the whole mess. They couldn't collect alimony and support if he wasn't earning, could they? And then a return loaded with real man's stuff. A triumph.

"Tolman, suh," said his porter obsequiously, seizing his weightless overnight case. Correct arrival came high.

And then no audience after all, damn it. Not a thwarted spinster or a cousin-companion in sight. Only a row of dingy cars along the platform and dingy buildings the other side of a gravelled station square.

A light skinned young negro in ordinary suit and chauffeur's cap, more Harlem than Virginia, came up to him. But no Harlem in the accent. "You Mist' Ashb'n? I's Henry from Uplands. Miss Paige mighty sorry not to meet you suh. Kin I fetch yo' luggage?"

So this was his punishment for postponing his arrival. Who did she think she was? After all he'd had a two-man show with McIntyre last year.

"Let's leave it till tomorrow, Henry. There's quite a bunch of painting gear checked through from New York, no use carting that till we know I'm staying." He didn't like the shade of amusement on the good looking tan face, nor the eye cast on his topcoat and case. "I hope there's time for a drink over there," he jerked his head toward a half-hearted tavern sign across the square. He was thirsty for the beer he had refused on the train, though he knew it was a thirst born half of pure contrariness.

"Sho thing there's time suh, but you Nawthn gentlemen's liable to forgit no real liquor sold over the bah heah. Miss Paige's liquor hit's ready an' waitin foh you. No more'n a fifteen minute ride."

That 'ready and waiting for you' settled it. She could learn at the start that he didn't jump when she snapped her fingers. "It's a beer I want, I'm thirsty," he said shortly. "How about you too?" He handed the man a quarter and

stalked across the crunching gravel. The bar and its customers were sad and the beer an unheard-of brand, but it was long and cold, and walking back he felt better, from having taken a stand as much as anything.

As they rolled across the tracks and away Henry opened up. "Miss Paige was sholy sorry not to meet you suh, but jes' she's about to step in the cah Mist' Robert he call from Bainbridge, says she gotta sign somepn befo' the county office close, an' she jes' barely could make it. Natchly this time o' day Miss Wylie's at the school so Miss Paige she taken Mist' Jackson's fahm cah an' sen' me in thish. Reckon she cain't be back befo' we's home neithah, she sho was sorry."

Perhaps the beer was taking hold, perhaps it was learning he wasn't being disciplined and that the old lady wasn't sitting beside her drinks tapping her foot, but Jerry felt better. "That's all right," he said.

"Who's Miss Wylie?"

"Miss Wylie Cooper she Miss Paige's cousin suh."

So the cousin-companion was also a school teacher. Dear God!

"This yeah," Henry pointed proudly across the swallow fields, "hit's the Toms Forge Hunt. You know, suh, the point-to-point they runs in April. Gits in all the big papahs. Sholy hope you gits to stay fo' that, Mist' Ashbu'n."

Jerry could see just nothing of note but wouldn't admit it.

"That-air bresh hazahd tha's where Miss Paige was throwed yeah afo' last. Like to broke her back. In the bed a month she was, nevah can ride point-to-point no mo'. Sho is bad fo' her 'n Miss Wylie."

So Miss Paige rode the steeple chase up to two years ago. His old-lady image cracked a bit. "You have horses at Uplands, Henry?"

"Well no suh, not to say like in ol' Mist' Edwahd's time. When I's growin, stables was full. Now they's only Miss Paige's an' Miss Wylie's geldins an' they boahds 'em over to Clovah Ranch that mounts the school, so's they git exercised."

"What school is this?" Jerry asked, thinking the countryside looked sparsely settled to support much except a Consolidated.

"Nethercote Hall suh," Henry's tone was that of one who has been asked what state this is.

Nethercote! One of the sacred names Alix had picked for 'entering' Sandra when she got to the 'finishing' stage. And for which he didn't intend to provide the means. Now he'd have a chance to see it and get a good load of

ammunition against the whole lah-de-dah set-up. Stables! Was he expected to support a horse as well as a daughter?

They had made one turn from concrete to old crowned tarvia and now took another to well packed gravel. He was just recalling Carter's predictions when he caught sight of a neat sign: Private Road-Dead End, and Henry said with the pride of ownership, "This yeah's Uplands suh."

Nothing marked it from the rolling half-wooded country through which they had driven for the last ten minutes. "Yes? How big is the estate?" That seemed a good lead, but he got his answer in terms of 'down to the branch' and 'over to Judge Taylor's land,' so he tried "How far are we from town?" That he really wanted to know.

"'Bout five miles I reckon suh."

"What about transportation? Buses?"

"You wants to git to town, you kin always have one the cahs suh."

"Oh yes, that's fine. But are there buses?"

"Well, they's the Toms Forge bus, goes right by where we lef' the black road yondah. One mo'nin, one evenin, fo' the Richmond train. Then they's a heap o' road buses ovah on 46, you kin git through the back way good 'cept'n rainy weathah, then hit's mean walkin'."

"I see." He'd learn more about chances for independent escape before he agreed to stay. They rounded an abrupt turn and through trees he saw the house, a sprawling affair of dim brick and faded shutters. It looked comfortable and unpretentious.

As they went up two steps to a pillared verandah the white door opened and a tall spare black woman in blue cotton stood aside for him to enter.

"This yeah's Mame, Mist' Ashbu'n, she'll show you in," Henry said, and handing her the traveling case he went back to the car. She was dignified and unsmiling, and her cast of features suggested she might be Henry's mother. She said, "You kin lay off yo' things down heah suh," and hung his coat in a hall closet. Then she led the way up a graciously wide stair. From the landing a door ajar showed a narrower flight leading down into rear regions. At the top, in a light hall that reached to the front of the wide shallow house, Mame opened a door with century-old hinges and latch. "This yo' room suh. Bath's yondah. An' next is where Miss Paige say you can rest yo' paintin things." She looked doubtfully at the little case.

"My painting things and the rest of my luggage are at Tolman station, till Miss Courtney

is sure of wanting me to stay."

"She wants you should stay all right." Was there a shade of irony in the smooth voice? Cool customer, this old Mame. Where was the lush southern hospitality? Why wasn't she all for him? "There's drinks in the livin room when you's ready to go down suh. Miss Paige she oughta be back right soon. Dinnah's half ahtah six," she said, and left him.

It was good, it was just right, this being left to look around for himself. He took in at one happy glance the worn unfeminine room. But its small-paned windows above a cushioned seat offered poor light, and he crossed to the connecting door for a look at the room where he could 'rest his painting things.' And there he drew a deep contented breath. As nearly as he could tell it faced north, and almost the whole outer wall was a row of French doors, uncurtained and showing an expanse below of green starred with jonquils and narcissus. The floor was bare, the walls were a rough off-white dim here and there as though it had done long service as a game room, maybe a nursery before that. Short of being built for a studio it couldn't be better. He crossed to the doors and looked out. They gave on a narrow gallery like the one that roofed the front verandah, ending where a long wing projected to the rear, in two steps leading up to another door. Along to the left he could see a flight of stairs leading down. A private exit! This was getting too good to be true.

After a quick wash and sprucing up he paused in the upper hall and scouted. Off from it at right angles opened a narrower passage with doors on either side. To the front would lie the master bedroom, and opposite, another couple to one of which the steps from the gallery must lead. His own quarters were nicely isolated. He went down to find the waiting drinks. Yes, it was a simple plan for all the sprawling effect outside, left rear the dining room, and in front a long low-ceilinged living room with log fire glowing and deep chairs circling it. He made for the one beside the liquor tray. Bonded stuff and plenty of choice. Nice going.

He poured a generous bourbon, bore lightly on the soda, and rolling the mellow drink on his tongue looked around and expanded with content. A less female and fussy room he'd seldom seen. Definitely he hoped things would add up to his staying. On the walls were some pretty fair landscapes, Impressionist school, and he tried a close-up of the nearest. But this light was impossible. Then he stretched out luxuriously and reached for the paper — but he'd seen a Richmond evening paper on the train.

Beyond the tray were a handful of books, couple of best sellers in jackets and an old one, outsize russet boards stamped with tarnished gold, a slip of paper marking a page. Tourtelot, *On Fencing*. Well! He let it fall open at the marker and grinned at the last-century line drawings. Anatomically comic but full of action, showing the postures with geometric accuracy. He began to turn the pages.

The front door opened and in the same breath a woman was standing in the archway from the hall pulling off her gloves. Tall, black haired, strong featured. Tweed ulster and suit, dark blouse closed at the throat with a huge wrought-silver pin.

"Mr. Ashburn!" There was warmth in the deep mature voice. "I'm Paige Courtney."

On his feet, he shook a strong hand. He found himself bowing slightly as he spoke her name.

"I'm so happy you've found your way about. Forgive me if I don't stop even to apologize—make yourself comfortable again and I'll be down in a couple of minutes." Her firm tread mounted the stairs.

So that was Paige Courtney. Very lady-of-the-manoor. Probably fortyish, though her vitality would let her pass for thirty-five. Good bones, not a gray hair, eyes the color of sherry, no pink in the skin, a dark mouth—clever lipstick, probably natural health under it. Certainly not beautiful, miles from pretty, but definitely still paintable. And damned strong minded. Watch which foot you get off on!

His drink was finished, he wouldn't have another until she reappeared. He caught the sound of water running hard upstairs. If that was a bath he could prow! a bit more before she came down. For now he came to think of it where were those ancestral portraits? He didn't recall any in the dining room, house wasn't formal enough for that anyway. Hands in pockets he strolled across the entrance hall toward the room that must be under his. Someone had turned on a low light there and he looked in. Yes, this was it, and by jove what a room! He'd read somewhere that the eighteenth century gentleman's tradition had died slowly in the south, and here was evidence. Books breast high the whole way around, and above on white panelled walls, canvases in elaborate gold frames. Well, he couldn't study these to-night either, and probably just as well, for most of them at a glance looked more Family than art.

Then across between the fireplace and a window he spotted a little scene that pulled him like a magnet—the Place de la Concorde in

exactly the light he remembered it ten years back. The one lamp was near enough to throw an upward gleam on it, and close to, he saw that it followed Pissarro in mood and angle of vision—and how it brought everything back! There were other small canvases around it all by the same hand and dated as well but not too bad. And that must be a self-portrait, precious young pansy. But perfectly in period. Almost certainly one of the family, for this little huddle of things had nothing in common with the rest.

Somewhere outside a noisy car was snorting along at a good clip. Surely the 'black road' wasn't as near as that? He turned to the window and looked out into the last of the daylight just as headlights rounding that sudden curve came sweeping across the face of the house. It was a yellow convertible, top down, driven by a hatless boy with hair whipping, and it shot past the front entrance by fifty feet, came to a screeching stop, and over the unopened door vaulted a thin tall sprout in dirty white pants and a striped pull-over. He made the distance from the drive to some side entrance in three leaps, and then there was the sound of soft shoes pounding up the back flight and on to the second floor, two steps at a time, and the crashing slam of a door. Who might that be? No one had mentioned any nephews. Son—or more likely grandson of the family artist? Same thin blond slightness. A kid like that around might be fun—something male at least. Yes, a stay in this set-up looked promising.

He had just settled himself before the fire again and was reaching for the tome on fencing when Paige Courtney swept in, poured drinks with a free hand, and offered a slightly expanded version of Henry's earlier apology. He could listen with half an ear and give his main attention to studying her. She now wore dead black of the simplicity that advertises top-notch taste—and money. And she was really a fine figure of a woman, neither slim nor heavy, full breasted, with generous lines of torso and thigh well revealed by the gown that would be fun to draw. Her heavy heirloom jewelry in deep gold and topaz did the final trick of lighting up eyes and setting off that matt skin. Unless she could pull miracles out of her wardrobe he'd paint her in just what she wore now. Had she put it on with that in mind?

He was about to mention the canvases in the library when light feet came flying down the stairs at dangerous speed, Miss Courtney said, "Oh good, here she is," and another figure shot through the archway.

"My cousin Wylie Cooper, Mr. Ashburn."

So this was the companion, the school teacher. *Wow!*

Under a short crop of ash-gold curls were dark brows, brilliant sea-blue eyes, and as for the rest his first sense was that she was naked above the waist. A real look took in the transparent gauze blouse long of sleeve and high in the neck, and the trick of anatomy—small breasts set low—that made only a few inches of lace necessary under it. And she was definitely worth putting on view. Below the wide belt that stressed her slimness fell a straight sheath of turquoise blue slit from toe to knee.

"No use my trying to pull my eyes in nor my jaw up," he said impudently. "If you had walked out on the stage of the Iridium Room my mouth just might not be hanging open. But lady! At the dead end of a private road—" He bit back 'six jumps from nowhere' just in time.

She gave a ringing slightly edged laugh. Miss Courtney's face was impassive, but there was a gleam and not of displeasure he thought in her eye.

"You just don't know the sticks in Virginia, do you?" Wylie Cooper tossed back.

"Not yet, but I'm willing to learn."

"Have you been warned that I'm a school-ma'am?"

Mame appeared in the doorway, very straight. "Dinnah's served Miss Paige," she said in exactly the tone, he thought, of a mammy reminding her chillun not to forget their manners.

The table was set for three. Where was the kid from the yellow jalopy? Not party-broke enough for the first night?

At different distances in the house three clocks one after the other struck a single note. With the third Jerry dropped his brush and smote his forehead in burlesque contrition. "Not one o'clock! I thought the last go was eleven and this would be noon. You must be paralyzed."

Paige Courtney leaned back, crossed her knees, and flexed her shoulders with a smile. "Sitting still? If I'd been posing for the Discus Thrower perhaps, but not like this." She lit a cigaret. "May I look?"

"Of course, but you won't like it."

"But I do. I like your way of painting from scratch, keeping it all at the same stage. I can remember Cousin Spencer drawing a lot with some soft crayon or pencil and then filling in with color, more or less in detailed spots. Clothes and background always last."

"I know. What I call the Redon effect. If you want to end with a Redon canvas, fine. If you don't it's apt to be amateur. Though—did your cousin Spencer do that handful of things to the left of the fireplace in the library?"

"Yes. I didn't know you'd seen them."

"Haven't really. Found them the other night almost at dark. Tell me about him. He lived in Paris?"

"Yes." He thought for a minute she wasn't going on. "My uncle—Grandfather's brother really—was sent over on business. Spencer was eleven. Then Uncle married again, a French girl with two artist brothers, so Spencer grew up in studios, with artists and writers . . . and a young stepmother . . . It was a weird sort of life for an adolescent. Spencer never really belonged over here again." She appeared to welcome the interruption of the gong calling them to lunch.

By the time he had washed and was downstairs she had changed from the black and topazes to gray gingham with a remarkable leather belt and necklace—a catalog of her wardrobe would make a nice lesson for Alix. He couldn't get her back to Cousin Spencer and Paris. Why? Was the still unseen boy a by-blow of Spencer's bohemian career? And out of what mother? He'd learn if it took him the length of his stay.

She was full instead of this evening's fencing match—didn't he remember?

She was full instead of this evening's fencing match—didn't he remember? Wylie's annual exhibition she'd been spilling over about. Fifteen girls, from little preps to Palmyra Folliot who could be stage material if she liked. She ran on until they had finished lunch and then invited him to drive with her to Bainbridge. She had errands, but the old court house was almost untouched 1690, quite worth seeing, and he'd done enough of a day's work, he should come too.

But he didn't want to be driven around in a car. Enough of that already the past two afternoons. After she left he took a quick hike, scouting out the back lane to the highway, and then came back to the canvas while his palette was still soft and the light good. With any luck it was going to be a nice job, this portrait. She was a fine model, poised and relaxed, with a born sense for finding the natural pose and holding it. If he could get that skin tone . . . She knew about underpainting, too—hadn't raised an outcry at seeing her flesh blocked in with reseda and rose-sienna.

Now if he could get Wylie as well . . .

Wylie!

He threw down palette and brush, lit a cigaret and prowled up and down the room with long strides. Then he pulled open a door and stood drinking in the moist spring/acid air in deep gulps. It was going to happen. However hard he tried to keep the knowledge under it waited to

spring at him the moment his guard relaxed. Brief blazing slanted glances, arm brushing arm in a doorway, pulsing undercurrent in her laugh. All there remained to know now was—when? It had better be soon if he was to go on doing sound work.

Women. Damn them. But God, how good she'd be!

He went into the bedroom, flung himself down across the dark homespun cover and slept as instantly as a dog. Waking at three he took a quick pull from his private pint—better restock soon—and began to clean up his paints. There was movement in the house, Paige come back probably. Then a knock on the door from the hall and Wylie came in, in a blue straight dress with striped cummerbund and a bolero.

"Hello. May I see? Paige says it's something."

He made a large gesture, and then picking up a clean canvas he set his second easel. "Sit down. There," he said brusquely. "Having walked into my parlor you're caught. Light's still all right. I'll try getting a preliminary sketch. After all it takes awhile to get a feeling for a new subject." He gave her a wicked grin as he squeezed tubes. "Take off that jacket thing."

He moved her chair, pulled and pushed her a bit, then said, "That's it. Now relax and hold it. Yes, look at her if you like—that's a good enough head angle for a quick study." He worked fast, laying down and picking up brushes with the speed of a five-minute artist in a vaudeville act. But it was no go. She was stiff, she twitched. Once, twice he scraped off wide swathes and repainted. Then he laid down the brushes and let her try this shift and that, hoping she'd settle. Still no luck. She was nervous, jumpy, as bad as Paige was good.

At the end of five more edgy minutes he threw himself into a chair and sat studying her half insolently, while she stared back, mocking and defensive. "You're not a quiet model. Don't you ever relax?"

"Not often. Except in a hot bath. What are we going to do about it?"

He flushed, seeing for an instant the image he knew from her eyes she intended him to see.

"Well, you might stay put as a Reclining Nude. If you don't behave that's how we'll have it."

"Am I supposed to scream at this point?"

"No, faint. That would hold you."

"Look," she said with laughing scorn, "if you're trying to shock me you'll get paid in kind. I've grown up in dorms, remember. Do you think I'd stick at posing raw?"

"I wouldn't know. Or—if this is a bluffing match, yes. I do think you'd stick when it came to the showdown."

"Showdown is the operative word." She made half a dozen lightning moves most of which seemed concerned with the cummerbund, gave one good writhe of the shoulders, and stepped out of the slight wreath of fallen clothing in nothing but tan sandals. She kicked those off, took the four paces to the monastic cot as unconcerned as though she were crossing a beach in a bathing suit, and flung herself down on one elbow in roughly the pose of Canova's Pauline Bonaparte. "All right, this is where you take over." Her voice rippled with mockery.

He jumped up electrified into action. Her body was not his type, too much on the thin rangy side, but it was as perfect as he'd known it would be, an artist's dream in general and in detail. And now she was as still, as arrogantly sure in her loveliness, as the sculptured figure whose pose she had taken.

And it was well past three! He jerked the cot about into better light and pulled her back into position as if she were a studio model by the hour. He was needed into such speed and precision as he had seldom achieved even at the beginning of a good day. He painted like mad and saw line and color go down clean and strong, not pausing once until the canvas showed her as she lay—a rough unfinished sketch but with such promise that he sang wordlessly in his throat while he stroked on the blending colors. Then standing back for his first more than squinting and measuring look, he half stumbled, and felt palette and brush sag in his hands. Outside the light was failing fast. How long had he been at it?

As suddenly Wylie's elbow collapsed, she drew up into a knot and said through rattling teeth, "Oh lord I'm cold!"

"My God, you poor devil!" He was into his room and back almost before it was said, dropped the down puff from his bed over her and held his depleted pint to her lips. "I should be cut up for dog meat. But damn it, it's good!"

He turned on the lights, and wrapped like a squaw in her bloated covering she stood before the easel and stared. She turned with a look for which no word but homage would come to mind. "It's incredible," she said. "In an hour and a half! I'm proud to have had any part in it." Then she scooped her clothes from the floor and ran out, calling over her shoulder, "I'll return the quilt."

He needed now to drop down and sleep in earnest, but knew if he did it would be hours

before he waked, and there was this blasted fencing match. Cursing it, he stripped, showered, dressed in the slacks and jacket that were the nearest he could come to 'spectator sports,' and then badly in need of a drink went downstairs to find one. Glass in hand and too keyed to sit quiet he prowled across to the library for another look at Cousin Spencer's efforts. With his own achievement upstairs still in his eye these looked soft and imitative. He must remember to come back in full day and really examine technique.

In the living room again he noticed the tome on fencing lying open and rifled it through hunting for basic definitions and elementary moves. He knew just nothing about fencing except that if well done it took him by the throat. All physical grace sent him like primitive music. Wylie fencing—the image shot him through with a pang. He wished she would come down. She had carried off her exit with style, but the first look she gave him when they came face to face now would tell him whether the past couple of hours had done to her what they had to him.

The book under his careless hand flipped back its leaves to the old fashioned title page and then to the fly leaf, where in handsome nervous backhand was written *Emily Spencer Cooper. Paris, 1900.* That would be Wylie's mother? So she had had her season in Paris too. Had she been a fencer? How the names inbred. And what relation would she have been to Cousin Spencer?

Steps descended the stairs, but in Paige's rhythm, not Wylie's. Would she know about the nude modeling? And how would she take it? She looked tired and preoccupied, a bit pale. Or that last might be the taupe sheer and heavy amber necklace, less vivid than this noon's gray and tan. Definitely black was her color, black with the fire of topaz and gold.

"Oh, here you are," she said almost absently, going across to stir the fire before pouring her drink. "You must be more dead than alive after your second bout." So she knew. "I stole a look at it—it's magnificent. I shall want to buy it."

"Afraid to leave it in my possession?" He thrust straight at the uneasiness beneath her tone. He had his lips open to say 'If it comes out well I'll give it to Wylie,' but checked himself. Five years ago he might have made the offer, but he had learned better since, with unpaid De Pinna bills in his wallet.

"Not at all. Though one would have to exact some conditions, I suppose, about its not being exhibited." She was obviously trying to keep

voice and smile light.

"There are a good many nudes exhibited annually."

"But the models are professional, surely? Or else—wives or—mistresses? And I've often wondered," she had captured lightness now, "whether even the renaissance masters exhibited their ladies' charms before the paint and the relations were quite dried. I should think complications might have ensued."

"Very likely, but for a different reason."

"Naturally." Her faint irony said so clearly 'After all I wasn't born yesterday' that he could think of no quick retort.

Mame appeared in the doorway with, "Yo' dinnah's ready now, Miss Paige," a form of announcement that struck him as odd.

But at once Paige explained. "That means Wylie has already been fed in the kitchen. She never eats to speak of before fencing, but she'll come home and make up for it afterward. Mame always leaves a mountain of sandwiches."

So Wylie would not face him across the table. Irritation brought the blood to his face so hotly he was glad Paige was preceding him through the doors. And Wylie had known it, the sly wench. Riding across to Nethercote in the dark would give him no chance to watch for play of expression. He sat down furious at his own disappointment.

Through the doorway he noticed already laid out in the entrance hall a suit case and the odd symmetrical case enclosing a pair of foils. She wouldn't be coming down, then, until just time to leave. As he was attacking perfectly broiled chops he heard with a start the soft-shod step of the boy plunging down the upper stairs. Would he be going to the match? And was he to be produced openly at last, or would he dash out the back way and off alone in his little yellow wreck?

The feet ran on down the front flight and the boy appeared in the doorway—no, Wylie! Wylie in tailored flannels under a loose light ulster, with hair sleeked back from perfect hairline to nape and face as cool and absent as a stranger's.

"See you there, folks. I'm off to get my chicks lined up and calmed down, they get the most hellish jitters from stage fright," she explained to Jerry, picking up her paraphernalia. The door fell to noisily behind her and out in the drive rose the staccato cough of the yellow car.

So! The boy was Wylie. On Paige's matter-of-fact face he could not detect the slightest sign that she was watching for or expecting surprise from him.

The sun on his closed eyes waked him. He raised his head to look at the clock, but groaned and let it fall back again. God what a night! Cautiously he turned his skull on the pillow and brought the clock-face into range. Nine. Wylie would be gone to Nethercote, Paige would be—he didn't care where. If he ever pulled himself up and got downstairs, Mame could damn well make him a full pot of black coffee and open a quart of tomato juice.

Letting his arm fall beside the bed he groped for the bottle that subconscious memory told him should be there. It was, and in it was the inch that self preservation had trained him to leave there against such mornings, no matter how far under he was when he tumbled in. He swallowed half of it, shuddered, and felt better. Presently he felt up to reaching for the water on the night stand and for the tablets that should be—and were—in the pocket of his coat across the chair. A couple of those and the rest of the liquor, and he lay back and let them get to work.

At first just a kaleidoscope, every-which-way—starlight, fencing figures, a smoke-blue half deserted bar, the rutted back lane under his feet . . . Then things began to stay right side up and in some sort of order. Cool high-ceilinged halls of Nethercote. Babel of southern voices. A couple of hungry-eyed young teachers yearning toward him behind their smooth propriety. A dry gray ironic one whose eyes said: Oh dear—male animal. Background of girls fluttering and giggling or histily grave. Great cavernous gym, beastly crowded bleachers, necks craning as his sketch pad appeared.

Fencers. Leggy young colts getting licked into shape, little girls with bangs, quick as crickets. Bigger ones conscious of their bodies and posing like dancers. The beautiful calm pale girl, a Greek statue, moving without effort to her opponent's heart. The furious gypsy snapping a foil across her knee and bursting into tears when she lost.

And then Wylie—and that ominous lithe beast opposite her, black flame under her sleekness, out for Wylie's blood. They moved again in quick-paced rhythm behind his closed lids. The dark girl in crimson, the heart on her tabard a medieval magnificence of embroidered gold. Fire, hatred, no play there. And Wylie—God! Black silk fleshings, man's short jacket of dead white, heart plain vermilion. Cool, skilled, heartbreaking in grace, parrying, lunging, feinting, just holding her own.

Paige's hands wrung together in her lap beside him, her dark voice praying half audibly: Oh Wylie! Watch. Not there, she's—. And

then that grim second wind of virtuosity, that lightning-swift play so slow in total sum. Inching, giving, regaining—lost—*No, touchee!* And then bedlam. Two factions, Wylie's and the other's, sifting apart with triumphant screeching and tears.

Paige beside him, collected again. "That was a near thing. *She was tired*. More exciting than a walk-away of course, but Palmyra's dangerous. Dreadful if she'd come out on top. Let one of these over-age girls turn school idol—" She made a wry mouth.

Wylie swept on a tide of frenzied worship. One face under a mop of red hair so naked in its passion he looked away revolted. Another with the worshipful whiteness of a Saint Joan, her eyes like holes burnt in a sheet. A giggling freckled little bacchante twisting like a puppy. And a sudden sick need to be out of it, out of the whole nauseous inverted fever and backwash. Paige turning the car over to him—she'd wait for Wylie.

He had brought the car to the door and come upstairs not yet quite sane, clutching the sketch book that had saved him—if he hadn't continuously driven his pencil across pages over there he'd have gone berserk himself. He opened it thinking a drink and a half hour of critical revision would right him. No liquor. That brought back Wylie of the afternoon on the cot in there, drinking his last drop. Roused and in discomfort he had gone downstairs for a drink—cabinet locked. So that's how it was here with servants, even In The Family.

Back upstairs he opened the book again. There they were, everything he'd seen caught in revealing black line. All the grace, the fever—and more. Palmyra, Wylie, the figures might have been men fencing. *Were* men fencing, by God... Wylie in the tailored flannels... in the filthy white slacks and pullover... Why did schools allow it? What could they expect with no men around if they let women like that loose in the wrong clothes!

But—Wylie on the cot this afternoon... He'd wanted and he'd had plenty of women. He had never wanted one in exactly the way he wanted Wylie then, alone in the silent house. He had plunged downstairs and out, crashed through the back lane to the highway, miraculously been picked up by a half-witted boy in a jalopy, and jolted into Tolman. A dark back door into a dirty illicit bar, and real drinks, double, emptied as fast as the barkeep could fill them. How much had he bribed the guy to sell him this pint? A long-run road bus back to Judge Taylor's place, and the lane again, the outside stairs to the back gallery. Just enough sense left to undress. What time—three—

four? God knew.

But it was still going to happen with him and Wylie. Like it or not now, there it was. He got up and made his way to the shower.

As he reached the bottom of the stairs Paige came out of the living room, newspaper in hand. "Good morning. I'm glad to see you're still alive." What did that mean? "I'll tell Mame."

But the impassive blue figure was already on the threshold of the dining room. "I heard Mist' Ashbu'n gettin' up." And there it was at his place, the enormous glass of tomato juice, the huge steaming silver pot of concentrated coffee, a plate of scrambled eggs. No fried ham, no hominy grits swimming in gravy, no butter-drenched toast. Was the woman a witch, or had she heard him come in this morning? He knew nothing about the geography of the servants' quarters.

There was a fresh cup at Paige's place and she sat down and filled it after she had poured his. "I hope we didn't wake you coming in last night. We wanted you to share our midnight feast, Wylie was ravenous as usual, but we simply couldn't get away over there and when we got here you'd turned in. And no wonder. Do you know, we counted up that with the sketching you did over there you'd put in better than an eight hour day of hard work? We mustn't do that to you again."

He was grateful to her for running on till he had coffee inside him. Unless she was putting on an act for some unlikely reason, she didn't know he hadn't been in bed at midnight. "Didn't hurt me," he said carelessly. "If I didn't hear you and come down it was probably because I couldn't sleep and went out and walked awhile. I was afraid maybe I waked you when I came in. No idea what time it was." That would hold Mame in case she was where he thought she was, at the crack of the swinging door.

"Oh I'm so sorry! Now I know you were overtired."

"Not a bit of it. Just overexcited. Takes me that way—fencing, dancing—I'd have gone off my head if I hadn't sketched last night."

She gave him an odd penetrating look. She wasn't born yesterday. "You must go back with us on a more peaceful occasion. Miss Chase was distressed at not meeting you last night. She wants us to bring you to dinner one night next week, if that won't seem like exploiting our lion."

He gave a sharp snort of laughter. "Pretty tame lion. But I won't go back, that place is not my glass of schnapps."

"Why Mr. Ashburn! What have you against Nethercote?" The seeming hint of superior

reproof was the last straw.

"It happens to be one of two possibilities chosen by my ex-wife to 'finish' our mutual offspring," he said brutally, "and I don't hold with educating daughters on any such exalted levels."

"But you have it all wrong! It's not a snobbish place. There are very few of us in this part of the world, you know, who aren't genteel poor."

"But you're from this part of the world. With neither a county name *nor* a bank account—"

"No, no!" She was leaning forward now, elbows on the table, strong hands clasped as if pleading. "We're not like that. Of course there are a few girls there who have everything, and of course any school—very mistakenly, I think—plays up all its extra advantages in its advertising. But the great mass of them are just nobody and have nothing. That's why Wylie loves her work so. She loves to take what they have—youth and health—and train them to use it, teach them grace and poise and confidence. Oh, Jerome Ashburn, let your daughter come down here! We'd take such care of her, Wylie and I."

Yeah, I'll bet you would, he thought blackly. Why, the trouble with you is thwarted maternity. And by the time Wylie had the poor kid lying down and rolling over with one of these rotten crushes, and you'd got your maternal instincts wrapped around her like a boa constrictor...

He was afraid to try arguing aloud. He poured himself a third coffee before she could come out of her evangelist's trance to do it for him. "Well, it's a long way off," he said. "She's only nine. Maybe in another three or four years I'll have seen the light. Maybe! In a pig's eye."

They came out of the movie in Bainbridge and blinked a little in the sudden lights. Wylie in profile was flushed and bright eyed from the play of shoulder and hand and knee that had gone on through two hours of titillating film.

"Like a drink?" he asked as a matter of habit, and would have hated her for saving yes.

What she said was, "Forgotten your state again? We can get better at home."

"I've got better with me if you like it straight."

"Yes," she said, throwing him one glance like a blue steel blade, "I like it straight."

They drove out of town into the black overcast spring night. "Turn off here," he ordered at the first good side lane. She shook her head, but after a quick look at his face she gave in and brought the car to a stop beyond a screen of thicket. He passed his flask and she took one deep pull and sat resting her forearms on the

wheel while he followed suit. She offered no resistance when he took her in his arms. She kissed as well as he knew she would, as if they'd done this before and knew all one another's tricks. She hasn't stayed too tight in her convent, he had time to think as she drew away a moment for breath. She offered no resistance to his hands either, and in startlingly little time they had reached a pitch where there seemed no stopping. He eased himself into better position and tried to draw her to him altogether.

At that she twisted sharply and reached for the ignition key. "Let's go home," she said, and as he began to curse, "I'm not a piker. It'll be so much more comfortable at home." And she gave him a teasing smile. They covered the few miles at a dangerous clip and left the car in the drive. "Come to my room when you're ready," she said, "along the back gallery. You know, up those two steps." So...

He found the door open an inch and groped his way into blackness where her hand found and led him. When he reached for her he could tell she wore next to nothing and he took that little roughly off as he let his own robe drop. God, how many times has she done this, he wondered as he felt her respond like a fire whose licking flame follows every crevice of the log it envelops. But it seemed not so much skill as a kind of inborn certain knowledge of what he wanted as soon as he knew himself.

So when the extreme moment came it was a shock to discover she had never met this moment before.

The farm cocks were crowing and the sky was ashy when he fumbled his way back through the studio to his own room and fell already two thirds asleep across the bed. He should have felt only a large simple peace, but sparks of thought kept lighting up like fireflies and pricking him back to consciousness... So you're her first!... Nice work one week after first sight of her... In that naked blouse. Whose nice work, yours or hers?... What rot, you're her first aren't you... And is she *good*... crowding thirty, known everything a long time and you're her—What's got into you? Anybody'd think she was your first first!... It took a good drink to stop his mind switching around like a weathercock.

He stood hands in pockets watching rain run down the French doors in wavering sheets, whistling tunelessly between his teeth, disliking everything. More than time he took a little stock, and when better? No good color work to be done in this muddy light. Paige gone to Bainbridge again on some business or other, Wylie off to school looking damned near as gray as the

day outside. Everything had gone flat and a little sour and he wouldn't be sorry when he could move on.

Slowly against inner resistance he walked across to the line of canvases leaning face to the wall and one by one set them up on easels, chairs, cot, anything that would hold them against the oystery white, facing what light there was. Then he walked backward till his shoulders were against the panes of a door and looked at them coldly with complete detachment. They didn't make him too happy. Better than three weeks work—well, certainly not bad for that, there were half a dozen counting the sketches.

And in one way those sketches were the best of the lot, pushed through at a single stretch and from a single impression. Paige on her black gelding, easy as a centaur. They'd discussed the 'point-to-point' as he worked, and he'd caught the mood of a woman who would take her hazards in her stride—and their consequences. She was as pleased as a kid with it. Odd that Wylie had done no riding since he came, he'd counted on seeing her in the saddle. But the fencing job made up for the loss—flattering, that one, it showed her keen as a foil and still completely the woman. A half hour's posing here alone—she posed wonderfully in action as long as she could hold it—had given him what he needed to take the curse off those damned pencil sketches from the exhibition. The other of her, in flannels and ulster, foil case in hand and jealousy for background, was done from memory and pure hate. She and Paige both were still at him tooth and nail to rework that into something 'more like her,' but he wasn't spoiling his little portrait of Spencer Junior! Let 'em bite on it, it might teach them something.

The nude was damned good too, still rather surprised him that it was his. It was finished first of the Big Three so it came all from one mood too, and probably someday he'd see it again as the cream of the crop. If right now it left him cold it was because the original had begun to do the same. She'd surely changed, and no wonder! What girl could stand up under working all day and playing all night? Every damned night. He grinned triumphantly as he made the count. He was even feeling the effects a bit himself.

At the moment the portrait of Paige held up best. A long way from what he'd had in his mind's eye when he began—the vivid arrogant Lady of the Manor had simmered down into just a handsome woman in her prime. That's what getting to know your model did for

you, hard even to remember now that first incisive impression. When was it the difference began to strike him—morning after his and Wylie's first night of it? No . . . dinner before the fencing match, in that sad combination of taupe and amber and the absent look that went with it. That was the afternoon he'd begun on the nude—hadn't she liked even that? Hell, he was getting morbid and analytic as an old maid himself.

When it came to the straight portrait of Wylie he was stopped. Technically he'd turned a couple of the best tricks of his life there, that gauze blouse over flesh and the sheer flame of the eyes. But she looked like a tart. And so she had of course, but she'd looked a lot else besides, and that he hadn't caught—soon enough. And now damned if he knew what to do about it. But he'd jolly well have to do something or he'd lose a sale. Paige wasn't paying a portrait price for it as it stood, but she wasn't letting him keep it either, as he'd suggested when he offered to begin over again. "Criminal libel," she'd said in the lightest possible way, but she'd meant it. And Wylie meant it too when she said in the same tone that if it wasn't cleaned up he'd find it in ribbons one day before he left.

All told, a nice total bill of sale. All of us might be genteel poor down here but what we wanted we seemed pretty well able to pay for, at Uplands anyway. He walked up and back studying the condemned portrait through narrowed eyes. If he reworked it now it risked being overlaid worse than Paige's with commonplace flatness, for the gal had certainly been looking a wreck at breakfast.

Good God! What if the trouble with her these past couple of days was that she was caught? His skin went cold and the back of his scalp prickled. Shot-gun marriage? He'd better ask her straight out tonight. Funny that possibility hadn't till this minute crossed his mind—but it never seemed to cross hers. He'd never known a non-professional so care-free and careless about the Awful Risk.

He turned on the neon tube, set a palette grimly and shut his eyes a moment, straining to recall Wylie across the breakfast table those first mornings, fresh and ready to set out for her day of teaching the young their poise and confidence. What came was the gal whose bed he'd left about five hours ago. It was at dinner he could see her better, by then she seemed disconnected from him, tired maybe but alive, full of a good day's work. Holding that image he began to experiment cautiously. And while his attention was focussed on the

canvas idle scraps drifted through his mind like flies volplaning in and out of a shaft of sunlight.

What had happened? He'd thought she was going to be the best he'd ever had. All fire and still casual about it, no clinging, no moaning above Love. Sane as a man. But only that way—he'd never seen the male in her again after that first complete night. . . . Where'd you learn all you know? . . . My dear man, I've lived twenty-nine years, and not in a convent. Haven't you ever heard about South'n Gentlemen? . . . Well then how come that till last night . . . Maybe I just never wanted to bad enough! Too dark to see her face then but her voice had been—mocking. . . . Where'd you learn *that*—from girls? . . . Oh, you've read too many naughty books! They all make boarding schools out to be sinks of iniquity—or so I've heard. Well, they're *not*! Real warmth in that, and almost the only time he'd heard it. But he'd had it aplenty before, and from girls that didn't cling, too, even professionals. Well, that underlying mockery made it easy to move on when this job was done.

After an hour or so he dropped his brushes and stood back to appraise results. He'd gone quite some distance toward making an Uplands lady of her, and without banking the fire too much. Lord knew what tomorrow's good daylight might make of the color, but for better or worse this would have to be it. He was stale, sick to death of the thing, he'd never touch it again. . . . Oh won't you, my fine buckaroo, if the Lady of the Manor talks in terms of five hundred dollars! He went downstairs and had several stiff drinks.

At dinner Wylie looked ghastly, the color of clay. So it was no surprise when she went upstairs at ten, or, when he eased her door open a bit later, to meet a light and hear her murmur, "Sorry, no go tonight. Off the floor. Stay for a cig?"

He sent up a silent cheer. "No thanks, I could use a bit of shut-eye myself, and you look as if you could. I'll make it *our* *revoir* till I get the green light." (If I'm not gone first!)

"Thanks, Jerry," she said almost absently. "For everything."

What the hell did that mean? There was such a final note in it, had she read his mind? But he didn't want to start a discussion now. "Happy dreams," he said, and then stopped on the outer steps with his hand still on the door. Suppose something did keep him here, he didn't want to be locked out for good.

(to be continued)

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For several years the LADDER has not once mentioned how much we needed money (but we do). We hope you've noticed the delicacy with which we avoided all mention of our losing war with poverty. BUT NOW WE TELL YOU LIKE IT REALLY IS — THE LADDER NEEDS MONEY!!!

We solicit your generous contributions, your advertisements, your renewals, new subscriptions and just plain, dirty old money, checks, bequests, free-will offerings. Love may make the world go 'round but it takes cash to "turn on" the printing presses. •

In this issue we are publishing the first part of a long story called A MAN'S WORLD, by Jan Addison. My editor always has the final word on what goes into this magazine. Many times we publish a story because of general interest or because it is submitted by some writer whom we wish to corral as a frequent contributor. This particular story was recommended by our assistant, Gene Damon. As you know, from my picture, I am an integrated cat. Had I been asked about the story, I think I would have objected to several passages of dialect that appear. I tend to believe that all the people who live in some areas of our country talk alike, whether they are black or white and I think that if a writer feels compelled to reproduce dialect in some of the characters, then the same effort should be made to reproduce the dialect of all of the characters. I have not travelled in the south, but the boss says she saw "Gone with the Wind," and *all* the characters had some sort of speech difference from her own Oregon twang. Obviously a whole story written with the multitude of apostrophes and such things to create a true presentation of dialect would be a bore to read and probably pure hell to type-set and proof. So . . . for my tastes, I would just as soon we didn't mess with this sort of thing. I hope that none of our readers are offended and that they will accept my effort here to express the view of the editor, who is hiding in a corner, afraid to admit that she actually did not read the story before it was set in type. She promises this won't happen again.

THE STRIPPER

The darkened bar, too clean,
Concealed its empty tables close
to velvet walls,
While chairs, like spectral guests,
Huddled beyond the edge of light.
The unfamiliar silence of the room
reminded us

We came too early,
So we slouched on barstools near
the door,
A muddled moody group.
Then suddenly the unexpected music,
Its quick harsh notes demanding
our attention,
Filled the bar.

—And he appeared from nowhere,
Stretching his long legs molded
by the charcoal slacks,
Alone within the tiny spot of light
upon the dance floor.
His white shirt open to the waist,
he swayed to curious rhythms
In a private world of sensual grace,
Turning his back on those of us
who watched him dance.
The shirt his only prop,
he fluttered in a tete-a-tete
And flirted first with love, then hate,
Curving his hands around the cuffs
to pull them down
In innocent abandon.
Shrugging off the shirt,
he danced langorous patterned steps,
The essence of all women
Drawn skillfully with nothing
but a rumpled shirt
Playing across his golden olive skin;
The ultimate female,
Yet a man—

The music stopped.
Silent, the jukebox flashed
its cold pink lights

In splotches on the empty floor
While he picked up his shirt
from where he'd tossed it.
Then seized a bar stool,
And faded from our view.
by Maura McCullough

LITTLE JOE

We should call you Don Juanito;
Every night you herd the chosen girl,
As if she were an anxious fuddled sheep,
Back to a cubbyhole between the
bottle crates,
A public closet where the two of you,
Exchanging your desires,
Can reach for lost security.
Go on and lead her to the bar depths
as you led the rest;
We know your need to prove virility
is great.
The seeker, you, in cowboy boots
and sausage-casing jeans,
And she the tool of pleasure,
A mindless blow now qualified
To join that sisterhood of
one-night loves,
Those many girls you used,
Who surely found you charming
for a while, at least.
I've seen them exit placidly
from crowded bar,
Your rough hands prodding them along,
Impatient for the nearing brush
with love;
And possibly I'd follow too, if picked,
Because I want to learn what
they can see in you,
When all I notice
Is a sorry mimic of a man.
by Maura McCullough

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Cocktails at the Cash Bar at 5:30 p.m.
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August 11 (Sunday)
Meeting resumes at 9:00 a.m.

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Address your envelope: **ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE**
Daughters of Bilitis
1005 Market Street
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MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED at the Assembly will be our new constitution, reports of past officers and committees and Chapter presidents.

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