

purpose of the

Daughters of BILITIS

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

- 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.
- Encouragement of and participation in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.
- Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposing and promoting changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group through due process of law in the state legislatures.

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization except such opinions as are specifically acknowledged by the organization.

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Rung By Rung

by Gene Damon

I was asked by Helen Sanders, Editor of THE LADDER, to contribute 1500 to 2000 words on the current convention theme, "The Changing Scene." She suggested that I could talk about literature "without too many titles or anything like that."

Well, literature is the one aspect of the changing homophile scene that I believe has been covered at sufficient length through the years.

Instead I started back through the old issues of this magazine, looking at them (trying to, anyway) as if I had not seen them before. Obviously my partisan view would make me unqualified to review the magazine, but no one ever has, really, and so for the more recent readers, this is what it has been through the years. And later, perhaps, a look at what we anticipate for the future.

It is quite probable that 80% of the subscribers today weren't on the roles back in October, 1956 when the first issue, Volume One, Number One appeared. (I wasn't around myself until March, 1957, when V. 1 was six months old.)

The physical problems surrounding publishing a "magazine" without any money, with volunteer labor, and "borrowed" equipment, were, I am afraid, pretty evident the first year. I don't believe the subscribers noticed this, though, being busy writing those thousands of letters that all read:

"I am so glad you exist. I never thought there would be a magazine like this, just for us."

That was twelve years ago, and the paperback boom hadn't really begun, and magazines did not freely publish articles and stories about homosexuals and Lesbians. THE LADDER wasn't unique, there were two other regularly published homosexual magazines—but these were almost entirely directed at the male audience. Much of the literature (almost exclusively in the form of hardback novels then) was directed at the male audience as well, and few knew how to find the existing Lesbian literature.

So the magazine became, was forced to become, many things for many people. At no time has it ever pleased its entire audience, and it is very unlikely that it ever will. But it has had several things in it that are not easy to overlook or forget, and indeed, should not be overlooked nor forgotten.

THE LADDER managed to draw the support of a number of psychologists and psychiatrists, including Dr. Blanche M. Baker, who put up a spirited defense of the magazine and the organization until her untimely death.

In May, 1957, when the magazine was only eight issues old, there were items by Marion Zimmer Bradley, novelist and bibliographer, Dr. Jeannette H. Foster (author of SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LIT-

ERATURE), Dr. Paul H. Gebhard, Executive Director of the Institute for Sex Research (Kinsey Institute in popular terminology), Dr. Baker and a letter simply signed with the initials, L.H.N. This letter outlined as valid an approach to Civil Rights today as it did then, and those initials disguise the, now deceased, very famous lady who was the first Negro playwright to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, Lorraine Hansberry Newman. (Her 1959 drama, A RAISIN IN THE SUN, was both a hit Broadway play and a successful movie.)

Volume Two brought one very needed change, a different cover for every issue. Volume One was uniformly bound in a drawing of a line of women moving toward, and, eventually, up a ladder. It was fitting symbolism for the time and spirit.

The most needful readers were, and still are, the isolated. Those who for one personal reason or another must live in areas where they have no contact (or cannot make any contact) with anyone else like themselves. Some portion of every issue, and the total impression of every issue, is designed to give these readers a sense of participation.

THE LADDER began early to provide articles on those "proud disputed names" and to cover issues that seem to have meaning for large numbers of its audience: raising children in a Lesbian household; how to cope with a heterosexual marriage made in haste, repented at leisure, when children deem it advisable to continue the marriage; what to tell anyone you decide to tell; should you tell your parents and/or siblings?; what about "on the job" behavior, etc. etc.

A series of articles on "Living Propaganda," bettering public images; and a series on not living like sheep in an ugly enclosure, stirred up a good deal of comment.

Civil Rights, the ones we don't have, have always occupied a good portion of magazine space. Articles through the years have covered every aspect of insurance, taxation (Federal, state and local) inequalities, legal marriage, and property protection/inheritance problems.

Several studies of Lesbianism were conducted by D.O.B., or aided by their members, and two of these were reported on at length in THE LADDER by Florence Conrad.

Early contributors included (in addition to those already named), Mary Renault, novelist, Valerie Taylor and Paula Christian (two of the leading writers of Lesbian paperback original novels during the boom years of this genre), Artemis Smith, novelist and poet, Lee Steiner, psychologist and marriage counselor, Rev. Robert W. Wood (author of CHRIST AND THE HOMOSEXUAL), Dr. Ralph Gundlach, Donald Webster Corv, half-adozen lawyers, and even a miscellaneous, embarrassed and frightened police official, or two.

THE LADDER has grown from less than 10 mimeographed pages, assembled and bound by hand, to a professionally typeset, slick paper magazine of up to 40 pages. In recent years we have had distinguished artists such as Jan De Ruth and Jane Kogan as cover artists, and photos of works by sculptors Chaim Gross and Tylden W. Streett for use as covers.

No one has ever been paid for any work for the magazine. Every issue has been dependent upon the generosity of the readers, the supporters who believe in the worth of the organization and its voice.

Probably every individual reader could and would ask for something or some things not now in the magazine. But one consistent, insistent demand has been the demand for better writing, not in the articles, but in the fiction and the poetry. With the exception of a few isolated stories in the eleven volumes preceding this current volume, and an occasional "accidental" poem, it is in this area that the magazine has been seriously lacking.

We are trying now to do something about this lack, and in the last several months we have had some fine young poets, and good, solid prose writers. No magazine having had works by Helene Rosenthal, Lorita Whitehead, Maura McCullough—poets all—and prose by Jody Shotwell (the last, unfortunately, due to her death) and Jane Rule, has any reason for shame.

The future looks even brighter, with more and more good things promised, and in response to recent mail, increased efforts to obtain re-

print rights on the "old" stories that pre-date some of today's less pleasant motifs. (If the writer who signed herself "Jay Wallace" is still among the readers, won't you rejoin us. I enjoyed re-discovering you in this odyssey through twelve volumes of THE LADDER.)

And a quiet final word. THE LADDER has an unbroken record of continuous publication since October, 1956. Only one other homophile magazine published in the United States comes near to this record, and, as those of you who recognize the other magazine I refer to, realize, it cannot be called an "unbroken" record. We have made many people angry (and hope to again, when it is necessary) and many, many more very happy. Nothing we have done, nor will do, is any more important than the attempt to please and help the, still present, still needful readers who write:

"I am so glad you exist."

I, for one, will do all I personally can to make certain that THE LADDER will always exist.

Homosexuality and Sexual Identity

by Martha Shelley

In our society, the condition of homosexuality has been closely connected with problems of sexual identity. That is, if someone is homosexual, he or she is presumed to have difficulty in identifying as a man or as a woman. If the difficulty isn't there to begin with, social prejudices create it. The prejudice runs as follows: A "real man" is believed to enjoy sexual relations

with women only; a "real woman," only with men.

An adolescent, then, who finds herself attracted to her own sex is beset with doubts about her feminity, (and a male about his masculinity). Other homosexual women see her as a woman and are attracted to her for this reason—but the more she responds to this attraction, the more dubious her femininity,

both in society's eyes and in her own. She is "queer," a member of the "third sex," considered neither a man nor a woman.

Many heterosexuals are also confused and doubtful about their sexuality, and cover their confusion with a "normal" facade. However, adequate heterosexual relations often help to relieve the doubt— "I can make it with a woman, so I must be a man."

I believe this problem is peculiar to certain cultures, including our own, and is not true of human beings in general. The Greek male appears to have felt no less manly for having a male lover. It reinforced his manhood, made him one of the boys. In that society, having homosexual relations may have relieved his doubts about his masculinity—he could relate to other men, whose masculinity was not in question, and who accepted him as one of them.

In a scientific study of homosexuality, this cultural situation should be borne in mind. What goes into the making of a homosexual in the United States is not true of homosexuals everywhere. The reasons for practicing homosexuality may vary with different cultures and subcultures. Family structures vary. Perhaps the "causes" of homosexuality vary.

Many of the factors which are considered to "cause" homosexuality here in America are true for heterosexuals as well. Most of my straight friends had "possessive" mothers, puritanical upbringings, competitive or absent fathers, se-

ductive mothers, etc.

If scientific studies are going to give us any useful information, they had better be more specific and more exact. I do not need a study that tells me that 90% of American homosexuals believe, unconsciously, what is culturally accepted—that they are not "real men" or "real women," any more than I need a study to tell me that 90% of American Negroes have problems related to self-esteem.

To give a closer analogy, if 90% of all Americans in the Victorian era believed that masturbation was harmful, sinful, and immaturewhich they did-this does not mean that they were correct. However, since most of them did masturbate, they had psychological problems—the fear of insanity, impotence, loss of health, and spiritual damnation. For a physician to say that people should stop masturbating in order to avoid anxiety is the height of sophistry. It is far healthier, physically and psychologically, to work toward overcoming the cultural prejudice; and indeed this has been done in our own society.

Practicing homosexuals do not constitute 90% of America. Nevertheless, homosexuality, like masturbation, cannot be eliminated from the population. To suggest that homosexuality is a disease because it involves guilt feelings, confusion about one's sexuality, and other psychological problems is again a sophistry. Going to bed with—and enjoying—one's own sex is not a disease. Prejudice is.



MY COUNTRY WRONG

by Jane Rule

There should always be a reason for going somewhere: a death in the family, a lover, a need for sun, at least a simple curiosity. Even a business trip provides excuse for discomfort, focuses discontent. To explain why I arrived in San Francisco on the twenty-third of December, instead of on the twenty-sixth when I was expected, would be nothing but a list of non-reasons. I did not want anything. It was the least distasteful of the alternatives that occurred to me to fill the hole in a blasted schedule. I don't want to talk about the death of friends, failures of domestic courage, the negative guilt of an ex-patriot. It is probably better to be grieving, tired and guilty in a familiar place. San Francisco is familiar enough, home city as much as I ever had one, growing up American. My great grandparents died there, still speaking German. My mother went to school there, married there with the knees of her bridesmaids showing in both papers. My father went to war with the Japanese from the Oakland Mole. My brother suffered his adolescence in the bars of old North Beach. And I? I used to have lunch with my grandmother at the Palace Hotel, waffles, and the head waiter poured melted butter into each square. She tried to teach me in Chinatown how to recognize Japs by the look of their feet. I had a godmother who sold shoes at the White House because she was divorced. For the same reason my great aunt had a boarding house

somewhere out on a street that ran toward the park, where once I spent a whole, terrified night pulling paper off the wall next to my bed. Grandfather had a pass through the restricted areas all during the war. A city of uniforms, of hotel dances and breakfasts at the Cliff House. A familiar place.

Now again it is a city of uniforms, and, learning the newest routines of the airport, I was distressed by them, not resigned as I had been at their age. Most of the boys do not wear their uniforms well, being unfamiliar with ties and used to putting hands in their trouser pockets. My grandfather would have been critical. I only wondered if they were as clumsy with guns.

A bright, salt smelling day, the first of three. I had no plans. I had written a tentative card to Michael and Jessica, another to Lynn, friends I did not usually see in my funeral and wedding ridden returns. Perhaps I'd see Lawrence. There were half a dozen others. But, of those half dozen, three were on their way to jail. I read that in the CHRONI-CLE in my slot of a hotel roomthe Hilton, which would take more defensive explanation than is valuable. Lawrence was pleading not guilty to disturbing the peace in an anti-draft demonstration. He was trying to disturb the war, he said. Last time I came home my mother said, while we wefe still at the airport, "You're not going to get in-

volved in any of these marches, are

you, darling? You really don't have time to go to jail." It would have been unseemly of me, surely, having given up my citizenship years ago for positive political reasons, for wanting a vote where I lived.

I don't like being ten floors above ground. In San Francisco, every time I am over three floors up, I have fantasies of riding a mattress to Alcatraz, a journey several of us were in the process of attempting when we were discovered and ordered out of the attic. I don't remember whose attic—perhaps my godmother's. Now I understand it is possible to go to Alcatraz by boat, but visiting an empty prison two days before Christmas has no point when old friends are crowded into neweriails.

I had done my Christmas shopping, but I went out into the summer day. The third floor of the City of Paris hasn't been redecorated since my grandmother shopped there. The White House is gone. and my godmother has died of cancer. People are still meeting under the clock at the St. Francis, a dark place, where old men sit and visit on couches just outside the ladies' room. The bar hasn't changed much since my brother and father had one of their many man-to-boy talks twenty years ago, my brother not knowing what to do with a new hat.

I bought books, NAT TURNER and ALL THE LITTLE LIVE THINGS, knowing from the reviews that the one would take the last of my irrational liberal hopes that we'd get through without a massacre, that the other would reconfirm the bitter war between the generations, old men drinking themselves to death in Puritan rage, young men hallucinating in tree

houses. Is reading a way of not seeing for myself?

Back at the hotel, the red button on my phone was flashing. I had to read a number of directions before I received two messages, one that Michael had appeared "in person," another that Lynn had phoned. And there was a small, live Christmas tree on the desk, about as tall as the bottle of scotch next to it. No card, but it was an unthreatening, discreet kindness. Outside a bus signaled a turn with a high, repeating whistle.

Dinner with Michael and Jessica: The cab driver believed-because of my foreign clothes and shifting accent?-that I had confused streets with avenues. He gave ethnic reports for each more deteriorating neighborhood we passed through. And finally in the block that should have been Michael's. he wanted to turn back. But I saw that one of the Victorian town houses was embarrased by a nearly completed front porch. I said to the still very reluctant driver, stopped in the middle of the street, shining his police flashlight up the fourteen feet to the front door, that I wanted to get out. He honked, a thing my father says gentlemen do not so. I suppose ladies are not expected to have horns to honk. There was Michael, hurrying down the uncertain new steps, black hair to his shoulders, his side burns white and winged, the bones of his face sharp, the flesh soft, his eyes permanently crossed, caught in their inward gaze by the driver's flashlight.

"This is the place," I said, money ready.

Michael waved the cab away, honking his voice, tenor, nasal. I saw his velvet shirt, the kind I like to buy for myself in men's shops.

Around his neck, hanging by a black shoe lace, was a silver lion's head, not medallion so much as door knocker, Metro Goldwyn Mayer. Michael and I are professional rather than personal friends. It was a formal moment before he showed me the path through hardening concrete up to the unfinished entrance. I had not been to the house before because it was new to them. Jessica waited just the other side of the new wrought iron gates, framed in stained glass. She is tall, cowboy faced, gentle. We were glad to see each other in this kindness they were offering me.

Other people were there, a couple of close friends in the habit of the place, which is a stage set, room by high ceilinged room. We went nearly at once to Michael's studio on the second floor to see his new paintings, as thick with oil as relief maps, from photographs and prints of nineteenth century scientific apparatus and bubble gum cards of the Beatles. They would not be properly dry for a hundred years, and then those small mountain ranges of paint would crack into colors of earlier images, flower into the past, or explode. Michael and I would not be there to see it happen, sharing the generation between the great earthquake and his own.

With drinks that Jessica had brought us, we climbed higher. The walls of the old house have little plaster left from years of a leaking roof, but paintings have been hammered to the old lathing, crowded together up the huge stairwell and along the corridors. The windows that are not stained glass are hung with ancient materials, shawls, rugs, tapestries. On the third floor we

found the children, a boy and a girl in their early teens, long haired, bare footed, dressed in jeans and sweaters. They were sitting on the floor and did not greet us.

"Med," Michael explained. "Meditation. It keeps them off pot and away from liquor."

We went down by the back stairs, which cut across the wall of the first floor toilet, in use as we passed, and turned into the kitchen, where Jessica was cooking.

"How do you like the house?" she asked.

I did not have to answer because the children, having given us time for our slow descent, came quickly and noisily out of their perch of silence, talking like competing commercials or poems.

"To find out if you had a vision or I had a vision," I said, dated by as well as detached from Ginsberg.

"But it works," North said, friendly now and hopeful.

"If you don't cheat," Sky modified as a way of threatening her brother.

Their odd first names are practical to counteract the pages of their last name in any telephone directory. And North has the arctic eyes of his father, but straight. Sky is still child enough to be all style without distinctive definition. They are not so much badly brought up children as unbrought up. What manners they use have the charm of their own invention.

Charlie came out of the bathroom, looking for his drink.

"Charlie doesn't even hold it," North said. "The greatest aim in the west."

Jessica was giving us all things to carry into the dining room, where uncertain chairs were randomly placed at a large, round table. Michael and Jessica sat side by side. The rest of us took places as we chose or where we found ourselves. Charlie, between the children, took their hands for a moment. It might have been some sort of grace.

"It's a small table now that everyone's in jail," Sky said.

"And you think everybody over eighteen should be in jail," Charlie said. He was obviously over eighteen but not by very many years. "You're a very uncool person, Sky."

"Is it embarrassing to be out of jail?" I asked.

"Yes," Michael said. "It's so easy for me to stay out."

"I'm going when I'm eighteen," North said. "If they get Charlie."

"They're not going to get me," Charlie assured him. "As soon as I get my degree, I'm going to Canada."

"Maybe you won't have to go," Jessica said. "Maybe nobody will."

"Dr. Spock's going to jail," Sky

"He's a very uncool man," Charlie answered her.

"What about Lawrence? What about Joan Baez? and her mother? One of my teachers goes to jail everyweekend."

"Well, what does one do?" Michael asked. "Even Jessica read Spock when she was scared. He didn't intend to raise a generation of murderers."

"They're building concentration camps for Negroes and draft dodgers," North said. "They're going to evacuate all of Oakland."

"We're going with them," Sky said. "When the time comes."

"Why doesn't somebody teach these kids to be cool?" Charlie said. "The country's a jail already. You don't have to go anywhere."

I tasted Jessica's bland food, as gentle and vague as her face, and felt the chair under me give slightly. The children were talking now about a college president who was on probation for refusing to let police turn tear gas and dogs against students who were not rioting. Jessica kept saving to each new threat, "Maybe it won't happen. Maybe you won't have to," which was surely how North was conceived, how she married, how she came to live in this whimsical fortress, continually singing hopeful little unrealities to her cross-eved husband and her children. Nobody ever encouraged her. Nobody ever said, "No, maybe it won't, Jessica. Maybe we won't have to." Nobody believed her because Jessica was basically one of Charlie's uncool people who had been to jail on principle and off principle until Michael found her and kept in mind what could happen and stopped her. If she was less interesting now than she had been in the days of McCarthy purges and the first UN delegation, she was herself safer in a less safe world.

Some time between the main course and dessert, the chair I was sitting in disintegrated. After Charlie and Michael helped me up, the children counted eighteen pieces which they carried in to the fireplace in the living room where another bundle of sticks which had also been a chair waited to be burned.

I keep not mentioning Alice. At first I thought she was with Charlie. Then it seemed to me that she might live in the house. She did not say very much. She kissed one or another of the familiar company now and then, more affectingly when

she chose Jessica, who obviously liked to touch her since she was of sweeter, safer substance than the rest of us. Or that would have been my reason for liking to touch her. After dinner she read some poems to us, not clearly her own though she did not disclaim them. They were as diffusely erotic as she was and might have been written for her. The children meditated in various, undisciplined postures until they fell asleep, in random touch with one or another adult. We were free then to talk of things other than draft dodging, race riots, and drugs. Michael wanted to talk about photographs, those fixed hallucinations from which he worked. Near him was a portrait he had done of old Mrs. Winchester from a photograph, not looking frightened of the things she was frightened of. On his lap was a box of photographs of himself as a child, of machines, of boxers, of Alice, to whom I looked for some explanation. There was none.

At midnight, Charlie drove me back to the Hilton with only a trace of embarrassment, and I invited him to visit me as I always invite people to visit. My phone was flashing with new messages, and there was no direction for stopping it without receiving them.

In the morning, I had Christmas cards with foreign post marks, and out in the bright day a Salvation Army band played by a place advertising topless lunches. In the dining room an Hawaiian tour had just arrived, fifty dyspeptic grandparents with midwestern accents, stricken with pleasures they would rather have read about than paid for. One couple had apparently missed the plane, but they were there somehow, moving from table to table relieving people with their simple

San Francisco is not a beautiful city, except at the distance from it I usually keep. From Berkeley, from Sausalito, from nearly anywhere else, even the sky, it is white and as abruptly mountainous as one of Michael's paintings. But in the city are the centers of pretentious civic architecture, green domes and irrational spires among a cluttered, dwarfed, bay windowed suburbia. I went to the parks, to the museums, to the cliffs above the Golden Gate, that narrow channel of catastrophes. Across it was a military installation on a golden winter hill with large, outlined Christmas star for night shining. I went to Cost Plus and bought Korean brass and postcards from Vietnam.

Dinner with Lynn: Christmas Eve is not a time to go out for dinner; so many French, Italian, and Mexican restaurants shut. Lynn came to the hotel, dressed in carefully tailored suit, stiff collared blouse and cameo where a tie might have been. Soft haired, soft spoken, amusement and surprise always faint in her face. We had a drink in the hotel while we decided where to go. The exposed thighs of our forty year old waitress were not appetizing. Still, we had another drink.

"If we have to choose," Lynn said, "I'd rather have tits."

"Not for dinner. There must be an unbelieving Mexican or Frenchman somewhere in the city."

There was, in Girardelli Square. We walked through the shops first, stepping over clay hens and carp, barnacles with succulants, looking at nests of bright boxes, primary colors everywhere. At a shop for child art, a woman was handing out pam-

phlets for the protection and support of the imagination. The drawings and paintings on display were obviously teacher chosen, either psychiatric or rigid with the right ideas, but occasionally a child had been willfully childish: a tall house among giant flowers, a sun round in the corner, every object with a face. a bright face. Out in the square itself all the Christmas lights were white, a relief.

We ordered quacamole with a third martini, drank and watched the traffic under and across the bridge. Then we ate the hot food that reminded me of country fairs and my grandmother's cleaning woman, depression food in expensive surroundings. Lynn will not talk unless she is asked questions. I asked questions, thin and general, because I don't know much about efficiency engineering.

"I'm all right now, but there's less and less space to move."

"Why?"

"Nearly everything is war indus-

"And you don't want to work in war industry," I decided.

"Oh, I don't care about that. Simply being alive is murderous. Beyond that, moral choice is a theoretical exercise. The point is I can't work in war industry. I can't get security clearance."

"Why not?"

Lynn smiled with derisive sweetness.

"Is is that bad?"

"When the security people come to ask me about friends I had in graduate school, they ask two questions: is he homosexual and has he ever been to a psychiatrist."

who'd been to a psychiatrist," I said.

"I don't know, but there are a lot of people who think it's pretty risky to go to one."

"It's getting very bad," I said.

"I think about getting out, going to Canada, but there's not much for me vet in Canada," Lynn said.

"I suppose not."

"Never mind, I'm having a lovely time. Most people are. A lot of money and a taste of illegality in nearly everything takes care of it."

There is no point ever in arguing with Lynn. Ideas for her are no more than wry confessions. To debate failures of conscience is inappropriate. She paid for my dinner, and we went out to find her car, which I would have been impressed by if I knew anything about cars. I knew only that much. We drove over the hills and out to the Haight-Ashbury district.

"The flower children are almost gone," Lynn said. "There are a couple of good bars."

I was not properly dressed, being properly dressed, in navy silk with a green silk coat. I have other kinds of clothes, even a pair of modest boots, which I would have been glad of, but in whatever costume I would have to carry my age. It becomes me, defining and refining a person out of the blur of adolescence, but persons are troublesome in the places Lynn wanted to go. She's eight years younger than I, the acceptable side of thirty.

As we walked down a quiet side street, we could hear people singing Christmas carols in an apartment above us. One hundred miles to the south my family had gathered for the same purpose: parents, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews decorating a tree. I had not gone home for Christmas for fifteen years. Only "They wouldn't stop someone deaths and marriages. My arrival on

the twenty-sixth would be without excuse, no relative left to say goodbye to, my parents settled in the static status of the sixties, in my own generation first and even second marriages achieved, the new generation still being measured in steps and inches.

The bar was so crowded that at first we didn't realize we had walked into a Christmas Eve party. Not only all the bar stools and chairs had been taken, but it was difficult to move through the clusters of standing people. A huge man, probably the only man in the place, dressed in a Santa Claus suit, handed us chits for free drinks.

"The bouncer," Lynn explained. She went to get us drinks, leaving me to occupy what space I could find. I moved farther into the room where a pool table had been covered, obviously ready for food. Only a few people leaned against it; so I joined them, without being friendly. On a wall near the juke box was a sign which read, "Pool Table Reserved for Ladies and Their Guests." Eight or nine couples were trying to dance, youngsters most of them, some in stylish hip hugging trousers and nearly transparent shirts, others in earnest drag, everything from conservative business suits to motorcycle outfits. They were having fun. It felt like a party, and I was smiling vaguely at it by the time Lynn got back. She had two college students with her, one tall sulky girl in a very well tailored slack suit whose name was Ann, one short dandy with cropped curly hair, a pin striped suit out of the thirties, and a cigarette holder. She wanted Lynn to dance; so Ann and I held drinks and braced ourselves against the table.

"Tourist?" she asked.

"Not really," I said.

I hadn't been in this kind of bar since my own college days when I was a tourist, but not simply in this world-in all worlds of social definition. Now, careful to have unoffending costumes for most circumstances, I was still, as a traveler, often caught in the wrong one.

"Lynn said you wouldn't want to

"I'm traveling," I said. "I haven't much time."

It was too noisy to talk anyway; so we drank our drinks, then drank the ones we were holding for the other two, and watched the crowd. I was putting my second glass down on the pool table when Ann put an arm around my shoulder. It startled me until I realized why she had done it. A motorcycle rider, nearly as tall as the bouncer, heavy set and handsome, was approaching us.

"Taken?" she said to Ann.

"An old friend from out of town," Ann said carefully.

The explanation was acceptable apparently. The cycle rider nodded and moved on.

"We'd better dance," Ann said.

I hadn't been on a dance floor for perhaps ten years, but only a few of these dancers shook themselves and stared at their own feet. Most of them liked the public declaration of being in each other's arms. I could dance the way I was being asked to. The novelty of it for me, the grace and protectiveness of my partner, were new pleasures. Once I caught sight of Lynn, watching, with that characteristic faintness of surprise and amusement, and I wondered what kind of a fool I was making of myself. It was difficult to determine. I am not used to this kind of attention and protection. If dancing had occurred to me, I

would have expected to ask.

"Drink?" Ann suggested.

"May I buy it?" I asked.

She looked down at me, obviously calculating what that would mean, ready to be agreeable.

"Just to buy it," I said. "I can't stay

"Then I'll buy it," she said.

"Like?" Lynn asked, free for the moment from her dandy.

"She's sweet," I said, "but I can't stay around being a hazard."

"What makes you think you're a hazard?"

"These clothes. This age. I haven't any business letting kids take care of me."

"Why not?" Lynn asked. "She wants to. She'd like you to stay."

"How often do you come here?"

"A couple of times a week, I guess." The questions I hand't asked at dinner couldn't be asked now. Still

I begantoask. "Why? What's happened to Jill?" "She got married last year," Lynn

said, "to a very good security risk."

"Still...."

"Let's stay another hour, all right?" Lynn interrupted. She had just seen someone she obviously wanted to see. "Then we'll go if you like.".

The girl Lynn greeted was with someone else. The tension was unpleasant.

"You don't really like it here, do you?" Ann said, handing me a drink.

"It's a very good party," I said. "Thanks."

"We could go some place else."

Lynn was dancing.

"Who is that?" I asked.

"The one with Lynn? I don't know ... any more. She used to be a friend of mine. Why did you let Lynn bring you here? Why is she embarrassing you like this?"

"She's not." I said. "We're old friends."

"That's all?"

"That's all."

"I didn't know anything was like that any more. Let's dance."

This time it was not easy to do. There was something wrong between Lynn and Ann, a competitiveness.

"We're going down the street for a quiet drink," Ann said to Lynn. "We'll be back in about an hour."

"Why don't I call you at the hotel?" Lynn said, obviously wanting to be helpful.

"All right," I said. Out on the street, I said to Ann, "Let's find a cab for me, and you go back to the party."

But she was hurt; so I walked along with her until we found a bar that was not having a party. I had already had enough to drink, and so had she. I wondered if she was twenty-one.

"I want plain soda," I said.

"Two plain sodas."

"Why are you by yourself on a Christmas Eve?" I asked.

"Why are you?"

"An error in the schedule," I said. "That's all. It happens when you travela lot."

"I didn't want to go home," Ann said.

"Well, neither did I, I guess."

"You aren't gay, are you?"

It's an unanswerable question from my point of view, but I am more often than not doubtful about my point of view.

"Yes." I said, regretting it.

"Then why are we sitting here?"

Why? Because I hadn't the sense to know what mood Lynn was really in, what trouble she was in. Because I had on the wrong clothes. I was also wearing the wrong manners, heterosexual, middle aged manners which involve so many frankly

empty gestures.

"We're sitting here because I don't know what else to do," I said.

"I don't understand."

"I know you don't. Shouldn't I take a cab before I begin to give you motherly advice out of sheer embarrassment? I haven't been in that kind of bar since I was your age—fifteen . . . twenty years ago? It's not time for me to begin. And, as for you, you're not supposed to trust anyone over thirty."

She smiled then, for the first time, and I relaxed a little until she said, "but I think older women are wildly attractive."

"I do, too."

"Oh."

"But not in bars," I went on. "I like them in their own living rooms or on lecture platforms or in offices. I've never danced with one."

"I was only trying to be polite," Ann said.

"I know, and I'm touched by it, but there isn't any way to be polite to me."

"I don't want to go back there either," she said. "Let me stay with you, just for the evening. We could go to a movie or just drive around or go back to my apartment."

Christmas Eve: I should have been in my own apartment cooking a turkey or at home eating one. Or I should have, given all the wrong choices so far, found Lynn and made her take me home to hers, for her sake, but she did not want to go. Ann and I walked back to the party to make sure. Then we walked again to find Ann's car. I did not want to stay in these remnant crowds, the dying market of flowers. We drove to North Beach and walked in Chinatown. I suppose the shops have always been full of dull, dirty jokes, but I looked for the miniature

worlds I loved when I was a child not stocking presents for the tired and impotent. At midnight, when we might have been in church, we were in my hotel room, drinking scotch, I in the chair by the window, Ann stretched long on one of the beds.

"I'm essentially a very uncool person," she said.

I yawned, thinking of Charlie.

"Merry Christmas," she said.

"Merry Christmas."

I got up to pour a last drink, saw Ann watching me in the mirror, and felt guilty. It did not very much matter to me what I did on this particular evening. At her age, I would have wanted very badly whatever I wanted.

"I feel like the bouncer in Santa Claus disguise," I said.

"You won't have to throw me out. I'll go."

I sat down on the bed beside her. She didn't move. I put a hand on her thigh, and she turned a little toward me, but she did not reach out. I was, for a moment, surprised, then relieved into having to give more than permission. She wanted me as I am used to being wanted by a woman . . . never mind that length of body, the boyish manners. I wanted to laugh, to tease her, but I was afraid to. Her body was so young under my hands, her need so seriously sacred. I was afraid, too, that she would come to me before I had even undressed her or that she woulld not come at all if I moved too slowly. I had to be very careful, very gentle, control the comic wonder I felt in myself, wanting not simply to be good in bed out of thoughtful habit but to be marvelous at once. But she was as understated and as graceful as she had been on the dance floor, leading only to invite being led, if I had noticed, if I had wanted to notice. She came to me

perfectly at the moment I wanted her I sent a reply and then walked up the street to David's for lunch, lox and

"You did want me," she said.

"Apparently," I said, and then I did laugh, surprised by her immediate and confident change of mood. "You wear such pretty clothes."

I am not either twenty or practiced in adjusting my own desire to strangers. The few experiences of this sort that I have had in the last ten years have always embarrassed me and, to some extent, made me feel guilty. I don't believe in fidelity, though it is for me the only practical way to live.

"Don't do that," Ann was saying to me. "Don't go away from me like that."

"I'm sorry."

I must have natural bad manners in bed. I had also had too much to drink. I drifted toward her touch for a moment, enjoying it, then drifted away near sleep.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen."

"You ought to go home," I said.

Once she had, I couldn't sleep. I read until seven in the morning, or-

dered breakfast in my room, then took ALL THE LITTLE LIVE THINGS up to the roof and sat in seventy degrees of sun by an empty swimming pool until a woman joined me who wanted to know if I thought the deck chairs at the Athens Hilton weren't better than these.

"I haven't been to the Athens Hilton," I said.

"The chairs are better. I have trouble with my back."

I turned a page.

"They ought to be all the same. It's a chain, after all."

I closed my book and took an elevator to the lobby. There was a telegram.

I sent a reply and then walked up the street to David's for lunch, lox and cream cheese. When I paid the bill, the cashier handed me a small box. Out on the street, I opened it to find four large macaroons and the message, "Eat the macaroons with joy. David."

I went back in and bought two dozen macaroons. Then I went to my room, closed my suitcases and phoned my brother. He would meet my bus.

And say, 'How's the picture business, Sis?' or 'Mother's worried there aren't enough sweet potatoes,' or 'It's like you to be the only goy at David's on Christmas day.' It's a long bus ride on the Bayshore which has tabled out over the years so that there are no landmarks left, forests or hills of flowers, nothing except occasional hangars, faint structures in the haze.

What he did say was, "I think I'm going to Vietnam next week."

Christmas dinner at home:

"They give them estrogen, that's all. When they're about eight or nine. They stop growing and start developing. And if it's a matter of having to wear a bra in the fifth grade or go through life six feet tall...."

"Harry sent off to Charles Atlas and got this questionnaire about whether or not he was popular. 'Are you constipated?' 'Do you have bad breath?' "

"Charles Atlas must be one hundred and two."

"Aren't you proud of your brother going off to Vietnam? They'll only send him where it's safe, of course, just where the president goes."

"Friends of ours won't even take a plane that flies over France."

"It's easier to share a crust of bread than a feast, that's why. I mean, if all you have is a crust of bread, who cares?"

"I showed the cops where I found it—a whole great big sack of it, just sitting in a tree. I was looking for snakes."

"People with long hair want to go

"She said all the men who go to concerts are queer. I said, 'Well, George isn't.' She's just jealous."

"Every year I think I like the pink camellia best until the white one comes out, and then I just can't make up my mind."

"Why decide?"

"I like to know what I like."

"If you want to know what I think, I think Charles Atlas is dead."

"Then who's reading his mail? That's illegal."

"Look, a bra in the fifth grade is an asset. Ask Harry."

"I think saying grace in Latin is phoney. God speaks English, doesn't he?"

"We learned JINGLE BELLS in Latin."

"It's going to be a long war, that's all."

"Is the turkey dry?"

"Not the meat. I suppose you're used to goose."

"Poets live in trees."

"Don't argue about it; discuss it."

They all have names, and I have no trouble remembering them. In fact, I say their names too often when I'm talking to them. I have loved the children, each one. But Harry, the oldest, my brother's son, is most familiar to and with me. He invited me to see the workout room he was digging out under the garage. And, while I stood, admiring the hole in the ground, he took off his jacket, tie and shirt, and reached for his pick axe. I watched the easy rhythm of his young mus-

cles, the sun on his California color hair. He hadn't been at work for more than five minutes when I looked up to see a girl sitting on the stone fence, then another in the apple tree. They perched as still as birds.

"How old are you, Harry?"

"Nearly old enough," he said seriously.

Mother was calling from across the yard. "It's long distance, dear."

I never have any trouble deciding for the white camellia.

"That isn't what 'homesick' means exactly," I said into the phone. "Yes, sell it." And then to the question of how long I would be away, "Long enough to say good-bye to Harry."

It shouldn't have come as a surprise.
"Oh, screw the kids," my brother
was saying. "It's Christmas and I

want another drink."

Charles Atlas isn't dead; it's the children who are mortal. Now that grandparents are all dead, now that everyone who is going to marry has married, it is time to say good-bye to the children. I came home to say good-bye to North and Sky and Ann and Harry.

Every Magazine Is New Until You've READ It!

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Changing Times

by Meredith Grey

What may happen if proponents of organizational decentralization win at the 1968 General Assembly of the Daughters of Bilitis? Immediately there will be no need for the Assembly to elect a National President of Governing Board of Directors for the next two year term. The new Board of Directors would be the present elected Chapter officers and their advisors. There would be no need for a National Office in California or anywhere else! Chapters would take care of their own requests for information, tax reports, public relations and many other "National" functions. In fact, there will be little need for National General Assemblies as we have known them.

Will decentralization destroy the DOB as some critics claim? Will anarchy ensue? Many Daughters feel that the corporation functioned best when it operated in a limited geographic area. "DOB was not conceived as a mass organization." Decentralists advise us to return the major responsibilities of the organization back to the home regions, as close as possible to where the individual members live.

Over the years, the institutional structure of the Daughters of Bilitis has had numerous modifications—and it has survived. During the same period, several distinguished but less flexible homophile organizations have perished.

This year's General Assembly

faces the problem of reaching the appropriate balance between what should be saved to preserve continuity and what must be replaced to ensure vitality. A glance backward at the history of the Daughters may remind us of past changes and prepare us for future changes.

The first organizational meeting of the women's society, now known as the Daughters of Bilitis, was held in San Francisco on September 21, 1955. Eight charter members met four consecutive weeks until the basic constitution and by-laws were drawn up, a name chosen and officers elected. The first official meeting of the newly formed organization was held October 19, 1955. In 1956 the first issues of THE LAD-DER appeared.

In 1957, the State of California accepted the Daughters' application for incorporation as a women's social club. In 1958, Daughters in Los Angeles applied for Chapter status and became the first Chapter outside the City of San Francisco. Also in 1958, a group of New York women requested recognition as a Chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis and thus began the first DOB Chapter outside the State of California.

Major constitutional revision was then undertaken which changed the base of authority from representative to democratic government. The supreme authority in the organization was transferred from selected delegates to each and every member

around the globe-meeting in person or by proxy-once every two vears! Between the biennial meetings of the Daughters, the organization was to be run by a few officers scattered across the continent who were neither elected by the Chapters exclusively, nor responsible to them. Later constitutional provisions added "token" Chapter Representatives to the Governing Board. Despite the Board's theoretical omniscience, its decisions have often reflected extreme provincialism. For years, the Governing Board had neither the means nor the woman power to take effective action. By the time the tide began to turn, the precedent of ineffectuality was so firmly established that few inspired Daughters were any longer devoting their best talents to their most challenging responsibility: service to the organization as a whole.

Restructuring may serve a valuable function if it helps us to see our old commitment in a fresher light.

Over the years, the DOB has evolved its unique ideology. Back in 1955, it was conceived as a self-help social group. But the statement of purpose with its concern for the lesbian, with "all its social, civic and economic implications" was ample evidence that the Daughters were much too "square" to be a simple social club.

As thousands of women turned to the Daughters for assistance in their personal searches to become more secure, productive citizens, the staff was simply swamped. The need was clearly seen to be far greater than the resources. Some members urged that greater attention be devoted to treating the "cause" rather than the "symptoms" of the lesbian's alienation from society. They observed daily the self-destructive and socially destructive emotional violence which society generated by rejecting the allegiance and scorning the human potential of the homosexual. While some members considered concentration on the individual as a delusive form of flight from the central problem, others saw selfknowledge as the essential beginning of all knowledge. The Daughters' statement of purpose is a statement of faith in the belief that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is a situation—a complex set of relations between one's self and society. The ideology which evolved, the ethos of the Daughters of Bilitis, is to support any and all legal means of improving the situation of the lesbian, either as an individual or as a group. This lack of specialization has contributed to the vitality of the corporation.

Numerous geo-political problems confront the Daughter; each of the fifty sovereign States has its own set of morality and corporation laws and all of them have a variety of "sumptuary laws" enforced by the whim or design of the communities. Only a small proportion of the membership could attend the national General Assemblies. How many of last year's Board members did you personally know, even though in this most democratic society, your vote or non-vote elected each of them? The patience and finances of the Daughters are sorely taxed trying to keep in communication with you fellow members dwelling across the continent.

By 1961, the DOB was the only homophile organization attempting to operate across State lines and legal mazes with a theoretically structure "national" structure—a structure under which no individual Chapter could do anything innovative without the membership's approval. And where was the membership between Assemblies? Just where National has always been—all over the globe. When there was work to be done, only the flesh and blood people who meet each month in the Chapters could do it and usually, if they did not do it, it was not done.

Most members recognize the need to pool the organization's limited resources to support a single organizational publication (THE LADDER) to share professional contacts, to share organizational "know-how," and most of all, to be of aid and comfort Chapter to Chapter. Despite the occasional disagreements between and within Chapters, the concept of working together has deep roots. The Daughters have held together not by organizational structure, but out of sheer determination. We have held together because of the ideal that women should be able to work together to further the basic cause on which we all agree. The "new freedom" for Chapters requires that they assume responsibility for their own destiny. It does not release them from being the effective keepers of the common commitment.

After years of study, your National President, Shirley Willer and other Board members have amalgamated your comments, suggestions and advice into sweeping proposals for organizational restructure. The proposal provides that the articles of incorporation be amended and completely new set of "National" By-Laws be adopted. Membership in the new UNITED DAUGHTERS

OF BILITIS, INC. will be limited to corporations and groups which have been authorized to conduct business as the Daughters of Bilitis in their localities. The business of THE UNITED DAUGH-TERS OF BILITIS, INC., will be conducted by its Board of Directors -made up of the officers or agents of the member corporations and associations, and their advisors. Advisors whom the Board elects will have a vote on the Board and will probably include distinguished women from many public arenas, as well as THE LADDER Editor, Research Director, Scholarship Fund Director and other functional advisors. This Board must meet annually but the meeting may be by conference-telephone. This Board will probably conduct much of its formal business by mail. It may sponsor national or international meetings but not particularly as a means of transacting businessrather as a means of expanding dialogue between members and friends of the various component corporations. Presentation of papers with discussion, work shops and idea exchange would be the business of the day, not Constitution and By-Laws. Chapters would apply for authorization and become the Daughters of Bilitis in their region, quite separate from each other and from the UNITED DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, INC. Each group will have its own financial responsibilities, including those to Federal and local internal revenue. Its tax status will be determined by IRS on the nature of the individual group and its income, expenditures and other activities.

The various corporation and association agents on the UNITED will decide what portions of their local organization's income they can afford to pool to produce THE LADDER and expend on other cooperative publications and activities. The new National will probably wish to continue publication of THE LADDER, though it may not be able to afford it every month. The revised structure establishes THE LADDER as a separate "profit-making" corporation which will publish magazines when it has the funds to do so. The restructure also envisions ties with a "foundation" type group which may serve to receive funds and disburse them for appropriate purposes with appropriate legal safeguards.

The various Chapters must immediately undertake to be the effective nucleus of the Daughters in their areas. They must prepare for their new responsibilities as independent and free groups. Under the

old structure, all assets, cash and equipment of the Chapters belongs to the parent corporation. Such obligations will not dissolve with the change in structure but efforts will be made to reach mutually satisfactory solutions before legalistic steps are taken. The Chapters will cease to be children, subject to the whim of an absentee parent; they will have "come of age" and must accept the burdens and responsibilities such freedom implies. If one organization of the Daughters of Bilitis was a good idea, then fifty organizations of Daughters working together is a much better idea.

The new UNITED DAUGH-TERS OF BILITIS will hold together not by organizational structure but by the common determination of women across the country to work together in every legal way to improve the social and economic situation of the lesbian.

LESBIANA

by Gene Damon



The lady who called my attention to Anthony Gilbert's short story, "Point Of No Return" in the May, 1968 issue of ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE, quickly added that though I would enjoy it, no one could prove a scrap of pertinent material in it. Well, that is, strictly speaking, not true. I did enjoy it very much, and it is a tightly written mystery story, nearly long enough to qualify as a novelet. It has the kind of characters and situa-

tions that ought to appeal to readers of this column. Nothing needs to be said about plot, because I don't like spoiling mystery stories for the reader in advance.

In 1893, August Strindberg wrote an autobiographical novel about his relationship with his Lesbian wife, Siri Von Essen. He wrote it in French, though he was a Swedish writer. The book was subsequently translated into German, at least twice into his native Swedish, and

so many controversial books throughout literary history, it was bowdlerized substantially from the beginning. Most translations into English have been based on the first and second German translations and a couple of Swedish translations. Apparently, until recently, no one bothered to check the original form of the novel before translating it (a sloppy practice to be sure). The book in question was called LE PLAIDOYER D'UN FOU. It was translated into English and published in the United States by Viking Press in 1925 under the title, THE CONFESSION OF A FOOL. This is the best known edition in this country. In 1967 Doubleday published this under the title, A MADMAN'S DEFENSE, as a quality paperback original, translated by Evert Sprinchorn. In 1968 London publisher Jonathan Cape published the Sprinchorn translation and stirred up quite a tempest. Strong objection has been made to the continued use of "watered down" texts. It seems that one Abthony Swerling (academically connected to Trinity Hall, Cambridge) has translated the book into English directly from the original French manuscript. In a letter to the editors of LONDON TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, April 18, 1968, Mr. Swerling advises that "Trinity Lane Press, Cambridge, is bringing out my own unexpurgated direct translation of LE PAID-OYER D'UN FOU (A MAD-MAN'S MANIFESTO) later this month." If the textual errors he cites and corrects are any example, it should be a lulu of a book. It seems clear that no prior edition has been even faintly accurate. One can

into many other languages. As were

understand why Strindberg was unhappy with Siri Von Essen, though it must be added that he never did make a successful marriage with anyone.

One short story reviewed in the June, 1968 Lesbiana Column, "... Aye, And Gomorrah," by Samuel R. Delaney, has been awarded the BEST SHORT STORY OF 1967 NEBULA AWARD. This science fiction homosexual parable is in Harlan Ellison's delightful collection, DANGEROUS VISIONS, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1967. The astonishing thing is that this is Mr. Delaney's FIRST published work.

For the last 100 years or so, women have been objecting to the treatment they receive in a world ruled by men, set up by and for men, etc. Much of the griping has been justified, but little of it has been as vitally presented as is BORN FE-MALE: THE HIGH PRICE OF KEEPING WOMEN DOWN, by Caroline Bird, N.Y., McKay, 1968. This deals, almost wholly, with the ridiculous prejudice against women in the business world. There are a few forays into the professions, including a good look at one previously nearly exclusively feminine field, library service, which has now gone into a wholesale practice of using male "rejects" from the business world. This is a carefully documented study, citing hundreds of examples of deliberate injustice. Regardless of talent, education and proven ability, few women have a chance in hell in an executive capacity. There are, of course, exceptions, but the attention drawn to these few dozen women serves to show that for the vast majority of female workers, there is almost no executive opportunity.

The arguments, pro and con, reach a kind of stalemate in that the basic reasons for the prejudice are sexual rather than strictly competitive. For many men it is just not possible to consider women on an intellectual par and still remain fond of them as sexual objects. The alternative, of course, is to repress them in the business and professional fields. The same old tried and untrue reasons are given: women are prone to illness (yes, minor ones, seldom lose time over major illnesses, as do men); women are prone to absenteeism (statistically this is true, but the statistics include women doing work on the menial levels, where comparative male statistics only use white collar levels and above. Women on executive levels work just as hard as do the men.) The biggest reason seems to be the one involving marriage. She will marry, and move away, or get pregnant. The latter argument is, like absenteeism, largely untrue. Statistics can be made to say many things. The old story about the man standing with one foot in a bucket of boiling water, and the other foot in a bucket of ice water, who can be said to be 'on the average, quite comfortable,' is very true in a case like this. Again we reach the impass of sexual bias. Men do not like to admit that the women who are over 25 or so and haven't married have, for the most part, chosen not to marry. It may well be true that there would be a calculated risk in assigning executive responsibility to a 21-year-old girl. On the other hand, there is an equal risk in assigning such responsibility to a 21-year-old male.

Miss Bird's book shows, quite clearly, that the economic structure of the country is the loser in this game. There just aren't sufficient logical reasons to justify the exclusion of women from executive positions in a work force.

Regardless of where you personally stand in the world of employment, this is a vital book for those concerned with the future of women in general.

Something of a surprise is in store for the readers of A QUIET PLACE TO WORK, by Harry Brown, N.Y., Knopf, 1967, 1968. Nothing in the reviews that I have seen indicated that this is a rather major Lesbian novel. The reviews did show it to be of some significance to male homosexual readers. As it turns out, however, it is quite minor on the male side. I suspect that embarrassment may be the reason no trade reviewer has mentioned the Lesbian aspects of this novel, since Mr. Brown seems almost to belong to some other era. A writer, Sam Culloden, takes his family to Mexico, in search of A **QUIET PLACE TO WORK. He be**comes caught up in the (to be expected) colony of American expatriates (which, if one believes our current novelists, exist in every Mexican village) and spends more time drinking and snooping than writing. He sees himself as some kind of avenging angel. We are never told any reason why this, reasonably mediocre, man should see himself in a God-like role. He spouts Latin poetry at the drop of a hat, or at the drop of a drop. He sets about to clear up the social, moral, political relationships of the village, and when something just doesn't please him, he takes rather

individual action. He personally destroys several lives, and spends pages defending his actions. When he runs out of narrative strength (that is, when what passes for humor in his writing is a little more stretched than usual) he kills by the red herring route, or has his "undesirables" commit suicide.

The primary action revolves around Sam, his patient and much too kind wife, Polly, and three other women, Lalage Delmore, a teenage Lesbian (the only well drawn character in the book), her brittle mother, Marian Delmore, and a local aging sex symbol, Joy Durwood.

Read as entertainment, this is entertaining enough for the summer hammock. If you delve into the psychology of Sam Culloden, however, you come up with something unbelievably twisted and ugly. It would not be so, I hasten to add, if the narration did not seek to make his actions appear saintly in character. Midway through the novel, Polly drops the clue. Sam can only write under certain circumstances. It is the circumstances that chill the blood. This would make a good Alfred Hitchcock movie (that undersung god of the twisted mindswhose talents in interpretation have never been fully appreciated), provided the script-writer had the patience necessary to delete the "comedy" lines delivered by Sam Culloden. For mystery fans, this is highly recommended (though it is not in any sense a conventional mystery). For the rest of you, wait for the unlikely movie.

PEACE IS AN UNKNOWN CONTINENT, by Helene Rosenthal, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, Talonbooks, 1968, belongs in EVERY

Lesbian library. There is very little being published pertinent to such collections in the poetry field, but even if the world was overrun with Lesbian poetry, you would need to have this book. Readers of THE LADDER, however, should already know this from the selection of Mrs. Rosenthal's poetry that appeared in the February-March issue, 1968. Seven of the twelve poems in the February-March issue are NOT in the book. However, in addition to the other five, there are many poems which could very properly appear in these pages.

Mrs. Rosenthal's views tend to be currently popular. She is anti-war, for sexuality, anti-prejudice, and for love. A blessing also, in that she is too good a poet to rely on obscurity and bombastic phrases in lieu of honest explication. You know what she is talking about, and approve or not, that she cares, deeply. It is almost an insult today to call a poet a singer, yet many of the best young poets are singers as well. Several of the poems here could be well set to music. There are far too many of unusual interest to single them all out for comment. However, one poem, "The Hunter's Death" demands attention. This alone, in my opinion, makes the \$2.50 cost of this book negligible (it is, by the way, a very beautifully bound quality paperback original). The address of Talonbooks is 1911 Acadia Road, Vancouver 8, B.C., Canada, and I advise writing direct, since bookstores have problems when ordering outside the continental limits of the U.S.

Froma Sand's THE DAUGH-TERS OF LONGING, Los Angeles, Sherbourne Press, 1968, has all of the ingredients needed for bestseller status, including a complete lack of writing ability. It is almost as poorly done as VALLEY OF THE DOLLS. The author swings back and forth from wild romanticism, to an almost clinical state of penis worship. Most of her characters either discuss or think about the male organ constantly. It really doesn't leave them a great deal of time for the business of living. The setting is a middle-class apartment building in Hollywood, California. The cast is almost exclusively feminine (gender that is), and covers that ground swell group required in these sexy soap operas. There is Myra, whose husband is partially paralyzed (apparently only the aforementioned organ is missed here, the fact that he cannot walk doesn't seem to matter greatly), and Gerry Carter, whose hangup seems to be playing tricks on the possessors of the symbol about which the book was written (I am not really sure in her case, since all that seems to happen to her is that men speak to her and regardless of the innocuousness of her reply they are, almost in the next breath, screaming at her about not being a real woman —all this on perhaps two minutes acquaintance). Katherine is a widow, and, after a long discussion about her masturbatory habits, we are told that this is not enough, and then there is this handsome. older man, and no, he isn't interested in marrying her. . . Possibly the funniest case is Janice Grace, who is supposedly trying to decide between men and women. She is being pursued by a Lesbian, and is pursuing a male homosexual.

Into this apartment building comes Lotus Lin, an illiterate prostitute, with at least two hearts of gold. She sets everything to rights. She arranges for real or imagined phalluses for all of the ladies of the building, except for the sweet old thing who partially narrates this novel, and, anyway, she has a cat named Chaucer. The author, Froma Sand, is said to be, among other things, the writer of numerous screenplays. This is to be made into a movie, and I rather hope that she won't write the screenplay.

Sol Yurick has made a name for himself as a novelist, beginning with the noticed (but not overly so) THE WARRIORS, and the much superior, and deservedly lauded. FERTIG, a novel about revenge unlike anything before or since. His third novel, THE BAG, N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1968, is his most ambitious book, but it is not nearly so successful as FERTIG. Sam Miller, a writer who has written a potential best-seller (and then run out on his publisher, on his life, for fear of having somehow sold out by having done this shocking thing(takes an insignificant job as a welfare worker. Then the fun begins, and it is fun with a message and a vengeance. Sam becomes involved with an ADC (Aid to Dependent Children recipient) named Minnie Devlin (the most anti-Negro portrait of a Negro woman in recent fiction), several of her children, including one who is something of an artist, a Senator Roy Bleakie (who wants to be President), the welfare department case supervisor, Mr. Greech (similar in personality to Dr. Seuss's famous Grinch), and slum-landlord, Meyer Faust, his daughter, Clara Faust, and young social worker, Eve Carmichael.

Miller is an anti-hero portrayed

as some kind of giant sized fool. It is difficult to care about him, and almost impossible to care about the rest of the cast. This method of writing satire is not as effective as it might be, since it eliminates identification almost entirely. A world of phonies, living on varieties of graft, however amusingly portrayed palls. Mr. Yurick's view of life is so completely without hope that he overshadows and nullifies his arguments. It may well be difficult to find a wholly honest man, but it must also be equally difficult to find so many wholly dishonest men (and women).

Our special interest here is in Meyer Faust, one of those legion of heterosexual men who believe that Lesbianism can be cured by "a good fuck". His daughter, Clara, is in love with Eve Carmichael, and with a twist I don't recall having seen in fiction before, Meyer decides that he will pursue Eve, and, he wins her. It may be that Sol Yurick is simply saying that these are the "bags" these people carry, and perhaps he is inquiring about "how heavy is yours?"

As the ad photos show, and the back of the book jacket, Gaia Servadio, author of MELINDA, N.Y., Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968, is a very beautiful woman. Unfortunately, this is not enough, and ME-LINDA is a long long joke that doesn't sustain the pace set in the beginning. Melinda, The Baroness Publishing, begins her career by sleeping with her father and brother. She ends her career accidentally launched in a rocket to the moon by the Russians. This is, I suspect, a spy novel spoof. I rather wish it had worked, because portions of it are as funny as anything you will ever read. Melinda has many husbands, many lovers, naturally vists both sexes (I am not sure, really, just how natural it is in her case) and, when it is all over, seems to prefer sex alone, specializing in auto-eroticism. One of her adventures has her as a "Pussygirl" in a "Sexyboy Club." The Lesbian portions are substantial enough, but obviously of no importance whatever. Nothing is really important in the book. This might have made it as a novella, but, in this form, only if you are very bored and easily entertained. . .

The new Broadway production of the musical HAIR, a last fall off-Broadway production, includes a "mass" part of which features these lines:

"Sodomy, Fellatio, Cunnilingus, Pederasty.

Father, why do these words sound so nasty!"

The play is about the hippie revolt, and as such has little to do with homosexuality as either a cause or a condition or a statement of relationship. But these words fit well into a review of John Updike's novel, COUPLES, N.Y., Knopf, 1968. Mr. Updike has long been the critic's darling, the public's blank spot. Few outside of the literary establishment know that he is one of the gods in writing today. COU-PLES takes the stand that traditional morality is gone, and that sex has become a form of deity. To debate that point, as does Mr. Updike at great length, seems to me to be an exercise in futility since it is a pretty foolish premise for a novel.

However, it is to Mr. Updike's remarkable skills as a writer that we owe great thanks for, possibly unintentionally, he has given us a believable novel about the conflict

of sexual expression in a society where only monogamy and the missionary position is acceptable. His COUPLES are moderately promiscuous and they engage in all the supposedly evil refinements of sexual activity. It is this latter point that has so enraged some of the critics who still espouse genital sex as the only road to maturity.

Among the couples are Eddie Constantine and Roger Guerin who work out a homosexual attraction by wife-swapping, and a brief menage-a-trois that includes a Lesbian relationship. The book is not, of course, of any importance whatever as either male or female homosexual literature, though there is one very vital male homosexual character (his homosexuality has no bearing on the book's theme). This is Dr. Fred Thorne, a dentist, who is symbolically crowned with his name's derivation. He is in love with the novel's hero. Piet Hanema (rhymes with sweet) and his love is tinged with hatred as he tries to reason Piet into his own moral views.

COUPLES can be read in several ways, as entertainment (of an unusually high quality), as a morality play, or, as it is, a whole and accomplished novel about the real world, upper middle-class version, U.S.A., 1968. I recommend the latter.

Last year's entertaining, THE PRACTICE, by Stanley Winchester, is out now in paperback from Dell, 1968. Quite substantial Lesbian theme.

Those who remember Louise King's hilarious romps through the fringes of gay society, will love MR. LADYBUG, by Becky Crocker, L.A., Sherbourne Press, 1968. On an

island, near New York City, there is a summer resort called "Holly Hill." It is to this unlikely place that our heroine, Helen, comes, She is a West Virginia school marm, engaged, she hopes, in writing a geography textbook suitable for use in grade schools. She is more or less trapped into renting a cottage called "Grand Prix" for the summer. Understandably, she gets little writing done, as she becomes the butt of all the in-jokes you've ever read and several new ones. All of the cottages have amusing names, she observes. There is "Les Girls." "Bottom of My Garden," "Tulle Shed," "Boys In Ivy," "Bangkok," and "Oedipus Wrecks." She is delighted to discover that the primarily male inhabitants are very interested in cooking. Why one even called another up to discuss a mere meatrack at 9:00 A.M.

Helen's neighbors live in "White Slavery," "Group Expression," "Sewers Folly" and "Venus and Adonises." The "Venus" of the latter crew of Mrs. Mack. As do their homes, so do the occupants have colorful names. There is "Ev from Everywhere," "Captain Hooker," "Double Truck," "Rabbit Warren," "Uncle Tom" (when our heroine asks Uncle Tom why her unpretentious little cottage is called "Grand Prix" he tells her that it is because he once lived there), "Mr. Marilyn Monroe," and last, but surely not least, "Mr. Ladybug."

There is much action, and it is all frenetic. The summer weekends come and go, with gangs of boys from the neighboring town occasionally descending for an evening of bloodshed (a reminder that the "real world" is still out there). Helen is perplexed by the interest

shown in the deserted dunes areas of the island, until a chance heard conversation convinces her that illicit cock fights are being held there after dark. There are many parties, including a Christmas in July celebration, with plans for a mince pie eating contest (doesn't quite happen that way) and Uncle Tom (who is a member of B.O.R.E.) playing Santa Claus.

Much suspense surrounds the apparent disappearance and death of Mrs. Mack. Our heroine feels sure that the mysterious bundle headed for the dunes area is her body. As she tells it: "The burial of this Venus could easily occur in one of the areas of wilderness off

either end of Holly Hill. There, a mound of Venus might remain unfound forever."

Clearly Becky Crocker is the pseudonym (jacket photo and wild biography not withstanding) for some enterprising young man. It is as funny as can be expected from such a long rendering of a single track joke. Some of it is truly hilarious. It is all kindly enough, but no punches are pulled. The ridiculous gets proper lampooning. While of more interest to a male audience. there is enough Lesbian activity here to recommend it for everyone. There is never enough humor in this field, gripers take note. Best read aloud to a good friend. . . .

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FIVE POEMS

by Kate Martin

AWISH

Oh, that you'd come tonight across the distance,
The miles of moonlight that can keep two friends apart—
Would come to where I lie awake in silence
And old a blanket of soft words about my heart.

NOANSWER

Did you, when the grackles came Asking questions of the spring, Pause, perchance, to speak my name? Grackles always sound the same. It must be only in my ear They cry so plaintively this year.

WITH JOBY

Saturday night, or really Sunday morning, While trying not to look into your eyes, I laced my brain with alcohol's adorning Saturday night, or really, Sunday morning.

Saturday night (or Sunday morning), drinking, I realized that I might not be wise To let my tongue relate what I was thinking (Saturday, Sunday), watching you and drinking.

I might have stopped, that morning—night—revealing The thoughts I was afraid you might despise, Except they were already past concealing That night, that morning which was so revealing.

So, Saturday night, or really Sunday morning, Unheeding of discretion's desperate cries, My arms enfolded you without a warning, Saturday night, or really, Sunday morning.

RECOGNITION

One year I found I had a need for needing.
But no desire for wifery and breeding.
That's why I found the look you gave so haunting:
It said so clearly you were wanting wanting.

THREE YEARS LATER

I'll tell you a sad story for a joke?
This year I picked dewberries where they grew
And twined their vines amid the poison oak.
The combination made me think of you.

A MAN'S WORLD

Part 2 by Jan Addison

Her light went out and then he heard her soft hurried step cross the room to the hall door, heard the latch give. Where the hell—where could she be going but to Paige? To confess her sins? Rot. Paige must have known all along, that was what showed in her portrait. But had she laid down the law at last? Could this Off the Floor stuff be a stall?

Curiosity was an itch that drew him back into the room and through the hall door after her. It was only a step across to the other door behind which he could hear a low blur of voices. He found himself braced with one hand against the wall, half crouched, straining his ears in defiance of his own You damned eavesdropping old maid...

Wylie was crying and Paige almost without sound was quieting and comforting her.

"All this for nothing. I can't stand it."

Inarticulate murmurs.

"I can't stop! These awful weeks! Without you, without even telling you. I've done everything, taken everything from him—you don't know how awful it was, I wouldn't even think it, I've tried so hard to blank out and make myself like it, want it, but it was horrible. Horrible. I'll never feel clean again."

Stronger murmurs but still not clear.

"Darling, no! All it did was make me want you more. And I've had to watch what it was doing to you and never make a sign. I've lain there after he's gone and thought I'd die . . . No, no, no! I can't, I won't. It's no use, what's left to try if all this was no good?" Now her sobs were loud and Paige's voice came clear for the first time:

"Hush, beloved, you'll wake him."

"Him? He wouldn't care if I yelled the house down. He'll be snoring like a pig by now, the—" She broke off with a choking snarl.

He pushed himself upright and without caution blundered along the corridor, down a step to the broad hall and across to his door. Boards creaked, his latch snapped loudly. He didn't give one bloody damn. Christ! The putrid lezzies, using him like a dose of salts to cure what ailed Wylie. And he never suspecting, lame-brained bat-blind drivelling idiot. Yaeh!

A red mist pulsed between him and the clothing he jerked on and the other clothing he threw by the armful into his big case. Under his breath he kept up a lurid cursing. It was only when he found himself in the studio with palette knife raised above Wylie's painted body that a cold gaggng sanity stopped him.

A couple of grands' worth of paint smeared on canvas here. One lunatic rage wasn't worth it. They weren't worth it, the stinking scum. He'd clear out of here and still collect his fee, every red cent of it, by Jesus. They'd pay that much for trying him as a purge.

He locked his door and the door from the studio into the hall. Then he went fast down the gallery flight to the yard and through the back lane to the highway. As he stumbled along the rutted track scenes flared in his head like a landscape under lightning. Dirty boy vaulting out of the yellow jalopy. Those two damn dykes fencing. Paige, Lord of the Manor, and how! Cousin Spencer's self portrait in the library, smirking little pansy-By God! Emily Spencer Courtney, Paris, 1900, was Cousin Spencer! And Wylie was her daughter, by the devil knew what faggot in that Paris crew. They handed him diagrams and he'd been too goddam dumb-He lashed out so hard at an interfering branch that the skin of his knuckles stayed on the bark. Then he broke out on to the highway and ran for Tolman.

No lucky pickup tonight. But fury pushed him hard and the few lights showed up in time to let him read midnight through a closed shop's window. There was a light in the station and he pounded on that window until the bald head in a green eyeshade came up blearily from the desk blotter where it had dropped. No phoning. thank you, no blatting female operator was coming in on this, but this little guy he drank with in that back room three weeks ago, he could be bought, he could be made to see the message as a he-man's practical joke.

"Here's for a wire," he said, shoving a bill across the shelf. "And the change is yours for keeping your face shut about it. Been doing an art job out at Uplands for a month and got to have a break. But my bread and butter says it's got to look natural. Give me a blank." He scribbled rapidly and pushed the yellow sheet in. "Get this through fast-answer prepaid -and remember that answer's got to be at Uplands first thing in the morning."

"Sure thing, sure thing," piped the old coot with a senile cackle, and his hand with a missing finger raked in bill and message. "Send it soon's 38 goes through. Rich'll get the answer when he opens up at six. Won't know it ain't a straight SOS, not from me."

"O.K. How soon does 38 go?"

"Twelve-ten. On time."

"Fine. See you across at Ab's when you're closed up and buy you a couple."

"Sure thing, sure thing. Won't nobody know we seen each other."

The talk with a male, any male, made him feel a little cleaner. He was well in the lead when the old fellow came into Ab's hole at twelve-fifteen They drank hard for a quarter of an hour, but liquor could not release him from the pit where he was thrashing. When he got up to go the old man lurched to his feet.

"How you gonna get back to Uplands? Didn't see no car."

"Walk."

"How about me takin' you? I go out Toms Forge road." There was calculation in his eye.

"All right." A bit saner now, he wanted time to get his painting gear in order. For though this would look like a temporary leave he was not coming back, and his things must be in shape to be shipped by amateurs. He paid the fellow off at the gate and hiked along the drive and across the lawn to reach the back stair-

"Mr. Ashburn-" A dark figure came to its feet on the verandah.

He literally jumped, but knew at once it was Paige.

"Come here please. I must talk to you."

At once he was blind with fury again. He made the verandah in two strides and stood facing her, not speaking.

"I'm sure that a couple of hours ago you were listening outside my bedroom door. You made no effort to leave quietly," she said in a voice like slate on slate. "I'm afraid you had an unpleasant experience of the adage that listeners hear no good of themselves, and I regret it."

Was she trying to remember the rest of the speech she'd obviously rehearsed these two hours or did she expect an answer? She

wouldn't get it.

"I imagine you heard enough to grasp one of the reasons you were invited to Uplands. I assure you it was only one. Our interest in your portrait work was paramount and has shown itself more than justified. I have been into the studio while you were out-" The red wheels began to spin again before his eyes and the spate of curses to rise in his throat. Sneaking in the back way, the snooping bitch. "And I find all your work even better than I had realized. We have already discussed terms and I left a check for you that will square us on that score. But I think you will understand that after tonight Wylie would find it-painful to see you again soon. She has gone to bed ill and means to keep to her room tomorrow. At the risk of damaging our region's reputation for hospitality I am going to ask you whether you could leave without too much inconvenience by the four o'clock train tomorrow."

She recited it glibly enough but he gloated over signs that it didn't come easy.

"I'll leave with pleasure by the 9:15 a.m. And now that you've made your speech I'll make mine. The listener hearing no good of himself is rich in view of what I did hear. Your reputation, you two, in your own region or anybody else's, from now on is right in my hands. You might remember that."

She laughed quietly. "We have lived here all our lives, Mr. Ashburn, exactly as we are living now. Decently, happily, constructively. Our servants and our friends know us well. You couldn't harm us with anyone who matters to us. And we are independent enough to be quite indifferent to those who don't." There was so much dignity and easy confidence in her that he felt as though he had hit out at wind or water. He stiffened. His magazine wasn't empty

"Oh well, it'll still make a good club-car story. And I've ridden with folks on this run who'll enjoy it." He heard her draw a hissing breath and felt her gather herself as if to spring. Now it was he who laughed. "For a gal whose stomach I turned Wylie was pretty good, you know. And about the hottest point a club-car story can have is getting a virgin who's been trained for you by another woman."

She moved so fast that though his eye saw it coming he couldn't dodge completely and she fetched him a blistering slap on the jaw. With a grunt he caught her wrist and twisted it down until she made a sound of pain. As her left hand came across to loosen his grip he captured that wrist and forced both arms around and out at a punishing angle so that she was powerless and stood straining a bare six inches from him, her eyes glittering in the dark, her hard shallow breathing hot on his throat. He could hear her teeth grind together.

"Finally," he said with deliberation, "from what I know of your tribe's habits, having had the real thing will spoil her a bit for the imitation."

Her voiceless snort of scorn cut across the end of his words. "Oh, I'll grant you the spirit may be intact," he spat out, "but after all I altered the topography a bit."

At that she flung herself toward him with such violence that only a miracle saved his balance, but saving it distracted him from her intent and she achieved it-she bit. Where she aimed the attack was doubtful, but as he bent forward automatically against the shock of her weight she caught him on the lip. He tasted blood and felt a warm drop start. With that his head seemed to explode. He caught her in a rib-crushing grip and forced her down and back until she was helpless, and then tearing her clothes he took her brutally on the rough boards of the verandah.

With a suddenness that undid him her bones melted, she went so limp in his arms that she felt small and he would have thought she fainted but for the high-tension current that burned from her to every nerve-end in his body. None of Wylie here, this was all woman. There was but one entity in the pounding storm that left him at last barely conscious, the backs of his hands stinging with tiny slinters from the old wood.

The five mile sprint to Tolman and all the recklessly gulped bad liquor caught up with him now. He lay in a stupor that lurched with fantastic drunken movement for perhaps a minute, perhaps ten. When at last he opened his eyes she was gone. Slowly he gathered himself together, stumbled around outside and up his private flight.

He was square with the lot of them now!

CHAPTER II

Hiking along up Seventh Avenue to Penn Station Jerry was stopped at Thirtieth by the traffic light and from habit looked nervously at his watch. Then he laughed and relaxed. Better than half an hour before his train could even be called. One way to get there on time, having the second-hand boys come and remove the furniture from under you. He gave a bark of laughter remembering Alix's face yesterday when she heard he was selling out. What did she expect, that he'd pay storage on the stuff for Auld Lang Syne? Fifteen years old and cheap to begin with. She'd made off with all the good pieces herself four years ago.

Then as he crossed the pavement he saw Sandra's face too, against his will, and winced. Rotten deal for her all around. And for him, having her last sight of him like that. And so damned needless, if Alix had just given them five minutes to themselves. But not she! Not with that court order behind her. What did she think he'd do, kidnap the voungster?

He could still phone and leave a decenter last impression. He turned into the drug store at the right of the long arcade and shut himself into a booth. He had all but dialed Operator when he remembered Sandy would still be with Alixstaying there for the weekend. Not so simple as reaching her at school, but he'd do it anyhow and be damned to Alix. With his finger

in the first letter, it struck him he'd better know just what he was going to say. Nothing that could be taken as changing his tune about Nethercote, not at any price! Just that he guessed he'd sounded pretty grim yesterday and wanted to make it a nicer good-bye.

He recognized the girl's voice at the apartment switchboard and asked for Sandra. "Not Mrs. Ash burn. This is Sandy's father calling." He heard the buzz of the apartment phone and Elvira's plaintive answer and the operator precisely repeating his message. "I'll see if Miss Sandy's in," Elvira said indifferentlyas if she mustn't know in that precious two-byfour joint! And then after a bare moment, "No, you tell Mr. Ashburn she isn't here." He slammed the phone into its cradle and cursed. No use pretending they might be out, the two of them, Elvira would have said that at once. So now he wasn't to be permitted to speak to

He went on along the arcade and into the Savarin bar. The tarnished gold of dim light and the formless blue drift of smoke made it like stepping into that lubricating oil that was always two colors. What a trick to try painting it, he thought idly, finding a stool at the end of the bar. But neither color problems nor the double bourbon he emptied too fast could crowd out Sandra's face last night, blank as a Laurencin mask with those great blots of eyes, but with none of a Laurencin's silly placidity. He saw it white as paper and the eyes black with shock that left no iris visible at all. Just as he could feel her shrink away from the arm that reached to draw her to him. If only she were old enough to understand woman's language-at fifteen. sixteen she wouldn't pull away. But that pitiful string-bean of a thirteen year old body-what went on inside them at that age? And what would they all have made of her before he saw her again?

He was done with his second double and a little tight and glad of it when he felt a hand clapping him on the shoulder and heard a half familiar high voice crowing heartily, "Well if it isn't old Ashes again! Didn't see you come in. Going or coming, fella?"

"Hiya, Cart," he said without enthusiasm. "Going. For good, I hope."

"Where to for God's sake? What's up?"

"Oh, southwest, Mexico maybe-follow my nose-"

"Sounds like you're taking my train, I'm off home from a press conference. Come on, you haven't got all day!"

If he hadn't a reservation to New Orleans he'd lie out of it and take the next one. But what

did it matter? He followed Carter out and down the escalator, thinking: Might as well get completely tight on the Daily Banner and get Cart talking. Forget the whole stinking business that way. Remember only a fresh start. Strong sunlight, no more of this oil-bath stuff. Hot color . . . horses Men.

Before they were under the Hudson they were holed in a corner of the club car and he was nursing another drink. And Carter was getting wound up nicely to play his whole twelve records with no bother about changing.

"Say listen. That set-up in Virginia where you spent that month making hev-hev. Last time I saw you-Richmond to Washington, remember? You were waving a check for a couple grand and spouting quite a varn. I'll admit now I thought it could be a talking jag. but next year I heard this tale that made me sit up and tip the hat to you. What you hear from Uplands these days, anything?

"God no. And God forbid."

"Wait now, I've got something may change your tune."

"O.K., spill it," he said half-heartedly. Not that Cart needed any priming with that glint in his eye. Another round of drinks and pulling out of Newark. He hoped it would be a long long time before he saw it again. Or Rahway. Elizabeth, Metuchen and the rest of the bleak list clear through and out of Washington . . . Sun-hot light-horses-brown women who didn't know the English language.

"Remember old Ed? Well, his wife has a cousin down Bainbridge County way and we had dinner at Ed's one time she was visiting. Wife's birthday, everybody high, someone started county gossip, and before you could spit we were yoicks and away. Pricked up my ears when I heard Cooper-Courtney, and by tossing in two cents' worth of what you gave me I kept it coming. Quite a tale, brother, quite a tale. Remember your girl Wylie?"

"Yeah, I remember the damn dyke all right." "Wait a minute! Ever occur to you she might have produced a little specimen of your manhood?"

"Christ that's a laugh." But he came to in spite of himself. "What you trying to tell me?"

"Little county dirt, that's all. Seems she and Courtney adopted a kid about a year after that visit. Two old maids should know they can't work that game and not set every bitch's tongue in seven counties wagging. Not that they didn't play it mighty neat. Migh-ty neat, I'm telling vou."

"Yeah?" Jerry went on pretending indifference but he wanted to get this. He let his drink stand, and felt Carter's eve probing.

"Of course I got it backward and upside down, you know women, but trust an old reporter. Seems your gals announce they're out to adopt a kid. They go on a summer trip to all the good kennels and come back 'disappointed.' Then Cooper takes a leave from her school and goes up to Washington for some high-falutin' course in Pageantry and doesn't come back till February. Next summer they start out again on the pup-hunt and by golly in September back they come with a cute whelp looks about a year old. At least they give out it's a year old, but they don't hold any christening parties, and that's when the local bitches begin to give tongue and sprain their brains with dates.

"You figure it. You're there in March. Women gone all summer. Who's to know if they're holed in somewhere so your gal can be sick as she wants? Supposed to be all over the U.S.A. but you can get letters mailed from anywhere if you pay for it. Then that leave. Of course plenty of folks saw Cooper in Washington, but you get a top price wardrobe-or just one of these damn beaver coats-talk about Elizabethan court costumes! So baby comes for Christmas per schedule, and incidentally Courtney was in Washington from Thanksgiving on, Cooper didn't come home. Your gal, being the athletic type, is spry as a cricket by February and the baby's farmed out somewhere. By the end of that summer the kid's a good nine or ten months old, and if she's as bright as she ought to be by all accounts of her paw and maw. who's to say she's under a year if they don't see her for more than ten minutes? Well? Don't you think you better stop off and pay your daughter a little visit?"

Jerry shook his head with a superior grin. "You newspaper characters, all Winchells under the skin. Never heard a better string of circumstantial evidence, but it's all hogwash, and I should know. I haven't any daughter in Virginia-He bit off or anywhere else, wincing as he thought again of Sandra. "And how do I know? Because my last night there my athletic type was in her own cute phrase Off the Floor. Or is it the

"Dammit, are you sure?" Carter's face looked like a baby's ready to cry.

"I couldn't be surer," he said bitterly.

"Well. One sweet hunk of deduction down the drain." Carter emptied his glass.

There was a sudden diabolic click in Jerry's head. "Where'd you say Paige Courtney was all this time?" he asked thickly, making his voice as jeering as he could. "Anybody think of her?"

"Don't rub it in, you baboon. Right at home running the county as usual, when she wasn't up to Washington holding her girl-friend's hand." Then he eyed Jerry with drunken concentration. "Say, why'd you ask? You wouldn't be the type that sleeps with grandma, would you?"

"Want your face pushed in?" Jerry could breathe again, and in sheer relief beckoned the waiter and ordered. "Either that brat is just as advertised, hundred percent adopted, or Wylie found her another male in the bushes pretty damn quick. If she did here's to him, he needs it."

They were on the fast stretch above Wilmington before a chapter of Carter's own True Confessions ran down to a stop and he asked in a hazy effort at reciprocal interest, "What about you? Where's that kid of yours, out of the snob's paradise vet?"

Jerry was drunk and knew it, he shouldn't talk. But something about that pale blue reach of the Delaware, little old skeletons of fruit trees sprinkled with pinkish bloom outlined against it, filled him with a washy softness. Knowing it for maudlin self pity wasn't enough to stop him.

"Haven't any kid any more."

"My God! Not-

"Oh, no, she's alive enough. But not mine any longer. Goddam Nethercote Hall fixed it. Hated that stinkhole before I ever went down there. Healthy man has an instinct. After I'd seen it, said I'd see the kid dead first. But-women! More I talked, more set Alix got. Said any place I felt that way about must be just right for a Nice Girl. I say I won't foot the bills, I'll take it to court first. She says all right, just do that, and sends around her legal eagles to tell my man they've dug up more of same as got her the divorce. Long and short of it was, got me declared unfit guardian, no chance to tell what I know in court. So now-" He gave a shrug that all but spoiled his equilibrium. "Nethercote stew gets Sandy and Godalone knows what'll become of the poor li'l devil. But it won't be on my money. Going where I won't need money. They can't collect support from no income, let 'em try. Can't get blood from stone. I'll dig ditches to buy paints. Paint enough to buy me frijoles. Get me a Mex wench. They say I'm unfit guardian, by the jumping jesus I'll be unfit guardian. Waiter!"

lerry turned off the shower, towelled casually, came out of the bathroom and looked himself over in the door mirror. First long mirror in four years. His body was hard and brown, damn shame to cover it with clothes. The seersucker suit he'd picked up in New Orleans hung like pyjamas, brought out all the gray in his hair, made him five years older. But it was what so'thn genlmen were wearing, it seemed. Like to see a bunch of the characters in that

lobby downstairs in the denim shorts that had been his costume most of these last years. Sweet lot of plucked capons they'd make.

Down below his windows newsboys were beginning lazily to call the Daily Banner. He reached for the phone but let his hand fall. Cart wouldn't fancy being received in the raw—he snorted, imagining Carter's face—and he wasn't going to dress till he had to, not for anyone. But he'd like to show Cart his comeback. And Sandra's letter. . . . That could wait. Maybe before he left he'd be showing Cart Sandy herself, if she turned out as good as she sounded.

He sprawled in a wicker chair and reached for the letter. He'd never been one to re-read letters much or keep them. He wished now he hadn't torn the others up as fast as they came, he needed them for comparison, for unless memory was tricking him she'd grown up in the six months since the last one. Or how long was it? He thought back. The Christmas card wasn't much more than a note, last real letter must have been late August or early September. from that camp. Paige and Wylie seemed to be quite the lady managers now, Wylie assistant headmistress at the school and then they start a camp. Imagine kidding a sixteen year old into fancying herself a counsellor, earning her own way. Damned frauds.

He made a bad-medicine grimace and pulled out the pages, ignoring by an effort of will the beautifully engraved school letter-head.

Dear Daddy.

It seems odd to be calling you that when I have grown up so much, but that is the way I still always think of you. I am writing this early because I know it takes a long time for mail to reach you through that New York address and I do hope you can come to my graduation so I want to give you plenty of notice. Mother is sure you are still in Mexico and I know that is a dreadfully long trip, and I'm afraid you don't like the commencement sort of thing anyway, but I feel this is such an important occasion in my life, I hope you will give me the very special present of coming if you possibly can.

I remember the last time I saw you how upset you were about my coming to Nethercote, and so I want you to see I am not the kind of person you were afraid I would be. Also I would give anything to have my own Father here for my commencement. Of course Mother and John will be here and John is wonderful to me, I like him so much, but that is not the same as being related. And there are so many important things I

want to tell you that I can't write about. So please do come.

Your loving daughter, Sandra

P.S.—Perhaps you think it would be awkward you and John being here at the same time, but lots of girls' mothers and fathers are both married again and they all come, and this place seems to make everybody feel all right about it.

P.S.2—I know I have thanked you before for all the things you've sent me but I want to again, especially the *lovely* pictures. The one of the fiesta is over my desk and the mountains are by my bed where I can see them every morning and imagine I am out there and can ride with you in that sunrise. When Anny's mother said "Now there is real art," it made me so proud and happy I cried. I wish I had copies of all you ever painted.

Lovingly, Sandy

Clever little devil! And not one mention of Wylie or Paige—how wonderful they were, at home they made her at Uplands, how much they'd done for her, how darling 'little Cleo' was. That's what made him rip the other letters to shreds. Well, maybe she had grown up, got her eyes opened, that could sober her. A good stiff dose of disillusion at seventeen ought to be healthy after all the pink cotton wool. How soon could he get her to himself? He'd better get busy on the phone.

He got the school readily enough and asked for Sandy Ashburn.

"Who's calling, please?" A professional greeter's voice.

"Her father."

There was a pause and the voice said a shade less cordially, "And the name please?"

Well! Didn't they know by now? "N. Jerome Ashburn," he said with heavy irony, "but don't tell Sandy, I want to surprise her."

"Oh. Mr. Ashburn. Of course. I'm sorry, but I didn't know your voice. I'll call Alexandra."

He got it. They'd heard John Hobart's voice often enough. Who'd they imagine this was—the wolf after Little Red Riding Hood? Or—good God! Was Sandy old enough to have men gate-crashing?

Then a middling-low light voice: "Hello? Sandra Ashburn speaking."

"Hello there. This is your dad."

"Oh Daddy! I'm so glad you've come! Where are you?"

She had grown up all right. That was no

child's surprise and delight, a good deal more of a little woman's relief at hearing she wasn't stood up.

"Richmond. How about my picking you up this afternoon and running you in here to dinner? I'm renting a car."

"Oh Daddy, that would be wonderful, but —how long are you staying?"

This took him by surprise. He had notions of carrying her off to Washington or Atlantic City for a bit, but he didn't mean to say so at this stage. "Not sure exactly. Long enough to see you graduate anyhow."

"Well I hope so! And of course over tomorrow night."

"Yes, even tomorrow night." Strong irony again.

"Oh then that's wonderful. I could be all packed by two or three tomorrow and we could have a real visit then. Could you do that?"

"Certainly. But I'd rather like to get a sight of you before that."

"Oh Daddy of course. Didn't you get the invitation and the program?"

"Yes. Do I need them?"

There was a brief blank silence. "Well yes, the invitation, but—about the program. Didn't you notice, Class Day is this afternoon at three. And then the garden-tea, and the play tonight, and there wouldn't be time for us to get in to Richmond and back between—"

"You mean I'm supposed to take in all that?" he fairly barked.

"Well—I hoped you would. You see I think that part of it gives you more of an idea about Nethercote than graduation even—I mean, that's pretty much alike everywhere, isn't it, but these other things—" Her maturity had leadked away fast, she sounded so like herself at nine that he was sorry for his disappointed sharpness. Though after all he had come a couple of thousand miles to see her.

"Sure, I'll come—maybe I was just pulling your leg."

"Oh Daddy that's marvelous. I'm not sure I can meet you because you couldn't get out here much before three now, could you, and I have to get dressed and all, but I'll find you the minute the program's over and be with you for the tea. And Daddy, about dinner tonight, Paige and Wylie are having us all over there—Mother and John and me—it's sort of a pick-up supper between things, and they've been wishing you were here for it too, so you're invited without their calling you back or anything. You'll come, won't you."

Now it was he who let a blank moment pass while he swung between profane refusal and curiosity. He'd like indeed to get a look at the whole kit and bilin' of them—Alix and her second catch, Paige and Wylie and their brat. Why not?

"Yes, I'll come. While I'm socializing might as well go the whole hog. But I'm telling you, young woman, a Class Day, a tea, a dinner and a play all at one stretch is some graduation present from this desert Indian."

She broke into a half hysterical giggle of relief. "Daddy, you're wonderful! I can't wait to see you."

He looked at the clock. Plenty of time to dress and make it by three. He wouldn't risk arriving early and getting entangled. His timing was so neat that something chimed the hour as he was stopped at the gate by a liveried Negro. Parking space in the grounds was full. Following instructions he left the car with others on a green stretch of roadside and strolled across lawns to a spot behind the last row of folding chairs, also full, on a gentle slope. Music was tinkling out from a shell-backed and flowerbanked platform set with rows of white chairs, and from behind shrubbery near one of the buildings a single file of girls began to move in the stylized rhythm of a bridal procession. Trust women to make anything look like a wedding!

This, he thought cynically when the first half dozen were in sight, was nothing but a damn fashion parade, with most of them so ruffled and flowered you couldn't even guess what was in the package. How long would it take at this distance to spot Sandra under the disguise? But they'd been taught to walk-and to keep their feet out of those fool long skirts even on grass and going up steps, and the big nosegays took care of their hands, a real problem that, as any portraiter knew. And some of them were definitely worth looking at! Not even flounces could spoil that pre-Raphaelite with the corn-colored mop shimmering down to her shoulders, nor the tall erect brunette in ripe watermelon. The back row was full now, and whoever assigned places had an eye for color, they were stacking up into a creditable palette, even the flowered prints.

Then came a red-head in dulled shrimp pink, and he itched for paints. No one but an artist would have dared to set that color against the crest of acid-washed copper. She moved to the end of the front row and a cool little shadow followed her, in the silver-indigo of wood smoke below a demure ash-blonde thatch—Sandra, by God! He lost the rest of the procession for staring at her. So slim she looked tall, though she wasn't, and pale as a moth—still something of a Laurencin about that coloring and her look of a dreamy little sphinx. Funny

daughter for a lusty devil like him, but all right just the same, a good body in its small way and she knew how to manage it. And the ends of that thick bang and bob were curved by nature, not Elizabeth Arden, praise Allah, and the straight fall of chiffon somehow repeated the hair's effect of rich simplicity. Who'd known enough to turn her out like that? Not Alix. Yes, by heaven she'd do!

Now they were all in place and an invisible chorus struck up a sentimental song. Looking at the sheet that had been put into his hand at the gate he saw there was to be a pageant representing the Past of the class, then a Prophecy, a Valedictory Poem, and the Alma Mater. Lord...

But after all it wasn't so bad. Whoever staged the dancing wasn't sentimental—would it be Wylie, with her Pageantry? There were all ages of girls and all kinds of dances in the sequence, even some neat humor in spots. The Prophecy was a total loss, though it raised waves of young laughter, but the poem moved him to a private cynical grin—no youngster wrote that! The magnetic little copper-head had something, though, she was delivering it with a power and restraint beyond anything expected from an adolescent, and with a voice like that the stage would probably get her...

And what would get Sandra after this? Westchester County debut? Ye gods! But there'd probably be little he could do about it, her inviting him to this shindig didn't mean he was back on the board of advisors, and she'd be her own boss in a matter of months anyhow... While he was lost in thought applause broke out again, and then the audience rose with a great clacking of loose-jointed chairs for the final song.

Almost at once he spotted Paige Courtney. Height, dark haughty head-some salt in the pepper now-nobody could miss her. As the crowd broke up and began to flow toward a long table with punch bowls she turned and he dodged to avoid her eye, trying to locate Sandra among the scattering girls. But evading Paige brought him into line with her companion-Alix! Groomed and sleeked down to her idea of a Powers girl. She saw him and her eyebrows flashed up in just the old way, but as he grinned impudently back he felt his arm grabbed and found Sandra lit with excitement beside him. While his head was bent for a good kiss and her token return, Wylie appeared out of the crowd, Paige and Alix reached them, and he was sunk under a wave of chatter.

As he expected, nothing came of the next half hour except an endurance test, with all the women very bright and unconcerned and Sandra growing more and more flushed with her efforts to play catalyst. He met John Hobart, who looked like nothing so much as a small-college professor, and he had considerable chance to study 'little Cleo,' as sturdy and solid as Sandra was fragile. Her blunt freckled profile had an odd familiarity, though he couldn't catch any resemblance to Wylie's. Nor to Paige's either for that matter. He was struck most by her eyes, round and the mixed color of agate, showing gold flecks when she smiled and thunder blue when she didn't. Could they possibly derive from Wylie's sea-blue irises?

At last the mob began to thin, and after a brief discussion of getting to Uplands he found himself in possession of Sandra—but also of Cleo, who to his annoyance seemed to stick to her like a leech. Oh well, the kid wouldn't have the damping effect of one of her elders. She tagged into the dormitory for the five minutes it took Sandra to change from long Chiffon to short linen, and she scrambled into the car before he saw what she was up to and sat in the middle, 'so Sandy's dress won't get crushed,' though the seat was generous for three. The tactics of a jealous boy!

The first few minutes on the road were all excited chatter about the program and the proper turnings to take for Uplands. Then Sandra asked him politely about Mexico. He tried to cull details least likely to startle her, but switched as soon as he could to the subject of his own interest. "What are you going to do when you leave here?"

Sandra had turned her eyes to him while he talked. Now she watched the road with a little excited smile. "John and Mother have asked me to go to Lake George with them till camp opens."

Camp? Same as last summer?"

She really lighted up. "Yes, I'll be a senior counselor, isn't that grand?"

"Aren't you pretty young?"

"I'm only six months under age. Paige and Wylie say it's all right for someone they know as well as they do me—or Anny and Joan."

"How long till camp starts?"

"Three weeks."

"Well—" But he didn't feel like broaching his own little project yet, not with Cleo to report it back to headquarters as soon as they reached Uplands. "And what are you going to do next year?"

She was silent for a minute, while Cleo between them bounced and swelled with excitement. "Well it's supposed to be a secret till announcements are made to morrow, but I guess families are an exception." And then turning a radiant face—she was the color of a spring-beauty when she lit up—she bubbled, "I have a scholarship to Worthington!"

"Where's Worthington?"

"Why, the woman's college in Richmond. Isn't that marvelous?"

"I don't know about that, sounds a bit ingrowing to me. Four years here and then no farther away than the dooryard. Won't you be getting kind of provincial?"

She drooped, and Cleo gave him a furious scowl. "I don't think so. And anyway there's the scholarship."

"That isn't the only place that offers them, is it? Try for any others?"

"No, because this one just came. Besides, there's no place I'd rather be." And then politely again, "Where would you like me to go, Daddy?"

"Oh, clear across the continent. Lots of good universities on the west coast."

She was startled. "But—that would be so dreadfully far away from—everyone."

"I might show up now and then," he said offhand, but he panicked at the thought of doing this every few months, even at a good co-ed university.

"Of course—that would be wonderful, Daddy," she tried to make it convincing, "but I couldn't get a scholarship now for next year, and then the trip back and forth would be so expensive and all."

Opposition needled him to reckless lengths. "That might be managed. I've got a good backlog of canvasses stored up now, going to hunt a dealer pretty soon. I guess I could stake you." Scoring for once against the lot of them would be cheap at the price.

"Thank you, Daddy, I really am grateful and I really will think about it." Her voice trailed off.

"But you shan't go away!" Cleo burst out, and turned fiercely on him. "You can't take her way off to California or someplace! We won't let you!"

Sandra laid a calming hand on the bare knee. "Hush, honey-bun, don't worry."

That was his answer all right. She might promise politely to think about it, but the kid had nothing to worry about.

"Oh! Here—" Sandra cried, "This is the Uplands turn, don't you remember?"

With a squealing of brakes he made it, skidding on the tarvia of the 'black road,' and now he recognized the half remembered curves and the honeysuckle-covered stone fence. In another minute he was into the driveway and came sooner than he expected upon the house.

It was more charming among the summer green than it had been in March, but he had one bad moment of recalling his final sight of it. Thank God the veranda in summer dress held few reminders.

Wylie instead of Mame was at the door this time, and he was struck as he had been an hour ago by her composure, her share of Paige's almost regal assurance. She still wore blue but she was well covered. "So you remembered the way," she laughed with cool formal gaiety.

"With Sandy's help," he mimicked her triteness, and found himself walking again into the genial living room. Alix was lounging comfortably with a cigarette between her fingers, Paige was dropping fruit for planter's punch into tall glasses on a tray, and John Hobart stirred a frosted pitcher with a more practiced hand than matched his classroom air. Jerry saw that his portrait of Wylie hung at the far end of the room, balancing Paige's at the near end. The impressionist landscape was still above the fireplace and opposite was Cousin Spencer's self portrait. They certainly had decided to display the clan.

While the drinks were being poured Mame came in with claret lemonade for the girls. Her hair was white now, her tan face more impassive than ever, and she barely murmured a greeting that ended with 'Mist' Ashbu'n suh.'

"I think I should be grown up enough for a real drink," Sandra threw out airily, and he seconded with a hearty "Hear, hear!"

Alix stirred and frowned, but it was Wylie who answered. "Not with that play coming up, hon." She threw an arm over Sandra's shoulders with a quick intimate pressure and he saw pink mount to the girl's hair.

"Good lord, do seniors have to perform?"
His voice came out more sharply than he intended in anger at that possessive gesture.

"Oh that's nothing, Daddy, we gave the thing twice in April, we've hardly had to rehearse at all. Anyhow, we *love* it."

He accepted his glass and drank thirstily, thankful that John mixed them strong. "What's the play?" he asked, trying to hold down his irritation.

"It's called 'Maupin Moderne,'" Sandra began eagerly, "and—"

"It's called what?"

"Keep your hair on, Jerry." Alix's supercilious drawl took him back a dozen years.

"And what's it about?" He pointedly ignored her but his own tone was also a reversion.

"Oh, you'll have to wait and see," Sandra gushed nervously, looking at neither of them, "and the wonderful part is, Anny wrote it! My roommate. I almost feel I helped." "The girl who read the poem this afternoon?"

"Yes, she wrote that too, she's marvelous."

"She didn't write it without help."

"But she did," Paige said with authority. "She's one of the most remarkable girls the school has ever had. And she's graduating at fifteen."

"She frightens me," Wylie made a movement with her shoulders. "It's simply uncanny for a child like that-I mean a child in years -to be so horribly mature. Iane Chase thinks beyond doubt she has real genius."

"I'm skeptical of these child geniuses. I've seen 'em in art classes where I can spot the master hand."

"You're just like all the rest." That was Alix again, languid and superior. "But I've seen something of young Anny. Jane Chase hardly touched the play, and she saw that poem for the first time last night at seven. That I know."

"Jane's a wonder," Wylie broke in, "a born teacher's gift for bringing out all that's in them. And it's not just what she's put there. You wait."

"I'm waiting." He shrugged and held out his glass readily for John Hobart's refill.

The man gave him a faint dry smile as welcome as the drink after all the cackle of female defense. "I don't know much about genius and I don't know how well you'll like the show, but the kid has something," he said, and Jerry heard the echo of his own thought this afternoon. But he wasn't being sidetracked from what he meant to learn.

"I still don't know what the play's about." He turned on Sandra. "What's your part?"

"Well-you've read the book, Daddy?"

"Sure, years ago. Everybody does."

"Well, Anny's kept just the three main characters. All the setting and details are modern, but she's kept the same names. There's Maupin-Anny plays that herself, and wait till you see her!-and Albert, and Rosette. I'm Rosette."

He had already half emptied his second glass, and he felt suddenly large and free of all the afternoon's ruffles and nonsense. "That's lucky for you, young lady," he let his normal hard laugh out without restraint, "because if you had a part in pants, so help me I'd carry you off under my arm and lock you up in Richmond till the show was over if it brought all Nethercote Hall down in rubble on its foundations." He felt quite equal to doing it.

There was complete silence. Good God, after the pains he'd taken to keep it funny! He saw faces gone expressionless, Paige's eyes on her drink, Wylie's dropped to her lap and the knuckles of her fist there showing white, Alix's

eyebrows up and her cold blank eyes recalling 'It appears you were raised in a stable' from one of their old rows. John Hobart was eveing him with the sardonic interest of a poker player out of the game but watching for an ace to spill from his sleeve.

What mattered was that dazed mask of Sandra's, the eyes blank gray with distaste. Like

Then, "I think you're beastly!" exploded from Cleo with a smack of her flat sole on the parquet. Looking at her for the first time he saw her knotted fists, the freckles standing out sharp on her distorted face, chin jutting, pupils shrunk to pin points leaving the irises shallow and stony. Suddenly he saw himself at six, as in the midst of one of his blind rages Aunt Lou had swung him around to face a mirror and said, 'There, just look at yourself.' And instead of shame he'd felt a savage exultation. By God, she was the livest thing there. He wished she were his daughter.

"Good for you, kid. I am beastly," he said with another large laugh, and the masks cracked and the stopped reel began to move

Mame was standing in the doorway. "Dinnah's served," she said tonelessly.

At the play by dint of stubborn politeness he maneuvered the three women and then John Hobart into a row of seats, leaving himself insulated from his one-time bedmates. He wondered how John would take that nugget of intelligence. And how many gals he had had. And how he was making out with Alix. His eye ranged over the pretentiously festive audience and his lip curled, but he could take some pleasure here and there in a woman's ripe face or a young back well exposed above an evening frock. Then the curtain went up, and he settled back to be bored in the darkness.

But his attention was caught at once by the professional economy of the scene. The rounded corner of a bar, two high stools, part of a mirror reflecting dim figures dancing offstage, muted jazz from a recording-it caught the atmosphere of a complete set though it occupied only a narrow gap between two curtains. Sandra came on, and a boy, quarreling. She was wholly different from either the lovely wisp on the platform this afternoon or the earnest little thing in crisp linen afterwards. She was slick, blase, spoiled, valuing her escort for his looks and money and the smart fun he provided. And he was a male replica. Their dialogue and business were as economical as the set.

In a matter of seconds a shift of hangings produced another segment of scene, a good-

night on the front steps of a white-pillared mansion. And now the two youngsters' sophisticated necking had gone stale on them. The more they clung and struggled for what they craved the more it eluded them. Jerry found the hair pricking at the back of his neck as some protecting wall cracked and let in memory of a feverish deviled time that hadn't come back to him these couple of decades . . .

It wasn't until the curtain came down on the act that he remembered Sandra's partner was a girl. Then he recalled the handsome brunette in watermelon pink. A damned near perfect impersonator, but he loathed her for it, she was eternally spoiled for him. He had half a mind to leave now and skip the rest of the unwholesome business. But that moment of cracking through into boyhood held him. He actually wanted to see what happened next to that kid on the stage . . .

And a girl wrote that? A fifteen year old? Hell! And yet-why hadn't any other stage adolescent he'd seen done this to him? He

Act Two gave him the copper-headed genius herself as 'Theodore,' and something he hadn't felt much these four years came to life in him -one artist's hard excited appraisal of another. For by God she was managing to play a girl playing the man. He and John Hobart were right, she had something. Her 'Theodore' caught Rosette on the rebound from the spoiled brat Albert, and played a straight bid for a pal in skirts that started that reminiscent prickling again. And the way Sandra as Rosette responded and gave, swept him with such a memory of Alix that first summer at Hyannis that he couldn't wait to tell Sandra she'd been born of just that. She'd certainly seen none of it in the two of them later, poor little devil .

And then a ten-minute passage behind the scenes of As You Like It, and Maupin in skirts caught Albert as neatly as 'Theodore' had Rosette. But now Jerry began to bristle. The red-head was turning too damn cerebral. ... And yet she was still hot stuff too ... Mostly her voice-indoors it had a chance to show what it could do. They were right, one way or another that kid was one in a thousand, she'd end on Broadway sure as shooting.

The third act went against the grain from the start, philosophizing in a big way. And yet 'Theodore's' slick if poetic evasion of Rosette's love-surely that stuck close to Gautier? How could it come back to him so plainly, at least the mood of it, after all these years? Because it was good, that was why-the way any girl ought to turn any other girl off. Some buried memory had him on the qui vive now,

though, and as soon as Maupin began spouting her Declaration of Independence to Albert he began to boil. Highty-tighty dyke! Why couldn't she play the big love scene straight and call it a day? Why drag in a suffragette oration? For that's what is came to, however well coated with poetry and thrills. And then her nobly throwing Rosette and Albert into each other's arms, and curtain on trousered heroine doomed to a life of Sexless Loneliness! Hell and damnation, it gagged him. What that precious babe needed was a good lay.

He wasn't so well insulated from his women that he couldn't see all three of them wiping their eyes. So were others all over the place. Only John Hobart turned a quizzical raised evebrow. He believed he could like that fellowrotten shame Alix had him thrown and tied . . . The everlasting applause and curtain calls gave him time to pull himself around, he'd have to congratulate Sandra somehow, she'd done a good enough job. But when she came she was too high with excitement to have known if he'd quoted the Police Gazette.

Driving in to Richmond in a clean breeze he snapped completely back to normal and gagged again at his own hypnotized lapses into mawkishness. Only went to show what kind of loco-weed sprouted when you shut a bunch of girls up together in a hot-bed. Yup-ee, what that hectic little genius needed was a good piece. Let her find what that would do to her high-flown theorizing. And wouldn't he like to be the one to teach her!

The late solitary hotel breakfast-he'd declined with thanks any more of Uplands-and the long, hot, pompous and deadly commencement session were over at last, but there was another hour to pace and smoke while Sandra changed clothes and finished packing. Not that she needed to be locked, strapped and shipped out today like the rest, for she seemed practically to live at Uplands and Wylie was lieutenant of the whole show here now. But it was the Lake George trip she was packing for, she thought she was leaving with Alix and John tomorrow morning. He was laying about even money as he prowled back and forth between arbor vitae and butterfly bush that she'd be wearing that resort wardrobe on the boardwalk at Atlantic City for the first of her three weeks. Or a few days anyhow. Considering how long he seemed to have lived since this time vesterday, he wasn't sure he could take a whole week himself.

She came out of the wide doorway at last looking washed out and older by a year or two. Maybe it was the white tailored suit, which didn't make him happy, though it was damned becoming with lilac blouse and fixings.

Cutting his eye around at her silent profile as they left the gates he said, "It's good you're through with that for awhile—it's worn you out, all this hoorah and to-do."

"Oh no, Daddy, it's not that." She sat up, trying to look alive. "It's just—last day blues, I guess. You know." She managed some flippancy but it ended on a choke and she looked away out the window.

"You mean you're that sorry to leave the place?"

"Of course I am! When you've lived with people for four years . . . And then, I don't suppose I'll ever be so happy again in my life."

At that he couldn't help throwing back his head and roaring, though he knew she'd probably resent it. "Oh my lordy, puss, your life hasn't even begun."

She gave him the oddest adult-female look with definite pity in it, and that tickled him so that he flung an arm over her shoulders and drew her against him. "You don't know what a good time is yet," he said, and kissed her soundly. He meant if the road ahead stayed clear to repeat the performance, but she stiffened all over and moved away, drawing the back of her fingers secretly across her mouth.

Remembering her response in the play last night he boiled, but he also remembered the look she had given him in the living room at Uplands, and held his tongue. No use getting her back up at the start. "What's the matter—did I spoil your lipstick?"

With a relieved laugh she took out her compact. "Not much. Lucky for you it's the kind that doesn't come off."

He could chuckle at that. "Guess there's nothing wrong with you a little change of scene won't cure. How about running off with me for a few days?"

"What do you mean? When?"

"Oh, beginning now for instance. We can go back for your bags after dinner and take off to—say Atlantic City a day or two, and then stop in New York before I put you on a train for Lake George."

He saw her face stiffen. "Daddy I'm sorry, I couldn't possibly."

"Why not? I've come a couple of thousand miles to get acquainted with you, and Alix and John can have you any time."

"Yes I know, and I am sorry. But you see this is a special commencement present and John's had it planned since Easter. I know I've been at Brewster lots in the short vacations but that was kid stuff, I brought girls home with me and there were swarms of boys running in and out. But this time it's just them and me.

As if I'd come out, sort of."

That showed the fine hand of Alix. "They could still have you a good two weeks," he argued stubbornly.

"No, Daddy, he's invited Paige and Wylie and Cleo ... and Anny up for the last week, and they'll drive me back to camp, so if I went with you I'd hardly be with John and Mother at all, and ... Oh, if I'd only known you were coming! But now I can't just back out at the last minute. You do see, don't you?"

He saw all right: Wylie and Paige, and Sandy preferring them and a Coming-Out to him. But he managed to swallow it. Mustn't wreck the evening if it was all she'd have to remember him by. For by God he wasn't going to hang around all summer waiting for his turn.

"If you'd only let me know," she wailed in the voice of a child unfairly punished, and he saw her begin to dab at her eyes.

"Here, good lord, don't do that. Look, we're coming into Richmond. What's your favorite place to eat?"

She sat up, all adult on the instant, put her face in order and began to draw on her lilac gloves. "Monty's, when I'm really hungry," she said with a rueful laugh. "Isn't it tragic to have the chance and just not be? But their food's wonderful, you'll love it."

"And a bar?"

She nodded. "This state's kind of bar, as John says."

He had forgotten, and groaned. "I thought a drink would do us both good. I'm bound I'll stand you to that much commencement celebration. But wait—Papa fix." At a package store he picked up the best rum he could buy, drove to a curb-service soda fountain and ordered coca-cola. "Hope you like Cuba libras."

She twinkled. "I'm not supposed to know, but I'm crazy about them. Only I haven't had a lot, so—"

"I'll be careful." But he poured fairly liberally. It would do her good to get completely relaxed, and this session must be some sort of fun.

Over the table at Monty's, really quite bearable for a tea room, she began to brighten. "I believe I'm hungry after all," she said, and ordered chicken salad and a parfait. His own steak was all right, and he realized it was about time for nourishment. The buffet on the lawn at Nethercote had been mouse-meat.

Food was doing her good too, there was color in her face now if not exactly light. While they waited for dessert he offered a cigarette which she accepted with a casualness that surprised him. He lit it and his own, hooked an arm over the back of his chair and settled into com-

fort. "Well now," he said, cocking an eyebrow, "I know about the scholarship, and camp, and Lake George. How many more of those important things you couldn't write about are there?"

Her face went startled and grave and he was half sorry, half annoyed at her intensity. These damned hot-beds and their sensitive plants. If he'd had the raising of her...

"Those weren't what I meant." She glanced about taking stock of their privacy, but it was hardly more than late afternoon, the place was almost empty and theirs was a wall table. She leaned forward resting on her forearms and clasped her hands. "What I wanted to talk about was... Uplands."

Oh lord, what now? He wanted another drink "I know you didn't want me to come to Nethercote, but now you've really seen it, the place and the girls and—that play, there's lots I won't need to tell you. You've seen what it does for us."

"Have I?" he growled in his throat, but not loud enough to interrupt her.

"But that dinner last night—everything was so sort of rushed—of course you saw Wylie and Paige and Cleo, but not enough to understand what they mean to me." She paused, drank some water, and locked her hands again. "Daddy, I was pretty young when all that—mess happened before you went away, and of course I wasn't supposed to know, but I couldn't help hearing some when you and Mother and Mr. Elkins got to arguing, even with the doors closed—"

"Yes I know, skip it."

"Well, I got the idea you were even more against Wylie and Paige than the school. And when I got here I simply couldn't understand at all, because they were so absolutely wonderful to me."

The old refrain! But what with rum and excitement her eyes were enormous and they hung on his for every change of expression. He must hold on.

"I tried to get it across in all my letters, but even if you never said anything—I guess because you never did—I felt all the time that you were still against them. And Daddy, you shouldn't be. They've made Cleo and me feel you were—a really remarkable person, and your pictures are hanging all over the house. I wanted to show you last night but there wasn't time. And do you know what Paige did for my commencement present? She had a woman she knows come down from Washington and take big color photographs of every one of them and she gave me the portfolio last night. I was so thrilled I couldn't sleep."

"Well, well!" he said dryly, flattered in spite of himself. And he needn't worry about the gal in D.C. and her negatives, Paige would have seen to that.

Now her parfait and his cherry tart were set before them but she sat twisting her fingers, forgetting to eat. "And they've told me all about that time you were down here..."

Like hell they have, he thought, but let out only "Is that so?" with not too much irony. This should be good.

"Yes. You see last summer there was a girl at camp from Richmond, Peewee Carter, some newspaper man's daughter, and because she said her father knew you I was friendly with her at first. But then one night she got mad at me and started—spilling a lot of dirt some-body in his office or somewhere had told around. The most awful things about—oh, everybody, Wylie and Paige and Cleo . . . and you . . . "She was breathing hard and there were small pink spots as sharp-outlined as the mark of a coin on her cheek bones.

"Come on, eat your ice-cream," he said firmly, for though she hadn't raised her voice anyone looking at them could see her excitement and he wanted no attention drawn to what might be coming. "The rest can wait till we're out in the car."

She shivered and picked up her spoon but laid it down again. "I don't believe I'm hungry any more," she said, and he beckoned the wait-ress and paid the check.

"I told her she'd get sued for libel," she went on as they crossed the pavement, "but she said if things are true you haven't a case, and then I slapped her, so there was kind of a mess. They had her father come down, and he said it was all just drinking-party nonsense he didn't know she'd heard and nobody but a child would take it seriously anyway, but Paige really talked to him and made him take her home."

Driving without comment he stopped quickly at another curb service and mixed a second drink, a stiff one. Then he headed west under her direction and drew up in an isolated corner of the park overlooking the river.

Sandra drew a deep breath. "It's good here," she said in a small voice, "I've always loved this view, so far and so peaceful. It makes ugly things seem—just small and pitiful."

He saw that she was slightly drunk, all to the good at this point. "So that was the end of the mess?" he prompted now.

"It was the end of that nasty little Carter for us. But then Wylie said I'd better know the real truth. So she told me."

"Oh, she did. And what did she tell you

exactly?" Something told him this might not be so good after all. With a long breath she wrapped one leg around the other and locked her hands about her knee as if getting set, but she didn't speak.

"Come on, let's have it."

At that she gave him a bleak look of reproach and turned her eyes again to the far shore. "She told me how long she and Paige had wanted a—wanted to adopt a child. But —but one that would be—really part of the family. Theirs."

"You can give it to me straight, I'm of age."

Pink rose to her hair and her face and voice hardened. "Paige had been wanting their portraits done for a long time too and she spotted your work and knew you were the artist she'd like, and while she was looking up things about you in Washington—" she stopped and swallowed, "the New York papers came out with your divorce from Mother. So you see . . ."

"No, I do not." But by God he was begin-

"Well they thought maybe you'd ... like one of them ... And then if ... anything happened ... maybe you'd marry her. Just long enough ... you know, to make things legal. They didn't mean to tie you ... afterwards ..."

Like one of them! Rage beat violently behind his eyes and in his throat. So they'd had it planned cold before he came! He spat viciously. "I get it. Stud service."

She went gray-white and flung up her head. "I'm beginning to see why Mother left you," she said in Alix's voice.

That hit, but he was too red hot to care much. "Oh come, I was being funny. A bit crudely for Nethercote or Uplands of course, they tie it up in pink ribbon."

Her profile did not soften but she shook herself, uncoiled, and leaned back. "I'd like a cigarette please."

Surprised, he gave her one and offered the rum, but she ignored it and lit her own match while he took a long defiant pull. Something had changed in her, she went on with a cold adult irony and a twist of the lips too much like Paige's.

"So you and Wylie had an affair," she looked as if the word were spoiled food in her mouth, "but it didn't come to anything. And then when you found she wasn't so crazy about you after all—any more than you were about her!—you got into a blazing row with Paige, and to use your own sort of language, you—raped her."

"My apologies to Wylie! No pink ribbon. She sure educated you."

"No, no! She was trying all the time to make

me understand your side of it. It's you who've made me see how it must have been. This is just me—your daughter!"

"Oh come off it. Did Wylie tell you all I found out?"

"I suppose you mean how much she and Paige love each other." Now she softened and turned with the kind of look she'd given that red'head on the stage last night, but it wasn't for him. "They've always loved each other and always will. And you did give them Cleo."

"My Christ," he said softly through his teeth, "so the brat is mine. I knew there was stuff in her. And you're sisters. One big happy family." He threw his head back and let out shout after shout of contemptuous laughter.

"Be careful, I think you're a little drunk."
The thin cold voice was such an echo of Alix again that he was stopped between two breaths.

"Drunk I may be but I'm also normal, thank God. Did Wylie enlighten you as to just how she and Paige love each other?"

"She didn't need to. I'm of age too."

"Oh yes, you've read your Maupin, but do you know what you're talking about?"

"Of course." It was her turn for contempt, and at that the red mist blinded him. From a throat tight with fury he got out, "And who taught you that, may I ask?"

"You may ask but I won't tell you."

He clutched the wheel and cursed, then spat again out the window. "Well, it's no more than I expected. I knew that hell-hole would ruin you. I hope the lot of them are satisfied. Including you."

"Now you listen to me!" He turned in sheer amazement to stare at her blazing white face. "All the ruining that was ever done to me happened long before I got to Nethercote. Or the Hudson School either. Do you remember West Tenth Street? Those Trelawney girls upstairs where we—at least you and I used to go so much?"

Trelawney?...Ha! Trelawney.Well, by God, their mother hadn't been that way. Would he ever have thought of her again without this? He let out a kind of snort.

Again Sandra's voice changed abruptly to last night's, almost the voice of that copperhaired poet. "That's why being here has meant so much to me. Everything before was so kind of messy and silly, even the poor little thing at Hudson who was so homesick and scared of everybody else. But here there's real love. That's why Uplands and Nethercote are home to me. So much, much more than any place I've ever been," she flung at him. "Paige and Wylie love each other, and Cleo, and me. We're their children. Cleo is Paige's of course,

but in a way I'm just as much Wylie's. I never knew anything could be so-beautiful."

"You mean you and Wylie—" He choked, he was suddenly afraid his twitching hands would reach for her throat. He had a red memory of Paige struggling in his grasp. Sandra would crush like tissue paper.

"No! oh no, no!" That white-hot defense

"Then what the hell are you trying to tell

"Oh, can't you see-where Wylie is is just home to me. But at Nethercote-" She stopped with a frown of concentration and then tried a fresh start. "At Hudson they talked to us about 'crushes' all being silly and childish and a bad habit, and they laughed at people that had them-unless they were just dirty, then they were expelled, like here or anywhere else. But here ... there aren't any talks, and a lot of girls get through without ever even knowing ... But Wylie keeps watch, she cares so much what happens to us, every single girl, and when she sees anyone getting crazy about somebody she talks to just them. She makes you understand what love is, and that real lasting love, when you care more about the other person than yourself, is good, no matter who the other person is or what people say about it. Only you have to keep it like that, and keep it absolutely private the way decent people do their married life, or-"

"So it's somebody at that school—God, I knew it! That rotten-morbid poetry-spouting little genius. Your roommate! Isn't it? Isn't it?

"I'm not going to tell you anything more," she said in the small pitying voice, "you or any other man, ever. You're just not made so you could understand."

He could only fall to cursing again, beating on the wheel and damning in general and in particular the manners, habits and morals of the whole putrid tribe, until at last, emptied out, he pressed his throbbing forehead against the cool metal of the door frame.

Beside him the small voice said with remote detachment, "I'd like to go home, please."

He straightened and wiped his face. "OK by me. Where are John and Alix staying?"

"Not to them. Uplands."

"I'm goddamned if I'll take you."

She opened the car door and stepped out and closed it quickly behind her. There were enough pedestrians and other cars about now so that if he made any attempt to stop her there would be a fine scene. It wasn't worth it.

"And how do you think you'll get there?"

"Taxi." She patted her lilac bag with a bitter little grin. "I have mad money." Then her face quivered. "I'm sorry, Father, but you can see it's no use. Thank you a million times for coming—and trying it, and letting me try. But we'd better not again, had we? But I'll always be looking for your pictures ... and ... let me know where you are."

She raised her hand in a kind of salute and turned away. He knew she was crying.

"Sandra! Get in here like a sane woman and let me drive you to a taxi anyway. It's getting dark."

"No, I'd like to walk. There's plenty of light still." She turned into a path the drive did not follow.

He would not watch the white suit diminish through the shrubbery. He pulled out a railroad folder and studied the northbound schedule. One in half an hour to Washington, or a later express through to New York. That was what he wanted, New York, real women there and he knew where to find them. Two hours and he'd be away from this stinking bog.

Thank God he hadn't called Carter, that would have been a sweet mess.

As for Alix, John, the whole Uplands stew, the hell with them. Let Sandra spin her own yarn. She'd keep it decent, noble even. He saw her in her taxi bowling along the tree-tunneled roads to Uplands. Not crying now! To sleep with Wylie like as not, in spite of all her pious protests. Or maybe they had the Genius there tonight too. Uplands, the House with somebody to satisfy every comer!

He picked up his rum and unscrewed the cap.

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