The Ladder
a Lesbian Review

Liberty

THE
RIGHT TO CHOOSE

JULY 1968
purpose of the
Daughters of BILITIS

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

1. Education of the Lesbian, enabling her to understand herself and to make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic, and economic implications - by establishing and maintaining a library of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public meetings on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by providing the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group.

2. Education of the public, developing an understanding and acceptance of the Lesbian as an individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices - by public discussion meetings and by dissemination of educational literature on the Lesbian theme.

3. Encouragement of and participation in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposing and promoting changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group through due process of law in the state legislatures.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the years that Mazo was struggling to get started as a writer, Caroline held down a clerical job. After the award for JALNA, Caroline was able to quit work and simply act as housekeeper (a function she had always performed in addition to her working full time). From 1928 to 1938, Mazo and Caroline lived outside of Canada for the most part, primarily in England. In 1930, while on a trip, they learned of the death of friends which left a little girl, 2 1/2 years old, and a 13 month old baby boy orphaned.

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

With the exception of her popular success during the 1930’s, little of ex-
LESBIANA
by Gene Damon

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

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

English readers complain they cannot find the books I review (even the English titles). I apologize, but cannot find the books I review (even scial, one Madame Jave. Nothing special. I cannot keep up with the British paperback market. Robert Somerlot's, THE FLAMINGOS, out here in 1967, is out in England now from Hutchinson (London), 1968.

Robert Kyle's novel, VENUS EXAMINED, N.Y., Bernard Geis, 1968, is getting the standard Bernard Geis reception and promotion. It's a grand snow job they do to sell these. They aren't half as dirty as you think they are going to be, and some of their titles have merit enough to make you wish they'd lay off the "crud" buildup. Kyle's book is a rather moralistic study of the type of institutional look at sexual response that has been making headlines these past several years. It is moderately well-written, never vulgar, not particularly sexy, and ends with the conclusion that it is best to stumble along in the dark. I do not share the author's conclusions, even slightly. Sex education, properly handled, might well free our society of many of its hand-me-down hangups. There is one woman who involves herself, after hours and incidentally, with another from the "institution," and this leads to a brief, abortive, Lesbian seduction. It is entertaining enough reading, since Mr. Kyle has been freelancing his way along the pulp route for many years, and knows most of the tricks. Try it.

THE MIDDLING, by A.L. Barker, London, The Hogarth Press, 1967, is a collection of four episodes in the life of Ellie Toms. When first met, at 9, she is busy goading a wet lump of a girl cousin into "heights of glory" (as seen by Ellie). In the second section, during her teen years, Ellie falls in love with Laura Coyne. This is a superlative account of all
der works (primarily collections of short stories) have appeared in the United States since 1948. So far, those I have examined have not proved pertinent, but she has a way of writing about women, and youth that many will find appealing. Try your library for the older works and hope for this one on this side of the ocean.

It is far too early in the year (from my viewpoint) to name probable best books in our field for 1968, but surely one of the best will be HORACE SIPPOG AND THE SIREN'S SONG, by Su Walton, N.Y., Morrow, 1968 (London readers note: this came out in 1967 in your country, make your bookdealer look it up for you). If you could take a literary hat and throw in fairly equal parts of Robert Nathan's poigniant fantasy, Iris Murdoch's complicated relationships, ditto Ivy Compton-Burnett, the laughter in the wings of life as seen by Noel Coward, and sauce provided by the turned on, tuned in world of today's young, you might come up with something close to HORACE SIPPOG AND THE SIREN'S SONG.

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

Brief mention here of a very unusual male title, PLACE D’ARMES, by Scott Symons, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1967. This was published in a deliberately disguised form, as a travel book. It is not, but rather it is, and it is also a hymn of praise to Canada and a votive offering to homosexuality as a way of life. Very beautifully written, frankly sexual, and highly recommended to those with wider reading horizons.
than the usual limitations of this column. (Suggest writing directly to the publisher, since this is hard to get in the United States. Address is 25 Hollinger Road, Toronto 16, Canada, and the cost for paperback is $2.50 and cloth (hardback) is $6.00.

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

Count Robert de Montesquiou lived from 1855 to 1921. In one sense he is the spiritual father of male homosexual literature, since he served as the prototype for three of the most famous literary homosexuals. In 1884, Joris-Karl Huysman’s A REBOURS (AGAINST THE GRAIN) appeared, and the hero, Duke Jean Floressas des Esseintes, was modeled on Count Robert de Montesquiou. Later he was the model for Oscar Wilde’s Dorian Gray, in THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, and finally, his good friend Marcel Proust made him immortal by fashioning him as Palamede de Guermantes, Baron de Charlus, in REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST. He also served, less nobly, in several literary blasts, including as Jean Lorrain’s hero, Monsieur de Phocas, in the novel of the same name. He was the fabulous PRINCE OF AESTHETES, and is thus best immortalized by sensitive biographer, Phillippe Jullian, in PRINCE OF AESTHETES: COUNT ROBERT DE MONTESQUIOU, 1855-1921, N.Y., Viking Press, 1968. (First published in France in 1965 and published in England by Martin Secker and Warburg, London, 1967, under the title, ROBERT DE MONTESQUIOU: A PRINCE OF THE NINETIES).

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

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

I do not like to have to recommend books that are very poorly written. However, TITANS AND KEWPIES: THE LIFE AND ART OF ROSE O’NEILL, by Ralph Alan McCanse, N.Y., Vantage, 1968, is of interest because it is the only biography of this woman (that I’ve been able to locate). McCanse is incapable of analysis, so he makes no attempt to relate her behavior to her Lesbianism, but despite his deadly style and the boring structure of the biography, it is a must for fans of Rose O’Neill. (If you are not familiar with Miss O’Neill and her Lesbian literature contributions, I suggest you look her up in Jeannette H. Foster’s SEX VARIANTS WOMEN IN LITERATURE, N.Y., Vantage, 1956. And, while on the subject, for those of you who write to me for further information on older Lesbiana, this book, by Dr. Foster, is the thing to own. You cannot begin to comprehend the field without this book. In its original review in THE LADDER, Marion Zimmer Bradley called it the “cornerstone” of any library of Lesbian literature. The proof of this is that it is just as true in 1968 as it was in 1957.)

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

We are being blessed by increasing numbers of titles dealing with very important years in literature, vaguely 1875 through 1935. Most of what was happening then happened in France and England, though many of the involved were Americans, at least by birth. While it is not true today, there was at that time a freedom, particularly in France, for literary and artistic expression that simply could not be countenanced in Puritanville, U.S.A. Many gifted male and female homosexuals, looking for freedom in life as well as literature, escaped our shores and blessed France with their presence. LADIES BOUNTIFUL, by biographer-bookman W.G. Rogers, N.Y., Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968, is about women who acted as angels for various literary and artistic geniuses. Before the days of grants and gifts and awards and overall university sponsored largesse, writers and artists born without silver spoons simply starved to death, or, luckily, met with one or more of the LADIES BOUNTIFUL.
James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Pablo Picasso, composer George Antheil, dancer Isadora Duncan, sculptor Jo Davidson, the list is endless, all these and many more could not possibly have achieved their artistic ends without the help, money, time, labor, given gladly, by the bountiful ones.

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

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

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

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

Best of all, Mr. Rogers is a good writer. He manages to be both honest and compassionate, something not too often seen these days. The portrait section is a lulu. I can only explain its predominant interest here by saying that had I been asked to choose the photos for this section, I would not have dared duplicate his choices. You will enjoy this book, even if half the named greats mean nothing to you, the book lives, has humor and love in it.

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

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

There is Priscilla, who is quite mad, and her husband, patiently being destroyed. There is Robin, who is loved by his sister, Erin, far too well. He is a drunkard, and the most lovable of the lot. There is Spur, repressed homosexual, married with two sons. One of Robin's sons, Buck, is homosexual, and lives out a fantasy love affair with his restrained father. There is Rhoda, frigid, unyielding, who has managed so well, her husband, her world. And, for our interest, Millicent, who is least seen, and an odd exception for the family in that she is kinder, gentler than the rest. She is a Lesbian, but we are told little about this from the standpoint of her background, except for her father's repeated attempts to rape her during her teen years. She is a model, and successful in her career, though not happy in her personal life.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

by. Lorita Whitehead

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

A MAN'S WORLD
Part 1
by Jan Addison

Jerome Ashburn walked out across the
National Gallery's broad granite terrace shrugging
on a topcoat and whistling absently
before these sucking mouths wither and crack,
you will be dead for me. I will feel nothing.

The clock in the station brought him up
slow. One minute to make it! His watch must
be slow or he was drunker than he thought.

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

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

The look she gave him was Alix over again
and he snorted. . . . The time she caught him
'slipping out to the Vertes private showing and
whined, 'This is the only thing we do together
any more, Jerry.' But when he'd started to
adjust that complaint the obvious way she'd
been so outraged she hadn't spoken for a week.
That was the trouble. It there'd only been
healthy rows and hot reconciliations they'd
have worried along somehow, cat and dog life
maybe but still a life. It was weeks of the
damn superior St. Niteouche act that sent a
man out on other hunts, and not for art. He
saw her again in her astrakhan, eying him
across the width of Elkin's office. One cool
calculating dame, Alix, out for a place in West-
chester County and for nothing else. He hoped
the next guy she caught wanted it too. Himself
he could use a real woman for a change.

"Where, to, sir?"
"Richmond. Coach."
"Get on here and walk through. Four cars
ahead."

He swung aboard as the train began to move
and stood panting on the platform. Damned
close shave. Suppose he'd missed this one
after letting last night's go without him. A
second wire to this old girl could just about
queer things before she ever sets eyes on him.

He took off his hat, ran his fingers through the
damp hair on his forehead, and then breathing
more normally began to make his way through
the swaying coaches as they blacked into the
tunnel.

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

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

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

"Hi, Cart," he said, not sitting. He couldn't
afford an afternoon of club car drinks with a
pocket full of bills for Sandra and God only
knowing how soon this unseen old party would come up with a first payment—if the deal went through.

But Carter was blind to signals, introducing him after a fashion to the bald little coot beside him, bawling "Sit down and order! Forget they quit serving across the river." Perspiring, thinny, suddenly empty to his boots, he dropped his case and coat on one chair and slumped into the other. One good drink and then beer and a sandwich, he could run to that much.

Carter got in ahead of him. "Waiter! Another here and two over there, he's gotta catch up with us. No argument, old horse, expense account. On our way home from a press conference. This is on the Richmond Daily Banner." "Long may it wave!" Jerry begged to be cheered. "I'm bushed. Been gallery-prowling since this time yesterday. Planned to spend just the afternoon but one good taste got me worse than one drink after a cure. Made this train by the skin of my teeth!"

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

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

"No. Just Art."

"Who you with?"

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

"Money in it?"

Damn him! "Oh, not bad. How about you?"

He shifted the subject before alcohol got him bragging what his copy work brought in. Because that would raise the image of him with easel set up before some Salome and maybe a gallery tour of schoolgirls gawping over his shoulder and giggling. But it was one way to eat without being chained to a desk.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My dear Mr. Ashburn,

I have followed your work with interest for several years, and know that you occasionally paint portraits if the subjects interest you. I am bold enough to hope you may be willing to do one or two for me. Ours is an old Virginia family of which there is an unbroken pictorial record for three centuries—

(An unprintable sound from Ed)

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

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

Most sincerely yours, (Miss) Paige Courtney.

He finished with a long whistle.

"Know her?"

Carter shook his head. "This state crawls in arsenic and old lace so she'll love it." And don't play for peanuts."

"And don't play for peanuts."

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

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

"What kind of bugs?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And don't play for peanuts."

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

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

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

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

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

"Let's leave it till tomorrow, Henry...There's quite a bunch of painting gear checked through from New York, no use carting that till we know I'm staying." He didn't like the shade of amusement on the good looking tan face, nor the eye cast on his topcoat and case. "I hope there's time for a drink over there," he jerked his head into the down lines—she'd liked that scenery fit for greeting cards. As we are not too close to any town where you could find pleasant accommodations, you would be our guest during this tentative visit and whatever you were at work, if you should undertake the commission. Would you be graceful enough to let me hear your reaction to this perhaps unorthodox proposal?"
stalked across the Crunching gravel. The bar and its customers were sad and the beer an unheared-of brand, but it was long and cold, and walking back he felt better, from having taken a stand as much as anything.

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

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

"Who's Miss Wylie?"

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

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

"This yeah," Henry pointed proudly across the sallow fields, "hit's the Toms Forge Hunt. You know, suh, the point-to-point they runs in suh."

"That's all right," he said. Jackson's fam cah an' sen' me in thisn.

"Drink's tapping her foot, but Jerry felt better. "That's all right," he said. Jackson's fam cah an' sen' me in thisn.

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"But five miles I reckon suh."

"What about transportation? Buses?"

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

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

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

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

As they went up two steps to a pillared verandah the white door opened and a tall spare black woman in blue cotton stood aside for him to enter. "This yeah's Mame, Mist' Ashbu'n, she'll show you in," Henry said, and handing her the traveling case he went back to the car. She was dignified and unsmiling, and her cast of features suggested she might be Henry's mother. She said, "You kin lay off yo' things down heah suh," and hung his coat in a hall closet. Then she led the way up a graciously wide stair. From the landing a door ajar showed a narrower flight leading down into rear regions. At the top, in a light hall that reached to the front of the wide shallow house, Mame opened a door to the anteroom of best sellers in jackets and an old one, outsize russet boards stamped with tarnished gold, a slip of paper marking a page. Tourtelot, On Fencing. Well! He let it fall open at the marker and grinned at the last-century line drawings. Anatomically comic but full of action, showing the postures with geometric accuracy. He began to turn the pages.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then across between the fireplace and a window he spotted a little scene that pulled him over. A pair of misty old women seated in an armchair in the hall. One hand was held in a white gloved hand, the other slightly raised. "How old do you think they are?" he asked. "You should stay all right." Was there a shade of irony in the smooth voice? Cool customer, this old Mame. Where was the lush southern hospitality? Why wasn't she all for him? "Where do you think they are?"

Beyond the tray were a handful of books, couple of best sellers in jackets and an old one, outsize russet boards stamped with tarnished gold, a slip of paper marking a page. Tourtelot, On Fencing. Well! He let it fall open at the marker and grinned at the last-century line drawings. Anatomically comic but full of action, showing the postures with geometric accuracy. He began to turn the pages.
exactly the light he remembered it ten years back. The one lamp was near enough to throw an upward gleam on it, and close to, he saw that it followed Pisarro in mood and angle of vision—and how it brought everything back! There were other small canvases around it all by the same hand and dated as well but not too bad. And that must be a self-portrait, precious young pansy. But perfectly in period. Almost, just, only one of the family, for this little huddle of things had nothing in common with the rest.

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

He had just settled himself before the fire again and was reaching for the tone on fencing when Paige Courtney swept in, poured drinks with a free hand, and offered a slightly expanded version of Henry’s earlier apology. He could listen with half an ear and give his main attention to studying her. She now wore dead black of the simplicity that adorns top-notch taste—and more. Not as she was really a fine figure of a woman, neither slim nor heavy, full breastied, with generous lines of torso and thigh well revealed by the gown that would be fun to draw. Her heavy heirloom jewelry in deep gold and topaz did the final trick of lighting up her eyes and setting off that matt skin. Unless she held it. If he could get that skin alone . . . She gave a ringing slightly edged laugh. Miss Courtney’s face was impassive, but there was a gleam and not of displeasure he thought in her eye.

“Just don’t know the sticks in Virginia, do you?” Wylie Cooper tossed back.

“My cousin Wylie Cooper, Mr. Ashburn.”

“Hello. May I see? Paige says it’s something.”

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

“Do you think I’d stick at posing raw?”

He flushed, seeing for an instant the image he thought of but not like this.” She lit a cigarette. "May I look?"

“Of course, but you won’t like it.”

“Sorry. I didn’t know you’d seen them.”

“Yes,” he thought for a minute she wasn’t going on. “My uncle—Grandfather’s brother really was sent over on business. Spencer was eleven. Then Uncle married again, a French girl with two artist brothers, so Spencer got up in studios, with artists and writers . . . and a young stepmother . . . It was a weird idea for an adolescent. Spencer never really belonged over here again.” She appeared to welcome the interruption of the gong calling them to lunch. By the time he had washed and was downstairs she had changed from the black and topazes to gray gingham with a remarkable leather belt and necklace—a catalog of her wardrobe would make a nice lesson for Alick. He couldn’t get her back to Cousin Spencer and Paris. Why? Was the still unseen boy a by-blow of Spencer’s bohemian career? And out of what mother? He’d learn if it took him the length of his stay.

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

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

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

He threw down palette and brush, lit a cigarette and prowled up and down the room with long strides. Then he pulled open a door and stood drinking in the moist spring’acid air in deep gulps. It was going to happen. However hard he tried to keep the knowledge under it waited to spring at him the moment his guard relaxed. Brief blazing slanted glances, arm brushing arm in a doorway, pulsing undercurrent in her laugh. All there remained to know now was when? It had better be soon if he was to go on doing sound work.

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

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

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He moved her chair, pulled and pushed her a bit, then said, “That’s it. Now relax and hold it. Yes, look at her if you like—that’s a good enough head angle for a quick study.” He worked fast, laying down and picking up brushes with the speed of a five-minute artist in a vaudeville show. With any luck it was going to be a nice job, this portrait. She was a fine model, poised and relaxed, with a born sense for finding the natural pose and holding it. If he could get that skin tone . . . She knew about underpainting, too—hadn’t raised an outcry at seeing her flesh blocked in with reseda and rose-sienna. Now if he could get Wylie as well . . . Wylie!

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Earnest, but knew if he did it would be hours before he waked, and there was this blasted fencing match. Cursing it, he stripped, showered, dressed in the slacks and jacket that were the nearest he could come to 'spectator sports,' and then badly in need of a drink went downstairs to find one. Glass in hand and to sit quiet he prowled across to the library for and then to the fly leaf, where in handsome back its leaves to the old fashioned title page again in quick-paced rhythm behind his closed eyes. And Wylie had known it, the dark would give him no chance to watch for play of expression. He sat down furious at his eyes. Ode to a nightingale. And Wylie had known it, the dark would give him no chance to watch for play of expression. He sat down furious at his eyes. Ode to a nightingale. And Wylie had known it, the dark would give him no chance to watch for play of expression. He sat down furious at his eyes. Ode to a nightingale. And Wylie had known it, the dark would give him no chance to watch for play of expression. He sat down furious at his eyes. Ode to a nightingale. And Wylie had known it, the dark would give him no chance to watch for play of expression. He sat down furious at his eyes. Ode to a nightingale. And Wylie had known it, the dark would give him no chance to watch for play of expression. He sat down furious at his eyes. Ode to a nightingale. And Wylie had known it, the dark would give him no chance to watch for play of expression. He sat down furious at his eyes. Ode to a nightingale.
then that grim second wind of virtuosity, that lightning-swift play so slow in total sum. Inch­ing, giving, regaining—lost—No, touché! And then bedlam. Two factions, Wylie's and the other's, fighting with triumphant screeching and tears.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He was grateful to her for running on till he had poured his. "I hope we didn't wake you coming in last night. We wanted you to share our midnight feast, Wylie was ravenous as usual, but we simply couldn't get away over there and when we got here you'd turned in. And no wonder. Do you know, we counted up that with the sketching you did over there you'd put in better than an hour eight hour day of hard work? We mustn't do that to you again."

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"We're not like that. Of course there are a few girls there who have everything, and of course any school—very mistakenly, I think—plays up all its extra advantages in its advertising. But the great mass of them are just nobody and have nothing. That's why Wylie loves her work so. She loves to take what they have—youth and health—and train them to use them and poise and confi­dence. Oh, Jerome Ashburn, let your daughter come down here! We'd take such care of her, Wylie and I."

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

He was afraid to try arguing aloud. He poured himself a third coffee before she could come out of her evangelist's trance to do it for him.

"Well, it's a long way off," he said. "She's only nine. Maybe in another three or four years I'll have seen the light. Maybe! In a pig's eye."

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

"Like a drink," he asked as a matter of habit, and would have hated her for saving yes. What she had said was, "Forgotten your state again? We can get better at home."

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

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

They drove out of town into the black over­cast spring night. "Turn off here," he ordered at the first good side lane. She shook her head, but after a quick look at his face she gave in and brought the car to a stop beyond a screen of thicket. He passed his flask and she took one deep pull and sat resting her forearms on the wheel while he followed suit. She offered no resistance when he took her in his arms. She kissed as well as he knew she would, as if they'd done this before and knew all one another's tricks. She hadn't stayed too tight in her con­vent, he had time to think as she drew away a moment for breath. She offered no resistance to his hands either, and in startlingly little time they had reached a pitch where there seemed no stopping. He eased himself into better position and tried to draw her to him altogether. At that she twisted sharply and reached for the ignition key. "Let's go home," she said, and as he began to curse, "I'm not a piker. I'll be so much more comfortable at home." And she gave him a teasing smile. They covered the few miles at a dangerous clip and left the car in the drive. "Come to my room when you're ready," she said, "along the back gallery. You know, up those two steps." So . . . !

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

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

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

He stood hands in pockets watching rain run down the French doors in waving sheets, whistling tunelessly between his teeth, disliking everything. More than time he took a little stock, and when better? No good color work to be done in this muddy light. Paige gone to Bain­bridge again on some business or other, Wylie off to school looking damned near as gray as the
That's what getting to know your model did for you, hard even to remember now that first incisive impression. When was it the difference began to strike him—morning after his and Wylie's first night of it? No . . . dinner before the fencing match, in that sad combination of taut and amber and the absent look that went with it. That was the afternoon he'd begun on the nude—hadn't she liked even that? Hell, he was getting morbid and analytic as an old maid herself.

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

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

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

He turned on the neon tube, set a palette in front of the nude—hadn't she liked even that? Hell, he was getting morbid and analytic as an old maid herself.

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

"Thanks, Jerry," she said almost absently. "No thanks, I could use a bit of a break myself, and you look as if you could. I'll make it our revoir till I get the green light." (If I'm not gone first!)

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

What the hell did that mean? There was such a final note in it, had she read his mind? But he didn't want to start a discussion now. "Happy dreams," he said, and turned off the light and stood a full five feet away from her, and then stepped within the half-open door, and then he didn't want to be locked out for good.

(to be continued)
Dear Advertiser,

May we draw your attention to the potentials of a new customer market? The LADDER has reversed its long established policy and is now accepting general advertising.

A thousand adult readers regularly receive The LADDER, a magazine circulated throughout this country featuring news and views of the homosexual and the homophile movement of particular interest to women.

Most of our readers are women 21-45 years old who have devoted a major portion of their leisure time to assisting the lesbian to become a more productive, secure citizen. Most of our readers believe that discrimination against the homosexual is unfair and unjustified. To these readers your advertisement places you on record as an ally in their personal area of deep concern. Our readers are apt to become and remain loyal customers. Charges for single insertions of advertisement copy are given below.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this letter.

Very truly yours,

The Editor

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Repeated advertisements at reduced rates.

Please mail your advertising copy and check in full to:

DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, INC.
1005 Market Street
Room 208
San Francisco, California 94103

Dear Gentle Reader:

The LADDER is about to become ... CRASS, INSENSITIVE AND OH SO COMMERCIAL, we hope!

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

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

In this issue we are publishing the first part of a long story called A MAN'S WORLD, by Jan Addison. My editor always has the final word on what goes into this magazine. Many times we publish a story because of general interest or because it is submitted by some writer whom we wish to corral as a frequent contributor. This particular story was recommended by our assistant, Gene Damon. As you know, from my picture, I am an integrated cat. Had I been asked about the story, I think I would have objected to several passages of dialect that appear. I tend to believe that all the people who live in some areas of our country talk alike, whether they are black or white and I think that if a writer feels compelled to reproduce dialect in some of the characters, then the same effort should be made to reproduce the dialect of all of the characters. I have not travelled in the south, but the boss says she saw "Gone with the Wind," and all the characters had some sort of speech difference from her own Oregon twang. Obviously a whole story written with the multitude of apostrophes and such things to create a true presentation of dialect would be a bore to read and probably pure hell to type-set and proof. So . . . for my tastes, I would just as soon we didn't mess with this sort of thing. I hope that none of our readers are offended and that they will accept my effort here to express the view of the editor, who is hiding in a corner, afraid to admit that she actually did not read the story before it was set in type. She promises this won't happen again.
THE STRIPPER
The darkened bar, too clean.
Concealed its empty tables close
to velvet walls.
While chairs, like spectral guests,
Huddled beyond the edge of light.
The unfamiliar silence of the room
reminded us
We came too early.
So we slouched on barstools near
the door,
A muddled moody group.
Then suddenly the unexpected music.
Its quick harsh notes demanding
our attention.
Filled the bar.
—And he appeared from nowhere,
Stretching his long legs molded
by the charcoal slacks,
Alone within the tiny spot of light
upon the dance floor.
His white shirt open to the waist,
he swayed to curious rhythms
In a private world of sensual grace,
Turning his back on those of us
who watched him dance.
The shirt his only prop.
he fluttered in a tete-a-tete
And flirted first with love, then hate.
Curving his hands around the cuffs
to pull them down
In innocent abandon.
Shrugging off the shirt,
he danced langorous patterned steps.
The essence of all women
Drawn skillfully with nothing
but a rumpled shirt
Playing across his golden olive skin;
The ultimate female,
Yet a man—
The music stopped.
Silent, the jukebox flashed
its cold pink lights
In splotches on the empty floor
While he picked up his shirt
from where he'd tossed it.
Then seized a bar stool,
And faded from our view.
by Maura McCullough

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

AMULETS *
TALISMANS *
are YOU unlucky?
FUTURE UNCERTAIN?
YOUR LOVE—MONEY—HEALTH ?

SPIRITUAL AID
Let the SCIENCE OF THE TAROT help you.
Consult SARA and let her knowledge of
the OCCULT and ASTROLOGY help you as
it has helped others.

- PSYCHIC POWER -
NATAL SCOPES * EGYPTIAN TAROT READINGS
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WITCHCRAFT:
A complete selection of authentic
handcrafted AMULETS and TALISMANS.
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changed and blessed for the individual.

THE VIRGIN GROVE
6927 Paseo del Serra
Los Angeles, Calif. 90028

by Maura McCullough
BI-ENNIAL ASSEMBLY and CONVENTION
OF THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS

Place: King's Inn
11800 East Colfax
Aurora-Denver, Colorado

Time: August 9, 1968 (Friday)
Reception and Registration
Cocktails at the Cash Bar at 5:30 p.m.
August 10 (Saturday)
Annual Meeting convenes at 9:00 a.m.
Banquet in the evening
August 11 (Sunday)
Meeting resumes at 9:00 a.m.

Banquet Choice:
Baked Breast of Chicken ... $4.50
U.S. Club Steak ... $5.25

The King's Inn is a lovely motel with swimming pool and air-conditioned rooms.

Rates:
Singles 9.00 plus tax
Doubles 11.00 and 13.00 plus tax
Room with two double beds 18.00 plus tax
(rollaway bed in a room for only 3.00)

REGISTRATION FEE will be $1.00 and this must be in San Francisco on or before August 2.

Address your envelope: ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE
Daughters of Bilitis
1005 Market Street
Suite 208
San Francisco, California 94103

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED at the Assembly will be our new constitution, reports of past officers and committees and Chapter presidents.

OUR THEME is "The Changing Scene."

This is a jam-packed business meeting and it may well be that the future course of our organization may be decided at this time. What our aims and purposes will be, what we can do about THE LADDER, how can we increase our membership—all of these things will balance with whether or not we should continue at all. Every member should come to this meeting.

NAME_____________________________________________________________
ADDRESS..............................................................................................................

Check One:  Single □  Double □  Two double beds □  Cot □

REGISTRATION FEE of $1.00 enclosed.  Signed ________________________________