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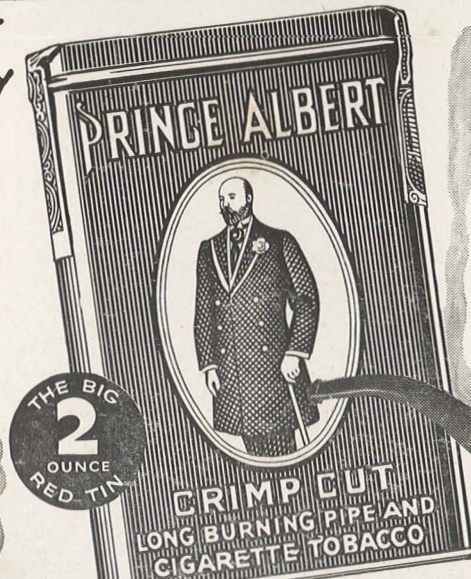
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THE FLAMINGO

Vol. XI

APRIL, 1937

No. 4

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Why Not Now

RICHARD LEE

SALLY MET Lefty at the first little mixer given by the YMCA. He was sitting over by the punch bowl looking rather dejected, and Sally turned to me and said. "I think the lad's lonely. Sit tight. I'll go over and do my big sister act." Well, Sally was on the welcoming committee to make the frosh feel at home so I didn't kick.

She saunters over to him as only Sally can saunter and says, "Hello".

He looks up and grins in that slow way of his, and right then and there I should have known there was trouble ahead. "Hello" he says.

Sally smiles right back at him. "My name's Sally Pitcairn," she says. "I'm supposed to see that you freshmen mix at this mixer . . . Why don't you dance?"

"My name's Bill—"the boy caught himself, "I mean, Lefty, Lefty Dennis, and I don't dance because I don't know anyone, and besides, I don't dance so very well." He throws her that smile again, and Sally pulls up a chair.

"And where are you from, Lefty?" Sally asks in her best welcoming manner.

Suddenly he looks very serious. "From Citrus Lake, out in California. You never heard of it."

Now Sally prides herself on her memory, but even she couldn't remember ever having heard of Citrus Lake, so she falls back on Chapter Two of the Zeta's Rushing Manual and tries to make him feel at home by asking him what he's interested in at college. This line of conversation works very well with cornfed rushees, but it didn't go over so big with Lefty. "Human relations," the lad says, "But I'm majoring in English if you get

what I mean." And Sally nodded but she didn't get what he meant.

In desperation she changed the subject. "How about dancing with me?" she said, "I'll promise you you won't be stuck."

The kid laughed at this. "I'll take a chance," he said, "but barn dances are a little more in my line." and up he stands to his full sixfoot one and starts walking on her feet.

Sally was grinning bravely up at him and talking fast, but I could stand it no longer so I cut. "You did your duty." I said. But she didn't say anything. When Joe Somers cut me a moment later, Sally caught me by the arm.

"See that that kid gets around," she said. "Introduce him to some of the girls. You've got to help me out a little tonight," and then Joe whirled her away.

So I walked over to the kid who was sitting back by the punch bowl again and said "Hello, Freshman."

He looked up and smiled.

"There's a girl I want you to meet." I said. I didn't have anyone in mind so I picked the first babe I came to, Doris Benton, all tricked out in some expensive dress that made her look beautiful because it showed very little of itself and very much of Doris.

"Doris," I said, tapping her on an orchid covered shoulder and nodding to Tom Philips with whom she was dancing, "I want you to meet an old friend. Miss Benton, Mr. Jones." And I left the two together. As I turned away I heard Doris say in her Oklahoma Oxford accent, "Your name isn't really Jones . . . How quaint."

And the kid grinned at her and said, "Naw, it's Dennis, but call me Lefty, and I'm not an

old friend either—just another freshman being shown the ropes."

A minute later my heart sank. After all he was a good boy and just a kid. I saw him and Doris heading for the door. I don't know whether Doris needed "a breath of clean air after that smokey old dance floor", or whether the kid just couldn't bear walking on her feet any more, but I'll bet Doris had something to do with that exit . . . After all the boy was good looking.

The dance broke up about twelve and still the kid and Doris hadn't come back. I rounded Sally up, took her arm and dragged her away from Bill Langrock and out into the night. "Let's not drive home," Sally said, "the stars are so lovely and you can come back and get the car. Let's walk." So we walked.

All of a sudden Sally said, "Why did you introduce Lefty to Doris?"

"What?" I said, coming back at her with my usual subtle understanding.

"I mean you may want to pledge him sometime you know," Sally went on, "and he'll blame you for Doris. He's not her kind. He's clean and awfully young, and I think . . ."

"Wait a minute," I broke in, "What's the matter with Doris? Oh, I know she rolls around in a show case instead of a car, and I know she's drunk on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I know a lot of things about her, and . . ."

"Oh, you do do you!" Sally said, "Well, tell me more."

"For God's sake Sal," I said, "She won't kill him. And what's it to you anyhow?"

Sally froze up. "I'm on the Freshman Committee," she said, and that was all. We went the rest of the way to the sorority house in silence, ignoring a night that God worked overtime to perfect.

For the next couple of weeks Lefty wasn't much in evidence around campus except in "Beanery", where he waited table, or on his way to class with a stack of books under his

arm. Once in a while you'd see him piloting his rickety old Model A Ford around town, and he was always dressed the same. He had a way of wearing old cordurays and a sweater and looking smoother than most guys do in tails. He lived downtown someplace in a boardinghouse by the river. He said he liked living there . . . It was quiet and then, he couldn't afford to live in a dorm. At least that's what he said.

He palled around with the other waiters in Beanery, mostly tramp athletes, but he stood out from them. He seemed shy yet his manner was one of complete assurance. He was different. Definitely different, his accent, his walk, everything about him was poised. There was a modesty about him, the modesty of superiority. If he'd had any appearance of money we'd have liked to have pledged him to the Fraternity, but we're carrying too many guys as it is, so we left him alone. We played his game completely as it turned out. But how were we to know?

Then one day Sal and I were parked out in front of Barney's Tavern, catching a beer after class when Doris's lavender Cord snarled in beside us. Sally jumped and then I saw that Lefty was driving. I might have known he'd fall for that car sooner or later. "Hi," I said.

Lefty slid out of the car and said hello to me, then looked at Sally quickly and he and Doris went inside. A minute later we heard the music on the honkey-tonk begin. "I'll bet Doris is teaching him to dance," I said.

"I don't care," said Sally, which seemed to me sort of stupid at the time. Then suddenly she said, "Let's finish the beer inside." She opened the door and went in. I followed her.

Inside, Doris and Lefty were standing back in the dark corner of the dance floor near the phonograph. We walked past the bar and took a booth beside the floor.

Sally didn't say much. She didn't even

look at Lefty. Suddenly she said, "Let's dance."

When the music stopped we sat down again. "How about sitting with us?" I asked Lefty.

"Let's" said Doris, and Lefty and she slid into the low bus seats that Barney has in all his booths. "How about a drink?" Doris said, and she got up and went back to the booth where she and Lefty had been and returned with a bottle of soda, a bowl of ice, and two glasses. "My hands are full, Honey," she said to Lefty, "You get the baby." Lefty got out and brought back a quart of Scotch about half empty.

Doris called a waiter and asked for two more glasses. "Make it one glass. I think Sally'll stick to her beer," I said, remembering that Sally didn't drink.

"No, make it two glasses," Sally said, "I think I'll go off today," and before I got my wits back she leaned over the table and picked up the bottle. "Good old Haig and Haig!" she said like a guy greeting an old friend from prep school. It was about the third bottle she'd ever touched in her life, but she threw a good act.

When the glasses came Lefty poured out the drinks. Sally's was mostly ice. I noticed that but Sally didn't. Lefty was reaching for Doris's glass as Sally took her first taste of hers. I watched her trying to keep her face from twisting as she sipped the thin scotch. Then I heard Doris's voice, very languid, say, "Just soda, Lefty dear." I looked around at her and saw her take the bottle and fill up the two ounce shot glass with scotch. She tossed it down with never a murmur, said "let's dance," took a sip of her soda as she left the table and then walked over to the "Vic" with Lefty.

There was a clink as the nickle dropped in the slot, and then the music began, "Why Not Now" from the show "Third Row Center". It was soft and tired, yet paced with a restless sophistication, smooth ride music, weary

on the surface with a rhythm underneath like the throb of fast beating pulses. It made me think of city streets, strangely bright in rain, and scurrying taxis, champagne, and night clubs, and all the glamour we dream about but rarely know. And I watched Lefty dance . . . He wasn't the same boy who'd walked on Sally's feet. Could Doris have taught him that!

No, he was born dancing. You could see it in the way his body hung on the music. He danced with his hands, with his whole body. There was something haunting about the way he moved. It was a mood, gay one moment, tender the next. He was part of the music and so was Doris. Why then, had he played the awkward farmboy the first of the year? I couldn't figure it out. Then he must have noticed that I was watching him for suddenly he siffened up. His feet stopped floating and he seemed to come back to earth with a start. "Let's drink," he said, and Doris sat down.

Doris has taught me a lot about dancing," he said with a laugh.

"I see?" I said.

A few minutes later Sally finished her drink and I dragged her out with me. From then on Sally began to change. She stopped going out with me almost altogether, and I only saw her about once a week. The rest of the time I watched her ride around with Tommy Philips, Bill Langrock, and the rest of the Republicans, always in shiny cars. When on my rare dates I took her to Barney's, the bartenders had a smile and a word for Sally every time, and she was drinking scotch pretty steadily though she still didn't like it. I tried to talk to her about it, but there wasn't a chance. She danced all her evenings away with the campus smoothies and she laughed a lot more than she used to. Sometimes she sat in the booths with Doris and Lefty, if her date was an old friend of Doris's and he usually was, most of us were.

And so the year rolled around to March.

Then the break came . . . Lefty was leaving school. He said he had an offer of a job up North. "I needed rest and an education—well, I got the rest anyhow, and now back to making both ends meet." The night before he left Doris threw a party for him. I was invited and I took Sally.

Doris sure knows how to throw a party. She has a lot of good points to say nothing of a lot of dough. There was a band from the North playing at the Country Club, sixteen pieces and really good. There was a free bar, and the crowd was just right, not too many and just the right sort. All the gay bright lads and lasses were there, and there were very few drunks.

Sally headed straight for the bar when we arrived. She edged her way through the crowd and began tossing down her liquor straight. She had about four shots before I got her away and onto the dance floor. But a few minutes later she wanted to go back to the bar. I guess I don't dance well enough for Sally anymore, but still . . . I couldn't get used to her with a shot glass in one hand and a coke in the other for a chaser. And the second time she went to the bar she dispensed with the chaser.

The bar was crowded with smoke and with people. The music of the orchestra sounded faintly above the roar of voices, and occasionally a high laugh drowned it out completely. Sally was too gay, too bright. Her cheeks were too flushed, and I began to get worried. I took her out on the floor again by main force, and had taken about ten steps when Lefty cut . . .

The rest of the story I got from Sally when I saw her in New York. Everybody at school knows about Lefty by now, but not many know the story that Sally told me when we went to see the show in New York and went the rounds later.

Sally was pretty high when Lefty cut, or things probably never would have worked

out as they did. At first they didn't say much. They just danced as only Lefty can dance when he drops his rustic pose, then suddenly Sally said, "I suppose you're going out to Citrus Lake."

"What?" said Lefty.

"Citrus Lake, you know," Sally went on, where all they dance are barn dances and the orange groves smell so sweet at night."

Suddenly Lefty caught on. He remembered his first meeting with her. "No, I'm not going back there," he said, "Let's go in and have a drink. I want to talk to you."

They got one of the few tables in the bar and Lefty brought over a quart and set it down. He called a waiter for soda and ice when Sally said, "I'm drinking mine straight"

"Oh, you are?" Lefty said, smiling at her, "OK, I will too, and he poured out two hookers. "Now about Citrus Lake," he went on, "I want to apologize for . . ."

Sally cut him off. "Let's not talk now, let's drink," she said, "I'll match you drink for drink." She was pretty bad then. She must have been to act that way, but I guess Lefty's grin when she said that she was drinking straight got under her skin too

And so they drank Sally said, "I'm sorry to see you go, Lefty, you were a good kid," and she fingered an orchid that she must have bought herself I sure never bought it

"I hate to leave," Lefty said, "I've a lot to explain to you. You see . . ."

"Forget it," Sally said, "Another drink, please-sir!" She was out-Dorising Doris, but she was getting drunk awfully fast. "Dad's getting me a Cadillac in the Spring. Maybe I'll drive out and see your farm someday," then she began to laugh.

Lefty looked at her with a puzzled sort of expression. "What's so funny?" he queried.

"You," Sally laughed, "I can see you in overalls spraying trees of something. Maybe I'll have a drink with me. I'll give you some if I have." She began to laugh louder

still. "Drink for drink, Lefty. Give me another, and one for you too." He poured her a drink. Then suddenly she began to cry. "I hate to see you go, Lefty,—such a good kid . . ." She lifted her eyes. She'd stopped laughing and crying both now. "Lefty," she said, "Lefty, I'm drunk," and she picked up her glass.

Lefty reached out across the table. "Not for you, Hon," he said and he took the glass and drained it. "Come on," he said, and he caught her arm and lifted her to her feet. He led her out through the door, across the floor and through the entrance. They walked across the golf course, Lefty steadying her.

The night was silver and the mist that hung low over the golf course was moonstained. The sky was clear and the stars glittered except where the spreading brightness of the moon washed them out around it. The grass under their feet was wet. They walked in silence. The fresh air and the coolness of the night combined with the soft glow of the moonlight and starlight to clear Sally's head. It seemed so perfect to be walking here with Lefty. The past was forgotten and the future . . . the future didn't matter. They were walled off from the world by a thin shape of silver mist.

At last Lefty spoke, "I've been cruel to you. But that's the breaks, you never know."

"Cruel?" Sally looked at him. So he thought he could hurt her. "Don't be silly. It really never mattered, I was only curious, and now it matters not at all." Something seemed to be slowly wasting away inside of her. There was a dull pain.

She stopped and turned. "Let's go back. I've been a drunken fool. The Scotch is stronger here than it is at home. At home a quart's nothing, but I guess I'm getting old." She laughed.

"Oh, so you drink a lot." Lefty said.

"Not so much, just a bit for convention," Sally replied trying to sound sophisticated.

"And I suppose you chase around a lot too," Lefty went on.

"Not much, it's rather boring," Sally said, her blasé attitude at its best.

"And you're tired of it all, aren't you. You might even like me because I'm fresh and unspoiled and haven't been around. Is that it?"

"Like you? Yes, I like you, Lefty. You're sweet, but you're not my kind," Sally said, and it hurt.

"Let's not go back right now," Lefty ventured. "You're my last link with this life. Tomorrow I'll be gone and then . . . Tell me what you do . . . How you live, really . . . Tell me . . . Oh, what's the use. Let's go back."

They could hear the music of the orchestra on the faint wind that came over the golf course. The tune was the one that Lefty and Doris had played in Barney's early in the year, the first time Sally had really seen him dance. And it still throbbed. There was a wistful note behind its sophisticated rhythm.

"I love that song they're playing," Sally said. "I saw the show. It was lovely." Sally remembered that on the record it said—Why Not Now—from "Third Row Center" and she remembered that it had been a hit on Broadway the year before.

"I'd have loved to have seen it," Lefty said, "How did they do it in the show?"

"Oh, it was one of those pageant things," Sally said, "All in costume and very lovely. I . . ."

Lefty caught her shoulder and spun her around. "Cut out the act," he said.

Sally's heart was in her throat. "What do you mean?" she said, trying hard to sound insulted.

"I know the show. I . . . Oh, Sally, why do you try to hide what's so swell about you. I mean the sweetness, the naivete, the youth. You're not what you've been trying to be, and

you'll never be that way. There's too much to you."

Sally could stand it no longer. Tears flooded her heart, and she began to sob. "Oh, Lefty, I thought, I . . ." He drew her close to him.

"What did you think, darling?" he asked.

"I thought that Doris . . . That I, Oh, I don't know. I thought that I was too dull for you." She stopped. She wiped her eyes and then went on. "I thought that you had fallen for Doris's sophistication . . . And it isn't real—I know that. But I wanted to make you notice me. You, being a boy from the country and . . . you said you were, I thought you'd fall for glamour. But Doris beat me . . . I never . . ."

He stopped her. "I have really been cruel," he said. "I didn't mean it. Oh, Sally, I wanted to get away from tinsel and glamour and from all that's artificial. That's why I came here."

"But Doris . . ." Sally began.

"Doris was so fake she was funny," Lefty said, "and then she can dance . . . and I had to dance." He stopped then went on, "But you, I couldn't figure you out. You were swell when I first met you but then you started your act and it almost had me fooled. But at times, darling, at times, I saw enough of the real you to get to care just a wee bit . . . See sister, I've known for days and days and then some that you were faking, and I . . . Oh, Sally I can't leave you!"

They were very still. The music stopped and they could hear the sound of automobiles on the gravel drive of the Country Club. It was late. The dance was over.

Sally raised her head, and suddenly their lips met. The mist seemed to crowd around

them. There was nothing but the night and they were together. Lefty's voice was low, "I'm leading with my right, darling . . . but I'm afraid I love you." Almost to himself he continued, "And you?"

"I do, I always have," Sally murmured, her face buried in his shoulder . . .

Well, I went home minus Sally that night. I was pretty worried, but when I called the sorority house they said she'd come in and gone right out again and said nothing. They couldn't understand it and neither could I until I got Sally's wire from New York in the morning. It read, "LEFTY AND I WERE MARRIED IN ELKTON THIS MORNING. WE FLEW NORTH IN HIS PLANE. LOVE FROM BOTH OF US. SALLY"

Well that about finished it. As Sally put it after we'd seen the show in June, "We're happy. We'll always be happy." And it wasn't until that day that I found out that Lefty was the great Bill Hanlon, dancing star of last year's "Third Row Center" and this year's "Just for Tonight", where his dancing to—Forgive and Forget—even surpasses his sensational solo to — Why Not Now—which laid them in the aisles not long ago.

The three of us, Sally, Lefty and I were having a drink in Tony's around the corner from the theatre when Lefty said, "I miss college. I sure picked the right place to get away from it all when I went there." And he looked at Sally and smiled. "By the way, how's Doris?"

"Just fine," I said, "She'll want to see you before she sails. We're going to Europe on our honeymoon." I took a sip of my drink. "Doris and I are getting married next week."

Italian Vista

DETALMO PIRZIO BIROLI

MY VERY first memories go as far back as the winter of 1917-18. I was two years old and naturally I can remember nothing of most that happened at that time. There are however two distinct pictures left in my mind—early remembrances always remain in our minds under the form of "pictures". In one of them I see a small, cosy lounge in our house in Rome, my father sitting on the sofa in his military uniform and myself on the carpet, surrounded by beautiful toys which he had brought me upon arriving home. It was a usual event happening twice a year; forty-eight hours of leave from the front. In the other picture I see the entrance room, a military trunk lying on the floor, my father kissing me, and myself asking him candidly: "Where are you going Popp?" "Vado in guerra" was the answer. "I am going to war." And then he disappeared behind the door all buttoned up in his long, huge military overcoat. I remember seeing my mother in her room weeping silently for hours and hours.

Those words of my father, my mother, all those circumstances seemed completely and truly natural and normal to me; they never in any way affected my gaiety and they never even moved my interest. "I am going to war" sounded to me something like "I go out one moment to buy the newspaper"! I was born at the end of 1915 and I hadn't experienced any atmosphere other than that one which I was still living in. In my mind the word "war" was connected with the impression of a place full of noise and confusion where my father had some business to do together with a lot of other people. . . .

Such is the atmosphere in which all the Italian youth was born. All my friends have

such memories as mine. Moreover some hundred thousands of the Italian young men have lost their fathers or older brothers. It may seem awful to other people of other countries, but to us, being used to this situation since birth, the whole thing seemed absolutely normal. We only realized later, when growing older, that it wasn't exactly the best thing one could go through.

I have related these few facts in order to show what were the first impressions which life has marked in our minds. During the following years we had to go through all that well known series of economic and political crises just as naturally as we had been through some or all the years of the war.

In Rome I had a crowd of little friends, all under ten, with whom I used to "play the revolution". My cousin was "Mussolini" while I, if I recall well, was his colour bearer. Whenever we would go to visit each other for parties we organized parades along the rooms and corridors of the apartment. Some other times we would drive out all together on the Old Appian Way where there was a huge mass of cats constantly lying peacefully in the sun amidst the Roman ruins. The cats were supposed to be the Communists, the Socialists, the Free-Masons and the Whites . . . We would chase them away with violent attacks, while the English governesses and nurses around were trying to persuade us "not to be so rough"!

After 1925 we began to notice the advantages of the Fascist action. Peace and order came for the first time into our lives. Studies could be pursued regularly and with a good profit, we were developing together with our country which had become young and healthy again. In one word we enjoyed peace, as that

was peace for us! You must realize that when I say "peace" in speaking of Europe I do not mean an American kind of peace. It was peace for us because it wasn't real, proper war. In fact everybody knows about the endless series of quarrels among the different groups of countries in the past years, which at the present time are as bad as ever; sudden mobilizations to this or that frontier, long polemics in the press, battles on the benches of the League of Nations, public excitement.

All this however afforded a good deal of fun to us and plenty of material for long, hot political arguing through the high schools and colleges. We were always ready to mobilize spiritually behind our older friends in the army, so much that we got used to the idea of mobilization as a common event of life. At the same time the wonderful rise of our renewed country, the wave of patriotism inspired by the Duce, the revived Roman traditions, all the new ideals created a national unity never seen before and became the springs of our action, in a complete devotion and sacrifice of all private interests for the supreme welfare of the Country and glory of the Flag.

Thus, as the circumstances I mentioned before have made us used to the idea of war, the new Fascist spirit has made us ready for any case in which the national honour shall need to be defended. This is the back-ground one has to bear in mind when observing the Italian youth of today.

I should think the main and most striking characteristic of the Italian young people of today is their exceedingly early development both in character and intellect. We can say they are all ready, by the age of twenty, to face life alone in all its hard problems. Two other factors, besides those already mentioned, contribute largely in creating this situation: the financial distress and the life in the army. The excess of population, the lack

of material resources, the new situation created by the past depression make it very hard for everyone to organize his life satisfactorily and to build up a pleasant future.

The average Italian boy knows now-a-days by the age of fifteen what he is going to do with his life. People who have no money to end their studies usually get to work at eighteen, those who have attained their doctor's degree in the Universities, by the time they are twenty-three or twenty-four have already initiated their careers and earn their livings. Very often they even partially support their old parents. Those who can afford luxury are very few. However for everyone, it doesn't matter how wealthy or poor he is, the main problem is to undertake a good career in order to become financially self-sufficient as soon as possible. The spoiled children who continue to live exclusively on their families' funds after twenty-four years of age are merely exceptions and they are universally despised as socially unworthy people. The reason, I believe, has to be sought in the fact that those families who can't allow their children to remain doing nothing are in such a majority that the other side considers it morally wrong to behave differently.

Because of the influence of the new Fascist social justice the aristocracy of birth has been replaced with the aristocracy of labour. Old names, titles, properties and capitals are worth nothing with us now-a-days if the noble crowns aren't worn by industrious people, and the capitals are inexorably cut down. Everybody therefore is compelled to get in direct contact with life very soon and to face at once its hardest and most important problems: food, career, social position, marriage, defense and service of the Country.

Let's see about military training. This matter takes a long time and absorbs a good deal of energy. It always does a lot of good to the boys and for some of them it is even a

resort to which they go with personal satisfaction and pleasure. The army is the most character-building institution we have. There is hazing (and a bad form of it), severeness of officers, discipline, life in common, continuous competition, hard physical work . . . but what romance at the same time!

In the army we learn to be men, in the army we make our best friends. We always long to go home when we are in it, but then, when it's all over, we can't look backwards at all our comrades without tears in our eyes. With them we used to sing around the fire while camping during the great maneuvers. With them for a long time we shared food, sleep, fun, pleasure, hard work, fatigue, success, punishments, machine-gun-cleaning, love blues and boot-shining; in one word, everything of life! A hard life but lots of fun. There was nothing that could make us lose our sense of humour.

Because everybody is a member of the regular army for a period of at least one full year, we can say that military life is a part of the individual development and education. When one has not yet been under the flags, if a student, he is always in contact with his own "section" of the Fascist Youth Organizations and is busy with military training, all kinds of sports and competitions as well as cultural activities, cruises, trips abroad and various other things.

This is the life of the average type in its very general lines. Naturally, as it happens everywhere, the different kinds of people are legion. Some excel in sports, while others excel in intellectual work. Studies too absorb a large part of the individual activity. There are a good many differences of tastes and ideas, but in one thing they all agree: in their devotion to the King and to the Duce.

At first sight one may think religion means nothing to that youth. In fact the majority constantly skip Holy Mass on Sundays, when they can manage to avoid their parents' con-

trol. And God only knows the huge amount of "mortal sins" everyone has on his conscience about Holy Masses, meat-eating on Fridays, deserting Holy Communion and Confession, jokes on sacred things, and the like. But, despite all this they all feel very deeply the Christian morality in their souls. At least so far as the substance is concerned, Christian morality remains untouched and inspires the actions of everyone. And how do they solve the supernatural problems? Some believe in the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, but are too lazy to fulfill all the formal duties which the priests require. Others no longer believe in the Catholic dogmas and have a philosophic system of their own, usually it is one of the branches of the modern idealism, at any rate some form of pantheism. The point of view is always idealistic, skeptics and atheists are exceptions.

And now let's go briefly into the private affairs of the Italian youth. The Latin spirit, no matter what the political system, is essentially individualistic. Everyone has a spiritual universe of his own, often very original. Each one has his own program before him and lives following his personal needs, tastes and ideals. Collectivism exists only so far as the political, historical and social interests of the Country are concerned, as here they all stand by the Chief. In all the rest there is a great variety of ideas.

Romance stands always as the basis of every soul: romance of the old Roman traditions, romance of the Country, romance of the Army, romance of the Family, romance of love, romance of culture, romance of sport in the Greek sense, romance of life in general.

I think this is enough to give an idea of what life is for everyone in its serious part. Of course we mustn't forget that they are not the last in the world in wanting to have good, real fun . . . They usually like social life a good deal. They dance and make a racket

practically every night and they quite often drink, although not habitually. The main, basic point of fun though, for the great majority, is love-making. It is a spiritual necessity.

Everyone has a long, exciting story of adventures behind him. If they haven't got one they try to build one in order not to be behind the rest. There is a lot of boasting, terrible individual competition sometimes, and fights for personal prestige within the crowd of one's friends. It is all a succession of falling in and out of love. They talk frankly to each other and to their parents about anything quite naturally, without the least embarrassment. Sometimes they behave like pigs, usually they enjoy playing with

love, but when they finally happen to be hit on the right point of the heart they give to the family, together with their love, their entire life.

This is what the Italian youth of to-day looks like. I had a chance to come in contact with the French youth and with the American in a large measure. I find the French boys, in many things very much like the Italians, while the Angle-Saxons are entirely and fundamentally different. The difference is due to circumstances of history, traditions, mentality and education. The Americans have many great, very great qualities. I have no room to talk about them now, but I leave them with all my sympathy and admiration.

VIRGINAL

ELIZABETH SCHOENING

The woman gone reluctantly to death,
Torn from the arms of love, lies well content—
Wrapped in a cloak of warm, remembered breath,
Her body's dower well and gladly spent.
While they whose cloistered beauty breathes its last
Upon the breast of death, the final lover
Being the first, one poignant moment past—
Their barren wombs give birth to whitened clover.

Behold at last how, shorn of all pretense,
The suppliant arms are raised—the lips are given
Freely, in one last measure of defense—
Clutching in vain the swiftly fading heaven;
And that being lost, how amorous they pass
From air unheeding to impartial grass!

Poems

ALICE BOOTH

Alice Booth, in her two years at Rollins has achieved a body of work distinctive in its style, fresh and original in its viewpoint. Her poetry delights in the small, the exquisite. The simple and the everyday become for her clarified into forms of beauty in a world full of small climaxes. She sees with a kind of

innocent sophistication so that to read her work is to see through her eyes the clear mosaic structure of her own world—a world detailed and jewel-like, inhabited by bird and snake and the little furry creatures which burrow deep within the earth. The poems printed here are characteristic of her interest in pattern.

BIRD HEAVEN

Wild with flight
Were the slopes last night
On the moon. Little dead birds
That once were redbirds
And robins and whip-poor-wills,
Sparrows and yellow-bills—
No more than skeletons
Fashioned of silver bones—
Took to the air
With a featherless whir,
And all was excitement
Wherever their flight went.

"They're coming!" the humming
bird
Cried, and the faintly heard
Words of far birds carolled
Up from our darkened world;
Bluebird and oriole
Joined the ethereal
Gathering, listening,
Waiting on misty wing.

Birds there were there
Who had pecked at a pear
When the apple was Eve's;
Who had sunk to their graves
In the water-roofed dark

Rising under the Ark;
Birds who in trances
Had talked with Saint Francis;
Birds God had given
The moon for a heaven;
By waterless river
To revel forever;
With lunar lawns sweet
To their little dead feet,
And under their breasts
Strawless, air woven nests.

Thus the wonderful tune
From the full-again moon
Drew the no-longer living birds
Steadily heavenwards;
Cousins and parents
Rained jewel-notes in torrents
To guide to the edge
All that vast pilgrimage.

How lightly we slept,
And, sleeping, wept
With exquisite longing
Beneath that singing,
And on the same breath
Dreamed lightly of death.

NINETEEN

I am frozen into flame,
Waiting for what is to come;

Like the silver unborn leaf
Knocking at the bough for life,

Or fledgling bird that starts to murmur
Close against his frail shell armour.

Grass beneath the ground am I,
Straining up to see the sky.

Almost sad to leave this place—
So brief the sweet unknowing is!

A SAD LAY

Feet hid in leather
From fire and frost;
Heads quite lost
Under flower and feather;
Safe from the weather
In sable and silk—
Us and our ilk,
Entombed together!

WITH TIME

Nothing more cruel
Than new grown old:
Bough into fuel,
Flame into cold;
Hands into thin dust,
Cloud into air,
Leaf into wind-gust,
Song into prayer.

REUNION

Weeping beneath a leaf
I found her.
Silver grief
Of a cobweb bound her.

Eyes wide
And full of fright,
Wild she cried
To the circling night.

But it wasn't fear
Of the dark that filled her,
Or frost-veneer
Of the stars that chilled her.

Rather she wailed
Like a small lorn elf
In moon-mist veiled
"I have lost myself!"

I took her hand,
And I nodded my head,
"I understand,
Here I am," I said.

WAR SONG

So through cloudfire of shrapnel
And swinging blue gun-thunder,
Meeting at last
In impetuous wonder,
An instant we stare
The one at the other,
A little selfconscious
In such a bright smother
Of bomb-jewelled gas,
Then shall part, our good-bye
One's bright bayonet
Through the other's eye.

Broadway Malady

JESS GREGG

NOW LISSEN M'rie,—say will yuh put down them True Confeshuns an' lissen to what I gotta say? Now get this straight. Be more dignified an' refined around here and can the flirtin'. Tennyson sez "Manners maketh man", but that don't mean that you hafta make 'um. Be pulite, but not susceptible. Here comes a customer so watch me an get my technique.

Somethin' fer you, sir? Hey M'rie, a cup o' cawfee fer the gent here. Why,—sa-ay. Ain't we met somewhere before? You're, . . . I remember, you're Rod Trueman. Fancy that. Betcha don't 'member me. The name's Kittee Blythe. You knew me when I was stripin' the light fantastique at Minsky's in 1928. Yeah, that's me. Guess my blonde hair fooled yuh. Uh-huh, it usta be red. Yuh know, I recuhnized yuh right away. Yuh ain't changed a bit. What? Oh g'wan, Mister Trueman, I have too changed. Not jest my hair, but my outlook on life.

I guess yer sorta wonderin' why a high stepper like me is in a place like this. Well, I'll tell yuh, Mister Trueman, it's due to bad speculation in 1929. No, I didn't pick the wrong stock. I picked the wrong husband. It was like this.

I quit Minskys in 1928 when I found that the only way I could get the director to pull for me,—was by givin' him plenty of rope. When they say they'll pull the strings for you, yuh can be sure there're be a string attached to that contract too.

M'rie, will yuh tend to that customer over there. He ain't got all day.

Now I liked life at the Burly-que, but better things in the theayter called. I had a face like a picture an' my frame wasn't bad, so I felt I could fit in anywhere. Soon I

meets up with a young fellah, and we form an act: "Kittee an' Munroe; singin', dancin' an' wisecracks". It was pretty good too, 'cept Ted jest simply couldn't sing. Sentimentally, he liked music, but organically, he didn't have the stuff to grind out. Naturally I had to do all the singin', an' at that they liked it. We run fourteen weeks, and was headed fer a "big time" circ, when Cupid raised his ugly head.

Ted was jest mad 'bout me, see? It wasn't that he wanted to cut down the expense of havin' to rent two rooms; he even wanted to marry me. Well, while I was fond of the guy, he didn't have no culshure an' I felt that there wasn't much ahead for him anyway.

"After all," I sez, "after all, a girl hasta think of her future. I wanna make my mark in the world."

"The only mark you care about makin'," he sez, "is the dollar mark. They're right when they called this part of town 'Broad's-way.'"

That was too much. Real stately an' refined, I sez to him, "You an' comparisons," I sez, "are odorous. Don't never speak to me again." An' I walks out an' slams the door.

Now there was a simple old guy of sixty er so, that wanted to marry me too, but he was last year's hat to me.

"Marry that old fool?" I sez to Beebe Delle, my room-mate. "Why, I'd die first."

"I doubt if it would be you who'd die first," sez Beebe. "He ain't so strong as he looks."

I glares at Beebe, who was really awful unrefined.

"You'd vulgarize Judgement Day," I sez. "Anyway, he's too old."

"Lissen, dearie," she sez to me, "never count a man's years until he's got nothin'

else to count. 'Member, it's as easy to marry a rich fool as a poor one, and much more profitable. This guy is the best bet on the Happy Hunting Grounds."

"Oh save yer breath to cool yer porridge," I sez.

Nevertheless, I began picturing life with a millionaire. Meetin' class, beini' a debutante, my pictures in the paper, European tours, swell clothes, jools, havin' culshure, bein' presented at court . . . An' the more I thought of it the better I liked Herman, so early in 1929 B. C., (Before Crash), we got hitched.

Then I see what's been goin' on. The guy's a millionaire, o. k., but he's a cattleman an' insists on goin' out to his ranch to live. Worse, Beebe takes my place in the act an' in Ted's heart. Next thing I knew, they was married too. Here she was with my man, and there I was with a sixty year old greybeard an' several million cows on my hands.

Well, there's nothin' I can do but go out West to lead a fine an' upright life with the cows an' my husband. Now cows are all right in their way, but they were continually gettin' in *my* way, which wasn't so good. Herman was even worse. Since I married him fer life, I sort of expected him to show a little. We led an existence that began at five in the morning and ended at seven at night. Herman didn't seem to realize that early to bed an' early to rise makes a man laugh at you today.

Finally comes the dawn and the crash. It seems that Herman's interest in stock wasn't limited to the four footed kind that moos. We was left so broke we rattled.

That was too much. I tried to divorce Herman a month later. What for? Sixty dollars a month an' a settlement. Oh, you mean what grounds? Incompatibility; he wouldn't give me a divorce an' if that ain't incompatible what is? Anyway, later I decided not to

do it 'till he got enough money back to pay me alimony.

Wait a minute. Here's a customer. Somethin' fer you, ma'am? Whole wheat or Rye? Hey, M'rie, ham on rye fer the lady here.

Where was I? Oh yeah. Well, in the meantime, Ted and Beebe hears Hollywood's clarion voice an' lands in a review there. One night Beebe gets laryngitis an' can't sing, so it was up to Ted. Well as I say, the only way yuh could recuhnize the song he sang was by the title. Hones', he'd get so off tune you'd think he was singin' another song. But the show must go on y'know an' Ted bravely began.

At first the orchestra tried to follow him, but after all, they was musicians, not magicians. 'So without music Ted warbled on, guided by his conshuns, which didn't help much. When the curtain fell Ted nearly fainted, cuz the audience went wild with applause. They thought he'd interduced a bran new song, an' they liked it.

After a couple o' encores, Ted woke up an' wrote down the score. The next day he was knee deep in offers, an' finally sold the song to a movie compuny. Soon it was spreadin' the country like wild fire with wander-lust. Originally the song was "Three Little Words", but nobody recuhnized it. Ted's version was called "There's Nothin' New", which you'll agree is a damn apt title.

Now he's makin' millions writin' music fer movies. All he hasta do is to give a song a treatment with his hack-saw of a voice, and voy-la, as the French say, he has a completely new and different tune.

You've heard his new one, aincha? "The Ragman Rag"? It came from "Onward Christian Soldiers". His "Schenectedy Swing" is from "Lover Come Back to Me", an' last month he wrote "Nile Green Blues" after singin' "Silent Night". Yeah, no kiddin'.

Wait a minute. Here's a customer. Yessir? We got chawklut, vunilla, strawberry an,

tooti-fruiti. Hey M'rie, a chawk malt fer the gent here.

Well, Mister Trueman, last year I got fed up an' divorced Herman. Then I writes Ted.

"My own darlin," I writes, "I'm free again. I seen my mustake an' never ceased regrettin' it. Take me back, my own," I writes, "I'll be waitin' with open arms." An' wouldja believe it, Mister Trueman, I never got no answer. That sure goes to show how money changes people.

Speaking of money, when I divorced Herman he'd regained some of his fortune an' the dirty son of a seacock tried to keep me from gettin' any of it.

"A lovin' wife," I sobs in court. An'—"This is a fine way to be rewarded after sacrificin' the best years of yer life."

With the money the court awarded me I started this little "Ye Klassy-Kuisine," where I'm tryin' to regain my self respeck after those awful years with the cows an' Herman.

My life, Mister Trueman, is an example of frustration. If I'd a married Ted, I coulda settled down.—Instead I married Herman—an' settled up.

I'm alone in the world now, Mister Trueman. Jest a castaside blossom hopin' fer the

golden rays of love to restore my life. This shoppe has been my savior. It's really home to me. I always say one of Tennyson's most beautiful lines is "Home is anywhere you hang your hat."

Drop around often won'tcha mister Trueman? It takes a girl's mind offa the day's dull drudgery to hear someone with culshure talk. An' you're good-lookin' too. Y'know when an irresistible force like me meets an immovable object like you,—anything can happen.

Pardun me a sec; here's a customer.

Somethin' fer you sir? We got apple pie, coconut, banana cream, cherry, an' punkun dulight. M'rie, a piece o' punkun dulight fer this here gent.

As I was sayin' Mister Trueman— Hey M'rie, where'd Mister Trueman go? I wonder why he left in such a hurry. Maybe he had a appointment er sumpin. Y'know, Marie, there's a real refined gennulman. Y'only smell the best liquor on his breath, and didja notice his ceegar—? Jest the same, I'd like to know why he run off like that, jest when I was gettin' started. Don't that beat the Dutch!

CULMINATION

LOIS RAEGE

How soon the cursed watcher must survey—
Before the summer fruit is at its height,
Before the feaster lulls his appetite—
The rotting grapes, the wine's unclean decay,
The trodden husks of sweetness and display.
How swiftly on the harvest comes the blight.
How soon the darkness grows into the night,
From the inherent shadow of the day.
Thus every garden comes to wilderness,
Thus evil smell will ever supersede
The scent of rain and rushes. And the feet
Of Love must ever walk in sordidness.
But if each flower holds destruction's seed,
Therefore is Beauty in itself complete.

The Power of Darkness

FRANCES GODWIN

THAT NIGHT a bitter wind slanted rain against the ancient brownstone fronts of the narrow tenements. A dirty scrap of newspaper was blown around the corner and tumbled down the cracked curbing of the street. Only on the corners arc-lights gleamed cold yellow through the heavy downpour. And there was the distant traffic from Grand Avenue booming like a muffled tide in the dim backwash of Cedar Street. The drizzle of rain from leaking, broken eaves; the faraway intermittent boom; the hoarse whisper and low moan of the wind as it whistled around corners, over high-pitched roofs, down the dark chasm between the row of buildings made the street seem alive with whispering secrets, darkly murmured. And at times the sound of distant traffic was like a muffled heartbeat. Another sheet of paper was blown around the corner and tumbled down the length of the wet pavement; a skinny dog, miserably wet, turned the corner and wandered shivering down the sidewalk. There was a neon sign swaying dizzily in the wind, its brightness subdued to a burning ruddy ember in the thick mist. In the light of its red glow a man lurched out of a swinging door and swayed cursing down the street.

In the yellow circle cast by the arc-light on the shining pavement appeared a slim hurrying figure. Rounding the corner quickly, her wet skirts blown forward with the wind, she became part of the shadowy moving current of Cedar Street. At times with the wind behind her she moved with a kind of winged eagerness. Once her steps slackened; she paused, and then went on—her progress like the precipitant, hesitant flight of the torn scrap

of paper as she went forward, propelled, driven by some invisible force.

Although the icy wind stung her cheeks and her bare hands, though it whipped her thin wet coat about her figure, Marie Chopek was warm. The warmth of her body, her consciousness of it, was suddenly exciting—like the perfume her flesh exuded. She had touched her hair, the soft curve of her neck, her shoulder with heavy scent—remembering Tony's kisses. She passed her own rough palm over the childish down on her cheeks, remembering Tony's caressing hands. Marie's full red lips were curved in delicious remembrance, and her young body was swift with eagerness. There was a singing, like the music of violin strings, in Marie's ears; singing that turned instantly to clamor and discords when she saw the heavy figure of a man sway drunkenly away from the neon sign. It was not the night wind, but an old cold fear that so suddenly chilled the warm tingle of Marie's heart. She shivered, realized that her hands were chapped and numb. Remembering suddenly she had stolen the money from her father to buy that perfume, she remembered too the ugly bruise on her arm, and her ears rang with the echo of a thick, angry roar. For a moment Marie felt the old tired defeat, the old helpless loathing. Then quickly with youthful volatility she thought of Tony, and dreaming, she encircled herself in his hard arms, and shut out the rest of the world. Reckless, eager, impatient, Marie hurried down Cedar Street, her shabby thin coat wrapped tightly about her, her heart singing within her, and her pliant body tingling with desire.

The girl who followed was cold; shivering, she buried her sharp little chin in the

soft rich fur of her collar. About her steps there was no eagerness, no momentary hesitation; only a kind of dogged, weary patience. From time to time she glanced nervously around her. For Margaret Blaine the shadows of Cedar Street were threateningly alive. The cold wind pierced her thin body; the rain had soaked the fluffy collar of her coat and her bright fine hair. She was a smaller girl than Marie; and exhausted from trying to keep up with the other's long, eager strides, she slipped. The muddy water running in the gutter splashed over her small feet. She shivered and thrust her hands deeper into her muff. But her pretty mouth was set in determination as she followed Marie.

They were a strange sight, these two, one following the other; both moving determinedly down the murky wetness of the narrow street. The one walking eagerly, warmly enveloped in her dreams, the other cold, nervous, yet following quietly, doggedly. Both of them along with the dirty papers, the wet cur, the drunk, and the other shadowy moving shapes—all of them, the jetsam and flotsam, that night on the dingy current of Cedar Street.

At the end of four blocks Marie paused. Uneasily she glanced about her, then tossing her head defiantly she turned in a deep doorway. As Marie mounted the narrow, familiar stairs, her heart was pounding. She glanced up at each landing, squinting through the gloom to see if Tony were there, if his dark face were laughing down at her. When she reached his door, she stopped to catch her breath. She rattled the doorknob, waited, and then with a little sigh she reached for the key.

In his room she wandered about restlessly, emptied out a glass of stale gin, automatically threw away an empty bottle, absently stroked his violin case. She went to a dim mirror and cautiously studied her face. Impatiently she threw off the damp coat, walked

over to the unmade bed and sat down, staring moodily at the dusty carpet. Then her eyes rested on the hollow his head had made in the pillow, and her heart contracted strangely. She put out her rough hand to touch the pillow gently. Hearing the doorknob turn, she jumped up and stood waiting, a pulse pounding in her throat, her face radiant.

After the door opened, it was a full moment before Marie could speak. "Oh—!" she said, "You!" and then her voice gained in volume and anger. "What are *you* doing here?"

At first Margaret could not answer, for she too was breathless with the long climb. She stood in the doorway curiously appraising the room—the clothes strewn over chairs; the liquor bottle and bright ties on the dusty bureau top; the worn violin case. So this was his room. And then her eyes went back to Marie. Marie, her green eyes blazing with anger, her full mouth sullen with disappointment. Margaret could not but notice the frizzed black hair, the cheap perfume. But now that she was here facing Marie like this, Margaret felt ill at ease. Marie no longer seemed like a child of sixteen. In a way she seemed years older than Margaret.

"How did you know I was here?" Marie asked sullenly.

"I heard someone say you were coming—at the settlement house tonight."

"Who was it? That Eleanor Kefensky, probably. What a swell girl friend she is!"

"I'm not going to say who it was, Marie, but I'm glad I found out."

"Why?"

"Oh Marie, Marie, think what you're doing!—This man—"

"Don't you say a word about Tony, or I'll—"

"Please, Marie, listen to me! I walked all this way in the rain to get you." Margaret crossed the room and sank down beside Marie on the bed. Marie was quiet, but some of the

resentful anger had gone from her eyes. Margaret Blaine was a very small, appealing person, and her blue eyes very candid and disarming. "Marie, Marie Chopek, we have been such good friends, you and I, since I came to work at Pillsbury House, haven't we?" Marie nodded her head mutely. "And I thought—" Somehow all the words Margaret had been rehearsing so glibly all the way over stuck in her throat. In spite of herself, she knew they were just words, words. And she *had* known so well what she would say, how she would save Marie from herself, make her adhere to the ideals which Margaret had tried to instill in her girls at the Settlement House; and now those ideals seemed very impotent and abstract, face to face with this Marie—Marie in Tony's room: in his room where the ghost of his soaring, quivering music lingered like a haunting melody. Margaret twisted her handkerchief nervously and paced up and down. "I have really grown fond of her, this strong tempestuous little Slovak," Margaret said to herself, "and with every word I say I'm tearing down our friendship. And yet I can't bear to have her run off with him—ruin her whole life." Marie's strangely foreign will interrupted her thoughts.

"Miss Blaine—it's not any more wrong for me to come over here to stay with Tony than to stay at home with—Well, you know what my home's like! When I'm with Tony, when he plays his fiddle, when he—when he kisses me—then I'm happy. Don't think you're the only one who's told me I'm wicked! Father Stanislaus has told me, so's Mrs. Taylor at the House. But I don't care—I love Tony, and *no* one's going to make me stop being with him!"

"But you *know* what has happened to the other girls—look how he's treated them; and he's always in trouble with the police. He's been in jail—He—"

"I don't care, I tell you! You live your own good life. There's no reason *you* shouldn't be good. Look what a cinch your life has been. *You* weren't brought up on Cedar Street—or by my father. So you have no right to meddle in our life. Do you hear? Now go—get out of here!" Margaret's throat felt tight, and her voice was strained.

"Marie, do you realize you're only sixteen, and that if I reported you to the board—" Marie stared at her, her green eyes blazing.

"Oh, how I hate you!" Then her stormy eyes narrowed. "Do you know what I think? Why you don't want me to be here with Tony? It's not because you want to 'save' me. Oh, no! You know, I've seen things since I was a kid that—. Anyway, that's not the reason. You're just as bad as Eleanor who snitched on me. You'd report me and say it was for my good. And it would be just because you want him for yourself. If you could see your face! You're in love with Tony, that's why you don't want me to have him. You're in love with him, too!" Marie's voice which had crescendoed into a hysterical shriek, suddenly died off into a faint gasp, and her eyes went beyond Margaret, behind her. Margaret whirled around. There, leaning in the doorway, watching them with a strange regard, stood Tony.

On his mouth was an amused grin, but in his black eyes was a speculative, newly aroused interest, as his gaze rested on Margaret. Margaret, hot with anger and confusion, could feel the burning red creep up her neck over her cheeks, up to her hairline. There was a shimmering haze before her eyes. Blindly she reached for her coat and ran to the door. Without looking up, she knew he had stepped aside for her; was gravely holding the door for her to pass. With her mind in a tumult she fled down the stairs—only to hear his steps in the dark behind. From the landing above she heard a cry, imploring, heart-broken—"Tony!"

As she ran down the street, the rain cooling her hot cheeks, she heard him running easily, close behind her. Her breath was coming in short, painful gasps. His arm was under her elbow. "Wait up," he said easily, "and I'll see you home." About him there was a scent of stale tobacco smoke, of cheap pomade, and whiskey on his breath. The odor sickened Margaret, and she pulled her elbow away, and slipped on the wet pavement. His arm was about her, steadying her. For a moment she leaned against him to steady herself. Then he removed his arm and walked beside her quietly, between the dark, murky shadows of the street. They passed the red neon sign, and a drunk patron, emerging, almost knocked her down. Again his arm was about her, steadying her. They were passing the third street lamp when he said aloud, ruminatively, "So that's the reason you didn't want little Marie to come to my room . . ." Her cheeks flamed with anger, but she did not answer him. When they were within a block of the Settlement House and she could see its solid bulk looming comfortably in the darkness, he jerked her with a powerful arm into a narrow little alley between two buildings. And he had her tightly locked in his arms, his lean hard cheek against her soft one. It was useless for her to struggle in that iron grasp. He drew his head back, and holding her face in his hands, he looked at her intensely in the faint yellow glare from the street lamp. "Margaret, Margaret," he said over and over. He was smiling; she could see his black eyes, and his white teeth gleaming in the shadows. His arrogant, insistent mouth was on hers, and suddenly for Margaret the world was black and pulsating, shot with colored flares. When he released her, drained and dizzy, he laughed a rather shaken laugh. But he said, "There . . . I knew you felt that way." For a minute she stared at him, speechless; her heart rising and falling in short painful breaths. A smile was curling

his lips. "I knew it the night I played at the Settlement House, and when I had finished I saw you looking at me. I could tell then."

"No!" Margaret said, "Oh, no! You're mad!" She thought of Marie, of Eleanor, of the others and her cheeks burned with shame. "You—you," she said in a choked voice. "You're a worthless scoundrel, a bully, a cheat—you're nothing but a cheap crook. What in the name of God would make you think I loved you?" The look in his eyes maddened her. With a hard stinging slap, her palm resounded against his lean cheek. "I loathe you," she said in a low, breathless tone. She turned and fled quickly away from him.

That night Margaret lay late, wide awake in her room at the top of the Settlement House. Her slim arms locked behind her head, she stared into the dark, biting her lips. She hated him. hated him. But lying there in the dark, she could not put out of her mind her first memory of him the night he had played for the neighborhood party at the House. She had not known who he was when he appeared, standing by the fire-place; his violin under his chin, bowing and smiling, white teeth flashing in his dark, vital face. She remembered the queer thrill of excitement that had gone through her when he first pulled his bow across the strings. That initial singing note—like an arrogant, beautiful voice calling attention to the song. He had played a Hungarian folk-song—something she had never heard before. First it was gay with a mad recklessness, as he was gay—hell-bent for the devil. And that dark, curly lock fell over his damp forehead. His eyes danced and sparkled as the ruddy fire-light cast leaping shadows on his swarthy, diabolical face. He looked what he was; a wild Hungarian, fiddling by some gypsy camp fire. And the swirling obligato notes, the laughing eyes, the swing of his shoulders,

quickened her senses with a sudden warmly responsive thrill.

Then the music was on a minor note; sad with a haunting, singing sadness; and his black eyes, deep-set, were somber, dreamy; and the song sobbed with an elemental earthly sorrow. She remembered how those Hungarian and Slovak people listened to him, their tired peasant eyes wet with a mutual peasant sorrow . . . Towards the end it was a love song; throbbing, insistent, tender, cruel, and passionately overbearing. She could feel her whole self warming to that song. She knew that all the young people there were listening to it with quickening pulses. Margaret remembered that as he had played that part, his eyes had roved over the room, had rested for a second on Eleanor Kefensky, had flickered over her head to Marie Chopek. Marie with her dusky hair framing flushed cheeks, her green eyes luminous with enraptured, unshed tears, stood spell-bound, her hands childishly clasped. He did not take his eyes off Marie until he had finished. At the loud applause his gaze roamed about the room, and he had seen her staring at him.

She remembered with what a shock she had learned all about Tony from the resident workers—learned about the weakness and laziness of him which had drifted him into a criminal career; the latent, incalculable cruelty of him to which they attributed the ruin of many of the neighborhood girls. It had all seemed so incongruous, Margaret thought, with that music of his. But every day since, Margaret had come more and more to realize what Father Stanislaus sorrowfully called "the blackness of his soul". To Margaret he represented all the forces of evil which she in her work at the Settlement battled vigorously to overcome. With the girls—especially Marie—he worked as a subtle, undermining flood, tearing down all the flimsy structure of ideals and morals that Margaret had so determinedly and righteously erected.

She turned over and shut her eyes. But that night her dreams were threaded with a strain of wild, rich music tauntingly leading her into black darkness.

A week later that same music, swirling, fiery, blended with, yet rose above the nasal accordion, the tinkling rhythm of a cracked piano. Tony was swaying with the music, swaying too with the red Hungarian wine inside him. From the wine his high cheek bones were flushed scarlet. His black eyes were blurred—but not the quick crescendoed notes from his strings. Margaret watched his hands; bony, olive hands, slim-fingered and sensitive. She noticed with distaste the broken, dirty nails. Turning away, she smiled dazzlingly at an amazed Peter Mayor, who, melting with warm red wine, leaned eagerly towards her. Quickly her eyes slid past him with a calculated dreaminess. The barren "club" above Sam Finberg's delicatessen was decorated for a festive occasion. The room was blue with tobacco smoke. The blue haze dimmed the garishness of red and yellow crepe paper streamers, the wreaths of artificial flowers; dimmed the sparkle of gold earrings and glass beads; subdued the bright bold patterns of peasant skirts, the shining gloss of cheap sateen—but did not dim the teasing, restless clarity of the violin's song. Like an accompaniment was the sound of the dancers; muffled shuffle of old feet, emphatic stamp of a bold, "old country" step; and the sliding gyrations of the fox-trot. It was a sound now staccato, now thumping, so that the rough wooden floor trembled and shook. Margaret's ears rang with the clamour; foreign voices, American slang, laughing voices, sullen growls, blurred voices, feminine, high-pitched shrieks:

"Aw, Mike, stop it!"

"What for, you peeg, did you geef *heem* the wine? I ask anda ask—no get notings!"

"Papa, sit up!"

"Throw your money at the plate, here. Eef you heet heem, you kees the bride!"

"No, Mike, kiss *me!* It won't cost you nothing."

"Leesten to heem play, that Tonee! My poor old feet, they weel not stay still! Don't he play fine though, Mees Blaine? Ah, eef I was young—he's no good though, that devil." The music grew faster, the room was hot, the good wine strong. Margaret dizzily watched the whirling couples; she saw Marie, her gaze fastened on Tony. She watched the girls dance past Tony, turning their heads and bright eager smile to him. And he laughed at them, and his drunken eyes sparkled. Over the heads of their sweating, resentful partners, he winked and mouthed audacious compliments. Now and then some hot-blooded youth growled at him resentfully. Then Tony's eyes blazed with drunken anger, and a steady stream of splendid, colorful profanity issued from his gamin mouth. At last he could play no longer. He drew his bow across the strings in one rich sweeping note and tenderly laid his violin away in its case.

The piano and the accordion were still playing, but the winged, soaring beauty of the song had taken flight. There remained only that tiredly blatant wheeze and the metallic tinkle of dirty keys. With the sinewy springiness of a panther, Tony leaped down from the platform. He swaggered down the length of the room. Marie Chopek leaned forward in her chair, one hand brushing back a lock of hair, her green eyes on him. As he passed her, he gently touched the warm curve of her throat and favored her with a rarely sweet, slightly tipsy smile. His eyes met Margaret's for an instant, and something strange flickered in their dark depths. Voices called out to him; someone handed him a bottle of wine, and he gulped it thirstily. With an exhausted sigh he flung himself down beside old Mama Kefensky, grabbed one of her wrinkled old fat hands in his slim brown ones and rest-

ed his black, curly head like a tired child on her ample bosom. She smiled down at him, a toothless, sheepishly pleased, maternal smile. "Love me, grandma, love your Tony," he said imperatively. With her free hand she stroked his wet forehead. His eyes were closed and the long black lashes lay like shadows on his flushed cheeks.

"You, Tony! You son of a beetch, see eef you can stand up like a man!" Igor Mayar was standing in front of him, drunk with a murderous, flaming drunkenness. His face was a dark purple-red; the veins stood out on his sweaty forehead. His eyes were blood-shot, and his heavy body swayed pronouncedly. He panted like some big animal. Tony lazily opened one eye.

"What's your trouble, Igor?"

"You Goddam son of a beetch, you—I am going to keel you! My Olga just told me—she—you" In his great wrath he choked and sputtered. "I am going to keel you—you."

Tony's eyes blazed with temper. He rose to his feet, and also swaying slightly, he faced the mad hatred on Igor's red face. Igor's hand strayed to his back pocket. Mama Kefensky screamed, and Margaret saw the glint of steel. Tony's powerful hands shot out and grabbed Igor's wrists. Igor roared like a bull. "Afraid I'll keel you, aren't you? Afraid to go to Hell, you black—"

"Are you scared of heem, Tony?" someone taunted. Tony's nostrils flared.

"Suppose you and me get out of here, Igor," said Tony. "We can settle this outside. Mama Kefensky there, she don't want to see anybody killed before her eyes. And you don't want to mess up poor Rosa's wedding feast." A suddenly sober silence had fallen on the room, but none intervened. Shuffling, mumbling, clenching, and unclenching his hairy hands, Igor stumbled out. Tony slouched after him. At the door he turned and winked at the tensely quiet room.

After the door shut there remained a strained silence. Everyone jumped when Marie's cry shattered it.

"No, no! Stop them!" Mama Kefensky hushed her, and the noise of the piano and the accordion filled the awful silence. Again there was the sound of shuffling, stamping feet, the clink of wine glasses. Mama Kefensky's face was blank with a peasant inscrutability, but her old hands picked restlessly at her skirt. Marie, her face paper-white, stared into space. Margaret lifted her wine glass to her lips. The red liquid spilled over as the glass shook in her hands. She was dizzy. The room dimmed and swam about her. In her ears there was only the loud thump of her own slow heart-beats and the taunting echo of singing strings. Her throat was tight and strained. She had an instant's vision of Tony dead—the fire of him quenched to cold ashes. Margaret shut her eyes. Before her there was an image of Tony—his potent, arrogant beauty. In her ears was the swirling strain of his music.

How long she sat there tensely waiting, Margaret did not know. It seemed like an eternity in that smoke-hazed room.

"My pop always said Tony'd get his."

"He had it coming to him."

"He'd keel hees own brother for the fun, that guy, but Igor ees bigger, and he's handy weeth the knife."

"Be quiet! Stop it! Oh, stop it!" Marie shrieked. Margaret's hands were clenched.

"I love him, I can't help it," whispered Margaret to herself through dry lips. "I love him! I'm just as Marie." She heard a sob and thought it was her own; it was repeated, and, turning, she saw Marie Chopek weeping openly, tears welling down her cheeks. "Marie—" began Margaret in a choked voice. She was stopped by the look in Marie's eyes; those green eyes smouldering between black lashes looked into Margaret's blue ones with a strange gaze. Hate and

jealousy and heart-break mingled with a mature awareness. We are both women, those eyes seemed to say to Margaret—and we both have felt his arms around us, his kisses; have throbbed to his music. And now neither one of us will see him again. One deep sob seemed to tear Marie's body. "Oh, Ton-y!" Her cry twinged with exquisite pain in Margaret's heart-strings.

Then Marie, gazing beyond Margaret, stiffened and clapped one hand to her forehead. Her breathless exclamation made Margaret turn quickly around. At the door, pale, with blood streaming down one cheek, was Tony. His shirt, torn from his back, was a bloody shred. For a moment he leaned exhausted against the door. Then, lifting his head, he smiled a crooked, diabolical grin at the frozen, staring faces turned towards him. Again the room was abruptly silent. Again it was broken by a feminine shriek, but not Marie's. "Igor! You have killed my husband!" There was a pause.

"—No," Tony said. "But—well, Olga—it was either him or me—and so he's sort of cut up. I'm getting out of this place tonight." He walked over to the piano and picked up his violin case.

"Oh, God," said Marie in a trembling voice. "It is him!" Like the spreading of dawn over a gray sky, radiant joy transformed her dark, volatile face. Margaret, mute, felt as if her heart would burst. She half rose from her chair. Her knees trembled beneath her. She took a step forward, her hand at her throat. Tony was stepping down from the platform towards her, his black eyes intensely on hers, gleaming with an eager warmth.

"I'm getting out of here, and I'd like someone to go away with me." Margaret felt that every eye in the room was on her. She paused, suddenly remembering who she was—Miss Blaine, student worker at Pillsbury House. Again the familiar clash of op-

posing forces struggled within her. This man is a criminal, perhaps a murderer, whispered a small, cold voice inside of her. The old restraining bonds innate in her, held her back from him. She hesitated in her tracks, lowering her eyes and averting her face from his expectant, audacious smile.

But Marie Chopek did not hesitate or reflect. With a joyous, gusty sigh which everyone could hear, she flung herself at Tony, wound her round young arms about his neck, and pressed her cheek against his. Over her dark, tousled head he cast Margaret an unfathomable glance, and then he quickly bowed his head to Marie's face. In front of them all he strained her tightly to him. Margaret could not tear her eyes from the two of them. She watched Marie and Tony walking away together, his arm tight about her waist, her head on his shoulder. He was swinging his violin case and humming a gay tune. At the door, the raw, unshaded light shone on their black heads, the two olive faces. Margaret heard them laughing together—two

beautiful pagans, gloriously alive. She suddenly felt cold and old and very empty. She did not notice that Mama Kefensky, her eyes wise with an ancient, eternal wisdom, was talking to her, mumbling in a low tone.

"He's a devil, that Tony. Igor couldn't keel heem. Not anyone—no. But Marie, ah, poor little Maria, she should not geef herself up to heem like that. Her life he weel ruin—like the others. Father Stanislaus himself said he is headed straight for Hell." She sighed. "Such a pity, but I can see—Eees it not, Mees Blaine?" she asked suddenly. Margaret nodded dumbly. The music, that music, that soaring, tingling music was gone forever, and for Margaret the world was filled with the terrible finality of a flat silence. "Such a pity," the old woman crooned. Margaret, her trembling lips pressed together in a tight line, nodded again. But the bitter, bitter tears which coursed down her white cheeks, Mama Kefensky knew suddenly, those tears were not all for pity of Marie Chopek.

EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS ... SHE DESIRING LIFE

FRANCES PERPENTE

The ghost-birds fly beneath a ghostly moon.
The flower-shades are mist about my feet.
These men are pale with some unearthly lust.
Their hands are air, their lips less . . . less than dust.

But fire-pace, light-grace, how the pulses leap,
How the blood flares to see you cross the sky!
Tear the dim veils of fantasy and death.
Scatter the shadows. Give me your own breath.

O let me be your harp, your singing string . . .
Alive to love, quick to your voice, your touch.
Voiceless and sullen is the untouched lyre,
Until it meet the hand of your desire.

Birthday

ELEANOR BOOTH

HE SAT alone on the porch, waiting for his dinner. The sun at two o'clock shone through the trees into his wrinkled face. It was the day after his eighty-third birthday and he was very silently and wistfully contemplating this problem of being old. He was impatient for company.

From the kitchen he could hear sounds of pans and running water. He moved his paralyzed leg slowly back and forth, listening to the sounds from the kitchen, and wondering why he ate.

"I eat to keep alive," he assured himself.

"And why should I keep alive?"

"I keep alive to—to—" he sighed, and picked up his book of P. G. Wodehouse. He had read every one of Wodehouse's books through five times now. It was nice to be able to chuckle five times at the same things.

Rebecca appeared on the porch. Rebecca was his daughter-in-law, and they didn't like each other.

"Good afternoon, father," she said brightly. She was holding a red enamel tray with his dinner, in her hands. She dropped it ungently on the table beside him, and sat down in a rocking chair. He put Jeeves tenderly in his lap and scrutinized the tray. There was a salad with cucumbers, and there was coffee, and a bowl of shredded wheat. He always liked shredded wheat at noon. Noon? Ha! It was two o'clock.

"I knew you'd bring it some time before six," he said.

"I decided to wait till I sent Bob safely off to school," Becky said defiantly.

"Well," he said, "That's all right. The children should be before me. They have all their lives in front of them. Mine is in back

of me. They have all their lives to live, I haven't. What I eat doesn't matter."

"Of course it matters, father!"

"No. It doesn't matter a bit what I eat. Is this milk or cream you put on my shredded wheat?"

"Milk, father. The cream was used up in the dessert. You'll have to have milk in your coffee too. I'm sorry."

"Oh," said he, "that's all right. Milk or cream makes very little difference." He paused and searched the tray. "Why didn't I get any dessert?"

"Bobby ate it all up."

"Oh, did he? Well, it will make him fat, I guess. He needs it more than I do, I guess. He's still growing, and I stopped some sixty years ago."

"Isn't it a lovely day today, father!"

"My leg isn't so good today. Aches a little. I imagine it's the dampness in the air."

Becky adjusted herself impatiently in the chair. "Nevertheless it is a lovely day."

"Oh yes certainly it's a lovely day," he assured her. "I've been watching the river, and the boats going by. The river's rather dirty today . . . tide's going out, I guess."

"How's your poetry coming, father?"

He looked at her gravely, and shook his head. "I can't write it any more. I guess my brain's going back on me. I'm expecting a Miss Cram from the Free Press—they want to print a column of my poetry."

Becky wasn't awfully impressed, because she knew he had requested them to publish his poetry in their paper. "Oh father! Isn't that nice!"

"What poetry shall I give her?"

"Oh give her the one about the Thanksgiving turkey. That's a splendid one!"

"Yes," he said, "I thought of that. But they want three or four. What others can I give her?"

Becky tried to remember the poetry he had shown her.

"What about the 'Ode to Isabelle the Hen' And The 'Pumpkin'?"

He beamed. "Oh yes! 'The Pumpkin!' Will you get one of the girls to type it for me?"

Becky shook her head emphatically. She wished he'd wipe the stray wisp of shredded wheat from his mustache.

"No sir, father! You're getting lazy. I'll bring the typewriter out here on the table, and you can keep yourself occupied. And another thing," Becky looked bravely into his tired eyes, "If I see you reading Jeeves again I'll scream! Why don't you try Hugh Walpole or Sinclair Lewis?"

"I don't like the English authors," he said. "But I tell you what I will do—I'll read that new book by Kelland if you'll get it for me." He felt around in his pocket for a dollar. "And while you're down town, buy me a haircut."

His eyes twinkled as he emitted this favorite joke of his. Becky reminded herself that she had never heard it before, and she laughed.

"Oh father! You silly."

His mind had already wandered from his temporary facetiousness. "I haven't seen any of the children since last night. Not one of them came in to say good morning to me."

"Father, the children are very busy."

"Oh yes! Allein plays solitaire all morning. Betty feeds those two pesky alligators and plays with them, and Billy reads the funny papers until school time—of course they're busy. Yes. But it does seem as if they'd have time just to drop in their old grandfather's room and say good morning. No one but you ever comes in to talk to me."

He looked particularly old while he said

this. His hair was very white, and his eyes looked sadly out at the river. "All I do is look at the river all day."

"It's a lovely river, though, father."

"Oh yes. But it's dirty. Tide's going out I guess." An inspiration came to him. "Has the Post come? I can read the Post!"

Becky looked down at the floor. "You'll have to read Jeeves this afternoon. I'm reading the Post."

He gently crossed his legs. "Aren't you going to be sewing on your quilt this afternoon?"

"No—my eyes are tired of looking at cloth. I'm reading the Post!"

"Your eyes are tired?"

"I'm reading the Post."

He looked at her reproachfully, and seeing no sympathy he quietly sulked, looking at the river. "Well, I can watch the river all afternoon."

"Father, you can read Jeeves!"

"I've read it five times."

"The sixth time is the best. After that, of course, some of the spontaneity is gone."

"I think the tide's going out, Becky. The water's dirty. No boats have gone by for nearly twenty minutes. I saw Allein smoking—did you know she smoked and why didn't you tell me?"

"Oh father! Of course she wasn't smoking! No granddaughter of yours would smoke. She must have been eating something hot."

"Oh no, she was smoking. I saw the cigarette."

"It must have been a prank."

"Nevertheless—I wish you'd give her a little booklet I have on 'NICOTINE, ROAD TO DESPERATION, DEGRADATION, DISSIPATION'."

"Yes, father, I will. Shall I tell her to memorize it, or merely to read it through? And another thing. Your son—where did he acquire his habit of two packs a day? Did

you neglect to hurl your pamphlets at him?"

"Becky, if we're going to talk like this we'd better stop our conversation for the time being."

Hastily she sprang from her chair. "Anything you want, father, before I get settled?"

"No." He folded page one eighty-nine of Jeeves and closed the book. "Except

Becky, could you please bring an old man a glass of orange juice? I feel just like some orange juice."

"Well—all right—we have three oranges in the house."

"Fine! And Becky—when you come—bring me the Post will you."

Wedding Eve

PATRICIA GUPPY

"O-o-oh!"

"A-a-ah!"

"Oh, Miss Bee, how exquisite you look!"

Bee stood in the middle of her bedroom, in the midst of the wedding-dress that was stiff enough to stand alone, and enjoyed being the focus of attention of Ella, the seamstress, Mary, the upstairs maid, Miss Simpson, her governess (almost her ex-governess now!), her mother, and her own reflection in the long mirror.

"It fits as if it 'ad been made for 'er, Ma'am," breathed Ella—"Just those two little alterations!"

Bee's mother nodded, sitting in the armchair like a figurehead of a Roman matron rising from the broad sea of her grey silk skirt. "Turn around, dear," she commanded.

Bee turned around in a wide circle, on the circumference of which Mary moved, carrying the train. On the way she reviewed Ella, kneeling on the floor and clasping her rough hands with oh's and ah's, Miss Simpson with her thin, prim face sentimentally tearful, her mother's monument of undisputed authority, and once again the fashion-plate bride in the mirror who looked back at her with her own heart-shaped face and large blue eyes.

"I never did see a Paris wedding-gown before," marvelled Ella.

"I think it is satisfactory in every way," decided Bee's mother, "Now that the lace in the yoke has been more modestly replaced. Take it off, now, dear."

"Yes, Mamma," said Bee.

Mary helped her into a walking costume while her mother sailed away to supervise the hanging of the wedding-gown. "Law, Miss," she said admiringly, "You do take everything so calm; when I tried on my wedding gown first time—'course 'twas just a simple homemade frock—but I was *that* excited!—But I was younger than you are, too, Miss—by two years, you being turned eighteen."

"That will do, Mary," said Bee's mother in the doorway.

She shut the door after the maid's black skirt swished out, and advanced magnificently upon her daughter. It was one of those rare occasions when her austerity was overlaid with a smile. She took Bee's hands.

"Beatrice, dear, I am sure that you must be very happy."

"Yes, Mamma," said Bee, casting down her eyes.

Her mother released her hands. "Lawrence is an admirable man in every way, and will make you a devoted husband, I am certain."

"Yes, indeed, Mamma."

"I think you received a note from him today, did you not, dear? You have not shown it to me yet."

"Forgive, me Mamma. Here it is."

Her mother rustled over to the couch and seated herself, while she opened and perused the letter. At the end she nodded and folded it again. "A charming letter," she approved; "It is a great comfort for an affectionate mother to know that her daughter's future happiness is in the hands of a Gentleman."

"Yes, Mamma," said Bee, putting the note on her writing-table again.

"Beatrice."

"Come and sit by me on the sofa, my dear; I have an important matter to discuss with you."

Bee crossed to the sofa and composed herself demurely beside her mother.

"It is my duty, Beatrice, since this is the eve of your wedding, to inform you of certain aspects of the matrimonial state of which I am sure you are ignorant, since your upbringing under my supervision has been carried out with the greatest care. You no doubt wondered at the time at my taking you from your finishing school and putting you under the tutelage of a governess, instead of permitting you to continue with your classmates. It had come to my knowledge that—ah—there were young persons at that school capable of damaging that pure innocence, the priceless possession of a young girl, which I was determined to preserve in you at any cost.

"At marriage, however, my child, this innocence must regretfully be given up; but before I inform you further, I must impress upon you that in exchange we obtain entrance into that highest, noblest state of Woman—wifehood and motherhood."

She took her daughter's hand and smiled into the wide blue eyes.

"A mother's fond words lessens even this shock to a young girl's tender mind . . ."

She smiled to see the color in the face of her daughter. Bee sat with downcast eyes.

"Your momentary bewilderment is natural, my child; but I am sure what I have said to you will make the matter simple upon reflection."

"Yes, Mamma," said Bee. And then: "What you have told me *has* disturbed me somewhat, Mamma; I feel I should be immensely benefited by an hour of silent prayer. Will you be so kind as to desire Thomas to accompany me to church?"

"Certainly, my dear," said her Mother, leaning forward to kiss her daughter's forehead.

In the shadows of the leafy lane by the churchyard wall, Bee pressed herself tightly, passionately, against the embracing body of the young man who wore the livery of one of her father's footmen, and answered to the name of Thomas.

"Oh, my darling," she whispered, "I am glad it is going to be tonight; I felt so sick this morning, and Mamma came near to discovering it—"

"My dearest—" he murmured, pressing his lips into her hair.

"We must go back," she gasped, and then looked up into his face with a glory that filled him with worship—"I shall have my bag ready, tonight when Mamma lets me go to Evensong."

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