

The Mercury Literary Issue

Glenville State College — Spring 1965

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Innocence Conquers All

By NILA ROLLINS

The courtroom bustled as Eve rose to take the witness stand. She walked delicately to the front of the room and seated herself, being careful to leave her white suit skirt about two inches above her tan knees. Her blonde, curly hair was piled graciously on top of her head and her long slender neck and oval face glowed with a pearl-like luster. Her coquettish little mouth was drawn in an effort to look bewildered and shocked. Eve Campbell was presenting the perfect picture of a trim, little twenty-four year old who, in blooming innocence, had been thrown on the harsh perverted world.

This was a rape case. Eve Campbell was suing her brother-in-law for rape. It was going to be a messy suit, resulting in a great deal of embarrassment and bad publicity, a brotherly split, and a great deal of heartache for the Campbell family; but it would result in no marriage split for Eve.

The bailiff went through the usual procedure for swearing in a witness, and Mr. Wolfe, the attorney for the plaintiff, came slowly forward.

"Now Mrs. Campbell, I realize how terrible this all must be for you; but I am going to be gentle with you and will endeavor to spare you as much as possible," said Mr. Wolfe.

Spare me, you old drooling leach, though Eve, what you want is to hear me tell every raunchy little detail to your thirsty, fat ears. "Yes, Sir," Eve said in a soft, choked voice.

"Fine. Now Mrs. Campbell, you are the wife of Richard J. Campbell, principal of the Janson Grade School, are you not?" asked Mr. Wolfe.

"Yes, Sir," answered Eve.

"And you and your husband reside at Denton, a small community about six miles below Summerville, do you not?" asked Mr. Wolfe.

"Yes, Sir," answered Eve.

"Does your husband live at home with you, Mrs. Campbell?" queried Mr. Wolfe.

"Yes, Sir," came the monotonous reply from the witness.

"On the night of April 21, 1961, however, was your husband at home, Mrs. Campbell?" asked the attorney.

"No, Sir," replied Eve.

"What were the circumstances which had caused him to be away from home on that particular evening, Mrs. Campbell?" pursued Mr. Wolfe. "Well, began Eve in an almost inaudible tone, Richard had made arrangements . . ."

"I am sorry," injected the judge, "speak up so that the jury can hear you."

"I'm sorry," said Eve in the same quiet voice and continued. "As I said, Richard had made arrangements to go to Charleston on April 21, to attend a weekend W.V.E.A. conference as a representative from Nicholas County."

"Was he to be away from home all night?" asked Mr. Wolfe.

"Yes," said Eve, "he had reserved a room at the Daniel Boone."

"Now, Mrs. Campbell, you're doing fine. But tell me, did your husband leave you on this evening of April 21, with no protection at all from such people as the accused?" continued Mr. Wolfe.

"Objection, your Honor," said the defense attorney, Mr. Olivetti, "Mr. Wolfe is endeavoring to lead the witness."

"Sustained," replied the judge. "Mr. Wolfe, you will please try not to lead Mrs. Campbell into answering the questions."

"Very well, your Honor," replied Mr. Wolfe, "and now Mrs. Campbell."

On and on the questioning continued. It was apparent to all that Mr. Wolfe was merely trying to establish a suitable background for his main case. After about fifteen minutes, however, his questioning came to a head.

"Mrs. Campbell, would you please now tell us in your own words just what happened on the night of April 21?" asked Mr. Wolfe.

A soft bustling was heard throughout the courtroom as everyone leaned forward trying to hear each little detail yet pretending to all their neighbors who were sitting by that they were completely unmoved by the change in the line of questioning.

Eve's blonde head dropped a little and she thought to herself, those old biddies . . . the news of a rape case has really perked their scrawny ears up . . . they really look like the devil . . . probably came here to hear what their husbands have been doing . . . hairy faces . . . I even saw that old, fat Mrs. Hawkins on the second row. That old hag has been out of commission for twenty years now . . . keeps trying, though . . . and old Jack Simms. You can bet he never missed a chance either.

When she raised her head, Eve's face had the look of perfect innocence. "Well, like I said, Richard has stopped by to see me at Parish Elementary, where I teach, before he left; so, after school was out that afternoon, I took my car home. By 5:00, I had supper over and had washed up the few dishes. Then, I took a bath, put on my robe and slippers and settled down to watch T.V. It must have been 9:00 p.m.—yes, the Hazel show was on—anyway, it was about 9:00 p.m. when I heard a sharp knock at the backdoor.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Campbell, but you did say the backdoor, did you not?" queried the plump-faced Mr. Wolfe.

Eve glanced over at her husband sitting dejectedly at the plaintiff's side of the court and then answered, "Yes Sir. The backdoor . . . well, I went to the door, lifted the shade, and saw that it was Richard's brother, Ed. I opened the door immediately and let Ed in. I noticed then that he

seemed to have been drinking, but I invited him in for a cup of coffee."

"Tell us, Mrs. Campbell, what was Mr. Ed Campbell's general appearance on this evening of April 21?" asked Mr. Wolfe.

"Well, he was dressed in his work clothes yet . . . he works in a coal mine about two miles below Denton . . . his face was still dirty, too . . . and that . . . is about all that I could tell you," uttered Eve with a sob.

"That's quite all right, Mrs. Campbell, now try to control yourself and tell us what happened after Mr. Ed Campbell came into your home on the evening of April 21," said Mr. Wolfe.

"Well, we had just gone into the living room to sit down when we realized what a mess Ed's clothes would make of the furniture. Ed asked if he might borrow one of Richard's robes. I thought that this was rather strange, but after all . . . he was his brother. So, I rose to get the robe out of the bedroom. As I did so, I noticed Ed eyeing my . . . my legs . . . beneath the robe. Nevertheless, I rose and went into the bedroom to get the robe. I . . . I had my back to the door and was searching in the closet when I heard footsteps behind me . . . I turned quickly, but in the dark room, could see nothing. In the next instant, he was upon me . . . tearing at my clothes and pulling me down upon him. I screamed! . . . Oh, it's too terrible . . . I can't go on! . . ."

"Now, Mrs. Campbell, just take it easy . . . here, have a glass of water . . ." injected the smooth Mr. Wolfe.

By this time, the courtroom was all tension. The onlookers were on the edges of their seats, craning their necks for a better view, and straining their ears to catch every gory detail. After about three minutes, Eve's sobbing subsided.

"And now, Mrs. Campbell, are you all right? Are you ready to continue?" asked Mr. Wolfe.

"Yes," answered the witness. "As I said, he was upon me before I knew it and pulled me down on the bed. I remember his dark form coming down upon me and then . . . all was blackness. When I came to, Ed was standing over my aching body. He had a gun in his hand and his face was all distorted.

"Swear," he said, "swear you'll never tell. I'll blow your brains out if you ever utter a word." "Swear," he screamed.

I did what he said and swore that I would never tell if he would only get out and let me alone. With that, Ed turned quickly toward the bedroom door. As he reached it, he turned. "If you ever tell, I'll kill you!" he growled as he ran quickly through to the backdoor. As I lay there, I heard the backdoor slam and I heard Ed's Ford start up and roar out of the driveway."

"And from here, Mrs. Campbell, what did you do?" asked Mr. Wolfe.

"I lay there about fifteen minutes, my body aching, and my thoughts blacking out from time to time," answered Eve. Then, I managed to roll off the bed and to crawl to the phone, where I called Mrs. Violet Klop-

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JUDITH MUSGRAVE, Editor



Life's Destiny

By GLEN MOWERY

Under a tree so brown, I sit on the ground
And look across the green field.
I know that soon it will be long past noon,
And by sunset my spirit will yield.
I've lived several years, but now my fears
Are not of days past gone;
But the future ahead, when my soul is dead,
Makes me wonder what will go on.
I know the spot in a little green plot
Where my corporeal frame will lie;
But I do not care if they lay me there,
What bothers me is to die.
Now I look at a little black book
That's known as the Bible;
It was appointed even to the Lord anointed
To die when life is full;
There's comfort in this— the Book that I
kiss—
And with it an ease of mind.
So now I smile, for in a little while,
A new earth and a world I'll find.



Ode to Kanawha Hall

By LARRY R. HALL

Tear me down? Oh, come now,
That's right, don't ask why or how,
Just swing your hammers, ignorant saps,
Ouch! That left quite a gap!
That's right, break my windows,
You'll never know or even guess
What joy, what contentment, what bliss
Will live forever in my stone soul,
But time is forever and must take its toll.

A million secrets whisper through my walls;
A million dreams echo down my halls.
I have watched them come and go,
A million souls seeking to know,
To grasp, to learn, to find;
They'll never find a life like mine.

And you ask,

"Must they tear it down?"

Of course they must, for you see,
I'm more at peace than you will ever be!

Life's Destiny II

By GLENN MOWERY

My face is so white when I realize tonight
It won't be long 'till I fade;
To me it's new, but I feel kinda blue
Not to shave with my new stainless-steel
blade.
But now my fear as I drink this beer
Is Saint Peter won't like my breath;
So now I smash this bottle in the trash
Because I'm nearing my death.
I won't wait to enter the pearly gate
Because I never did smoke;
I'll walk right in, for I'm free of sin.
(Guess you all know that's a joke).
Well I've been rather brisky, and I've drunk
that whisky,
And stole a chicken or two;
But I don't care by the breadth of a hair
If I fly away through the blue.
This piller in bed on my shiny bald head
Seems to be spinning, dear brother,
Give the preacher a buck and wish me good
luck,
Sometimes later we'll see each other.



The Dreydyl

By FRANCES HAYS

Once upon a lonely isle of yesteryear,
There crouched a child,
Spinning a red and golden dreydyl.

But winter's wiles were far beyond the child,
And the rain came,
Hiding the sun that played on the top.

The child, diverted, ran to find the cause
Of the pebbly sound,
Leaving the lovely dreydyl to spin
And the dreydyl disappeared—gone.

Now, within the crowded sea of humanity,
There struggles a God,
Seeing all men's thoughts from dawn to dark.

But cold logicians will ignore warm God
And turn from him,
Wrinkling their noses in intelligent disgust:

Humanity will turn aside to sniff
The air of Science,
Forgetting the one who makes worlds to spin
And the world will disappear—gone.

Scene

By FRANCES HAYS

Sparks disappear, all red and glowing
In the crisp night air,
From the crackling clutch of the
Amber fire.
Little splinters, quick, pointed,
Pierce the ice blanket,
Burnt from the broken heart of the flame.
Tiny red devils, dancing-flit fairies,
New born red hearts
To nip the frozen flesh of
Mankind.

Editor's note: "Scene" was chosen by the Board of Judges of the National Poetry Press to be published in the Spring Anthology of College Poetry. Mrs. Hays' poem was one of some thirty thousand entries.



First Encounter

By LARRY R. HALL

He came as others had
Centuries before,
(They had been coming since Adam)
With ten stumbling thumbs
to knock on her door.
He entered the same door,
Where before nervous, little
minds like his had whirled;
And one-half later emerged
A man of the world.



Night

By LARRY R. HALL

The amber rays of day have died,
The soothing black now takes its place
And discloses its lovely face,
The beauty of night cannot be denied.
The voices of night call me now;
Night slips in with subtle charm;
My heart is at ease, my soul is calm,
And day subsides with a stately bow.

My world is free when night enfolds
My lonely room and softly holds
My soul in contrast to its own,
The world to me is now unknown.
I, myself, can hardly tell
That I am confined to this dreary cell.



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Camelot

By ANNA BATES

Outside the weather was bleak and gloomy; inside the room the very atmosphere was dim with despair. Mary moved slowly now, hampered as much by the mental strain as the physical. The narrow room was grimly lit with a naked bulb hanging from the ceiling by a frayed wire. She rose slowly and padded to the grey square that was her link with the outside world.

"Guess I'd better get something ready for JB and the children. They'll be here soon." She stared unseeingly at the tall buildings, as she had many times before. It was always the same. The grimy, belching smokestacks growing out of sooty slate roofs. The roofs themselves marbling along for row after row, broken only by the yawning jaws of the air ventilators and the dull blisters of the skylights. This "vast panorama" was framed by the frayed edges of the clean, dotted-swiss curtains, and punctuated by a small, courageous African violet bending its purple head over and looking for some sunlight with its beady yellow eyes.

But Mary did not notice these things. She didn't notice much of anything anymore; nothing but the endless, never changing pattern of the passing days. She turned mechanically from the window and started the motions for preparing a meal. First, heft the latch on the archaic icebox, stoop down and peer hopefully into its antiseptic interiors. Then resignedly take up the ever-present leftovers and scraps—warm up this, dump that together for a soup of sorts. Get the pots and pans from the cracked, sagging cabinets. Strike a match and light the three burners that worked on the "war stove" as JB called it. He had started calling it that when they first bought it brand-new in 1942. He was making good money then because of the scarcity of good mill-hands and the great demand for goods that had to be filled. Now the demand wasn't so great and the money didn't always roll in.

As Mary moved about in the kitchen, she was forever wiping at counters and imaginarily dust specks and cobwebs. That's what was so startlingly evident in this house, the hopelessly clean, well-ordered, despair. From the crocheted cups hanging above the stove in the kitchen to the paint-by-number picture over the sofa hung an aura of grudgingly obedient cleanliness. The gadgetry and knick-knacks on the divider shelf were as clean as humanly possible. The faded rag rugs had had

their daily shake-up.

"Ha!" Mary thought as she looked around. "What a waste, when five minutes after the kids and JB are home the place will look like a cyclone hit it. But no one can ever say Mary Michelson never kept her house up."

A step on the porch meant JB was here. She turned from her station at the window to set the table and check on the bubbling pots. A big belly followed by a grimy face loomed into focus around the corner of the kitchen—a peck on the cheek.

"Hello, Honey. What's to eat? U-m-m-m, smells good. Pot-luck, huh? That's o.k. with me, I'm starved. Any beer in the refrigerator, Honey?"

"Yes, it's on the upper right hand shelf. Aren't you gonna take off that dirty stuff before you get settled?"

"Now, Momma, I'll take 'em off in a minute. I just wanta catch my breath. Are Sonni and Sam coming over to play euchre tonight?"

"I hope not. Tonight is Theresa's choir concert and I thought we might go."

"Oh, hell, there's always something going on. I'm pooped, and besides the NBA championship playoffs are on at 9:00 tonight and I don't want to miss 'em." This last mumbled from the depths of the living room sofa.

"Well, Terry will be awful disappointed. You know how much it means to a kid to have someone there to sing to." No comment, only the rustle from the pages of T. V. Guide."

Just then booming thuds on the steps announced Jim's arrival. Later light patterings meant Theresa and still later shuffling meant Andy.

"Hi, Dad. Hi, Mom. Got our report cards today."

"What's cooking? I'm starved."

"I lost my math book today."

"Oh, Andy, where?"

"I don't know. Someone swiped it, I think."

"Well, you'll have to use Jim's."

"I got three A's and two B's."

"That's very good, Jim."

"You wanta see our report cards, Daddy?"

"Not right now, Terry. Just lay

them on the table. I'll see them later.

"O.K."

The conversational confusion persisted in a pleasant babble which ran on over Mary's consciousness. It was nice to have the children home. Don't know what we'll do about Andy's book. Poor Andy, always losin' stuff. You'd never know he and Jim were twins. Guess Andy took more after his Dad—kind of satisfied with things the way they were. But Jim was more like me—I can't say he's more like me 'cause I never amounted to too much. But I had my dreams and Jim's the same way. Only he's gonna see his dreams come true.

He won't be like me and throw away his life for nothing. I've got the children though, and JB has been good to me. He's really a good man, he just lacks ambition, that's all. I could put up with the ever-lasting cards and beer and stay-at-home evenings if I just knew he was even lookin' for something better.

Maybe someday—Oh, give up! You lost your chance for anything when you got married instead of finishing school. Sure, big deal, "married so young" and "he sure is a good-lookin' young man, Mary" and "Boy, are you ever lucky!"; but, it was fun before the children were born—there had been plenty of time for each other and a small apartment was just fine for two people just starting out and you could always work out the money when you were in love.

Love, ha! The only time he thought of anything like that anymore was in bed. In the long evenings it was "go get a beer at Tony's" or "play poker with the guys" or "bring someone over for a game of cribbage." I'm not so bad-looking after four babies—my legs are in better shape than Sonni's and she's only thirty. I try to ask him about things he does and about his work and all but it seems he's so far away and different now—he doesn't even notice the house being clean or the pies I bake, anymore.

Maybe I shouldn't have nagged at him so after the babies came but I wanted so much to have something good for them. Our chance is past but they could've still had something. If he'd only tried to move up maybe we wouldn't have had to transfer schools back and forth so much and live in a different house every year. That's why little John-

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INNOCENCE CONQUERS ALL

(Continued from page 1)

man, the principal of the school where I teach, and she came and found me. She was the one who called the doctor and the police."

"Thank you, Mrs. Campbell. That is all my questions. Your witness, Mr. Olivetti," said Mr. Wolfe.

Mr. Olivetti was a short man of small stature. His hair was blonde and slightly flecked with gray. The large horn-rimmed glasses that he wore seemed to dwarf him. Slowly he came forward, propped one leg upon the railing under the witness stand, stared Eve straight in the eyes, and asked, "Mrs. Campbell, how near are your nearest neighbors at Denton?"

"Our neighbors, the Huxleys, are about twenty feet from our house on the right," replied Eve.

"Were they home on the evening of April 21?" asked Mr. Olivetti.

"Yes... yes, I believe they were," replied Eve.

"And you say that you screamed, Mrs. Campbell?" pursued Mr. Olivetti.

A sudden flush or red came to Eve's face. "Yes, she said bitterly, 'I did scream!'"

"That's all," said Mr. Olivetti, "No more questions."

"Next witness," said the judge.

"The plaintiff calls Mrs. Violet Klopman to the stand, your Honor," bellowed Mr. Wolfe.

Mrs. Klopman came to the stand and once again the smooth-talking Mr. Wolfe began the questioning. Then, the Justice of the Peace of the Denton district, several police officers, and Mrs. Campbell's mother were called to the stand. For three days, the plaintiff kept the witness stand hot with character witnesses for innocent Eve.

Finally, it was Monday. The trial was into its second week. The defense was preparing to send Ed to the stand. Once again, the courtroom was jammed with spectators. It seemed as if the crowd were actually growing. It was rumored around town that some of the female workers in the shops and offices even came up here on their lunch hours if the trial had not yet adjourned for the noon hour.

"The defense calls Mr. Ed Campbell," Mr. Olivetti called in a loud voice.

The bailiff again performed the usual formalities and Ed was soon on the stand.

"Now, Mr. Campbell," said Mr. Olivetti, "please tell the jury what happened on the evening of April 21."

"Well," began the defendant, "I had received a message at work for me to stop by my brother's house to pick up a robe for Mom—she was going to mend it for the white elephant sale."

The courtroom was invaded with a loud roar of whispering from the spectators.

"Order!" yelled the judge, "Order!"

The noise subsided.

"As I said, I had been given a message to stop by Richard's after work that evening. Well, I got off about 8:30 and by the time that I got my equipment put away and got to my brother's it was about 9:00. I knocked on the backdoor, just like we always did when we came to visit, and Eve came to answer it. She was dressed in a flimsy, blue night gown or robe of some sort. It looked rather suggestive and all, but then Eve was always a little..."

"Objection, your Honor!" pealed the plaintiff's attorney.

"Sustained, Mr. Campbell, you will please just answer the questions directly and not inject your own opinion as to what Mrs. Richard Campbell's character might or might not have been" said the judge.

"Yes, your Honor," answered Ed. "Well, as I said, Eve an-

swered the door and invited me in for a cup of coffee while she got the robe. I went in, stood so as to not get the furniture messed, and drank my coffee. Eve had gone back into the bedroom. I turned and was watching the television when suddenly, I felt her arms around my waist. She was cooing and sweet talking in my ear, telling me how she had always preferred me over my brother Richard. Soon, she had led me into the dark bedroom... and I... well, I had been drinking a little... and well, you can guess what happened there," said Ed.

"Objection!" bellowed Mr. Wolfe. "The witness is not permitted to leave the jury to guess work. He is leading the jury," quoted Mr. Wolfe.

"Sustained. You will instruct the jury more precisely as to what you mean, Mr. Campbell," said the judge.

"Do you mean that you raped the plaintiff, Mr. Campbell?" asked Mr. Olivetti.

"No!" came the gruff reply from the defendant.

"What do you mean, Mr. Campbell?" asked the defendant's attorney.

The defendant hesitated, looked over at his brother, and blurted, "I was seduced!"

The courtroom spectators burst forth with a loud roar.

"No more questions. Your witness, Mr. Wolfe," said Mr. Olivetti.

Mr. Wolfe came toward the witness, his face flushed and his hands shaking slightly. He once again took up his monotonous line of questioning as to background and occurrences...

Finally, it was the time for the final arguments. Mr. Wolfe made a splendid show for a man who had his speech written and who read it off with much ability. Mr. Olivetti, on the other hand, took his final argument strictly from his head and a few scribbled notes that he had made. He recalled how it would have been impossible for Mrs. Campbell's supposed screams not to have been heard by the Huxleys. He pointed out other incongruities in the plaintiff's case. Everyone agreed that his was an excellent oration.

At last, the judge gave the jury their final instructions and they were sent off to another room to debate and to discuss their final decision. It was 10:00 a.m. Thursday and by 5:00 p.m. of that same day, the jury was still hung. The judge dismissed the case for the day and instructed that the jury would be locked until the following morning.

Friday morning came, and still no decision. At 3:30 that afternoon, however, the knock came from the jury room, signaling that they were ready to give their decision.

As the jury filed into the courtroom, the faces of the ten men and two women gave no indication of their decision. They merely seated themselves and waited for the judge to call for their decision.

"Has the jury reached a decision?" asked the judge.

"We have, your Honor," replied the foreman.

"Will the foreman please rise and give the court the decision of the jury," said the judge.

The foreman rose exhaustedly from his seat and stated, "We, the jury, having heard the testimonies of all these witnesses and having duly deliberated upon them, find the defendant guilty of rape. We recommend no leniency."

So it went... the judge gave Ed eighteen years... eighteen years in the state penitentiary. This was four years ago. Ed is still serving time and has a great deal more to go. Eve, however, has resumed her former life. She is now teaching the little innocents at Parish Grade School.

The Mustard Seed

By VIRGINIA SHAFER

Lying there between the immaculate sheets, Tina remembered a sermon that her pastor had delivered to his congregation some six months ago. In that sermon there was a certain passage the pastor had read from the Seventeenth Chapter of Luke. The words ran clearly through her mind. "The Lord said, 'If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, "Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea;" and it should obey you.'"

For three weeks now her once petite but now huge, swollen body had lain on this bed staring at the ceiling above her. Her huge bulk cringing with pain had now become a specimen for laboratory study. Constantly filing in and out of the room were doctors, interns, and nurses dressed in white immaculate gowns and smelling of antiseptic substances.

They all appeared to have an intellectual manner about them; yet, there was something too solemn, too serious, too unsparring in their manner. They reminded Tina of this room with its white, spotless walls, its square-like shape, its tile floor smelling of germicidal solution, and its bare, unlined appearance.

Tina had married Norman Williams upon her graduation from college. They had been married three wonderful years and had established themselves very well into the life of the community near the town of Middleburg where Norman was now head football coach at Middleburg High School.

A desire for parenthood had become a part of their plans; and Tina now recalled her visit to the physician and the scene, the doctor in his mannerly professional way saying that for Tina to conceive and bear a child could be a risk to her life, became alive before her eyes.

The doctor—slightly graying at the temple, a slight stoop in the

once broad shoulders, and in his white uniform—was telling Tina that it was possible she could become pregnant but there were many complications that could result from a pregnancy. Tina had a relatively common disease that had been present from childhood and this could result in a very difficult pregnancy unless under constant supervision of a doctor and even then it could be serious.

Of course, the doctor went on to explain that many people did have a normal pregnancy with no serious effects on either the mother or child. Yet, through several tests the doctor had found that the disease was still not under control with her urine showing a pale, greenish cast, considering the high specific gravity, and albumin, too, was present.

With the disease so uncontrollable as Tina's had been since its discovery several years ago, it would not be a wise decision to consider a pregnancy.

Tina sat there looking at the spotless office and thinking, "Who does he think he is, a judge or juror of my happiness in life? This physical maturity, this desire for parental fulfillment is it not to be given me just because this doctor feels it may present some small testing of his knowledge and skill?"

There are over one million such persons in the world with this handicap. I imagine a few of the women have had some serious problems, but that doesn't mean everyone will. Who is he to say that I cannot do this one thing successfully? Life at times must be a gamble. The doctor had given her the advice she wanted but it was her and Norman's decision to make.

Her breathing came uneven and in short gasps showing the effort put forth to breathe between the dull pains under her breast. Toxemia, or toxic pregnancy, had occurred during her sixth month of pregnancy, depositing its poison throughout her blood stream and with this a kidney ailment, too, had developed.

Now excessive fluid, along with the growing child within her body, gave to her the appearance of a rubber balloon inflated beyond normal or valid proportions. Her legs were so swollen and the skin so stretched that they could not support her weight. It had begun with nausea, vomiting, epigastric discomfort, and drowsiness leaving her skin pale, dry, and shrunken, her tongue, throat, mouth, and lips were glistening and beefy, her eyeballs feeling soft.

Her thoughts wandered and touched upon the past, the present, and the future. "What was that the Reverend had said? Oh yes! Children are... no that isn't right. Yes, it is. 'Children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward.' Yes, a reward... but this pain, it's unbearable. The doctor warned me. I was just too proud, too stubborn to take good advice. (Wanting to prove I was a woman too.) Norman and I could have adopted a child and we would have loved it.

I'm so sleepy now, but it is so painful. How long has it been now since I've slept, two or three days? No, I wanted a child conceived from the love Norman and I shared. He has such laughing eyes and such a sweet smile. Pain goes away! Doesn't he have a sturdy physique and such a sybarite and solid rock form of character? Oh, here they come again to see their guinea pig. They are just trying to help me, but I get so tired of their parading around me. And that one that calls me 'Big Tummy.' I'd like to push



Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

By SHIRLEY DAVIS

The room was hot and muggy. Letha could hardly wait to get out in the air. Her mother's voice droned on in her ear as she moved listlessly about.

"You're awfully lucky to get to come here, you know. Your father and me are making lots of sacrifices so you can get educated."

"Yes, I know." She looked out the window at the group of laughing kids on the sidewalk. That

those hornrimmed glasses up on his nose where they belong.

Another syringe with them. Guess they want to take another blood sample. Why this will make four today. Vampires! Don't know where they will get this one from. Blue spots all over my arms and hands. They should be more careful when plunging that needle into those soft veins. Coward! Looking at me as though I am some hideous creature from outer space.

No use asking them to drain the fluid. Old horn-rimmed would only go into this detailed description of how contamination could be delivered by the injection equipment, the pyrogenic property of these bacteria being unaltered by heat of the intensity and the duration customarily applied in steam sterilization. Maybe I could get one night of sleep before the fluid could replenish itself again.

That hurt! I hope he gets the blood this first try so he won't have to stick me again. Um, he hit the vein. Blue blood filling up a tube. If that pain under my breast would only cease. Another six weeks before the baby is due. I hope it quits hurting tomorrow. Norman should be here soon. I like visiting hours, but I loathe the hour of darkness. I want to sleep but I cannot get these eyelids to stay closed. These monstrous legs. Death is a kind of darkness. But it is a long, peaceful sleep, no pain, no worries. It would almost be nice.

Footsteps. Norman. No. There is Norman. He looks pale, probably hasn't been eating properly. The pain continues but it helps seeing Norman. I love him so much. I like the way he holds my hand and brushes my hair from my forehead. I must not let him know how badly it hurts. His hands are so tender. The egg, the sperm, the zygote and how it attached to the uterine wall developing the umbilical cord and the nutritional contact between mother and child, the embryo—all this was involved in the for-

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girl on the right has on a cute outfit.

"I really like your room, Letha. It's so compact. No, don't touch those clothes. I'll hang them up for you. I hope you have a good time here and make lots of friends. Remember that being popular is awfully important."

"Yes, Mom." "Now that I know the size of your window, I'll get you one of those white, fluffy curtains to go there. It'll look real good with your new bedspread."

"Un huh." Another group of kids walked by.

"Now, you remember to keep your clothes ironed real nice. It'll probably be pretty hard at first, but you have to keep looking nice or no one'll like you, you know. You can bring your dirty clothes home and I'll do them up nice. That should help some. I'm going to worry about you down here by yourself and all. You know how..." Her voice went on and on sounding like a monotonous buzz-saw in her ear.

Letha stood in front of the floor-length mirror inspecting her hair. She had beautiful long, auburn hair that she was extremely proud of. She ran the comb through the long strands and watched them fall back into place. Tonight she'd put it on top of her head and let her bangs come down on her forehead. It looked sexy that way.

"Well, Honey, your dad is waiting downstairs so I'd better go. Remember what I've told you and be good."

Mrs. Goode laughed at her pun as she kissed her daughter affectionately on the cheek. Letha watched her mother move her large, stout body through the doorway without really seeing her. The fact that she was being left alone in this strange but exciting environment had not impressed itself upon her mind and would not do so for some weeks. She turned back into her compact, little room that was like every other compact, little room in the building and prepared to change her clothes. It won't hurt to impress the natives, she thought, as she pulled out one of her nicer, form-fitting dresses which covered her well-developed body as if it had been sewn while she was in it.

As she was in the process of coiffing her hair, her new roommate walked in, looked at her in amazement, and said, "Whew, are you wearing THAT to eat in. It looks more like a cocktail dress. The rest of us might as

well not be there if you wear that."

"Don't you like it?" Letha asked.

"Well, sure," she answered. Letha, smiling in satisfaction, did not notice her roommate's slightly worried look.

Letha looked at her new pajamas her mother had sent her as she curled her hair in front of the mirror. The two filmy strips of cloth could hardly be recognized as pajamas at all. Her roommate, across the room, looked idly up from a book she was reading.

"You know, Letha," she said, "those pajamas are seducing as all getout. Too bad the whole effect is lost on a dorm full of girls." "Yeah," Letha replied. "Cryin' shame, isn't it." She was careful to keep a calm, cheerful face as she slipped into bed. After her roommate finally turned out the light, she lay in the dark and thought over the events of the past few months.

Some of these people treat me like a spoiled kid, she thought, especially teachers. Heck, though, I'm not going to worry about them. I hope Stan calls me again. Afraid I made him too mad, though. First time I've ever been called a prude. No reason. I agreed to go to the Moonlight with the crowd. First time. I was a little dizzy, I'll admit, but I still couldn't do it. Hope he calls me again. Won't make the same mistake again.

Stupid girls around here. I try to be nice to them but... Loaned that girl down the hall my dress, and what thanks did I get? Now she hardly speaks to me. Wonder why I never get invited to the dances? Have plenty of other dates. Even Sue, my own roommate, condemns me for what I do. Can't figure them out. If I didn't conform, they'd think I was a square. Like the other night at the Center. Had that real cute slacks outfit on. Three or four guys whistled when I walked across the floor. Did look pretty good even though they were sort of tight. Stan called me over to his table and started scooting me over toward him and hugging me and all right there in front of everybody. It was kind of funny. Looked like I was really popular that night. Only I wasn't.

I can't figure out what I am doing wrong. I always do what people seem to want me to do and it's still not enough. You never see me being a square and spoiling the party like Linn Spencer did that one night. Just because

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Post-Mortem

By FRANCES HAYS

"I won't have it." Those words were destined to be Lydia's last, thought Hollis, as he walked into the outer office, filled with chattering women, through the door that said "Hollis Anderson, Attorney at law." Strange wasn't it? Now Lydia didn't have to worry about "it" any more. She didn't have "it," she didn't have anything, not even life.

Marian, his secretary, was already at her desk. She seemed to be fooling around with some of the mail in the "out" box.

"Good morning," Marian looked up, rather coldly, he thought. "Is it?"

Hollis tried to ignore the chill of the greeting. He hoped the women in the next room hadn't heard the tone of it. They were so nosy where Marian was concerned.

He opened the door that led to his own private cubbyhole and hung his wet hat and raincoat on

the coat tree. Then he crossed the room to his file cabinet. He should try to look busy this morning in case the police came to see him. Was he a good actor? Could he pretend that he didn't know anything about his wife's death?

He closed the file; nothing in there looked even mildly appetizing. He walked to the desk and sat down. He wondered if the maid had found her yet. Picking up the phone he dialed R1-65088.

His hands were shaking and the receiver bumped spasmodically against his ear. He let it ring twelve times. No she wasn't there yet. He placed the receiver on its hook.

He worried again over Marian's cold reception. She had been like that last night too when he had told her that Lydia was going to die. He must compose himself. Maybe brain-washing would help.

He tried to tell himself that it was all an unhappy accident. He hadn't remembered to tell Lydia about the new automatic lock that had been installed on the kitchen door while she was in

that old faith in her, or was it her imagination, pretending nothing could go wrong.

Sometime after Norman left that night, Tina lay and thought of the small soft articles she had knitted. Their baby would look so cute in them. Then suddenly her eyes grew weary and the pain seem to lessen. Tina closed her eyes in sleep. It was a restless sleep and was finally interrupted by a pleasant smiling nurse. She apologized for having awakened Tina. Tina had been moaning and the nurse had wondered if there were something wrong. Tina grinned and replied that she felt fine. The pain had left under her breast, her legs no longer ached; however, there was a dull pain in the lower section of her back.

The nurse disappeared and suddenly muscle spasm tore at her body. She was on a stretcher now moving down the hall, around a corridor and entering into a large and immaculate room with blinding overhead lights. It was too late now to perform a Caesarean section; it must be a natural birth. A needle plunged softly into the region of the back; and then her feet were lifted and were tied into the air by stirrup-looking apparatuses. An excruciating, racking pain twisted her body. The lights were now more blinding and Tina wondered about the situation.

"Five doctors and two nurses. I didn't think it took that many to deliver a baby. Poor little darling. Wonder what that fluid is dripping from that bottle down that tube, and into my arm. It's not dripping very fast. Old horn-rimmed is wiping the perspiration off my forehead. It's not hurting much now. That one keeps checking my blood pressure. Must be more to having a baby than I thought. My God! Those words, what are those words? I need them now. Oh yes! 'Thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear.' 'Cut the cord!' Is that what he said? 'It's dying.'"

Tina breathed a sigh of relief. She had been allowed the emotional joy of knowing when the child had come from her body; she had heard its first cry, such a weak whimpering sound. The words, "It's dying," echoed through her mind. But where there was breath there was hope. All she could do now was to pray for that small life. A smile softened her face, her body relaxed, and her eyes fluttered softly and closed.



New Orleans.

But it wasn't working. Who was he trying to fool? Himself? No he couldn't fool himself, not now anyway. He had wanted Lydia out of the way so Marian could be with him.

Lydia had been weak and sick. She had had a bad heart. Truthfully, he did try to tell her that the temperature was fifteen degrees below zero, that she shouldn't try to feed the howling dog. But she had only answered "Why not?" And he had not cared enough to try to dissuade her further. She had given him a cold stare accompanied by dilated nostrils. Those awful nostrils! He might have been able to have stood her if it hadn't been for them. Now Marian's nose...

Marian's nose was delicately patrician, and when she smiled you couldn't even see her nose-

trils because her nose was the kind that went down in a "V" from the front view.

Marian had smiled when she first met him at the Carousel Club. What was it that she had said to him about Lydia, even then about Lydia? She had been waiting on tables and had said, "I've seen your wife, she comes in here now and then."

And he had thought, "Yes, and she doesn't even know that you exist." That had been three years ago.

It was like Lydia to ignore someone. She had never known what it was like to be poor, or snubbed. Moving discreetly in her own social circle, she had never realized that another world existed outside the pale of demitasse cups and hors d'oeuvres. Well, now she was poor, yes, poor AND ignored, and he would have all the money.

Lydia had left a small fortune.

He and Marian could fly to Nassau, or even Europe, on their honeymoon. Of course, that would have to wait for a year or two, until the police investigation and the gossip subsided. Hollis knew that, under the circumstances, there would inevitably be an investigation.

When they found her, she would be frozen to death on the breeze-way with the bag of dog biscuits in her hands, and he would say, "Dear Lydia, she must have gone out to feed the dogs and..."

But no, that was too melodramatic, too trite. A pretense of silent shock and grief would be much more effective. Yes, that was the solution! He would look stunned.

Maybe he was sorry that he had done it now, he didn't know. He hadn't realized that he would feel like this afterwards. But, then, she had found out about Marian when she returned from her trip. Marian had left a lipstick on Lydia's dresser. She had threatened to cut him out of her will, after all those years of kowtowing to her every wish.

"Yes Lydia. No, Lydia." It had been like that all through law school and ever since. But, Lydia had held the purse strings and Hollis had wanted wealth and success. But he had never been really successful at law.

He had heard the poundings on the door. "Hollis, Hollis! Let me in!" All of a sudden it had come to him, the idea of leaving her out there to freeze to death, or die of a heart attack. He had waited until the cries stopped, and then he went to the kitchen door and pushed back the curtains. Peering through the window, he could see her bedroom slippers and a part of the blue-veined legs and the edge of the bathrobe. She was sprawled on the green cement of the breeze-way. He could not see her face. The head was too close to the kitchen door. She was not moving. He did not want to see the mottled face. Then she would seem too real to him.

He had quietly slipped out of the other side of the big house and stepped into his car. The grounds around the house stretched for miles and the estate was isolated further by tall pines that hid it from the road. Lydia had always liked the privacy of the estate. Hollis started the motor and headed straight for Marian's apartment in the Carmel Towers. No one saw him go in. It had been eleven o'clock when he arrived there. The whole affair had happened within thirty minutes. Marian had met him in her robe and slippers. She was honestly surprised to see him. He reached

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MUSTARD SEED

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mation of the tiny creature. I was slim at first; I even lost weight but then my waist got fuller.

Norman would lay his hand here and could feel the movement of the unborn life inside me. Such a wonderful feeling. His hand is there now but there is no movement, hasn't been for several days. An inflated balloon.

I told him that a Caesarean section could not be performed until my temperature was again normal. They seem to be concerned only with me. I'm concerned with this tiny life. It must be given a chance to see life—life, sweet and pleasant, sad and cruel. His lips are so warm and give me a feeling of love and security. Don't go. I'll see him tomorrow."

Sleep did not come to Tina that night. The fluid pressing heavily against her lungs and the tightness and ache in her legs permitted no sleep to her. She thought of the decision she had made to bring a child into the world. Why had she not used reason in her decision? She had been selfish in her decision thinking of the cute maternity clothes she could make, of how proud Norman would be, of the names they could select and of her obsession to fulfill the desire of physical maturity.

What if something were to happen to her what then would Norman do? If the baby should live, what would it do for a mother? How much was this unborn child suffering too? Life was a chance itself, but she had made it an even greater gamble. Why had she not thought of this months ago? The swollen shape raised itself in a laborious effort to a sitting position, lifted her head to the heavens, her eyes closed, and a prayer formed on her lips.

Morning came and found Tina fatigued from lack of sleep. The same routine continued throughout the day with doctors filling in and out of the room, medicine to be taken, more blood samples to be tested, and the constant pain never lessening. Norman came that evening and Tina told him that she had felt a slight movement that day as of a butterfly fluttering in a pool of water.

She informed the doctors and one had marked an X on her swollen stomach. He had heard a faint heartbeat but the others had not. Tina was in a better mood telling Norman how the other doctors needed their ears cleaned then they, too, could hear the heartbeat of their child. Here was

YETSERDAY, TODAY and TOMORROW

(Continued from page 4)

she doesn't drink, she had to even have Dick take her to the dorm instead of enjoying himself with the rest of us. And he's still dating her. Don't understand. . . . Letha drifted into sleep with the mysteries of her life still unsolved.

It was exactly seven months and eight days since Letha had arrived at Sharpville College when she found out that she would have to leave. She wasn't sure at first, but after the past two weeks, she couldn't fool herself any longer. Letha was pregnant. The baby was Stan's, she thought, but she couldn't be sure. He wouldn't marry her either—that she knew. He knew he wasn't the only one and could probably prove it. At eleven o'clock Letha still sat in her now detested room staring at the wall which seemed to be closing in about her. She quickly got up and walked to her dresser where her makeup and comb was as Sue walked briskly into the room.

"Oh, are you still here?" Sue said, throwing her books on the desk. "I thought you'd be in class by now."

"I didn't go to that stupid class. Professor Wilson knows I don't read my lesson and he asks me questions just to make me feel dumb." Letha answered as she threw herself on her still unmade bed and ran her comb through her tangled hair.

"But I thought you had three cuts in there. You might get in trouble."

"That's nothing new," Letha said lifelessly. "Besides, I don't care. I'm going to leave after this week anyhow. I'm going to call Mom tonight."

Sue said nothing. She glanced

at Letha as she lay on the bed. Let her give herself a good excuse, she thought. She at least deserves that. After all, everything hasn't been her fault. Some of those guys took advantage of her. They knew she wanted affection any way she could get it.

Letha interrupted her thoughts. "I'm sick and tired of this place," she said. "They act like we're still living in the Dark Ages. Like that night I was half an hour late. You'd have thought I'd committed a capital crime. I'm just sick of it. I have to get out."

"Well, if that's how you feel," Sue said, "it's probably best that you leave. What do you think your mom'll say?"

"Oh, nothing much," Letha said. "She hasn't liked the way I've been treated down here anyhow." Nothing much—that's a laugh. How will I ever get the nerve to tell her? She's always wanted me to be popular. Big laugh. Popular.

"I'll see you after lunch," Sue said, walking out the door. "You'd probably feel better if you'd get out and walk around."

Oh, my God, what shall I do, Letha thought as the door slowly closed behind Sue's departing words. I've got to tell Mom. She'll find out anyhow, and it'll be better if I tell her. Why? Why did I have to happen this way. I tried and tried, and what did I get for it? Shame. Disgrace. People don't care, they just don't care. If they knew, they'd just laugh and snicker behind my back. But they don't know and they never will.

Letha walked to the closet and got out a black, straight dress. I'll walk down by the river, she thought, at least I'll get some peace down there.

Over the Edge

By NANCY CAROL REED

Charlie Fields did not exactly consider himself an erring husband, but there was a tightness about his stomach and a cold dampness of his hands on the steering wheel as he hurried home at four A.M. He thought Helen would forgive him for being late since she was a very understanding person, and he had telephoned from the Club before going on to Bob's stag party.

Maybe he shouldn't have stopped at Jack's All-Night Grill and chatted so freely with the attractive blonde counter girl. Sure, but he had done no more than the average man might do, he told himself. Many married men said of their wives, "What the Little Woman doesn't know, won't hurt her." Charlie, however, did not endorse that doctrine. Yet, could he tell Helen everything that happened there at Jack's? Yes, he decided; that is, nearly every little thing. He had not been disloyal to her, for he had told the blonde that he was a married man.

He wheeled into his driveway with a slight cry of tires and a crunch of gravel that sounded loud in the pre-dawn stillness. The overhead garage door came down explosively, and even his steps on the concrete walk echoed against the quiet dark dwelling across the street. In the distance a motor hummed, neared. It was a prowler car that slithered to a crawl in the street, as its uniformed occupants sized him up at the door, then moved on.

Couldn't a man have a night out once in a great while without arousing the suspicion of everything and everybody? He shrugged off his annoyance, unlocked the door and went into the sleepily lit hallway. He tried to make his footsteps normal so that if Helen were awake she would know it was he and not be frightened. He stopped at the closet and hung up his overcoat and went toward the open door of their bedroom. Her light was out and she was asleep. The soft, reflected light from the hallway showed the contour of her face and shoulders and showed the rise and fall of her breast with her quiet breathing.

Charlie was instantly at ease, with a let-down from the tension of moments ago that left him tired and sleepy and he hurried to the shower. Helen definitely was not angry. Had she been angry, she would have waited up with a book, not to scold or nag, but on the contrary, to utilize her weapon of silence that shut him out until she felt he had paid the penalty, and then she would open her heart to him again.

Of course, she could have been physically exhausted and needed to sleep, for she had seemed listless of late, not physically ailing or complaining, but just not her old buoyant self.

His reverie had carried him through showering and dressing for bed, and he was reaching for the bathroom light switch when he found himself staring at his hand, the hand that had been intentionally or not, ever so gently brushed by the soft hand of the blonde at Jack's All-Night Grill. Their eyes had met instantly, warmly. They had talked long and confidentially, but he had told her all about Helen.

Charlie switched off the bath light and went into the bedroom. Helen was still sleeping soundly. For a moment he looked down at her silhouetted body. Her unawareness of his presence and the peacefulness of her sleeping and the full knowledge of his love for her made him want to crush her in his arms. He restrained

himself, snapped on the light in order to set the alarm clock at seven o'clock, a short two hours away.

With the flashing on the light Helen was a sleeping beauty being aroused. She frowned and moved her head from side to side as if to escape the brightness and the rhythm of her breathing shortened. Charlie pressed his face down on the folds of her dark hair and brushed his lips lightly over hers. He withdrew fearful of awakening her and was reaching for the light switch when she sprang up to a sitting position arms braced behind her on the bed. Her eyes stared blankly ahead. "You—you scared me!" Her utterance of half-sleep was of relief. She sank down to her pillow and her eyes closed and she smiled.

"Love you—love you—love you!"

Charlie hovered over her—listening, smiling, understanding. Suddenly, she thrust both arms upward and brought them back crossed, squeezing them against her. "Love you, Teddy!"

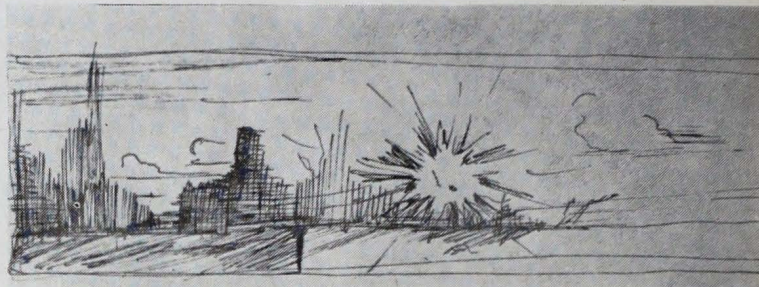
That word, that foreign name struck Charlie like a dart in the heart. He stood in silence for a moment, a pounding in his ears and a tight-banded feeling in his temples that made him giddy.

He tried to say it wasn't so, that he had come home at a late hour to his wife to find her lying there peacefully sleeping, that all was well; but the panic was rising in him as the throbbing in his ears seemed to echo Helen's last word, "Teddy." Once he had felt like that when, approaching the brink of Lover's Leap, his foot had slipped on treacherous loose shale and he teetered there frightful seconds while fighting for and gaining his balance. He resolved to fight as hard for solid footing in the present crisis.

He switched off the light and stretched out on the bed to try to think things through. Should he wake Helen up and demand to know who "Teddy" was? Would she own up to it, or deny it? In four years of married life he had never caught her in a deliberate lie and deceit had been contrary to her nature. Could her subconscious, in the dream, have reverted to a youthful romance? No, he decided. The warmth of affection displayed in her every move and word, which at first seemed directed to him, her husband, was too ardent to reach far into the past. Teddy was definitely a male acquaintance she had recently met. She must have been overwhelmed by his aggressiveness and entered into a romance, meeting him in some rendezvous. That would be pure deceit. That would explain why her telephone had not answered a couple of midafternoons when he had had occasion to call home unexpectedly in recent weeks.

Triangles, the newspapers called them. Divorce courts were sounding boards for such goings-on, after they had been found out. Such sordidness had always been just something unpleasant to raise an eyebrow about, now directly concerning him and Helen and their marital life full of faith and love and understanding. He had always thought so, but this...

He roused from the two hours of melancholy sleeplessness, scotched the alarm clock, dressed and went to the office still without any plan of action. Words of greeting and smiles of acquaintances and co-workers were wasted on him, for they seemed forced to Charlie. He tried to throw himself into his job, but he



found he could not concentrate on the work piled up before him. He glanced around at the others in the office and they seemed to be a bunch of robots going about some set tasks.

Near noon Mr. Norris, the office manager, strolled by and stopped with a quick glance. "Off your feet today, Charlie?"

"Yes, I guess you could call it that," Charlie said.

"You better go and see your doctor. Take the rest of the day off and do that. Be sure to call me tomorrow and let me know how you feel."

"Thank you, Mr. Norris," said Charlie. "I'll do just that."

He left the office of United Wholesale Company on sick leave, the first time in six years of service. He couldn't tell the boss he wasn't sick, for it had stuck out on him like a sore thumb, nor could he tell him where the hurt was. He headed for the first bar and downed a drink. That was it. He would get drunk—drunker than any man ever got before. The drinks did clear the covey feeling in his head, but left the pounding worse in his temples.

After about his fourth drink, he realized that drinking was not the answer to his bewildering problem. It would only lead him to more trouble, maybe even jail. He would telephone home and see if Helen were there. If she were, he would go home and ask her some point-blank questions.

The telephone did not answer.

She was probably somewhere with her Teddy right that very minute.

There was a note sticking out of the letter-box by the door. He read it aloud: "Darling, I am going over to Jane Schuh's and also do some shopping. Be a little late. Love, Helen."

How long would she keep up this "Darling" and "Love" pretense? He was tempted to force himself back to normalcy and bide his time before exposing her. She would think that he had him fooled completely if he didn't give himself away. He settled down with a book to await her return. Suddenly, violently, he threw the book across the room. He had to have action. He looked up Jane Schuh's number in the telephone book and dialed it.

"Schuh's residence," a feminine voice answered.

"Helen Fields there?" Charlie asked.

"No, she isn't," was the answer. "Who is this?"

"A—A friend of hers," Charlie said, finding it difficult to deceive Jane.

"But she was not expecting any calls. Nothing's happened to her and Teddy, has it?"

Charlie, "So Teddy was with her!"

"Why certainly. She borrowed my car to drive him over to Lakeside Park. Say, is something wrong? Is this the Police?"

"Everything's wrong!" Charlie shouted and slammed down the telephone.

Well, the secret would soon be out. The first hint he had was

dreaming out loud. She had made a mistake in not posting Jane Schuh about what to say if anyone called about her. That must have been Jane Schuh on the telephone. He remembered her as an attractive visitor of Helen's a few years older and very active with Helen in clubs and socials. Certainly she had not seemed the type to conspire in an illicit home-breaking romance. You could never tell about people.

He was driving furiously across town toward Lakeside Park. He stopped his car a discreet distance away from the park and proceeded on foot. He wondered what Helen would say when he confronted her. What would Teddy do? On, on through the new spring scenes of the park he hurried. Noisy children fed the squirrels and squealed delightedly as the squirrels scampered playfully back up the trees. Other people meandered aimlessly, doing nothing and enjoying it. He saw Helen. She walked alone, beyond a line of benches fifty yards or so away. He had failed if he saw him, he decided, and was retracing his steps when her voice rang out:

"Charlie!"

He froze in his tracks. Helen came through an opening in the line of benches and hurried toward him. She was not alone! A small boyish figure dressed in a blue play suit, was straining at the end of one of those leash outfits in front of her.

He dared to look into her happily surprised face, then down to the cherubic face of the small boy, and then the truth struck him like a bolt of lightning. A twinge of anxiety was on Helen's face, like the passing of a small

cloud before the sun. "Anything wrong, Dear?"

"Never in my life were things righter!" Charlie shouted, swooping down and picking up the little boy. "So this is Teddy!" "Yes, but I forgot you two hadn't met. Charlie, this young fellow is two-year-old Teddy Daniels, who is visiting, along with his Mama of course, with Jane Schuh. Isn't he sweet, Charlie?"

Charlie took the tiny hand in his and said, solemnly, "Any friend of my wife's will always be a friend of mine, young fellow. You may never know how glad I am to meet you, Teddy!"

Someone hurried toward them. It was Jane Schuh. "My goodness—is anything wrong with Teddy?"

"No," answered Helen, puzzled.

"Why?"

"Somebody called—" Jane Schuh stopped, whirled to Charlie. "Wait a minute. Wasn't that you, Charlie?"

"Yes," replied Charlie, quietly. "You sounded rude, you know." Jane Schuh's voice was kinder than her words.

"I'm truly sorry, Ma'am," said Charlie. He saw that Helen was mystified. "It was because of a bad dream."

"A bad dream?" asked Helen.

"According to the way I interpreted it, yes. That way, this little boy would not be here now and I might have gone over the edge," Helen shuddered. "That's enough about bad dreams. Let's talk about pleasant things on our way home."

"Amen," Charlie whispered in relief.

bastard for putting me in such a spot!

But, I'll tell them that Hollis was at my apartment all night. And then the family will be embarrassed and have a private hearing. Oh yes, I'll lie for him, but he'll pay.

He'll start by paying my bill at Carson's. Those people have been pestering me for months for the money.

Oh I wish I could tell Lar. We always laughed at old man Anderson. I remember that time Hollis and I sat on the couch and I told him that he was the only man I ever really loved and Larry was lying right behind the couch.

And last night...

By God that old man really thinks I'll marry him!! No, I won't marry him. I can use him much better this way. A secretary's job doesn't pay much but I've been doing okay by playing up to Anderson. Come to think of it I'm really the cause of Lydia's death but no one can touch me for it. It's almost too much. That old fool, that blinded, impotent, old fool. But, I never thought that he'd leave her to die...

Marian Barton smiled as she closed the compact.

POST-MORTEM

(Continued from Page 5)

nervously for a pipe, and it rattled as he drew it out of the rack.

"What if Marian doesn't lie for me?" The thought kept beating in his mind. Then he told himself, "But, she will," and then he would try to breathe more regularly.

After all, he had done this all because of Marian, all for Marian. But why was she acting so strangely? He must calm himself before the police came.

Marian Barton opened her compact and examined her eye makeup. She was wearing dark blue mascara that accentuated her Celtic blue eyes. Her champagne beige hair was carefully arranged in a youthful style. Marian was a thirty-seven and divorced, but her face seemed that of a woman of twenty-five. Unlike many other women of her age, she did not need blond hair to be attractive. She would have been striking without it because of her high cheekbones and flawless complexion. She was contemplating a new hairstyle.

"I think I'll ask Larry to do my hair up next time. It doesn't look quite prim enough for either a wedding or a funeral. Lar will laugh when I tell him I want to look spinsterish. Oh, but I can't tell him. I forgot. Damn that old