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THE MAN FROM SATURN

By HARRIET FRANK, JR.

You might as well know it right off: it won't do any good for you to fall in love with Betsy Simms. She's crazy about a guy named Yrtxxe (alias Sam), whose skin is green and whose address is Saturn. Betsy dug him out of a test tube one night and hasn't been quite the same since. . . .

Sam wasn't easy for a girl to handle. For one thing, his idea of flaming love was to take a walk in the park and think at you. That might be hot stuff up among the Rings, but Betsy wanted real action!

And then a sleek slice of female named Leda came along and loaded Sam up with ticker-tape parades, keys to the city, and a Presidential reception — and Betsy had more action than she knew what to do with!

RUTHIE said she knew something like this would happen to me. She says there's something dark and Celtic in my ancestry, even though she knows that my family is Pennsylvania Dutch. Ruthie's a fine one to talk. She has her fortune told down on Third Avenue once a week as regular as clock-work, and she won't go to work if our landlady's black cat crosses her path. Now she says she felt it in her bones. She says there was a kind of sulphurous smell in our apartment, but I'm sure it was only the stuff I used to mop the bathroom with. I told her so.

"All right, Madame Curie," she said. "Explain it to me."

Ruthie thinks because I'm a lab technician for the Severn Research Foundation that I'm a cross between Robert Oppenheimer and Albert Einstein. But even if I were I couldn't come up with an answer, because nothing like this has ever happened outside of a Walpurgis Night, especially to a girl like me.

I'm the kind of a girl who gets her bills paid promptly

on the tenth of the month and sees her dentist twice a year. I bank a third of my salary, vote in the primaries, and cry at the movies. I love Valentines and children and early American furniture. Except for the mumps I've never been sick a day in my life, and the only psychosomatic symptom I've ever shown was when I broke out in a rash the day I got engaged to Arnold. He says it was an anxiety syndrome, but I think it was my red woolen dress. I didn't contradict him because he's a psychiatrist and he ought to know. I don't hate my parents secretly, I have no power drives, and the only time I take a drink is when Ruthie and I have Christmas open house. So far there is no explanation. Arnold is in no condition to apply the scientific method, and Ruthie just mopes around being Irish and spooky, so it's up to me — and I've gone over it and over it.

It started on Valentine's Day. There was some chocolate cake left over from the night before and I made myself some cocoa. It was a lovely, unwholesome breakfast. There's something about cocoa and snow and smoke from chimneys that makes me feel Charles Dickensy and romantic. I called up Arnold and recited "Roses are red, Violets are blue" at him, but he was sleepy and thought it was a maladjusted child he'd been treating. When he finally realized it was me he

wanted to know if anything was wrong.

"No," I said. "I'm just feeling festive."

"Fine." And then, with more of a lilt, he said, "That's fine."

There was a pause and then he coughed and cleared his throat. "Valentine's Day . . . There's a romantic significance, isn't there?"

"Usually," I said.

"You'll be hearing from me," he said mysteriously, and hung up. I *would* have liked him to murmur a few things at me, but it was seven in the morning and he probably hadn't even brushed his teeth. Besides, Arnold says the sensual graph is periodic and moves in a cyclic pattern, and that emotional relationships have to allow for the discrepancies of the parties involved. What he means is you're either in the mood or you're not. He wasn't.

I confess it took the wind out of my sails, until I went to catch my bus. There was snow on the ground and everything looked as though it were wrapped in white tissue paper. You felt that if you peeled it off you'd find a spring hat or a dollar bill or a ticket to Paris. When I got to Rockefeller Center I went into the florist's on the ground floor and bought one single daffodil in a little pot. It cost me a dollar sixty-five, and since I needed a new lipstick and mouth wash, you can just set it

down to late winter stirrings.

Everybody in the elevator looked at that daffodil wistfully. One man, a sort of stock-brokery type, leaned over and inhaled it. "Perky thing," he said, sighing. When I got off at my floor he said, "I wish you were going all the way to the top," and he wasn't being fresh. It just had that effect on people.

When I got to the lab I put it up on the window ledge. With the light coming through its petals it looked like home-churned butter. Even Mr. Randall, who never makes a joke because he's head of the laboratory, made a joke. "Daffodils are yellow, wish I were your fellow," he recited. "Primavera, eh, Betsy?"

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Well, I hope it won't take the starch out of you if I ask you to stay late tonight. The fragments of the Santa Querido Meteor arrived this morning. . . ."

It had been in the newspapers for three weeks; first, the reports from observatories all over the country, describing the spots and eruptions on the planet Saturn; and then the fall of that great meteor in the Arizona desert. The crater it had ploughed was almost five miles long, and it was filled with strange and glittering rock fragments. We felt pretty good about the fact that Severn Labs had been chosen to do the analysis on ore that might, just possibly

might, have fallen through space for a billion miles, all the way from the Rings of Saturn.

Randall's voice droned on. "Jensen is running some geological tests on them, but we'd like you to do the report. It has to go to Princeton in the morning. Those atomic fellows want our findings. Think you can handle it?"

"I'll try."

"Good. Jensen's got the material vatted in a salt solution. Just leave everything undisturbed. His notes will be ready by six. Get your boy friend to buy you dinner, and then be back here by eight if you can."

"Yes, Mr. Randall."

"And don't discuss it. We're all under a top secret regimen as long as we're being investigated. I want my crew to make a fine showing. It's Los Alamos for all of us if we come out with a clean record." He paused at the door. "You're not nervous here at night, are you?"

"Oh, no."

"Remember, don't disturb the material. Just do up the report."

Miss Tomkin, who works in blood culture, came in on his parting remark. She waited until he had turned into his own office. "Is he keeping you in tonight?" she asked, sotto voce.

"He is."

"I wouldn't stay in this lab after dark for all the mink in minkdom."

"Why not?" I asked, putting on my smock. "We don't manufacture monsters here."

"Did you see *The Thing*?" she said nervously.

"No."

"Well, I did. Last week at the Uptown. The Thing came right out of an ice-cube when this man wasn't looking."

"You don't say."

"Laugh if you want to."

"I do."

"All right! But that rock Randall was telling you about — it's bobbing around in the vat like crazy. Jensen had to seal the lid with paraffin."

"Maybe it's a Mexican Jumping Meteor," I said solemnly.

"Well, I think you ought to call up Arnold and have him stay with you."

"Suzy," I said sternly, "for a scientifically trained person you're acting like something out of a weird story magazine. I think this investigation has got you jumpy."

"Jumpy!" she snapped. "Last week the investigators went to talk to my dentist because I was taking night appointments. They know all about my upper plate. They know what I eat for breakfast."

"What's so terrible about that?"

"They know who I eat it *with*!"

"That's funny. Nobody's been asking any questions about me."

"What's there to ask?" said

Suzy. "You've been going with the same fellow for two years."

"They'll probably get to me," I said. "Now run along and let me get some work done."

Arnold called around five to say he couldn't have dinner with me, but that I could expect a little surprise. "Something sentimental," he said. "I'm awfully sorry about tonight, but Leda has asked me to sit in on an examination. She's blocked away from the root of her patient's neurosis, and wants a fresh mind."

"Oh," I said. Leda is not my favorite dish. She's Arnold's associate, and if ever I saw a woman with a mind like a steel trap, she's the woman. She's as cold as beer on a hot day and twice as heady.

"Do good," I said cheerfully to Arnold, and rang off. All my Valentine feelings ebbed away. It was just another cold day in February. I'd work late, eat a sandwich in the drugstore, buy some magazines, and so to bed.

The elevator boy brought in a box from the florist's just as the last person left the office. Arnold's roses with Arnold's idea of love rampant. The card read: "Body and Soul . . . A".

I stuck one of them in the lapel of my coat and went downstairs to the drugstore. Mickey, the counter boy, saw me come in, glanced mysteriously around him, produced an egg from under the

counter and cracked it into the malt mixer. "Valentine," he said. "No extra charge."

"I'll pay," I said sadly, "in calories."

"Where's the doc? Working late?"

I nodded disconsolately.

"Tough. You in late, too?"

"I'm afraid so."

He bent his head close to mine and spoke from the corner of his mouth. "I got news for you," he muttered. "You're being tailed."

His eyes flicked off a sallow-faced man at the end of the counter who was rhythmically munching crackers.

"That's just a man eating crackers," I said.

"You come in here every day, don't you — maybe twice?"

"Sure."

"He's been in every day — twice when you are. Coincidence? Not on your life." He looked at me, troubled. "You're a dish. Maybe this guy figures to take you on some night when you leave late. It's happened."

I took out my compact and tilted it so that the mirror picked up the man's reflection. "He looks harmless to me. And tired."

"You from the country or something? Listen — give me a buzz before you leave tonight. I'll grab you a cab."

"All right. Meanwhile, I'd like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich."

"Take the hot roast beef."

"I don't —"

"I'm telling you — take the beef."

"You'd make a wonderful family man," I said resignedly.

"That ain't for me. You go home, you wipe noses, somebody's all the time in the bathroom." He shook his head emphatically.

"That ain't for me."

"I'd love it."

"Well, make your move. I bet the doc ain't dragging his feet."

"I can't just walk out on my job. It's important. I worked hard to get it and I'm doing fine." I paused. "You see, Mickey, a woman's place isn't in the home unless she's ready."

"Maybe you're still shopping around," he said casually.

"How much do I owe you?" I said firmly.

"Seventy cents. The advice is free."

"It's better than the food. Thanks."

He followed me along the counter. "Anytime."

"Goodnight." I took off my rose and handed it to him. "I love you like a brother."

He tucked it into his cap and waved me out. Once I was in the foyer, a chilling night silence fell. The elevators were on automatic. I never did like that — I'm always afraid I'll get stuck. Sometimes I dream I'm in one and it falls and

falls. Arnold smiles suggestively when I tell him that and says it will pass with emotional fulfillment. I suppose he's talking about sex, but I don't see the connection at all. Anyway, it was a long, quiet ride to the thirty-fifth floor. They keep little night lights burning in the halls, and it's sort of hospitable and antiseptic without people around. I get lonely without people. The gregarious instincts of extroverts, is what Arnold says.

Sometimes I wish Arnold didn't always have an explanation for everything I think or feel. I like to be a deep pool, like Greta Garbo, with an aura of the East and ancient Bacchanalian rites about me. Arnold makes me feel as though I'm having my teeth straightened, or taking corrective posture exercises. He kind of tidies up my mind for me. Guide to Betsy Simms' mind — see Dr. Arnold Allan. Just the same, I started to wish he were beside me. All Mickey's talk about the man in the drugstore had made me polka-dot with goose pimples. Somehow, I didn't want to go into the office.

"It's all gobbley gook," I said out loud.

"... Oook," echoed the empty hall.

"I'll just take a drink at the fountain first," I went on, still talking to myself.

"... First . . ."

In the utter silence that fol-

lowed, the water had a loud, furious, tearing sound, and it was so cold it made my head begin to ache.

"Well!" I said, with firm resolution.

"... Eiii," said the hall.

"I think I'll just go in."

"Innnn . . ."

While I fumbled for the key, I remembered with terrible clarity every tale of terror I'd ever read; and then, like a slide being pushed across the eye of a reflector, a picture came jumping into my mind, a picture of the nervous rook fragments in the room just next to me, bumping, bumping, bumping against Mr. Jensen's carefully sealed vat.

As soon as I was inside the door, my nervous flutterings vanished. I snapped on the light and was once again in the calm, reasonable sanctuary of science. I looked about me with pride. Here was the nerve center of a thousand investigations, a thousand attacks on the mysteries of life and its preservation. Each test tube, each careful annotation, was a life line which led from darkness to light, from disease to health, from the present to the future.

"Of course!" I said aloud, as if something of irrefutable logic had been told me. After all, I lived and worked at the very heart of science. The thought made me move briskly into my own cubicle.

My white smock hung like a lithe and pliant ghost on the coat tree, and my daffodil still made an oasis in that business-like room. I put on the smock. Arnold would have said that it was a gesture of self-dramatization, but I found that wearing it settled me firmly to my work. I'm sort of moody about clothes anyway. Once I bought a blue velvet housecoat that was cut from here all the way to there. When I wore it I talked about love affairs and life and things like that. Ruthie got so bored with it she got me a seersucker one for Christmas. When I wear that I make pop-overs and sort my stockings and read house magazines. In my rainy-day tweeds I feel like that girl in *Rebecca*, and my nylon bathing suit is nothing if not an *Esther Williams* movie.

My smock is special, though. I feel useful and intelligent in it. But that's one of the things I *don't* tell Arnold. He'd say "Fetish", and spoil everything.

I had to walk through the main office to get to Jensen's lab. I noticed a large sheet of paper tacked on the bulletin board. It said *Attention*, in large red type, so I stopped. It was addressed to Mr. Randall; it stated that Mr. Jensen had felt quite ill, suddenly, and that he would probably not be in the next day. He could be reached at his home if any questions arose concerning the *Santa Querido Meteor Report*.

I finished reading it and turned away. I looked at the closed door to his lab. I thought I had heard a noise; a funny, scraping noise, like rock against glass. A sudden wind blew the door of the laboratory open and I could see the gleaming, soap-bubble shine of all those transparent containers, standing row upon row against the wall.

It was unmistakable — and it came with a jolting suddenness — the sound of splashing.

I don't know what I could have been frightened of — I did it without thinking — I took the knob and slammed the door shut. And then I stood there a moment staring at it. After a moment, my voice coming very thin, very unfamiliar, I managed to speak. "Who's in there?"

I bent against the closed door. The splashing sounds had stopped. I tried a different, a more cordial attack. "Nobody's in there, are you?" Of course there was no answer.

"Mice," I promised myself, and I walked boldly inside. I saw it, first thing.

I remember how my knees buckled. I remember that my mouth got all stiff, like when you have novocaine, and that my fingertips and toes went to sleep. I wanted to faint, but got only as far as being slightly whirly. I wasn't thinking straight, I knew that, and I wanted some air. The

room smelled strongly of formaldehyde and salt, and black spots were making little patterns in the air before me.

"It'll go away," I whispered to myself wildly. "Don't panic. Walk to the window and open it. Don't bolt or scream. There's a perfectly logical explanation. It's a rational world. You're tired. You admit you're nervous about being here. Breathe. In. Out."

Miraculously, I did get to the window. The night air came in cold and fresh. There were many stars, lovely starlight. I looked up at the heavens — but I wasn't fooling myself — I still remember that faint, greenish glow somewhere in the room behind me. I turned slowly.

"Oh . . ." I said. It wasn't a word. It was a moan, involuntary, from deep within me. For it was there, in plain sight, just as it had been before, beckoning to me, bathed in green light, there within the jar.

I did the only thing I could think of. I started to cry. I sat down just in front of it, put my face in my hands and wept quietly and persistently, wept to myself.

I heard the slow, delicate tapping on the glass. "Don't!" I implored. And I looked at it again.

The voice was masculine, the tongue English; I was looking at it directly. The lips moved, entreating me: "The lid — the lid —

lift up . . ." They said it to me, softly, as if from a great distance.

There was no longer any denying it, unless I wanted to doubt my sanity. It was a man, a beautiful man, only inches high, formed perfectly, like a lovely statuette, bobbing in the jar, living in the jar, breathing, the bubbles rising in a tiny stream, the eyes straining, fixed on mine, entreating me. And at the bottom of the jar was a layer of sand . . . sand . . . rock fragments from the fallen meteor, dissolved in salt. Rock brought here from Arizona, scraping, floating, struggling to live.

"Go away," I begged. "Don't be there." I cried harder.

The greenish light from within the jar suddenly brightened fiercely, like an emerald in the sun. "The lid," the lips said, whispering, muted, blending with the bubbles. "Turn it . . . free. . . ."

I felt the breath being mangled out of me with fear.

Did it read thoughts? "Don't be afraid," the muffled, indistinct whisper said.

"Aah!" I cried, whimpering. I turned and went away from it, putting the distance of the room between us. If it didn't pass away in another moment I would call for help. The light darted after me, like a beacon moving across black gulfs, green and probing.

And all the way across the room I heard its voice, weaker now and

trembling. "Please help me. . . ."

Maybe that did it. The terror in the room was shared, my fears echoed. The terrible racketing of my heart slowed. I glanced at it quickly, and then away again, as one does when confronted with great ugliness or deformity. But it wasn't ugly. My eyes returned, fascinated; it was the handsomest facsimile of a man I had ever seen. I went back. And opened the jar.

Then I put my hands over my eyes. I suppose I was expecting a rending explosion, a shattering noise; I suppose I wanted that, I suppose I hoped it would shatter everything, even my nightmare. But there was nothing like that. Only a deep sigh of relief. A voice low, near my ear, gentle, saying, "Thank you. Thank you. That was very good of you."

I remained frosted with fear, rigid. It went on: "Is my light getting into your eyes? It should let up any minute."

I peaked between my fingers and gasped. It had shot up, released from the jar; it had filled out, grown, miraculously, swiftly, and now stood looking down at me. I checked the details. It looked like a man. In every regard, except for that luminosity, that greenish radiation, it looked exactly — sweet heavens! — like a naked man. I groped wildly across the room, scrambled hastily to Dr. Jensen's cupboard and

found his smock. I threw it across the room.

"Put that on. Cover yourself up. Get dressed." I tried them all, determined that it should understand. Evidently it did. I heard the starched folds crackle. The green light gloomed and faded. I turned to face it again.

It was seated in a chair, looking at me with infinite respect and gratitude. It was smiling faintly. If I talk to it, I told myself, then there's no turning back. It becomes an admission; it's like committing myself. I stared at it unblinkingly.

We must have sat there for the better part of an hour. Some people, the kind who function well in a crisis, would have confronted it instantly, demanded an explanation and disposed of the problem in fifteen minutes. Not only that, but they would have told the story at dinner parties for months and kept everybody spellbound. I'm not that type; even little things set me off.

The real truth is that I've always dreamed of something glamorous and off-beat happening to me; but nothing ever has. Girls in my position just don't marry Rajahs or cross oceans on rafts or become career diplomats. The only extraordinary thing that ever did happen was the time I was chosen to be Miss Subway, but they picked me only because I'm

kind of typical looking. What's more, I haven't got the temperament to *make* anything come true. The girl downstairs bought a dog just to walk in the park in case she met someone else with a dog. She did, and now she lives on Riverside Drive and has a hyphenated name. I bought a goldfish for Ruthie. You can see the difference.

That's why I did no more than sit on my chair and stare at it. I confess that I sat on the edge of my chair, and that I was ready to bolt at its first flicker of movement. But it made no such gesture and the result was that we sat studying each other in silence. I knew I'd have to say something sooner or later, but I was trying various tacks in my mind. All of them seemed hopelessly inadequate in this particular crack. It looked awfully regal and imposing. Finally, I decided on boldness.

"I think you'd better explain all this," I said. I'm not much of an actress. I sounded the way I do when I'm telling the cleaner he made a mistake in the bill — thin and piping. I tried standing up. "I'm waiting," I said, but whatever confidence I had managed to find now oozed out of my manner. I sat down again, quickly.

It seemed really troubled. It kept shaking its head and looking around the place. I guess "despairing" describes it. "Please give me a moment," it said in a

nice voice. "I'm rather shaken up. I don't . . ." It stopped then and sighed.

There didn't seem to be any point in being bold in the face of that pathetic sigh. "Take your time," I said.

"I don't quite know where I am," it said slowly.

I felt the room begin to waver at me again. Urgently, I said, "Look! It's some kind of a trick, isn't it? You hypnotized me."

"I beg your pardon?" It still looked dazed.

"The jar, I mean — all that hocus-pocus."

It glanced at the jar with a shudder. "I'd be in there yet," it said in a strangled tone, "if it weren't for you."

And it bent its gaze on me. I like an adventurous situation as well as the next person, but this one was getting too deep, it was making that nervous flutter beat in my stomach again.

"You aren't trying to tell me that . . . well, that you — you came out of there?" I heard my voice scooting up the scale.

It put its head in its hands. "The shock," it muttered. "It tore everything loose. I felt myself spinning. . . ."

"But those rocks! They came from a meteor! It fell through space!"

"I fell for weeks," it said softly. "Maybe months. I thought that it

would go on and on forever."

Desperately, I cried, "Those rocks are fragments — torn off from another planet!"

"I know. . . ."

I felt my mouth go slack. "Where are you from?"

"Saturn." It rose and bowed slightly, then sat down again.

Inwardly, I began to recite a catechism to myself. I'm Betsy Simms. This is New York. I'm Betsy Simms. This is New York. I'm —

"Are you all right?" it asked solicitously. I nodded my head dumbly. It went on: "I see I'm a sort of phenomenon to you."

I waggled my head; it felt loose on my shoulders.

"I assure you," it said anxiously, "that I'm nothing to be afraid of."

"Oh, no?" I whispered.

"It's true I'm a little out of the ordinary — but so are *you* — to me. I'm as confused as you are."

"You speak English!" I said suddenly.

It nodded. "That was my job — at home. I'm an air waves analyst —"

"A what?"

"We send the waves through channels, decode them, reconstruct languages, and then —"

"Never mind," I said. "Some other time."

We sat there, looking at each other cautiously.

Then I broke the silence again.

"Listen, I've got to get rid of you. I don't know how to handle anything like this. I'm so shaky now I can't think straight. The only trouble is, I don't know who to call — the police or Bellevue —"

"It's a problem," it nodded.

I began to run my fingers through my hair. "But how will I explain you?" I whirled on it. "You know what'll happen, don't you? They'll book you as a psycho — and me, too, if I try to tell them who you really are." I paced up and down in the lab. "I couldn't even hide what you are — even if I wanted to, and I'm not saying that I do. Why, Holy Moses, you've got no identity; no driver's license or social security or draft card."

"I haven't — whatever they are."

"Couldn't you —" I turned to it again — "Couldn't you find some way to get back? To go home?"

Home. The word seemed to crystallize its dilemma. That sad, lost look came over its face again. "I don't think there *is* a way to get back," it said despairingly. "At least, no way occurs to me now. I don't even understand clearly how this happened, or why. . . ."

"We've got to think!" I said. I don't know what it was about him that made me use that companionable pronoun. Maybe it

was that ridiculous smock reaching to its knees, and that forlorn expression.

"Suppose — just suppose — I'm not promising anything — but suppose I could get you in a cab. If I walked into the apartment with something like you, Ruthie would blow her stack."

"Colloquialism?"

"Yes," I said shortly. I explored all the possibilities. "If you wandered off now, a policeman would pick you up." My voice trailed off. "They'd have you in the pokey in no time."

"I seem to be giving you a great deal of trouble."

Its voice was so mild and lost that I felt as if I'd kicked it in the shins. "Arnold," I said aloud. "I'll call Arnold."

A passing streak of moonlight crossed its face. I drew in my breath. It looked like a great Viking, huge and green and shining. "Not Arnold," I sighed, "he wouldn't buy it for a second."

"Whatever you decide," it said gently, "I'm entirely at your disposal."

"That's just it. How can I possibly dispose of you?" Then I blushed. "That sounded awfully rude. I'm sorry. I don't mean to hurt your feelings — if you have them."

"That's all right."

Suddenly it hit me. I was on the threshold of an adventure

that nobody living had ever had before. I was communicating with the expanding universe, in touch with one of the great riddles of the twentieth century. My life in science had given me insights into the courage of people who scratched their way bravely and blindly through the How and Why of things. Why should I turn my back on it?

Besides, it was so helpless, so cast adrift. It was all the stray dogs, lost cats and orphaned children I'd ever seen in my life. My heart went out to it.

"I'm going to help you!" I said breathlessly. I waxed more eloquent the longer I looked at it. "Here you are, dumped into a strange world you never asked for, with nobody to turn to. Yes, I *will* help you. You're not responsible for what's happened to you. You're not to blame, not a bit. Anyway, the world's full of crazy wild things. One more won't upset the balance of things. I'll simply —"

That stopped me short. *What could I simply?*

"I could keep you out of sight in the apartment. You could sleep on the couch, and then when it gets light go out on the fire-escape till Ruthie leaves. If anybody sees you, I'll say you came to wash the windows." I nodded happily. "That's not bad for a beginning. We'll go downstairs and get a cab."

That stopped me again. A cab. People would take it for a crackpot. Crackpot. The word rang through me like a bell. Why not?

"Listen," I said. "I'm going to muss up your hair and print you a sign, saying Come to Salvation. If anyone tries to stop us I'll just say Praise Be To — what's your name?"

"Yrtxxe," it said.

"Very pretty. I'll call you Sam. I'll say Praise Be To Sam, and you look wild-eyed."

I drew the sign and got it pinned to the front of its smock before I remembered Max and the man downstairs. I picked up the phone and called the drugstore.

"This is Betsy. I'm going home now. Is my shadow still there?"

"Yeah. Reading the magazines. He even bought one."

"Listen, Max, something sort of embarrassing has happened."

"What's the matter?"

"My cousin came over from Jackson Heights. He got spiffled at the Art Center Ball and dropped by to see if I was here. He looks awful, Maxie. He's wearing a smock and a sign, with his face all painted green. I want to get him out without any trouble. Could you flag me a cab?"

"I'll do better'n that. I'll come up and help you pilot him."

"No, don't do that. I mean, he's walking under his own power. He's mild as a lamb, really. Just get the cab and act like nothing

was going on. It's sort of — I mean — he's sort of sensitive, my cousin."

"Got you," he said. "You're on your way."

I hung up, limp with relief. "Let's go," I told it. "If anyone speaks to you, just answer Hallelujah. Nothing else. Just Hallelujah."

"It has a lyric sound." It tried it. "Hallelujah."

"Fine," I said, and switched out the lights. Right then and there I knew we were cooked. He was as burnished as old copper, and twice as shiny.

"You're glowing," I said in despair.

"Thank you," it said. "My color's always been good."

"If only you were A.C.," I muttered.

"Beg your pardon?"

"I'd short-circuit you."

It looked at me a moment. "The light disturbs you, doesn't it?"

"It's kind of pretty," I said gently. "Only it might stir up a ruckus." I paused. "Well, there's nothing we can do about it. We'll just have to chance it."

It followed me docilely into the elevator. "I hope you don't have a sinky stomach," I said, "but if you fell all the way from Saturn this should be a breeze." I pressed the button. The elevator descended gently.

It seemed to like it. "That was very pleasant," it said. "I don't suppose we'd have time to . . ." It lingered in the cage.

"The cab's waiting," I said firmly. "We haven't a minute to lose."

We went through the park on our way home. The skeletal trees and the sharp cold air made all this seem like a Halloween chag-rade. It looked out the window, staring at everything, bright with interest.

"Remarkable," it said.

I almost laughed. There it was, the Eighth Wonder of the world, behaving like a kid at a circus.

"Did I say something unusual?"

"No. I was just thinking that you're hardly the type to behave like a visiting fireman. Still, why not? You're a stranger in town."

"You're attached to this place, aren't you?"

"I love it and I hate it," I said. "It lifts you up and it beats you down. It's too hot in August and too cold in December. It's the loneliest and most comforting place in the world." I glanced at it. "In my world, anyway . . ."

"Home is like that," it said quietly. It was remote, and a little sad.

"You know the great thing about this town?" I said urgently. "We get all kinds of people from all over, and before they know it

they feel like they've been here all their lives. We've even got a statue out in the harbor that says something like that on the base." I moved a little closer. "Take me. I come from Yakima, Washington, and my roommate Ruthie was born in San Diego. The man living downstairs is from Athens, Greece. All kinds. You'll see. You'll be all right . . ."

The cab had turned onto our street. "One thing," I said hurriedly. "Don't do anything on your own for the next day or two. Let me do the planning — or else we'll both end up in the soup. Idiomatic," I added.

I took it by the hand, a little gingerly, and we went inside. Fortunately, the hallway was empty. I left it at the top of the stairs and went ahead to check the apartment.

Ruthie was sleeping. She wears ear-plugs and eye pads, and nothing wakes her but the threat of cold water — so we were all right on that score. I stuck my head out of the door and beckoned to it.

"I didn't get a chance to clean up the place," I said, hurriedly picking up my bathrobe and a Turkish towel. "We're a little cramped." Suddenly, as we stood there together, just inside the door, the enormity of it all washed over me. It was so big, it was so good to look at, it was so much man, it was from Saturn — it was

from hunger. It was terrific!

"Where am I going to hide you?" I whispered desperately. I looked at the settle bench I had bought in Vermont — perfect for a Pilgrim, but it would pleat my visitor. Nobody in or out of this world could sleep on my Hitchcock chairs. That left the kitchen table, the top of the bookcase, and the bathtub.

"I'll give it to you straight," I said. "There's no bed for you."

It moistened a finger and held it up to the air. "Current's perfect," it said, "no pitch or down-draft."

"What?"

"I'll show you." It fell backwards. In another moment it was floating gently above me, six feet off the floor. It was late at night, but I watched it with my own eyes! Then it regained its feet again. "Any place without too much wind will do."

"No," I said firmly. "Suppose Ruthie should get up for a drink and run into *that*!"

It nodded its head in agreement. "Better not risk it."

"Can't you do it *our way*?"

"Yes. If I have to."

"All right." I sighed deeply. "I'll set my alarm for you for five-thirty. I know it's terribly early, but I'd rather be on the safe side. Now, when it goes off, you get up and crawl out there on the fire-escape. If anybody

looks out and sees you, just make a motion like this." I demonstrated. "They'll think you're the window-cleaner. Then, when Ruthie's gone, we'll have breakfast and make plans."

"That won't be necessary," it said. "I don't eat."

I took this in my stride. I was beginning to get oriented. "I'm not sorry to hear it," I said. "What with the cost of living and everything."

It looked at me puzzled. "It's an economic term," I went on. "It means that hamburger is a dollar a pound. Well, never mind. I'm not the only one who's tried to explain it."

I went into the bathroom and turned on the light. "In here." It appeared in the doorway. I pointed to the tub. "Sleep well," I said, "and try not to worry."

"You too."

That stopped me. I looked at it strangely. Its voice was intimate, compelling, affectionate. It made me suddenly feel shy with it. "Thanks," I said, and went into the bedroom.

I must have stayed awake until almost daylight, watching Ruthie. Outside of Rip Van Winkle, nobody's ever slept longer or harder than Ruthie. I dozed fitfully. I dreamt of Arnold and elevators, meteors and men eating crackers, until the alarm went off. I sat up stiffly, listened until I heard the

living room window raised, and then fell back exhausted until morning. Ruthie came in around eight o'clock to wake me up.

"You know," she began, "I ought to stay home today. I read my astrological forecast. It wasn't good."

I remained calm. "If they dock your check it won't be good, either."

"I don't like to go up against Fate," she said.

"Well, it's either that or Macy's. You owe them twelve-fifty on last month's bill."

"Say no more. I'm going." She put on her hat. "We're out of eggs, and the mice got in our shredded wheat. There's rye toast, though."

"Okay."

She sat down again. "Betts, you're pasty. What time did you get in last night?"

"Late—and I had nightmares."

"Something the matter?"

I could tell her now, I thought. "Ruthie," I said, "what would you say if—" I broke off and looked at her, so sane and crisp and feet-on-the-groundish. I clammed up.

"You in hock?"

I made a quick decision. "Well, if you could lend me five dollars. I hate to ask you."

"Look under the corn-meal. Take six if you need it. You mean to tell me you were awake all

night just because of this?" I nodded.

"You goon." She got up and smoothed her dress. "You know you can have everything I've got—all ten of it." She patted her hat. "I've got to run. Oh, listen, one thing, honey. There was a terrible ring of dirt in the tub this morning. If you get a minute . . ."

"Sure," I said.

"You know, the plumber came yesterday to fix the john. Do you suppose he took a bath?"

"I don't know. . . ."

"It's kind of shiny. Almost green."

I wet my lips. "The ring?"

"Yeah."

"I'll take care of it. You'd better go, you're late."

She nodded and hurried to the door. "Oh, by the way, the landlady's got a window-washer. He's working off the kitchen, so don't be scared."

She was gone. I climbed into my robe and slippers and sped into the kitchen. It was there, patiently making sweeping motions at our window with a wash-cloth. When it saw me, it smiled and waved. I found myself thinking that Apollo must have looked like that with the morning sun behind him.

"Good morning," I called. "Come in."

It leapt through the open win-

dow and stood before me. Its legs were blue from the knees down and it shook.

"You're cold." I motioned it toward the stove and lit all the burners. "You've got to have some clothes, first thing." I gulped a cup of coffee. "I'll phone the lab and tell them I'll be late." I looked at it speculatively. "I think you're the Brooks Brothers type. Can you tell me your clothes size?"

"I've never worn any," it said politely. "Our climatic conditions are—"

"I'll manage," I said. "We're not expecting company, so you'll be all right here. Don't answer the phone — that thing — and keep the blinds pulled."

"Did you sleep well?" it asked as I hurried to the door.

I stopped. "Fine. Did you?"

"I thought about you."

My toes curled slightly in my woolly slippers, and a spot on the floor had my undivided attention.

"Do you mind my saying that to you?"

Thoughts of Arnold were suddenly with me. "Well," I said hesitantly. Then I gave up and took the bull by the horns. "Sam," I said, "I don't know anything about your world, but down here a situation like this isn't considered kosher. What I mean to say is: you'd better *not* think about me, at least during the night." I paused, suddenly

very embarrassed. "Maybe I'm jumping the gun." I risked a full look at his beguiling face. It remained charmingly attentive. "You don't understand anything I'm saying, do you?"

"The words are familiar," it said, puzzled.

"But you don't catch the tune." I took a deep breath and started over again. "Sam, there are lots of complications. Look, somebody else thinks about me."

"I see."

I wanted to drop that tack. "And there's my job," I said urgently. "I've got to be careful because of my job."

He remained silent, but he looked as bewildered as a pup left in a pound. "This is a democracy," I said at last. "You think what you want to."

"Very well," it said quietly.

"There are all kinds of things to read. If your taste runs to Jane Austin and Trollope, I have lots. Ruthie has scads of astrology booklets."

It looked at me serenely. "If it's all the same to you," it said, "I'll think about you."

It was a lovely full circle, like a man's arms around you. Right then and there I made one decision. I wouldn't be thinking of Sam as It anymore; he would be he to me from now on, and it was a lot more than a question of grammar.

When I finally tore myself away, I went down to Brooks Brothers. I bought all the things I wouldn't dare to give to Arnold. There were argyle socks (in green) and a Russel Nypish bow tie and a cashmere sweater the color of spring leaves. I bought shaving lotion and cuff links with an S on them and moccasins like the Princeton boys wear. I bought striped pajamas and nylon shorts and a salt and pepper tweed suit and a pipe, and I never had a better time in my life. Also, at the end of two hours and thirty minutes, I was broke, late for work, and troubled in my mind.

I took all those pretties with me to the office and deposited them in my locker. I was standing there when Dr. Jensen went by, looking pale and a great deal older than when I had seen him the day before. He turned back, distraught, snapping his fingers at his side, and spoke to me in a hollow voice. "Did you do the report, Betsy?"

"Uh-huh," I said laconically.

He moistened his lips. It was then that it struck me. He knew! "Dr. Jensen," I said. "Dr. Jensen — I'd like to talk to you about that rock."

"Perfectly ordinary rock," he said, like a man going down for the third time. "Nothing unusual. Nothing." His eyes met mine, and then they flew away. "I've put in for a vacation," he said. "I'm

very tired. "Really very tired."

"Yes, but —"

"Got to go now. Can't talk," he said, stuttering. I saw it was useless. He'd never admit it. He'd seen Sam, but he'd never talk. I let him go without another word.

The day was as long as a best-seller. Around five I went in to Mr. Randall and pleaded a headache. He let me go and I was home fifteen minutes before Ruthie was due. Sam was sitting in the dark when I opened the door. I could see his faint green shine, dimmer today as a result of his bath.

"Hi!" I said, struggling with my packages. "Bargain day at Brooks Brothers." I dumped them all on the couch and sank down beside them with a sigh. "Anything to report?"

"No," he said. "Nothing happened."

"I bought your stuff," I said. "You'd better climb into it because I'm going to introduce you to a friend, and I want you to look . . ." I paused. ". . . Human."

Then I began fumbling quickly with the boxes. "If you hate it, just say so." I held up the suit.

"Very handsome," he said. He liked the socks and the tie and the striped pajamas. Suddenly it was like a kid's Christmas. He held the sweater up and smiled, and he laughed out loud at the shorts, and I laughed too. I

stopped when he started to peel off the smock.

"Hey," I said. "In there."

He looked at me blankly. "Custom of the country," I said. He nodded and disappeared.

Five minutes later he came back in the doorway. Talk about Pygmalion and his Galatea. I had made myself a matinee idol out of one tweed suit, a bow tie, and a sweater. He was perfectly beautiful. I stared at him spellbound.

"Golly," I said in a small voice. For a moment the whole thing had me on the ropes. Then I won out over chemistry and motioned him to a place beside me. I took his hand in what I tried hard to make a sisterly gesture.

"Sam," I said, "I've got to tell my room-mate about you. She's a nice girl with a big heart, but the idea of you may be a little too much for her at first. I just want you to trust me. If I ask you to float . . . float. You may even have to shine in the dark." I looked at him wistfully. "It's a shame to make a sideshow out of you, but she's got to believe us. Okay?"

"What's your name?" he said suddenly.

"Betsy."

"Betsy," he said. The name sounded new and very sweet. "May I call you that?"

"Sure," I said weakly. Then I heard Ruthie on the stairs. "Get in there, quick, and stay

in there till I call for you."

He moved across the room swiftly, closing the bedroom door just as Ruthie came in. The boxes and tissue paper were still in plain sight. Ruthie glanced at them and then at me as she struggled out of her coat.

"Have you come into money?" she asked.

I brushed the boxes onto the floor and threw a newspaper over them so that the name was obscured. "I just got a few trifles."

"All those trifles for just five dollars?"

"Ruthie, sit down and compose yourself. I've got news for you."

Let me say at the outset that Ruthie has gone through a lot with me. She's nursed me through the mumps; she's enlarged on my Yakima, Washington, views of sex; she's helped me file my income tax. She knows I'm reasonably sound of mind and body. That is, she thought so, till I finished my story.

"Well," I said, after twenty minutes, "that's the long and short of it."

Ruthie being Ruthie, she didn't do what everybody does in the movies. She didn't call a doctor or tap her forehead or back away from me. She merely sat there in a very deep coma.

"Say something," I begged.

"I'm thinking," she answered quietly. And then she suddenly

stood up and screamed, loud and penetrating. "Good God! You mean he's here in this apartment!"

"Yes, he is. In the very next room."

"He was in this apartment all night!" The whole fantasy for her revolved around the fact that she had spent the night with him under the same roof.

"Yes, but that isn't the point, Ruthie."

"It is for the moment," she said, looking terribly white.

"First of all, do you believe me?"

She nodded dumbly.

"You're sure?" I persisted, like a prosecuting attorney.

"Listen," she said wearily. "Last week I went to a seance and some ectoplasm showed. I bought that. Why shouldn't I believe this?"

"Then can I bring him in?"

She hesitated a moment. "Is it scary?"

"He looks like Jean Marais," I said softly.

"Jean Marais," she repeated. "Call him in."

When Sam appeared, she looked at him and gasped. "Murder!" she breathed.

"Sam, this is Ruthie. She lives with me."

"Does it talk?" Ruthie whispered.

"Certainly!" I said, irritated.

Sam smiled. "Good evening,"

he said, as smoothly as Charles Boyer.

Ruthie just shook her head. "Can you beat it?"

"Better sit down, Sam," I said. "We've got to talk about our problem. Now look at him good, Ruthie."

It didn't seem to cause her any pain. She stared at him with a foolish smile.

That went on for quite some time. "Ruthie," I said firmly. "Ruthie, listen to me!"

She tore her gaze away. "Yes?" she said vaguely.

"Can we pass him off as a man?"

"What?"

"Can we pass him off as a man? That's our problem."

"As far as I'm concerned," she said appreciatively, "he's passed."

"I mean, those feelings aside," I said coldly. "Can we get him a place to live? Find him work? Can we introduce him to Arnold?"

"Any time," she said with conviction.

"We've got to be sure." I got up and paced the room restlessly. "You know that the lab is being investigated. I can't be seen with an unexplainable man, and I don't know *how* to explain him without going up for a lunacy hearing. Are you listening?"

"Sure," Ruthie said transfixed. "Sure."

"Well, we've got to try. Arnold's taking me to dinner to-

night. That'll be the acid test. You come along with Sam. He's a friend of yours from home."

"You know how I feel about my friends," she said heartily, her eyes gleaming.

I ignored that. "Sam, do you think you can go through with it?"

"Who is Arnold?" he said. "Your voice changes when you say his name."

"Go explain Arnold," Ruthie said wryly.

I decided I had to set the record straight, right then. The words didn't want to come. "Why don't you get dressed?" I said to Ruthie. She looked quickly at me and then at Sam. I looked at the floor. She left hurriedly.

"Arnold's a dear friend of long standing," I said all in one breath.

Sam took his new pipe out of his pocket and stroked it speculatively. "You belong to him," he said with great finality.

"Hey, wait a minute. I didn't say that."

"You don't care to belong to him?"

It was like talking basic English. With Sam it was either yes or no. "I'm thinking about belonging to him," I said weakly. "A sort of incubation period."

"Ah," he said unhappily. "You're thinking about it. That's something I can understand very well." He rose, bowed slightly,

and quickly sat down again.

I didn't have time to pursue the subject. I was supposed to meet Arnold at Fabrizio's in fifteen minutes and I hadn't changed. "I've got to change," I said miserably, "but I'll see you later."

Arnold has his own special table in the corner. His eyes are weak so he sits out of the light and away from the noise. He had a drink waiting for me and there was wine cooling in an ice bucket. I sank into my chair, smiled wanly and dove into the drink.

"Tired, darling?"

"Collapsed. Arnold, before we settle down, I'm afraid we're not going to be alone."

I told him about Ruthie and her friend. He took it graciously but not without comment. "Do you consciously try *not* to be alone with me?" he asked patiently.

I looked at him. He's one of those Distinguished Men ads—you've seen the pictures. "Arnold," I said, "you know that isn't true."

"It has to be," he said sternly, "or we would have been married long ago." He leaned across the table and took my hand. "Leda could handle my practice for a while. We'll go to Florence for a honeymoon."

I felt like a package that was being wrapped up. "Wait," I cried, "let me say something."

He sat back in his chair, finger-tips together, silent as a doctor listening to symptoms. But now that it was time for me to speak, all I could think to say was, "What's the rush?"

"There's the biological factor, for one thing. I'm only human."

I drank some more of my drink. "You know my views on that," I said solemnly.

"I do. They're lofty." He sighed. "Damn it, Betsy, you tempt me. I've faced that unalterable fact. I asked you to marry me. I'm asking you again."

"I don't know what's the matter with me!" I wailed.

"You're suffering from high moral tone," he said, handing me his hanky. I hid my face in it and thought of the strange and giddy feelings I had had since I found Sam, and cried all the harder.

"My dear," said Arnold contritely, "you *are* frazzled. I think the strain of your job's really telling. We won't talk about it anymore tonight. Better?"

I wiped the mascara out of my eyes and smiled wanly. "Yes, thank you, Arnold."

"All right. The beast in me is subdued and you're entirely safe."

"Yes, thank you, Arnold."

Maybe *his* beast was subdued, I thought, but mine was on the prowl for the first time in my life — and its prey was coming across the room toward me.

Ruthie came in as though she were leading a band. And Sam was enough to strike one up, too, as he threaded his way among the tables. Even Arnold's eyes widened.

"He's somewhat larger than life-size," he muttered. "Who is it?"

"Sam Saturnis," I said. "I think he's from San Diego."

"They grow them big in Southern California," Arnold said, standing up.

Ruthie beamed down at me. "We got here," she said triumphantly. Then, as I frowned, she burbled at Arnold, "I was afraid I'd lose Sam. It's his first time in the city."

The two men shook hands. I noticed with a kind of primeval satisfaction that Arnold winced at the grip. Then I was ashamed of myself, so I moved closer to him.

"Where are you staying?" Arnold asked.

"With friends," Sam said easily.

"What's your work?"

"Air analysis."

"He's in the radio business!" I said desperately.

"Oh, yes," Arnold said, and a silence fell. We all smiled at one another.

Ruthie eyed the wine bottle frantically. "Is that private stock?" she said meaningfully.

Arnold beckoned for glasses. Sam took his and put it carefully

aside. Arnold's face darkened. "I hope you're not one of those California wine enthusiasts," he said.

"Drink up!" I shouted.

Sam looked at his glass with bewilderment. "How?" he asked.

"Here's how!" I said emphatically, and tossed mine off in one swallow. Sam nodded imperceptibly and did likewise. Arnold's mouth went slack.

I held out my glass imperiously. Then I felt Ruthie's hand clutching my wrist. "You'll get coddled," she said firmly, "and you know how addled you get when you get coddled."

I set the glass down with a click. "My," I said, "but that was refreshing. How do you feel, Sam?"

It was classic. "It tickles," he said, "as it makes its way, all the way down. That's all."

"Yes," Arnold said. "Well."

"Sam's a teetotaler, mostly," Ruthie explained.

There was another silence. Somewhere in the background a rhumba band began to throb urgently. "You don't rhumba, do you, Arnold?"

"I drink," Arnold said, filling his glass again, "and then I rhumba."

Sam glanced out at the dance floor. "I believe I could do that," he said. Ruthie and I exchanged looks.

"It tickles," Arnold said sourly.

"Try it with me," I said and

got up. We moved out on the floor together. Space and time fell away. I leaned closer to him. There was no doubt about it. We were star-crossed.

"Something smells good," Sam said.

"It's me," I told him happily. "Ten dollars an ounce."

"You're soft to the touch," Sam said. "Let's take a walk."

I looked at him, startled. "I can't," I said mournfully.

"You're thinking about him." He motioned toward Arnold.

"Yes . . . I guess so"

"You'll think about me sooner or later," he said complacently. "I'll wait."

By the time we got back to the table, Arnold had taken the bottle out of the wine cooler, plunked it solidly down before him, and was cradling it in his arms. Ruthie raised her eyebrows in warning. Arnold caught the grimace. "Sublimation," he said loudly. "It's any man's prerogative. Isn't that right, *Saturnis*?"

"Please, Arnold," I begged him. "No shop talk."

Arnold had a none too steady gaze fixed on Sam. "What'd you say your line of work was?"

"He's in radio. I've already told you."

"He didn't tell me. I'd like to hear it from him."

I started to answer, but Sam took over like a pinch hitter. "I'm

what you might call the head of a station. I do experimental work in what you people would probably call electronics. I work for — well, I believe you call it the Government."

My hands were sticky with nervousness. Arnold digested all that, and then he asked crisply, "Married?"

"Arnold, what's the matter with you?" I said.

"Yes," echoed Ruthie. "That's a chair he's sitting in, not a couch. Business must be slow."

"Sorry," Arnold mumbled. Then, by way of explanation, he turned back to Sam. "You're too big. Big guys make me combative. Anxiety neurosis." He held out his hand. "Forget it."

"Sure," said Sam. "Anybody can blow his top." He looked at me, pleased with himself. "Colloquialism."

"Ruthie," I said quickly, "you look like you're getting a headache."

"No, it's in my neck," she said resignedly. "Come on, Sam."

"Going?" Arnold asked with vast relief.

"I never stay more than ten minutes anywhere," Ruthie told him bitterly. She took Sam by the arm. "We loved it." And then, menacingly to me, she said, "I'll see you at home."

Arnold watched them depart, his face brightening as they passed out of sight. "Something really

funny about that guy. . . ."

"I thought he was sort of nice."

He tapped the bottle nervously. "I'm out of training. I guess I must be a little tight."

"What is it?" I tried to keep my voice calm and indifferent.

"Him. That fellow. Something the matter. What was it? I've got it right on the tip of my tongue. What?" He thought a moment, frowning. "Ruthie known him long?"

"Ages," I said. "Let's not talk about him any more." All in in the same breath. "Next week's my vacation. Am I going to see you?"

His face fell. "Medical convention in Boston. Leda and I planned to take in the whole session. But if you're free I'll cut it short."

"Don't do that. I've got scads of things to do."

"Like what?" he said fondly.

I ticked them off in my mind. Find Sam a place to live. Sit in a warm, silent museum with him at my side. See how he'd react to a chocolate sundae, my red knitted dress, and a kiss in the dark.

"Silly things," I said to Arnold. "I was going to paint our apartment and make myself some harem pajamas and cook foreign — things like that."

"I wish I could think what it was about him," he said softly, and then he shook his head, as if to clear it. "I'll call you every



night from the hotel in Boston."

He did, too, but the days were mine and Sam's. I began by telling Ruthie I was going to take him house-hunting. "Somebody's bound to find out he's living here, and this week's the only time I have to get him settled."

Ruthie looked the way she did when her pet gold fish died. "I've gotten used to him," she said. "Couldn't we keep him a little bit longer?"

I felt the same way myself, but Ruthie's voicing it put new resolution into me. "No. It isn't nice. After all, he isn't even a relation."

"He could be," she said. "Just for the asking." I looked at her coldly, so she changed her tactics. "He doesn't cost us anything."

"Look, he's not a pet dog. He's—"

"What is he! See — you can't answer."

"That's irrelevant," I said.

"You know what I think?" Ruthie was looking at me steadily. "I think you've got a yen for him. It's like when you're dieting — you won't let me keep cookies in the house."

"It's not the same at all."

"Then why are you giving him the bum's rush?"

Ruthie and I never fight, but I felt we were close to it then. "I found him, didn't I!" I said angrily. "Finders keepers! I can do what I want with him! I'm moving him out."

I went to fetch Sam. He was doing the breakfast dishes. He'd learned how the tap works and he found the process intriguing. I asked him to come with me.

We went out into the crisp daylight. I wanted to find him a place with charm, so he wouldn't be lonely or lost. I also had to find a way to tell him what I was doing without making him feel abandoned.

We walked until we came to the Village. The park was empty except for a man feeding crackers to the pigeons. I stared at him moodily for at least a minute before I made the connection. Crackers. My shadow from the drugstore. I squinted at him and recognized the wan, polite face.

I turned up my coat collar and sat so that Sam blocked him out. "Sam," I said, "the time has come." I took his large, warm hand. "I'll come and see you as often as I can, and this week we'll do all kinds of nice things together."

"I understand," he said quietly. "You can't go on keeping me."

My throat thickened the way it does when I'm going to sneeze or cry. "I'll find you a good place." I held his hand tightly. "Do you think you can manage everything — living by yourself?"

"I think so. I've been watching you closely these few days. I've learned a lot."

"You're very brave," I said tenderly. "And very smart. I'll

bet you were a V.I.P. at home."

"What's that?"

"Very Important Person."

He shook his head. Over his shoulder I could see my friend, still there. I said, "I wouldn't turn you out like this if it weren't for —" I motioned in the direction of the cracker-man.

"What's he got to do with it?"

"He's following me. He *has* been — for days and days. You see, Sam, I've got a job I have to protect. It's important to me, and to lots of other people, too. I'd have a hard time telling anybody about you."

"I see that."

"I'll show you how to send your laundry out, and how to use that telephone so you can call me if anything goes wrong."

He listened to me attentively, but there was no sign of the regret I hoped to see on his face.

"And that's about it," I said. I waited a moment. He said nothing. "Maybe you can think of something I've overlooked," I said hopefully.

"No, nothing." He glanced at the man feeding the pigeons. "Do you want him to follow you?"

"He has a right to. Besides," I added demurely, "you're the only thing I've ever had to hide in my life." The man was watching us intently now. I stood up. "We'd better get started."

We found a little place under

the eaves in a funny, sagging old house near the park. It was on a narrow, sedate street which still had the high-collared respectability of Henry James' New York. The landlady was Swedish and nearsighted. "This is a gentleman-only house," she said, peering at me.

"I'm just helping my cousin settle in," I told her. "My aunt specifically wanted me to help him settle in."

"That may be as is," she said, "but rent in advance, no smoking in bed or cooking whatsoever."

"No problem there," I muttered, and we followed her up the stairs. The room was lovely, full of nooks and crannies and antimacassars. It was the kind of room to lie abed in with someone you loved when the rain sounded on the roof. It was a room for tea parties and the smell of lavender sachet, and I stood in it with a man from another world who didn't know I was alive. I sighed and sat down on the brass bed. It had a friendly creak. Sam remained planted firmly in the middle of the room.

"Look at your view," I said, strangled with the sense of intimacy and remoteness, both at the same time, which emanated from him.

He moved obediently to the window. "Roofs," he said. "And sky." His tone softened over that. "Sky . . . Blue sky . . .

It's somewhere out there . . . my home. . . ."

I came and stood beside him. He didn't stir. He seemed lost to me as he stared out the window. I wanted to wrench him back down to Earth — to fix him here — to keep him here. My shoulder touched his. His eyes remained on the horizon.

"Sam," I said, in my most seductive tone. "Look at me."

Reluctantly, he dropped his gaze. I had had momentary wild urges, but they paled and vanished under that curiously unemotional look. What was the matter with him! Or better yet, what was the matter with me? I don't like to brag, but nothing like this had ever happened to me. There is a certain class of men who respond to my type — if you happen to like medium to small brunettes with good dispositions and acceptable measurements. But not old Sam. Oh, no.

I said, "Okay, I'm a dud. Forget it."

He answered slowly. "Betsy, are you trying to tell me something?"

"Who — me?" I said dejectedly. "What gave you that idea?"

He put his hand under my chin and tilted my head up. "We're friends, aren't we?"

"I'll settle for that," I sighed. "If that's all I have coming. I'm not one to press an issue."

He turned away from the window. "I'd better forget all that

out there. Begin making a life for myself here." He patted me impersonally. "You'll have to show me how."

"How far would you care to take that?" I said tightly. "There's a lot to living."

"Tell me," he said in an interested tone.

"I'll show you — up to a point."

I showed him — up to a point.

After that we went on the town. I bought him a soda at Schrafft's and made him drink it. "Some people eat to live. That doesn't apply in your case. You can live to eat. Call it pleasure and dive in." He liked it. He drank three in a row. I took him tea-dancing on the St. Regis Roof. There was a mood in the room of confidence and promise; he liked that, too. We went to the theatre and the Museum of Modern Art. We window shopped at twilight and walked through St. Patrick's. We went ice-skating at the Center and buying at Lord and Taylor. We saw the ocean liners come in at the pier and rode a bus through the Bronx. We went to the zoo and the aquarium and drove through Holland Tunnel. We went to Yankee Stadium and Madison Square Garden, a UN session and a burleycue. It was a three-ring circus, a Roman Holiday, a sob story. I ended up weary, broke, and crazy in love.

The Sunday night before I had

to go back to work I left him alone at his apartment and holed in to check the damages to my heart, my bank account and my morale. Ruthie made me milk-toast for supper and sat with me while I put my hair up.

"Well," she said owlishly, "you've had yourself quite a time."

"Yes," I said weakly.

"Arnold has called and called."

"What did you tell him?" I asked in a small voice.

"I said you had taken cold and gone to Connecticut to recover. I said you sent him your love but you were too stuffy and miserable to talk to anyone."

"Did he believe you?"

"No. He asked about my friend Sam."

"Oh . . ."

"What about my friend Sam?" she asked evenly.

I put my head under the pillows. "I love that thing!" I wailed. "I love him like he was flesh and blood!"

"Come out. Let's talk about it."

"There's not much to say." I looked at her with tearful eyes. "I've got news for you. I don't think he knows anything about love. *Anything*," I repeated.

"Oh, no!" Ruthie said, paling.

I nodded vigorously. "I think they have other methods. Something like that. It must be!"

"Keen," she said. "Now, all

you have to do is dump Arnold, learn all about *Saturnic* birds and bees, and you're in business."

"Don't joke," I said. "I'm so unhappy I could die."

Ruthie sighed. "Gee, honey, I don't know what to tell you. It's outside my range. Nothing like this has ever happened to me."

"Nothing like this has ever happened to anyone!" I cried. "This is a *first*."

"Well, you know that thing — that saying — East is East, and never the twain. Maybe the same thing goes between you and Sam. Birds of a feather stick together. But this one's an odd duck, so maybe you'd better forget all about it."

"He's so touching," I said. "He's so gentle. He's so kind. He's so cuddly."

"All six feet four?"

"He's like a beautiful green meadow — clean and quiet and peaceful."

"You *have* got it."

"I've got it. But what'll I do with it?"

"I think you'd better see more of a certain psychiatrist," she said. "And he's a good guy, too."

I lay back on the couch, drained, limp and languid. "I guess so. . . ."

Then the phone rang. "I don't want to talk to Arnold," I said. "Not tonight."

Ruthie picked up the phone, listened a minute and then handed

it to me, wordlessly. It was Sam.

"Betsy," he said softly. "I know it's late but I've got to see you."

My blood pressure began to rise. "Oh," I said swiftly, "I *never* go to bed before one."

His voice came over the line vigorously. "I believe the time has come. The time for us to take a walk."

"Yes," I said, all choked up. "That would be lovely."

"I'll meet you in ten minutes, downstairs."

I hung up and turned to Ruthie, bright-eyed. "He wants to take a walk."

"You see," she said. "You figured it wrong. He's just a slow starter."

I put on my best sweater and all the perfume in the house. "Wish me luck," I said, and I went downstairs and waited with my nose pressed against the glass of the door till I saw him coming.

The park was cold and frosty and the benches were damp, but it could have been a beach in Bermuda as far as I was concerned. I was generating enough warmth for the Tropic of Capricorn.

Sam took his pipe out and put it in his mouth. He looked calm and reflective and wise. He said, "Betsy, close your eyes."

I took a deep breath and did so. Expectantly, I raised my face to

him. Nothing happened. Nothing.

I waited. Minutes passed. He remained silent by my side.

I took a chance and stole a glance at him. His eyes were shut, screwed tight with some kind of enormous effort — and yet there was a passionately tender look on his face. It must have been some kind of a strain for him, because he was breathing hard.

"Sam," I said softly, after awhile. "I'm over here. At your side."

His eyes opened at that. He looked at me hopefully, yearningly. "Well?" he said.

"Well, what?" I asked gently, slightly bewildered.

His face sagged in disappointment. "You didn't feel anything?"

"Sam," I said desperately. "Listen. I'll tell you how I feel!"

He shook his head slowly. "We didn't make contact," he said sorrowfully.

I looked at him.

"My mind went out to meet yours," he said. "But they didn't meet. Yours wasn't there. If they'd touched, you would have known it. It's electricity. There's no mistaking it when it hits you."

"Wait a minute," I said. "I'm a little confused."

"I asked you to take a walk," he said. "When you accepted, I hoped —"

"I take walks all the time. What's that got to do with it?"

"Of course," he said. "How could you be expected to know?" He paused a moment. "At home, when a man and a woman think that they love each other, they take walks together. It's as simple as that. It means they want to contact each other's minds — establish a current. That's what we call it — Going for a walk. . . ."

"Holy Moses!" I said. "Is that how you do it up there?"

In answer, he grabbed me fiercely by the shoulders. "Think!" he said wildly. "Concentrate! The way I have since I first saw you!"

"Darling, listen," I said hurriedly. "There's something I must tell you."

But he couldn't be stopped. His voice was shaking with passion. "I know you've been thinking about Arnold. Forget him." He whirled me around, pulling me closer to stare down at me. "You want to. I know you do. That much I've felt all along. At least that much. Betsy!" he said, "make contact! Try!"

Feverishly, I said, "You don't understand. Look. Things are different here. Lots of things. You've seen that for yourself. We eat. You don't. You glow. We don't. You *think* about someone you love — you concentrate. So do we, but — well, that isn't all."

He began to smile, as if there had been a great illumination, a light dawning. "Ah," he said. "Is

that what it is? I didn't know —"

"Yes," I said, and I puddled some dirt around with my foot.

He moved closer to me. His mouth brushed my ear. "When you love someone — what happens?"

I blushed furiously. "Well," I said, clearing my throat. Golly. . . .

"My thoughts are close to you," he whispered. "Don't be afraid."

"I'm embarrassed," I cried. "I've never explained the facts of life to anyone. I didn't find out myself until I was fifteen."

"Isn't it pleasant?" he asked, troubled.

"It's . . . it's wonderful," I muttered, "only I don't think I can talk about it."

"Betsy," he implored, "I *must* know. You're the only person who can tell me."

"Sam," I said desperately. "Don't you *feel* anything for me?"

He looked at me blankly. I blushed again, to the roots of my hair. "It's like this," I said in a quavering voice, "when I think about you — things happen to me."

"What kind of things?"

"Well, some are chemical, and some are psychological, and —" I broke off. "This is insane. You can't be told about it. It's something you feel or you don't."

He was silent. I turned to him,

anguished. "We're worlds apart, Sam. That's all." I got up reluctantly and put my hands against his face. "I'm glad you don't know what you're missing," I told him gently, and then I bent down and kissed him tenderly on the forehead. How I'd wanted to do that — for so long! It didn't take. I suddenly felt the cold of the park and the chill of the wet benches. The trees had never seemed so lifeless; the sky so black and unfriendly.

I'll say this for him. He did throw a bone in my direction. When he deposited me at my door again he made a last try. We stood together under the lamplight just like any other boy and girl. It was touchingly ordinary, the immemorial posture of lovers. "Betsy," he said fervently, "couldn't you . . . show me?"

I sighed bitterly. There I was, up against my whole twenty-three years of what Arnold calls my high moral tone. Explain it to any man, let alone a man from another world. I took a deep breath and plunged. "Sam, dear, I'd like nothing better, but —" I was stymied. I tried again. "Just showing you wouldn't be love. I've had plenty of chances to show men. Any girl who isn't a lemon has plenty of chances. But *loving* someone is something else."

He said, "Why?"

"People have been asking them-

selves that ever since Adam and Eve."

"When I feel it, will I know it?" His face was strained and anxious. "Will I be sure?"

"It'll hit you like a Sherman Tank," I said.

We lingered there another moment, looking at each other in the darkness. It was a terribly empty moment. I turned and ran into the house. I was crying and I didn't want him to see that. My nose turns red when I cry.

I went to work the next day feeling like the third act of *Camille*. I hadn't even put my hair up or anything, and I wore an old black suit that always makes me behave like a sad French movie. The minute I came into the office I knew something was wrong. Everybody in the lab looked at me sideways and nobody except the elevator boy said good morning. Even my daffodil had died. I was just about to throw it into the waste basket when Mr. Randall came into my cubicle. He usually had a gentle grandfatherly face, but today it wore a "this is going to hurt me more than you" expression.

"Betsy," he said quietly, "don't bother to change. Just step into my office. There's a gentleman there who wants to speak to you."

My mouth got as dry as a gravel path and my knees went suddenly soft. "Now?" I said.

"Just tell the truth, Betsy, for all our sakes."

I followed him in and he was there, as I knew he would be. The cracker man. He stood up when I came in.

Mr. Randall said, "This is Mr. Sharpe, who has been investigating you."

Mr. Sharpe smiled and said, "Good morning."

I was so nervous I almost dropped a curtsy. Mr. Randall shoved a chair under me and I collapsed into it gratefully. Mr. Sharpe held out a pack of cigarettes. "Smoke?"

"No, thanks."

He lit one for himself and drew up a chair. "Did you enjoy your vacation?" he asked.

"Yes . . ."

"You seemed to." He smiled again, still friendly, but it reminded me of a doctor about to administer a hypodermic. I looked out the window. "Miss Simms," he said, "you're aware that the Severn Labs have been under investigation for some time."

"That's what Mr. Randall said."

"You know why?"

"Yes. Some of us may be going to Los Alamos."

"That's right. You know the nature of the work being done there?"

"Yes."

"You understand its importance to the country?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then you understand how certain we must be of the personnel working there."

"Yes."

"Miss Simms, who has been your companion for the last week?"

My ears began to ring violently. "Could I have a drink?" I asked pitiously.

"Of course." Mr. Randall poured me a glass from the carafe on his desk and handed it to me. I noticed with a sinking heart that his hand was shaking. I tried to smile at him and failed.

"Better?" asked Mr. Sharpe.

"I had something in my throat."

"Can you answer my question?"

"He's a friend," I said.

"What's his name?"

"Saturnis," I said, and I choked over it.

"More water?" asked Mr. Randall.

"Please." I drank it in little tiny sips. The longer it lasted the better I liked it. Finally it was gone. I looked up. Mr. Sharpe was still there, waiting.

"This Mr. Saturnis," he continued, "how long have you known him?"

"A little while."

"And what, may I ask, is the nature of your relationship?"

"Friends," I insisted. "We're friends."

"I see." He and Mr. Randall looked at each other.

"Miss Simms," said Mr. Sharpe, "we have kept a close check on your activities for the last six months. During that period we have no record of this man. He appeared shortly after the prospect of your going to Los Alamos. We have not been able to establish any kind of identification for him. We'd like you to help us."

"Betsy," Mr. Randall said, "is there anything you want to tell us? Anything you're trying to hide?"

I looked from one to the other of them. "I have nothing to tell you," I said dully. "There's nothing I *can* tell you."

Mr. Sharpe looked unhappy. "Your friend has been taken into custody pending a fuller investigation. I'm afraid we'll have to hold you, too." He looked at me with his mild, troubled face. "I urge you to give us every cooperation."

The atmosphere at City Hall was a little more on the antiseptic side. I could have taken even that, but they brought me face to face with Sam. I felt like Mata Hari, but I didn't react. Then they brought me into Mr. Sharpe's office and a man with a notebook came in, too.

"If you're involved with this man," Mr. Sharpe said gently, "I advise you not to take the full load on yourself. You won't be protecting him. If he's actually a spy, we'll get him, whether you cover

for him or not. That's all. Now would you care to make a statement?"

It was zero hour and I knew it. "Okay," I said hesitantly, "but remember, you asked me." I paused slightly. "The man I've been meeting isn't a man at all. I don't know quite what to call him. He arrived two weeks ago in the Santa Querido meteoric rock which fell from Saturn."

I folded my hands in my lap and waited, rather primly I confess. It was my inning and I knew it. The man who was taking notes gaped at me — and then a look of great compassion crossed his face. Mr. Sharpe's eyebrows met in a frown of disapproval.

"This is no time for levity, Miss Simms. A great deal is at stake here."

"You don't have to tell me that. I've been half out of my mind ever since it happened."

The stenographer looked at me as if 'half out of my mind' was a conservative estimate. Once I'd made the initial plunge I couldn't be stopped. I told the whole story with all the trimmings, except for the personal details which wasn't any of their business anyway. When I was all through, Mr. Sharpe took out his handkerchief and mopped his face. Then he stared at the light fixture for an eternity. Then he looked at me.

He only said, "Holy Toledo."

But a moment later he was turn-

ing to the stenographer. "Bring him in," he said. "And keep those notes close to your chest till we check."

Sam followed the man in. "I've told them, Sam," I said hurriedly.

"I'd appreciate it if you let me do the talking," Mr. Sharpe said. He was staring raptly at Sam. The grilling began. It was almost ten o'clock at night before someone was sent out for coffee and sandwiches. We were all exhausted. Mr. Sharpe had taken off his tie. He had run his fingers wildly through his hair. He had called a conference. We just told the story over and over. Four or five officers were ringed around us. At last a numb silence descended. Then Mr. Sharpe spoke. "He's either a super spy or he's what he says he is. We can't find a single item on him, can we?"

"No." It was a chorus of replies.

"You'd have just that," I said hotly, "if he were a real person. You'd have a birth certificate or a draft card or something."

"Not if he were a foreigner. Still, nobody answering his description has entered this country by any method known to us." Mr. Sharpe wrenched at his collar as if it were choking him. "I don't know," he muttered. "I don't know. . . ."

At last he turned to one of his men. "Get a doc in here. We'll

give him a complete physical."

After a few moments they led Sam out. The doctor came in later and shrugged. "Homo Sapiens," he said. "Just like the rest of us."

Mr. Sharpe paced like a caged animal. Cigarette smoke swirled around the room like a witches' brew. Then he said desperately, "We got to try everything. Get that psychiatrist. We'll run intelligence tests on it and see if anything shows. Maybe we can get a lead."

Of course that psychiatrist had to turn out to be Arnold. It was one in the morning before they located him. He came in with an obliging smile on his face. It froze as Mr. Sharpe explained my presence, and it left his face entirely when they got to the part about Sam.

"It's a form of hypnosis," he said. "I know Miss Simms has been under a great strain. She could very well be a subject for mesmerism if the approach were convincing." He looked coldly at Sam. "I'm prepared to make a thorough examination."

"Can you do it now?"

"I'll need the assistance of my colleague. First thing in the morning?"

Mr. Sharpe agreed.

I guess they kept poor Sam in the lock-up that night. They led him away, and all I could do was stand on tip-toe and wave encouragement to him over their heads.

The next morning we all assembled in Arnold's office. It's one of those suave places with cheery prints and lots of leather-bound books. Leda was there, too, big as life. She was wearing a little black dress that cost as much as my income tax and looked as if it had been painted on.

I'm not trying to undersell her. She's an intellectual, all right, but strictly sugar-coated. She had her hair done like a Madonna, and when she smiled the temperature of the room rose. Arnold had already briefed her on Sam. She shook hands with him like he was visiting royalty, with a 'we understand, don't we' look on her face.

We all sat down facing Leda and Arnold. Sam wasn't the least bit nervous. He glanced at the charts and blocks on the big desk and grinned. The investigators kept their eyes on him. Arnold avoided me as much as he could, but it wasn't meanness. I guess he thought he was being delicate about the whole thing.

For three-and-a-half hours they ran all the intelligence tests on him. He figured how many gallons Judy would have to take to point A in twenty minutes in a bucket that was six inches deep. He looked at little ink blots and told Arnold what significance they had for him (mostly he said they were just little ink blots, which I thought was quite sensible). He picked his favorite color (green)

and he put square blocks in square holes without being fooled for a minute. I think he enjoyed himself very much.

Then they got to the subtle part. Arnold asked Sam if he minded a rather intimate discussion in front of people — if it would inhibit him. Sam was perfectly agreeable, so they started off. I kept praying they wouldn't get to his libido, because then things would be said that would be best left unsaid. Then I saw that it was Leda who was taking over and I began to get hot under the collar. She kept looking at him as if she were a fellow Saturnite, if that's what you call them, and it was beginning to feel like a private club. She motioned him to a seat beside her and I knew he was getting lungfuls of that jasmine perfume she wears.

"Do we seem very strange to you?" she asked with considerable charm.

"Not at all."

"Good. We don't want any barriers."

"I take it you want me to talk about myself," Sam said.

Leda made it an invitation. "Would you?" she said softly.

The investigators leaned forward tensely. Sam talked. It was very highly-colored, to say the least; a kind of futuristic David Copperfield. He told everything: how he had lived and worked, what home looked like, how he



had arrived on Earth, what he thought of Manhattan. It was super-science fiction with sex-appeal. Leda felt it, too. She moved a little closer to him and hung breathlessly on every word.

When he had finished, everyone leaned back and gasped, the way you do when somebody has been safely hauled off a high place. Arnold was still a holdout. He kept tapping the tips of his fingers together and raising his eyebrows, but he let Sam finish before he beckoned to Leda. They went off into another room for a huddle. When they came back, Arnold's face was angry.

"There's some disagreement between my colleague and myself."

"Is he or isn't he?" Mr. Sharpe asked pointedly. "That's all we're here for."

"I think he's psychotic. Like some of them, very clever. Dr. Taylor, on the other hand, feels he's genuinely a being —" Arnold paused, as if he couldn't quite bring himself to say it. "— a being from another world."

Mr. Sharpe's nerves were gone. "Great. What are we supposed to do now?"

I was tired and all keyed-up. I jumped to my feet at that and shouted to Sam, "Float, Sam! Show them!"

"I don't know, Betsy," he said, flushing.

"They think you're a liar. Show

them. For my sake." I was awfully emotional right then. I looked at Arnold. His face was grave and a little sad.

"What's this?" Mr. Sharpe asked, bewildered. "What's going on?"

"Only this," Sam said, and he lay back on the air.

There was a long silence in the room.

Sam climbed down again. A clamor broke out. Arnold held up his hand. "Wait a minute," he said. "There have been cases of Hindu fakirs. . . ."

Leda shouted him down. "Why fight it? I think it's thrilling!" There was exultation in her voice.

Arnold had objected only because of his own, dark reasons. I knew he believed at last; he stood there blinking rapidly and looking quite frightened. As for Mr. Sharpe, he had sat down as though suddenly hit in the stomach. He said, after a while, "My eyes don't lie. I'm sold. This is a very solemn occasion."

"Hear, hear!" said Leda. She prowled restlessly about the office. "It's rather like discovering America or something." She smiled happily at Sam. "And we're the discoverers."

Mr. Sharpe struggled back to his feet. "Wait a minute. Don't forget the circumstances under which it — I mean to say *he* — was found. He shows up in a lab where top secret work is being

done. He gets involved," and here he looked at me apologetically, "with a member of the staff who is shortly going to Los Alamos. Add that up and what have you got?"

"Boy meets girl," said one of the agents. Nobody laughed.

"I'll have to consult Washington," Mr. Sharpe concluded. "I don't even know if we can book him or hold him or what we're supposed to do with him."

Sam spoke quietly. "I can assure you that I have no hidden motives. My arrival was an accident. In fact, if you can find any way to send me back, I'd be most grateful. Tell you the truth, I'm getting a bit homesick."

My heart split down the middle at that.

Leda inclined her head toward him. "You don't mean that," she said. "You've hardly given us a chance."

Give her a chance, I thought bitterly, and I might as well get myself plowed under.

"Well," said Mr. Sharpe, "I'm not going to discuss this one over the phone. This is something that has to be seen. We'll put it on a plane for Washington tonight. We'll see what the Pentagon has to say." He turned toward Sam. "Technically, I don't think we can arrest you. I have to ask you to cooperate."

They planned to take a morning

plane, and they asked if either Leda or Arnold could go along as technical advisor. Leda jumped at the chance. I could see that she would be as close to Sam as clams in chowder the minute they were out of sight. I began to feel slightly manic-depressive.

"What about me?" I said in a small voice.

Mr. Sharpe sighed. "Go home and get some sleep. I'm afraid I'll still have to keep you under surveillance till I get word."

Gently, Arnold said, "Say goodbye to him if it'll make you feel any better."

I went up and shook hands with Sam. It was awful. It was like settling for rabbit when you want a Persian Lamb.

"I know they'll like you," I said. It wasn't exactly eloquent, but I couldn't think of anything else to say. "You'll be all right, won't you?"

"Don't give him a thought, dear," Leda said. It wasn't advice, it was a warning.

Sam was blissfully unaware of the undertow. We stood very close together. Right then, with all those people around us, I felt miraculously transported back to the park we had walked in. It was a bittersweet mood, for we were separated by barriers of space and time and custom. It was like hearing a love song sung in a foreign tongue, or trying to recall a face seen in a crowd. He held

my hands very hard. "Thank you," he said fervently. "Thank you for everything." There was a look in his face which told me he wanted to say more. It was like a torrent held back, dammed up.

"I'll call you first thing," he said.

"I'll wait for the call," I said, and on that less than rapturous exchange I stood back while they filed out. I was alone with Arnold.

We were silent a while. I've read plenty of stories where the other man gets sulky and insists on his rights, and I was afraid Arnold might be just cliche enough to do that. After the door closed, though, he just invited me to sit down in a nice, big-brother voice. "You're tired, aren't you?"

I began to feel weepy. I didn't have a Kleenex, either, so I just kept sucking in my breath and hoping it would stop. Arnold saw it and gave me his hankie, something he'd been doing frequently of late. I began to twist it into little knots.

"Arnold," I said, "do you think I'm a heel?"

"You're a little mixed up, that's all," he said quietly.

"You know that I've betrayed you, don't you?" I asked tremulously. "I mean, I didn't do anything, but I certainly thought about it a lot."

It was murky but he seemed to follow me. "Baby," he said, "lean back. . . ."

"I hope you're not going to scold me, or tell me that I'm in the grip of an adolescent emotional trauma, or anything like that." I said it very fast.

"I'm not."

"You see — he belongs to me. He's mine, in a way, because I found him. I'm the one who let him out of there when he wanted to get out. I got him all squared away and I looked after him and I —" I stopped.

"And you fell in love with him." Arnold finished it for me.

"It's terrible. After all, you had a prior claim on me, and you know that I have very high moral standards. But since Sam came, I go around feeling very primitive inside all the time." I swallowed hard. "I can't control it."

His voice was troubled. "Betsy, this is far graver than you think."

"Oh, it's grave all right. I know that."

"Darling," he said, "this *being* — how do you know — how can you tell —" For once he didn't have all the words. It made him seem pathetic, nicer than I'd ever seen him.

I helped out by telling *him*. "I know he's different, and I know *how* he's different. I don't think he can love me at all."

"Then what are you going to do about it?"

"Well, first of all," I said weakly, "I think I'd better break my engagement to you."

He smiled wryly. "Before you get too inevitable about this, shouldn't you keep me in reserve?"

"Arnold — I couldn't do that."

"Why not, if I'm willing?"

"It would be like having a harem," I said. "And it would be awful for you, knowing that I —"

"You don't love me. I don't care about that right now. Betsy, Sam is not for you. He can't be. He never will be. He'll always remain an invader, a stranger. You won't be happy."

"I have to take a chance," I said feverishly. "He might learn to love. When he does — I think it'll be me."

"And if he doesn't?"

"I'll be an old maid," I said, "and do good works."

It sounded very final, the way I said it. Arnold felt it, too. "All right," he said, "but if you ever change your mind — if you need me —"

"You're so sweet," I said. Then I did begin to cry. I know I sound like a very unstable girl, but here was Arnold dedicating himself to me, and there was Sam flying away from me to Washington, and there were agents waiting to watch every move I made. It was just too much.

Arnold gave me a sedative and told me to go home and think about something remote and placid. A book like *Pride and*

Prejudice or *Jane Eyre* will generally calm me when I'm all wrought up, but I wasn't in the mood at all. I went home to Ruthie and she put me to bed. She put a hot water bottle in the bed and sat beside me, making little motherly noises, while I spilled it all out. When I was done I felt a lot better.

"Listen," she said emphatically, "this Leda's not such a hot-shot. Don't worry about her."

"She's a mind expert," I reminded her, "and Sam's very *mental* about everything. If anyone can make contact with him, it's Leda. She's in training," I added dismally.

"Here, honey," she said, "read Jane Austin, and we'll work out something in the morning." She knows about Jane Austin, too.

I tried but it didn't help. I kept thinking of Leda discovering Sam like he was some sort of a peninsula, and planting a flag on him for keeps. I didn't close my eyes until noon the next day.

Love is hell. For the next three days there was an ominous quiet on the Washington front. The papers had a leak regarding a very secret joint session of Congress, but that was all — no details. I went to work and took baths and ate food and everything, but my heart just wasn't in it. By ten-thirty on the third night I was climbing up the walls like a human fly. Ruthie tried to take my

mind off everything by working a giant cross-word puzzle out loud, but it didn't help to have her always asking me what was the Hindu god of fertility.

"They'll deport him!" I said suddenly.

Ruthie put the paper aside. "How?"

"I don't know how. They've got all kinds of things perfected we don't know about. Or suppose they jail him for life."

"He hasn't committed any crime."

"Why doesn't he call? He said he'd call."

Ruthie took my shoulders and forced me onto the couch. "Look — Washington takes time. You can't blame them. He set us on our ear and we know him and love him."

"Well, why don't they hurry?" I said irritably. "He's no menace. When I found him he was just like Moses in the bullrushes. He didn't even have any clothes, let alone a secret weapon."

The phone rang then. I made it across the room like an Olympic sprinter. When I picked up the receiver I heard an insane babble of tongues for a minute, and then Sam's voice. He was shouting.

"Betsy!" he cried. "Is that you, Betsy?"

"Sam! Are you all right? Where are you? What are they going to do with you?"

"Fine. I'm fine!" he shouted. "Can you come down to the Waldorf Astoria?"

"Aren't you in Washington?"

"Waldorf Astoria!" he said at the top of his voice.

"I hear you!" I shouted back.

"But what about Washington?"

"Half an hour — the lobby!"

"All right," I said. "I'll be there. Sam, darling —" He had hung up.

I was already shucking off my bathrobe and pajamas and scrambling around for clothes. Ruthie followed me around asking questions. "I don't know anything except he's in town and wants to see me."

"So you're off and running," Ruthie said tartly. "You're turning into a regular little handmaiden."

"I'd like nothing better," I cried. "Anyway, what am I supposed to do? Leave him to Leda!"

"There are cabs. He knows where you live."

"I'm skipping the formalities," I said. "Where's my hat?"

"On your head."

It took me eons to catch a cab. I thought I'd never get there. The Waldorf, lit up at night, looked like Valhalla. A crowd milled about outside the main doors, but I shoved through them. Inside was like roll-back day at Macy's. I thought maybe it was a conven-

tion, until I saw who was in the middle of the crush. There were flash bulbs going off in all directions. There was Sam, dead center, blinking like a horse caught in a barn fire. And there was Leda, directing traffic and loving every minute of it. I got up close enough to hear, but I couldn't catch Sam's eye. I knew right away it was a press conference to end all press conferences.

Leda was talking in her chocality voice. "I can only assume the President was consulted," she was saying. "Yes, Congress sat in an emergency session."

"What was the verdict, Dr. Taylor?"

She got arch. "I'm afraid they wanted all this to be very hush-hush, but it leaked out somehow. Some enterprising young man just happened to get a tip, I don't know from whom —" she laughed musically — "and here we are."

"Power of the press," one reporter said laconically. "Tell us — is it really from Saturn?"

"Oh, absolutely."

"Is there a hands-off policy about it among the top brass?"

"Absolutely not. The House Foreign Committee sat for ages. They were perfectly marvelous about everything."

I pushed in closer. By now I could see Sam's face, tired and strained and bewildered. My tem-

per rose like the thermometer in August.

"One point," said Leda. "They wanted it kept secret because they were deathly afraid of a panic."

"Why?" asked a young man with heavy glasses. "Is it a danger — part of an invasion?"

"Really!" said Leda in mock outrage. "That's bizarre, it really is."

"You know all about it, then?"

"I was the consulting psychiatrist. No, what I started to say was that Washington felt it would be best if he had a private identity — if he were integrated into American life." She paused, her face solemn. "After all," she said, "our country has always benefited by the absorption of other cultures. This one is no exception." She made a dramatic gesture toward Sam, who looked down at the floor sort of uneasily. "Personally," she went on, "I feel that it would be a great shame to have him simply lost in the scuffle. The preservation of the unique is also important culturally and sociologically. So, in the public interest, I have booked him for a country-wide tour."

"Under your management?"

"More or less." She smiled modestly. "As I said, I consider it a public service. Give me some play on that, boys."

"It'll do more for you than sex for Kinsey," said one reporter. "Where are you going to exhibit

it? Honestly, I can hardly wait."

Her voice frosted slightly.
"He's not a side-show attraction."

"That's how it'll end up, Doc. Just run a line on a Man from Saturn, and you'll have your side-show."

"I'm presenting him to the public as an envoy without portfolio — an ambassador from another world."

"Can we talk to it?"

"He's very tired. You can put whatever questions you like to me."

I put a question — right then and there. "Just where the hell do you think you get off at?" I screamed.

But it was drowned in the din. The crowd pushed me back against the wall. I saw it was hopeless, so I took out a pencil and wrote a note on the inside of a gum wrapper. I gave it to a bellboy with two dollars. "Get that to him, will you? It's terribly important."

"You starting a fan club?" He glanced at Sam.

"Please!"

"I don't think I can get through, lady."

"Please try. It's important."

He pocketed the tip and then bucked the line; but in a minute he was cut off from view. I waited and waited. The noise had subsided again and the questions went on.

"Where's it staying?"

"That's not important, is it?"

"Like to interview its landlady, that's all."

They kept calling Sam it. They wanted to know what it ate and if it was going on television and if it thought like a man and did it like girls. Then Leda held up her hands.

"Boys," she said, "you've been wonderful, but we're both terribly exhausted. As you know, Grover Whalen has named Saturday as Saturn Day — and as our activities will be centered in New York for the time being, you can call on us any time. Goodnight and thank you."

As she spoke, a couple of doormen came up and reinforced the police; they held the crowds back as Leda and Sam swept right past me and out into the night. I ran like a crazy fool, but when I got to the door I saw their hired car pulling away, and he was gone.

My spirits were low, as black as India Ink. I couldn't face the thought of going home and thinking about Leda leading Sam around by the nose, and yet I didn't want to be by myself. So I called up Arnold and asked if he'd see me in his professional capacity. He said to come right over and wait for him, so I did. When he came upstairs he had a little paper sack with a carton of cocoa in it as a sort of relaxer, and he led me into the office and

tucked me into a chair like a mother hen. I told him everything that had happened and asked him what in heaven's name I was going to do.

"You know how smart Leda is. She'll figure out about contacting his mind, and before you know it they'll be taking a walk. She's just exploiting him for all he's worth."

"Drink your cocoa," Arnold said.

"I don't even like cocoa anymore," I said dismally. "Sam called me up. He wanted to see me."

"Listen, Betsy," Arnold said sternly, "face facts. If he wants to see you, really wants to in his heart, then he'll do it."

"How can he?" I wailed. "You should have seen her. She's got him tied in a sack. Her and her tours and her Grover Whalens!" I put down my cup. "Couldn't you do something? I mean, tell her that her behavior is unethical or predatory or something?"

"Leda is immensely attracted to him."

"She's just building a better mousetrap," I said. "With poor Sam the cheese."

"I don't deny it."

"Well . . . thanks very much, Arnold. Send me a bill. I mean it."

"For what?"

"Shoulder room."

He wanted to take me home, but I told him I'd rather be

alone. I walked all the way to our apartment, and by the time I got there I had made up my mind. The first chance I got I'd go tell Leda she was jumping my claim and that she'd better leave Sam's mind alone. The trouble was that chance was a long time coming. What happened next makes the Festival of Britain look like a church bazaar.

First of all it was Saturn Day in New York. I planned to stay home with a sick headache. I didn't want to see Sam driven through the streets with Leda at his side, like an Egyptian princess bringing home a captive. So I stayed home. I got out all the stockings I'm supposed to sort and mend but never do, and began to sort and mend them. It was about noon and I decided I wasn't going to eat any lunch. I was just going to sort and mend and not think about anything or anybody. Then the phone rang.

I picked up the receiver. It sounded like Yankee Stadium during the World Series, but very faintly I could make out Sam's voice against the clamor.

"Betsy!" he shouted, "is that you?"

"Sam," I said joyfully. "Oh, Sam!"

"I'd like to—" The roaring noises surged up and I couldn't hear him. But I took a chance. "So would I, Sam!" I shouted into the small mouthpiece. "SO

WOULD I!" The noises came pounding through like a wave. "Sam, are you still there?"

"I'm at City Hall. They're going to give me a key. Can you meet me at —"

We were cut off. I almost jiggled the phone to pieces, but the line was dead.

I couldn't get back to him, and I knew that by the time I could get to City Hall he'd be gone. That afternoon, when Ruthie got home, she was all out of breath.

"I saw him," she said. "He was all over ticker tape."

"Does he look healthy?" I asked plaintively.

"Thriving."

"Oh . . ."

"You can see for yourself if you want to. He's going to be on Faye Emerson's show tonight. I asked the landlady if we could come down and see, and she said yes. Want to?"

Of course I wanted to. Miss Emerson was very nice to him, but Leda did all the talking for everyone. She told how New York had taken Sam to its heart, and how Governor Dewey had invited him to dinner, and how Howard Hawks had wired to say he wanted to make a movie about him called "The *Real* Thing," and how thrilled she was to be such a close friend and companion of his. In the middle of the commercial I heard our phone ring upstairs. I ran up them two at a time and

caught it just in time. Sam sounded as though he were in a bottle again. His voice was all muffled and vague.

"Betsy," he said, "I've just got a minute —"

"Sam, where are you?"

"Radio City . . . yes," I heard him say to someone else, "coming. Have to go, Betsy. I'll call you."

The line went dead. And that was that.

In most love stories, something melodramatic or contrived generally happens which throws the lovers back into each other's arms when the hassle is over. The girl is dying and the boy hears about it; or the other man says "Don't be a little fool," which makes the girl suddenly see the light; or the big Misunderstanding is clarified in the nick of time. My trouble is I'd read too many of those stories, so that way in the back of my head a tiny hope kept winking that one of these might happen to me. The girl dying was the one I was actually closest to, because I *was* dying for Sam, steadily and in little pieces. But it didn't do any good. I just didn't hear from him anymore. Oh, I followed his life in the newspapers; I saw that he'd been in a fight in the Stork Club and some damn man had hit him; I saw a picture of him and Leda in the Sunday supplement, all teeth; and he hit

the cover of *Life*; but it was all very remote and second-hand.

By then most girls would have counted themselves out of the running, but in any discussion of me it must be remembered that I come from Pennsylvania Dutch, a very stubborn stock. That's why I did what I did.

First, though, I went to Henri Bendel and bought myself a thirty-two fifty hat. It was strawberry soda pink with lots of hyacinth blossoms and dangly ribbons. It was a hat that any woman who saw it would know that it cost thirty-two fifty. Then I asked Ruthie if she could get the fur coat. This fur coat belongs to her cousin, who lives in a very swanky apartment on Madison Avenue. About twice a year Ruthie borrows it when she wants to make a splash for some reason. She'd only had it once this year to go to the opening of *Guys and Dolls*, so she thought she could get it again.

"But why?" she asked.

"Well," I said, "you know that gray coat that *Vogue* says business girls can wear over everything?"

"What about it?"

"Just that. It *looks* like a gray coat that a business girl can wear over everything. I've got to have something posh."

"Would Sam know the difference?"

"No — but Leda would."

"Betsy, what are you up to?"

"Just get me the coat," I said, beginning to be nervous. "That's all."

She didn't say another word, but that night when I got home the coat was hanging up in one of those cellophane envelopes in our closet. It was gorgeous, and since I'm moody and sensitive about clothes anyway, it stimulated me into action right then. I called up Leda.

I didn't tell her who I was because I knew she'd stall me, so I talked in a very tired Upper New York State voice, and told her that *Vogue* wanted a picture of her at home and could they send an interviewer. Her voice was as smooth as cold cream. She'd love it. She'd be in at the cocktail hour. I had to be sure Sam wouldn't be there, so I asked to see her alone. She agreed.

I got there around five. Leda lives in a two-room apartment, but everything is custom made. It's all gray and gold and very abstract. To be honest, I don't think she was too surprised that it was me. She looked rather superior and amused, as if I'd done something extraordinary for a five-year-old.

"My dear child," she said. "Come in."

I suppose the my dear child was calculated to put me in the minor leagues, but she underestimated both the mink coat and my pas-

sion. I accepted a chair and a cigarette. She poured sherry for both of us. I hate the taste of it, but I held the glass in my hand for a while. She kept looking at me warily, and then she set her glass down with a little click and smiled. It was meant as a tolerant smile; but it didn't come off.

"It must be terribly important. I mean all this Trojan Horse business to see me alone."

I had intended to be very brittle and dry and cutting, but suddenly I wanted to kick her and throw sherry all over her silly, kidney-shaped furniture. It was childish, I know, but all I could think of was how she was exploiting my Sam.

"Listen, Leda," I said, "I can't think of anything Noel Cowardish to say to you, so I'll get right to it. I don't like you or your sherry or what you're doing to the man I happen to love. He's so groggy from being pinched and analyzed and photographed and clucked over and torn to pieces in screaming mobs that he doesn't know what's hit him. He'll end up some kind of a crazy comic book character. They'll be putting his picture in cereal boxes, but that's all right with you. You've made such a monkey out of him that all he needs now is a little red hat and a tambourine."

I stopped long enough to breathe and to struggle out of the coat. It made me feel free and

like myself again. "Furthermore," I said, "you're trying to make time with him. I don't know as much as you do about Freud, but I don't have to. Sam has a very complicated libido, and I'm the only one who knows how it works."

"Dear, foolish Betsy," she said. "Libidos are my business." She paused. The silence had a momentous quality. "Sam and I have taken a walk." She put her hands out in a 'what more is there to say' gesture.

I froze in my chair. "What did you say?"

"Sam — and — I — have — taken — a walk." She repeated it deliberately, enjoying every word. "We made contact. It was a new emotional experience. Quite thrilling. I felt like an explorer. I really did."

I sat before her stunned, and she plowed right on. "You have to be very delicately attuned," she said. "One might say it's a kind of emotional and intellectual radar."

"Stop it!" I said. "I don't want to hear anymore."

I managed to get to my feet. "There's just one thing," I quavered. "Why did he go along with you on this publicity wing-ding? He was happy out of the spotlight, before you came along."

"You're really incredibly naive, Betsy. It was simple. I explained money to him."

I had heard enough. "Tell him I wish him every happiness," I said, and went out.

I don't know how I ever got home. I suppose I was taking the whole thing awfully big, but consider the circumstances. This hadn't been any tired old romance. Nobody could say, 'That's just the way I met Harry,' or, 'Isn't that funny, the same thing happened to me.' Sam had fallen to me from a star. He had come to me on Valentine's Day. The whole thing had been a fairy tale, except the witch ended up getting him.

Ruthie had gone to a double feature, and I was glad. I wanted to be alone to blot up my psyche. Not that pride means anything to me—I just didn't think it would be fair to Ruthie if she had to room with somebody who was always 'wan and paley loitering.' I didn't even turn on the lights. I always sit in the dark when I'm being introverted. Only it wasn't dark. I was aware, with a suddenly tingling spine, of a light, a faint green light.

"Betsy," he said. "Don't be afraid. It's me. Sam."

I felt like laughing out loud. Who else do I know who lights up the sky?

"Hello," I said. Then I couldn't think of anything else at all.

"I've been here a long time."

"I was out," I said inanely.

There was a long silence. "Could we have the light on?" Sam said. "I'd like to see your face."

"Same old face," I said flippan tly, only my voice was solemn.

"Please."

I snapped on the light. I knew I looked fine in the thirty-two fifty hat, so I didn't mind.

He stared at me. "Betsy," he said, and then again, "Betsy . . ."

His face seemed different, but I didn't look at him much.

"How have you been?" I asked lamely.

"It's a long story," he said. "Will you listen?" Listen! He could have told me *War and Peace* and I would have listened. I sat down on a chair across the room from him and waited. He said, "You're too far away."

"I'm trying to get a little perspective," I told him shakily. "I'd better stay here."

"That hat," he said at last, tentatively. "Nice."

I dropped my eyes. I felt he was getting off on the wrong foot, engaged as he was to Leda. I decided to tell him so. Unhappily, I said. "Do you think you ought to be paying me compliments—under the circumstances?"

"Yes. Of course." The way he said it you'd think I was being unreasonable. I began to get confused, so I threw down the gauntlet.

I said, quite formally, "I happen to know about your recent engagement to that eminent medical pioneer."

"My what?" And he blushed slightly. What with the faint greenish cast of his skin and the scarlet of the blush, he looked very Christmasy and exotic.

"I understand you went for a walk. Your fiancée inferred that it was as electrical as Times Square. Not that I'm probing or anything," I said with dignity, "it's really none of my business, except that you're here talking about my hat and all in such a personal way."

"But I want to," he protested. "I want to talk about that and more."

"I don't see —"

"Of course you don't! I've just begun to myself. Betsy —"

"Yes?"

"I know about love!" he said triumphantly. "Real, human love. Your kind."

"I'm sure the object of it is very gratified."

"You don't seem very happy. . . ."

My eyes widened with anger. "What do you think I am? Why should I be happy because you and Leda act like high tension wires?"

"Leda? What's she got to do with it?"

"I've seen Leda," I said coldly, "and she gave me a shock by

shock account. She left out the real, human part, and I'd just as soon let it go at that, if you don't mind."

"You don't understand," he said gravely.

"No, I don't. However, *chacun a son gout*, if you understand French." I stood up. "I don't care to talk about it anymore. I hope you'll enjoy yourself and everything, but I don't want to talk about it."

Slowly he said, "Leda lied to you. We did take a walk, she insisted on it, but nothing happened. Not even an erg."

"An erg?"

"It's a unit of energy. Not even that with Leda."

"You mean," I asked, swallowing, "you had ergs with me?"

He was across the room in a flash and I felt myself pulled in close to him. Then he kissed me. Maybe you remember the old Gilbert-Garbo pictures. That was us. Then he looked down at me. From his great height he was as towering and majestic as the Matterhorn. "Just like a Sherman tank," he said huskily.

In big, dramatic love scenes everyone is always so articulate. I was down for the count. He helped me to a chair. "My own true love," he said quietly, sitting down beside me. I know it's a pretty archaic expression, but tears came to my eyes.

"Me?" I quavered. "How come?" And then, as a startled afterthought. "You! How come?"

"I've read a lot of your books, and heard a lot of your love songs. They don't seem to have many ways of putting it." He paused, as if he were looking for the way.

"Love," he said.

He was groping a bit, but I could tell immediately that he had it. "It's like that ride we took in the elevator. . . ." he began.

"You mean smooth and sinky," I said.

He nodded. "And that chocolate soda. You don't have to have it, but . . ."

I helped him out. "It's more fun when you do."

He nodded again. "You remember that UN meeting?"

"Yes. They were talking about aid to India."

"That's right. It's like that, too. It's help when you need it."

He paused slightly. "And that place where we danced."

"Everyone stood close together."

"Yes . . . close together . . ."

"What else?" I asked dreamily.

"It feels the same as it did the day you gave me all my clothes, and we laughed about it together. Only it feels that way all the time — not just for one day."

"More, Sam," I murmured.

"It's like the time you kissed me."

"Oh . . ."

"It's like making sense out of ink blots. It does things inside you like Arnold's wine. It's like your hat — very pretty. It makes any place home — even a park bench. It's taking a walk. It's contact." He was getting wound up now, and I didn't interrupt anymore. He didn't need any more help. "It's you, Betsy. Everything you showed me, everything you are. It means a vacuum being away from you. It means needing you, just having to have you. It means looking the same on the outside, having two arms and two legs, but not being the same at all, missing something, a part that makes you go; without it, nothing works right anymore." He paused then a moment. "I couldn't feel anything like this before — because I never had anything like it in my life before. But now I've got to have it. Got to have you. . . ."

A silence fell. If I hadn't been brought up in a strictly middle-class environment, I might have asked him what I knew I'd have to ask him sooner or later. I just couldn't do it right then. He'd learned what love was like now, there wasn't any doubt of that. But did he know what to do about it? Did he? Could he?

Well, I thought, I'd worry about that later. The important thing was that he was able to feel, to react; that he had an

emotional life, fresh and shiny.

When I first learned to ride a bicycle I wanted to do it all the time. That's the way Sam was about love. We sat close together for hours and hours, holding hands. Finally he straightened up abruptly.

"We'll get married," he said.

"Oh, you know about that, too."

"There's a place out of state. We can be married before morning. We'll take a cab."

"It's too expensive," I said.

He pulled out a wad of bills. "Leda explained money. That's why I did those silly things with her — I realized how much you'd spent on me, and I wanted to give it back. Is this enough?"

"More than enough." I tried to move away from him so I could say what I had to say without being befuddled.

"Sam," I said, "marriage is a very serious step."

His face was against my ear. "Let's take it."

"It has many ramifications.

..."

"Betsy . . . Betsy . . . Oh, Betsy . . ."

"All right," I said suddenly.

"I think we'd probably better."

And that's the end of the story. We drove all night and ended up in a wonderfully musty-looking little parlor, being married by a sleep-rumpled Justice of the Peace. Afterwards, he directed us to a hotel in the village.

I guess my feelings were the same as any bride's — except for one detail. Sam kissed me tenderly and went off into the bathroom to put on his pajamas, leaving me alone in the darkness with my thoughts. I had them to think about. All Arnold had ever said to me about compatibility and harmonious relationships whirled through my head. Certain doubts began to assail me. After all. How could I be sure of being harmonious if . . . But I was worrying about nothing at all. Quite suddenly, I began to smile to myself. I knew I no longer had anything to fear. Sam's voice came from the bathroom, Sam's voice raised in song, in lilting, serene song:

Folks are dumb

Where I come from,

They don't have no yearning.

Now I'm happy as can be,

Doing what comes naturally!



*Y*OUR face gets more radiation when you get your teeth X-rayed than it would receive over a period of a year if you worked in one of the plants operated for the Atomic Energy Commission.

— Edward J. Kehoe, AEC