

MADGE. (Rises, crosses to shed.) Mom, don't make fun of me.

FLO. (Crosses to above stump.) Madge, you shouldn't object to being kidded when it's well meant.

MADGE. It just seems that when I'm looking in the mirror that's the only way I can prove to myself I'm alive.

FLO. Alive?

MADGE. Yes. Lots of the time I wonder if I really exist.

FLO. Madge! You puzzle me. (Irma enters from D. R. followed by Christine and Rosemary, returning from their afternoon party. They are exhausted and bored.)

IRMA. We've brought home your wayward girl, Mrs. Owens! (Madge crosses u. on Mrs. Potts' steps and sits on steps, to avoid the teachers.)

FLO. (Turning from Madge.) Oh, hello. Have a nice party?

IRMA. (Crosses to c.) It wasn't a real party. Each girl paid for her own lunch. Then we played bridge all afternoon. (Christine stands below r. corner of steps. Rosemary crosses u., puts hat and jacket on bench, moves to above armchair on porch.)

FLO. Food's good at the hotel, isn't it?

IRMA. Not very. (Christine crosses to lean on arm of beach chair.) But they serve it to you nice, with honest-to-goodness napkins. Lord, I hate paper napkins! (Flo sits on stump. Irma scrapes some gravy off her bodice. Silence.)

CHRISTINE. I had a French-fried pork chop. Mostly fat. What'd you girls have?

ROSEMARY. (Without enthusiasm.) I had the stuffed peppers.

IRMA. (Disquieted.) I had the Southern fried chicken.

CHRISTINE. Linda Sue Breckenridge had pot roast of veal. Hm! There was only one little hunk of meat in it. All we girls at her table made her call the waiter and complain.

ROSEMARY. (Moves to D. of front door.) Well, I should hope so!

IRMA. Good for you! (There is a pause.) I thought by now someone might have noticed my new dress.

ROSEMARY. I was going to say something, kid, and then I . . . uh . . .

IRMA. Remember that satin-back crepe I had last year?

ROSEMARY. Don't tell me!

CHRISTINE. My goodness!

IRMA. Mama remodelled it for me while I was at Columbia. I feel

like I had a brand-new outfit. (Furious at the thought.) But nobody said anything all afternoon!

CHRISTINE. It's so chic.

IRMA. (This soothes Irma a bit and she beams. But now there is an awkward pause when no one can think of any more to say.) Well . . . we better run along, Christine. (She crosses u. to c. lawn.) Rosemary has a date. (Turns to Rosemary.) We'll come by for you in the morning. Don't be late. (She goes upstage and waits above the alley gate for Christine.)

CHRISTINE. (Crossing to L. of Rosemary, putting out her hand.) Girl, I want to tell you in one afternoon I feel I've known you my whole life.

ROSEMARY. (Shaking hands.) I look upon you as an old friend already.

CHRISTINE. (Overjoyed.) Aw . . .

ROSEMARY. (As Christine and Irma go off alley and out u. L.) Good-bye, girls! (As teachers disappear, Rosemary sits in armchair.)

FLO. (To Rosemary.) What time's Howard coming by? (Madge runs across to front door.)

ROSEMARY. Pretty soon.

MADGE. (Turning.) Mom, is there any hot water?

FLO. You'll have to go see, darling.

MADGE. Miss Sydney, would you mind terribly if I used some of your Shalimar?

ROSEMARY. Help yourself!

MADGE. Thanks. (She goes inside.)

ROSEMARY. Madge thinks too much about the boys, Mrs. Owens.

FLO. (Disbelieving.) Madge? (The conversation is stopped by the excited entrance of Mrs. Potts from her porch steps. She is followed by Millie who carries another cake. Mrs. Potts crosses to c. lawn. Millie follows to her L. Flo crosses to Millie, L.)

MRS. POTTS. It's a miracle, that's what it is! I never knew Millie could look so pretty. It's just like a movie I saw once with Betty Grable . . . or was it Lana Turner? Anyway, she played the part of a secretary to some very important business man. She wore glasses and did her hair real plain and men didn't pay any notice to her at all. Then one day she took off her glasses and her

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