

FLO. You don't sound very enthusiastic.

MADGE. What do you expect me to do—pass out every time Alan puts his arm around me?

FLO. No, you don't have to pass out. But it seems to me you could at least —

MADGE. (*Turning to her.*) What?

FLO. (*She rises.*) Hold this dress up in front of you. (*Madge rises, holds dress. Flo sits u. l. of her in beach chair and continues work.*) Madge, it'd be awfully nice to be married to Alan. You'd have charge accounts at all the stores—automobiles—trips. You'd be invited by all his friends to parties in their homes and at the country club.

MADGE. (*Uncomfortably.*) Mom, I don't feel right with those people.

FLO. What do you mean? You're just as good as they are. My father was in the State Legislature and my mother's family was one —

MADGE. (*She gives dress to Flo and crosses l. to c.*) I know, Mom, but all of Alan's friends talk about colleges and trips to Europe. I feel left out.

FLO. You've just got to get over those feelings. Now, Alan will be going back to school in a few weeks. There won't be many more opportunities like the picnic tonight. You better get busy.

MADGE. Busy what?

FLO. Madge, a pretty girl doesn't have long—just a few years when she's the equal of kings and can walk out of a shanty like this and live in a palace with a dotting husband who'll spend his life making her happy.

MADGE. (*Turning away.*) I suppose, but —

FLO. Because once, *once* she was young and pretty. If she loses that chance, she might just as well throw all her prettiness away.

MADGE. I'm only eighteen.

FLO. And next summer you'll be nineteen, and then twenty, and then twenty-one, and then forty. (*Crossing with dress to Madge who holds it against her again. Flo squats in front of her. Millie enters from front door with sketch pad and charcoal, looks at new dress then sits on r. edge of steps.*)

MILLIE. Everyone around here gets to dress up and go places except me. (*Looking off r. sketching.*)

MADGE. Alan said he'd try to find you a date for the picnic tonight.

MILLIE. I don't want Alan asking any of these crazy boys in town to take me anywhere.

MADGE. Beggars can't be choosers!

MILLIE. You shut up.

FLO. (*Pinning up hem.*) Madge, that was mean. There'll be dancing at the pavilion tonight. Millie should have a date, too. (*She moves d. l. a bit and looks at hem line.*)

MADGE. If she wants a date, why doesn't she dress up and act decent?

MILLIE. 'Cause I'm gonna dress and act the way I want to, and if you don't like it you know what you can do!

MADGE. Always complaining because she doesn't have any friends, but she smells so bad people don't want to be near her! (*Flo covers Madge's mouth. Madge gives dress to Flo and picks up her towel.*)

FLO. Madge!

MILLIE. La-de-da! Madge is the pretty one—but she's so dumb they almost had to burn the schoolhouse down to get her out of it!

MADGE. That's not so!

MILLIE. Oh, isn't it? You never would have graduated if it hadn't been for Jumpin' Jeeter.

FLO. (*Crosses to the steps.*) Who's Jumpin' Jeeter?

MILLIE. Teaches history. Kids call him Jumpin' Jeeter 'cause the pretty girls in his classes make him so jumpy. He was flunking Madge till she went in his room and cried: (*An imitation.*) "I just don't know what I'll do if I don't pass history!"

MADGE. Mom, she's making that up.

MILLIE. Like fun I am! You couldn't even pass Miss Sydney's course in shorthand and you have to work in the dime store!

FLO. Millie!

MADGE. You are a goon!

MILLIE. Madge, you slut! (*She starts for Madge who shrieks and runs around stump to kitchen porch. Millie follows to porch.*) You take that back or I'll kill you!

END

FLO. Millie! Madge! (*She puts dress on porch armchair and runs u. s. after girls.*) Girls! Girls! Stop it! What will the neighbors say! (*Millie grabs Madge's hair and pulls it. Madge swats Millie with towel. Millie lets her go. Madge crosses to shed door.*)