THE OLD, OLD SONG

When all the world is young, lad, And all the trees are green; And every goose a swan, lad, And every lass a queen— Then hey for boot and horse lad, And round the world away; Young blood must have its course, lad. And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad, And all the trees are brown, And all the sport is stale, lad, And all the wheels run down-Creep home, and take your place there, The spent and maimed among; God grant you find one face there You loved when all was young. -Charles Kingsley

## 7 BLOCKS APART

They were talking about it again. Spoiling their evening, numbing their ecstasy that was born of the glittering lights and the glad, wild music. Madeline sighed. Why must they, always, everywhere they went? Why couldn't they forget it once in a while? And just have fun.

She reached over quickly and patted Johnny's sleeve. "Let's dance, Honey. Let's forget it-tonight, any-Listen to that music, will you

She smiled. She sat erect, chin lifted, gray eyes upturned. "Tyah-ta! Tyah-ta! Tyah-da-ta!" she breathed to the beat of the jazz, and gesture.

Abruptly she was grave again: quiet, and a little sheepish in the ace of Johnny's unrelenting gravity. Her shoulders drooped. She sat fingering her glass, twisting it round and round.

"But it is nice music, Johnny." "Um," he answered.

"We spent all this money to come here tonight—if all we're going to do is get sorry for ourselves, we might just as well've stayed home, seems

Johnny said nothing. He was sit-ting hunched forward, his arms folded, his dark glance fixed on the acre floor where the locked couples swung swayed. She looked at him. Big, beautiful Johnny. So stanch of shoulder, so brown, so-breath-tak-So sulky now, like a spanked small boy. She could have laughed at him; and yet she couldn't have laughed. Her eyes were misty, sud-

"I know," she murmured. "I feel the same way. But—we're young, Johnny. We've got lots of time— Some day-"

"Yeah! Some day!" His bitterness startled them both a little; they scrutinized each other briefly, hard. Then their eyes fell. Madeline fumbled her glass again, stirred with the straws the weary bits of fruit in her lemonade.

"For two years," Johnny said, we've been saying, 'Some day.' And it's no nearer now than it was two years ago."

She scarcely heard him. She was thinking. "Oh, what started us, anyway? When everything was so grand." She remembered. It was that idle remark of hers about Mary Brokaw's beau, and how they were going to be married.

It was that word-married. That other people's word. She should have known better.

"Two-years," Johnny repeated, and his voice made it sound like eons. "And look at us." His hands were fists inside his folded arms. He unclenched them, and clenched them again. "Some day—maybe," he said, low. "And maybe never."

"Johnny!" Madeline cried out. "But it's so, isn't it? Why should we kid ourse—"

Her swift hand covered his mouth. "Don't say such things! Of course so! Maybe never'-why, Johnny Sebastian, I don't know what you mean! Do you mean you think we're going to stop loving each other? Is that it?"

Johnny shook his head. "No. No, I don't think that." "Well then."

They were silent a moment. The forgotten music filled their ears again; the panting, haunting horns, and the strings that yearned and quivered and the deep gruff mutter of the drum. "Some-times I'm happy..... Sometimes I'm blue-hoo ..."

Under the table Madeline's foot, an absurd toy foot with a stubby toe and a lofty heel and a buckle, tapped the time. She was not con-scious of it. It was instinctive, that restless foot. Like a slain snake's tail.

Pushed the glass aside. Folded el's Worth, it was called." her white lovely hands with the lac- "'Nickel's Worth, eh?" quered nails on the table before

"It's so silly," she said, "to talk about 'never'—just because right now we're not— not getting the breaks. It won't always be this way of course. Something will hap-

pen, something-" She stopped short. After all. what could happen, except a dire and tragic something? Only unthinkable solutions were possible so-

same, and she felt ashamed, and talk about the newest pretty murdermiserable, and angry with herself and him. But there it was. There it always was. They were poor, for such a little man; about the They were a shipping-clerk at thir-bootleg-looking package that lay on ty dollars a week and a manicurist the seat beside him; about the carat about twenty-seven, counting tips. And they had each a dependent mother, widowed, not very young.

And there it was. She remembered two years ago, when they newly knew each other; rememberd it with wistfulnss. Life was simple, then. Paths were smooth seven blocks apart; that is almost You met a boy, and his eyes were next door in New York. They had ly. Without thinking. Without ever once looking beyond the next hour, the next breathless rendezvous.

ine first had talked of marrying remained still in her mind as the most hideous, most racking day of her life. Some of youth had been lost that day; and some of laughter. She never would forget it. She could see now, clearer than the wheeling couples or the band or the gilded walls-clearer than any tangible and present thing-their two blanchfaces, hers and Johnny's. She could hear Johnny's voice, over and over: "But, PinRy—there must be doesn't she?" some way—" And her own voice, "Yeah," sa saying desperately, "Yes. But what? I've got to take car of her. I can't leave her alone—any more than you of us live together. They—they don't get on. So what?"

wasn't any way. Not any way at

"Of course," he said, "if we had

The little groove deepened. Made-line watched it, unblinking. Yes. Of course. If they had money. She so darn low tonight, Pinky."

There was a tiny silence, and then source in the source of the sou thought of their spasmodic past attempts to make some, to make a lot of money, all at once. There was I swear I don't. I just—just had the that slogan contest, with prizes of darnedest feeling—" He shook his five thousand, three thousand, one thousand dollars. They still believed too, I guess. I should've kept it to that the judges had been bribed. that slogan contest, with prizes of five thousand, three thousand, one There was that drive for subscriptions to the Household Weekly. Johnny had made sixty-three dollars in a month, working evenings and Saturday afternoons. But his brother in Chicago, the one with the two small children, had lost his job about

The little groove was very deep. It would stay there now, forever, taste away? Johnny put the fork down and lean-ed back in his chair. He shoved himself low, his hands in his pockets, his chin digging his four-in-hand

"Maybe," he said thoughtfully, one of them will marry again."
She wanted to weep then. Something inside her snapped, and she hold Furnishings Bought & Sold." wanted to shriek and scream. "I can't stand it," she thought. "I can't!" It was too heartrending. They were too pitiful, snatching any more."

The music followed them out and down the stairs, nipping at their heels. Even on the street they heard it still. "Sometimes I'm happy....Sometimes I'm blue-hoo ...." They began to walk rather fast, to lose it sooner.

west. Then they were descending the gloom. "Somebody would subway steps. Johnny held Madeline wearily. line's elbow. They did not speak. was part of this night, more of its line's elbow. They had hardly spoken in three frustration. blocks.

The subway was dank and blurry-bright, and hollow with the strange bright, and hollow ess of subway "So long, sweet," Johnny said. stations late at night. The turns of the turnstile crashed, reverberated. There were not many people. A fat handled brush, a couple on a bench, holding hands. Across the tracks, on the down-town platform, a chub-by little boy with dangling sandals gave it up, and Johnny mumbled, slept beautifully in his young fath-

"Want to get weighed?" said Johnny.

He produced change from his pocket, spread it out on his palm, a penny. Madeline got weighed.

said. "You used to weigh—what? elephantine fluffiness. eighteen? Somewhere around there." "I was too fat," lied Madeline.

platform, side by side, gazing down on the gleaming cold tracks. "I hear the subway company's going to put up rails along," John-ny remarked conversationally. "Too many people jumping off in front of

have been a lot lately.'

They stared at the tracks. "I s'pose," Johnny said, "they just all of a sudden. Probably didn't mean to, beforehand. Probably just mean to go to Times Square or some place, and then-it

looked so easy-They stared at the tracks.
"I read a story," Madeline said,
"in a magazine, about a man who did. Jumped. He meant to, though. He planned it all out."

She added after a pause, " 'Nick-

"Yes. You see—"
"I get it," said Johnny. They stared at the tracks. There, far down, was the rushing red eye of Suddenly Johnny wheeled, jerking

Madeline by the arm. "Come on," he commanded in a queer, thick voice, "let's—buy some gum." They board-Their train stopped. ed the nearest car hurriedly, gratefully; and sat close together on the "N lutions to this problem. Something slippery yellow seat. Their hands happening to Johnny's mother. Or touched, gripped. The man across something happening to hers. the aisle had a paper with pictures. She knew that Johnny read her of the newest pretty murderess on mind, and that his mind read the the back. They began feverishly to ess. Then they talked about the man's feet, which were monstrous for such a little man; about the

cards strung in a high bright row above his head and on down. By that time Madeline's color was back, and the ghost of madness had gone from Johnny's eyes, and the train was diving into their station. They lived in the Bronx, only brown and bothersome, and his hair lived there since infancy, both of grew down in a tiny arrow on his them, but they had not met until forehead. You fell in love. Blithe- they were grown, and then they had Charles A. Lindbergh. met at Coney Island. This fact was then an unfailing source of wonder. he next breathless rendezvous.

Then you began to want to get had to go to Coney to find each other arried.

Neighbors for years—and they had had to go to Coney to find each other bedroom, dropping her pocketbook ny? They often spoke about it. It

The day that Johnny and Made- was, they agreed, Fate, absolutely. her hat to the corner of a chair. She ne first had talked of marrying 1e- Johnny's home was nearest the looked tired. The skin that the red loitering walk to Madeline's: a soiled brick building with a fire-escape muzzling its thin facade. They glanced at it as they passed, and Madeline leaned her head back to look up. High up.

"Your mother's awake," she rved. "There's a light." served.

"Yeah?" "She always waits up for you, "Yeah," said Johnny.

They quickened their pace a little after that. But not for long. A block or so, and they were sauntercan yours. And we can't all four of us live together. They—they don't get on. So what?"

She still could feel the first sick shock of their realization that there see. Madeline yulled off her hat and specified and see. Madeline yulled off her hat and specified and seem times are seen. swung it in her hand, and sometimes her hair was blacker than the shaall, except to wait.

Johnny sat marking the bare wooden table-top with the prong of a fork. Dully she watched. First a gleaming red with gold in it. scratch. Then a line. Then a little "Nice out," she sighed, with her face lifted to the wind.

"You said it." "Stars-and everything."

"It's all right." "I don't know what got into me,

"It's all right," she repeated. But it was not all right. She knew He knew it. Tonight, for the first time, they had said, "Maybe never," they had let themslves admit that life might beat them afer all, and waiting have no end. It was not all right; for once you tasted hopelessness, what quite could take the

They turned into Madeline's block without speaking again.

The house was one of a row of sullen brownstone houses; the sixth the bathroom tap would yield—which in the row from the corner-or, more unmistakably, the one with the second-hand furniture shop in the basement. "P. Marek,

Madeline's flat was the fourth floor front one. (There were two on a floor.) From her windows she could look on the opposite sullen brownwhere there were no straws.

She said, "Let's go home, Johnny.

Please. I—don't feel like this place

on the children who hopscotchd all day long in the street, on the comings and goings of the stones, on the children who hop-scotchd all day long in the street, chairs and lamps and bedsteads of P. Marek.

The house had a vestibule, secret out hope. and dark, wherein Johnny and Madeline were wont to bid each other lingering good nights. But tonight the vestibule was occupied. When they opened the door there was a lit-Two blocks north. One block tle stir, a glimpse of two faces, in was part of this night, more of its

They shut the door again, stnding on the topmost brownstone

"Good night, Johnny dear."
"I love you."

"I love you, too." med to be nothing furan attendant wielding a listless long- ther to say. After a mute, strained moment during which they tried to line. think of something-something com-

"Well. Be good," and kissed her once again, and went away.

Mrs. Phoebe Dietz, Madeline's mother, was a vast pink woman made pinker by rouge and vaster by laces and ruffles. She was a pre-posterous woman. When you saw her attired for the street or for the Johnny was frowning when she movies—you blinked; this simply, stepped from the machine. "Hun- you felt, could not be. This riot of dred and seven's not enough," he color. This billow of frills. This

She had married George Dietz, printer, when she was thirty-nine. It was very sad. But it was not as They stood at the edge of the sad as it might have been. For by the time Mrs. Dietz was fifty-nine Madeline was twenty, and able to

support Mrs. Dietz.
Mrs. Dietz, you see, had a Heart. Capital H. (One no more could begin this particular Heart with a littrains. Raises Cain with the serv- tle h than one could omit to mention e." it altoghether.) Nobody, said Mrs.
Madeline nodded. "There certainly Deitz, nobody knew just what she suffered with her Heart. True. Nobody did—though it was certainly

not Mrs. Dietz's fault. Because of the Heart, Mrs. Dietz had to be supported. The Heart was a Bolshevist. It declined to allow any tolling or spinning, but insisted upon a regime of movies, naps and rocking-chairs. Mrs. Dietz obeyed it to the letter. She said she was it? afraid not to. Madeline, reared in the Heart tradition, was afraid not

to have her obey.

There was also, of course, that as-

'Yes."

"Home at last!" "Yes."

Mrs. Dietz sighed profoundly. From the darkened bedroom, through the open doorway and across parlor the sigh carried, and Madeis it, Momma? Is anything the mat-

"Nothin' much. Only my back again." Mrs. Dietz said this as one might say, "Nothing has happened except an earthquake, a fire and a tornado."

Madeline's hand left the knob and groped along the wall until it found the bookcase, and the matches in the saucer on the bookcase. She struck one on her shoe and lighted the gas. Home sprang into view. The things of home. The oak center table with the curly feet. The davenport of imitation leather. The two rocking chairs and the other chair. The The bookcase. (It held souvenirs.) limp net curtains that had shrunk somewhat. The potato-colored wallpaper. The pictures of Jesus, the Grand Canyon, the late George Dietz, the "Vanishing American," the surf at Old Orchard, Maine, Un-Dietz, the der the Mistletoe," and Colonel

The room was small and stuffy, and Madeline opened a window first of

subway. They passed it on their hair kissed so prettily was wan, the cloud-gray eyes were shadowed un-derneath. But she walked with derneath. But she war quick, brisk little steps.

"It's a shame," she said. it hurt very bad, Momma?" She was standing by the bed now, gazing anxiously down. The light from the room adjoining showed her mother: a mighty mound of bedclothes and a pillowed, sad pink face topped with a coronet of patent curlers.

"Terrible," whimpered Mrs. Dietz.
"Somethin' terrible. It started about eight o'clock, and I been in misery ever since." She added, "What time is it now?" "It's about twelve-thirty."

Mrs. Dietz closed her eyes and rolled her head as far to one side as the curlers would let it go. "I thought you'd never come," she said

"I'm so sorry. If I'd known-" Mrs. Dietz's eyes reopened. "Where

were you?" "At a place called Jazzland." "Dancin'?"

"Yes." This was plainly too much for Mrs. Dietz. She closed her eyes again and lay supine.
"Well," said Madeline, feeling guilty, "anyway, I'm here now. So what can I do? Shall I get the hot-water bottle for your back?"

"It's under." "Oh. Well, can I-" "But it's cold," said Mrs. Dietz suddenly. She tugged, and the bedclothes heaved, and the hot-water bag appeared. Mrs. Dietz lay back as though spent with this effort, the

bag falling to the floor with a loud glug sound.

Madeline stooped for it. She crossed the room, carrying it, and lighted the gas-jet beside the huge oak bureau. From a closet shelf she took down a patent burner and a saucepan, and lighted the burner and set the pan full of the warmest water

was lukewarm—over it. "Now!" she said. "We'll have some hot in a jiffy." She returned to the bed. "Did you try taking those pills the doctor gave you?"
"I took three. It only says to

take two, but I took three. "And they haven't helped?" The curlers wagged in piteous negation.

"It's a shame," said Madeline again. "Well-would it help for me give your back a good rubbing?" "Maybe," replied Mrs. Dietz, with-

"Turn over, then. Where's the al-"Under the wash-stand. Or no, behind the-oh, I don't know," wailed Mrs. Dietz, "where I put it! I'm too sick to think!"

"I'll find it," said Madeline. Five minutes of rubbing revived Mrs. Dietz somewhat. She was moved to conversation, difficult though conversation was, with her face squashed against the pillow and her short breath shorter under Made-

line's young hands. "H-how's-Johnny?" she panted. "Oh, fine." "I saw-her-s'mornin'-(Her was Johnny's mother.)

'Did you? Where?" asked Made-"Market. She was-ow! Not so hard!-buyin' berries." "Was she?"

Pokin' and pinchin' and—feelin' of every last—one in the box—Ow!" "I'm sorry, Momma."
"You take the breath out o' me!" "I'll go easier. What about Mrs. Sebastian?"

"Um. You—should 'a' seen her.

"Oh, she says to me—'You're out —early, ain't you? Early for you,' she says-sarcastic-like." Madeline went on rubbing.

"Poor white trash," said Mrs. Madeline went on rubbing, lips compressed. "You say you—were to—Jazz- notes. land?" Mrs. Dietz queried, after a "It's

pause "Yes." "Have a-good time?" Another pause, slight, almost im-

perceptible. "Yes. Lovely," said Madeline. She was up the next morning at half past seven, up and nearly dress-ed, when a knock rattatted on the front door of the flat and a high voice called through the panel, "Madeline! Hoo-oo! Ma-ad'line!"

"Coming," she called back. In the bed Mrs. Dietz stirred drowsily. "Who's that?"
"Jewel, I guess."

"What's she want? What time is Madeline did not answer. She was on her way to the door to find out what Jewel Marek, daughter of P. Marek, Household Furnishings sistant Bolshevist, Mrs. Dietz's back. Bought and Sold, did want.
"Madeline?" Jewel was tiny and gipsy-dark, with teeth that flashed. "Hi, there,"

she said. "Say, your fella's on the "Johnny?"

Jeyel laughed. "How many fellas you got?" "But it's so early—" Madeline beline, her fingers still on the inner gan. Then her puzzled scowl gave knob of the hall door, asked, "What way to a business-like expression. "All right. I'll be right down."

Descending the stairs, she overtook Jewel on the third flight down. "What do you s'pose he wants," she demanded, "at this hour in the morning?"

Jewel had no idea. didn't he?" He woke you up, Madeline said sympathetically. She sighed. "Oh, well. Some day I'll have a phone of my own."

The Marek telephone was entirely surrounded by Household Furnishings Bought, but not yet Sold. It stood on the top of a medicine cabinet, which in turn stood atop a buffet, and as you talked into it you leaned against an ice-box and rested your foot on the rung of a baby's That day you did, at least. Another day you might not. Even before you finished talking the baby's crib might vanish, borne off by hairy, dirty truckman hands; and when you went to put the telephone back on the medicine cabinet, you might find you were putting it back on a kerosene stove.
"Hello?" said Madeline.

"Hullo there, sweet!"

lant, that Madeline caught her she must think she'll get mentioned breath. "Oh, what is it, Johnny?" in the will." breath. "Oh, what "What is what?"

"Don't tease me," she begged. "Something's happened—" "You're dog-gone right, some-thing's happened!" crowed Johnny. "But I won't tell you over the phone.

I want to see your face when I tell you. Listen. How soon you going to start for work?" "Why, about the usual time. Eight-thirty."

"Can't you start any sooner?" "Till try. But I've got to get breakfast, and get Momma fixed, and all." "Hurry, then I'll wait for you by

the steps. He was there at eight-thirty, when she came out; teetering there on the curbstone, whistling blithely, with his back to her and his hands in his trousers pockets. She knew an instant's pang of tenderness, poignant, exquisite. He was such a kid.... She stole up behind him and linked

her arm in his. laughing at his involuntary start. "Don't run," she said. "It's only me." She had never seen him so happy. She stood looking up at him, at the radiance of his face and the hint of glory in his eyes; and gradually her laughter died, and a certain vague terror was born. This thing that had happened, whatever it was—would it last? Was it sure? Because if not-if anything went

She felt a little sick. She said, "Tell me what's happened, Johnny. Tell me now."

"Wait till you hear!"

"I can't," she whispered, white-

wrong, when he looked like this-

Johnny, blind with his own glee, noticed nothing. He unhooked his arm from hers and took her arm with his hand; he began to pilot her

along the sidewalk.

"Well," he said, "first let me ask you something." He was pretending to be solemn, trying, as he would have put it, to "keep a stra ght face." He cleared his throat. "Supposing you and I got married—oh, say that about September first? Would you like that?"

(This was the twenty-third of July.)
"September—September first?" Johnny nodded.

"You mean"—her fingers dug his wrists—"you mean, this coming September?" Johnny nodded again. "Tell me! Oh, go on!" She had forgotten fear. There was

nothing now in her mind but eagerness, and the dawn of a joy that matched his. "We can do it!" Johnny cried, and she believed him. "We can—and we're going to!" He turned on her. He was almost shouting. "You hear that? We're going to get married!"

"Yes!" breathed Madeline. "Yes!" She knew. It was so. Details didn't matter, how didn't matter. They were going to get married. They stood there on the pavement in front of a fruit-stand, staring shining-eyed at one another: the long broad boy in the shabby suit

all alone. Shapes drifted past them, voices murmured, but they were all alone in the world. Madeline thought, "September. Eight more days of July. Augustlet's see, 'Thirty days hath'—'all the

rest have thirty-one'-thirty-one and "Thirty-nine," she said aloud.

"Right!" roared Johnny. They moved away, presently, from the fruitstand. They had not seen it at all. For years to come the odor of fresh peaches would trouble Madeline vaguely; she would not knnow why.

Walking along slowly, very close together, oblivious and sunlit and young, they talked things over. Or rather, Johnny talked, Madeline listened, and now and then laughed, a small excited laugh, like flute-

"It's wonderful!" she kept saying. It had to do, the wonderful news with old Mrs. Lane. Of all people! Madeline had met old Mrs. Lane but once; her recollection of her was a recollection merely of an eartrumpet and constant cries of "How? How's that?" Old Mrs. Lane was very old. She was eightysome. She wore yards and yards of greenish black, and had a little mustache. She did not look at all like an answer to prayer. But she was.

She was. Old Mrs. Lane lived on Johnny's street, in the little gray clapboard house that cowered between the two tall tenements, looking meek and scared and countrified. It was her house. Mr. Lane, who had been in Heaven for years and in politics prior to that, had left it to her. (They said on Johnny's street that he also had left her thousands; Johnny's mother thought it was more.) Old Mrs. Lane always, since Mr. Lane's demise, had lived by herself in her house. But now she was eighty-some. Stairs were harder to climb now, and stoves meaner manage, and silences were full of strange and frightening sounds, "and," said old Mrs. Lane to Johnny's mother, "if you want to come and live here and keep me company, you kin. It won't cost you nothin'.

Dear old Mrs. Lane! "Isn't it the darnedest thing," Johnny crowed, "the way things hap-pen, Pinky? Just when you think you've reached the end of your rope -zowie! The old luck turns. Last night was last night! I could've killed myself." He laughed rather sheepishly. "Say, we nearly did, didn't we?"

"I'll say." Johnny shook his had. "Darn fools. Well, anyway, here I go home from your house, so low I'd have had to stand on tiptoes to pat a caterpillar —and thre's Mr. waiting up, just back from Mrs. Lane's, with this to spring on m! Say! Did I feel good!" know," said Madline softly. "Lik I feel now." Sh was wordless a moment, her forehead puckering between the thin curved brows. "Your mother wants to do it, does

"Crazy to! She and Mrs. Lane are awful thick, you know.' Into Madeline's mind flashed an animated-version of her own mother's oft-repeated: "She certainly shines

His voice was so joyous, so jubi- up to that old Mrs. Lane! Guess

"Listen." continued Johnny "Here's what we'll do. I got it all doped out. We'll wait till the first of September, for three reasons. One is, that's when I get my vacation. We can go somewhere. Maybe"—his voice soared-"maybe Atlantic City! Or somewhere. Anyway, the second reason is because I'll have to save money, enough for the ring and the license—and the trip. I'm a little short right now. Some bills I owe. And then besides we got to give Ma time. She thinks it'll take her about a month to get moved and pull up stakes and all. We don't want to

rush her." "No," agreed Madeline.
"So September's about right, don't you think?"

"September's wonderful," said Madeline. "So then we'll get married, and then we'll go on the trip. And you'll give up your flat, and we'll get some new furniture and stuff for my place, and—and live there! You and

And your mother, too, of course," he amended, frowning slightly.
"You don't mind, do you, Johnny? Awfully?" "N-no. No, of course not. Look!" said Johnny, changing the subject. "Look what's across the street!" It was old Mrs. Lane's little clapboard house, grown all at once in-teresting and dear. They gazed at

it. Their footsteps slackened. Madeline thought, "Funny I never noticed that cupola thing. And those curtains.' She said, peering, "There's—isn't that her in the window?"

"I guess so," Johnny answered, also peering. "It's something black, anyway."
"I think" said Madeline slowly—

"don't you think we sort of ought to go over and—and speak to her?"
"Well," doubtfully. "What'd we "What'd we Madeline didn't quite know. It

would not do, of course, to thank old Mrs. Lane for taking Johnny's mother off their hands—hardly. "We'll go some other time," decided Johnny. "We're late enough now as it is."

He spoke truly. It was twenty minutes after nine when Madeline finally reached the Broadway beauty shop where she worked. Her first client of the morning had been waiting nineteen minutes, and had not liked it at all. But she did not say so. There was something about Madeline's face that day that made it impossible to scold her, just as it is impossible to scold a flower, or a

star, or a singing bird. The day was an average beautyshop day, no better, no worse. There was the smell of soap and steam and the faint oily smell of hair.
There was the hiss of water, and the drier's hot whine, and the rattle of marcelling irons. There was the bustle of slender white-clad girls, the cacophony of conversations.

Every half-hour there were ten new fingrs on the little pad in front of Madeline. Every half-hour smiled, "How-do-you-do?" and took and the little Titian girl. They were her nickel bowl with the paper frill inside to the back room for new soapy water; returned, and set the bowl down, and picked up the file, and said, "Pointed? Do you want them any shorter?" She worked well. She made neat rosy nails out of nails that had been neither. And she nev-

er really saw a single nail. At twelve, on her way to luncheon, she called up Johnny from a paystation. "I don't know why I'm calling," she told him amusedly. "I

haven't a thing to say.' They talked for twelve minutes. Her luncheon was a cup of cocoa with beady whipped cream and a cream-cheese-and jelly sandwich. Net expenditure: forty cents. She had three dollars and seventy-four cents in her pocktbook after the check was paid. This must feed her and transport her all the rest of the week. On her way back to the beauty shop she stopped and bought a seven-dollar chiffon chemise. Three dol-

lars down. Curiously enuogh, it was the thought that chemise-but wait. I go ahead of myself.

July had been ripped from Madeline's calendar and scrunched into a ball and thrown away, and nine of the days in August had been crossed out with pencil crosses, when old Mrs. Lane abruptly died. She died in the morning. At least, they found her in morning, lying very still in bed, with a set of teeth

grinning in half a glass of water on the table by the bedside. Johnny heard before noon. His mother telephoned him. But Madeline had hours of grace, and did not hear a word evening. till Johnny came. She heard him on the stairs, and the dish-rag and the platter with the yellow poppies on it slipped back into the water and were drowned, while Madeline ran to

dry her hands and touch her nose

with powder. "And I'll always," she

vowed to the mirror, "look nice when

he comes. No shiny nose or curlers when I'm married, any more than now. She had the door open before he reached it; was standing on the threshhold, vivid head ducked forward. "Slow-poke!" she called him. And laughed caressingly. And pull-ed his head down so she could kiss

him, using his ears for handles. "Momma's out" she said, when the door was closed. "She's gone to the movies. Honey, don't put your hat there—one of us'll sit on it, sure." She moved the hat; laid it on the table, her fingers lingering along its brim. She seated herself on the davenport and patted the leather be-

"Park," she directed. She surveyed him maternally. "You look done up, Johnny."

"Had a hard day?" He nodded, evading her eyes. "Make my place," said Madeline Her place was the curve of his arm when he leaned back sideways

in his corner. He arranged this, and Madeline snuggled in, so that her pink left ear lay over his heart. 'Now!" she sighed. "Go on. What was so tough about it?"

"About today?" (Continued on page 3, Col. 4.)