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GIRL WITH A CAMERA

A Novel of Margaret Bourke-White, [Photographer](#)

Commented [CY1]: Add Photographer?

By Carolyn Meyer

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GIRL WITH A CAMERA

Sometime after midnight, a thump—loud and jarring. A torpedo slams into the side of our ship, flinging me out of my bunk. The ship is transporting thousands of troops and hundreds of nurses. It is December 1942, and our country is at war. I am Margaret Bourke-White, the only woman photographer covering this war.

The U.S. Army Air Forces has handed me a plum assignment: photographing an Allied attack on the Germans. I wanted to fly in one of our B-17 bombers, but the top brass ordered me to travel instead in the flagship of a huge convoy, headed from England through the Straits of Gibraltar towards the coast of North Africa. It would be safer than flying, the officers argued.

As it turns out, they were dead wrong. Beneath the surface of the Mediterranean, German submarines glide, silent and lethal, stalking their prey. One of their torpedoes has found its mark.

I grab my camera bag and one camera, leaving everything else behind, and race to the bridge. I hear the order blare: Abandon ship! Abandon ship! There is not enough light and not enough time to take photographs. I head for Lifeboat No. 12 and board with the others assigned to it, mostly nurses. We've drilled for it over and over, but this is not a drill. My mouth is dry with fear.

Our lifeboat drops into the sea. The boat is filled with water from the torpedo splashback. We use our helmets to bail. The rudder is broken. All around us in the water people are struggling to survive. We rescue some, lose others. A voice cries in the darkness,

“Help me! I’m all alone!” We try to row toward that desperate voice, but without a rudder we can do nothing. The cries grow fainter. Then, silence.

I take my turn rowing, my arms aching and my hands blistered. Someone in a nearby lifeboat begins to sing, “You are my sunshine.” We all join in. Even off-key, it makes the rowing easier. We watch silently as flames swallow our wounded ship.

The rest of the convoy has scattered, to keep from giving the German U-boats another target. In the bright moonlight I see that a single destroyer stays behind, and we wonder if [they#](#) will come to pick us up. But no—they drop depth charges to try to get rid of any remaining German submarines. Someone is shouting into a megaphone, but we can’t make out the words. Maybe he’s wishing us luck. The destroyer sails on. Now we are entirely alone.

The moon sinks into the dark sea. I think longingly of the chocolate bars, emergency rations I’d tossed out of my camera bag to make room for extra lenses. The hours pass. I’m wet to the skin, wet and cold. Hungry, too. I could do with a bite of chocolate.

Dawn comes slowly, the pale colors blooming in the eastern sky. I wonder again if I will survive, if any of us will. Irrationally, I mourn the loss of my elegant cosmetics case, covered with a beautiful ostrich skin and filled with ivory jars from Hong Kong. I can’t imagine why it matters.

It’s December twenty-second—the winter solstice, ~~someone reminds u,~~ [someone reminds us](#). No wonder the sun is so late making its appearance, and we cheer when [it](#) finally ~~it does, risingrises~~ majestically from a flat gray sea. I get out my camera and begin taking pictures. We look miserable and bedraggled, but we’re alive.

One of the nurses jokes that she’s ready to place her order for breakfast: two eggs, sunnyside up, no broken yolks please. “And hot coffee!” adds another. “Buttered toast!”

In midafternoon someone spots a flying boat, a large seaplane. It flies low over us, wagging its wings, and we all wave back, assuring each other that help will come soon. The sun sinks lower, lower. There is no sign of rescuers. It won't be long before darkness descends, and they won't be able to find us.

*Wet, cold, exhausted, crowded in with dozens of others, all wondering what will happen to us, if we will live or die, I remember my home, my parents, those early years when I had no idea where life would take me, only that I wanted it to be bold and exciting, anything but what it was **then**.*

Commented [CY2]: Great opening! Are there actual photos of this? Photos of her used throughout or just at the end in perhaps a gallery?
There is one of people in her lifeboat.

Chapter 1. Bound Brook, New Jersey, 1918

I blame everything on my mother. She strove for perfection, and nothing else satisfied her. There were rules, and we—my sister, my brother, and I—were expected to abide by them.

Commented [CY3]: Love this opening line.

Mother decreed that we would not read the funny papers. She found nothing funny about them. “The comics will harm your mind and ruin your taste for good art,” she said, lips firmly pursed. One look at “Krazy Kat” or “Maggie and Jiggs” would surely begin ~~its~~ our disintegration.

As a consequence, we were not allowed to visit friends who *did* read the funny papers and might have them lying around the house, tempting us. I imagined Sara Jane Cassidy and her brother, Tommy, who lived on the next block, sprawled on their living room floor with the Sunday papers, laughing at the antics of the Katzenjammer Kids—Hans and Fritz—and somebody called Der Captain. I knew about those characters because Tommy loved to imitate their German accents.

“Vot’s der dum-goozled idea?” he’d ask in what he imagined was Der Captain’s voice.

Sara Jane was sympathetic. She sometimes smuggled the funny papers to school in her lunch box and let me have a guilty look at them while I ate my liverwurst sandwich.

Mother also dismissed movies as a waste of valuable time. “Movies entertain much too easily,” she said. “Far better to read a good book that stimulates the mind.” So, of course, when boys at school amused us by miming a peculiar shuffle and calling each other “little

tramp.” I had no idea what they were talking about, until Sara Jane explained that the Little Tramp was a movie character. Charlie Chaplin was the actor who played him.

My sister, Ruth, two years older than I, complained about our mother’s rules even more than I did. *No card playing*. (Chess was a different matter. Father taught [all of us](#) to play, even Roger, who was much younger.) *No gum chewing. No slang*. But the one that bothered Ruth the most: *No silk stockings*.

Ruth was dying to have silk stockings, if only one pair for dress-up, but Mother was adamant: we must wear cotton stockings. [Much more practical, she said](#). “They’re so ugly!” Ruth wailed. “I look as though I just got off the boat!”

“The hard way is always the better way,” Mother lectured, unmoved.

Why is it better? I wanted to ask. *Vot’s der dum-goozled idea?*

Our family lived in Bound Brook, New Jersey. I was in eighth grade in grammar school, and Ruth rode the trolley that ran near our house over to Plainfield, where she attended high school. Roger was only six and had just been enrolled in first grade. He hated it, and I think it was because Mother questioned him so mercilessly about every little thing. The minute Ruth or I walked in the door, Mother requested a report of what had happened that day in school. If I told her about a quiz in geography, mentioning that we were required to answer just ten questions out of a dozen, she pounced: “I hope you skipped the easy ones and chose the ten hardest,” she said, frowning until I assured her that yes, I had picked the hard ones, and I’d answered the easy ones too.

Then she smiled and said, “Good girl!” She hardly ever said that to Ruth, and almost never told little Roger how good he was.

I was sick and tired of being a good girl. What thirteen-year-old girl is not?

I ~~considered myself~~ felt lucky not to be the [eldest-youngest](#) child in our family, or the [youngest-oldest](#). Ruth, fifteen, was treated most sternly by our mother. Maybe it was easier to

Commented [CY4]: Awkward. Father taught even Roger?

overlook the middle child. Father was usually too distracted, too wrapped up in his work to pay much attention, but like Mother, he wanted us to be good, ~~as every parent does~~, and not only *good* but *perfect*.

The cotton stockings, the way we spoke, the ban on funny papers and chewing gum and slang, even nicknames—Ruth and I were misfits. How could we *not* be?

When Ruth and I were both in grammar school, we walked together to the four-room schoolhouse every day, balancing like tightrope walkers along the tops of fences. Not that we'd ever seen a tightrope walker, because we'd never been ~~taken~~ to a circus, but we'd seen pictures. After Ruth moved on to high school, I missed having her walk home with me, and I did my high-wire act without her. I had good balance—I could walk on logs across streams and on the railings of bridges—and never once came home with wet shoes or skinned knees.

Two grades were assigned to each room with one teacher, so that in fifth grade I shared Miss Lucas's classroom with the sixth grade and picked up much of what the older students were being taught. By the time I was actually a sixth grader, I had absorbed most of their lessons, and every afternoon after recess Miss Lucas sent me to the cloakroom with a group of slow readers to tutor them. This made me popular with no one.

My best friend, Tubby Luf, was tall and blond and thin as a straw, but she explained that when her younger sister, Eleanor, was just learning to talk, she couldn't say her name, Margaret. Somehow it came out as "Tubby," and it stuck.

"I like it," she said. "It's ironic."

Tubby was the kind of brainy girl who used words like *ironic*.

My mother would not have permitted the nickname to stick, ironic or not. She disliked nicknames. Our friends called their parents Mom or Mama, and Dad or Daddy. In our house Mother was Mother and Father was Father. Mother's name was Minnie—her given name, she claimed, not a nickname. My father was Joseph, but she made an exception for him: she

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called him Joey. If she could call my father Joey, then why could I not be Peggy, the name I favored?

“Because I named you Margaret.” End of argument.

At school Tubby called me Peggy, and so did Sara Jane (who didn’t have a nickname) and my other friends, but in the presence of my mother I must always be Margaret.

Mother insisted that we speak correctly. Proper grammar was not a problem, but we must have sounded very formal. We were not allowed to use slang, of course, or even contractions—no *I’m* or *she’s* or *isn’t* or *wouldn’t*. “It shows sloppiness of mind,” Mother declared, “as well as lack of effort.”

When I spoke the way Mother required, the other students looked at me as though I were an oddity. In time I developed a dual language: one for home, one for school.

Mother herself spoke very well. She had studied stenography [at Pratt Institute](#) with the idea of becoming a secretary, and her teachers had insisted upon correct grammar, perfect spelling, and accurate pronunciation. Father also spoke well, when he spoke at all—he was a very quiet man. Sometimes I wonder if he talked so little because he was afraid he’d make a mistake, and Mother would correct him.

Father was an engineer for a company that manufactured printing presses. Mother complained that the only things he thought about were those presses and his inventions to improve them. One invention improved the way those forbidden funny papers were printed in color, a mechanism to align the edges of the various colored parts. This may not sound like much, but it was very important to R. Hoe & Company, because it improved efficiency and saved the company [a lot of](#) money. Mother tried to get Father to ask for a raise in pay, but he didn’t seem to care much about [money](#)~~that~~.

He'd designed the unusual house we lived in and built the huge stone fireplace with a mantel ~~that he~~ sawed out of a tree he'd cut down himself. He planted gardens all around it, including rare specimens, each labeled with its scientific name. He ~~took~~ led us on nature walks in the woods near our house. When I was younger, he often took me by myself, saying little but pointing out things he wanted me to observe. His silence was comfortable, because I was used to it, for me.

Father imitated birdcalls, and the birds actually came to him. He knew all about snakes and lizards. When I was nine or ten, a snake slithered across our path, ~~noticed~~ sensed us, and stopped. It flattened its neck and raised its head up like a cobra, hissing and striking. I clutched Father's hand.

"Harmless," he said. "Just a hognose. Some people call it a puff adder, but a hognose snake isn't a puff adder at all. Only the real ones, the African kind, are deadly. Watch him roll over and play dead."

The snake did just that. His mouth was open, his tongue hanging out. He certainly *looked* dead. "Turn him right side up," Father said. I wasn't too sure about this, but when I did, the snake rolled over "dead" again.

"Can we take him home?" I asked, and Father agreed and showed me how to pick it up. I wasn't afraid.

That snake was the start of my bringing home whatever interesting creatures I found, mostly garter snakes that showed up in the garden and water snakes from the nearby brook. I scooped up eggs from the water and watched them hatch into tadpoles and salamanders, and I added them to our growing collection of hamsters and rabbits housed in cages Father built. Two turtles that Ruth named Attila the Hun and Alaric the Visigoth lived under the piano.

The hognose/puff adder was soon completely tame and liked to curl up on Mother's lap when she sat in her rocking chair to sew or read the newspaper. I named him Puffy.

“You could have come up with something more original,” Ruth said. “‘Puffy’ seems rather childish.”

I glared at her. She sounded like Mother—*No nicknames*. I looked up the snake’s scientific name in one of Father’s books: *Heterodon platirhinos*. He would remain Puffy.

On the day I took Puffy to school with me, the dear little fellow, frightened out of his wits, performed exactly as I knew he would, rearing up, neck puffed out, and hissing menacingly. The other children screamed and pulled away, even though I promised he wouldn’t bite. They laughed nervously when he played dead, but still they refused to touch him.

“Do not be afraid, it is just a puff adder,” I reassured them.

My schoolmates reported “Margaret’s poisonous snake” to the principal, who ordered me to take Puffy home and not to bring it or any other snake back to school.

“There are only two venomous kinds of snakes in New Jersey—rattler and copperhead,” I informed the principal, quoting my father. “And more than a dozen harmless ones in our part of the state.” The principal was unmoved.

Ruth never did anything like that. If she had, she would have been punished, required to write a letter of apology to the principal and also to Mother, explaining exactly why she had been disruptive and promising never to repeat the crime. Ruth had to write a lot of those letters. I did not. “You could get away with murder,” Ruth said sourly. “I do not know why.”

The next year on my birthday, the fourteenth of June, Father surprised me with a baby boa constrictor. She was beautiful, cream colored with reddish brown markings, and she twisted herself around my wrist like a bracelet. She had to be kept warm in a blanket, and once a week I fed her a poor little mouse. I called her Cleopatra.

Ruth said that was a stupid name. “It makes no sense.”

“It does to me,” I snapped. “I was thinking of the snake the Egyptian queen used to kill herself.”

“That was an asp,” Ruth argued. “Not a boa.”

My interest turned to caterpillars. I gathered dozens and dozens of them. Mother let me use a number of our drinking glasses, which I arranged upside down in rows on the dining room windowsills. These became incubators for the caterpillars, and for weeks I put leaves in their glass cages and waited hopefully for them to turn into butterflies. The problem, Father pointed out, was that caterpillars eat constantly at this stage, and not just *any* leaf but only the kind they were laid onto as eggs.

But I persevered: I found the right leaves, and some of the caterpillars did form shiny little cocoons and entered the next stage, the chrysalis. “This is where the metamorphosis happens,” Father explained. “Now you must wait. And watch.”

Each day I rushed home from school, afraid I might have missed the magical event. Then one by one the chrysalises began to burst open, and I watched entranced as each damp shape emerged and spread its beautiful butterfly wings. Father, who happened to arrive home from work in time to witness this miracle with me, took photographs with his old-fashioned camera.

“Let me look,” I begged. He stepped aside while I ducked my head under the black camera cloth and peered into the viewfinder. The image was upside down. Better not to have the camera in the way, I thought. Better just to *look*.

Father took lots of pictures—of Mother draped in a shawl, of us children, of the flowers in our garden and the birds that visited there. He hustled around setting up his tripod, opening the camera with the accordion-shaped bellows perched on it, inserting the glass plates, focusing. Once he was satisfied with the composition in the viewfinder, he finally clicked the shutter. Afterward, he ~~shut~~closed himself ~~up~~ in the bathroom in total darkness,

bathed the glass plates in separate trays of awful-smelling chemicals, rinsed them, and set them up to dry. He printed the best of the glass negatives on special paper—another messy process—and built frames for them. Father’s photographs hung on the walls in every room of our house. I helped him choose which chrysalis-to-butterfly pictures to hang.

It may seem as though my father spent most of his spare time tramping through the woods or building things or making photographs. That was not the case. Mainly, Father *thought*. Then he drew sketches and diagrams of what he was thinking. Once he took our family to a restaurant for dinner, a rare treat, and, just as our food arrived, an idea came to him. He began to draw on the tablecloth. We ate, and he drew. Ruth and I nudged each other, wondering when he would notice the fried chicken growing cold on the plate in front of him. He left without eating a single bite.

“Aren’t you going to take the tablecloth, Father?” Roger asked, startling him out of his thought cloud.

Father shook his head, tapping his forehead. “Unnecessary. I have it here.”

Mother grew impatient with him. “If only he would talk more!” she complained. He was a brilliant inventor, she said, and his ideas made other people rich, [like the owners of the company where he worked](#). I overheard her telling him that he should be paid more ~~for his work~~, but I didn’t hear his answer. Often his reply was simply silence.

~~Tubby’s family was not as strict as mine.~~ Before we ~~were in~~[started](#) high school, Tubby’s mother bought her pretty dresses ~~in~~; red and green plaid; or little blue and white ~~checks, that~~[checks that](#) I admired and envied. I wanted ruffles and lace and gay colors, but Mother would have none of it. She dressed me in plain brown or dark blue skirts and white middie blouses with a sailor collar. “Very practical for everyday,” she said. Every day was the same as the one before.

My hair was parted in the middle and pulled back in plaits. ~~It was~~ Ruth was assigned's job to braid my hair every morning, and if my sister and I had argued about something, she punished me by pulling them so tight that I couldn't blink. Mother promised I could do away with braids when I reached high school. Not a word about my dresses.

Tubby and I both took piano lessons from stern-faced, thin-lipped Mrs. Grauert at the Watchung School, and I was allowed to go to the Lufs' house to practice duets together. I had no particular talent for piano, demonstrated by my dismal performance at Mrs. Grauert's annual student recital. Half way through the piece I'd memorized, I lost my place, started over, and missed the second ending, playing on and on. Mrs. Grauert, signaling frantically, finally caught my eye, and I stumbled off the stage, humiliated.

Mother was waiting. "You should have practiced more," she said. "And I ~~did~~ noticed when you left the stage that the bow on your dress was badly wrinkled. How embarrassing for you!"

I didn't care about the wrinkled bow, but I silently vowed that I would never again play in a recital.

Dancing classes came next. Mother ~~sent~~ signed Ruth and me up for lessons because, she promised us, "If you dance well, you will never lack for partners."

The boys in the class, sent by their anxious mothers, obviously wanted to somewhere, anywhere, else. The teacher paired off according to height. ~~She or her~~ Her assistant sat at an old upright piano and banged out a peppy tune. Short, shy partners steered me glumly around the polished floor. Later, at home, I danced by myself, whirling through the house from living room to kitchen to enclosed porch, clutching a large towel as a make-believe partner and dreaming of the day some boy would actually ask me to dance.

Each year the grammar school held four dances for the seventh and eighth graders: Autumn, Christmas, Valentine, and Spring spring. I came down with a cold and missed the

autumn affair, but after weeks of dancing classes I was primed for the Christmas party. I helped with the decorations, cutting out ~~innumerable~~ paper snowflakes to pin up around the gymnasium. Teachers would chaperone, and parents volunteered refreshments. I asked Mother if we could contribute cookies.

“If you wish to take cookies, Margaret, you must bake them yourself. You certainly know how.”

I wanted to come up with something that would distinguish my creation from everyone else’s, but I debated for too long, and time was running out. Suddenly inspired, I decided to forget baking cookies and take pickles instead. I loved Grandmother White’s dill pickles. My mother did not care for them. But she didn’t much care for Father’s mother either, and the jar had sat ~~unopened~~ in the cupboard for a very long time, ~~unopened~~.

The night of the Christmas dance I put on my one dress-up dress, dark green with white buttons (sash neatly pressed), utilitarian high-top shoes (freshly polished), and the dreadful cotton stockings. With the jar of pickles and a borrowed fork, I set off for the schoolhouse.

I put my contribution on the table decorated with jolly Santa Clauses among an array of delicious-looking treats—tiny tarts with a dab of raspberry jam in the center, a beautiful cake sprinkled with coconut, cookies in the shape of Christmas trees, rich cubes of chocolate fudge arranged on paper doilies.

Some thought the pickles were a joke, others weren’t so sure, and no one wanted to sample any of Grandmother White’s sour dills. I made a show of eating three of them myself.

Worse than my spurned pickles, not a single boy asked me to dance. I was a good dancer! I knew all the steps! But the boys asked other girls. Even Tubby got asked, although it was by a boy she couldn’t stand and not the one she had a secret crush on. None asked me.

I dumped the rest of the pickles behind a bush on the way home and told Mother it was a very nice party. Secretly I wept.

Then I told my sister the truth. I always told her the truth.

“Pickles?” Ruth exclaimed. “You took a *jar of pickles* to the dance? Why on earth did you do that?”

“I didn’t want to be like everybody else,” I mumbled.

“Well, I guess you succeeded.” Ruth sat down beside me on my bed and put her arm around my shoulders. “Boys your age are really not at their best. You’re probably smarter than all of them, and they know it, so they stay away from you. That will change as you get older. One of these days—and it’s coming soon, I promise you—the boys will be standing in line for a chance to dance with you. But,” she added, “you probably didn’t help your case by taking pickles.”

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Assume most of what happens here is based on real events.
Not the pickles! I made that up.

Chapter 2. Plainfield High School, 1919

I was not beautiful. I knew that. My dark, deep-set eyes were like my father's, but my face, like his, was a little too round. I had Mother's thick, dark hair, but my lips were a little too thin, like hers.

"You're not pretty, Margaret," my mother told me frankly—she never attempted to soften her words—"but you have an interesting face."

I did not want to have an interesting face.

I wondered what my parents were like when they were young. I saw a photograph of Minnie Bourke in a white shirtwaist with big leg-of-mutton sleeves and a bit of lace at her neck, and my mother had confessed in an unguarded moment that a shirtwaist was considered "not quite nice" at the time. In the picture she ~~was's~~ standing by her bicycle and smiling. She ~~wears-wore~~ a skirt that had been shortened a couple of inches to reveal a shocking ankle. On the back of the photograph Minnie had noted that her mother was sure she was going to the devil because she was riding a bicycle—that wasn't quite nice either. And on a Sunday ~~! the~~ [Sabbath!](#)

Her father was Irish, a ship's carpenter, and her mother was English and worked as a cook. She was riding her bicycle to meet Joseph White. The Whites lived in the Bronx, and the Bourkes lived in lower Manhattan. ~~Her father was Irish, a ship's carpenter, and her mother was English and worked as a cook.~~ After she and Father met at a social club, they began to go bird watching in Central Park and rode their bicycles out into the country and

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read philosophy to each other. One day when they were riding in the Catskills, ~~a part of my mother's~~ Minnie's bicycle broke down.

“We left our bikes and hiked up the nearest mountain,” Mother told us, “and that’s when your father proposed.”

Ruth and I thought their courtship was terribly romantic.

“Do you think he kissed her?” Ruth asked me.

“Well, of course he kissed her!” I said. “She said yes, and then they kissed.”

Ruth was doubtful. “They were very proper. And Mother has told me over and over that I mustn’t let a boy kiss me until we’re married. It could lead to other...things.”

Mother had given me no such instructions, but, then, Ruth was older, even if I was bolder.

Mother was an expert seamstress and taught us to sew. “It will come in handy some day,” she promised. She gave sewing and cooking lessons to Ruth’s friends and to Sara Jane and Tubby and me. Mother’s cooking was like her sewing, plain and practical—she made all of my clothes, and Ruth’s—but Tubby, especially, loved everything Mother taught us: how to poach an egg and make rice pudding ~~and~~ the meatloaf that Mother served for dinner every Thursday.

“My mother is a terrible cook,” Tubby confessed. “I don’t know how I’d learn anything if it weren’t for Mrs. White.”

I took to sewing more eagerly, because I believed that, if I got good enough, I could eventually make myself the kind of stylish clothes I wanted. The kind I felt I deserved.

~~Ruth was a junior at~~ When I entered Plainfield High School ~~when I entered~~ as a lowly freshman. Ruth was a junior. My sister informed me about the social divisions at Plainfield. There was the “crystal-chandelier set,” snobbish girls who shopped for stylish clothes in New

York City and attended lots of parties. Then there were the “linsey-woolseys.” I knew what that meant—linsey-woolsey was cloth woven from a mixture of linen and wool, plain and serviceable. Ruth and I were linsey-woolseys. It was certainly not what I aspired to be. I had already made up my mind that someday I would be famous, *very* famous, and rich, too, and the crystal-chandelier girls as well as the linsey-woolseys would look back at their high school yearbook and marvel at what had become of Peggy White.

Boys ~~did seemed~~ to like me well enough. I was invited to help them paddle canoes on the Raritan River and to go on hikes and identify plants and birdcalls. Mother’s fruit pies were popular with boys at picnics. I was what people called a “good sport.”

But none of the boys who ate my mother’s pies or showed me a snake to identify asked me to dance.

I was fourteen years old, I faithfully attended the school mixers and parties, and I still had not been asked ~~to dance~~. So much for Mother’s promise that if I learned to dance well, I would never lack for partners. She was wrong. How many times did I go to a “mixer” and not mix? How would anybody know I was a good dancer, if nobody ever asked me?

Then in my sophomore year—Ruth was a senior, getting ready to graduate—I heard about a contest. ~~The Babcock Prize~~ ~~A prize~~ was being offered for “excellence in literary composition,” an eight-hundred-word short story to be finished by the end of the semester in June. The prize was fifteen dollars worth of books to be chosen by the winner. Sophomores were eligible to enter, but no sophomore had ever won ~~the Babcock Prize~~, and everyone understood that it would go to a junior or senior. I learned that I would not have to take the usual English exams if I entered the contest and declared that I was working on the assigned theme. ~~That clinched it.~~

That clinched it. I informed my English teacher, Miss Aubrey, of my plans, and she marked in her grade book that Margaret White would be excused from examinations for the

rest of the year. “I know you’ll do well, Margaret,” she said, smiling up at me. “You’ve shown that you have talent. But remember that you must never leave a task until you’ve completed it to the best of your ability.” She sounded just like my mother.

And then I put the whole thing out of my mind. There was plenty of time to think of an idea for a short story. It wouldn’t be too hard. Eight hundred words weren’t really that much, and the end of the semester was still a long way off.

Spring came, and; the weather warmed. Others in my class had to sit through dreary exams; I did not. I was writing a short story, or would be quite soon. And then, almost without my being aware of it, the last day of school was *the next day*. My short story was due to be handed in during English class that morning. I’d done nothing—I didn’t have even the germ of an idea. Then I got a reprieve: Miss Aubrey announced that the deadline had been extended. The story now had to be delivered to the front porch of the principal’s house by half past five.

At lunchtime Tubby and I sat side by side on a mossy stone wall near the school, eating our sandwiches. She swapped half of her bologna for half of my liverwurst. “What am I going to do, Tubby?” I wailed. “If I don’t hand in a story, Miss Aubrey will fail me, because I didn’t take any of the exams. I told her I was entering the contest. And I will have let her down. She has such faith in me.”

“You’re going to write a story, of course,” Tubby said.

“I don’t have an idea in my head,” I moaned. “I haven’t even thought about it.”

“You’re going to start thinking right now.” She began to peel the orange in her lunchbox. She closed her eyes. A sweet orangey smell drifted around us. “A dog story,” she said, as if she were having a vision. “Everybody loves dog stories.”

I thought about our dog, Rover. Rover had died a year earlier, carried off by old age. I’d been yearning for another dog ever since, but I had not yet persuaded my parents that we

should get one. Mother thought we had enough animals, what with all the rabbits and turtles and snakes et cetera that had taken up residence in our house. Everybody loves dog stories!

The bell rang. I had algebra and geography to get through before dismissal. Tubby and I gathered our trash and hurried off to class. “Meet me in the library at three o’clock,” I said. “I’ll have come up with an idea by then.”

For the next hour I was not thinking about quadratic equations and coefficients. I was trying to come up with a name for the dog, doodling various possibilities in the margins of my algebra worksheet. By the time class was dismissed, I had settled on Sparky. The name would give a hint to his personality.

In the next class, while Mr. Bergman droned on about major river systems in Russia, I worked on a suitable boy’s name. I considered calling him Roger, for my brother. Roger, an unhappy little boy with two older sisters. Or maybe with no sisters—that would make him more poignant. Roger, a lonely only child, yearning for a puppy. But Sparky would not be a puppy—he would be an abandoned mutt yearning for a home, just as Roger was yearning for a companion.

After dismissal Tubby and I retreated to a corner of the library, away from the watchful eyes of Miss Greenlaw, the librarian. “I’m thinking of writing it from Sparky’s point of view,” I whispered to Tubby.

“Dog as narrator? That would certainly be different.”

I thought about that: maybe it was *too* different. “No, just through his eyes. Here’s how we’ll do it. I’ll write a page and hand it over to you, and while I’m working on the next part, you check grammar and spelling and count the number of words.”

The yellow dog was tired and hungry, I scribbled, *and also very dirty*. I stopped to read my first sentence. *Was*, I decided, was a weak verb. And the adjectives were pretty weak, too. I scratched out the first sentence and started over. *The dog trotted wearily down*

the dark alley, searching for something—anything—to eat. Stickers matted his filthy yellow fur.

Much better! My pencil raced across the page, describing the sad life of the abandoned pup who'd escaped from his cruel owner and now had to avoid the dogcatcher and find some kind of meal or starve.

Then I introduced Roger, renamed Robert but otherwise similar to my brother, except that he does not have two older sisters and is allowed to have a nickname, Rob. Rob's father is a sea captain away on a voyage to Africa. The mother, called Mama, stern but loving, tells poor Rob that he cannot have a dog. Rob, disconsolate, kicks pebbles down the road and tries to think of ways to change Mama's mind. Run away from home and make her sorry? Get work as a paperboy and earn extra money as well as her admiration? He must find a solution!

I handed the first page over to Tubby.

"Two hundred words on page one," she announced. "You'll have to write three more pages."

The table where we huddled had a view of the wall clock, and I tried not to look at it. Time-keeping was part of Tubby's job. At four o'clock Miss Greenlaw announced that the library was closing. We moved outside the school building, back to the stone wall where we'd eaten lunch. I balanced the writing tablet on my knees and raced on.

Sparky spots a lonely-looking young boy, the kind of boy who might want a dog. He wags his tail and gazes at the boy pleadingly. The boy is delighted to find the disheveled pup and brings him home. But Mama shakes her head, saying harshly, "Rob, get that flea-ridden mutt out of here. No, you may not keep him."

Tearfully, the boy takes the leftover meatloaf from the icebox, where it has been kept to feed mother and son, and [feeds-gives](#) a bit of it to the famished dog. The dog is obviously

still half starving, and Rob gives him the rest of the meatloaf. Now Mama is angry, and Rob is in deep trouble. Sparky slinks away.

“Three hundred and eighty-five,” Tubby announced.

By four-thirty I was within a hundred and twenty words of the end. Rob goes to work, performing extra chores while Sparky lingers hopefully outside the garden gate. Then the captain comes home unexpectedly from his voyage, and Sparky greets him so joyously that Mama changes her tune and declares that Sparky, cleaned up and de-flea’d, must become a member of the family. In the final scene, Rob, Sparky, and Papa start off for a walk in the woods as Mama waves goodbye from the porch.

Tubby didn’t believe the ending. “Why would Mama change her mind so suddenly?”

On Tubby’s advice, I rewrote that part. Sparky barks his head off when the captain returns, protecting Mama from the unknown intruder. The captain is impressed and persuades Mama the mutt is exactly what she needs as a watchdog.

I hurriedly copied my rough draft onto clean paper. The two of us raced to the principal’s house with only minutes to spare and added my masterpiece to the pile on the front porch. I was only a sophomore and had no hope of winning the contest, but at least I would not fail my English class and disappoint Miss Aubrey.

A week later the winner of the contest was announced: *I had won!* This was even more unlikely than a happy ending for Sparky, who in the real world would have been hauled off by the dogcatcher to a miserable fate. Nevertheless, I knew exactly which books I wanted as my prize: *The Frog Book*, *The Moth Book*, and *The Reptile Book*. The prize was to be awarded at commencement exercises.

Tubby was thrilled for me; Ruth was, too. My sister was graduating near the top of her class, but that seemed less impressive compared to my achievement. “There’s a dance

after the commencement exercises,” she reminded me. “Mother and I are making me a new dress.”

Of course I knew about the dance! I always knew about the dances, which so far had been complete and utter failures. I was almost fifteen, and I had spent my entire school career as a wallflower, but I ~~knew~~ believed in my heart that winning the writing contest was about to change everything. It was as if a fairy godmother had touched me with her magic wand and transformed me into a princess, and every boy at Plainfield High School would recognize this literary Cinderella and want to dance with her. From now on, my life would be completely different.

I convinced Mother that I, too, needed a new dress for this special occasion. She agreed, so pleased for me that she stayed up late, her treadle sewing machine chattering far into the night to finish my dress in time.

Commencement took place on a warm June evening in the school auditorium, normally dull and colorless but ~~new~~ transformed by the junior class, strewing festive greenery and white carnations, into a place that seemed almost regal. I had not only the new dress, maroon with a white linen collar and cuffs, exactly like Ruth’s, but also new shoes. Cotton stockings spoiled the picture, but at least ourthe stockings were white instead of black. The graduating class, solemn in royal blue caps and gowns, took seats in the front rows. Behind them were juniors who were receiving prizes, and one sophomore—me. The orchestra played something by Bizet, only slightly out of tune, a local minister delivered an opening prayer, followed by a piano solo, something loud and fast (Rachmaninoff, maybe), performed by a talented member of the graduating class, and speeches by the salutatorian (boy) and the valedictorian (girl). The orchestra lumbered through “Pomp and Circumstance” as the graduating seniors filed up to the stage to receive their diplomas. Then the chairman of the Board of Education exhorted the new graduates to go forth, do good works, et cetera.

I was in a delicious froth of excitement about what was going to happen next. My dreams were about to come true.

Winners of prizes in mathematics, French, and patriotic oratory were awarded, and the Rotary Club gave medals to The Most Useful Boy and The Most Useful Girl, leaving Ruth disappointed again. She'd had her heart set on being chosen for this honor.

My big moment had arrived. Mr. Best, the principal, reappeared at the podium, a small, thin man who almost staggered under the weight of a great bundle of fat green books, tied with white ribbons. "Miss Margaret White, please step forward to receive the Babcock Award!"

I walked up to the stage and waited, smiling, as the principal spoke of the "fresh, young talent discovered in the person of Miss Margaret White, not yet fifteen years of age, whose short story, 'Rob and Sparky' shows how much we have to look forward to as Miss White makes her way into the future as a writer. She is destined to make us all proud."

Mr. Best transferred the tomes to my arms, the audience politely applauded, and I returned to my seat, beaming.

The commencement exercises ended, proud parents set out for home except for those who would remain as chaperones, and most of the chairs were folded and stacked to make room for dancing. Potted palms were carried in from the hall and placed strategically around the auditorium, transforming the space into a ballroom.

The Aristocrats, a five-piece band, had been hired for the evening, and as the lights were lowered, they began to play "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles." Couples drifted out to the center of the ballroom—all of the crystal-chandelier girls and boys who'd shed their royal blue gowns to reveal the finery beneath, and most of the linsey-wolseys except for a handful who disdained dances and had already left. Even Tubby had a partner, myopic Kenny Strausser with his thick glasses and an overbite. I ~~waited patiently~~ stood on the sidelines,

clutching my ~~heavy~~ bundle of books ~~that seemed to grow heavier~~, sure that at any minute one of the boys in my class, or possibly even in the junior class—a senior would have been too much to hope for—would see me ~~with my prize books~~ and recognize that I was *a star*. I had won the Babcock Prize! I was talented!

The Aristocrats launched into “A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody,” ~~the pianist improvising ripples and runs~~. A stag line had formed near a long table set with a punchbowl and cookies (no pickles!), and a few boys stepped out boldly and cut in on the dancing couples. The new partner swept off with the girl in his arms, and her former partner joined the stag line. It would have made sense for one of those newly available boys to glance my way and ask me to dance. None did.

I told myself there was still plenty of time. ~~The night was young~~. Tubby now had a new partner—Jack Daniels, a boy with pimples. I would not have minded if Kenny or Jack, or any other boy, with pimples or without, asked me to dance.

Still none did.

“Yearning,” the trumpet crooned. The dance floor had become crowded. The bundle of books in my arms—~~my passport to the land of enchantment that I pictured for myself in my new life~~—grew heavier, and so did my heart.

The violinist took up “Beautiful Ohio,” a waltz. I loved to waltz, but nobody ~~wanted to waltz with me~~ ~~even looked in my direction~~. My hopes dwindled as it began to dawn on me that my prize-winning story of a boy and his dog was not going to win me what my heart desired most.

Then, out of the crowd stepped Stella Ertley, a friend of Ruth’s. Stella, five feet eleven and a half, who might have qualified as a crystal-chandelier girl if she hadn’t been quite so tall, noticed me standing there alone and walked over to me. I suppose she felt sorry for me. I must have looked pathetic.

“Peggy,” said Stella warmly, “congratulations on winning the ~~prize for excellence in literary composition~~ Babcock! What an honor! And for a sophomore! This is something worth celebrating, isn’t it? Ruth’s ~~already left, I believe, but she’s~~ ~~has~~ been telling me that you’re a swell dancer. Come on, let’s get out there and show them some of your fancy steps.”

A girl, asking me to dance? What utter humiliation! I bit my lip, trying to think of an excuse. But Stella didn’t wait for an answer. “Here, ~~let me take~~ ~~I’ll put~~ those books ~~and put them~~ somewhere,” she said ~~and lifted them from my arms~~. She deposited the ~~m~~ ~~books~~ behind ~~one of the~~ ~~a~~ potted palms, seized my hand, and whirled me ~~out onto~~ the dance floor. The piano thumped out “A Good Man Is Hard to Find,” and I would have given almost anything to disappear.

Chapter 3. A Glorious Future - 1917

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~~I wish I could say that my life improved a~~fter that ~~long and~~ tortured evening. I moped around so much that my two ~~closest~~ friends decided to do something to drag me out of the doldrums.

“We have a surprise for you,” Sara Jane announced ~~a few days later~~. It was the thirteenth of June, the day before I would turn ~~fifteen~~. “As a birthday gift Tubby and I are taking you to New York, to visit Miss Fowler of the American Phrenology Institute.”

I knew about phrenology. An expert could feel the bumps on your head and analyze your personality, point out your strengths and weaknesses, and guide you in your future choices.

I was skeptical, but it sounded like an adventure. On a hot, muggy day the three of us ~~in our hats and gloves~~ boarded the local train for the city and made our way to a building on Broadway near 36th Street. The sign of Fowler & Wells was posted above a show window on the first floor with a display of bald china heads. A map of the organs of the mind was drawn on each head. A ~~smiling~~ receptionist ~~greeted us and~~ directed us to a fusty Victorian parlor crowded with uncomfortable furniture. There we awaited a summons from Miss Jessie Fowler, described in a dignified brochure as the daughter of one of the founders of the Institute.

We were too nervous and excited to talk much. After a tense wait, we were led to Miss Fowler’s darkened inner sanctum. Despite the heat, the lady behind the large carved desk was dressed in a black suit and a white blouse. Her gray hair ~~seemed to be struggl~~eding

to escape from the severe bun at the nape of her neck. She glanced at the three of us shifting uneasily from foot to foot and wondering what would ~~come~~happen next.

Her gaze came to rest on my head. I was wearing a large blue straw hat, loaned to me by my sister. “Miss White, you are here for a consultation?”

I nodded.

“Kindly remove your hat.”

She pointed to a chair beside her desk. Sara Jane and Tubby retreated to a settee against the wall. Outside, the sun baked the city sidewalks, but heavy velvet draperies at every window had blocked off all natural light in Miss Fowler’s office. The only light came from a small desk lamp with a green shade.

Miss Fowler stood before me, eyes closed, and ran practiced hands over my skull, beginning around my temples, proceeding up my forehead and across my skull, then working down the sides around my ears. She began again at the crown and progressed down the back of my head. I sat perfectly still, staring at the lace jabot cascading over her ample bosom. She did not speak. When she had finished her examination, she settled at her desk and made notes on a large sheet of paper printed with a silhouette outline of a head. The head was marked into sections like the china heads in the window, each labeled with a simple drawing or a word: Language, for example, was located at the eye; Memory on the forehead, close by Agreeableness.

“Very well, Miss White, I imagine you are quite eager to hear the results of the examination.”

“Yes, ma’am,” I said, leaning toward the shadowy figure behind the green lamp.

Miss Fowler regarded me with pale blue eyes. “You have a most interesting cranium,” she said, ~~regarding me with pale blue eyes.~~ “Your head measures a little above the average, for it is twenty-one and three-quarter inches in circumference, while the average is twenty-

one and one-half inches average," she said. "You show a fair balance of power between body and brain."

Tubby and Sara Jane murmured something unintelligible behind me.

"I see that you are eager and adventuresome, prepared to travel to any destination to gather information on whatever topic interests you, regardless of the difficulties you may encounter." Miss Fowler continued, "I believe that you would benefit greatly from world travel. And I would advise you to take photographs of the places you have visited and the sights you have seen, in order to give lectures about your adventures to your friends and family when you return."

The phrenologist went on to give details of the glorious future she envisioned for me. There was more: possible focuses for my energy and talent in the fields of music, childhood diseases, even home decoration. All this deduced from the shape of my head!

She promised to have the receptionist type up her notes and mail them to me with a copy of the map of the human brain, as illustrated on the diagram. Tubby and Sara Jane paid Miss Fowler for the consultation with their pooled funds. I would have paid her double—triple!—had she asked for it. ~~She promised to have the receptionist type up her notes and mail them to me with a copy of the map of the human brain, as illustrated on the diagram.~~

My friends and I We left the offices of Fowler & Wells, and stepped, squinting, into the dazzling sunlight. Of course we talked of practically nothing else as we waited for the train back to Bound Brook. My mood and attitude toward life improved dramatically. I may have been a wallflower at the commencement dance, and at every dance I'd attended before it, but now I had the assurance, the profound belief, that the bumps on my head indicated a glorious future in which I would truly be a star, whatever I chose to do.

Chapter ~~43~~. Her Glorious Fancies - 1919

~~The My glorious~~ future ~~arrived-seemed in no hurry to arrive, with painful slowness, dragging its feet.~~ I desperately wanted attention, and ~~I tried to figure out ways to get it.~~ ~~W~~with that goal in mind, I joined the debating society. Most of the members ~~of the club~~ were boys. I soon realized that girls who join a debating society are not the kind-type of girls who might be asked to dance, and I probably wouldn't find a partner here.

Should women be granted the right to vote? was one of the questions being debated that fall. After years of marches and rallies and speeches by suffragists, Congress had passed a law granting women the right to vote, but it was now up to the states to ratify the law as an amendment to the Constitution. Thirty-five states were needed to ratify. New Jersey had not yet voted on the issue.

"I hope you're taking the negative side in the debate," said Mother.

This came as a shock—I knew she was wholeheartedly in favor of the amendment.

"Surely you don't think I'm opposed to women having the right to vote!"

"Of course you're not!" she snapped. "But for you to take the side you agree with, would be a mistake. That's the easy side! Remember, Margaret, always choose the harder path. What excellent discipline for you to argue in favor of the side you disagree with!"

That was how I wound up in front of a room full of people, arguing for something I didn't believe—that for their own protection women should not be allowed to vote. "Because it's the proper role of men to protect women," I declared, "and because women are by their nature unable to protect themselves"—I nearly choked on that line—"men must continue to

exercise this solemn duty. And since voters also have the duty to serve on juries, and since jurors sometimes hear descriptions of such deplorable acts that would be upsetting to the delicacies of any normal woman, they must be kept off juries—again, for their own protection. Furthermore,” I argued, “allowing the weaker sex to take part in political discussions could upset the harmony of the home. In addition, allowing women to run for public office could pit one woman against another. That is a situation distressing to civilized society.”

None of these was my idea. I found them in an anti-suffragist pamphlet and tried to translate the arrogant nonsense into something that sounded like my own words. But I argued so logically and convincingly that I won the debate. Afterward I felt guilty—what if I actually persuaded someone to that way of thinking? I did not for a minute believe that women needed to be protected, and I felt like a traitor to my gender arguing that they did.

Paul Reed, the boy who had actually argued in favor of women having the right to vote, invited me to [step-go out](#) for a soda afterward, so that he could talk some sense into my apparently misguided head. I let him think he had persuaded me, but that didn't lead to any more soda dates, or to an invitation to dance. In February of 1920 New Jersey became the twenty-ninth state to vote in favor of the amendment. Five years in the future I would be eligible to vote, but the debate club did nothing to change my life in the present.

That spring the drama club announced plans to put on two short plays: “Rosalie,” a three-character melodrama, and “The Bluffers,” a revue with a dozen or so characters. Both plays were set in France. Despite my complete lack of stage experience, I tried out for the title role of Rosalie, the maid, and was picked for the part. The role of Monsieur Bol went to Charles Drayton, tall, dark, and the handsomest boy in our class. I liked Charley a *lot*, but he dated crystal-chandelier girls and naturally was not interested in a linsey-woolsey. Violet-

eyed Eleanor Treacy, practically a founding member of the crystal-chandelier set, was cast as Madame Bol. I didn't know if she and Charley were dating, but they flirted constantly.

~~Both plays were a great success, "Rosalie" received three curtain calls, and Tubby and Sara Jane declared that I had natural comedic ability.~~

"Coming to the cast party?" Eleanor asked casually after the Saturday night performance. We held our conversation in the mirror of the girls' bathroom. I was wiping off my stage makeup with cold cream, and Eleanor was skillfully applying her usual rouge and lipstick, neither of which I was permitted to wear. "It's at Charley's house," she said, moving on to eyebrow pencil. "All the Bluffer boys will be there, and the stage crew, too. There'll be lots to eat, and dancing, too, of course." Eye shadow was next.

"Sorry, but I can't," I said. "I already have other plans."

"Oh, too bad," said Eleanor, but I felt sure she wasn't at all disappointed. My "other plans" were a fabrication, but I'd decided that the best way to avoid being humiliated at a dance was simply not to attend one.

At the start of my senior year I signed up to work on the staff of "The Oracle," the school's monthly magazine ~~that came out on the second Wednesday of every month. I'm ashamed to admit that one of my reasons for signing up was because~~ Charley Drayton was the editor-in-chief. Charley was a favorite of Miss Benedict and Miss Daily, the faculty advisors. He had an ingratiating manner and an easy grin, but he was also lazy, and the rest of us had to take up the slack for him, which we performed gladly at the time and then resented later when he got most of the credit. My title was "School Editor," and my job was to assign and edit articles about ~~school~~ activities, such as the drama club, the debate club, and the glee club. Mary Nancy Paluso, a linsey-woolsey nicknamed Mimsy, was the literary editor overseeing short stories and poetry, an assignment I would have preferred.

Printed above the masthead was the magazine's slogan: *I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips, let no dog bark.* "Can somebody tell me what that means?" I asked at an editorial meeting.

"It's a line from Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice'," answered ~~Mary Nancy, who goes by~~ Mimsy. "An oracle is a wise person who prophesies the future, and someone who calls himself 'Sir Oracle' believes that everything he says is so important that even the dogs should stop barking and listen."

Linsey-woolseys tended to know things like that.

The final issue of the year was published as the class yearbook with individual photographs of the graduating seniors along with that person's nickname, ambition, list of activities during four years of high school, and a classical quotation that was supposed to capture something of the senior's personality. Brainy Mimsy, of course, came up with the quotations. I could picture her sitting up all night, thumbing through books of poetry. Or maybe she had them all memorized.

Tubby's was from a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson, "A Dream of Fair Women": *A daughter of the gods, divinely tall, /And most divinely fair.* Mine was from a poem by James Russell Lowell, "My Love:" *Her glorious fancies come from far, /Beneath the silver evening star, /But yet her heart is ever near.*

"Suits you perfectly," said Tubby. "You and your 'glorious fancies'."

Jean Runyon, a junior ~~who would succeed to my position next year~~, was in charge of gathering the information on each graduating senior. We went over ~~the information~~ together, checking spelling and punctuation.

Margaret B. White. (The B was for Bourke, my mother's maiden name.) *Nickname: Peggy. Ambition: Herpetologist.*

"Herpetologist?" Jean asked. "What's that?"

“Someone who studies reptiles and amphibians,” I explained, thinking she surely ought to know that much. “Snakes, mostly, but also frogs and toads, newts, salamanders. And also lizards and turtles. They’re all herps. Creeping animals.”

Jean shuddered. ~~“Creepy, is what I’d call them.”~~ I remember the time—was it last year?—you came to school with a snake wrapped around each arm. And back in eighth grade, when you brought a snake to school and all the girls screamed, and the boys put on a show of not being scared, but I could tell that they were. Then Mr. Patterson said you couldn’t bring snakes to school any more.”

“I didn’t want to scare anybody. The snake wasn’t poisonous. I just thought it was interesting.”

“Maybe.” She shuffled through the forms she’d collected. “Other girls want to be teachers, and there are a couple who say they want to be nurses, but I know that Dottie Hendricks, for example, ~~faints at the sight of blood and~~ gets sick to her stomach when something doesn’t smell right. Eleanor Treacy says she’s planning to study art and become an illustrator. Most of them, though, just want to get married. The boys hope to go to sea or become doctors. But so far you’re the only one who wants to be anything like a herpetologist. Whatever made you decide to do something like that?” She arranged the papers in a neat stack. “What would you actually do with these creepy, scaly things?”

“I’ll visit dark and interesting jungles and bring back specimens for natural history museums. I’ll learn so much about them that people will invite me to come and lecture. Maybe I’ll become a famous scientist, and then I’ll marry a famous scientist, another herpetologist, and we’ll travel all over the world together.”

“You really want to do that? That’s kind of a strange thing for a girl to do.”

“I want to do all kinds of things that girls never do. That ~~women~~ never do. Didn’t you ever think of doing something like that?”

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Jean looked at me skeptically. “I just want to go to normal school and get my teaching certificate, because my dad wants me to, and teach for two years while Tom gets his degree, and then we’ll get married. They don’t hire married teachers where we’re going to live.” She opened her notebook and showed me a section in the back where she’d pasted pictures of bridal gowns and bridesmaids’ dresses. “See, I’ve already begun to plan my wedding.” We studied the pictures together. “Which do you like better for my bouquet, lilies or white roses?”

“Either,” I said. “Maybe both.” I’d never thought about wedding bouquets. I saw no point in thinking about [#weddings](#). Marriage seemed like something a long way off. [I was more interested in becoming a famous herpetologist.](#)

We went back to checking the seniors’ forms. My list of activities was among the longest in the class—decorating committees, ice cream committees, receptions, pageants, debating club, dramatic club, class secretary. I added another one: class song.

Along with Jack Daniel—the pimply boy who’d danced with Tubby after commencement two years earlier—I was elected by the staff of “The Oracle” to write the words to the class song. It would be sung at commencement to the tune of the Plainfield High School alma mater.

I’d been writing poetry since I was a young child. Mother kept most of my early scribblings in a box, along with my report cards, beginning in first grade. She did this for Ruth and for Roger, too, although Roger’s box was practically empty. “Just look at this,” my mother had said, pulling out a crumpled bit of paper with my handwriting. ‘Flit on, lovely butterfly/Into a world more fair/With azure sky far more high/Than that blue sky up there.’ You wrote that when you were eleven—see, I put the date on it: August 1915.”

Six years after writing that butterfly poem, I sat in the library across from Jack Daniel, trying to come up with an idea for the song. I didn’t much care for Jack. His pimples were

Commented [CY7]: Did MBW really write this poem? Clear up what’s fact and fiction in the back matter. Yes, she did.

mostly gone, but he seemed overly impressed with his own brilliance. He'd already had his poetry published in some little magazine no one had heard of. "We have to work the class colors into the poem," Jack said. "That's a good place to start."

"I didn't know we even *had* class colors. When was that decided? And what are they?"

Jack looked at me with utter disdain. "For your information they're red and gray, and we voted on them last fall, before the Autumn Festival dance. You don't recall that?"

"I didn't go to the Autumn Festival dance," I sniffed. "But aren't there some *other* school colors? Scarlet and azure?" I was thinking, I suppose, of the azure sky in my childhood poem.

"Red and blue, Peg," [Daniel-Jack](#) sighed. "Red and blue are the *school* colors. We're talking now about our *class* colors."

I had once ~~managed to write~~ [written a prize-winning an](#) eight-hundred-word short story with much less fuss, but then I wasn't trying to work with a self-appointed poet laureate. After hours of ~~debate~~ [discussion](#) we'd cobbled together a poem.

Our Red and Gray we'll ne'er forget, /We'll always to our Class be true. /What e'er we do thruout our lives /We'll keep unstained the Red and Blue.

"Very colorful," I allowed.

I graduated with high grades and plans to attend [Columbia University in New York City](#). ~~college in New York City~~. Mimsy was the valedictorian, no surprise, and gave a stirring address on "Beauty in Modern Life" with references to art, music, poetry, and dance. Prizes were awarded in Latin, physics, chemistry, mathematics, and Mimsy collected the Babcock Prize for her short story based on Hermione, the daughter of Helen of Troy. "I didn't even know Helen had a daughter," Tubby said. "But if anybody would know, it's Mimsy."

Commented [CY8]: Is this the actual song?
Yep.

I stayed at the dance for about fifteen minutes after the commencement exercises with no expectations—a good thing, because not one boy even glanced my way. What boy ~~could love~~ would want to dance with a girl who loves snakes and frogs? ~~Or even want to dance with her?~~

“It’s not the snakes and frogs that are the problem,” Tubby said. She’d stayed at the dance until she’d gotten tired of Jack Daniel hanging around and gone home. “It’s that you always seem so sure of yourself! ~~So confident!~~—And I think that scares them off. Just look at those crystal-chandelier girls. ~~Some of them might be strong as an ox, but w~~When a boy they like comes within range, they look as though they couldn’t open a jar of jelly without ~~masculine~~ his help. Maybe you should cultivate some of that—you know, the helpless maiden.”

Commented [CY9]: His instead of masculine?

Commented [CY10]: A tad awkward

“All right,” I said sarcastically, “but I’m probably incompetent at trying to appear incompetent.”

Tubby laughed. “~~You’re probably right~~ Maybe so. Anyway, you’ll be off to college in the fall, and everything will be different.”

* * * *

That summer I took the train to Rutgers University in New Brunswick, where I was enrolled in classes in swimming and aesthetic dancing. I was already a good swimmer—I’d been on the high school girls’ swim team—but I wanted to become an *excellent* swimmer, because I believed that, as a herpetologist ~~out~~ collecting specimens in the wild, I might frequently be around bodies of water. The Amazon, maybe, or the Nile!

When Ruth and I were children, our mother had sent us to dancing class to learn the waltz and the foxtrot, while crystal-chandelier girls studied ballet or tap. Aesthetic dancing—barefoot, no point shoes or tap shoes required—was different, a form of self-expression, ~~and~~ best of all and it didn’t require a partner. ~~I’d been walking home along fence tops since my~~

~~first years of grammar school and I~~ already had good balance, but I wanted to have complete control of my body, ~~my bones and muscles,~~ and I thought this kind of dancing would develop it.

The instructor, Madame Chartier, was a gaunt woman in a ~~tight fitting black garment from neck to ankles that she wore under a~~ flowing black skirt, her dark hair with a dramatic white streak pulled severely back into a chignon.

“Once upon a time,” Madame Chartier told us, “ballet was my life. I danced en pointe, I had beautiful extension!” She paused to demonstrate, her ~~elegant~~ arms and legs in an ~~elegant~~ breath-taking pose. ~~“But then I studied with Ruth St. Denis and her husband, Ted Shawn—ah, what a glorious pair! But m—and my~~ focus moved away from my limbs, ~~in~~ to the center of my body. I learned to ~~focus-concentrate~~ on my breathing and ~~the movement of my body how I moved~~. And that, my dears, is what I want you to do: Breathe! Move! Feel that energy coursing through your entire body!”

Day after day I breathed and I moved. ~~I had always been a bit chubby, but T~~he swimming and dancing streamlined my roundish figure, ~~and m-~~My body became lithe and sleek. One of the dancers loaned me a lipstick and showed me how to use it. I looked in the mirror and liked what I saw. No longer a plain, baby-faced girl but a pretty seventeen-year-old smiled back at me.

The other thing that happened during that summer was my growing friendship with our ~~well-to-do~~ neighbors, Mr. Henry Munger and his sister, Miss Jessie Munger, ~~who lived a few blocks away~~. Bound Brook was not a wealthy town. ~~Probably most of the people living there could have been described as linsey-woolseys. The crystal chandelier types had homes in Plainfield—large villas, not quite mansions, with sweeping green lawns and elaborate flowerbeds that changed with the seasons.~~The Mungers could very well have lived in ~~nearby~~

Plainfield, ~~a town of large villas, sweeping green lawns, and elaborate flowerbeds,~~ but for some reason they chose not to. Mr. Munger pattered around his flower ~~s~~ ~~gardens~~ and looked after his own lawn, although he had reached an age when that was becoming harder.

Sometimes my mother sent Roger over to the Mungers' ~~a few blocks away~~ to help out. They always ~~offered-tried~~ to pay Roger ~~for his efforts~~, but Mother forbade him to accept any money.

"It's what neighbors *do*," she said. "They look out for each other."

Roger objected, saying he wanted to have some extra spending money, and he promised to save half of whatever he made, but Mother was unbending. So Roger rode over on his bicycle to help with the weeding and mowing and snow shoveling and sometimes ran errands for Miss Munger without pay, ~~but I have no doubt she~~ ~~She probably~~ slipped him a quarter every now and then and Roger didn't say no, and he didn't report this income to Mother.

Miss Munger had problems with her eyesight, and this was where I came in. Two or three times a week I read to her for an hour or so. We sat in the dark Victorian front parlor with the dusty velvet draperies and weighty furniture and inscrutable paintings in heavy gilt frames crowding every wall, the lights all burning, even on the brightest summer day.

~~Between chapters~~ Miss Munger always called for tea ~~somewhere between chapters~~, and it was Mr. Munger who obliged, as though he was a servant, carrying a large silver tray and a plate of slightly stale cookies. When I told Mother ~~about it~~, she began sending over a tin of cookies fresh from our own oven.

Miss Munger ~~had a fondness for~~ ~~was fond of~~ historical novels, particularly if they were set in England and featured the Tudors. She loved every one of Henry VIII's wives. She was interested in many other things as well, and I once brought my hognose snake to visit.

Miss Munger squinted at him when he reared up and hissed at her and applauded softly when he played dead.

“What is it you intend to study, Margaret?” she asked on my last visit before I was to leave for college-

“Herpetology.”

“The study of snakes! How thrilling!” she said. “But is that a proper calling for a young lady, I wonder? Still, one does sometimes wish for the unusual, doesn’t one!” Then she ~~recalled~~ added thoughtfully that the highlight of her life had been a trip to India with her grandmother when she was a girl. “The naja naja! That’s what they called the cobra. I remember the snake charmer playing his pungi, and that snake rising up out of his basket, my dear! How exciting for you!”

“The colors!” she said every time she spoke of it. “And the sounds, my dear! The smells, too, but that’s another story.”

I was packing my clothes, folding another drab dress as well as several pairs of those awful cotton stockings. Ruth, home from Boston where she was in college, sat on her bed across from mine. She was trying and tried to assure me that from now on everything would be different.

“College boys aren’t like those boys who didn’t pay attention to you in high school,” she said. “You probably scared them off. You’re too smart, too ambitious, too *driven*. Boys mature more slowly than girls, you know, and in high school they just don’t know what to make of a girl who is as confident as you seem to be. But that will change. You’ll see.”

That was pretty much what Tubby had said. Maybe she was right.

“Has it changed for you?” I asked. It didn’t seem to me that much had. She was still wearing cotton stockings and the dresses she’d made herself in high school.

Commented [CY11]: Connection to snakes?

Commented [CY12]: Is she obvious?

“I’m not like you, Peg,” Ruth replied. “I’ve never been like you. I love the law classes I’m taking, I get good grades, and I’m contented with that. I’ve never had the slightest desire to do things that other women don’t. I don’t want to be different. And you *do*.”

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“Yes,” I said. ~~““You’re right.”~~ That’s true.”

When I’d finished packing, we all piled into the family car, a strange-looking vehicle that had been modified by some of my father’s inventions and always drew quizzical looks and Father drove to the women’s residence hall at Barnard College, where I’d be living while I attended classes at Columbia, the men’s college across the street. Columbia didn’t admit women, but we could enroll in science courses there while we took our required courses, such as English composition, at Students’ Hall on the Barnard campus. Columbia was a men’s college and didn’t admit women, but I could enroll in science courses there and take my other required courses at Barnard, the women’s college on the opposite side of Broadway where I’d be living.

Commented [CY13]: Is the reader prepared for college? This paragraph is rather cumbersome.

Fixed. Meanwhile, somehow erased your Roger question. Of course he can! He’s ten!

~~I didn’t have much luggage.~~ “Call if you need anything,” Father said, setting down the battered old suitcase my mother had loaned me.

“Remember, Margaret, never take the easy way,” Mother ~~told me~~ said, predictably.

Roger promised to take care of our various animals.

From now on everything will be different, Ruth had ~~said~~ promised.

But they weren’t. Nothing changed—at least not right away.

Chapter [54](#). A Mature and Intelligent Young Woman - [1921](#)

I'd signed up for biology, zoology, mathematics, and chemistry at Columbia ~~and~~
[Most](#) of the students in my classes were boys. The girls in my residence hall laughed at things I didn't find funny, and they never seemed to tire of discussing clothes and parties and the handsome philosophy professor. My roommate, Madge Jacobson, a pretty girl with a curly blond bob and a closetful of smart dresses, would have fit perfectly with the crystal-chandeliers. While I was studying in the library, Madge and her friends spent their free time playing bridge and talking incessantly about the Columbia boys they met. Madge [had an infectious laugh and always seemed ready to have fun. Boys were](#) ~~had boys~~ asking her for dates from her first week on campus. [One thing can be said for Madge: she didn't seem to mind that I kept a couple of pet snakes in a terrarium next to my desk.](#)

We had strict hours—eight o'clock on weeknights, midnight on weekends, ten on Sundays. The hours didn't bother me. Why would I want to stay out any later? There was a telephone in a booth at the end of the hall, and we had to take turns answering "Good evening, Fourth Floor Brooks Hall," from seven until quiet hours began at ten; no calls were allowed after ten. I hated that one hour a week when it was my turn to sit by the phone and answer when it rang, then trot off to knock on the door of the fortunate girl [who'd gotten the call.](#)

It never rang for me.

At the start of Christmas vacation I caught the train from Manhattan out to Bound Brook. As usual, I had brought [along](#) a satchel of books ~~with me~~. [My nose](#) was deep in [my](#)

~~chemistry book~~ a chapter on cycloalkane when a male voice asked if the seat next to me happened to be available. I glanced up and nodded, ~~and he sat down. I glanced over.~~ He ~~was older but good looking, was~~ tall and thin with fine features and bright blue eyes behind horn-rimmed glasses that slipped down his nose. ~~He looked older.~~ He observed me observing him and smiled, ~~displaying perfectly even teeth. I smiled back, a little nervously. He pointed~~ to the book in my lap.

“Organic chemistry,” he said. “You’re a student, then?”

I said I was. “Columbia University. I plan to major in herpetology.”

At first I kept my finger in the book to mark my place, but ~~I soon~~ forgot about it. He was a scientist, he said, on his way to Calco Chemical in Bound Brook where he was about to start work as a research chemist. ~~He was easy to talk to.~~

“They manufacture dyes,” he ~~said~~ explained. “That’s what I’ll be working on.” Brief pause, then, “My name is François Gilfillan. Please call me Gil.”

“Peggy White,” I said, ~~thinking that m-~~ My name sounded terribly dull and ordinary, ~~compared to someone named François.~~ “My home is in Bound Brook.”

We shook hands. “I’m from Ninnekah, Oklahoma,” he said. “I’m probably the only person from Ninnekah who’s ever been named François.”

~~A boy—a man, really—was paying attention to me. And he was a scientist!~~

~~I was light headed when w-~~ We both got off the train in Bound Brook. He helped me with my small bag—I didn’t need help, but, remembering Tubby’s advice, I let him—and introduced him to my father, who had come ~~to the station~~ to meet me. They seemed to make a favorable impression on each other right from the start.

“It appears that your daughter and I have similar interests in science, Mr. White,” Gil said while they were still shaking hands. ~~He seemed more formal than the boys I knew.~~ “May I have your permission to call on her?”

Commented [CY14]: General comment: Does she seem too obsessed with the approval of men rather than ALSO being obsessed with her own development and success?

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Father glanced at me, and a little smile twitched at his lips. “Of course, Mr. Gilfillan,” he said.

And Gil did call. At my mother’s suggestion, I invited him to come for Christmas dinner, and he accepted.

I wondered if, while Gil was there, Father would have a sudden inspiration and wander off to make notes or draw diagrams for one of his inventions. He was working on something extremely complicated, he said, the most complicated project yet. ~~I had not seen him since Thanksgiving, and I thought he looked pale and drawn.~~ “Maybe you need to take a rest, Father,” I said. “You look tired.”

~~“I’m fine, Margaret,” he assured me. “I’m just fine.”~~

Christmas Day dawned. There was no decorated tree, no wreath on the front door. I thought it would have been nice to have some cheerful touch, but my parents saw no reason for holly or shiny glass balls. ~~My parents~~They didn’t practice any religion, and they would have probably served what we always ate on Sunday—chicken fricassee and dumplings—if Ruth hadn’t ~~intervened and~~ persuaded Mother to order a big roasting chicken, instead of one small bird that she usually stretched to feed the five of us. We would stuff the roaster, mash potatoes with cream, fix glazed carrots, bake Parker House rolls, and serve apple pie with a scoop of vanilla ice cream (“à la mode” Ruth called it) for dessert. It would be a real holiday feast.

“You’ve been spending too much time with the upper crust in Boston,” Mother sniffed, ~~but I could tell she was pleased to be fixing some of the dishes she’d learned in her school cooking classes.~~

Mother and Ruth and I spent the morning in the kitchen. After everything was ready, I went upstairs to change. I wished I had something ~~gay and~~ festive to wear, but everything I owned seemed just the opposite. However, I had ~~purchased at~~the tube of dark red lipstick I’d

Commented [CY15]: Do you think this needs more background?
Better to cut it.

[purchased last summer while I was at Rutgers](#), and [I'd learned to apply](#) it expertly. I thought that was in the spirit of the day, but when I came downstairs, Mother saw me and frowned. "It makes you look cheap, Margaret," she said, but she did not send me to the bathroom to wipe it off.

Gil arrived, cheeks reddened with cold, wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and presenting Mother with a box of chocolates. Gil and Father hit it off immediately, as I expected they would. Gil was a serious scientist. Even before the chicken emerged from the oven, Father had asked all the critical questions ~~and gotten the answers~~.

Father: "So, Gil, where do you hail from?"

Gil: "Well, sir, I was born in Ninnekah, Oklahoma, ~~which you've probably never heard of~~, and my family moved to Texas when I was a boy."

Father: "Educated in Texas, then?"

Gil: "A year at the Polytechnic College, but I left and went to visit an uncle in Oregon and got a job teaching high school. Ended up going to college and getting a degree in pharmacy before I joined the army."

There followed questions of where he'd served during the [World War against Germany that had ended a few years earlier](#), and that led to a discussion about chemical warfare. Gil explained that after his discharge from the army he'd gone to Yale on a fellowship from Calco Chemical and had recently gotten his doctorate in chemistry. "Now I'm at Calco as a research chemist."

Mother (coming in from the kitchen and interrupting): "And how old did you say you are, Mr. Gilfillan?"

Gil (turning his attention from Father): "Twenty-eight, Mrs. White. I'll be twenty-nine ~~next month~~ [in January](#)."

Mother ([shocked](#)): "Twenty-eight! Are you aware that Margaret is just seventeen?"

Gil looked startled, and I suppose I did, too. I'd guessed he was older than I was, but not *that* much older. Twelve years sounded like a large age gap, even if it didn't feel that way. Gil recovered quickly. "Peg—Margaret—strikes me as a very mature and intelligent young woman."

A bright little bubble of happiness expanded in my chest. Not a seventeen-year-old girl—a *mature and intelligent young woman!* I turned away to hide a grin.

Nothing more was said about my age, and we lurched awkwardly to another topic until it was time to bring the food to the table. Father carved inexpertly, as though he'd never seen a roast chicken, and dishes were passed around. Gil complimented everything, but otherwise it was a quiet meal. My father didn't like a lot of conversation at meals, but at least he didn't bolt from the table to make notes on his latest projectidea.

Mother and Ruth kept eyeing Gil surreptitiously. We rarely had guests for dinner, and Roger stared at him with undisguised curiosity. "You must be pretty important," said my brother. "We never eat like this." Mother gasped.

"I'll take that as a compliment," Gil said smoothly and accepted more mashed potatoes.

Roger was not the only one who ~~I felt vaguely embarrassed. We rarely had guests for dinner, and this was the first boy—man, actually—I had ever brought home, the first who had ever paid attention to me, and I had no idea how to act. None of us did.~~ I ate silently, feeling vaguely embarrassed, and occasionally jumped up to ~~bustle in and out of the kitchen, carrying away~~ dirty dishes to the kitchen and, industriously scraping them, glad for something to do ~~before returning to the dining room.~~

"You should be in there entertaining your beau," Mother whispered as she rinsed the dishes. "Goodness knows your father won't do it."

Commented [CY16]: Reader needs to know him a bit better.
Revealed throughout meal.

“He’s not my beau! And he and Father are actually talking.” We crept closer to the swinging door between the kitchen and the dining room to listen. A deep conversation was in progress. I relaxed, a little.

Dessert ~~appeared~~was served. Ruth had produced a handsome apple pie, and Roger announced that he had cranked the ice cream freezer himself. “I thought my ~~until he thought~~ ~~his~~ arm would fall off.” he said proudly.

My parents didn’t drink coffee, so they didn’t offer any—just another round of ice water from a pitcher with an embarrassing noticeable chip on the rim. I wasn’t sure what to do next. Nobody else did either. We sat on and on at the table, trying to think of something to say, until Roger spoke up. “Do you want to see my rabbits?”

Gil said he did, and we~~We all~~ trooped out to the backyard. Roger introduced his bunnies one by one and allowed Gil to pet them. It had begun to snow lightly. Finally Gil praised the meal one more time, wished us a Happy Christmas again, shook hands with Father, and retrieved his hat and overcoat.

“Goodbye, Peggy,” he said. “Thank you for inviting me to be a part of your family’s celebration.”

Celebration? It hadn’t seemed like much of a celebration. Gil stepped out into the whirling snow, and the door closed firmly behind him. I stood at the window, watching. He shoved his hands deep in his pockets, hunched forward, and hurried down the front walk and turned the corner.

“Where does he live?” Ruth asked. “How’s he getting home? It’s snowing pretty hard.”

“I don’t know.”

“Well,” said Mother, dropping into her chair. “That’s that.”

A few days later a note arrived addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph White, thanking them for their kind hospitality. There was no mention of the mature and intelligent young woman.

* * * *

Gil telephoned me at Brooks Hall—the first phone call I’d received there, [other than from my mother](#)—and invited me to have dinner with him on his birthday, January twelfth. He would take the train into the city from Bound Brook after work in the laboratory. “We can meet at Pierre’s. It’s a nice little French restaurant near the train station.”

~~I mentioned that I had an eight o’clock weeknight curfew, and Gil promised to escort me back to my residence hall in time.~~

When I told Madge that I planned to wear my one “good” outfit, which wasn’t very good at all, and my dreadful cotton stockings, she offered to loan me an entire outfit. “You’re going to Pierre’s, my dear,” she said. “You can’t go there looking like a farmer’s daughter.”

Out came Madge’s smart little black suit, peacock blue hat and gloves, and silk stockings—the stockings alone made me feel as though I was dressed to the nines. My tweed coat would have to do. Mother had bought [it](#) for me when I was a freshman in high school, a size larger than I usually wore because she’d thought I hadn’t finished growing. It was an investment and worth every penny, Mother had said, because Irish tweed doesn’t wear out and I’d have it for years. But it was still one size too large and made me look like a middle-aged housewife, older and dowdier than a farmer’s daughter.

“Now the makeup,” Madge said, and went to work—rouge on the cheeks, powder on the nose, black pencil around the eyes, and finally the lipstick. “Remember to re-do the lipstick when you’ve finished eating. Be sure to blot your lips, but be careful when he kisses you that you don’t smudge,” she warned.

When he kisses me? I hadn't considered that possibility. The girls in our wing of the residence hall had thoroughly discussed the topic of when it was proper to let a boy kiss you the first time. Most agreed that the third date was all right. A few who were considered fast by the others dismissed this as prudish. "If you want to kiss him on the first date, then do it! What's the harm in that?"

"But you want the boy to respect you," argued overweight, sallow-skinned Muriel, and the prudes nodded sagely.

Madge sided with the fast girls. Kissing was fine, ~~my roommate declared,~~ but you did have to maintain your standards and not let it go beyond that. "No petting," Madge advised firmly. "Not until you've been dating regularly for a couple of months."

I'd listened ~~closely, and silently, not wanting to admit that I didn't know what~~ petting was. Madge explained it later: "No touching below the neck." They all seemed to have had plenty of experience in dating—even Muriel—and most had established timetables for each step beyond the first kiss. But I had no experience at all, and this would be my first real date. ~~Gil was so much older that~~ I was sure ~~he'd that~~ Gil must have had plenty of dates and would know what was expected. He didn't seem like the type to take advantage of a girl.

I checked the seams on my borrowed stockings ~~for the last~~ one more time; I was ready. I had my doubts about meeting Gil at the restaurant, but Madge thought ~~that~~ it was fine. "It's much more sophisticated to meet him there than to have him make the long haul up to a dormitory in Morningside Heights."

I arrived at Pierre's too early ~~and fidgeted nervously. N,~~ not sure what a girl was supposed to do while waiting for her date. I ordered coffee, even though I seldom drank coffee and didn't care for it, but I felt that ordering a glass of milk would betray my utter lack of sophistication. The waiter in a long white apron appeared indifferent. I poured in as much

cream as the cup would hold and sipped the pale coffee until it was cold. Should I pay for it? Or wait for Gil to pay for it?

At last he rushed in, overcoat flapping, glasses steaming in the sudden heat of the restaurant, full of apologies and explanations: his boss wanted additional data before he could leave, the trains didn't run as often as he thought. He slid into a chair across from me, ~~rubbing his hands to warm them~~. "Well," he said, smiling, "here we are."

"Happy Birthday," I said. *Should I have bought him a gift? But what would have been the right thing to buy?*

"Thank you."

~~I wondered if Gil could see how nervous I was?~~ I'd left a red lip print on the rim of the coffee cup. ~~H—had that taken it all off all the lipstick? Should I go to the ladies room and put on more? Or wait until after I'd eaten?~~

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The waiter appeared and saved me. "*Bonsoir, m'sieur et mam'selle,*" he said with a stiff bow, handing me a menu.

Two years of Madame Bosc's French class had not included any food vocabulary. I recognized a few words, like *poulet*, chicken, but I had no idea if the *poulet* was baked, boiled, or fried. When Gil said he'd heard that the *potage d'oignon* was excellent, and the waiter recommended the *vol au vent*, whatever that was, I went along with their suggestions.

Gil talked about his work in the lab and asked questions about herpetology that sounded as though he actually cared and wasn't just being polite. Boys I'd known in high school had always fled when the conversation veered toward my future plans, like wanting to travel and bring back live specimens and give lectures, but Gil paid attention. By the time my empty *potage* bowl was whisked away and a pastry filled with something-or-other was set before me, my self-consciousness was gradually disappearing.

After some delicious *mousse au chocolat* and another *demitasse de café*, there was the sudden realization that we'd have to rush ~~like mad~~ to make it back to the residence hall by ~~the~~ weeknight curfew. Gil took my elbow and hustled me ~~down curbs,~~ across streets, and along sidewalks to the imposing entry of Brooks Hall with the row of Greek columns. After a hurried thank you and goodbye—there was no time to even *think* about a kiss—I stepped through the door into the brightly lighted lobby, past the dour housemother frowning at her watch.

For five days I thought often of Gil, wondering if there would be another date and another possibility for a kiss. Then, at last, I received a telephone call. But it wasn't Gil. It was Mother.

“Come home as quick as you can, Margaret. Father is in a coma.”

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Chapter ~~65~~. Relatives and Revelations - 1922

My father had suffered a stroke. It was not his first.

~~The first one had happened five years earlier, before Ruth left for college in Boston.~~ ~~We~~ we'd just finished supper. ~~Ruth hadn't yet gone away to college, and it was Ruth's~~ ~~her~~ turn to wash the dishes; I was drying. Father sat in his usual chair, thinking, and Mother sat in *her* chair, sewing and probably trying to get him to talk to her. He'd made an odd noise and slumped over. Mother jumped up and ran to him. So did I, still holding the dishtowel. He'd seemed to be trying to talk, but nothing came out except strange garbled sounds. Ruth rushed to call the doctor.

It was a stroke, the doctor had told us then. I didn't know what a stroke was, but I soon learned: Father could ~~not~~ move his left arm or leg, part of his face was paralyzed, and he couldn't speak. I'd thought ~~that~~ he was going to die. But he had not, and every day as soon as I came home from school—I'd been ~~was~~ twelve at the time and in the sixth grade—I sat beside him and described everything that happened that day.

Mr. Hoe, the owner of the company where Father worked, had come to the house to visit him. "We are much indebted to you, White," I remembered Mr. Hoe ~~saying~~ ~~id~~, patting my father's hand. "We wish to assure you that your job will be waiting for you when you're able to come back to work."

It had been a long and frustrating process, the gradual return of speech and movement, a slow recovery of performing even the simplest tasks. But in time Father was well enough

to return to the foundry. Eventually he was back to normal and took Ruth and Roger and me on a trip to Niagara Falls.

Commented [CY17]: Perhaps end the sentence after the first “foundry”?

This time it was different. He was unconscious, ~~and the~~ ~~The~~ doctor was not optimistic. ~~For the next two days~~ I stayed by his side in his hospital room, holding his hand and speaking to him softly, ~~as he lay silent and unmoving.~~

Commented [CY18]: Said above that he is unconscious. Make it clear here that he is in the hospital.

“Do you remember when I was about eight years old and you took me to your factory?” I asked.

The day had been bright and sunny, but inside the foundry where the printing presses were manufactured ~~it was I had entered~~ a different world—hot, dusty, smoky, and terribly noisy. You had to shout to make yourself heard above the roar and clang of the machinery.

~~Father and~~ Clutching Father’s hand, I had climbed metal stairs to an iron balcony ~~and where we~~ looked down on an awesome, terrifying scene. ~~I’d clutched Father’s hand then, as I clutched it now.~~ A gigantic ladle ~~filled with molten iron and~~ suspended from an overhead track was guided into place. The ladle tipped, pouring a fiery cascade of red-hot liquid metal ~~poured~~ into molds ~~down on the factory floor~~. Sparks flew and danced, accompanied by a blast of intense heat.

Commented [CY19]: Meaning?

“I’ll never forget that, Father,” I whispered now, remembering the heart-pounding sense of danger I’d felt then, and the trust I’d always had in him to keep me safe. ~~and I~~ squeezed his hand, willing him to squeeze back, but there was no response.

Commented [CY20]: Already said that you are looking down. Smooth out this para.

Commented [CY21]: Is it clear WHY she will never forget it. What does her father mean to her? Reflect back on her childhood, how he encouraged her to do more, learn more, etc.

Ruth rushed home from Boston and spelled me at Father’s bedside. I was reluctant to leave, but my sister and my mother insisted and, exhausted, I gave in. Not long after I left the hospital and went home to climb into my childhood bed, my ~~f~~Father died. I ~~have never gotten~~ got over the fact that I was not with him at that moment.

Mother was completely shaken. Father's brother, Lazarus, called Lazar—an engineer, like Father—and Uncle Lazar's wife, Naomi, came at once. So did Grandmother White and my two cousins, Felicia and David. But for reasons that I couldn't fathom, it was obvious that my mother disliked her mother-in-law and sister-in-law, and she had only grudging respect for Uncle Lazar. Her feelings were obvious, and she didn't try to hide them, was barely civil to them. Later, when I asked why, Mother said, "They think they're better than we are, because Lazar makes more money than your father ever did." That was Mother's explanation, but I believed there must be more to it than she admitted.

Commented [CY22]: Seems abrupt.

Mr. Hoe and a handful of men from the foundry appeared in somber black suits with solemn faces on a blustery January day and stood bare-headed, holding their fedora hats, by beside the open grave in the Plainfield cemetery where the family had gathered. Holding somber black fedoras, they assured Mother that Joseph White would never be forgotten and a plaque in his memory would be mounted outside the main office. A tall, thin man with a goatee began to read from a notebook, saying droning on and on about what a fine person Joseph White had been. I'd never seen him before. How did he know anything about my father?

Commented [CY23]: What is a somber black fedora?

I glanced at Ruth questioningly. "Ethical Culture Society," she whispered. "Kind of a non-church. Mother's idea." She shrugged and dabbed at her eyes.

Whoever he was, he Mother and Father had disavowed any sort of religious belief. The Bourkes, my mother's Irish family, were Roman Catholic, but my grandmother had broken away and become a devout Baptist. Mother wanted no parts of either the Catholics or the Baptists and followed Father in joining the Ethical Culture Society in New York. A leader of the society had performed their marriage ceremony, and now another leader—they didn't call them priests or ministers—had made the trip to Plainfield. He called on Uncle Lazar to say a few words, and then it was over.

Commented [CY24]: This reads like explanation. Already said that her parents had no religion. What exactly is the Ethical Culture Society?

Roger leaned against Mother, crying quietly, sobbed and clutched Mother's skirt.

Commented [CY25]: No idea of him and his age. He seems like an infant.

Mother looked as though every drop of blood had been drained from her, and I was afraid that she, too, might topple into the yawning grave. Uncle Lazar and Aunt Naomi and Grandmother White clung to each other as a shovelful of dirt was flung onto the plain wooden coffin. My cousins stared dolefully at the grave. For days I'd done almost nothing but weep, but now, standing by the graveside, I felt only an awful numbness, as though a hole had been hollowed out inside me. Mother handed each of us a white rose she'd bought from a florist, and I stepped forward and dropped them-mine onto the dirt. I wondered when I'd be able to feel again, or if I ever would.

It was over. The men from R. Hoe & Company replaced their fedoras and left.

The rest of us drove back to our house, and Mother tied on an apron and served lunch, briskly ladling out steaming bowls of pea soup. Uncle Lazar and Aunt Naomi shook their heads, explaining that saying they weren't hungry, but Grandmother White refused the bowl Mother offered her. "I don't eat ham," she said. "You made this soup with a ham bone."

"That's right," Mother said, her chin lifted defiantly. "I did."

"You should have known I wouldn't eat it." Grandmother White and Mother glared at each other.

The others looked away, except for Ruth, who glanced at me and shot me a look and shrugged shook her head. I couldn't tell what she was thinking.

No one seemed to have much appetite, but we ate—there was plenty of bread and applesauce for the non-soup eaters—and then the in-laws prepared to leave. Uncle Lazar gave Roger and Ruth and me tentative hugs. "I'll do what I can to help you with your schooling, if you need it," he promised. We thanked him, although I had no idea if we needed it or not. ~~soon~~ A few days later I found out that we did.

My sister offered to go through Father's things with Mother, who sat at the dining room table, poring over a pile of bills. "Twenty-five years," she muttered. "Twenty-five years of marriage, and I never had the slightest idea of any of this."

Commented [CY26]: On the day of his funeral?

The door to Roger's room was closed. I tapped on it and pushed it open. Roger lay on his bed, staring at the ceiling. "Go away," he growled, trying to sound grownup and manly—he was eleven—but it came out as the sob of a sad little boy. I ruffled his hair, and he pushed my hand away.

Commented [CY27]: See previous comments.

I left Roger alone and wandered from room to room, gazing at Father's photographs that crowded every wall. The one he'd done of Mother in her shawl, lit with a flashlight, her head turned a little, her smile tenuous. Another of Ruth and Roger and me at Niagara Falls, taken after he'd recovered from his first stroke; Mother had said she didn't want to go anywhere, just wanted to stay home, and waved to us as we left, telling us to go and enjoy ourselves. Pictures of flowers, birds, my butterflies, our old dog, Rover. Every photograph brought back another memory of my father and the painful recognition that there would be no new ones. I was torn between wanting to look at them and being overcome with grief when I did.

Commented [CY28]: ? WHAT DOES SHE THINK/FEEL when she looks at the pictures. She seems two-dimensional at times.

On the day before Ruth had to leave for Boston and her law classes, Mother called us together at the dining room table. The flowers sent by friends were wilting, and the pies and covered dishes delivered by sympathetic neighbors had been consumed. Ruth brewed a pot of tea and poured a glass of milk for Roger and brought him the last of the neighbors' cookies.

"There's something I want to tell all of you," Mother began. "But I've waited until now to do it, trying to think how to say it. And I've decided there is no way to make it any easier. The Whites are Jews. I'm talking about Lazarus, Naomi, the grandmother, the children—all observant Jews, meaning they obey certain laws that make not a particle of sense to me."

Commented [CY29]: This seems to come out of nowhere – abrupt. Ease into, perhaps.

Roger broke off a corner of his molasses cookie and stuffed it into his mouth. I opened my mouth and closed it again. Ruth poured milk into her tea and asked calmly, “What about Father?”

“Jewish, too, of course, but not observant. He rejected all of that long before we were married, before I even met him. He told me right off about his family and asked if it mattered to me. He knew I was Catholic on one side, Baptist on the other, and I wanted nothing to do with either one. I said it didn’t, as far as he was concerned, but I had to be honest and say I’ve never liked Jews. In general, I mean.”

Ruth and I stared at Mother, trying to take in what she was saying. “Why?” Roger piped up. He was chasing a crumb around the saucer in front of him. “Why don’t you like Jews?”

“Because they’re all like Lazar and Naomi ~~and think they’re better than anybody else.~~ They call themselves the Chosen People. And But they’re greedy. All they care about is money. You don’t see Jews taking the hard jobs. They get someone else to do their dirty work and then make a profit on their labor. So it’s not something you want to brag about, that your own father was born and raised a Jew.” Mother slapped the table for emphasis. “When the family moved from Poland to England, their name was Weis, which means White. Then they changed it before they came to America, before your father was born. Grandmother White doesn’t let you forget for a minute who she is. That’s why she was making that fuss about not eating my soup because I’d cooked the peas with a hambone, to give it some flavor. Jews don’t eat ham. I didn’t do it. ~~Not~~ to deliberately insult her, but she took it that way, didn’t she?”

I was speechless, but Ruth was not. “Why are you telling us this now?” She ~~’d~~ pushed her chair back from the table, stood up abruptly and began pacing, her forehead knotted in a frown.

Commented [CY30]: Another way of saying this?

“Because someone might bring it up, you never know, and I didn’t want you to be surprised. I wanted you to hear it from me first.”

“Is it a secret?” asked Roger.

“Not a secret, exactly. You don’t talk about it, but if someone happens to ask you if you’re Jewish, you should say, ‘I am not, but my father was born to a Jewish family.’ And then change the subject.”

“Oh,” said Roger. “May I please be excused?”

Mother nodded, and Roger’s chair scraped away from the table. Ruth sat down again and poured herself another cup of tea.

I still hadn’t said anything, mostly because I didn’t know what to say, or even what to think. I listened to the *clink clink* of Ruth’s spoon against the teacup. In some ways what Mother had just told us seemed the least important thing I’d ever learned about my father, no more important than his shoe size. What could it possibly mean to *me*?

“Uncle Lazar said he’d help us with tuition, if we need it,” I said at last, because it seemed necessary to say something.

“Well, you probably will,” said Mother. “Your father was not prudent with money.”

The next day Ruth got on the train for Boston, and it fell to me to visit the law offices of Calhoun and Reilly. Mr. Calhoun, a half dozen thin strands of pale hair combed in even rows across his skull, sat behind a large desk and examined the single sheet of paper centered 4squarely on it. He explained that, although Father had drawn up a Last Will and Testament stating that his estate was to be divided evenly in four portions among his wife and three children, there was actually no estate to speak of—just a small savings account and a house with a mortgage.

Mother was right: Father had not been prudent with money.

Commented [CY31]: Needed? Yes – part of Roger, typical of his age.NO REACTION FROM MARGARET? She needs to react to the BIG moments in her life.

“You and Ruth will have enough to finish out the year,” Calhoun said, blowing cigarette smoke toward the ceiling. “But after that, I’m afraid you’re on your own.”

~~I was not the same Peggy White when I returned to college a few days later. My father was dead, and my mother’s life was turned upside down. I had learned that I was half Jewish, whatever that meant. I had no intention of telling anyone. And I understood that I might not be able to afford to return to classes at Columbia in the fall, if Uncle Lazar decided to change his mind.~~

Commented [CY32]: The reader really needs to see this before she says this.

~~When I returned to college a few days later, Madge was in our room, studying, when I walked in and tossed my bag on my bunk. I had left her a note, “Father ill. Going home,” and I’d signed out of Brooks Hall under the housemother’s suspicious eye, listing “Family emergency” under “Reason for leaving.”~~ She closed her textbook, ~~exclaiming, and looked at me.~~ “Oh, Peggy! I’ve been so worried when we didn’t hear from you!”

~~I had left her a note, “Father ill. Going home,” and I’d signed out of Brooks Hall under the housemother’s suspicious eye, listing “Family emergency” under “Reason for leaving.”~~

“My father died,” I said, and I opened my suitcase and started unpacking.

~~I was not a person who cried easily.~~ I hadn’t broken down in the hospital when I sat by my father’s bedside, or when the doctor told us that he was dead, or later at the cemetery, or even as I lay on my bed next to Ruth’s. But suddenly, as I shared this news with my roommate, I ~~could not contain my grief, and I~~ began to weep.

Commented [CY33]: Need?

Madge jumped up and threw her arms around me, gently stroking my hair as I cried. When I’d gotten some sort of control again and wiped my face and blown my nose, she said, “A Mr. Gilfillan called you a couple of times. He left his number.”

She pointed to the slips of paper on my desk, each with the same message. But I could not bring myself to walk down the hall to the telephone and put the call through, to hear his voice and tell him what had happened. I was afraid I'd start weeping again.

I was not the same Peggy White I'd been a few days earlier. My father was dead, and my mother's life was turned upside-down. It had finally sunk in that I was half-Jewish whatever that meant, but I had no intention of telling anyone. And I understood that I might not be able to afford to return to classes at Columbia in the fall, if Uncle Lazar decided he'd helped enough.

Commented [CY34]: The reader really needs to see this before she says this.

I had missed a few classes at the start of the new semester, and the next day I stopped by to speak to my professors, explain what had happened, and find out what I needed to make up. The days passed, a monotonous routine of getting up, attending class, eating meals or skipping them—it seemed to make no difference—going to bed, and suddenly bursting into tears for no particular reason. I felt nothing, unless numbness can be called a feeling. Everything I did took a tremendous effort.

Commented [CY35]: More of an inward struggle.

I'd been back at college for a week, and it was my turn to answer the telephone. My shift was almost over when Gil phoned.

“Peggy!” he cried. “I’ve been trying to reach you!”

“I know. I got your messages,” I said. A lump was already forming in my throat, and I struggled to speak. Finally I got the words out: “My father died.” And I began to sob—again. It seemed I would never get past this.

Commented [CY36]: More emotion...

He came in to the city to see me after work the next day and took me to the Cafe Prague, a coffee shop owned by a Czech lady famous for her pastries. He asked if I wanted coffee, and I said yes. The girls at Brooks Hall devoted hours to sipping coffee at one of the nondescript coffee shops near THE campus, and I'd learned to enjoy it, if I added enough cream and sugar.

Formatted: All caps

Sitting across from me in the cracked leather booth, Gil studied me with kind, thoughtful eyes. “Tell me what happened,” he said, and I recounted the story of my father’s sudden death. He listened quietly, asking a question now and then. I held ~~the~~my cup in both hands, warming them against a sudden chill. When I set the cup down, Gil reached over and squeezed my hand. I hoped he’d keep holding it, but he didn’t ~~just a squeeze, and then he let it go.~~

Commented [CY37]: Need?

~~We talked, not only about my father but about other things as well. Gil told me more about growing up in Oklahoma and Texas, how different it was here on the East coast, his thoughts~~said he was thinking of going out west the following summer. I told him I ~~was~~planned~~ing~~ to look for a summer job, but I didn’t mention I was worried that I wouldn’t have enough money to continue ~~because. I explained that my uncle had promised to help, but not that~~ my father hadn’t been “prudent with money.” Of course I didn’t mention ~~the revelation that~~that I’d learned my father was Jewish and therefore I was half-Jewish, but I did wonder ~~that if I told Gil my secret, it would make him think less of me if the disturbing fact of my background would make a difference to Gil.~~

Commented [CY38]: Need?

Commented [CY39]: A tad more angst on her part.

He paid for our coffee and the Czech pastries and helped me on with my ugly tweed coat. ~~He bent his arm, and I tucked my gloved hand in the crook of his elbow.~~ We walked across the campus under a black sky full of glittering stars ~~and a silvery Saracen moon.~~ Neither of us spoke. I was thinking of what might come next: a kiss, ~~warm and heartfelt maybe?~~ As we approached the entrance to Brooks Hall, ~~it was hard, I tried~~ to ignore the couples embracing in shadowy corners of the portico. ~~The hands of the campus clock edged closer to eight.~~ Gil escorted me ~~straight toward the glare of the entryway and followed me~~ into the reception room where several couples sat quietly, holding hands, murmuring, faces close.

Shall I ask him to sit down?

Gil stepped back, clutching his hat brim in both hands, in both hands and stepped away. “Please accept my condolences for the death of your father. I’m happy that we could see each other and talk, Peggy,” he said as though reading from a script. “May I call you again soon?”

“Of course, Gil,” I said, trying to match his formal tone. “And thank you for the coffee and pastry. I enjoyed the evening. It was quite delicious.”

Gill strode briskly down the walkway, collar turned up against a chill wind, and as the campus clock bonged eight times. I climbed slowly to my room on the fourth floor just feeling more alone than I had ever felt in my life—not because Gil had not kissed me, but because it hit me one more time that I would never see my father again as the campus clock bonged eight times.

Commented [CY40]: Perhaps goes on too long.

Commented [CY41]: And how does she feel about all of this? LONELY I bet, frustrated?

Chapter ~~76. Picking up a Camera~~ A Course in Photography - 1922

I never had much interest in taking pictures. That was something my father had done, and I'd been happy to help. But I'd always been interested in composition and design—something I'd noticed in his photographs—and when I heard about a two-hour-a-week class in photography being offered~~During the second semester, I saw a connection. I signed up for the class and borrowed one of the cameras available to students.~~

~~I found time to squeeze in a photography class once a week. I'd never been interested in taking photographs—that was something my father did—but taking pictures now seemed like a way for me to keep my father's memory alive.~~

The teacher, Clarence H. White, ~~not related to our family,~~ belonged to a group of famous photographers who believed that photography was an art form, not just a simple matter of clicking the shutter to capture an image, ~~and~~ I learned in Mr. White's ~~two-hour~~ class that ~~it was possible to do all sorts of things taking them~~ many factors were involved—composing the picture, developing the negative, ~~and~~ making the print ~~—in the creation of~~ ~~to~~ create an image as beautiful as an Impressionist painting. Two hours a week didn't seem like nearly enough to learn everything I wanted to know.

“When I first began taking pictures,” he told us, “I had very little money—only enough for two glass plate negatives each week. All week I thought about what I would do with those two plates on the weekend, when I had time to photograph.”

I wanted to make lovely, soft-focus pictures like ~~his~~ Mr. White's, each one carefully planned. That kind of planning, I realized now, was what my father did. I could almost hear

Commented [CY42]: The reader really needs to SEE her connection to her father, what he meant to her.

Commented [CY43]: Need? Sentence goes on too long.

his voice explaining why this angle was better than that one, why the lighting must be adjusted just so, and I felt some of the closeness we used to share.

~~There were a few other girls in the class, and we felt that Mr. White took us seriously. Unlike some other famous photographers the girls gossiped about.~~ “Experiment!” he instructed us. “Develop your capacity to *see*!”

Commented [CY44]: Not sure I follow. How do the other girls know famous photographers – and why is it important?

~~Besides teaching at Columbia, Mr. White had founded a photography school, and if I hadn’t already been taking so many science classes, I might have signed up for one of his intensive courses.~~

Commented [CY45]: What does founding a school have to do with intensive courses? Don’t follow. THIS part could be much tighter. AND WHY would she sign up. INNER MARGARET.

~~At the beginning of the semester I started a little later than the others in my class, due to my father’s death and my responsibilities to my Then I family I borrowed one of the cameras available to students. I remembered~~ thought of Father’s old camera, and one weekend on a visit home I asked Mother what had happened to it.

Commented [CY46]: Why not put earlier?

“I don’t know,” she said. “He stopped taking pictures a year or so ago, and the camera disappeared. He might have given it away, or sold it. But it’s gone.”

That was a disappointment, but ~~I would continue using one of the cameras at school.~~ A week later she telephoned. This was unusual—she rarely called me. “I have a surprise for you,” she said. “It will be here the next time you come home.”

Commented [CY47]: Show not say.

She had bought me a camera.

Commented [CY48]: Does her mother buy her a camera because she knows how much it means to Margaret. The emotional level of the manuscript needs to be deepened.

~~She~~ Her budget was tight, she had my eleven-year-old brother, Roger, to feed and clothe, but somehow she’d managed to ~~squeeze find~~ twenty dollars ~~from her tight budget and bought for~~ a second-hand Ica Reflex. ~~It was unusual for her to buy me something that she would not have considered necessary or practical. Mother did not explain her decision.~~

Commented [CY49]: All of a sudden we know his age. ROGER needs to come alive.

I was stunned. I tried to thank her, to tell her how much it meant to me, but she waved me off. “It has a cracked lens,” she said. “That will make it more of a challenge.”

The ~~It had a cracked lens, but the~~ crack didn't matter, because I was ~~more~~ interested in producing the kind of artistic photographs that Clarence White was famous for. I ~~proudly carried the~~ This German-made camera ~~into class. It~~ was the old-fashioned kind, like Father's and Mr. White's, that used glass plates to make the negatives, rather than the film that came with the ~~popular newer~~ cameras ~~most people were using.~~

One evening Mr. White ~~invited some several~~ students to his home to discuss the work of ~~such~~ ~~photographers as~~ Edward Steichen and Alfred Stieglitz ~~and other well known~~ ~~photographers. I knew it would be a~~ ~~sophisticated gathering, and I wanted to make -wanted to make~~ an impression ~~on the other students, and s-~~ So I did what I had done in high school: —I arrived at the Whites' house with a pet snake coiled around each arm. Mrs. White didn't seem to mind. She merely smiled, ~~admired my "herps,"~~ and asked if I'd care for a glass of fruit punch. The snakes achieved the desired effect: I ~~was noticed~~ ~~attracted attention, from~~ ~~shudders and questions of "How can you bear to do that?"~~ to admiration of my "herps," ~~until the conversation eventually turned to the subject of Steichen and his well-known disdain for~~ ~~women photographers.~~

~~I was sure I~~ ~~was sure~~ I wanted to be a herpetologist, ~~and I still kept pet snakes and~~ ~~reptiles caged in my dormitory room, still dreamed of going -and go~~ on exciting adventures of exploration and discovery. ~~B-~~ ~~but~~ ~~lately~~ I'd begun to suspect that the scientists on those expeditions were always men, ~~and I wondered how I could ever make a name for myself in a~~ ~~man's world. Then it occurred to me that -But perhaps surely they~~ ~~those scientific men would~~ ~~needed~~ a photographer on ~~those~~ ~~their~~ exotic trips, —~~and~~ I could be that photographer, ~~and~~ ~~my camera would be my passport! That was quite a revelation, and from this point on I~~ ~~believed I had a goal and a path to reach it.~~

Commented [CY50]: Missing a word here.

Commented [CY51]: Awkward

Commented [CY52]: Need "such"?

Commented [CY53]: What does this mean?

Commented [CY54]: LOST THIS. No sense what she is studying in college. Her love of animals is missing at this stage of her life.

Commented [CY55]: This seems forced. See above comment.

Every week or two Gil telephoned. We fell ~~I went out often with Gil that spring, but, amazingly, other boys—students in my science classes—began to call. The telephone on our floor rang for me quite often, and I accepted their invitations to evening parties. I enjoyed the attention, but the callers were boys—fellows my own age. They were not men, like Gil.~~

Gil and I had fallen into a predictable routine, going. About once a week he telephoned and we went to see a movie or a free concert and ended the evening at the Cafe Prague, drinking coffee and eating *palačinky*. The waitress had become so used to us that she brought two cups of coffee and a plate of *palačinky*, those delicious Czech pancakes, without being asked. We talked about the work Gil he was doing in the chemistry lab and about my photography class, but I didn't explain why I was so enthusiastic; mention that I now saw photography as a way to a life of scientific adventure. I wasn't sure he'd understand that.

~~I was learning that boys—men, too—seemed put off by girls who had ambitions of their own. It was better not to talk about my dreams.~~

As the weather warmed, Gil and I took rambling walks through Central Park. We climbed the Statue of Liberty, pretending to be tourists, and rode the ferry to Staten Island. On Easter we strolled down Fifth Avenue among crowds of people showing off their finery and fancy hats. We visited art museums and slipped into dimly lit churches to listen to the organists practicing.

Sometimes he held my hand, but he still didn't kiss me—just walked me to my dormitory, said good night, and left. I wondered if there was another girl he was in love with, someone he took in his arms and kissed passionately. Or maybe he had once been in love with a girl who broke his heart. Of course I never didn't asked, because we didn't talk about such things. I had no idea of how he felt about me, or, really, how I felt about him. I remembered the stories my mother had told about my father's courtship, their long bicycle rides in the country and walks in the park. Probably, I thought, this was the way it was

Commented [CY56]: She comes across as shallow as if this is her CHIEF concern. NOT getting ahead and making a name for herself. AND how did this happen? See above for comment about what she is studying at school

Commented [CY57]: Can you work in definition without seeming like a definition?

Commented [CY58]: The reader needs to SEE this. This reads like: this happened than that. Needs much more feeling, more emotion. More INSIDE Margaret.

DON'T FOLLOW. So she has become a typical girl that a lot of boys like? REALLY? This doesn't make sense with her character.

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supposed to be. Gil reminded me of my father in so many ways—his devotion to science and hard work—and that’s why I was attracted to him in the first place. Even his silences seemed familiar.

* * * *

The semester ended was almost over. I needed a job, just about any kind of a job that would earn money. Madge had suggested I apply for a job to be a counselor at a summer camp in Connecticut. Her parents had sent her to Camp Agaming every year when she was very young, and the previous summer she’d worked there as a counselor the previous summer. Now she was going back, and she promised to ask her father, a lawyer, to write a recommendation for me on his firm’s letterhead. With just only a few months of Mr. White’s classes behind me, I had I got up the nerve to apply for the position of instructor in photography, and they hired me! I would also act as a nature counselor, taking the campers on nature walks, to introducing them to snakes and butterflies, teaching them to identify plants, and showing them the wonders of the outdoor world. It sounded like the perfect combination of my two great interests: photography and natural science. I knew just enough about each to convince myself that I could keep the young campers interested.

I had finished my last final exam and was packing up when Gil telephoned and suggested that we meet at the Cafe Prague. The waitress had become so used to us that she brought two cups of coffee and a plate of *palacinky* without being asked. I slid into our usual booth and launched enthusiastically into an enthusiastic description of my summer job.

“While you’re cooped up in your lab,” I told Gil excitedly, “I’ll be out in the fresh air and sunshine, teaching the campers to take pictures when I’m not terrifying them with hognose snakes that pretend to be puff adders. I’ll bet I learn as much as the little girls do!”

Commented [CY59]: REALLY need? Where is this chapter going? How is she changing? How can the reader relate to her?

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Commented [CY60]: No sense of her AS a photographer. This is what the book is about. The reader needs to see the BIRTH of her as a photographer – HER PASSION toward it. And, the reader needs to ALSO see her continued passion for nature, etc.

Commented [CY61]: Two dimensional. What is his purpose in the book? She really only describes him – he doesn’t seem to act on his own. Come alive.

Commented [CY62]: SHOW

~~Gil laughed. His laugh, a low, quiet chuckle, was one of the things I liked about him.~~ “Sounds swell,” Gil said, smiled and sipped his coffee. ~~“Shame on you! Scaring innocent children!”~~

~~That was it! Not a word about what an ideal opportunity this was for me. I’d hoped for more from him. I wondered if he’d miss me over the summer, or if I’d miss him. I tried again to spark some enthusiasm. “Maybe you could come up some weekend,” I suggested. “It’s not too far from Bound Brook.”~~

~~Then he~~ Gil ~~leaned back and~~ looked away. ~~“But~~ I won’t be in the lab at Calco after this week. I’ve accepted a position as assistant professor in pharmacy at Oregon Agricultural College in Corvallis. That’s where I got my bachelor’s degree.”

“Oh,” I said, ~~deflated, and hoping I didn’t show how deflated I actually felt. “Well, congratulations!” I said heartily.~~

I shouldn’t have been surprised. He’d mentioned before that he’d been thinking of going out west. ~~But I wasn’t expecting it so soon. “Well, congratulations!” I said heartily.~~

~~Even so, I felt let down, deeply disappointed. I can’t say that I was in love with Gil—how would I even know if I was? I’d never been in love. And I had no idea how he felt about me. Gil was a lot like my father: serious about science, dedicated to hard work, and not at all keen on revealing his feelings.~~

~~“I leave next week. I’ll send you my new address.” “We’ll stay in touch,” he said.~~

“We’ll write, and ~~maybe~~ you could come out to visit. Oregon is beautiful. I think you’d like it.”

He ~~paid the bill and~~ walked me back to my residence hall. ~~W—We~~ stopped under the portico. “Goodbye, Peg. I’ve enjoyed our friendship.” ~~I’ll send you my new address.”~~

“Thank you,” ~~I replied. “I’ve enjoyed it, too.” said, trying to sound~~

He held out his hand, and I shook it. ~~T—And~~ that, I supposed, was the end of that.

Commented [CY63]: Really? He mentioned this? Need a greater sense of Gil and what he means to her, etc. The reader is not invested in him so when this takes place, I don’t think they would care.

Commented [CY64]: Lackluster. Is GIL important to the story?

I climbed the three flights of stairs to my room and sat hunched on the edge of my bed, trying sort through my feelings. I didn't think I was in love with Gil. How would I even know if I was? He was the first boy—man—I'd ever gone out with. But I was deeply disappointed—not that he wasn't in love with me or hadn't kissed me, but that he hadn't shown any interest in what so deeply interested me.

Madge burst in, full of cheerful gossip about one of our hall mates who had just acquired a new beau. She stopped mid-sentence and peered at me. "You all right, Peg? You look kind of down. Something happen with Gil?"

"No, of course not," I said, mustering a false smile. "Nothing at all. So tell me about Muriel!"

"Well," Madge began, and breathlessly launched ed into her tale, but I scarcely listened.

Chapter 87. Camp Agaming - 1922

“Who would like to hear a different story of Sleeping Beauty?” I asked a group of ~~chattering-talkative~~ ten-year-olds on their first evening at Camp Agaming. We sat perched on logs arranged a crackling campfire somewhere in the hills of western Connecticut.

~~Alert to something new and possibly interesting,~~ The girls stopped ~~for a moment~~ ~~chattering among themselves,~~ ~~alert to something new and possibly interesting and~~ ~~eagerly~~ jumped up and ~~clustered around me~~. I produced a chrysalis—the “sleeping beauty”—that I was carrying in my pocket, ~~and~~. “Once upon a time,” I began, “this little cocoon became the home of a very ugly caterpillar.” I let them pass it around. They were full of questions. Was it still in there? What was it doing? I explained how the caterpillar was indeed in the cocoon, silently changing from something ugly into something beautiful. “Soon it will ~~kept them enchanted~~ ~~for a good ten minutes with the story of how this little cocoon was the home of an ugly caterpillar that would soon~~ emerge ~~and as a butterfly and~~ unfold ~~her~~ ~~its~~ magnificent wings.” I told them, “and if we’re lucky, we might get to see it happen.”

“Is it magic, Miss Peggy?” asked a little girl with solemn blue eyes.

“All of nature has a little bit of magic,” I said.

~~Most~~ ~~Some of the~~ campers stayed for two weeks, but ~~some~~ ~~others~~ had been packed off by their families for a month or longer, and I was constantly challenged to find ways to engage them. When we went out on ~~what I called~~ a photographing expedition early each morning, I tried to teach them how to ~~see~~ the way Clarence White had taught me. “Slow down!” I instructed them. “Look carefully.” ~~But they had no patience.~~

Commented [CY65]: Need – SHOW this.

Commented [CY66]: Need – SHOW this.

Commented [CY67]: Make Margaret enchanting, interesting.

Commented [CY68]: Need?

~~I did have a knack for catching the attention of even the most restless little girls; holding their attention was something else. They wanted to rush off and take pictures of everything in sight, snapping away indiscriminately with their Kodak Brownie Box cameras.~~

~~Clarence Mr. White had composed each photograph with infinite care, before he finally committed to clicking the shutter. He taught insisted us that a photographer leaves nothing to chance. "Chance is a poor photographer," he told us over and over said. "Think like an artist. Study your subject." He himself composed each photograph with infinite care, before he finally committed to clicking the shutter. Any such This advice was lost on the girls. They had no patience. They wanted to rush off and take pictures of everything in sight, snapping away indiscriminately with their Kodak Brownie Box cameras.~~

~~At the end of the day, after Madge the campers were had taught them archery and worn out from riding horses canoeing and on Lake Bantam, other counselors had shepherded them through hours of swimming in its the chilly waters of Lake Bantam and horseback riding in the hills, and the girls were sound asleep on their camp cots, Madge and I rushed to the makeshift darkroom to develop their roles rolls of exposed film and print their snapshots, ready, ready to show the campers their pictures the girls the next morning.~~

~~On my rare free days off I went hiking off with my camera and climbed hiked to the highest point I could find. The whole valley lay spread out below me. A fence erected to keep careless hikers from plunging off the cliff spoiled the view, but a mere fence that did not deter me—I'd been fearlessly balancing on fence rails and crossing streams on narrow logs since I was the age of my campers. Up and over I went, creeping I climbed over, crept as close to the cliff edge as possible, and lay flat on the ground near the lip or balanced my camera on a rock. The whole valley lay spread out below me. Madge, who sometimes went with me on these expeditions, fretted from a safe distance and reminded me to be careful.~~

Commented [CY69]: Rethink. Too long.

Commented [CY70]: Gets inside her but the reader isn't really prepared for this BOLD person. She doesn't seem all that bold before.

Often I rose long before my campers ~~were still asleep~~had awakened and set off in the moonlight to reach the best possible place from which to photograph the sunrise. Sometimes I had to make several attempts to get the perfect shot, either because it started to rain, or clouds interfered, or the angle of the sun wasn't quite what I wanted. I ~~celebrated~~observed my eighteenth birthday by packing a lunch and hitching a ride to Mohawk Mountain, ~~some~~ fifteen miles away from the camp. Most girls would have wanted to celebrate with a party and a cake, but I was more interested in getting at least one picture that would take your breath away.

I was paid a small salary, but tuition would soon come due for my sophomore year at Columbia—nearly seven hundred dollars—and I wasn't sure how much Uncle Lazar was willing to contribute. Then I had an idea for making money: picture postcards. ~~The girls who'd cried when their parents dropped them off wept copious tears when it was time to leave, and I realized that those girls who had~~ Campers were required to send a postcard home each week. ~~developed an attachment to "Miss Peggy" were ideal customers for picture postcards.~~ If I ~~made a~~took a portrait picture of each camper, a picture of her girl grinning happily in front of her cabin, and another of her lounging on her bunk or engaged in some camping activity, on horseback or paddling a canoe and made the pictures into postcards, she would have a something unique postcard to send home each week mail. Her family surely would clamor for more cards to send to Grandma and aunts and uncles.

I was right—orders poured in by the dozen. I charged a nickel apiece, which the girls paid out of their pocket money. ~~I could probably have charged more for them, but I had no money sense. In that regard, I was too much like my father.~~

Encouraged, I expanded my original idea and took a number of photographs of the camp: the carved wooden sign at the end of the road, a row of canoes drawn up on the shore, the archery range framed through a drawn bow. Then I went into Litchfield and photographed

Commented [CY71]: ? Need "copious tears"? Why doesn't it really matter that they cried when they were dropped off? The point is when they had to return home? Perhaps another way of saying this? Seems awkward. Who appeared homesick at first but grew to love the camp...

Commented [CY72]: Specific. Seems "removed"

Commented [CY73]: Not sure I totally follow. Order more for whom? You talk about them leaving and then sending a postcard home each week?

the pretty white church on the green and the old foundry with its bronze cannons, a horse silhouetted against a panoramic view of the lake. ~~With the idea~~ Thinking that summer visitors were likely customers for scenes of rural Connecticut this quaint colonial village, I printed up a number of sample postcards and set off for the village and the Old Litchfield Treasure House. Old Litchfield Treasure House, a gift shop on the main street. Two An elegant white-haired ladies called out “Hello, hello!” benevolently when I entered their shop and introduced myself.

“I’m Margaret White,” I said, thinking that Margaret was sounded more professional-sounding than Peggy. “I’m a student of photographer Clarence H. White.”

“Clarence White!” exclaimed the lady. “Really?” with her snowy hair in a chignon.

Just like that, his name opened the door for me, and I went returned back to Camp Agaming with an order for five hundred postcards. I was This was exhilarating ecstatic that I’d found a way to earn money taking pictures, but, but now I had to figure out a way to print them, and to pay for the chemicals I needed before I could collect a cent. The campers and their families continued to clamor for my cards.

“Oh, don’t worry about it,” Madge said airily. “I’ll be glad to help you as much as you need, and you don’t even need to pay me.” Madge never had to worry about money, the way I did.

The campers and their families continued to clamor for my cards. We Madge and I worked furiously frantically to keep up with our duties as counselors and stayed up night after night to keep up with orders that poured in.

Toward the end of August the camp programs ended, Madge left and the most of my girls went home, except for. But two sisters, Phyllis and Marian, who lived nearby. The sisters, Phyllis and Marian, had shown real aptitude with their box-simple cameras, and were

Commented [CY74]: ?

Commented [CY75]: Awkward. Ties into the above. She takes general pictures of camp but then no mention of what she takes of town. Clarity. What exactly IS the Treasure House?

Commented [CY76]: Show this!

Commented [CY77]: Another way of saying? Really show her IN ACTION. SEE LAST PARAGRAPH. SHOW THIS MORE. THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF HER PASSION – point of the book.

Commented [CY78]: Need used twice. Stronger verbs.

Commented [CY79]: Another way of saying? Really show her IN ACTION. SEE LAST PARAGRAPH. SHOW THIS MORE. THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF HER PASSION – point of the book.

Commented [CY80]: Program? yes

~~fascinated by what happened in the darkroom. "It's like magic, Miss Peggy," sighed Phyllis. Marian added, "And you're a magician."~~

~~I showed them how to wash the prints. They soon grew got~~ used to working in near total darkness with the glowing red light, and they didn't seem to mind the smell of chemicals. ~~They were fascinated by what happened in the darkroom.~~ Each time an image ~~emerged~~ appeared on the printing paper, they were as excited as the first time they'd seen it happen. ~~They became my eager assistants.~~ By the time ~~my young assistants~~ they had to go back to school and I returned home, I had sold nearly two thousand cards. ~~After I'd paid for the supplies, I had made a small profit, and I saw that it was possible to earn money doing something I loved.~~

~~But that even with my salary from Camp Agaming and the help Uncle Lazar had offered, that still~~ wasn't nearly enough to pay my tuition ~~at Columbia.~~ My mother and I sat at our dining room table, staring ~~delefully~~ hopelessly at the figures she'd laid out on a sheet of lined paper and trying to figure out what to do. Mother had taken a job selling insurance policies ~~for a small company in Plainfield,~~ but she'd had only limited success. She decided to ~~sell~~ get rid of our car, since she had no desire to learn to drive, but money from the sale had gone to repair the furnace and pay off other bills. ~~And now there was the problem of Roger.~~

~~"I'm determined to send your brother to private school," she said. "His performance in public school has been dismal. I know he's not stupid, but his grades are terrible."~~

~~"Maybe Unele Lazar will help?" I suggested.~~

~~"Maybe." She sounded doubtful.~~

~~I felt sick. It seemed as though I would have to drop out after just one year. Give up herpetology, give up photography, give up everything I loved, and go looking for a job.~~

~~Classes would start soon, but I couldn't allow myself to think about that or I'd get depressed.~~

Commented [CY81]: Who is the magician? Don't follow next para. No sense that the two sisters were helping print the postcards. Thought they were JUST printing their photos. Needs clarity.

Commented [CY82]: Word choice. Get inside her more.

GENERAL COMMENT: the beginning of the book, the reader sees more of what makes Margaret tick, her feelings about school, boys, purpose, etc. That inner Margaret is getting lost.

Mother was helping me prepare a list of places where I might apply for a position of some sort when ~~Then, a sudden and unexpected miracle.~~ Mr. Henry Munger phoned and asked me to come ~~to by visit.~~ Miss Jessie Munger was especially eager to speak with me, he said.

Commented [CY83]: Transition doesn't work.

I had not visited the Mungers since the first of January, when I'd stopped by to wish them a happy New Year. They ~~Mungers~~ greeted me warmly now and ushered me into the parlor where I had spent so many hours reading to Miss Jessie. Mr. Henry brought in a pot of peppermint tea and a plate of cookies.

"So, Margaret," Mr. Munger began when we were settled and sipping. "You've finished your first year of college. I hear that you did very well in your courses."

Commented [CY84]: No sense of this. Are these two developed enough before this?

"Yes, I did," I replied and helped myself to a stale cookie. "I received high marks in all my classes. But how did you know that?"

"Roger told us. He comes by to help us out from time to time, you know," said Miss Jessie. "And Henry knows quite a few people on the faculty at Columbia, and he inquired about you. They supported Roger's view of your accomplishments."

I scarcely knew which surprised me more—that Roger had spoken about me to the Mungers, or that Mr. Henry had spoken about me to my professors. I had no idea he even knew who they were.

"And are you still ~~planning-intending~~ to continue with your study ~~of of...of...oh, I do forget what it is you're studying, all those snakes and lizards and such~~ herpetology?" asked Mr. Henry.

Commented [CY85]: Why wouldn't she remember? Especially since they are so interested in her?

"Herpetology—Yes, I am. ~~If possible~~ But perhaps later on." Then I added, "I plan to find a job for a year or two, and then go back to school."

The two old people exchanged glances. “Well, my dear Margaret,” began Mr. Henry in his raspy voice, “Miss Jessie and I are happy to tell you that we’ve decided to pay your college tuition and expenses for the coming year.”

Speechless, I stared at them, ~~scarcely hardly daring to believe~~ing what I’d heard.

“~~L~~And longer, if things go well,” added Miss Jessie.

“~~Which~~ And we anticipate that they will,” said Mr. Henry.

~~This could change my entire life! The astonishing offer shocked me, but finally I managed to find my voice. Finally I found my voice. I am delighted that you have~~ Thank you for having so much faith in me,” I stammered, ~~and~~ “I want to assure you that promise you won’t regret ~~loaning me the money. a~~ But I promise I’ll repay ~~also want to assure you that I intend to repay every penny of this loan~~ it, starting the day I graduate.”

“Oh, no, my dear!” Miss Jessie trilled. “We’ll hear of no such talk of a loan. What we do ask, though, is that when you have ~~achieved the success, we know you will, that~~ you will ~~find~~ seek out another young person in financial need and help her.”

“Or him,” said Mr. Henry. “We’re investing in you and your future, my dear.”

“And another deserving student,” added Miss Jessie.

~~Nearly dizzy with this astonishing turn of events, I listened~~ tried to concentrate as the Mungers laid out their plans for me. ~~T-~~ They ~~felt~~ believed that the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor would be a better place for me to study herpetology. ~~There was a professor of zoology named Arthur G. Ruthven whose reputation they knew, and beginning with that term~~ they wanted me to transfer from Columbia to study with ~~a professor of zoology named Arthur G. Ruthven whose reputation they knew~~ Dr. Ruthven, beginning with that term.

~~Not go back to New York? Go to Ann Arbor instead? My mind was in such a confused state that I had to ask them to repeat what they had just told me.~~

Commented [CY86]: The reader really needs to see this. See what? This is their plan.

Commented [CY87]: Show this. Get inside her more. So they forget what she is to study and then they think of U of Michigan? SENSE?

“Now about this postcard business of yours,” said Miss Munger, pouring herself another cup of tea. *How on earth did she know about that, I wondered. When she noticed my look of surprise, she smiled. “Roger, again, was our informant—he’s quite proud of both of his sisters, you know. It’s clever and industrious of you to have set up this postcard business,* Margaret, but *honestly*—I think you can find better ways to invest your time and energy.” *said Miss Munger.* “For one thing, it’s sure to be hard on your eyes, squinting through a lens and ~~then~~ spending all that time in the darkroom. For another, a young woman as attractive as you should have an enjoyable social life in the company of other young people. But you must dress the part, my dear! Buy yourself some nice clothes, the proper kind for a lovely young student. We know you won’t be extravagant. It’s not in your nature. That much is clear.”

Formatted: Font: Italic

Commented [CY88]: How does she know about this?

“Silk stockings,” I murmured. *Could this really be happening?—still in a state of shock—These kind people, whom I didn’t really know very well, making such a generous offer? And all they asked of me was that I help someone else someday.*

“Yes, my dear, silk stockings! And a few smart dresses and—for goodness sake—a coat that fits you properly.”

“Of course, Miss Munger.” *I hadn’t realized she ever noticed what I wore—I agreed.*

“Deep rose,” Miss Jessie mused thoughtfully. “You would look terribly attractive in a rose-colored dress. Please leave the brown and gray ones in Bound Brook.”

“Now go home and start packing,” Mr. Munger instructed. “A bank account has been established for you in Ann Arbor. I know you’ll use it wisely. It will be replenished when necessary. We’ve taken the liberty of buying you a train ticket. You are to leave within a fortnight. I’ve sent a letter to Dr. Ruthven, recommending you. Look him up as soon as you get there and sign up for his courses.”

Commented [CY89]: It’s a simple as this? And no real reaction from Margaret? And, again, the reader needs to know them.

I hugged my benefactors—I’d never done that before—and *thanked them over and over, not knowing how to express my gratitude adequately. Then I* rushed home to tell

Mother the news. She was ~~as amazed thrilled as I was~~ at the Mungers' offer ~~to finance my education, and just as determined that this was not to be a gift, for a year.~~ "It's a loan, of course," she said firmly. ~~"I hope you assured them that w~~We'll pay back every penny. ~~I hope you assured them of that."~~

"That's exactly what I told them," I said, and ~~explained-repeated~~ what the Mungers had said about helping another needy student in the future. "Miss Jessie also ~~told me that said~~ I should ~~get-buy~~ some new clothes, and that I should not skimp but get whatever I need." ~~I added.~~

Commented [CY90]: Use of the verb GET

Mother harrumphed. "Then you must keep track of whatever you spend on clothes, although I frankly can't see that it's at all necessary," she ~~sd~~ said. "What you already have is perfectly serviceable. One or two new dresses, perhaps, but ~~certainly that's all no more.~~ ~~That's just so~~It's that much less ~~that~~ you will ~~then~~ owe the Mungers, ~~however you intend to repay that debt."~~

Commented [CY91]: Awkward.

~~I wrote to Madge, explaining that I would not be coming back to room with her at Barnard and describing the exciting news. "My only regret is that we won't be roommates."~~

~~Two weeks later I boarded a train bound for Michigan, my money problems miraculously solved, and my future emerging as mysteriously as a photographic negative in the developing bath.~~

~~Just before I left New Jersey, a letter arrived from Gil, postmarked Corvallis, Oregon. It was friendly enough, beginning "Dear Peggy" and signed "Yours truly, Gil." He described the courses he would teach and the apartment he'd rented on the top floor of an old house with a shared bath one floor below. "But I do have a sliver of a view of the Cascade Range, and if you should decide to pay me a visit, there are some very nice hiking trails in the Willamette Valley."~~

If you should decide to pay me a visit. That was the only hint in the letter that we were anything but distant acquaintances. I carried the letter with me to Michigan, intending to write back, once I was settled. There had been times when I thought I might be in love with him.

Commented [CY92]: ?

Twice during my first month in Ann Arbor I began a letter to Gil: "Nice to hear from you. I've transferred to U of Michigan and have started classes." But I couldn't think what else to say. I put the unfinished letter in a book, thinking I'd continue it later, when I did have more to say, about my classes and the unfamiliar campus, or how it felt to be so far from home. And then I forgot about the letter, and soon I forgot about Gil.

Chapter 98. ~~A Butterfly in Michigan~~ - 1922

I'd been assigned a single room on the third floor of Betsy Barbour House, the women's residence hall that everyone called "Betsy's." My room was cramped and dark, but the ~~dining room and~~ two parlors were bright and elegant, one with a grand piano and a fireplace, the other with windows looking out on the sweep of green lawn. ~~Girls entertained their dates in these parlors, and teas were held there twice a month for the girls and their parents and beaux visiting from out of town.~~

~~There were only a few doubles, and I was just as happy not to have a new roommate.~~ But I did wish that Madge had come with me. She owned a closetful of pretty clothes and never had to worry about whether she was stylishly dressed. I was still feeling my way along, not sure what my style should be. Madge could have advised me. ~~We'd been close all summer,~~ but now she ~~had begun her sophomore year at Barnard and was dating a boy from Yale and~~ barely had time to answer my letters.

There were far more men than women at the university, and the telephone on the third floor hall rang constantly for other girls. ~~But not for me. It was like starting all over again.~~ Not surprisingly, ~~I suppose,~~ people thought I was odd, ~~maybe even~~ peculiar ~~even,~~ for keeping snakes in my room. ~~But why should I not have snakes? I was going to be a herpetologist! The first week of classes~~ Oscar, a ~~handsomely n elegantly~~ banded milk snake, escaped from his glass terrarium and slithered down the hall, terrifying an unsuspecting girl ~~who'd stopped by from another dormitory and who~~ assumed ~~that~~ he must be poisonous. ~~Oscar was not dangerous, and I tried to~~ explained ~~to her~~ that Oscar was quite benign. "Red on yellow,

Commented [CY93]: IMPORTANT

I worry about the pace of the previous chapters. Where are the tensions? What is Margaret really overcoming? It tends to be too slow compared to the beginning of the book. Don't have to include everything – more novel in direction.

Sometimes narrative gets bogged down in similar details.

Commented [CY94]: Really? No real sense of her.

Of course there is! She's the one who dressed MBW for her dates with Gil, went to camp with her..

Commented [CY95]: ? Is this really important? The

reader doesn't really know her.

Commented [CY96]: The reader really needs to SEE her –

see her as someone who has snakes. Who stands out.

deadly fellow, red on black, venom lack,” I told her helpfully, ~~and but~~ she screamed, “I don’t care! I don’t *care!* Get ~~him that thing~~ away from me!”

~~I was determined to learn to fit in, to stop being an outsider, the eccentric girl who kept pet snakes in her room—without, of course, giving up the snakes. I was going to be a herpetologist! Why should I not keep snakes?~~

I had been in Ann Arbor for about a month when one of the girls ~~on the third floor~~, Florence, suggested ~~that~~ we go to a dance ~~that that the Congregational Church a nearby church~~ was holding for students. ~~I had no idea what a Congregational Church was like, and I~~ dreaded another dance where I’d be unasked ~~for an entire evening, again. Nevertheless I’d been in high school, but~~ I agreed to go.

~~I still had not got up the nerve to bob my hair, but~~ I had taken the Mungers’ advice and their money and ~~gone shopping for new clothes. Not just ordinary clothes—beautiful!bought clothes: a black~~ dress of knit crepe ~~with a long, draped skirt and draped sleeves of sheer linen printed~~ in the soft rose color Miss Jessie had recommended, ~~the most expensive dress I’d ever owned, and that was the dress I chose to wearwore it to the church dance that night.~~

~~The dress~~It must have caught the eye of every male in the ~~eat~~ dingy church basement. I danced every dance, and boys cut in ~~constantlyone right after the other~~, so that when I started waltzing with one boy, I was soon foxtrotting with another, and then two-stepping with Partner Number Three. ~~It was an exhilarating experience. I felt like a queen, and soon I had a whole line of kings, or at least princes, waiting to dance with me. For the first time in my life I was not a wallflower. I was the belle of the ball.~~

I went back to the church dances with Florence a couple of times, and then I ~~went began going~~ without her. ~~I think she got tired of watching me attract so much attention. Each time, I met more boys who seemed fascinated by mewere attracted to me. But I learned a~~

Commented [CY97]: No real sense of this at Columbia. All the reader sees is no one calls her...Did she keep snakes at Columbia?

See p 65

Commented [CY98]: Need?

lesson: not to talk about my dream of becoming a herpetologist, traveling to exotic places and taking pictures. “You can’t be serious, Peggy,” one boy said, laughing, and another told me earnestly, “That’s not what girls do.” If I wanted to be invited to evening parties, it was better not to talk about *my* dreams and to talk about *theirs*. So I did, and it worked.

* * * *

My classes were going well. I studied hard and generally pulled good grades in all my classes, and I — an A in literature pleased me. I should have done better than a C in astronomy, and I might have had straight A’s if I had not been so caught up with photography. I carried my camera wherever I went, roaming the campus and the town, and I went everywhere possible, always alert for the next possible shot. I loved old buildings with steeply pitched gables and arched windows, and I’d become fascinated with trains, from the enormous locomotives to the abstract patterns of the small mechanical parts. Boys who liked to dance with me were also willing to accompany me to take pictures.

Frank Howarth, a new acquaintance who was studying business administration and cultivating a thin mustache, called for me on a golden autumn Sunday afternoon and asked where I’d like to go walking.

“To the railroad station.” I’d become fascinated by trains.

Frank raised an eyebrow, but he agreed.

The light that day was excellent. The station was a handsome old building constructed of roughly hewn granite blocks. Frank stood by patiently while I focused on the steeply pitched gables and arched windows. But my attention shifted to a locomotive taking on coal and water. I moved in on the steam-bellowing monster close and set up my shot. I thought it was tremendously exciting. “Isn’t this exciting, Frank?” I shouted over the racket of the steam-bellowing monster. I couldn’t hear his reply, and I didn’t notice how much time I spent

Commented [CY99]: Tighten to convey the thought that she wanted to fit in and then it worked. Make this more poignant – and shorter.

Commented [CY100]: The reader needs to SEE this. This reads like: this happened then that. Needs much more feeling, more emotion. More INSIDE Margaret.

DON’T FOLLOW. So she has become a typical girl that a lot of boys like? REALLY? This doesn’t make sense with her character.

Commented [CY101]: ?

Commented [CY102]: Is all this necessary. Tighten for scenes that build, that point to the evolution of her character. At times, it seems like, this happened, then this. Needs emotions, tensions.

Commented [CY103]: The passion for photography needs to be much stronger.

Commented [CY104]: ?

Commented [CY105]: Stronger if you show this instead of saying it.

~~peering into the viewfinder vs. the time I spent talking to Frank. It didn't occur to me that Frank might have had other ideas for how to spend an afternoon, or that he might be bored.~~

"You're certainly not like the other girls I know," Frank said after an hour or two of being ignored while I took pictures. "May I take you somewhere for a bite to eat?"

He chose a tearoom ~~at an inn~~ near the campus. ~~We were served a china pot swathed in a flowered tea cozy and accompanied by a plate of dainty sandwiches with crusts trimmed off.~~ Ravenous after an afternoon of photographing pistons and wheels ~~and other clanging parts of a locomotive~~, I ~~polished off the sandwiches quickly. Frank ordered another plateful.~~ ~~While I gobbled up these a plate of dainty sandwiches, Frank mostly watched. "I'm as well,~~ ~~he mentioned that he was~~ the business manager for ~~the student yearbook.~~ *The Michiganensian*," he said. "That's the student yearbook." "You should stop by and meet the editor. I think he'd be interested in ~~your some of the~~ photographs ~~you took this afternoon.~~ I'll introduce you, if you like."

A few days later I found the office of the *Ensian*, ~~as it was known.~~ Frank wasn't there, so I introduced myself to the editor, Harold Martin. "I'm Peggy White, and I'm a photographer."

"~~Really is that so?~~" Martin drawled and smiled mockingly. "Bring in some samples of your work. I can use some good pictures of campus buildings, ~~if you have any.~~" It was the kind of assignment he might have given to an annoying new kid ~~to get her out of his hair.~~ I took it as a challenge.

Two weeks later I was back in Martin's office with a portfolio of prints. He spread them out on a table and studied each one, ~~rubbing his chin. He needed a shave, I noticed, and a haircut, too.~~ The mocking smile had been wiped off his face. "I don't think I've seen anything quite like these before. They're like paintings. Somehow you've captured the personality in each building."

Commented [CY106]: Tensions? Too long. What do you want to get across in this chapter? How does she grow and change? What exactly is she grappling at?

Commented [CY107]: How does he know about her photographs? Has he seen them? Thought they just met?

Commented [CY108]: Need?

Commented [CY109]: Overuse of "get"

GENERAL COMMENT: Has the reader really seen her as a photographer? Seen her growing passion?

“I’ve studied with Clarence White,” I explained.

He glanced up at the mention of White’s name. “He taught you well. As of now, you’re ~~on the~~ staff ~~as~~ photographer.”

~~Over the next few months~~ From then on I was out taking pictures whenever I could spare time from my studies and my busy social life. I’d always wanted to be popular, and now, suddenly, I was caught up in an intoxicating whirl of dates and dances. I was making up for lost time.

One of my ~~frequent dates~~ biggest admirers was Joe Vlack, also a photographer for the *’Ensign*. Joe was tall and thin with unruly hair, rumpled clothes, and a long, narrow face like Abraham Lincoln’s that made him look older than he was—he’d just turned twenty-two. ~~He wasn’t exactly handsome, and his hair was unruly and his clothes were always rumpled. He~~ Joe figured out ~~quickly~~ that one way to eliminate the competition for my time and attention was to propose ~~a~~ new subjects. “I have an idea for some pictures,” he’d say, and we were off on another photographic adventure.

Joe suggested photographing the clock tower in the Engineering Shops Building. The clock and chimes had been moved to Engineering Shops w~~The clock and chimes had once been in the old library; w~~hen the library was knocked down, the clock was moved to Engineering Shops, where and the chimes continued to ring at eight in the morning and six at night.

“The best view is from the men’s toilet on the fourth floor,” Joe said. “You can get a great angle from there, but I don’t know if—“

“I’m game,” I said.

We waited until classes were over for the day and climbed to the fourth floor. Joe made sure the coast was clear, and we shut ourselves into the toilet and ~~locked~~ latched the door. I balanced on the seat and ~~rested~~ my camera on the window ledge above it. I was ~~and~~

was taking my usual care setting up the shot ~~w-~~ When someone knocked, Joe called out, "Sorry—~~I'm taking care of business~~occupied! Come back later!"

The ~~knocker went away, and the~~ building grew quiet. I worked until Joe remembered ~~in the nick of time~~ that the janitor always locked up the building as soon as the clock ~~chimed~~ struck six. "Just one more shot," I said, and then I grabbed my camera and we fled.

Joe had lots of ideas, some of them frightening. "There's a magnificent view from the roof of the Engineering Shops," he said. "I know how to get us out there, if you're not ~~too~~ scared~~afraid~~."

"~~Not too scared~~Afraid?" I responded scornfully. "Let's do it."

"Wear trousers and shoes with rubber soles. ~~G~~And gloves would be a good idea. Fasten your camera to your belt. You' ~~ll~~re going to need to have both hands free."

The next evening, dressed like a mountaineer, I signed out of the dormitory "to study in the library" and returned to the engineering building. Joe had persuaded the janitor to leave a side door unlocked and was waiting for me. ~~We went back up to the fourth floor.~~ He had already climbed out through a classroom window on the fourth floor, anchored one end of a rope, tossed the rest of the rope over the ridgeline, and anchored the other end on the opposite side. I was supposed to use the rope to haul myself up the steep slope of the roof. ~~When I realized what Joe was proposing, my~~My stomach ~~flipped~~lurched and my hands started to sweat.

"I'll be right behind you," he promised, "in case you start to slide back. You're not too scared, are you?"

"~~I won't,~~" I said, ~~sounding more positive than I felt.~~

"Certainly not," I lied.

I was glad I'd worked on strength in my arms in gym class. If I was going to live the life of an adventuress, going be part of on scientific expeditions and taking photographs in difficult places, I needed to be physically strong.

My throat tight with fear, My heart in my throat, I scrambled up the side of the roof, planting one foot ahead of the other and holding hanging onto the rope. I was terrified, but I did it. And Joe was right; the view of the campus was magnificent. I got the pictures I wanted and doubted that anyone had done anything like it before. I never let Joe know how frightened I was. After we were back on solid groundward, he wanted to suggested that we celebrate our achievementgo somewhere at the Royal Cafe. Bto celebrate our success, but I had to sneak back into Betsy's without getting caught, an equally daunting prospectand that would take some doing.

A few nights later, I was sitting across from Joe in a boothme at the Royal Cafein the cafe, Joe. He stirred a third spoonful of sugar into his coffee and proposed laid out going downanother idea: descending into the tunnels that ran beneath the streets of Ann Arbor. I was all for it, and weWe left as soon as he'd gulped his coffee. He lifted off a heavy manhole cover and plunged down into the darkness, calling up to me, "Hand me your camera, Peg. And watch your step on the ladder. It's pretty slippery."

It was awfully exciting, I made my way down one rung at a time, clinging to the rung above me. It was dank and fetid and I was not eager to stay long, abutand I got got a couple ofseveral interesting shots of valves and pipes that turned out very well. When we saw the prints, Joe pronounced them excellentfirst rate.

Whenever some new machine was assembled in his class in the Engineering Shops, Joe called me. "You'll love this thing," he'd say, his voice coming tinnily over the telephone. "And it's ready to pose, just for you." and I'd race over and we'd study it together. Joe's

Commented [CY110]: See past comments. This YEARNING is not always there. More of this and less about boys?

These scenes could be tighter and much more dramatic.

Commented [CY111]: What is she overcoming? What is she struggling against. Life seems a tad too easy.

Commented [CY112]: Point?

ideas were always creative, and he had a knack, ~~looking~~ for suggesting the most interesting angles for me to photograph.

Joe's ideas were always creative, ~~Still, but~~ I ~~worried~~ fretted that my photographs weren't turning out as well as I wanted. I had Clarence White's ~~beautiful~~ ethereal, painterly pictures as the standard I aimed for, and I tried to use his methods, like stretching one of my precious silk stockings over the lens to soften the edges of the image. I thought my pictures looked amateurish compared to his. The composition was not elegant enough, my use of natural light never achieved the subtle effect I wanted. ~~My pictures were~~ I was getting better ~~improving~~, but I knew I had a long way to go to become as accomplished as Mr. White.

Joe disagreed.

Joe ~~raved about my photographs.~~ "Listen, "Don't be so hard on yourself. Peggy. You're taking beautiful pictures, pictures that are really works of art. Y-you're going to be famous ~~some day~~ —. I'm positive of that. In fact, I've never been surer of anything in my life."

Sometimes I was too tired to meet him, from staying up late to study for ~~in the shops~~ —an exam ~~coming up in one of my science classes~~, or maybe ~~I was~~ simply worn out from a dance the night before, — and I'd tell him I just couldn't do it.

He refused to take no for an answer. "This is for your *future*, Peg," he'd ~~insist~~ argue. And ~~off I'd go~~ I'd give in and go off to meet him, on the chance that the new piece of machinery he insisted I photograph was worth the exhaustion the next day.

Of all the boys I knew ~~—and I was meeting them in droves~~ — Joe Vlack was the only one I knew who took absolutely seriously my goal of someday becoming famous. — He believed in me as much as I believed in myself. Maybe more.

* * * *

Commented [CY113]: NEED TO SEE THIS!

Commented [CY114]: More of an inner struggle.

Commented [CY115]: Is this really her goal?
yes

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Toward the end of the ~~first~~ semester Dr. Ruthven called me to his office. I was uneasy about this interview. Maybe he'd heard about my social life or my picture-taking and thought I wasn't concentrating seriously enough on my course work.

The professor's desk was piled high with stacks of papers, publications, reference books. Framed certificates and award plaques ~~were~~ hung haphazardly on the wall. It had been snowing heavily, and his galoshes sat in a spreading puddle of water. Dr. Ruthven leaned back in a swivel chair, ~~and crossed his legs. He~~ lit a pipe, and puffed on it. The scent of cherry-flavored tobacco filled the crowded office. I perched on the edge of my seat, nervously tucking my fingers beneath my thighs to keep my hands from shaking.

"Now, Miss White, you are enrolled as a student in the zoology department, and I'd like you to tell me, if you will, what your plans might be for the future."

"I'm studying to be a herpetologist," I replied, knowing that's what I was expected to say.

"And may I ask what has led you to that particular field of study?"

I was aware of Professor Ruthven's stature in the scientific community. Most of his research had been done with garter snakes. I tried to give a sensible answer to his question, explaining that since childhood I'd had an interest in living creatures of all kinds. I described my collection of caterpillars and my efforts to capture the moment of the butterfly's emergence from their metamorphosis. I told him about encountering the hognose snake with my father, observing the snake's behavior, and bringing the snake home. I left out the part about how I'd frightened my schoolmates with it.

The professor listened ~~silently~~, prodding me along occasionally, gesturing with the stem of his pipe. "I understand that you have other interests as well. I've heard many favorable comments about your photographs."

Maybe, ~~I thought,~~ this was the time to speak honestly about my ~~growing~~ interest in photography. So I described my classes with Clarence White, but I omitted any mention of my escapades with Joe Vlack that probably violated all sorts of university policies ~~to as Joe and I scrambled over rooftops, crept through underground tunnels, and locked ourselves in men's toilets to~~ get the pictures I wanted.

Commented [CY116]: Really need to say?

Dr. Ruthven knocked the ash from his pipe and refilled it, tamped the tobacco, struck a match, puffed and puffed ~~while I waited tensely.~~ “Tell me what you wish to accomplish in the world,” he said.

I hesitated, thinking of the best way to answer. I loved my “herps,” but I no longer saw them as ~~the-my~~ focus ~~in life, of my life.~~ I enjoyed writing, and I knew I was good at it ~~—~~ ~~my papers were always graded A plus. —I’d won the prize for my story of Rob and Sparky—~~ ~~But but I also knew I was on my way to becoming even better at~~ photography ~~had become~~ my true passion. ~~This new vision of myself had been growing clearer, like an exposed film in the developer bath. I believed~~

Commented [CY117]: Seems like a stretch.

~~my life was heading in a new and challenging direction.~~

Looking ~~I leaned toward~~ the distinguished scientist ~~boldly in the eye. I and told him that I hoped~~ said, “I want to become a photographer.”

Commented [CY118]: The reader needs to understand why and how she comes to this decision.

He blew a perfect smoke ring. “I assume you mean that you wish to concentrate on scientific subjects,” he said. “And not, I trust, to snap pictures of babies for their parents to display on their mantel ~~piece.~~” His tone made it clear that that was not an acceptable choice.

“I like to take pictures and I like to write. ~~The more I do it, the more I want to do it. I want to hope to~~ become a news photographer and reporter.” ~~I said earnestly. Then I added unnecessarily.~~ “And I intend to be a very good one.”

“Well put!” Dr. Ruthven exclaimed ~~and reached out to shake my hand~~. “Now let me think about how I may be able to help you along in this very interesting trajectory you envision. Come back next week, [Miss White](#), and we’ll talk again.”

I sailed out of Dr. Ruthven’s smoky office and headed straight for the *’Ensi*, in search of Joe Vlack. [Joe grinned when I told him about my conversation with the professor.](#) [“You’re on your way, Peg. There’ll be no stopping you.”](#)

Chapter 9. Successes - 1923

* * * *

The *Ensign* accepted a dozen of my photographs. Harold Martin was particularly struck by a nighttime picture of a building, ~~with~~ lights glowing in every window. "I'm not sure how you did that," the editor said admiringly. There were others of a building's harsh lines muffled in snow, the capital of a classical column shown in its geometric simplicity, the dome of the observatory cloaked in shadow. He wanted them all. Each would be published as a full page, in a special section ~~before the portraits of the graduating seniors.~~ Suddenly everything seemed to be going my way.

~~And not just in my growing passion for photography. Suddenly everything seemed to be going my way.~~ I remembered my painful years ~~in~~ high school, longing ~~for acceptance to fit in.~~ Instead, I had simply been ~~but~~ experiencing, if not outright rejection, then simply being ignored. ~~I might as well have been invisible, unless I showed up wearing snakes. Now all that changed. I had a social life.~~ ~~But~~ in the past few months I had danced with lots and lots of boys, ~~met them for coffee dates, and been careful not to talk about my ambitions, all of them seemingly attracted to me.~~

But I still had not been kissed. ~~I didn't know how to explain that. One of my dates, the captain of the wrestling squad, informed me that men are more strongly attracted to women than women are to men. He said this as he was offering to demonstrate the difference between a full nelson and a chokehold.~~

"Is that so?" I asked, slipping away. "Can you cite any scientific evidence to prove your point?"

Commented [CY119]: Perhaps a more direct way of saying this?

Commented [CY120]: Really? It all depends on boys?

Point of chapter. The scenes need to be tighter and point to the evolution of character. Also, the minor characters are not here. She seems to living in a vacuum. Who are the people she relates to? Relationships? Joe needs to come alive.

And what happens to him. He seems to disappear like Gil.

He could not

~~and I used that as an opportunity to excuse myself to visit the ladies room.~~

~~Nine out of ten of the boys that now swarmed around me~~Most of the boys I knew ~~didn't seem~~ ~~were not~~ my type. ~~They were just boys, and-~~ I ~~had set my sights on~~ ~~attracting~~~~preferred~~ men who had already achieved ~~something a certain status~~ on campus and were going places—men like Wesley ~~T,~~ the head of the science honor society, ~~Wesley~~ ~~informed me that men are more strongly attracted to women than women are to men.~~ “Is that so?” I asked. “Can you cite any scientific evidence to prove your point?”

He could not. “It’s just a theory.”

~~and~~ Philip, the president of the photography club, ~~-In fact, Philip, who'd told me to~~ ~~call him Flip, had asked to kiss me.~~

~~We and I happened to be~~ ~~were alone together~~ in the darkroom, working on prints for the *’Ensi*an. ~~We were alone.~~ I’d just taken a set of prints from the fixative, and ~~I had on~~ ~~rubber gloves.~~ ~~Flip~~ Philip clasped my wrist. “Peg,” he said, “you’re the most interesting, the most beautiful, the most desirable girl I’ve ever met.” ~~And then he~~ ~~He hesitated and then~~ stammered, “And I want very much to kiss you.”

~~So there it was: finally, the opportunity for my first kiss.~~ He bent closer. It was about to happen! But I hesitated. I liked ~~Flip~~ Philip, but I wasn’t *crazy* about him. And I wanted to be crazy about the first boy who kissed me. ~~Otherwise, it wouldn't mean anything. That was~~ ~~my theory.~~

~~So~~ I ducked away from him. “No, ~~Flip~~ Philip,” I said, “I think that would be a mistake. I’m afraid ~~that-it~~ would spoil our professional relationship.”

He sighed. “~~I understand.~~ I don’t agree, but I do understand.” We went back to making prints.

~~as though nothing had happened.~~

Commented [CY121]: See previous comment. What are the important events in her college life that need to be tightened here – that can point to her inner self.

Commented [CY122]: Really?

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Commented [CY123]: Important?

-Just before the Christmas holidays Fritz Snyder, a senior and the president of the men's glee club, invited me to a party at the Sigma Chi fraternity house. I wore my "Parrish blue" dress, the color named for Maxfield Parrish, an artist noted for his brilliant colors. I had new silk stockings and a pair of shoes with rhinestone buckles I'd found on sale. I had also taken the bold step of cutting my hair and wore it in a smooth bob. I felt extremely stylish, and I knew I was making more of an impression than I ever had with snakes wrapped around my arms.

At the height of the party Fritz excused himself disappeared and returned a few minutes later with three of his fraternity brothers, who suddenly dropped to their knees in front of me. Fritz announced, "This is dedicated to our own sweetheart, Peg White." In close four-part harmony they and the quartet serenaded me with their famous song, "The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," and Fritz announced, "This is dedicated to our own sweetheart, Peg White."

Could not have been more thrilled!

A few days later after the party I made the long trip home for the holidays, taking an overnight train for New York City and then the local out to Bound Brook. It felt strange to be back, where everything familiar now felt different. Mother was shocked at perplexed by the changes she saw in me, beginning with the shockingly bobbed hair, and I can't say she was pleased. "I'm afraid you're becoming superficial, Margaret," she said sternly. "The fancy clothes," she said. "And that garish lipstick!"

Ruth was still wearing the drab and dreary dresses of the type like the ones we'd both worn in high school, the same thick cotton stockings and unbecoming-clumsy shoes. Now that I had this new-found sense of style, I realized how dowdy we must have appeared then, and my for such a long time. My sister still did. She looked like an old maid, and- I wondered if she would end up as one. I wondered if she had been kissed, or if she wanted to be. She

Commented [CY124]: Important? What does this say about her? She seems to be more boy crazy or boy obsessed than a passionate photographer. She's BOTH! And yes, this is important.

Commented [CY125]: Important? What does this say about her? She seems to be more boy crazy or boy obsessed than a passionate photographer. She's BOTH! And yes, this is important.

Commented [CY126]: Meaning?

Commented [CY127]: ?

Commented [CY128]: I didn't think her sister was like this. I must have missed something. This could be tightened for impact.

seemed sad—had she always? I loved Ruth, but I felt I had less in common with my sister than I did with the girls who lived on my hall. Roger had grown an inch or two since last summer, and somehow I felt more comfortable with my little brother than I did with Mother or Ruth.

A Christmas card arrived from Gil with the briefest of notes—all was well with him, he wrote, and he hoped I was enjoying my courses at U of M. “Sincerely, Gil.”

Commented [CY129]: Need? No sense of Gil and their relationship. She doesn't react to this.

Sara Jane Cassidy and Tubby Luf were both home from college, and, eager to demonstrate our new sophistication as college girls, we made a date for lunch in the dining room at the Queen City Hotel, the most elegant eating place in Plainfield.

Mother thought this was pure foolishness. “Why don't you just invite your friends to come here? I could fix some hot soup, and I have a jar of the sour cherries I put up last summer that would make a nice pie.”

I made excuses, —“The girls haved their hearts set on the Queen City, I said.”

Tubby had learned to drive and would pick us up in her father's Model T Ford. More foolishness, Mother declared; we could easily have taken the streetcar to Plainfield. It was the last straw, then, when I appeared wearing a smartly tailored burgundy dress with a matching jacket, another outfit financed by the Mungers. “Silk stockings!” Mother exclaimed when she saw me. “In this weather? Have you lost all your common sense?”

Commented [CY130]: Is the reader really prepared for this change in her? Has the reader seen her like this in college?

Tubby and Sara Jane pulled up, honking the horn, and off we went. All three of us were dressed to the nines in our best flapper dresses with skirts up to the knees, and the other two had also bobbed their hair—Sara Jane even sported a raccoon coat. I think my old friends were stunned when I showed up in my fashionable outfit, no longer the dull little wren of our high school days. Tubby was studying at the women's college at Rutgers, and Sara Jane was at Bucknell out in Pennsylvania. She could hardly wait to tell us she was considering getting

It's been shown several times.

pinned to a fraternity boy she'd met in the drama club. "If I wear his pin, then it's like being engaged to be engaged," she said.

Tubby and I were excited for her and had to know all about the fraternity boy. We ordered expensive oysters and roast beef, and Sara Jane regaled us with the virtues of [Henry LaGranger new flamee](#). "He's going to be a doctor, because that's what his family wants, but his heart is in the theater," she said. "He plays the leading man in most of the Cap and Dagger productions."

On and on she went, until I finally interrupted. "He sounds wonderful," I said, "truly he does, but do you really want to settle down with just one boy at this point? Isn't it more fun to date lots of boys?"

My friends [both](#) looked at me quizzically. "Is that what you're doing, Peg? Dating lots of boys?"

"Well, yes," I admitted, "and I enjoy it." I knew what they were thinking: *Is this the wallflower who never got asked to dance even once in all the time we knew her?* "I'm meeting new boys all the time, [and](#) they all want to date me, and I hardly ever say no, at least the first time." I enjoyed their [shocked-incredulous](#) expressions.

"Aren't you afraid you'll get a reputation?" Tubby asked with a worried look.

"For what? Being a good dancer? No, I'm not worried—I'm eighteen, and I haven't even been kissed yet!"

The girls [staredgaped](#) at me. "I think you're setting some kind of a record, Peg," Sara Jane said.

"I'll drink to that," Tubby said, raising her coffee cup, and, laughing, proposed a toast to my unknissed state coming to an end in the new year, and to Sara Jane [and her](#) getting pinned to [Henry the fraternity boy](#), and to Tubby's [fond hope and her hopes](#) that the interesting boy who sat next to her in Medieval Literature would notice her and ask her out.

Not a word about our academic careers or future plans. I made only a passing mention of my fascination with photography. Mother would have frowned darkly and told us how disappointed she was that three of the smartest girls in our graduating class had all become superficial. At least for that one afternoon together, we wouldn't have cared.

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Ruth and I were in the bedroom we had shared as young girls, lying in our separate beds. "Ruth?" I whispered ~~from my bed~~ into the darkness. "Are you still awake?"

"Yes."

I propped myself up on one elbow. "Ruth, have you ever been kissed?" When she didn't answer, I ~~rushed hurried~~ on, "You don't have to answer that. It's none of my business. But I haven't, not yet, and I'm wondering if you could give me some sisterly advice ~~—, about~~ how I ought to feel about a boy before I let him kiss me."

Silence from the other bed. I lay back down and wondered if I should apologize for asking such a personal question.

"Yes," Ruth replied at last, "I have been kissed, by a man I loved very much, and it was the most natural thing in the world. I didn't have to stop and wonder if it was the right thing. I didn't care if it was or if it wasn't." I heard her start to cry.

"Ruth?" I sat up, straining to see in the darkness. "Ruth, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you."

"It's all right," she said. "I don't mind telling you about it. I fell in love, and he was crazy about me. He asked me to marry him, and I accepted. But Mother refused to allow it."

~~This was astonishing news.~~ I climbed out of my bed and crossed over to sit beside ~~Ruth~~ my sister. "Why haven't I heard about any of this until now?" I asked. I could scarcely believe what she'd just said.

Commented [CY131]: Wasn't this earlier in the book? Why wouldn't Margaret know about it?

NO

~~My sister Ruth~~ was blowing her nose. “Because Mother didn’t want you or anyone else to know about my indiscretion. That’s what she called it—an indiscretion.”

“But *why*? Why the big secret?”

“Dennis’s ~~mother is Irish but his~~ father is Chinese. ~~His mother is Irish. He owns a laundry. They live in Lowell, north of Boston, where his father owns a laundry. That’s what all the Chinese men do up there. It was~~ the only way ~~they he~~ could make a living after ~~they he~~ came to this country. ~~Dennis works in a Chinese restaurant in Boston. That’s where I met him. We got acquainted. Then we began to meet secretly~~”. ~~Every week or so Dennis’s father brought him to Chinatown in Boston. Such an interesting place, Peg! You’d find lots of subjects for your pictures there!~~

I reached for her hand and squeezed it. “~~Tell me what happened.~~” I whispered. “~~And that’s where you met him?~~”

“~~He got a job in a restaurant in Boston. Students eat in Chinese restaurants because the food is cheap, and it’s good, too. I started going there often. He’d become the manager, and gradually we got acquainted. We began to meet secretly.~~ Oh, Peg, I was so much in love. ~~I can’t tell you!~~ He asked me to marry him, and I said yes without a second’s hesitation. But there is a lot of discrimination against ~~people who came here from China, the Chinese you know. Everyone would have disapproved.~~ I don’t know why I ever thought Mother would allow it, but one day I gathered all my courage and made the trip out here to tell her I wanted to bring a friend to meet her. I didn’t tell her how serious I was about him, ~~just that I wanted her to meet my friend.~~ She asked his name, and I couldn’t lie. She’d know the minute she saw him—the Oriental eyes, the color of his skin. She said, ‘Ruth, if you don’t break ~~off~~ this ~~off~~ friendship, ~~as you call it,~~ immediately, I will disown you. I will not speak to you again.’”

“Mother said *that*? But she married a Jew!”

Commented [CY132]: Believe I read before You did not.

Commented [CY133]: Does the family know Margaret/Peg as a photographer? Bought her a camera.

“She did, but she kept ~~it~~ a secret, didn’t she? ~~She didn’t tell us? Not a word~~ until after ~~Father~~ died! ~~And it’s pretty clear that she has no use for Grandmother White, or Uncle Lazar and Aunt Naomi, or anyone from Father’s family—and that’s because they’re Jewish.~~ If she doesn’t want us telling people we’re half Jewish, what do you imagine she’d say if one of her daughters married a Chinaman!”

“And you did what she told you? You broke off with him?” I bristled, although frankly I was as shocked as Mother must have been.

~~that Ruth had fallen in love with a person of another race.~~

“~~Yes, and it has left me miserable. I had some idea~~ ~~knew~~ what my life would be like if I didn’t ~~do as she demanded. I knew that~~ Uncle Lazar would probably object too, and since he’s helping with my tuition, I’d have to drop out of college. Everyone I ~~know, not just Mother,~~ would turn their backs on me. Maybe even you, Peg!”

“I wouldn’t have turned my back, Ruth,” I said. “I would have wanted you to do whatever made you happy.” ~~I hoped I was right, that I would have behaved decently.~~

~~“It was stupid of me ever to think I might have any kind of life with this man I loved so much,” Ruth said. Ruth~~ ~~She shook her head and tried, and failed, to~~ ~~choked~~ back a sob. “I had to let him go.”

“Oh, dear Ruth,” I sighed. “How hard it must have been for you! But no doubt someone ~~more...~~ more suitable will come along, and you’ll fall in love again.”

~~“I don’t think so.”~~ “No,” Ruth said. “I’ve never been attractive to men. I’m not like you, Peg! But please don’t say anything to Mother. I promised I wouldn’t tell you, but ~~some promises aren’t meant to be kept.~~ I thought you ought to know.”

I leaned down and ~~kissed~~ ~~stroked~~ Ruth’s wet cheek, and then I crept back to my own bed and ~~lay~~ ~~listening~~ ~~to my sister’s~~ ~~her~~ quiet ~~sobs~~ ~~weeping~~ ~~until I fell asleep.~~ ~~Suppose~~ ~~people reacted like that when they found out I was Jewish! Mother and Father had kept it a~~

Commented [CY134]: Too long. Why not have Peg reflect on being Jewish?

Commented [CY135]: No inner reaction?

secret for years, so obviously they'd been ashamed of it. Were there telltale signs, like the shape of your nose? Was it just as bad if you were only *half*? How hard would it be to keep it a secret?

It was a long night until sleep finally came.

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Chapter 10. Chappie - 1923

It was a relief to get away from ~~my frowning, disapproving mother and my unhappy sister when the holiday ended and glad_ and to~~ make the long train ride back to Ann Arbor; ~~away from_ my frowning, disapproving mother and my unhappy sister.~~ Roger had clung to ~~my hande~~ when I left, begging me to come ~~home oftener~~ back soon. ~~“It’s lonesome here without you.” he said. “And Mother’s always mad at me.”~~

Commented [CY136]: WHY?

Commented [CY137]: No sense of him

~~“It’s not you she’s mad at.” I assured him. “It’s because she’s lonesome. too.~~

~~“I’ll come will,~~ as often as I can,” I promised, ~~not_ pretty~~ sure, though, that I ~~could not~~ keep my word.

~~A few days after I returned to campus, an amazing thing happened. I fell in love.~~

Commented [CY138]: Just like that. Anticlimactic.

I was on my way into the cafeteria on the West Quad for lunch. I had just stepped into the revolving door when I noticed a tall, handsome man on his way out.

“How do you do,” he said, smiling, and I replied, “How do *you* do,” and smiled back.

We were so busy smiling that the door kept revolving, and neither of us exited.

“Glad to meet you,” said the stranger, who was indeed *quite* tall, at least six feet with the shoulders of a football player, and *quite* handsome. His dark eyes ~~gleamed-shone~~ with amusement ~~behind spectacles.~~

“Likewise,” I said, ~~and the door revolved again.~~

I could have made my escape then, had my usual bowl of soup, and gone on with my life. But I did not. ~~H_ he~~ gave the door another firm push, and we went around ~~again~~ still ~~another time,~~ both of us laughing.

“We must meet again,” he said. “How about this evening?”

“I have a paper due tomorrow,” I answered truthfully, ~~never good at the fine art of flirting~~. “Maybe another time.”

“I won’t take no for an answer,” he said, ~~and we went around again~~. “This door keeps turning until you agree to meet me tonight at the Seal.”

The Seal was the university seal embedded at the Diag, where two diagonal paths crossed on the quadrangle between the main buildings. It was a traditional meeting place.

“Yes!” I cried. “The answer is yes!”

The door stopped turning, and ~~I~~we stepped out. ~~He was waiting~~. “On official forms I’m Everett Chapman, but everyone except my mother calls me Chappie. And you’ve just agreed to meet me at eight tonight. Your name, please?”

“Margaret White on official forms, but everyone calls me Peg except my mother.”

Mock solemnly, we shook hands. “Eight o’clock at the Seal, Peg to meet Everett ChapmanChappie,” I ~~intoned-said~~ and hurried away.

Commented [CY139]: ?

I finished my project in the zoology lab, and, stomach rumbling—I’d forgotten about lunch—I sat through a class in the works of John Milton and a discussion of “Paradise Lost.” ~~too excited to pay proper attention to “Paradise Lost.”~~ Then, pelted with biting crystals of snow and blasted by a relentless arctic wind, I rushed back to my room to drop off my books, ~~still with no time to eat, and~~before heading out again into the frigid Michigan winter.

Commented [CY140]: SHOW HER EXCITEMENT

~~Over the past few months practically all of my dates had called for me at Betsy’s, where they were routinely scrutinized and mercilessly judged by the girls on the basis of looks (height counted for a lot), dress, and manner. This date would have certainly passed muster.~~ Chappie and Iwe reached the Seal almost simultaneously. ~~Chappie~~He grabbed my arm and our heads lowered against the wind, ~~we~~raced across the Diag and hurried along snowy sidewalks down a side street leading away from the campus. As we hurried along

Commented [CY141]: Necessary? Get to the core of the story. Work with that. What is the point of the chapter? How will she change? Who are the new people in her life? And how does she relate to them?

~~snowy sidewalks, heads lowered against the wind, Chappie explained.~~ “I know you were expecting to go to the Royal Cafe,” ~~Chappie said,~~ “because that’s where everybody goes ~~to the Royal Cafe~~. But because everybody goes there and everybody knows you, Peg, that’s the one place we will not go. I want you all to myself.”

That ~~statement~~ caught my attention. *I want you all to myself.*

~~He steered me to a dingy. At a~~ down-at-the-heels diner ~~where the customers were mostly working men Chappie,~~ picked a table booth with patched upholstery next to a steamy window, and without even asking what I’d like, ordered melted cheese sandwiches for both of us ~~without even asking what I’d like.~~

“My favorite,” he explained.

Melted cheese happened to be mine, too, although by then I was so hungry I could have chewed the leg on the table. I gobbled my sandwich while Chappie talked, pushing the still uneaten half of his across the table, and I ate that, too.

Everett Chapman was a senior studying electrical engineering, he’d served in the army during the war, and he was twenty-two ~~—not nearly as old as Gil but older than the other boys I’d been dating.~~ He specialized in electric welding, about which I knew nothing at all but was now eager to learn. I discovered on that first date that he had a wickedly whimsical sense of humor, but underneath the easy manner I sensed a person who worked hard and took life seriously. I believe I started to fall may have taken my first step toward falling in love with him right then and there, in that dingy diner, eating over a congealing melted cheese sandwich. As a sophomore my weeknight curfew was ten-thirty, a half hour after the library closed. I wished it had been later. We had to rush to get back in time, before I was given demerits and risked losing going-out privileges.

That was in February. A lot happened during the shortest month. During rush week sororities sent out invitations to potential members. I received bids from four and decided to

Commented [CY142]: Context in the story? Need a greater sense of the world she lives in and HOW it affects her.

pledge Alpha Omicron Pi. I moved out of Betsy's and into the drafty old frame sorority house around the corner.

Commented [CY143]: MG Reader today follow? Is this important to the story. MINOR CHARACTERS?

And I wanted more than anything to be with Chappie. I did not have to wait for his first goodnight kiss. It happened on our very first date, and it was everything I had longed for. There were many more kisses after that, and I knew, by the way he held me that he longed for the closeness. But Chappie was always a gentleman. I never had to stop his hands from roaming into dangerous territory, but eventually, to keep our passion in check, I told him we had to stop the ardent kisses. He agreed. There would be just one goodnight kiss, we decided, and not the long, lingering kind I yearned for but was afraid to allow.

Commented [CY144]: ?

We had so much in common! ~~We had everything in common. We went dancing every chance we got.~~ If there was a movie, we went to see it and talked about it afterwards and almost always agreed on whether it was a good movie or not. ~~Neither of us cared for "The Beautiful and Damned," based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel.~~ We saw plays put on by the drama department: "The Importance of Being Earnest" by Oscar Wilde, and "Volpone," about a lecherous old miser who pretends to be fatally ill. ~~We went dancing every chance we got, a Chappie loved jazz and I didn't, but I went to jazz performances with him anyway, and it began to grow on me as well.~~ And I learned to dance the Charleston to songs like "Ballin' the Jack" and "Muskrat Ramble."

Commented [CY145]: Necessary?

Commented [CY146]: What?

Commented [CY147]: Lost on MG reader

We read to each other. Milton:

The mind is its own place, and in itself

Can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n.

And Carl Sandburg:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

We loved those lines, repeating them over and over. “I feel as though Sandburg wrote that for me,” I told Chappie. “I’m taking the road less traveled.” He, and he said he knew exactly what I meant. Later, I wondered if he really did know, or if he was just telling me what I wanted to hear.

When spring came, we went for long walks in the woods, searching for snakes.

Most wonderful of all, though, was discovering that Chappie was also a photographer.

He took highly technical pictures, fascinating photographs of wedge-shaped steel particles fusing under high heat. H

I was eighteen, and I was falling in love. He was everything I wanted in a man. I loved the way he held me close. I felt so protected in his arms! I did not wait long for our first goodnight kiss. It happened on our very first date, right after the melted cheese sandwich, and it was delightful, everything I had hoped for, dreamed of, longed for. I found myself wanting more kisses, more closeness. I knew by the way he held me when we danced, that he longed for more closeness, too. Chappie was always a gentleman. I never had to stop his hands from roaming into dangerous territory, but eventually, to keep our passion in check, I had to stop his kisses. He understood. There would be just one goodnight kiss, we decided, and not the long, lingering kind I regularly saw being planted on the lips of my sorority sisters under the glaring porch light. The kind of kisses I yearned for.

Spring came slowly to Ann Arbor, but it did arrive at last. We took long walks together in the woods, looking for snakes. Every interest of mine matched a similar interest of his, and every interest of his perfectly fitted in with mine. It seemed too good to be true! Even more amazing, Chappie was also a photographer. The engineering department had its own publication, and Chappie took pictures for it, many of them highly technical. For instance, he

Commented [CY148]: Get right to the detail. Chappie took pictures of wedge-shaped...” NO SENSE THAT HE TOOK PICTURES BEFORE.

Commented [CY149]: Need to say again?

Commented [CY150]: ? Can this be shortened. Goes on too long and feels repetitive.

Commented [CY151]: ?

Commented [CY152]: ?

Commented [CY153]: Necessary?

Commented [CY154]: This doesn’t make sense. She has to stop his kisses but yearns for the long lingering kisses.

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Commented [CY155]: Need? Need a sense of Chappie. Goes not come to life.

photographed wedge-shaped steel particles fusing under high heat to form fascinating patterns.

His developing and printing skills were much better than mine—was much better at the technical aspects of photography than I was, and we began to work together in the darkroom. Before the school year ended, we were. Then we started going out with our cameras and taking photographs together.

I had found in Chappie everything I had ever hoped for: a marvelous blend of my father's virtues of dedication and hard work, and Chappie's combined with a adorably boyish kind of playfulness and sense of fun. He bought a kazoo and serenaded me. He hid silly notes around the darkroom for me to find. When we went dancing, he would suddenly break into a tap routine that left me helpless with laughter.

Before the end of the term, Then, in May, Chappie told me he loved me. He belonged to me, he said, heart and soul. I should have expected it, but for some reason I found that declaration unsettling. I must not have been ready for it. I was only eighteen, and I was not prepared to give myself, heart and soul, to anyone at this stage of my life. If I did, what would that mean to my dreams of accomplishing great things? Of becoming a famous photographer? If I allowed myself to belong to him "heart and soul," as he seemed to want, would I lose sight of the person I wanted to be? There were still many boys who wanted to date me. I was so busy with my courses and my photography and Chappie that there was not much time left for them, but I was flattered by their attention. I had spent too many years when nobody wanted to dance with me, and now it seemed that practically everybody wanted to dance with me! And I couldn't say no.

When I tried to explain this, made dear Chappie became very unhappy, but although he was as kind and tried to be understanding about my feelings on this as he was

Commented [CY156]: Get right to the detail. Chappie took pictures of wedge-shaped..." NO SENSE THAT HE TOOK PICTURES BEFORE.

Commented [CY157]: He needs to come to life. The reader needs to SEE THIS.

Goes on too long. Need to evaluate the energy in these chapters – for tensions and drama AND CONFLICT

Commented [CY158]: No sense of this inner struggle. She seems to be driven by boys only and the passion to get ahead and make a name for herself is lost – as well as her passion for photography. How do her photos speak to her character?

Commented [CY159]: She says and thinks about this too much. What is the shape of this chapter

about everything else. “Peggy,” he ~~whispered~~ ~~urgently~~ ~~declared~~, “I’m mad about you. I never believed I could love anyone as I love you. And I understand how you feel. You’re younger than me ~~by several years~~, and I know that you want to experience more of life before you settle down with ~~the~~ one person ~~forever who loves you as deeply as I do~~. You must finish your studies, and I must begin my career. I promise to wait for you for at least two years—even three, if it comes to that! And then ~~you must~~—promise ~~you’ll that you will~~ be mine ~~forever for the rest of our lives!~~”

For the rest of our lives! The idea was frightening.

~~I adored him for saying this, but I also saw how hard it would be to wait for such a long time. He said that he felt I should date other men, so that I would be sure. He knew there was a risk that I could fall in love with someone else, and he said he couldn’t bear to watch that.~~

~~“Maybe I should drop out of the university and let you finish your education, so that I won’t be standing in your way. I’ll do anything—anything!—to prove to you how much I love you.”~~

~~I felt as though the~~The world was spinning too fast. ~~I loved Chappie, but was I ready to commit my whole life to him? I didn’t know.~~ I felt confused. One minute I was happy, and the next I plunged into despair. ~~I could see dreams of my future dissolving into dust. I wanted to cry when he pledged his love to me.~~

Chappie ~~was no better. He was also wrought up,~~ complain~~ing~~ that he ~~couldn’t think straight,~~ couldn’t concentrate. ~~With f~~Finals ~~are~~ coming up, ~~he needed,~~ and I ~~have~~ to focus on ~~his my~~ studies—~~“, b~~But how can I think about molecules when all I can think about is *you*?” ~~he wailed.~~

Commented [CY160]: I don’t see this love between them. Goes on too long.

Commented [CY161]: Too long. Point of chapter? How does she change? What does she want? What do those around her want? No sense of other people in her life, including Chappie.

~~What girl doesn't want to hear that? Yet~~ I didn't know how to respond to his pressure. ~~And there was no one I could talk to about my dilemma. All the girls I knew had their sights set on marriage. Not one seemed to have any ambitions of her own.~~

~~"Listen, my darling Peg: every morning I'm going to send you a dozen roses by mental telepathy. What time do you usually wake up?"~~

~~"Around eight."~~

~~"Then at eight o'clock I want you to think of the roses I'm sending you, and you'll know exactly what color they are."~~

~~And so I did, every morning.~~

~~That was an innocent pastime that went on for days. At other times we lived more dangerously. Chappie owned a dilapidated old car. The only reliable thing about his ancient Dodge was the regularity with which it broke down, but mostly it got us where we wanted to go. One night we decided to celebrate. When Chappie was accepted into the graduate school in engineering and offered a teaching job in his department, we decided to celebrate. We drove around aimlessly, until I proposed staying up all night to watch the sunrise. Chappie owned a dilapidated old automobile. The only reliable thing about his ancient Dodge was the regularity with which it broke down, but mostly it got us where we wanted to go. We parked and climbed onto the hood of the car to wait, and when the first bright rays shot above the purple horizon, we cheered. That was it--our celebration. Then I had to smuggle myself into the sorority house without waking up the housemother, an elderly widow with a hearing problem, fortunately for me.~~

* * * *

~~Not long after that,~~ Toward the end of May my mother came to Ann Arbor to visit for the first time. Naturally I wanted her to meet Chappie, and he was anxious to meet her. "But

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without you there, Peg,” he said. “I want your mother to get to know me on my own, so she can ask me whatever she wants.”

The two of them went for a walk and were gone for about an hour, ~~while~~ I waited nervously in ~~the the sorority house~~ parlor at Betsy’s while girls gathered around the piano and entertained visiting parents with popular songs. After Chappie left ~~us~~, Mother and I went to have our supper in the cafeteria. I showed her the revolving door where Chappie and I first met. “It was the funniest thing!” ~~I told her.~~ “He kept me going around and around until I agreed to have a date with him.”

Mother smiled indulgently. “And it seems you’ve been going around and around ever since.”

I felt myself blush. “Yes, I guess I have.”

~~We carried our trays to an empty table.~~ “Chappie and I had a long talk,” she said when we were half way through our meal and ~~still~~ had discussed nothing of importance. “I can see that he’s serious about you.” She ~~stabbed at~~ pushed a lima bean ~~and pushed it~~ through the mashed potatoes and gravy. “~~He made an excellent impression on me.~~ He made it a point ~~to tell~~ assured me that he has led a clean life and has the greatest respect for you.” She eyed me, waiting for my reaction.

I looked away. “Yes, it’s true. We’re ~~both~~ very careful not to ~~let~~ let things get out of hand.”

~~I found the conversation embarrassing. The truth was that I was at a point, and Chappie was too, that we both desperately wanted to “let things get out of hand.” I knew it would be wrong, and so did he.~~

I ~~tried~~ wanted to steer the conversation in a ~~different, less dangerous~~ more comfortable direction, but Mother would not allow it. “It’s important to control your ardor before marriage,” she said, ~~looking me straight in the eye~~ her eyes boring into mine. “It’s not easy. I

suppose every couple goes through the same struggle. Your father and I did ~~a~~. And it was worth ~~the struggle~~ it. We were pure when we married.”

The awkward conversation ~~finally~~ ended, and we didn’t talk about Chappie again.

After she went home to New Jersey, I had a letter from her. “I can tell, just by hearing your voice,” she wrote, “that you’re in love with this delightful young man.”

~~I read my mother’s letter several times and decided to stop questioning myself at every turn. Mother She was right—I I was in love with him Chappie. But I was also determined to realize my ambitions. Maybe I wouldn’t be going into the wilds as part of a team of scientists, yet surely I could find a way to become successful, first as a photographer but also as a writer. Surely I could have both a career and marriage. It didn’t have to be either/or, did it?~~

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Commented [CY162]: No struggle, No inner reflections. Just like that?

~~As soon as I read her letter, I decided to stop questioning myself at every turn.~~

Chappie and I ~~were going to~~ would be separated for the summer—he’d be ~~was~~ staying with his parents in Detroit where he had a summer job playing traps in a dance band, and I was going back to Camp Agaming in Connecticut to earn money for the next term. ~~I knew that I would miss him, that letters and telephone calls would not be nearly enough. Maybe, I thought, the time apart would be good for us. It would help to clear my head. I’d have a chance to think through this vision of my future that included Chappie.~~

Commented [CY163]: Earlier she was talking about dating other boys. WHY THE SUDDEN TURNAROUND?

~~But I was sure I loved him, and now I was ready to tell him that.~~

Commented [CY164]: Not sure I follow. When is NOW?

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~~Just B~~efore the ~~end of the semester’s end~~, Doctor Ruthven called me into his office again. “I’ve been thinking about you a great deal, Miss White,” he began, in his usual formal manner. “What are your plans for the summer?”

I told him about Camp Agaming, adding, “~~I hope to do something different this year.~~ I’d like to teach nature studies to the children. ~~It would be less tiring demanding than the~~

photography classes that ~~keep~~ kept me all night in the darkroom and earned very little money. ~~More rewarding, too. And frankly, I need to do something different.~~

Commented [CY165]: But she made money with her photography? She no longer needs money? Miss Munger told her not to

“Mmm,” he said, and out came ~~his~~ the pipe, the tobacco pouch, and the match ~~while he seemed to arrange his thoughts.~~ I waited ~~patiently until~~ while he’d finished the ritual of tamping, lighting, puffing. “I have another idea for you. You’ve told me that you hope to become a writer as well as a photographer. You seem to have rapport with young children, or the camp would not have invited you to return. Why not write ~~stories for them,~~ nature stories ~~for the youngsters,~~ and take photographs ~~that would to~~ illustrate ~~your tales~~ them? ~~I think y~~ You might enjoy creating such a book, and I’m sure the ~~children~~ youngsters would enjoy reading it. ~~You could work on it at the camp during the summer and here at the university when you return for the fall term.~~ Given what I know of your talents, I’m certain ~~that~~ I could help you find a publisher.”

Commented [CY166]: How does he know this? This seems a tad forced and comes out of nowhere.

Commented [CY167]: No sense of her as a writer – no sense of a passion for writing.

~~I loved the idea, and I readily~~ quickly agreed and sailed out of Dr. Ruthven’s office feeling as if I’d just taken a giant step into my future.

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When I ~~got~~ went home to Bound Brook early in June, ~~my home was~~ I found our house in a state of upheaval. Mother had decided to sell ~~our house~~ it and move with ~~twelve-year-old~~ Roger to Cleveland, Ohio. Her attempt to earn a living by selling insurance had not been successful, but now she believed she had found her vocation. “I’ve always thought I’d make a good teacher, and I’ve ~~decided~~ made up my mind to study Braille and become a teacher of the blind. There’s an excellent training school in Cleveland. I’ve already enrolled.”

Commented [CY168]: ?

~~Her announcement took me by surprise.~~ She hadn’t said anything at all about this when she ~~came to visit~~ was in Ann Arbor. It seemed like such a radical change, ~~but when~~ Mother made up her mind to do something, ~~there was no stopping her~~ she did it. “I’ve found a duplex near the two universities. We’ll live on the second floor and rent out the first floor to

Commented [CY169]: Has the reader seen this in her character?

students, and that will help cover our expenses. There's even a room for you and Ruth when you come to visit."

~~By then,~~ Ruth had graduated from college and ~~taken~~ accepted a job at a law office in Boston, ~~but she was home for a few weeks to help Mother pack up the Bound Brook house and make the move across Pennsylvania to Cleveland, and~~ ~~I wondered if she had gotten over the end of her love affair. Mother had never mentioned it, and I wasn't going to ask.~~

It was painful to see our home ~~being~~ dismantled, the furniture sold, the pale rectangles on the walls where Father's photographs had once hung. Everything reminded me of his absence.

~~After a week or two of helping Mother pack for the move, the empty windowsills where I'd tended the chrysalises, the neglected garden. I was relieved to get away to~~ ~~left for Camp Agaming to Camp Agaming in the beautiful Litchfield Hills and got to work immediately begin the task of~~ setting up a darkroom for my students. As it turned out, I would still have to teach photography to my young girls, but I would not be taking pictures of the campers to sell as postcards. Instead, I would work on the book that Dr. Ruthven had proposed.

Madge Jacobson was also back as a counselor, and she arrived at the camp the day after I did. We hadn't seen each other since the previous summer, and she had volunteered to give me a hand. I would not be taking pictures of the campers to sell as postcards—Madge was taking that over. I would work on the book that Dr. Ruthven had proposed: photographs matched with text that would be scientifically correct but simple enough for young readers.

Madge arrived at the camp the day after I did and couldn't wait to tell me that she was head over heels in love with Ben Hurley, the boy from Yale she'd been dating. It was

Commented [CY170]: See above? TIGHTENING is needed. What are the key scenes in the chapter? What do you want to get across in this chapter? Where is Peg going? Who is going with her?

Commented [CY171]: This seems to be the only thing on these women's minds.

WHERE ARE THE CONFLICTS? Tensions/dramas?

“Ben said this” and “Ben thinks that” until I wanted to scream. They planned to announce their engagement at Christmas and get married in two years right after she graduates.

“Our parents want us to have a big wedding, but we’re thinking of eloping instead,” she confided.

“So,” I said, “no career plans then? You’re a good student. You made almost straight A’s, didn’t you?”

Madge laughed. “Yes, I pulled good grades, but I’m majoring in English, and I don’t want to teach. I’m not really *driven*—not the way you are, Peg!” She and Ben were planning to sneak off for a secret weekend together at the end of the summer. “It wouldn’t be the first time,” she said with a knowing smile.

I didn’t say anything, just raised a quizzical eyebrow.

Madge blushed. “Don’t tell me you and Chappie haven’t?”

“No,” I said. It was my turn to blush.

Madge seemed so sure about her life; it was all laid out for her. I remembered our discussions in Brooks Hall about when it was all right to kiss your date for the first time, and Madge had said kissing was fine, but no petting until you’d been dating for a couple of months. She and Ben had apparently crossed that crucial threshold—and others as well. I wished I was as sure about my life as Madge was about hers.

I felt that I truly did love Chappie, but I was also convinced that an exciting life lay ahead of me and I would some day be famous. Dr. Ruthven had high hopes for my future—everyone who saw my photographs did, and I did for myself. But I still wasn’t sure what shape that future would take. Desire for success pulled me in one direction, desire for love pulled me in another, and the struggle was wearing me out. When I thought about being a successful writer-photographer, I pictured myself alone, boldly going into challenging situations to obtain the best shots and the best story. But I often thought of how nice it might

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Commented [CY172]: No real sense of this. I really want to see Margaret motivated toward this. I want to see her as a writer and photographer – in action. I also want to see her relating to people. WHY exactly does she want to be famous?

Commented [CY173]: Really? Who is everyone?

Commented [CY174]: This needs to be shown, not said.

be to share a cozy home with Chappie always waiting for me when I returned from my latest adventures. Could I have it both ways? I didn't know, and there was no one to advise me.

Chapter 11. Torn - 1923

My nineteenth birthday came and went in June. At first everything seemed to be fine. When I had time away from my campers, I immersed myself in the nature book Dr. Ruthven had suggested. I tried to imagine what might fire the imagination of a child of eight or nine, a child like myself at that age, intelligent and curious about the world around me. I created miniature stage sets with pebbles and bits of greenery and posed a series of insects— dragonflies, spiders, ladybugs, gently chloroformed to keep them still—while I made dozens of photographs. Then I wrote a story about that insect in a few simple paragraphs. I knew how to make the story come to life on the page.

~~All summer~~ I enjoyed working on the book project, and my campers were lively and engaging. I should have been content, but I was not. - I was miserable. I was on the verge of exhaustion. I couldn't sleep and teetered on the verge of exhaustion. My eyes were ringed with dark circles. Food had no taste, and so I lost weight. I couldn't bear to be alone, yet being with other people irritated me. I'd never been like this before—why was I now?- I told myself that all I had to do was to get through the next few ~~more~~ weeks. In the fall I would be back in Ann Arbor, Chappie would be there in graduate school, and I would keep working on my nature book. Everything would be fine!

But I wasn't fine now. I'd promised to write to Chappie at least three times a week, but whenever I started a letter, I burst into tears and up what I'd just written. When he didn't hear from me, he called on the camp phone, and that just made it worse.

Commented [CY175]: WHY? We need to SEE Peg struggling.

Madge, who was used to seeing me as the girl in complete charge of her life, now ~~saw~~ watched me turning into a wreck. “I think you should go to a doctor,” she ~~advised~~said. “I’m worried about you, Peg! You just don’t seem like yourself.”

“I don’t *feel* like myself,” I confessed, already teary. Why was I weeping all the time? I couldn’t understand it.

~~But~~ I took Madge’s advice and looked up a doctor in Litchfield. She drove me to his office in her flashy roadster. “I’ll be right here when you come out,” she promised and squeezed my hand. “We all get to feeling blue sometimes. You’ll be yourself again in no time.”

I tried to smile, and failed.

~~down the street from the shop run by the two ladies who had been so thrilled by my postcards. What would the ladies think if they saw me now? Last summer I’d been tanned and strong and healthy; now I had lost weight and my eyes were ringed with dark circles.~~

Dr. Graham had wire-rimmed glasses and a little gray mustache and a pointy beard. He was reassuringly grandfatherly ~~as I explained that~~ recited my symptoms: I feel tired, ~~couldn’t sleep, and had no appetite.~~ He peered in my throat and ears and listened to my heart.

“Miss White,” he said, laying aside his stethoscope, “I don’t believe there is anything physically wrong with you. But you appear to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown. You are perhaps demanding too much of yourself, working too hard, studying too much. Your brain is unable to tolerate any more, and your nerves are strained.” He removed his glasses, folded them ~~carefully~~, and slid them into the pocket of his white coat. “I advise you to refrain from all intellectual activity. Try to relax. Rest as much as you can. ~~Try to relax.~~ Go for long walks. Drink tea in the afternoons. Do you swim? Swimming is beneficial to the nervous system.”

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Commented [CY176]: Important?

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Commented [CY177]: This just comes about. No sense of HER.

I nodded, promising ~~that I would to~~ do ~~all that~~ as he suggested.

~~Madge was waiting for me outside his office.~~ I climbed into ~~her Madge's roadstrear~~.

Commented [CY178]: A greater sense of Madge.

slammed the door, and burst into wrenching sobs.

“Oh dear, dear, dear,” Madge murmured sympathetically as we bounced along the bumpy road back to camp. “Didn’t he prescribe something for you? Some pill or tonic?”

~~I shook my head and dug for my handkerchief.~~ “No,” I said between sobs ~~and dug for my handkerchief.~~ “~~Nothing~~ Just told me to let my brain rest.”

“But how are you supposed to ~~let your brain rest~~ do that?”

“Swimming. Long walks. Afternoon tea. ~~And relax! He doesn't seem to understand I'd relax if I could.~~” ~~I don't think he knew what else to tell me.”~~

Commented [CY179]: ?

The summer dragged on, and I dragged on with it. My little girls, some of whom had been ~~Agaming~~ campers the ~~previous~~ summer ~~before~~ and had come back eager for more of my enthusiasm, watched me warily. ~~They~~ must have ~~been obvious~~ noticed that ~~something~~ I had changed. I no longer stayed up all night to develop their pictures, no longer started off ~~hiking the hills~~ with my camera in total darkness to catch the best sunrise ~~from a nearby hilltops~~. Somehow Madge kept things going for both of us, and I was grateful. ~~But I was even more grateful when~~ At last the summer ended, the campers left for home, and I ~~could~~ made plans to ~~stop off in Cleveland to stay with~~ visit Mother and Roger ~~in Cleveland~~ before I ~~returned~~ went on to Ann Arbor.

“You’ll be fine, Peg,” Madge said as she prepared to leave. “I’m sure you will. You know that Chappie is madly in love with you.”

~~I did know that. And that was part of the problem. Or maybe the whole problem.~~

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Mother’s new home was on the second floor of a plain clapboard house on a dreary street with ~~only~~ a weedy patch of a front yard, so unlike the ~~handsome~~ unique house and

beautiful exotic garden Father had created in Bound Brook. The four of us—Mother, Roger, Ruth, and I—kept bumping into each other in the crowded apartment. Students had not yet begun returning to the two nearby universities, and the downstairs apartment sat vacant with a FOR RENT sign in the window of the sun porch.

I had been there for three days when Chappie called to ask if he could visit.

“Chappie’s coming,” I told my mother.

Mother was delighted pleased. He had made a good impression on her, as he did on everyone, with his intelligence and good humor. “Chappie reminds me of your father,” she said wistfully. She didn’t say so, but I knew she thought he would be an excellent husband for me.

From the very beginning I had mixed feelings about the visit. None of Dr. Graham’s recommendations had done me a scrap of good. No matter how many long walks I took and how many cups of tea I drank, I was still miserable. I didn’t want Chappie to see how tired I looked, how nervous I seemed, how thin and gaunt I had become. I didn’t want him to see how easily I burst into tears. Nevertheless, I made an effort to pull myself together, put on one of my nice dresses, and fix my hair. I was watching from the window when his old car pulled up in front of the house. He stepped out and adjusted a panama hat—he must have just bought it; I’d never seen him wear one, and somehow he looked different—and straightened his tie. Then he came striding up the cracked crumbling sidewalk and rang the bell marked “M. White.”

I made no move to go down and answer the door. Mother came out of the small kitchen, wiping her hands on a dishtowel, and glanced at me. “Aren’t you going to let him in?” I shook my head. She sighed and hurried down the narrow stairs to greet him.

Their voices sounded cheery as they climbed the narrow stairs together. My mouth was dry as dust, but I forced myself to smile when Chappie appeared at the sitting room door

Commented [CY180]: Has the reader really seen this?

Commented [CY181]: Do we know what university? Yes, but leave it this way; the names all changed

Commented [CY182]: See previous comments. No real sense of this.

Commented [CY183]: The reader needs to see her struggle. They need to empathize with her.

Commented [CY184]: Important?
yeah

and hesitated for a moment before he swooped in. He gathered me in his arms, murmuring, “Darling, I’ve missed you so much!”

It must have felt to Chappie as though he was embracing a bag of laundry, because I could not bring myself to respond. I backed away. I opened my mouth and tried to speak, but nothing came out. My tongue moved, but there were no words. Every ounce of strength seemed to have drained out of me.

Mother stepped in. “Margaret has been a little overwrought lately,” she said in a bright voice that sounded entirely false. “Let’s give her a chance to rest, and you and I can have a cup of tea and a nice chat.”

She took my arm and steered me ~~gently~~ back to the ~~spare~~ bedroom. ~~I was to share with Ruth when she was there.~~ It was ~~barely~~ ~~scarcely~~ larger than a closet ~~with one small window too high to see out of.~~ She eased me down onto the bed and threw a ~~light cover~~ ~~quilt~~ over me. “Rest,” she said. “But not too long. I’ll keep Chappie entertained for a while, but you must come out to see him sooner or later, ~~no matter how you’re feeling.~~”

~~I had no idea exactly what I was feeling, but it~~ ~~The feeling that I’d been holding my breath for too long~~ didn’t go away even when Mother returned to announce that supper was on the table. With ~~great an~~ effort I ~~managed to get~~ ~~got~~ up, straightened my clothes, and walked unsteadily to the little nook by the kitchen, ~~where~~ Mother had set the table with her good china. I forced a smile ~~that felt like a grimace~~ and ~~squeezed Chappie’s hand and let him Chappie~~ pull out my chair. The table was so small that our knees touched. There had been a time when that kind of closeness, hidden from view, would have thrilled me. Now it frightened me, and I couldn’t say why. Still I could not utter more than a word or two, “please” and “thank you” and “no more,” and finally, before the meal was over, “excuse me.” I ~~went~~ ~~crept~~ back to the stifling little bedroom, lay down, and wept and wept.

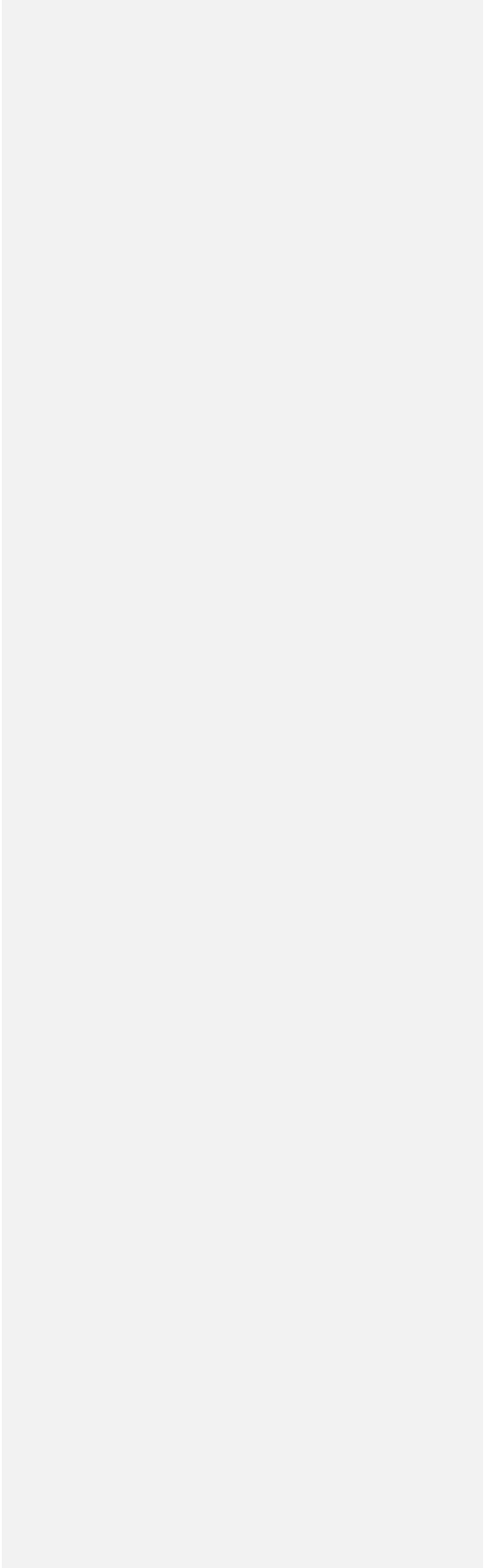
Commented [CY185]: She’s been there for three days?

The voices of Chappie and Mother continued for a while, and then I didn't hear Chappie's any more. The old Dodge coughed and started up under my window. My mother ~~came and~~ sat by my bedside, not saying anything, asking no questions, just sitting there in silence. Eventually I slept. The next day she said that Chappie had told her he loved me and wanted to marry me, and that he was prepared to wait as long as necessary ~~for me.~~

"He said he was going on to Ann Arbor, and he will see you when you return for classes," Mother said. "He's sure that whatever is bothering you is temporary and will soon pass."

But it wasn't temporary, and it didn't pass.

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Chapter 132. ~~Ambivalence and D~~Indecision - 1923

~~In~~During the fall semester I threw myself into my courses and tried to ignore the feelings that tossed me around in a stormy sea of emotions. It didn't help that Chappie and I were constantly together. ~~He was a keen photographer, and we~~We often went out to take pictures for the 'Ensign. ~~He was interested in capturing people in action—playing ball, for instance. But people didn't interest me nearly as much as the small detail that escaped nearly everyone's notice: an unusual lock on a gate, or the reflection on the coffee urn in the Royal Cafe. and then~~Then we developed and printed ~~them~~our pictures together. I admired Chappie's technical expertise; he was genius in the darkroom. ~~And he told me, over and over,~~

"Peg, you have the eye of an artist. You see things in a way no one else does."

Commented [CY186]: Put her in action so the reader can SEE this.

~~Harold Martin, the editor, liked our work so much that he asked me to take on the job of photography editor, but I turned it down; I wanted to make photographs, not pick which ones to use.~~I told Chappie about the picture postcards that had been so popular with the campers and their families at Camp Agaming, and we ~~decided~~thought that ~~would~~might be a good way to earn ~~some~~ money. ~~He was as poor as I was.~~ Together and separately we photographed ~~familiar~~ campus buildings and ~~roamed the neighborhoods of Ann Arbor in search of~~ other interesting ~~places~~shots ~~around Ann Arbor~~. Since Chappie was serving on the advisory board of the 'Ensign and also taking pictures for a school magazine ~~as well as~~and the Ann Arbor newspaper, I took over most of the darkroom work, ~~developing and printing his pictures as well as mine. A~~—all of this in addition to my classes.

~~At the same time I immersed myself in the nature book Dr. Ruthven had suggested. I spent hours setting up dozens of photographs of insects—dragonflies, spiders, ladybugs—~~

placed in a miniature stage set, whatever might fire a child's imagination. The child I was thinking of was myself at the age of eight or nine. Then I wrote a story about that insect in a few simple paragraphs. I knew how to make the story come to life on the page.

The project absorbed me, carrying me far away from the reality of my life that I found so confusing and troubling. Chappie and often I talked about what our lives would be like when we were married, the children we would have, and I sometimes happily pictured myself in the middle of that domestic scene, our two sons and two daughters running to greet their papa when he came home from work while I tended a potroast on the stove. - But sometimes at other times I saw imagined myself in a faraway place on a grand adventure, exploring some faraway place with my camera and then writing about it, - and Chappie was n't anywhere in the picture.

How could I have it both ways? I had no idea I could not, and realistically I knew I would have to choose between placid domesticity and exciting adventure. That seemed impossible.

Chappie, of course, sensed my ambivalence and pressed me to choose, to make up my mind. I could not. The more I leaned first one way and then the other, the more morose, peevish, and sullen he became. He apologized: he didn't want his wretched moods to affect mine. Naturally, they did. He wept at least as much as I did. Sometimes At times he threatened to break off our relationship. If he couldn't have all of me, then he would have none. He refused to speak to me for days, or else we argued. I could not keep a civil tongue in my head and lashed out at him, and then it was my turn to apologize. We wept in each other's arms, swore our love, tried to be kinder to each other.

Then we started all over again. We were going nowhere.

I seemed to be unhappy in every part of my life. In the spring I had been thrilled to join a sorority, accepted by a group of girls who admired me and even made me president of

Commented [CY187]: Why not show her working on this AT CAMP?

Commented [CY188]: Not sure what this means.

Commented [CY189]: Who was she – what kind of child?

Commented [CY190]: Put her in action. I don't really see her troubled.

Commented [CY191]: No sense of this – that this is driving her.

Commented [CY192]: Struggle Is this really what she is struggling with?

our sorority house; now I grew intolerably impatient with those same girls and the pettiness of their lives. ~~All they wanted to talk about were boys and dates and dances, which a year earlier were what I had wanted to talk about. I resigned and moved out of the sorority house and into a boarding house.~~

Commented [CY193]: See previous comments.

~~My unhappiness continued. I had no one to confide in, and who could understand what I didn't understand myself? Ruth was in Boston, too far away. Mother had witnessed my unhappiness, and she struggled as much as I did to make sense of it. Mother. Finally she~~ wrote me a long letter, urging me to see a psychiatrist, ~~“and get to the bottom of this. “You must not continue in your misery any longer. It will destroy you.”~~

Commented [CY194]: Her in action .Does she confide in her mother? She doesn't confide in Ruth?

I wondered what a psychiatrist would make of ~~me, or what I would make of a psychiatrist.~~ The Litchfield doctor's prescription, that I give my mind a rest ~~by not thinking,~~ had been impossible to follow. ~~It was as if he had told me to give my lungs a rest by not breathing. It doesn't work.~~

Commented [CY195]: ?

~~When I could not stand it any longer, I took Mother's advice. I went to the campus infirmary and~~ asked the nurse ~~at the campus infirmary~~ to recommend a psychiatrist. She looked at me oddly, ~~as though expecting me to describe some hallucinatory experience or collapse into insane laughter, but, when I did neither, but,~~ she wrote a name and address on a slip of paper and handed it to me without a word.

The reader really needs to see what brought this on and her struggle through it. Her determination to deal with it by going to a physiatrist.

~~I stood outside his door, staring at the name on the shingle—Wesley D. Stansfield, MD—and trying to work up my courage to go inside, and I hesitated so long that I nearly missed the appointment. His name was~~ Dr. Stansfield, ~~and he~~ was thin and ~~bald and had saggy little~~ pouches under his eyes, and ~~he~~ wore a pince-nez. ~~Every Wednesday afternoon for two months I went to H~~his barren office ~~was,~~ furnished with a chair, a couch, and a row of framed diplomas printed in Latin.

~~“Now tell me, Miss White, why have you come to see me?”~~

I began to cry. Dr. Stansfield waited until I had stopped and asked me why I was crying. “Because I’m miserable!” I wailed.

“And why are you miserable?”

“Because I can’t make up my mind what I want.”

“What do you see as your choices?”

Haltingly, I talked about Chappie and my conflicting desire to make a name for myself as a photographer and writer. The psychiatrist listened, sometimes asking a question and gave me an appointment to come back in a week. Every Wednesday for two months I and recounted the incidents during the previous week that I had found-upset ~~meting~~. He listened carefully, nodding, sometimes asking a question. My report was practically the same every week, dwelling on Chappie and my inability to make up my mind. But nothing changed. I was still miserable, and I began to wonder if perhaps I could not be cured.

Commented [CY196]: Tensions/drama.

Then one day Dr. Stansfield asked me to describe my childhood.

I gave him a glowing ~~description-account~~ of my walks with Father, the stories he’d told me, the snakes we’d brought home, the caterpillars we’d watched changing into butterflies. I described ~~the Mother’s passion for education. “She had very-high standards set for me by my mother.~~ “The hard way is always the better way,’ she always told me.”

Commented [CY197]: ?

“So, you admired your demanding mother and perhaps idolized your father?”

“Oh, yes! ~~More than any man I’ve ever known~~ I’ve never known anyone like him!” I

Commented [CY198]: Is this developed enough?

listed my reasons: his ~~focus on dedication to~~ his work, ~~his long hours, his dedication,~~ his genius, ~~his love of the natural world, his passion for photography.~~ I ~~told Dr. Stansfield about~~ described ~~our~~ my childhood visit to the foundry ~~with him, the vision of;~~ the fiery cascade of molten metal ~~being poured into molds that was~~ seared into my memory.

Commented [CY199]: Review that moment in the manuscript for importance.

“Ah, so perhaps your father was perfect! And Chappie can never measure up!”

Dr. Stansfield waited for my reaction, and it was immediate.

~~Then~~ I heard myself blurt out the words I had never spoken, words I ~~searcely~~ rarely even allowed myself to *think*: “But my father was Jewish!”

There it was. I had given away our secret, said what Mother had warned me not to say, the secret I had buried so that I would not have to deal with it. Jewishness had been the basic flaw in Father’s character, the one thing ~~she~~ my mother could not forgive.

The psychiatrist regarded me calmly, his expression neutral. “It bothers you, Miss White—that your father was a Jew?”

I stared at my hands, clenched in my lap. I couldn’t bear to look at him. “Yes,” I admitted. “I suppose it does. My mother dislikes Jews—she won’t have anything to do with my father’s family. And I’m half Jewish!” I glanced up. Dr. Stansfield did not appear to be shocked by what I’d just told him.

“Are you afraid that others would reject you if they knew you have Jewish blood running through your veins?”

“Yes,” I whispered. “But Dr. Stansfield,” I cried, sitting bolt upright, suddenly animated after weeks of slumping listlessly in the leather chair across from his, “so many people dislike Jews!” I sank back, my face buried in my hands.

“And what about you, Miss White? Do you also dislike Jews?”

“I—I don’t know!”

“You mentioned your father’s family. How do you feel about them?”

I had to regain my composure before I answered. “My father’s brother, Uncle Lazar, is very kind. He’s helping to pay for my education. I don’t know my cousins very well. I’ve spent so little time with them, because my mother dislikes them so much.”

“Do you know why she dislikes them?”

“She says they’re like all Jews and think they’re the Chosen People and better than anyone else. I guess I never questioned that.”

Commented [CY200]: No sense that she struggles with this.

“I believe that we may have learned something important here today,” said the doctor in his usual dispassionate manner, scribbling notes on a pad. “We have perhaps discovered the source of your inner turmoil, that sense of worthlessness that you sometimes experience. You have been keeping kept this secret for a very long time, is that not so?”

I nodded. “Since just after Father died almost two years ago. Mother told us then. I had no idea before that.”

“And you have ~~told~~ shared it with no one?”

“No.”

“You’ve kept your secret even from your friend Chappie?”

“Especially from Chappie! What if I lose him because of this—this flaw? You’re the first person I’ve told, doctor.”

“And how do you feel, now that you have told the first person? And that person has not turned away from you, or given you to feel that you are now worth any less in his eyes?”

I considered his question, and then I admitted—first to myself, and then to the doctor—that I felt relieved.

The doctor smiled. “Doesn’t it seem likely, then, that Chappie will not turn away from you when you share your deepest secret with him? And that perhaps your self-doubt has clouded your ability to make sensible decisions about what is important in your life?”

I didn’t see how revealing my secret would solve the other problems, but I agreed—a bit uncertainly, but I agreed—I would to tell Chappie, but only Chappie, and hope the doctor was right. We shook hands, and I walked out of his office feeling as though a weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

The next day ~~Chappie and~~ we I went for a long walk, away from the campus and the town, and out into the countryside. The day was bright and clear, the leaves that had changed color weeks earlier had drifted down, and I shuffled through the piles of dry leaves with

Commented [CY201]: Isn’t this the first day? She’s been seeing him for two months.

Commented [CY202]: She wrestles with being famous AND with Chappie. This now seems to be much more important.

Commented [CY203]: Need?

childish glee. Chappie ~~was watching~~ me warily, as though he expected me to begin sobbing for no apparent reason, as I had so often in the past weeks.

Commented [CY204]: Perhaps the description could speak to specifics. Could be anywhere.

Finally I gathered my courage and grabbed Chappie's hand. "Chappie, I have something to tell you," I said, struggling to keep my voice steady. "There is a secret in my family, something I think you should know. My father was a Jew, and so I'm half Jewish. I've been afraid to tell you, because I didn't want your feelings for me to change."

Chappie ~~had long ago given up asking me what was wrong, how could he help, and lately he seemed afraid even to touch me, fearing that might set off another storm of tears.~~ But now he turned to face me, and his eyes ~~gazed~~ straight into mine. "Peggy, my darling girl! How could you ever believe that something like that would make me feel any differently about you! I wouldn't care if your parents came from ~~an~~ other planet. I love you ~~so much,~~ so deeply, that nothing you tell me will ~~ever~~ make me change the way I feel." He ~~folded me in his arms and~~ kissed me passionately, and I returned his kisses with more fervor than I had felt in months.

Commented [CY205]: Chappie needs to be 3-dimensional.

But even then, ~~my unease did not end. The, as autumn faded and the~~ unforgiving Michigan winter closed its ~~iron~~ icy grip around us, ~~my uneasiness did not disappear.~~ ~~We~~ I worried about money, ~~and so did Chappie, who earned extra income playing traps in local dance bands. Even with the Mungers' help, my~~ My budget was painfully tight. I moved out of ~~the residence hall and into a cheap boarding house. When t~~he snows melted and spring came, ~~and~~ we set up a show in the library to sell prints of ~~our~~ the pictures ~~we'd taken of campus landmarks at various times of day and night and in different seasons.~~ We hoped to make a little money, and we did—but not enough.

Commented [CY206]: What does this mean?

Commented [CY207]: Who is we?

We ~~were~~ talking again about marriage ~~and the family we wanted some day.~~ I thought we should delay ~~marriage~~ for several years, ~~because there was still so much I wanted~~

Commented [CY208]: Specifics.

~~to accomplish.~~ There was still so much I wanted to accomplish! If I finished the nature book I'd been working on and it sold well, maybe I'd be asked to create other books. I knew my photographs were good, and I wanted to explore every possibility. If I settled into the conventional kind of marriage Chappie expected and the only kind I knew, how would I ever become recognized—famous, even— for my talent?

Commented [CY209]: No sense of her drive.

But we were passionately in love, and we both wondered how we could possibly wait that long to marry.

Chappie was offered a teaching position at Purdue University in Indiana, far from Ann Arbor. Of course he accepted, but now the pressure increased for me to make up my mind. To marry or not to marry? To go with Chappie to Indiana, or stay in Michigan and finish my degree? What would it be?

The more I wavered, the more Chappie's impatience grew.

~~Our intense longing for each other made us short-tempered. The man who had once unselfishly assured me that I could see other men as much as I wished, now pouted like a child if I even spoke to another man. Chappie~~ He wanted me with him all the time, and when I tried to go off and do things on my own, he became unreasonable and possessive, sometimes so jealous that he wept. he pouted like a child if I so much as spoke to another man, so jealous that he wept. And sometimes he shouted at me, "Why can't you be like other girls and just want to get married? What's so hard about that?"

Commented [CY210]: ?

And when I told him the truth, "Because I'm afraid of losing who I am and what I want to do with my life," he replied caustically, "Maybe you should talk to that psychiatrist again."

But none of this diminished our intense physical longing for each other that frustrated us and made us both even more short-tempered. By the end of the term with the prospect of a long, hot summer lying ahead, we could hardly stand to be apart, but the tension of being

Commented [CY211]: ?

together ~~was another kind of torture, and~~ without surrendering to our passion was more than either of us could bear.

Commented [CY212]: I don't follow. WHY?

And so I made my decision. We ~~decided not to~~ would not wait any longer.

We would get married—now!

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