

## HELEN

The doorbell rang startling me from my chair. I had been waiting for Helen so eagerly that I had fallen into dreaming of her as she appeared in this first week of our love - sinuous hips, her cries of pleasure in hot breaths upon my ear. The stale of fried eggs struck at me as I passed the kitchen. Dampness coated the wood of the hall. I pictured the wet London street and Helen shivering, waiting for me. The hollow thump of my descending footsteps resounded throughout the three floors of the house. My hand shook as I tried to fit the key in the lock. Little shoots of pain sprang up from my stomach. I could scarcely breathe. Pausing I watched the keyhole and gasped nervously for air. The glabrous feel of Helen's skin passed over me, weakening me. I exhaled and fitted the key firmly in the hole.

Helen looked up. She stuck out her hip and smiled naughtily. The fragrance of her body poured out in that gesture as if she had tipped the top off a bottle and waved its scent under my nostrils. Seizing her wrist, I pulled her in from the street, slammed the door and pressed her tightly against me. My hands sought her form, caressed, gripped, told my need as our mouths clinched. A door slammed somewhere in the house. We tensed and listened. My hands rested upon her hips seeming to soak up the animalism in her. My knees quivering, I stepped aside and allowed her to push by me up the stairs. Her behind wiggled on a level with my eyes. When she reached the landing, I seized her legs. She laughed over her shoulder and broke away. In a few short strides she was in my room and pulling the drapes across the high Victorian windows. Grabbing a straight-backed chair, I wedged it under the doorknob. My fingers clamped the wood as if to mash it, and, for a moment, I could not release them. With my other hand I pried away my thumb and rubbed my wrist until the muscles relaxed and my fingers slipped to my side.

Helen had slung her coat across the table. She undressed, a feverish excitement alight in her eyes; her short energetic body wrestling with her blue sweater and her plaid skirt; her flesh mysteriously luminescent in the pale light that fell through the high cracks at the sides of the drapes.

I dropped my clothes as she stepped to the bed, arching her back in a way that reminded me of college girls at gymnastic exercises. The bedspread flew up and circled to the foot of the bed, wafting a breeze over my nakedness. She rolled to one side as I went to her. I picked up the sheet but trembling dropped it. Smiling, she pulled it back and ran her eyes over me as I got in beside her.

Warm and firm, she pressed towards me, the two small breasts nestling against my chest, and impulsively I steered into the wet haven, offered as if it had been waiting a long time for this moment.

A gasp of relief escaped us both. Our pain, our tension fused into an ecstatic wonderment that swung like a cradle between us. I saw the curl of her lips and the rhythmic motion of her shoulder. The soft lines of her body began to break up, and I moved over them to help destroy, to enjoy every crumbling piece of beauty that strove beneath me.

Suddenly she groaned. Her head stretched back and the tendons came out upon her neck.

'Gently,' she whispered.

Chastened, I kissed her lips and lay my cheek alongside hers. I cuddled the curve of her shoulders into me and ran my hand over her back, treating her body as part of me. Slowly I recommenced the pleasure. Her arms pushed up against my shoulders. Eyes sparkling, she squirmed over on top of me. She snapped her fingers by her haunches and leaned forward. 'Giddyup.' Then grinning, she sat back and began to ride, gradually spiraling me into a violent heat, consuming my senses. Lost in the enjoyment of

her flesh, I felt her suddenly take my heart with the cords of my being and grappling them tightly, jerk them so that I went rigid, then weak beside her.

I opened my eyes to the black and gray of her hair. Several very white strands curled low over her ear. Moving my arm from under me, I brushed them back.

She turned her head and gazed dreamily at me. 'How do you feel?'

'Great.' My voice came out in a breath.

The lines of her face were sharpened by the white background of the pillow. Was she forty really?

'What are you thinking?' Her eyes widened in alarm.

'Nothing.' I looked away guiltily.

'Why were you looking at me like that?'

I sensed her anger working behind her brow.

'Should you be worried?' I laughed.

Her frown disappeared. 'I thought you were criticizing me. Your face shows your thoughts.' She relaxed.

'What did it show that time?'

'That I am old and you are young.'

I smiled. 'Twenty-one isn't young.'

She sat up, allowing the sheet to fall about her middle and turned, rumpling her side, to look back. Her breasts stuck out with the warm look of honey cones. I started with pleasure and reached out, but amused, she brushed my hand away.

'If I'm too old, don't touch me.'

'You'll never be too old. Oh brother!'

She pushed away the sheet and threw her legs over me, but before I could seize her, she wriggled away and stood up. My dressing gown hung on the back of the door. She didn't see it because this was the first time we made love in my room. She stretched, her arms planed back and her legs tightening as she rose on the balls of her feet. In an instant I was beside her, kissing her neck and shoulders and arms, a titillating sensation drawing me to her, inescapable.

She pushed me back and, catching sight of the gown, made a ballet leap to it and threw it about her shoulders.

'Did you learn that in acting school?' I said with interest, for the movement incited me to make love again.

She nodded roguishly. 'I've only found ballet useful for getting away from men.' She stuck out her tongue and pushed her arms into the sleeves of the gown. 'Let's hope I don't meet either of the boys.'

'Someone's in,' I warned, 'but I don't know who.'

Opening the door slowly she listened and then stepped quickly out. The dampness of the room slapped my skin as if with a wet cloth. The gas fire had gone out. Picking up my clothes, I threw them onto the bed and searched the pockets of my trousers. My skin was tingling from Helen's caresses. The cold of February could not penetrate to the inner glow, although its dank personality had settled upon the air of the room. I found a shilling. Sticking it in the meter I lit the fire and crouched for a moment in front of it.