

LOUISE. What's Lou got to do with it? I think it's admirable that you . . .

QUENTIN. Yes, but I am doing what you call an admirable thing because I can't bear to be . . . a separate person. I think so. I really don't want to be known as a Red lawyer; and I really don't want the newspapers to eat me alive; but when that decent, broken man who never wanted anything but the good of the world, sits across my desk . . . I don't know how to say that my interests are no longer the same as his, and that if he doesn't change I consign him to hell because we are separate persons!

LOUISE. You are completely confused! Lou's case has nothing . . .

QUENTIN. (*Grasping for his thought.*) I am telling you my confusion! I think Mickey also became a separate person. . . .

LOUISE. You're incredible!

QUENTIN. I think of my mother, I think she also became . . .

LOUISE. Are you identifying me with . . . ?

QUENTIN. Louise, I am asking you to explain this to me because this is when I go blind! When you've finally become a separate person, what the hell is there?

LOUISE. (*With a certain unsteady pride.*) Maturity. Knowing that another person besides yourself . . . exists.

QUENTIN. (*Questing.*) It's probably the symptom of a typical case of some kind, but I swear, Louise—if just once of your own will, you would come to me and say that something, something important was your fault and that you were sorry . . . it would light up the sky. (*In her pride she is silent, in her refusal to be brought down again.*) Louise?

LOUISE. Good God! What an idiot! (*She exits.*)

QUENTIN. Louise . . . (*He looks at his papers, the lights change. A sprightly music is heard. Anonymous park loungers appear, and sit or lie about.*) How few the days are that hold the mind in place; like four or five hooks holding up a tapestry. Especially the day you know you've stopped becoming, the day you merely are. What ought-to-be moves far away; what-is comes close. Even the bench by the park somehow seems important, and one word, "Now," holds all the promise in the world. (*An old woman crosses with a caged parrot.*) Now a woman takes a parrot for a walk. What will happen to it when she's gone? Everything suddenly has consequences. (*A plain girl in tweeds passes, read-*

ing a paperback.) And how brave a homely woman has to be! How disciplined of her, not to set fire to the Museum of Art. (*A Negro appears asking for a light.*) And how does he keep so neat, and the bathroom on another floor?—He must be furious when he shaves. (*Alone.*) And whatever made me think that at the end of the day, I absolutely had to go home? (*Maggie appears, looking about for someone, as Quentin sits on "park bench."*) Now there's a truth; symmetrical, lovely skin, undeniable.

MAGGIE. S'uze me, did you see a man with a big dog?

QUENTIN. No. But I saw a woman with a little bird.

MAGGIE. No, that's not him. Is this the bus stop?

QUENTIN. Ya, the sign says. . . .

MAGGIE. (*Sits beside him.*) I was standing over there and a man came with this big dog and just put the leash in my hand and walked away. So I started to go after him but the dog wouldn't move. And then this other man came and took the leash and went away. But I don't think it's really his dog. I think it's the first man's dog.

QUENTIN. But he obviously doesn't want it.

MAGGIE. But maybe he wanted for me to have it. I think the other man just saw it happening and figured he could get a free dog.

QUENTIN. Well, you want the dog?

MAGGIE. How could I keep a dog? I don't even think they allow dogs where I live. What bus is this?

QUENTIN. Fifth Avenue. This is the downtown side. Where do you want to go?

MAGGIE. (*Thinks.*) Well, I could go there.

QUENTIN. Where?

MAGGIE. Downtown.

QUENTIN. Lot of funny things go on, don't they?

MAGGIE. He probably figured I would like a dog. Whereas I would if I had a way to keep it, but I don't even have a refrigerator.

QUENTIN. Yes. That must be it. I guess he thought you had a refrigerator. (*She sbrugs. Pause. He looks at her as she watches for the bus. He has no more to say.*)

LOUISE. (*Appearing.*) You don't talk to any woman—not like a woman! You think reading your brief is *talking* to me? (*She*

goes dark, exits. In tension Quentin leans forward, arms resting on his knees. He looks at Maggie again.)

QUENTIN. (With an effort.) What do you do?

MAGGIE. (As though he should know.) On the switchboard. (Laughs.) Don't you remember me?

QUENTIN. (Surprised.) Me?

MAGGIE. I always sort of nod to you every morning through the window.

QUENTIN. (An instant.) Oh. In the reception room!

MAGGIE. Sure! Maggie! (Points to herself.)

QUENTIN. Of course!—You get my numbers sometimes.

MAGGIE. Did you think I just came up and started talking to you?

QUENTIN. I had no idea.

MAGGIE. (Laughs.) Well what must you have thought! I guess it's that you never saw me altogether. I mean just my head through that little window.

QUENTIN. Yeah. Well, it's nice to meet all of you, finally.

MAGGIE. (She laughs.) You go back to work again tonight?

QUENTIN. No, I'm just resting for a few minutes.

MAGGIE. (With a sense of his loneliness.) Oh. (She looks idly about. He glances down her body. Maggie rises.) Is that my bus down there?

QUENTIN. I'm not really sure where you want to go. (A man appears, eyes her, glances up toward the bus, back to her, staring.)

MAGGIE. I wanted to find one of those discount stores; I just bought a phonograph but I only have one record. I'll see you! (She is half-backing off toward the man.)

MAN. There's one on Twenty-seventh and Sixth Avenue. . . .

MAGGIE. (Turning, surprised.) Oh, thanks!

QUENTIN. There's a record store around the corner, you know. . . .

MAGGIE. But is it discount?

QUENTIN. Well they all discount. . . .

MAN. (Slipping his hand under her arm.) What, ten per cent? Come on, honey, I'll get you an easy fifty per cent off.

MAGGIE. (To the man, starting to move off.) Really? But a Perry Sullivan. . . ?

MAN. Look, I'll give it to you—I'll give you two Perry Sullivans—come on!

MAGGIE. (She balks—suddenly aware—disengages her arm, backs.) S'uze me, I . . . I . . . forgot something.

MAN. (Reaching toward her.) Look, I'll give you ten records. (Calls off.) Hold that door! (Grabs her.) Come on!

QUENTIN. (Moving toward him.) Hey!

MAN. (Letting her go—to Quentin.) Ah, get lost! (He rushes off.) Hold it, hold the door! (Quentin watches the "bus" go by, then turns to her. She is absorbed in arranging her hair—but with a strangely doughy expression, removed. . . .)

QUENTIN. I'm sorry, I thought you knew him.

MAGGIE. No. I never saw him.

QUENTIN. Well . . . what were you going with him for?

MAGGIE. Well he said he knew a store. Where's the one you're talking about?

QUENTIN. I'll have to think a minute. Let's see. . . .

MAGGIE. Could I sit with you? While you're thinking?

QUENTIN. Sure! (They return to the bench. He waits till she is seated, she is aware of the politeness, glances at him as he sits. Then she looks at him fully, for some reason amazed.) That happen to you very often?

MAGGIE. Pretty often.

QUENTIN. That's because you talk to them.

MAGGIE. But they talk to me, so I have to answer.

QUENTIN. Not if they're rude. Just turn your back.

MAGGIE. (She thinks about that, and indecisively. . . .) Oh, okay. (As though remotely aware of another world, his world.) . . . Thanks, though . . . for stopping it.

QUENTIN. Well, anybody would.

MAGGIE. No, they laugh. I'm a joke to them. You . . . going to rest here very long?

QUENTIN. Just a few minutes. I'm on my way home . . . I never did this before.

MAGGIE. OH! You look like you always did. Like you could sit for hours under these trees . . . just thinking.

QUENTIN. No. I usually go right home. (Grinning.) I've always gone right home.

MAGGIE. See, I'm still paying for the phonograph, whereas they don't sell records on time, you know.

QUENTIN. They're afraid they'll wear out, I guess.

MAGGIE. Oh, that must be it! I always wondered. Cause you can get phonographs.—How'd you know that?

QUENTIN. I'm just guessing.

MAGGIE. (*Laughs.*) I can never guess those things! I don't know why they do anything half the time! (*She laughs more deeply. He does.*) I had about ten or twenty records in Washington, but my friend got sick, and I had to leave. (*Pause. Thinks.*) His family lived right over there on Park Avenue.

QUENTIN. Oh. Is he better?

MAGGIE. He died. (*Tears come into her eyes.*)

QUENTIN. (*Entirely perplexed.*) When was this?

MAGGIE. Friday. Remember they closed the office for the day?

QUENTIN. You mean . . . (*Astounded.*) . . . Judge Cruse?

MAGGIE. Ya.

QUENTIN. Oh, I didn't know that you . . .

MAGGIE. Yeah.

QUENTIN. He was a great lawyer. And a great judge too.

MAGGIE. (*Rubbing tears.*) He was very nice to me.

QUENTIN. I was at the funeral; I didn't see you, though.

MAGGIE. (*With difficulty against her tears.*) His wife wouldn't let me come. I got into the hospital before he died. But the family pushed me out and . . . I could hear him calling, "Maggie . . . Maggie!" (*Pause.*) They kept trying to offer me a thousand dollars. But I didn't want anything, I just wanted to say goodbye to him! (*She opens her purse, takes out an office envelope, opens it.*) I have a little of the dirt. See?—That's from his grave.—His chauffeur drove me out—Alexander.

QUENTIN. Did you love him very much?

MAGGIE. No. In fact, a couple of times I really left him.

QUENTIN. Why didn't you altogether?

MAGGIE. He didn't want me to.

QUENTIN. Oh. (*Pause.*) So what are you going to do now?

MAGGIE. I'd love to get that record if I knew where they had a discount. . . .

QUENTIN. No, I mean in general.

MAGGIE. Why, they going to fire me now?

QUENTIN. Oh, I wouldn't know about that. . . .

MAGGIE. Although I'm not worried—whereas I can always go back to hair.

QUENTIN. To where?

MAGGIE. I used to demonstrate hair preparations. (*Laughs, squirts her hair with an imaginary bottle.*) You know, in department stores? I was almost on TV once. (*Tilting her head under his chin.*) It's because I have very thick hair, you see? I have my mother's hair. And it's not broken. You notice I have no broken hair? Most women's hair is broken. Here, feel it, feel how . . . (*She has lifted his hand to her head, and suddenly lets go of it. . . .*) Oh, 'scuse me!

QUENTIN. That's all right!

MAGGIE. I just thought you might want to feel it.

QUENTIN. Sure.

MAGGIE. Go ahead. I mean if you want to. (*She leans her head to him again. He touches the top of her head.*)

QUENTIN. It is, ya! Very soft.

MAGGIE. (*Proudly.*) I once went from page boy to bouffant in less than ten minutes!

QUENTIN. What made you quit?

MAGGIE. (*Student looks at her.*) They start sending me to conventions and all. You're supposed to entertain, you see.

QUENTIN. Oh yes.

MAGGIE. There were parts of it I didn't like . . . any more. (*She looks at a student sitting nearby.*) Aren't they sweet when they look up from their books! (*The student walks off, embarrassed. She turns with a laugh to Quentin. He looks at her warmly, smiling. A clock strikes eight in a distant tower.*)

QUENTIN. Well, I've got to go now!

MAGGIE. 'Scuse me I put your hand on my head.

QUENTIN. Oh, that's all right . . . I'm not *that* bad. (*He laughs softly, embarrassed.*)

MAGGIE. But if it's the way you are how can it be bad? I mean if you're shy . . . that's the way you are. (*Pause. They look at one another.*)

QUENTIN. You're very beautiful, Maggie. (*She smiles, straightens as though his words had entered her.*) And I wish you knew how to take care of yourself.

MAGGIE. Oh. . . . (*Holding a ripped seam in her dress.*) I got this torn on the bus this morning. I'm going to sew it home.

QUENTIN. I don't mean that. (*She meets his eyes again—she looks chastised.*) Not that I'm criticizing you. I'm not at all. You understand? (*She nods, absorbed in his face.*)