

% Dorothy Day

1924

Summary: (DDLW #880).

CHAPTER III.

"I'm here," she told him as he met her at the door of the little apartment on Thirty-fifth Street. He held a half-finished cigarette and an open book in one hand and with the other he closed the door behind her. He greeted her coldly, and resumed his seat in the armchair by the open window. The standing lamp by the side of him lit up a sullenly indifferent face.

June took off her hat and gloves and put them on a table at one end of the room. Then she slipped down on the floor by Dick's side and put her head against his knee. Her trembling excitement had given way to a languorous feeling of happiness but every now and then a sharp feeling of fear swept over her. She clasped his knees so that he could not get up and he picked up his book again. She did not even take the trouble to see if he turned the pages. She did not care if he continued reading. She was with him again.

Finally he flung the book to the floor. "I thought you said you'd be here a week ago!"

The tenseness of her body relaxed. So he did care that she was late! He had been waiting for her.

"The night you left, the doctor called the nurses' home and told me my mother was ill—that he thought it was diphtheria and I had to take care of her. It wasn't diphtheria. After they had taken tests they discovered that. But she was very sick and I had to stay."

"Why didn't your sister do it?"

"Mother wanted me, so I had to stay with her. I knew I was going to hurt her enough when I told her I was going to live with someone."

She spoke drowsily, hating to speak at all. Finally he drew her up in his arms and held her closely. She was no longer conscious of the overmastering desire that had been tormenting her all the week she was away from him. It was only when his arms relaxed and he looked at her moodily between kisses that she felt that bright flame searing her, leaping up in her again and again until it was almost anguish.

The lines about his mouth deepened. "Where are your things?" he asked her softly.

"I checked them at the subway newsstand until I knew."

"I'll get them for you tomorrow."

"You do want me?"

"It hurts me to be away from you. I can't fight against it. Besides—what does it matter? A month or two months, and it will pass and then I'll be free again."

"I don't care what happens in a month or two months. I'm here with you now. I adore you."

Somewhere from down the street came the restless music of a piano organ. Nearby, a phonograph tinkled mechanically. It was still very early, and in a

little yard outside the window there was a soft rustle in the stunted trees. Every now and then a cool breath of air filtered down between the skyscrapers. June shivered and clung closer to her lover. She felt very cold and there was a numbness creeping over her. Then he spoke again and she listened keeping her lips pressed against his throat where it showed above the turned-in collar of his shirt.

"Women—all I ever thought before was that you take something that you need from them. It's physically impossible for a woman to take a man. She always gives, gives herself up. And now I hate you—I don't want you because I feel everything going out of me to you. The thought of you eats into me continually." She had never seen him in this mood before. He was usually aloof, and rather mocking. He looked as though he were suffering. If he would only take her, push aside this barrier of sex that was between them he could grip hold of himself again. And then she could breathe easily once more and her heart wouldn't ache so in her breast. To get the first pain over with! She bit his neck contemplatively. He shook her so suddenly that she cried out, startled, and then noticed that it was very still and quiet. When he turned down the lamp there was only the painful thumping of her own heart.

Later in the evening, June sat cross-legged on the bed in a pair of pajamas which were far too big for her and ate with a great deal of enjoyment an anchovy toast sandwich and stuffed olives. She felt very young and child-like. The pain of the last week was far past and curiously unreal. "You are a lovely host," she said, leaning over and kissing Dick on the shoulder. He put down his glass of wine to smooth her cheek. "Listen to this, will you," he said, without looking up from his book. "Isn't this a darb of a line—" "I know not ugliness. It is a mood which has forsaken me."

Her days were curiously divided. When Dick left the house in the morning, the rooms were coldly desolate. The bed with its tossed-back covers was like a corpse. She felt it lingeringly to see if there was any warmth left in it. If there had been she would curl up there and dream of the close warmth of his arms. But he always flung the covers from him so riotously. There they were in a heap on the floor. The pillows were discarded things that he had spurned. He got up each morning as though there was some new joyous adventure to begin. The sunlight that streamed into the room gave the lie to the hours she had spent in his arms. Those early hours after he had left were cruelly unreal.

She picked up the socks he had left on the floor and surveyed the holes and runners in them with rueful affection. They were past darning. Poor wrecks of stockings. He saved them all so that he could have a change every day, brooding over them as they came back from the laundry.

"Well, this pair will have to be discarded." But there was never enough money in his pocket to pay for a new pair. June caught him washing two out one evening at the end of the week before the laundry was returned and snatched them from him. It was one more little thing she could do for him. Everything she did for him made her love him the more.

His ragged underwear which she had carefully patched still held the creases of

the iron which they had had when they came from the laundry. He was as dainty as a girl, June reflected. It was one way of feeling respectably prosperous. Collar, shirt, and socks with the thought of them were put aside for the laundry. She turned to a consideration of his suit. (Her thoughts were painfully simple now.)

Last night they had had a humorous evening patching one knee of the trousers. The suit, if you examined it carefully, would appear to be a greenish grey tweed. In fact the green tint was barely noticeable. But close examination disclosed the fact that not only were there green threads in what appeared to be a dark grey suit, but also brown.

June got her work basket, examined her various spools of darning cotton and she and Dick debated. Darning cotton didn't come in single threads. If you were an experienced darning you separated it, using two threads at a time. This avoided clumsy thickness. If you were very young, as June was when she first started to darn, you used the four threads, which when threaded and knotted became eight. It was easier and quicker to cover a hole so.

Now the question was whether to use two grey, one green and one brown thread and make a wild stab at approximating the tweed, or darn the weak spot which was threatening to become a large hole, in solid grey. A tiny spot which wouldn't show on completion was darned first with the mixed threads and proved to look peculiar. They decided on grey and when the spot had been reinforced, it was neat, but unmistakably a darn. The grey thread did not match the grey of the suit. Dick had the happy idea of tinting the patch, and used the cover of a dark green book, dipped in water. He had always noticed, he said, that it was easy to get the color off a book by chewing a corner or carrying it on a rainy day. The job was done with great thoroughness, but the results were not all that could be expected from the care which had been bestowed upon the work. It was decided that he would have to walk briskly, trusting to the rapid motion of his legs to hide the patch, and when sitting, he would have to keep one hand on his knee. The darling, June thought, as she finished reviewing the incident and turned to making the bed. There was a gorgeous Indian blanket on it which he had picked up in Mexico, which if sold would more than pay for another suit. But treasures once acquired, he refused to part with.

"I've had to beg or steal or sweat for most of the things I have and I'm not going to part with them now," he justified himself. "A day will come when I'll have fifty dollars in my pocket which won't have to go for rent or food and which I won't be tempted to use for poker and drink. It sounds impossible but the impossible has been known to have happened."

The bed was made with as much care as those in the hospital and as the sheets for a double bed are never the size of those for a single bed in the hospital, it was a longer job to get the lower one pinned neatly (and so it would not tear) and pulled free of wrinkles.

It was a comfort to see her picture of Amenemhat III framed and hung on one side of the bed. He looked more like Dick than ever. (That was the way she put it now. It wasn't that Dick looked more like Amenemhat. She loved her own absurdities.)

There were dishes to do, but when you had only two plates and two cups, queer bits of pottery from South Carolina, it was the work of a moment to wash them and put them away. One frying pan, one coffee pot, some silver ware. It took a minute to mop the floor.

The bath room still had a warm smell of shaving soap and talcum powder. An intimate, man's smell.

June would have preferred to have worked so that the long day would come to an end sooner. But it was sweet to be his woman too. She liked to have him use the phrase. It was more possessive than the phrase "his wife." "You're my woman and you have to wait on me hand and foot. I don't want you independent. I like to think of you sitting at home and thinking of me all day. While you're mine, you've got to be all mine so you needn't have any interest outside of me."

It was delightfully humiliating to be talked to in such a way. It was humiliating but she invited it. As long as he crushed her in his arms meanwhile, he could say anything. "You are nothing but a damn little fool so don't you dare tell me Conrad knows how to write a story. I tell you he doesn't so you might as well shut up." She wasn't even allowed to look as though Conrad could write novels. She could only snuggle her face closer in Dick's neck and say—"You are the most wonderful lover in the world and I'll never read Conrad again." (She gathered from Schopenhauer that he expected her to lie to him.)

At any rate she could spend the day in her armchair intermittently mending and reading books which he recommended—The Count of Monte Cristo, The Three Musketeers and the three volumes which followed their adventures, Heine's prose,—his poetry was not worth looking at—and any Scandinavian literature, for all Scandinavian literature was great.

For the most part, though, she was content to curl up in the morris chair and dream.

You could dream over sewing if you had any material to sew on. June became a collector of remnants. Every week when she had paid the milk and butter bill and enough groceries had been purchased to last for the coming week, there were usually several dollars left over. Although they talked of everything else in the world, the subject of money was never touched on. Every week Dick brought in forty dollars (his salary was fifty, but the temptation of drawing ahead on it was one of those meant to be succumbed to as he himself would put it.) Fifteen of this had to go to pay the rent. The egg and milk bill was around four dollars and the groceries never were more than five. June washed her own clothes in order to keep down the laundry bill which was always more than two dollars. Thirty dollars covered all these bills.

Now for the remnant! Silk mull, voile for lingerie, lawn, batiste, nainsook, flowered crepe, cross-barred muslins, cotton Georgette—all these may be found on the cotton remnant table. But you never went directly to that display of bargains. Across the aisle there are silk remnants—crepe de chine, silk Georgette crepe, taffeta, satins and brocaded silks in all colors and designs.

Would she rather have a flame-colored nightgown or a black one of slinky silk,

or perhaps palest of green? The material should be very thin.

The black would be the most interesting to experiment with. Pale green was too ethereal and the flame-colored one would be too passionate. Nightgowns should not be obviously emotional. Then too, with a black nightgown, experiments could be made with lamp shades. Rose and orange for languorous evenings, yellow for cruel coldness.

June suddenly remembered a story of Billy's.

"He was one peach," referring to a lover of the night before. "He tied my lavender chemise around the electric light—said it gave me a pensively chaste look. It made him a damn sight handsomer than I thought he was. Anyway, the fool thing caught fire at the most unpropitious moment!

"He sent me another one the next day—a floozy kind, of course. Just the kind a man would buy. Pink satin with bows and lace around the top."

June gave up the idea of colored lamp shades and startling nighties and proceeded to the cotton counter. She found just what she wanted there—enough sheer cotton Georgette crepe of very pale yellow to make her nightgown and after buying some black silk with which to stitch it her shopping was finished for the week.

She seldom had to go out. It was better to sit curled up in the big chair. There was no hurry about the sewing. She had a week in which to finish the new article of underwear and it would be a week before she could get new material to begin another. While June had been working she had observed the slogan, "a book a week." Now it was, "an article of clothing once a week." Her wardrobe became extensive. Little short white undershirts were cheap and not as repulsively sensible as the union suits for which you had to pay ninety cents. You could get the former in the ten cent store. You could get enough silk to make the most frivolous of chemises for one dollar and thirty-nine cents. Stockings were a dollar and a half and you could get along with one pair a month.

Silk and jersey for smocks was reasonably cheap and that year one embroidered them in wool. They were very gay. By December she had two, one woolen one and one of black silk. There was nothing she could do for the shabby lining of her coat. It just had to stay shabby. If she took it out, she reflected, the inner lining would have to come out too. She could make it look decent by facing the seams with silk and passing it off for a summer coat. But she needed something heavier those cold months. It was humiliating to expose her poverty in a restaurant when a waiter started to assist her in taking off her jacket. And still more uncomfortable to leave it on and bake. In order to divert her mind June ran out to the closet to look at the new velvet hat which her mother had given her.

June had called up a few weeks after she had joined Dick, just as she had done when she had been away from home working, and asked Mother Grace if she could come home for supper. Dick would not be home until twelve now that the snow had commenced.

"You bet, come along," her mother had said brightly. "I've got a lot of house-cleaning to do and you can help me."

She kissed June affectionately at the door. "How are you getting on? That's

fine. I've a little wedding present for you."

The wedding present proved to be six knives and forks and spoons which June received gratefully. She could discard the ten cent store things now. They were abominable to eat with.

"Dick will like these," she said. "He fusses every morning at breakfast at the incongruity of our china which is very nice and the 'silverware' which is aluminum. I think the forks spoil the taste for him. He's very fastidious."

It was in casual references such as these that Mother Grace learned of the new member of her family as she called him.

"Dick is so careful of his appearance that I've become engrossed in my own. I spend hours every day manicuring and bathing and primping." Or, "Dick is very finicky about his breakfasts. The eggs must be fried so that there aren't any little frills of crispness around them and the coffee must be French coffee and just come to a boil and the toast must be ready the last minute when he's ready to sit down to the table. Not really *too* finicky you know, because he's just as ready to get my breakfast for me and he does it perfectly. On Sunday mornings we have eggs Benedict with truffles on the top. I don't know how to make Hollandaise sauce, so he makes the breakfast then."

"He doesn't ever have to leave until around twelve, so every morning the breakfasts are lovely."

"Dick met Billy and Ivan and Hugh Brace and Ellen Winter and Chester. He seems to like them all well enough, and he's willing for us all to go on parties together either after the theatre or when he has a night off, but he objects to my seeing any of them when he isn't with me. I think he's jealous."

June was convinced that he was jealous a few months later. Billy and some friends of hers and Dick and June were having a late supper one night after the show, and June with her usual freedom of gesture, put her hand on the shoulder of the man next to her when she leaned over to talk to Billy.

Dick pushed back his chair roughly and stood up. When June turned to speak to him she was startled to see how pale he was. He seemed about to go without speaking to her, and then thought better of it.

"I'll leave you here," he sneered, "to embrace the gentleman on your right."

In her surprise and anger, June did not answer him. The blow was unexpected and she felt suddenly ill. She wanted to run after him, to embrace him and tell him she was sorry for some fault she was unconscious of committing. She wanted to trample on her pride and yet she sat there, paralyzed in her chair. Then he was gone. Despair was raising in her throat to choke her. She hastily swallowed the glass of whiskey and water that was on the table before her and although it was but her second felt that she would stagger if she ventured to get up.

"Billy," she said. "I feel awfully woozy. Can I come over to your place to stay to-night?"

"Sure, old thing. I'll bring home a bottle of sherry and we'll have one of those early morning sprees that I just dote on."

People seemed ugly suddenly. There were remarks from the man on her right—a sympathetic question—she could not hear what he said. She repulsed him rudely.

He turned and went on talking to his friends. What did she care for Sorolla or whoever it was they were talking about?

Billy moved to the vacant seat by her side and squeezed her limp hand. She felt limp all over. It was as though life had gone out of her. Wait! Dick had used that phrase. When was it? That night she went to him and he told her he hated her because she was taking his life from him.

"They're brutes, all of them," Billy whispered and then went on chirping to the others at the table. She could afford to be sympathetic. She was in love with one of them and basked in his presence whenever he would sit at the table with her. Why was it that women idolized men that scorned them? His name was Bryant and he was a thin, black-haired fellow who limped. He painted feverishly most of the time and only stopped now and then to drink.

June had known him when she had worked on the "Flame." She had always liked him. There had been nights when they had talked for hours over a glass of wine. She had liked to hear him talk even when she didn't know what he was talking about. It flattered her that he should take it for granted that she understood the difference between a Corot and a Manet.

Yes, there was a time when she liked to sit with people, evening after evening. She liked them. She liked their enthusiasm. She didn't any more. People were dull and stupid.

The other man at the table had a face like Puck. His mouth stretched from ear to ear when he smiled and his ears were pointed. He grinned as though life were obscene. He grinned at June now.

"I laugh that I may not weep," he said. Then, "Rotten to be in love."

There were three doors June could watch from where she sat. Each time she heard one open her heart gave a jump and each time she saw that the newcomer was not Dick, her heart sank lower. The café was "L" shaped and at either end of the "L" there were doors that kept opening and closing. Just around the corner from where she sat there was another door going out into the bar. He had passed through that. Although she had not listened, she had heard the swing door pushed aside as he had gone, and then swing back and forth. Was he in the bar now?

She forgot her pride and asked the Puck-faced man to see if he was in the bar. He grinned sympathetically and returned to report that he was not there.

"Why don't you go home after him?" he asked her helpfully.

"If I'd run after him when he left it would have been all right. Damn my pride! I love him and nothing else matters. But now—I don't know whether he did go right home or uptown. I haven't any key. We've only got one between us. We've lost the duplicate." (That "we" hurt her as she said it. Maybe it would not be "we" anymore. The dear intimacy of the word!)

"I could go home and sit on the door step, but if he's already there that would be useless. It's a back apartment so I couldn't make him hear me by tapping on a window. And the bell only communicates with the landlady. (It's an old house made over into apartments, you know.)"

June's mind kept running around and around in circles. She began to weep softly. "Don't pay any attention," she whispered. "It's probably only the whiskey."

“Take another. That’ll help. The thing to do is to get pie-eyed.” June didn’t think emotion and whiskey would mix very well. “I feel sickish now. But I’m not angry now. Before I had everything in the world, and now—now I don’t see any use in living.”

The three doors went on opening and shutting but Dick did not return. Every now and then the telephone bell rang and sent its jangle through her heart, but neither of the two waiters who knew her came to say, “Miss Henreddy, somebody wants you on the phone.”

Soon it was closing time and Billy was ready to go home.

“Come on, June. I’ve got the sherry and I’ll tuck you in bed and give you enough to make you forget there ever was a lover in the world.”

Billy had a telephone and June decided she would stay awake listening for it to ring. But she didn’t. The combination of emotion and highballs made her fall asleep as soon as she lay down and she awoke brightly to find the sun streaming across the dusty studio. Billy on the other side of the room, lifted a face still expressionless with sleep surrounded by matted short hair, and called, “Moral support!”

“What’ll it be? Sherry or coffee this morning?” June asked. With the recognition of her surroundings came the return of the emotions of the night before.

“Coffee o’ course. Every time I get lit, I decide when I go to bed that I’ll begin again immediately in the morning to keep up the glorious feeling. And then the next morning comes along and everybody in the whole house has entered into a conspiracy against me. They’re all making coffee. Smell it? Good ole coffee. June, get up and make my moral support.”

June looked at her watch and found that it was almost eleven. “But I’ve got to run up and see Dick,” she protested when she came out of the bath.

“You little idiot,” Billy sat up in bed in indignation. “Let him come down here after you. He went off in a huff. He isn’t tired of you yet. You can tell that by the way he acts. How long have you been with him?”

“Since the first of September and now it’s December. But I was really with him all summer in the hospital. We spent all our days together.” June wanted to cry but she took a swallow of hot coffee instead. It tasted so good that she decided to take Billy’s advice.

Later in the afternoon when her resolution wavered, she realized it was too late. He would not be there if she went home, and there she could not get in if he was not. She could only hope that he would meet her in the café where she often joined him after the theatre. It was a forlorn hope to feed upon. Until then, she could only sit in Billy’s dim studio and read. Now that the hard winter sun had gone down and the lamps were being lit along the street, her surroundings seemed very tawdry. She hid her face against the cushions of the sofa where she was curled up and repeated his name over and over. “God, how I want him,” was the cry she kept making.

They had a pick-up supper in the room and afterward while June cleared up Billy continued the pen and ink illustration which she was making for a magazine. But although June sat around with the “old” crowd in the café that night as she

had done before she entered the hospital, Dick didn't appear on the scene. She went to see him the next morning when she knew he would be home. "Did you come for your things?" he asked her brutally. He was sitting by the window as he had been that first night she had come to him and although she sat on his knee and twined her arms around his neck he did not stop filing his fingernails.

"I've beastly manners, haven't I?" he asked her grinning. "Well, you can kiss me if you want to."

But he met her more than half way in the kiss and they were swept away by it. She could feel him trembling as he picked her up and carried her into the next room.

"I do love you," he told her later, "but I can get along without you too. Better run along now. I'm going out pretty soon."

She hated him desperately while she packed her things. But she refused to hate herself. "I don't care. I'd sacrifice everything in the world for him," and then stopped her packing. "I don't see why I should take my things," she said aloud. . . . "I won't." She hurled her suit-case back in the closet.

"You've got to go," he reminded her gently, but she knew he meant it.

"I'm going to sit and wait in that café," she informed him stubbornly as she stood by the door, pulling on her gloves, "from the time it opens in the morning until it closes at night. So you'll know where to find me."

Tony, the waiter, was a good friend of hers. "What are you doing around here so early in the morning?" he asked her the next day.

"I'm going to sit in here from eleven in the morning until one at night for three days," said June, pleasantly. "I have a special purpose."

"It's a good enough place to sit and you'll have plenty of company. So far as I can see, that gang of artists or whatever they call themselves hang out around here all the time. Will you tell me when they work? I ask you now."

June couldn't tell him, but she was relieved to find out that the "crowd" made up of reporters and young writers and artists who were out of a job and never tried to get one, still clung to the old place. She had been there seldom in the last eighteen months, and in the last four, only after eleven o'clock at night with Dick.

At least she wouldn't be conspicuous in keeping her vigil. And keep it she would. Billy and Bryant dropped in several times that day and evening and Bryant, unwittingly, was the cause of further mischief.

He presented her with a volume of "Zuleika Dobson" to while away the time with, and placed her name and his inside the cover. He had a large library and had often given her books in the two years she had known him.

But Dick came in late that night and took a seat by her side. "How are you, child?" She was suddenly made light-hearted and gay by the affection in his voice.

But he reached over to look at the book which she was reading and noticed her name with "from Bryant" under it. He looked at her a moment with lifted eyebrows and then getting up casually, sauntered out. Fortunately, Billy and Ivan and several others whom June did not know were sitting with her, so she

had to resist the temptation to scream. Pure rage choked her. But it did not keep her from loving Dick desperately.

Dick joined the table the next night again, and spoke to her cheerfully. He was trying to torment her, she thought. But rather endure this agony of his casual presence than watch the doors and listen for the telephone bell to ring.

Billy had told her she was a fool. So she was. A line of Scripture flashed through her mind, "We are all fools for Christ's sake." She laughed suddenly and Dick took hold of her hand which was hanging by her side.

"Let's go home," he was saying.

"What? For the night?" she asked bitterly, knowing nevertheless that she would go.

"Come and see," and she got up with him and went out, too dazed with her recovered happiness to say good-bye to Billy.

"Look!" And he showed her a bouquet of deep red roses. "They are a little withered, see? I cleaned up the house and bought them for you yesterday and then I saw that book and just couldn't bring you home. What did you do with it?" suspiciously.

"I threw it in the nearest ash can when I went over to Billy's that night," June said, but she didn't add that she had finished it after he had left.

Spring came and with it that tormenting song, "The Missouri Waltz." Played on hand organs, on neighboring phonographs, hummed by the two little girls who lived upstairs and who played in the back garden under June's window all day long. The strains of it colored that season for her.

There was not very much to write about her now. She felt no longer that life was complicated. She no longer wondered and worried about herself and what she was going to do with her life. In fact she scarcely thought at all. She never thought about the "Flame" or the "Clarion." It was by chance that she noticed that the editors of the magazine had finally been brought to trial after many delays, and dismissed. She read the notice in the paper with indifference. She heard that Hugh and Kenneth had both married and she was not interested enough to call on them to meet their wives.

Billy wrote to her that Terry Wode was going to China and that Ivan was leaving for Monte Carlo and asking her if she would not like to attend their going-away parties. "*What is the matter with you,*" Billy underlined the words heavily. "Are you dead or something?"

June would admit that there was something the matter with her. But she did not take the trouble to answer the letter. She was in love. That was all there was to it. When you were in love you couldn't be anything else. When Dick was with her, she felt alive and completely satisfied. When he was away from her, she went around in a dream, living only with the image of him which was constantly with her.

One can understand how authors leave their heroines in the arms of her lover on the last page of the last chapter. There is so little you can say—that is, until the two have incorporated their dream into their daily life and woven the spell of it through everything.

June probably could have written about herself and her lover, day after day and

page after page without ever realizing that she was repeating herself. The trouble was, she did not take her love affair and Dick as something she could incorporate into her life. He was not hers and this love was not hers. She had just come upon it by chance and snatched it to her. She knew she would not have it very long. Dick's rather mocking attitude of casualness constantly reminded her of that. None of his plans for the future included her. At present he was working in the publicity department of a moving picture company, but he planned to act in the same capacity in the fall for a circus which had offered him the work when it made its southern tour.

"I love you, June, I love you more than anything else in the world, today. But I can't say how I'll feel tomorrow. It was my very good fortune to have been chucked out of that Furman Street saloon and into the hospital where you were. I have never loved any one before and I never shall again probably. It's just as well. It's a very wearing emotion. Won't you be glad to be free of it?"

"I only wish that with every kiss I give you a little of my life would leave me. It would be a lovely way to die, providing I could arrange it with God that my death would coincide with the moment you stopped loving me."

"You nasty little thing. And think what a nuisance it would be for me. How'd I raise enough money to pay for a funeral?"

"Anyway, I intend to leave you long before I stop loving you. I'd rather do it abruptly and go through the agony of parting from you than have my passion die out slowly. Unfortunately, you can't stop loving as suddenly as you begin. Besides I want to see you for the last time when all the glamour of my affection is still there. You probably have no idea how beautiful and mysterious you are to me. It's a continual torment to live with you.

"You are not beautiful but you appeal so to the imagination that I think all the poems in the world were written about you.

"And while I'm living with you, I'm not just living with you alone. When I hold you in my arms at night, you're not June. I'm kissing a little street girl from Montmartre whom I'm keeping with me for the night; or you're an eastern woman capable of any viciousness and with a knowledge of all the secret sins. Or I like to imagine you as cold and chaste, passively yielding to me because I'm stronger than you. You've taken the place to me of all the women in all books whom I thought I could have loved."

The summer passed and the winter came again. Dick and June continued to live as though every day would be their last together. It added a delight to their relationship that was often indistinguishable from the keenest pain.

June often rebelled against it and there were afternoons when she walked the streets, or took bus rides, watching the women shopping on Fifth Avenue, looking at the homes of all those people who accepted permanency as the undercurrent of their lives. Those women were buying things to take home to their husbands—to their babies, probably. Why couldn't she too have a home, a husband, and babies? A dull resentment smouldered in her breast. She envied and hated them for the peace they could have which was denied to her.

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