

*The Eleventh Virgin*

Part III, Chapter I =====

**By Dorothy Day**

1924

*Summary: (DDLW #878).*

**PART THREE  
NOT SO MUCH.**

**CHAPTER I.**

Mother Grace thought that it would be tactless to show her enthusiasm for what June was about to do. If she showed the happiness she felt, she thought it would reveal to June her disapproval of what her daughter had done before. "As for those three boys, Hugh and Daniel and Kenneth—they're perfect dears. And the apartment is a lovely one. I don't blame you for preferring it to a furnished room," she had said. "Of course your friends think nothing of it and neither do their friends. But think of the world. Not your world, I suppose, but my world. If any of my friends ask 'where's June living now' and I say, nonchalantly, 'with three men over on Waverly Place'—what do you suppose they'll think? Not that I'm likely to answer them in any such way."

She wrinkled her eyebrows considerably over the jail episode and June noticed the little pucker of worry with remorse. "I am a brute," she thought, "to make her worry so." And she continued to fret over the inconsequentiality of her life. "Am I going to continue frittering my time away?"

As for the youngest member of the family, he gloated over his sister's recent confinement. He sat on the front steps and informed all the children in the neighborhood of it. "My sister's been to jail," he boasted.

"We mustn't talk of June in front of Glubb," Mother Grace told Adele in despair. "He only goes out and repeats it to the children and they take the news home to their families. They think I'm the most unnatural mother, not to take better care of my children."

And then June came with a letter to show her mother, applying for admittance to the city hospital. Her mother hid her approval as carefully as she hid her disapproval and asked her if she was about to become patriotic.

"Not a bit of it," said June indignantly. "I don't believe in war and I really think that if women united and refused to bear children to fight wars or to take care of the wounded as long as there are wars we'd never have any more fighting. But I hate being Utopian and trying to escape from reality. And now that there is war and so much work to be done, I might as well try to do some of it instead of sitting around playing at writing book reviews and helping edit magazines that are on the verge of suppression. That's the only kind of a job that I'm fit for . . . And I've had enough of newspaper work. I'd be sacrificing principles to

work on the capitalist press even if I could get a job on one of the New York papers which I can't. And if I'm going to sacrifice the foolish little principles that I have in looking forward to an ideal state, I might as well sacrifice them by doing work that has to be done in a hospital."

"I don't know what in the world you are talking about when you say you are sacrificing principle to enter a hospital," said Mother Grace. "But you always have to have some high-flown reason for what you do, I suppose."

"I expect I don't know what I mean, either," June agreed amiably. "I just know that I don't believe in war and that by entering a hospital I am doing my share in the war."

"At any rate, the prospectus of the training school calls for six pink uniforms (that's what probationers wear and I look like hell in pink) and a dozen aprons. Will you stake me to the money to buy them? I'm broke."

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"By the way, Mother Grace," said Adele, not long afterward. "Do you realize that I'm eighteen?"

"Goodness gracious, so you are. I guess it's about time that you began to talk of living your own life and getting out in the world." And they smiled to each other as they often did when they were making pleasant fun of June.

"I know what you're thinking of," said June. "You want to enter the hospital with me."

"You've still got Glubb," and Adele looked at her mother appealingly. "I've got to do something, some time. And they need nurses so badly now. Not to go abroad, but to stay at home and serve in the hospitals here. The Red Cross is full and they haven't sent abroad anywhere near all the nurses they have in reserve. They just sit around doing nothing or parade Fifth Avenue while they wait to get across. And meantime the hospitals are terribly hard up for help." Mother Grace had long expected her youngest daughter to realize her eighteen years. Since the hospital the two girls wished to enter was within twenty minutes' ride of home, it was easier to give up the last of her grown ups than she had thought possible.

It was decided that the two should begin training after Christmas and many afternoons were spent in making pink dresses and voluminous white aprons.

"I did not dream bed-making could be so hard," Adele sighed at the end of the first day and stretched her lame body luxuriously. "If it weren't for you being here, I'd want to cry and go straight home. How many times did you have to put the bottom sheet on your bed? I didn't get mine right until the tenth time."

"I did mine satisfactorily the seventh," June laughed. "But then I'm two years older than you are, so I can't help being smarter."

Bed-making was a difficult job. First you whisked the mattress—away from you lest you get a germ on your clean white apron—and turned it and whisked some more. Then you whisked a carbolic solution over each side of the mattress and washed the remainder of the bed till there wasn't a speck of dust on it. You did this to six beds before you returned to the beginning of the line to make the first

one.

The sheets were folded in a certain way so that they could be unfolded and spread out on the bed in a certain way. There was no flapping open as you did at home with a sheet or table-cloth to spread it smoothly. That might disturb germs that were in the air and set them in circulation.

After the sheet was smoothed out on the bed, you tucked in one side, tucking with broad sweeps from the middle. Then you went around to the other side and the sheet was so wide that when you tucked it there, you tucked that side so that it fitted into the other, as an envelop flap fits inside of an envelope. At either end what was left over of the sheet on the under side of the mattress was inserted under the sheet on the upper side of the mattress, was folded to form a flap and pinned carefully and neatly with two straight pins to the mattress. There was a certain way of putting in the pins too. You see what a difficult job it was.

And you see also what June and Adele meant when they said they had to make the bed seven and ten times before the head nurse was satisfied. It was very discouraging to put the sheet on to the best of your ability and then have the head nurse come along and point out several wrinkles. Wrinkles, it would seem, were very irritating to sick people.

When you had been told to try again, off the sheet had to come. Not quickly. You didn't just take out the pins and pull the sheet off and begin laboriously to put it on again. No, it had to be folded as it was taken off, and unfolded again to put it on. So many times that you could never forget how hospital linen was folded.

Making a bed, June decided, was much more difficult than writing a book review, and her satisfaction when her bed had been made for the seventh time and approved was much greater than she had enjoyed when seeing a book review in print with her name signed to it.

June and Adele worked in an empty ward. A wide door opened into another ward from which every now and then came the hot, sharp cry of a patient. It was good to be working there. There was even a strange satisfaction in hearing a patient cry because when the cries were stilled you knew that something useful had been done.

Miss Kelley was the probationers' instructor. She was a little white-faced nurse with prim firm ways. Her eyes were large and intensely serious, the color of an ocean on a dull winter day. Her hair was mouse colored. She was sweetly firm and could be very forceful. June heard her voice from behind a screen, calming an hysterical patient. "Turn right over on your side now and let the nurse attend to you! The idea of your making all this trouble!" There was quiet immediately. There was the same insistence in the touch of her hands. She was not strong but she could move the helpless bulk of a woman who weighed three times as much as she did. Strength seemed to pour from her fingertips into a patient.

When, after several days of bed-making, June gave her first morning toilet, she felt that it was an event and an accomplishment. Before you could give a morning toilet, you had to be given a tray with many bottles and sponges and

toilet articles on it. Trays were fascinating with the little jars of salve and swabs and bandages and liquid green soap and mouth wash—many more things. You had to go over your tray every morning to see that the other nurses did not steal things from it.

June's first patient was an old Canadian woman, ninety-four years old. Granny objected to being washed saying that she had been bathed the day before and that at her time of life she did not see why she had to be pestered with soap and water the way she was. Argument was useless so she began to kick and fight, clawing at June with bird-like hands.

Another nurse said, "Can't you see, Granny, that Miss Henreddy only wants to make you comfortable? She does it because she loves you."

"Love be damned," said Granny, loudly, stridently. Her defiance was glorious, June thought, and she laughed joyfully as she put her hands under the armpits of the old lady and tried to persuade her to lie down. In the scuffle the bedclothes had been heaped in the middle of the bed. Granny perched there, sitting on the end of her spine, her arms clasped about her bare and scrawny knees and blazed at June with eyes as dark as those of a baby. Her cap hung over one ear, displaying a large bald spot surrounded by a queer fringe of grey hair which was matted and awry, standing up like a field of ferns. She gave way to June at last and allowed herself to be bathed, crying to herself all the while like a whimpering monkey. The ghastly youthfulness of her false teeth in her yellow shrivelled face haunted June for the rest of the day.

"She has been crying for months," another nurse told June, "to be allowed to wear a wig which was taken away from her when she entered the hospital. She says she wouldn't feel half so badly with it. I wish they would let her have it." There were two women dying in the ward, a woman of fifty and a girl of twenty-two. Mary Adams was slowly fading from the whiteness of the ward around her into a grey shadow on the long slim bed. She had a grown son who came to visit her every evening when the wards were twilit and the evening toilets were completed. He brought huge bunches of flowers which the head nurse vaguely disapproved of. "They are too flary." But the orchids suited her somber eyes and the mint and old-fashioned flowers made a strange rich scent around the bed. Every time June passed her, a little thrill ran up and down her spine. Mrs. Adams never spoke but lay there motionless, looking out of wide open grey eyes, looking at the death she saw so plainly with dull wonder.

Irene was the girl and she was pathetically young. Her finely shaped mouth was always contorted with pain and there was a fierce protesting light in her eyes. The lines that agony had drawn in the ivory of her skin were like those of passion. She might have been clutching a lover in a last embrace knowing that when he arose from the bed he would go out and close the door forever.

"There is the smell of death around her," June thought, "and no one brings her flowers to deaden it."

When Adele was working in a ward where there were six girls who were about to have their tonsils taken out, June was passed on to the fracture ward, number twenty-five. There were eleven old ladies there with fractures of the femur and hip bones. The most youthful of them were sixty and close on to seventy years.

They approached the elderly stage when they were eighty and when they passed ninety-five, it was admitted that they were indeed old.

It seemed strange at first to call them by their Christian names but it was the custom of the hospital and June soon became used to it.

Ida, a young Jewish woman of sixty, was a trial to June. It seemed she had never known the meaning of the word bath and when she was washed on her arrival she howled so that a young interne rushed in thinking that she had been taken with labor pains. Her features were colossal, well carved and wrinkled like a crumpled linen handkerchief. She had become so used to contorting every feature to give vent to her emotions that now her face was as uncontrolled as that of a six year old child.

Every morning June had to bathe her from head to foot, rub her back with alcohol, powder her and comb her hair. And soon Ida was so accustomed to being waited on that although she was no longer helpless, she wailed loudly if any detail of her morning toilet was omitted.

“Schmeer! Mit alcohol!” she demanded, arching her back from the bed. She could not turn, owing to the splint which bound her on one side from her shoulder to her ankle.

Her sensuous joy was so great that all the while she was being groomed and curried, she grunted like an enormous pig. Before she had been in the ward a week, she demanded that each leg, each arm, be also rubbed with alcohol.

Occasionally, the ward maid, Catherine, “did” her morning toilet, and to avoid the boisterous argument which Ida always indulged in and to save the alcohol, she took to rubbing her arms and legs with a weak solution of thymol and water. Ida soon discovered the deception and seizing the bottle, she dashed it on the floor. After that she could no longer be deceived. Before she allowed herself to be rubbed, she smelled the contents of the bottle.

Although she was physically clean, thanks to June’s efforts, her habits remained filthy. On visiting days, she furtively accepted the food which her relatives brought her, and which was not supposed to be left at the bedside of the patient, and hid it under her mattress, her pillow, under her arms, and even between her splint and her body under the bandages. Then knowing that she had only a few hours before she would again be bathed, she applied herself assiduously to the food which was brought to her until every crumb was devoured. “Ei, ei, gevault, gevault, gevault,” she complained if anyone tried to take her food away from her. Usually her relatives, who came in tribes and draped themselves around the bed to ei-gevault with her over the miseries of the world, brought her prunes. They came in quart jars, twice a week, and after drinking all the juice out of the bottle, Ida munched the prunes all night, eating them as continually and with as unalloyed delight as a debutante would salted almonds.

There were times in the sweet dusk of evening when she had been “schmeered” with alcohol to her heart’s content that she showed a gentler side. Her ei-gevaults gave way to a melancholy chanting, a chanting that was also joyous. One time when she was softly and exultantly wailing, June asked another Jewish woman in the ward what she was singing about. The reply was that she was “talking to God.”

There was another in the ward who was almost as much trouble as “Ei-gevault.” The nurse called her “Oh-a, Oh-a” because she cried continually. She was the one Irishwoman there who did not bear her pains stoically. Approaching death had loosened the bolts she had placed on her consciousness. Although she was seventy, she had a beautiful body, as white and firm as that of a young girl. She paid for her delicacy however, for every inch of her was alive to sensation and responded to the pain in her broken hip. She seemed burned by an inward fever and was always calling for water.

“I’m scaldin’, Nellie, and achin’. Bring me some water in the tin cup, in the little tin cup by the pump!” Glasses did not satisfy her thirst, so June bought a tin cup for her. “It tastes so good and cold,” said Oh-a, Oh-a.

June’s special pet was Sarah Lauthier, a tiny little lady of ninety-six. June was Margaret to her and anyone who made a noise was Willie. On one occasion, five nurses and a doctor were strapping a delirious, screaming patient into the bed next to her and consciousness of the tumult gradually sifted into her mind. “Willie!” she piped up. “Don’t make so much noise. The neighbors will think we keep a disorderly house.”

June loved Willie, her cubby great-grand-child of ten. He came twice a week with bottles of orange juice and sat by her bedside. When he had been at her side for an hour, she realized that he was there, and chirped at him happily. He always stayed for two hours, holding her hand, and never seemed oppressed by the sickness around him.

For a time June almost succumbed to the temptation to break one of the most stringent of the hospital rules. Sarah was continually beckoning to her and whispering slyly in her ear, “You know what I want,” or “Wouldn’t a wee drop of gin taste good.” And then June discovered that little Willie was bringing her something that strongly resembled a Bronx cocktail, judging by the smell of it. After that she was careful that Granny’s orange juice was not confused with the orange juice of other patients and that she got every drop of it.

Every morning when June arrived on the ward, she found the little old woman, lying naked. It was evident that she could not endure being wet and tore off her sheets and nightgown so that the warm air could dry her. Her withered, crooked body was like that of Rodin’s ancient courtesan.

At times her years dropped from her and she coquetted with June adorably. She had the sweetest grin and the wickedest wink. And there was a tiny dimple still left in one cheek when she laughed her silent laugh.

One evening June found her trying to sew with her large brass cross at the end of a rosary. “What are you trying to do, Granny?” She was swearing softly to herself now and then.

“Can’t you see I’m trying to make a buttonhole, you damn fool? The needle won’t go through. How can I keep warm without a buttonhole in my gowns?” And then Lora McAlister was carried into the ward and all its sordid ugliness was lightened and relieved. Lora was twenty-eight, a widow, with auburn hair and brown eyes. The floor man, an ex-patient, found much to do in the neighborhood and wandered around singing under his breath. June caught a few lines of a tuneless ballad once—“He placed his hand upon her knee. She said, ‘my man,

you're mighty free'—”and then he caught sight of her and the song died away in his throat. The doctors haunted the ward and other patients were deluged with attentions. The three men who were with Lora when the automobile accident occurred which resulted in her broken hip obtained special permission to call at the hospital to see her every afternoon, and the ward was beautiful with flowers and plants.

In spite of her injuries which were severe, she threw off her lethargy and powdered and primped and sewed ribbons on her night dress and sang until the ward was aglow and the up-patients in the corridor stopped their chattering to listen. The sixty and seventy year old women became conscious of their sex and were more willing to have their faces washed. They gave June quarters to buy them sweet-smelling talcums and relatives appeared with dainty night dresses for them.

June had been in the hospital six months when she was transferred to the male medical ward. She was glad to leave her old ladies for Sarah Lauthier was about to die. She did not want to see her dead. So she got permission to perform Granny's morning toilet for the last time and after gathering up her flung-out wet clothes around the bed, fastening the old lady securely in a dry unbleached muslin night gown, tucking her in tightly, and leaving a little kiss on the tiny dimple in her cheek, she rushed breathlessly to the male building at the other end of the grounds.

Ward fifty-four was a strange, wild place. June and Miss Andrews, a capable young Irish girl who was two months June's senior in training, were alone in the ward from seven o'clock in the morning until seven in the evening, save for the visits of the doctors and internes and the much to be dreaded superintendent of nurses. The head nurse of the ward was busy most of the day in the ward above and when she came, she came to help not to criticize. It was the superintendent who stood sternly at the end of the room and let her eye travel down the long ward for some disorder or carelessness. It was hard not to be careless at this time too, for an influenza epidemic had broken out over the city and every day eight to ten victims were carried in or walked in staggeringly, only to fall unconscious as soon as their clothes were taken from them.

According to the superintendent every ward in the hospital should be in order by ten o'clock; but to get the work underway, June and Miss Andrews did without their breakfasts in the nurses' dining-room and arrived on the ward at six-thirty. However, Red Reynolds who used to keep a saloon on Coney Island and was at present the kitchen-man, prepared an excellent breakfast of toast, soft boiled eggs and coffee. While June ate, Miss Andrews worked and kept a lookout for head nurses (it being against the rule to eat on the ward) and June did the same for her.

The up-patients were already at work when the girls arrived, sweeping, polishing brass, getting the linen in order and helping other more miserable up-patients into their wheel chairs. The latter were trundled out into the solarium where they sat all day and chewed tobacco and gossiped of wine, women and war and occasionally of God. Sometimes you could hear the cracked voice of an old sailor trying to sing a bar-room song or the booming voice of the old German who was

almost ossified, singing a hymn.

June's first task was to pour out the medicine for a hundred patients, a task demanding concentration and a steady hand. When she first started pouring, she continued pouring in her dreams every night, until she was able to associate every patient with the medicine which he took. For instance, whenever she saw Sullivan, her brain immediately flashed:

Arom. Spt. Am. Dr. I

Donov. Sol. M. 10

Pot. Iod. Gr. 15

Stokes M. Dr. I

There were almost as many medicines for each patient, and the entire dose was handed out in one glass regardless of chemical combinations. The convalescent patients greeted June hilariously as she came bringing them what they called their cocktails and bracers.

It took two hours to pour and chart the medicines. All the while June stood at the glass medicine cabinet in the center of the ward, Philip, a handsome elderly man in the bed opposite to her, leisurely selected and picked (with apparently great discrimination) a large bouquet of flowers from the air, each one of which he sniffed with enjoyment before adding it to the bunch in his hand. This he presented to June with a courteous, grave smile, when she brought him his medicine, and she thanked him with equal gravity and ceremony and arranged them in an imaginary vase on her medicine tray. One time she noticed him pulling with a great deal of effort at what must have been a goldenrod, it was so hard to separate it from its stalk.

"If you try to break it, instead of tearing at it," said the man in the next bed kindly, "maybe you'll get it off."

There was another patient, a laundryman, with a red haggard face and burning eyes, who took off his bed clothes, one by one and fed them into an ironing machine. Even his night shirt was sacrificed in the stress of his delusion, and wearily, again and again, June clothed him, and bound him down in the bed with restraining sheets which he loosened in fifteen minutes with his restless, strong, sick fingers.

Adele sat and sniffed into a handkerchief at the open window while June, crouched on the bed in the corner where she couldn't see how tantalizing the spring evening was, was trying vainly to memorize the symptoms of atropine poisoning.

"It seems to me that all the heart medicines have the same poisoning symptoms," she complained. "Now, mercury is easy to remember. If your patients salivate, then you know they've got the first symptom. Then their gums begin to swell and turn purple and then their teeth fall out. When I first went on ward seventy-two, I had just learned those symptoms, so I went around to all the patients who were taking mercury in one form or another and looked at their mouths. And would you believe it, every one of them complained of wanting to spit all the time! Those internes had forgotten all about prescribing mercury and had left it on the medicine chart and the damn-fool nurse who was in the ward before



me kept right on giving the medicine. I kicked to the head nurse—or rather I reported the matter respectfully, for she’s an old devil—and she told me to go right on giving the medicine till the doctor came on the ward again. ‘Doctor’s orders must be obeyed.’ And the doctor might not be on the ward again for a week!”

The ward was like a ship, she concluded, where the doctor was captain, the superintendent first mate, the head nurse, second mate and the nurses just ordinary seamen. They had to obey orders, nothing else. And if they used their brains, and deduced that a patient was about to die of strychnine poisoning unless the dose was stopped, they had to go on giving the dose until word came from higher-up to stop it. Discipline was a great thing. For any woman holding an executive position who was about to have a nervous prostration, a course of training in a hospital would surely cure her. If it didn’t kill her. June felt that she would like to scream every now and then and throw medicine bottles at the head nurses. But she felt too the relief of being told what to do and knowing that she had to do it.

Suddenly she looked up from the book she was vainly trying to concentrate her mind upon and noticed Adele with her handkerchief. “What is the matter? Have you got a cold or are you crying?”

Adele admitted that she was crying and continued sniffing. June’s sympathy made it worse.

“Oh, I like hospital work and I wouldn’t stop it for anything,” she wept, “but every now and then you see something that actually breaks your heart and you don’t see how you can stand it any longer. You know Mary—the one I told you about with consumption and who had just had a baby a month ago? Well, she’s dead.”

June knew that it wasn’t at the death itself that her sister was crying, for they had talked of it and expected it every day for the past week. It sounded callous but there was a sort of excitement in seeing how long you could keep a person who was lingering with a fatal disease alive.

“She died at quarter to seven,” Adele went on. “And you know when a patient dies at ten minutes of seven the day nurses leave the work to the night nurses. Doctor Gleason was passing through the ward and signed the death certificate then and there, the time of death marked at the top of it and the day nurses had to ‘do up’ the dead body. Miss Smith—she’s a month ahead of me—had to attend to it seeing as the head nurse was off duty, and she and another girl went behind the screen and you could hear everything they said through the ward and out in the corridor. They swore—they said, ‘damn it, why couldn’t she have waited till after seven. I’ve got a date tonight.’ And the other girl said, ‘Oh, hell, of course she had to wet the bed again before she died.’ And you could hear them slap her as they turned her over to get the sheet out from under her. The worst of it all was, the husband of the girl was standing out in the hall all the time and he was just a young boy. He was crying terribly. And I have been, too, ever since.” Nursing was like newspaper work in that it was impossible to suffer long over the tragedies which took place every day. You were too close to them to have perspective. They happened too continuously. They weighed on you—gave you a

still and subdued feeling but the very fact that you were continually busy left you no time to brood.

There was brightness on the ward, the brightness of the spring sunlight, the cleanliness and the convalescent patients. Some patients could not help shedding a jovial atmosphere about them. There was the old sailor who called himself Captain Kidd, for instance. He had toppled into the river and when rescued had emptied no one knew how many bottles of whiskey to avoid bad effects, he told the doctor. But nevertheless he had been brought into the hospital with influenza. Now he was convalescing and his red bandanna handkerchief which he twined around his head made the one spot of color in the white ward. Every time the head nurse entered the ward she made him take it off. But it was on again as soon as her back was turned and June received grateful little nods and winks every time she was reprimanded for not having discipline among her patients. Red handkerchiefs were untidy, it seemed.

Even the superintendent of the nurses, who had trained in that same hospital long ago and had been there ever since, felt the influence of spring. Her yellowish-grey hair usually was pulled straight back behind her ears, but now it fluffed out a little like the wings of birds. Instead of the high stiff collar which she wore all winter, there was a low stiff one, but it was softened by a white and slightly withered throat. Every other afternoon she lectured the first year girls on anatomy and June noticed that the bones which she handled delicately, as though they were flowers, were the same color as her hair.

There was an insistent somnolence in her voice which must have come from years of association with the sick. It murmured on, those spring afternoons like the bees in the park outside. On Thursdays there were band concerts for the old peoples' home next door and then the lecture had to be cut short. It wasn't only that Miss Daly couldn't compete with the noise. But the band was made up of twelve year old boys from the Catholic school nearby and every now and then came a series of bars that rasped on her nerves like the tearing of silk. She could not concentrate on what was before her. And since the lecture had been cut short there was a half hour of freedom for June and Adele to sit in the park and watch the old people smoke and mumble to themselves.

"Every one of those old ladies smokes her pipe and the county allows her tobacco," June grumbled. "Gee, how I'd like to have a cigarette now . . . What is it that you miss at these Thursday afternoon band concerts, Adele?"

"Lots of things."

"No, I mean one thing specially. It's the smell of cigarettes. I can't think of those park concerts and Mr. Armand without remembering that odor of damp grass and people's clothes and cigarettes."

It was very restful there under the trees. The sparrows hopped up to the little old women who had saved crusts for them in their apron pockets. An occasional pigeon strutted up and down and a large black cat slunk under the benches with her yellow eyes on the birds. The trees were flecked with the pale green of new leaves.

June noticed one shrivelled little woman standing apart from the others talking to a man who was also in the uniform of the county. "Sex instinct at this late

stage of the game,” she was about to say jeeringly, for the little woman was laughing coquettishly. But the smile was wiped off her lips as she recognized the bent figure as an ex-patient of hers.

“See that little old thing,” she told Adele, almost tenderly. “I saw her last night. You know the short cut I take when I’m in a hurry—around the back of the chapel and laundry and the two old peoples’ homes. There the two of them were last night, gripping each others’ hands, trying to tear themselves away. Seven o’clock is their bed time you see. Husband and wife being taken care of by the county, poor dears, and separated. He kissed her so nicely, and she said, ‘remember John, don’t kick the covers off tonight. You’ve got to be careful of your cold.’ Think of them having to sneak around behind a laundry house to kiss each other!”

What she did not say was that now and then a vague longing came to trouble her—she felt a restless need of some one who would clutch at her and not want to let her go.

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