

START

est — the "kids" disagreed. They wanted to see the will first, the lawyer wouldn't *show* it to 'em, they came down on both sides — *kill* her off! *Keep* her going! Not pretty.

C. (*Really beside herself.*) Stop it! Stop it!

A. (*To a naughty child.*) Grow ... up.

B. (*Smiles.*) She will; she does.

A. Well; yes; of course. And so do you.

C. (*Rage.*) I will not become ... *that!* (*Points to "A".*)

A. (*"Come off it".*) Oh, *really.*

B. (*"Oh, really!"*) Come off it.

C. I won't.

B. (*Smiles.*) What do you plan to *do* about it?

A. (*Amused.*) Yes; *that's* interesting.

C. (*To A; pointing to B.*) Nor will I become *this.*

B. (*A hoot.*) Hah! (*C comes down front and speaks to the audience. A and B relax, comment from time to time, react with each other, etc.*)

C. I won't. I know I won't — *that's* what I mean. That ... (*Points to "A".*) ... *thing* there? I'll never be like that. (*B hoots; A shakes her head, chuckles. Continued.*) Nobody could. I'm twenty-six; I'm a *good* girl; my mother was strict but fair — she still *is*; she *loves* me; she loves me and Sis, and she wants the very best for us. We have a *nice* little apartment, Sis and I, and at night we go out with our beaux, and I *do* have my eye out for ... for what — "the man of my dreams"? And so does Sis, I *guess.* I don't think I've been in love, but I've been loved — by a couple of them, but they weren't the right ones.

B. (*Rue; to herself.*) They never *are.*

A. (*Purring.*) Hmmmm.

C. Mother taught us what the right one would be. We have fun with the others — dancing, staying out late, seeing the sun up sometimes. Things get a little ... involved now and again, and that's fun too, though Sis doesn't think so as much as I do. They get involved, but they never get very ... *serious.* I have my eye out, and we do have our *jobs.* We're mannequins: the fanciest shop in town!

B. I don't want that *known!*

A. (*To B; pleasantly chiding.*) Oh, stop; it was fun.

C. We go into work and we put on these lovely frocks, and we walk elegantly around the store, (*Imitates.*) among the ladies shopping, sometimes with their men, sometimes not, and we stop, and they touch our dresses — the silk, the fabric — and they ask us questions, and then we pass on to another group, to another section. We twirl, we ... sashay. (*She does so; B imitates; A, too, but sitting. Continued; to A and B.*) We *do!*

B. Oh, I *know.*

A. Yes, we *know;* do *we know.*

C. (*To the audience again.*) Don't look at them; don't ... listen to them. (*A and B laugh a little. Continued.*) We wear our beautiful evening gowns, and we parade about, and we know there are people looking at us, studying us, and we smile, and we ... well, I suppose we flirt a little with the men who are doing it — the husbands, or whatever.

B. (*To A; mock astonishment.*) Flirt?! You!?

A. Me!? Flirt!?

B. (*Sashays; twirls.*) Wheeeeeee!

A. (*Claps with one hand; her knee, probably.*) Brava! Brava!

B. (*Still sashaying.*) Wheeeeeee!

C. Stop it! *Stay* out of my life!

B. Oh! My dear!

A. (*To C.*) I remember it differently, little one. I remember more ... design. I remember a little calculation.

B. Oh, yes; a little calculation; a little design.

C. (*To audience.*) Don't listen to them. Design? What are they talking about?

B. (*Cheerful.*) Never mind.

C. (*To audience.*) They don't *know* me!

B. (*Looking at A; mocking.*) Nooooooooooooo!

C. Remember me!

A. (*Also mocking.*) Nooooooooooooo! (*C claps her hands over her ears, shuts her eyes. Continued.*) Oh, all right, dear; go on. (*C can't hear. Continued; louder.*) I said, go *on!*

B. (*Loud.*) She says go *on!*, honestly.

C. I am a ... good ... girl.

B. (*To A.*) Well, yes; I suppose so.

A. And not dumb.

C. I'm a good girl. I know how to attract *men*. I'm *tall*, I'm striking; I know how to do it. Sis slouches and caves her front in; I stand tall, breasts out, chin up, hands ... just so. I walk between the aisles and they know there's somebody coming, that there's somebody *there*. But, I'm a *good girl*. I'm not a virgin, but I'm a good girl. The boy who took me was a good boy. (C does not necessarily hear — or, at least, notice — the asides to come.)

B. Oh, yes he *was*.

A. Yes? Was he?

B. You remember.

A. (Laughs.) Well, it *was* a *while* ago.

B. But you *do* remember.

A. Oh yes, I remember him. He was ...

C. ... sweet and handsome; no, not handsome: beautiful. He was beautiful!

A. (To B.) He was; yes.

B. (To A and herself.) Yes.

C. He has coal-black hair and violet eyes and such a smile!

A. Ah!

B. Yes!

C. His body was ... well, it was thin, but *hard*; all sinew and muscle; he fenced, he told me, and he was the one with the megaphone on the crew. When I held him when we danced, there was only sinew and muscle. We dated a lot; I liked him; I didn't tell Mother, but I liked him a lot. I like him, Sis, I said; I really like him. Have you told Mother? No, and don't *you*; I like him a lot, but I don't *know*. Has he? ... *you* know. No, I said; no, he hasn't. But then he did. We were dancing — slowly — late, the end of the evening, and we danced so close, all ... pressed, and ... we were pressed, and I could feel that he was hard, *that* muscle and sinew, pressed against me while we danced. We were the same height and he looked into my eyes as we danced, slowly, and I felt the pressure up against me, and he tensed it and I felt it move against me.

B. (Dreamy.) Whatever is *that*, I said.

A. Hmhmhmhmhm.

C. Whatever is *that*, I said. I *knew*, but whatever is *that*, I

said, and he smiled, and his eyes shone, and it's me in love with you, he said. You have an interesting way of showing it, I said. Appropriate, he said, and I felt the muscle move again, and ... well, I knew it was time; I knew I was ready, and I knew I wanted him — whatever that *meant* — that I wanted *him*, that I wanted *it*.

B. (Looking back; agreeing.) Yes; oh, yes.

A. Hmhmhmhmhm.

C. Remember, don't give it away, Mother said; don't give it away like it was nothing.

B. (Remembering.) They won't respect you for it and you'll get known as a loose girl. *Then* who will you marry?

A. (To B.) Is that what she said? I can't remember.

B. (Laughs.) Yes you can.

C. They won't respect you for it and you'll get known as a loose girl. *Then* who will you marry? But he was pressed against me, exactly against where he wanted to be — we were the same height — and he was *so* beautiful, and his eyes shone, and he smiled at me and he moved his hips as we danced, so slowly, as we danced, and he breathed on my neck and he said, you don't want me to embarrass myself right here on the dance floor, do you?

B. (Remembering.) No, no; of course not.

C. I said, no, no; of course not. Let's go to my place, he said, and I heard myself saying (Incredulous.) I'm not that kind of girl? I mean, as soon as I said it I blushed: it was so ... stupid, so ... expected. Yes, you are, he said; *you're* that kind of girl.

B. And I was, and my God it was wonderful.

A. It hurt! (Afterthought; to B.) Didn't it?

B. (Admonishing.) Oh ... well, a little.

C. You're that kind of girl, and I guess I was. We did it a lot. (Shy.) I know it's trite to say your first time is your best, but he was wonderful, and I know I'm only twenty-six now and there've been a few others, and I imagine I'll marry, and I'll be very happy.

B. (Grudging.) Well ...

A. We'll talk about happy sometime.