

Patty

GERALDINE HARMAN

The electric light in the middle of the ceiling illuminated the large, wide, antique bed in the center of the room. The carved headboard seemed to fill the space along the entire wall, although there was also a small desk in one corner covered with an arrangement of various pens and pencils and different shades of ink. Behind the three photographs on the desk were several boxes of stationary of different varieties to go with the matching inks. Spread out on the bed were stacks of old letters, carefully saved, each one numbered according to sequence. Curled among them was a tall, slender, blonde girl, sorting the letters and reading them, showing in turn dreamy and thoughtful expressions, sometimes almost sad, sometimes with a small curl of her upper lip, and sometimes accented with a small chuckle. She sat up and looked across the carved footboard of the bed into the huge mirror of the carved matching dresser opposite her. Suddenly making a face, she snatched at the letters arrayed on her bed, gathered them up quickly and stuffed them into their respective boxes without finishing the sorting. Pulling open the bottom drawer of the carved dresser, she thrust the boxes in and slammed the drawer. When one of the boxes caught and jerked the drawer sideways she impatiently stuffed the box in, taking no cautions as to the results, and shoved the drawer shut. She dashed down the stairs, terrifying a large, yellow, angora cat on the landing, and sauntered into the living room. She flopped down on one

of the chairs and picked up the evening paper, glanced through it leisurely and folded it again. She crossed over to the radio and put on a record. As it played she listened rather vaguely at first and then became engrossed in the thoughts inspired by the familiar melody and verse. Her blue eyes became deep and thoughtful as if she were roaming about in a fascinating world of wonder, seeing things that no one else knew. She stretched her long legs and pointed her toes smugly, thought for a minute, and then crossed the room and lighted a cigarette from the intricately carved container on the antique coffee table. She posed for a few minutes; then, with a rather sultry air, she ambled over to change the record. The yellow, angora cat watched her drowsily and a trifle questioningly, but it was not curious enough to care particularly. The girl draped herself carefully on one of the chairs and delicately finished her cigarette. The telephone in the hall jingled gayly crashing in on the mood like the red stripe slashed on the candy stick. She hopped up and dashed in to answer it, suddenly chattering informally and seemingly as endlessly as the crowd on a subway train. Her peals of laughter filtered through the sounds of the now forgotten record repeating itself, unconcerned, on the photograph, while the yellow, angora cat slept calmly on the cushion on the sofa, as content and serene as a sleeping country village happily curled among the blankets of trees.