

## Refuge

Glenda Benjamin

As soon as the lights are dimmed and the last minute tuning of the violins is finished, I shall begin my walk down the long, cathedral-like hall to the bleak, massive stage of Carnegie Hall. I, a nobody, am making my debut as a concert clarinetist. My constant practicing and work have reached a climax. There is my cue.

The echo of the click-click of my footsteps on the hard, cold floor reminds me of the perpetual tick-tock of a clock. It is setting the mood and tempo for me to glance back at those difficult and seemingly endless years—the years that have just been a preamble to these glorious but fleeting moments. The whole thing seems so vague. But wait, it is all coming back to me now. The hands of that clock are spinning back, back like a whirling top, and are bringing those buried, forgotten years back to life.

As I take this quick glance at these swiftly passing years, I see myself as a small child of six. On that birthday my parents took me to the circus. There I saw a vendor selling tiny tin horns. I begged my parents to buy one for me. They did, and I was the happiest and most contented person in the world.

To the vendor this was just another ordinary sale, but it was more than that to me; it was the turning point of my life. From then on, all I ever talked or dreamed about was the cheap tin clarinet of mine. But when I was twelve years old, my parents surprised me with a real clarinet and arranged for me to take private lessons on it. Years, long years of hard, tedious practicing followed, as I had definitely decided to make this instrument not only my career, but also my life's work.

After being graduated from high school, I made fifteen concert tours, and it was only last week that I was notified to come to Carnegie Hall for an interview. The letter stated that I had possibilities. Following my arrival I was requested to play a few selections, after which the professors informed me that they would like me to perform next Friday evening at nine o'clock. All I had ever hoped, prayed, slaved, and dreamed for came alive in these few, almost unbelievable words.

It is this very Friday evening now. This dream of mine that had once been a tiny, flickering flame was now a roaring fire . . . fire, fire, fire! Stop! Stop! I can't stand it any longer!

"Doctor, Doctor Gordon, come quickly."

"What is the trouble, nurse?"

"Miss Lewis is having another attack."

"Poor woman, she cannot erase that horrible experience from her mind. You remember, don't you? She was at the height of her career, ten years ago to be exact, I believe. Let me see; yes, it was

on the evening she was to make her debut at Carnegie Hall. As she was driving there, some fool crashed into her car. It sprang almost at once into flames, and by the time help arrived her hands could not be saved. Poor soul, she keeps thinking she is making that debut."

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## Star Dust

Barbara Dolen

"OH, what a beautiful morning," I cheerfully whistled as I popped out of bed on Monday, eager to set the world on fire. I usually think of Mondays in that typical blue way, but this Monday was bound to be different. Why? Because my horoscope for today had predicted: "One of those wonderful days. Think of anything you want—the chances are you can have it for the asking." Of course I don't believe in fortune telling, the stars, and all that; but I decided to see just how much those little glittering things could change my day.

"Anything I wanted" kept running through my mind as I walked out to the car. "O K, I'd like not to have to go to school today," I thought as I turned the ignition. The motor gave a spurt, died, and there I was without a car, or a way to school—my wish to a tee. However, I felt under the circumstances it might be more healthy if I procured a ride. I managed to get to class only twelve and one-half minutes late.

Arriving at my third hour class, I absent-mindedly made the comment to my friend: "Boy, how this hour drags! If only he wouldn't lecture." And he didn't. The professor announced after the gong had tolled that since the last of the week was being occupied by Teachers Convention, the mid-semester test scheduled for Thursday would have to be given today. He was really very generous though, and said he would curve the grades, since the students might not be prepared so early in the week. Sure enough, with the curve I made a 94, or was it a 49?

Lunch time finally rolled around, and how I longed for at least one glance at our tasty lunch. Just to be obliging, I'm sure, the actives decided that today was the day for Penny Pledge to help the cook in the kitchen. For one solid hour I got to do nothing but *look* at food.

Realizing that today was "one of my wonderful days" and everything I asked for would be provided, I decided after the above incidents to postpone further indicating of my desires. Above all I vowed never to look at my horoscope again; but that night when quite by accident I ran across it, I was startled to see—"Keep to your normal routine and don't be too experimental. Not your day for putting innovations into practice." The stars—bah!