

who was there will remember it, not for the violence or the excitement, but for that scarcely describable spirit of utter fear, hatred, and contempt that came from the souls of those workers in the howl they gave on seeing us.

We broke the strike. "Loyal workers"

were escorted to and from the factory by police and Guardsmen. At the time, I remember, I was very proud of my part in this modern drama; but now, as I look back, I think I understand who was really right and every once in a while the scream of a lost cause comes faintly to my ears.

## PRETTY IMPORTANT

BETTY GORDON

Haze from sputtering exhaust pipes drifted odorously to the nostrils of the little girl sitting on a low stoop. She peered near-sightedly at the cars rushing by her dilapidated house, scuffling the toe of her oxford in the grayed dust. Her prematurely wizened face was screwed up in an attitude faintly reminiscent of a white cat with sore eyes. Complacently she waited.

An attractive playmate bounced up to her side. "Hello, Eileen," she said hesitantly. "Can you play with me now?"

"Not now," answered the other. Importantly, she said, "My mother and father are getting a divorce."

Her friend regarded her skeptically. "I don't believe you," she said.

"Yes, they are," said Eileen, wrinkling her nose disdainfully. "Just because your parents can't get one — you're jealous, that's what." She smiled, thinking of the new status a divorce would give her.

"They could too, if they wanted to. Don't you really think they could?" she asked anxiously.

"No," said Eileen. A quarrel seemed to be imminent, but the girls' attention was distracted by the approach of a slovenly looking, uncorseted woman. The hard lines of the woman's mouth tightened as she saw the two.

"Did you get it? Did you get it?" screamed the child ecstatically, tugging at her mother's dress.

"Yeah," she said raucously. Irritably she pushed away the girl's hand. "Yeah. I got rid of that lousy father of yours. And he better not try to skin out of paying that six bucks support money, neither, that's all I got to say."

The mother looked as if she would like to slap her, even lacking express provocation. Eileen sensed her hostility. "I been good, Mom. I just been settin' here waitin'," she said.

The woman stalked into the house, her pudgy posterior wobbling ominously.

Eileen sighed, blissfully unaware of her companion. Her friend watched her with mingled awe and disbelief. "They really did get it," she murmured incredulously.

"Yes, they really and truly did. Now you just wait 'n see the things they get me." Eileen had half-awakened from her trance.

"Let's go tell the other kids," shouted her friend. "Won't they wish their folks would get one too?"

Eileen preened herself contentedly, anticipating her potential importance to the rest of the human young.

"There's the little girl whose mother and father got a divorce," she heard them, her neighbors, say enviously.

Her face composed itself into a modest smirk, the lines of her body settling into a correspondingly smug contour. In anticipatory delight, she scuffed the toe of her oxford in the grayed dust.