



## Appointment at Five

By LEANE ZUGSMITH

THE rain followed her into the vestibule. As she closed the door behind her, she noticed a large-faced, middle-aged man putting his umbrella into the stand.

"Nasty weather," the man said cheerfully.

"Very," she replied, stooping to take off her overshoes.

The man opened the inner door for her.

"Please don't bother," she said. "I've got to take these things off."

"Don't tell the doctor," he said, still holding the door. "I'm going in with mine."

She passed into the waiting-room. No one was there. She sat on the couch. The man took off his coat. He sat in the big chair in the corner.

"Don't know why they keep it so warm in here," he said.

"It is warm."

He went to the window and opened it.

"That's better, isn't it?" he asked as he sat down.

"Yes," said Ruth.

She smiled faintly, unbuckling her wide silver bracelet and buckling it again. The man arose and walked toward the window he had just opened.

"Hope it's not raining in," he said.

She looked up. The man turned away from the window.

"It's all right." He laughed. "Guess only old bachelors and old maids bother about that sort of thing."

"Oh, no," said Ruth politely, "it's just the instinct of the householder. Now if you lived in a hotel . . ." She gestured.

"That's it," he agreed. "People who live in hotels are terribly careless of other people's property. You can always tell the man who wipes his shoes on a towel."

"Yes, I guess so."

"Why, I wouldn't live in a hotel for anything. My mother's kept house for me forty-five years. If I had to live in a hotel, well——"

"It would be pretty dreary." She unbuckled her bracelet and snapped it to once more.

"Funny to see Doc's place so empty. I guess most of his patients left town for the holidays. My mother always goes to the seashore at Easter-time. Well, this year I wouldn't let her go. She's in poor health—I'm not here for myself; I'm here to see the doctor about her. And I just told her she couldn't go down in that crowd around the hotels.

"My mother went down last year with another lady of her own age. She always goes to the same hotel. Why, in the evening they could hardly find a place to sit in the lobby. And then girls would pass by smoking, and some of the ashes would fall right in their laps. Well, now, my mother's not so young any more. So I just told her she could go down any time she wanted except around the holidays."

"I think you were right."

"Yes, I've got some feeling about her. Funny the way the world is now about

parents. I know a man that's called a good son because he sends his mother ten thousand a year. But he don't have time to see her, not even when she comes to visit him. And that's the son of to-day!"

"Well," said the girl, "I'm sorry for the mother, but I'm sorry for the son, too, in a way. After all, he's doing what he thinks will make her happy. It's sort of sad to think of his not knowing that something besides money will make people happy, don't you think so?"

"No, I don't. He's a selfish man. But perhaps"—he looked at her triumphantly—"you think the present attitude to parents is all right. I could tell you any number of cases like that. Any number!"

"I could match you with any number of cases where parents exploit their children, where it's better for parents not to see their children—better for the children, I mean."

"Ah! I know, the children should all be put into institutions. That's interesting. Who was it—I was reading about some Frenchman who thought the way you do. Rousseau, was it Rousseau?"

"I don't know."

"Ye-es, I was reading about him. He married his servant-girl, and they had five children, and he popped them all into an institution. Is that what you would do?"

She snapped the buckle of her bracelet. "If I start, we'll get into an awfully long argument. Really, I'd rather not start."

"Well, why not? We don't know each other. You don't know who I am and I don't know who you are. Tell me what you think."

"I wouldn't put the children in an institution, but I'd certainly let them live their own lives. I think that most children are—well, sacrificed because they're afraid to break away from home. And they never really break away. They mar-

ry people like their parents, and they keep on living the same kind of lives until they die. The boys are Republicans because their fathers are Republicans; and the girls have stewed chicken on Wednesday nights because their mothers always did!"

"Then I guess you think the way young folks nowadays neglect their parents is all right? Stay away for months, never once think of going to see them!"

"Well, I don't see why a child is supposed to love his parents just because they're his father and mother. I think my parents are nice people. Father never made a friend of me. I have a tenderness for mother. But I could never live at home with them again, because they don't really interest me. And I don't really interest them—as anything but their child. Which really means, I guess, somebody whose inside life belongs to them. Well, I won't let my inside life belong to any one but myself. And that's the way it should be!"

"Ah!" His voice was bland and provoking.

"But it's so foolish," she said, "for us to get into an argument like this. Really, I didn't have any idea of——"

"We're not arguing, my dear young lady. I'm extremely interested in hearing the views of—ah—one who feels it isn't necessary to treat one's mother and father with love and respect——"

"I don't think you understand me at all. I just think love for your parents should be something honest and really deserved—by them, I mean—instead of a tradition. I've no doubt that you feel a very sincere love for your mother, but lots of children think they love their parents because they've been taught that you always do. All I say is that I'm one of the honest ones. . . . And I can't be a hypocrite—no, what I mean is I'm not a parasite, either. I work. I support myself."

As the man was about to speak, a nurse appeared at the door. "The doctor can see you," she said.

The man bowed toward the girl. "You're first," he said.

She arose. "Sorry we got into that argument."

"It was most interesting," he replied.

She followed the nurse into the doctor's office. He was sitting behind a large desk. He was a yellowish man with pouched bags beneath his eyes. She had seen him once before. He remembered her.

"How do you do, Miss Miller," he said.

"How do you do, Doctor Lang."

The nurse disappeared.

"Just the same?" he asked.

"Just the same."

He sorted some cards on his desk, looked at one. "Ah, here," he said. "Ruth Miller. Um. Well, just go into the other room. I'll be in as soon as you're ready."

After he had come in, she kept her eyes fixed on the glass-enclosed cabinet to her right. Shelf upon shelf of curious instruments. Strange little knives; sharp little knives. All to cut away painful flesh. There were things more resisting than flesh . . . and no knives were needed. She knew.

There had been no knife a week ago. Hardly more than a word. *Basta!* Enough! As a matter of fact, he had said many words:

"I want to be honest with you . . . terribly fond of you . . . memories always beautiful ones . . . hardly believe I was capable of falling in love . . . must know her, you'll love her, too . . . always think of you as one of the most charming . . ."

She had not heard everything he had said. Because it could all be reduced to that one word that she had read somewhere in some book, when an Italian countess had broken off with her lover.

The woman had sent back to him all his gifts and letters with a scrawled word: "*Basta!*"

Well, she had expected Roger to end it some day. If he had left it to her, it might have gone on forever. . . .

The doctor spoke. His back was turned; he was putting some instruments into the sterilizer.

"I'm certain now. You are three months pregnant."

She sat up slowly. "I see," she said.

The doctor left the room.

When she walked into the outer office, he was sitting behind his big desk, balancing a paper-knife in his hand. She stood opposite him.

The doctor raised his eyes. The bags beneath them were very pouched. He cleared his voice.

"Well," he said angrily, "won't this man marry you?" The paper-knife slid with a bang to the floor. He stooped to pick it up.

"No. He—I wouldn't want," she said, "to marry him under these—the circumstances."

The doctor grunted. The rain beat against the windows. He balanced the paper-knife carefully.

"Well, what are going to do?" he asked irritably.

The girl walked around to the side of his desk and sat down in a chair. "I thought perhaps—maybe—you could give me some address," she said.

He looked at her for a moment. Then he asked: "Did you really think I dealt in addresses of that kind?"

"No. I didn't think you did." She looked at her bracelet, started to snap the buckle, stopped, and looked up at him.

"I don't." His voice was more gruff than before. He pulled a pad of paper toward him and scribbled a name and address on it.

"Here! I guess this is the doctor you want."

She took the slip of paper and arose. "Thank you. I'm grateful."

As she walked toward the door, he spoke again. "I suppose you have some one who'll look out for you—go with you there, and all that sort of thing?" His gaze was concentrated on the exact balancing of the paper-knife.

"Oh, yes," she said quickly, and rushed out of the door.

The paper-knife fell again with a bang.

In the vestibule she stood for a moment, staring absently at her overshoes. They were still wet, and looked so suddenly forlorn that she could not bear to put them on. She pulled her umbrella out of the stand. She would leave the overshoes. It was raining too hard, anyway, for anything but a taxi. Perhaps her middle-aged friend could take the overshoes home with him. For his mother. He probably brought home gifts for her with regularity. A box of drug-store candy. A bag of fruit. A book. "Guess what I have for you, mother!" And he would pull out of his pockets the wet, forlorn overshoes. "My son!"

Ruth began to laugh.

She waited at the curb for a cab. But when she had seated herself inside, she did not know where to direct the driver. For a foolish moment she stared at the chauffeur as he waited for her to speak.

"Yes. Let me see. Oh, some department store, I guess. On Fifth."

She could use a telephone there. That was the chief thing at the moment. And it was too long a way to her room. Too far to go in a taxi. Cabs were an extravagance now.

Anyway, her room would be dismal. The rain would beat gray against the window-panes. And the fog-horns would whine along the river. Of course she could build a fire in the fireplace. That was the joy of a real wood-burning fireplace, the agent had told her

when she had rented the room; it made a room so cozy and cheerful. But, somehow, she had never thought it much satisfaction to build a fire just for yourself. A fire needed two people. It was like playing cribbage with yourself. Roger and she had played cribbage before the fire quite often. Whenever she played with the red pegs, she had won. It was curious.

Would it rain like this all April? "April is the cruelest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land." Or was it dead lilacs out of the rain? From that book (what was it called?) that Roger had lent her; but she had lost it at lunch at the Happiness, trying to memorize a little of it over a tongue sandwich and a chocolate ice-cream soda. It had been raining then, too, for in remembering to take her umbrella, she had forgotten the book. They had never found it for her. She had been afraid to tell Roger—and unable to buy him another because—what *was* its name?

Perhaps she should send him back all his books; perhaps he would want his letters ("Girl Sues Prominent Advertising Man. The letters were read in court: 'Darling Bootsie'") and the leather cribbage-board that folded and the lighter. The evening he had brought her the lighter was the time he had at last answered: "Yes, I love you . . . in a way." In a way. She had ignored his qualification, for it was the first time he had ever said "I love you." Always before that: "You know I'm terribly fond of you." Terribly fond of her. "What do you mean by 'fond'?" she had once asked. For vocabularies were so different, and what he meant by fondness might be what another meant by love. He had said that being fond was—well, he was fond of Dorothy, of Elinor, of Mrs. Boldt, of Sis, and of Miss Barbour, his secretary. April is the cruelest month . . .



The metre said sixty-five cents. Plus ten for the tip: seventy-five. That left only a quarter in change. Well, the door-man, big as he was, and big as his umbrella was, would get nothing. Perhaps he'd think she would tip him when she left the store.

At the fifth floor she got out of the elevator and walked back to the rest-room. It was crowded with women. There was a smell of rubber and wet umbrellas.

Even the telephone-booths were all occupied. She looked at the slip Doctor Lang had given her as she opened the telephone-book. The pages always seemed to fall apart to the Ho's, and there it stood out for her—Horton, Roger, 22 East . . . but it was an address and a telephone-number that she knew better than her own. And would it be as easy to forget as to learn?

She had not known that number by heart the day she had walked up Lexington Avenue two years ago (all of that? Of course, twenty-two in 1927), wondering if Roger Horton would ever call her. Three weeks before he had told her: "We can't go on seeing each other this way. You draw me too much. We can't . . . unless—" So she had known that if she saw him again, it meant surrender.

But going into the drug-store on the corner of 64th for a Coty refill, the telephone-booth, empty, so inviting—and the telephone-book had been open on the shelf. She had looked at the open telephone-book. Open to the Ho's. It had been an omen. By this token I am yours. And she had said over the telephone, primly: "This is Ruth. I called to ask the name of that book we were talking about the last time we dined together." "You funny little thing," he had replied. . . .

She turned the pages of the telephone-book quickly. There was the number she really wanted. At least, he wasn't afraid to have his name in the book. Probably

a very reputable doctor with a gray beard who would ask her, too, in an angry voice if the man wouldn't marry her.

She moved away and stood outside one of the telephone-booths, waiting. A woman's emphatic voice spilled itself in fragments from the little enclosure. Her voice punctuated itself with large capitals and firm periods.

" . . . if Junior coughs Once more, put him Right to bed. . . .

"Well, don't let him play in a Draught. Put him in My room if it's Warmer. . . ."

"That's right. And Katie. Katie. If Mr. Felsenthal calls, tell him that we've got Pot-roast for supper. And if he's Late, it will be Spoiled again."

The woman moved majestically out of the booth, and Ruth slipped into it. She called her number.

"Hello," said a cold woman's voice.

"This—this—Doctor Lang gave me your address. Could I come to see the doctor soon?"

"Who gave it to you?"

"Doctor Lang, but I think he'd rather I didn't say—"

"Wait a minute."

The woman's voice could be heard again. "We'll give you an appointment in an hour. Five o'clock."

"All right. I'll be there in an hour. Good-by."

There was no place to sit down. She went into the inner waiting-room, powdered her face, and combed her short hair. Came out. There was yet no vacant place. She leaned against the wall.

Rows of young girls lounging in divans, smoking, coloring their lips, chattering. ". . . all she wanted us to know was that he'd taken her to a show, not a movie. Can you tie that?"

All the booths filled with emphatic women telephoning home about Junior's Cough. There was one empty

booth. She might go in and telephone to some one. To whom? There was no one. No, not one. There should be many Felsenthals in the directory. She might call up one, and ask for Mr. Felsenthal. "Hello, Mr. Felsenthal, we have Pot-roast to-night, so don't be late for supper, or it'll be Spoiled."

Women with little smiles, writing at desks. The one opposite her moved her lips as she wrote. "Dearest . . . dearest . . . dearest." All the women in the place writing to Dearest, or telephoning to Dearest, or telling the other one about Dearest.

And that dream had shaken her out of sleep again last night. She thought she should be free of it—now. But it had visited her again, for at least the tenth time. Mother walking in the door of her room . . . at night . . . seeing her with Roger there . . . seeing . . . Once Roger had awakened her out of the same dream with a kiss, and she had told it to him, still under its spell. "Too simple for Freud," he had said.

"But it comes again and again. A bad dream."

"I know. It's your Puritan heritage, you funny little child."

Those were the times—the first year—when he could not bear to leave her until morning. The second year he had told her that he thought it better if he went back to his own apartment to sleep. "Both of us fresher for work in the morning, too." It had almost made her cry when first he told her. She had never cried before Roger. Men didn't like tears. What would Roger have done if she had cried? Accused her of heroics, or—? Well, she had never cried before him. . . .

The woman whose lips moved as she wrote sealed her letter, stamped it, and left the desk. Ruth sat down there. It was nice to sit down. She was a little tired. Sheets of store stationery lay scat-

tered before her. Mechanically she piled them in a corner of the desk. Too bad she had no cigarettes. . . . Some women were casting hostile glances at her. Did they resent her monopolizing a desk while they actually had letters to write? She unbuckled her silver bracelet, buckled it, and thought of smiling with dignity at those women and saying:

"You see, I have been standing for quite a little while. And since there was no other place to sit . . . And I am a bit tired."

"Anyway," she might add, "I won't be here long. I have an appointment at five."

That remark wouldn't be a success, for it was now—she looked at the clock on the wall—only quarter past four. And it would take only twenty minutes, at the most, to get to that address. Yes, no more than twenty minutes, even in this slippery weather.

One of the women glared. And, of course, she couldn't say what she had planned. That had just been for fun, like leaving the overshoes for the middle-aged man, and planning to call a Mr. Felsenthal.

With the air of one about to compose an important document, she carefully chose a sheet of note-paper, dipped a pen into the ink-well, and looked off into the distance. Neatly she wrote the date.

Then, almost by itself, the pen continued to write.

"DEAREST MOTHER:

"It is raining pitchforks today, and it makes me think of pleasanter weather—the sunny days in the garden at home that summer I spent with you three years ago. Also it reminds me that it's been an awfully long time since I've written to you or Father. And I'm really sorry.

"So many silly little things seem to come up, nothing important, and yet it

keeps me from doing the things I want to do. Such as write to you. Really, Mother dearest, today I want to write to you more than anything in the world. You know, in spite of all the loyal, devoted friends I've made here—well, what I mean is that you really love me, even though I am a neglectful daughter. And it's an awfully nice feeling to be writing to some one who loves you, even though I have nothing in particular to say.

"I'm planning to do more than write to you. I'm planning to get a few days off at the office and come home. I don't know exactly when it will be, though, because I have sort of a little cold, and I may have to take a few days off to get rid of it. But if I do have to take a few days off now, I'll make up the work as soon as I can, and try to get home, if it's only for two days.

"Then I won't seem like such a neglectful child, will I? I've been wondering for a long time why most parents really give their children much more love than their children give them. And, do you know, I think it's because of some instinct to give your love forward. What I mean is that the children don't give as much love backward to their parents, because they're storing it up to give forward to their children.

"Of course, that idea wouldn't apply to me if I never get married and have children. Now I know just what you're saying. You're sort of sniffing and saying: 'What! A nice girl like our Ruth

not get married? She's had any number of chances.'

"But chances don't mean so much. There's love. And it's not always so easy to fall in love again. Of course, by 'again,' I don't mean exactly that. You know what it means when I say 'in love.' I've probably never been in love. But the sort of crushes I used to have at home, like the time Danny kissed me at the New Year's Ball. Didn't I think I was in love then? Anyway, I do remember confessing to you that he'd kissed me, and you were awfully sweet about it.

"But, really, I'm rattling on at a great rate. The important thing is that I'm coming home for a few days, as soon as I can make it. Then we can have one of our good old talks. You must tell me all about the bridge parties you've been going to, and I'll tell you all about the funny little politics at the office and what they're wearing here and the plots of all the plays I've seen.

"I've really seen a lot of plays this year. I don't think I'll be going to many more. You can get awfully tired of going to theatres and parties and things. It's very nice just to sit alone in my room and read. I make a fire, you know, and it's so cozy and cheerful——"

But looking up, she caught sight of the clock. Quarter to five! It couldn't be! She crumpled the letter into her pocket, grabbed her umbrella, and dashed toward the elevators. It was still raining when she reached the store vestibule.

*In forthcoming issues of the Magazine will appear such outstanding articles as "The End of the Jazz Age," by Scott Fitzgerald; "Stalin Retreats," by Isaac Don Levine; "Can One Be Christian and Free?" by Clarence C. Little; "Are We Standardized?" by Margaret Mead, and others by Frank R. Kent, V. F. Calverton, Christian Gauss, William Harlan Hale, and Anne Hard.*



## I Like to Think of Us

By CHARLES NORMAN

THE sun brightens the street, and I wake  
And peer through the window like a child  
Without dolls, and I confess this country  
Frightens me, there are such people in it.  
And I think of you. You are what I  
Have thought about and little else for years  
So beautiful; and all the trite words are  
Suddenly true, suddenly beautiful.  
And a wind hesitates in the street  
At nightfall, the street quietly assumes  
Lamps and glamorous windows and the dark  
Is beautiful with things vaguely something  
And you are in my mind like music. I  
Think of you and all the trite words sing.

Or I sleep. And the city is not still  
The trucks go by, the wind is there, the lamps  
Throng the city, and there were nights like this  
Often in Paris. And where you are now  
It is like that, and a wind takes the street,  
The lamps hesitate, far heels ring out  
On stone. I think of you instead of God  
And make my prayer that all is well with you.  
And then I wake and know you are not there;  
The long day glitters at the end of streets,  
And night comes lonely. Who would wish to be  
Despite the lamps that glimmer in the dark  
Alone at night when you are in the world?  
I like to think of us when you were here.