

SUSAN. I almost called you yesterday. Rehearsals broke up early and I went for a walk in the park. It was so lovely. You know that carousel near the bridge? I actually wanted to take a ride. Isn't that foolish?

FLEMMING. Not at all.

SUSAN. I knew you'd be busy. But I could just picture the two of us spinning around like idiots.

FLEMMING. We'll do it sometimes. I'll wear my hom-burg and we'll pose for vodka ads. (*Kisses her again.*) How's the play?

SUSAN. Everyone's fighting. I think we're changing directors in midstream.

FLEMMING. What about your rehearsal schedule?

SUSAN. I have to go back for a few hours. But then I'm free for the week end.

FLEMMING. Good.

SUSAN. (*Pause.*) That woman who was just here. That was Claire, wasn't it?

FLEMMING. It's called E.S.P.—extrasensory perception. (*Smiles.*) There's a theory it only exists between women. (*SUSAN has been sobered by the thought of Claire, her mood darkens slightly; she digs in her purse for a cigarette and FLEMMING lights it.*) You're tense.

SUSAN. A little.

FLEMMING. Did you sleep last night?

SUSAN. No. . . . Well, maybe an hour or two.

FLEMMING. (*Studies her, then crosses to his desk, takes a pad from a drawer, and begins writing on it.*) This is a prescription. Have it filled at the drugstore downstairs.

SUSAN. What is it?

FLEMMING. Sleeping pills. (*He tears off the slip and hands it to her.*)

SUSAN. (*She puts it in her purse, then suddenly turns to him imploringly.*) Roy, can't we wait for a while?

FLEMMING. (*Firmly.*) No.

SUSAN. Just a little more time to think it over.

FLEMMING. How long? A week, a month, a year? Or shall we put it off indefinitely?

SUSAN. I didn't say that. It's just—

FLEMMING. (*Soothingly.*) It's just that you're nervous. And that's very natural. But, darling, face facts—you're going to be nervous whenever we do it.

SUSAN. (*Troubled.*) I keep wishing there were some other way.

FLEMMING. There isn't.

SUSAN. But if you talk to her. If I talk to her.

FLEMMING. (*Amused.*) Susan, you're wonderful. Really. But just a bit naive. What do you think Claire would do if you went to her? She'd listen politely—probably even give you a cup of coffee—all very modern and civilized. Then she'd consult with her friends and re-read Norman Vincent Peale for inspiration. Finally, she'd do the exact opposite of what I want—she'd forgive me.

SUSAN. Are you sure?

FLEMMING. Darling, she's a professional martyr. (*Takes her arms.*) Look—a long time ago I decided that my wife and I were incompatible, sexually, intellectually—(*Slight smile.*) and even politically. So I asked her for a divorce. She refused. A year later I asked again. She refused again. She told me, quite clearly, that she intended to live with me for the rest of her life. And she meant it. . . . The Claires of the world don't get divorced. Their daughters do—frequently, but not the Claires.

SUSAN. How can you be so positive?

FLEMMING. Because I've been studying them for a long time, in this room and at home. (*Faintly mocking.*) They're an amazing sisterhood. Every day is the same. They roll out of bed into Bonwits; they have lunch in town with their friends; they have one martini—just one—before dinner. But the remarkable thing is that they're tenacious as hell. Divorce is a dirty word, so even though they may not sleep with a husband, or even talk to him, they won't let him go.

SUSAN. When you talk like that I wonder if you'll ever get tired of me.