

WHEN she was home from her boarding-school I used to see her almost every day sometimes, because their house was right opposite the Town Hall Annexe. She and her younger sister used to go in and out a lot, often with young men, which of course I didn't like. When I had a free moment from the files and ledgers I stood by the window and used to look down over the road over the frosting and sometimes I'd see her. In the evening I marked it in my observations diary, at first with X, and then when I knew her name with M. I saw her several times outside too. I stood right behind her once in a queue at the public library down Crossfield Street. She didn't look once at me, but I watched the back of her head and her hair in a long pigtail. It was very pale, silky, like burnet cocoons. All in one pigtail coming down almost to her waist, sometimes in front, sometimes at the back. Sometimes she wore it up. Only once, before she came to be my guest here, did I have the privilege to see her with it loose, and it took my breath away it was so beautiful, like a mermaid.

Another time one Saturday off when I went up to the Natural History Museum I came back on the same train. She sat three seats down and sideways to me, and read a book, so I could watch her for thirty-five minutes. Seeing her always made me feel like I was catching a rarity, going up to it very careful, heart-in-mouth as they say. A Pale Clouded Yellow, for instance. I always thought of her like that, I mean words like elusive and sporadic, and very refined - not like the other ones, even the pretty ones. More for the real connoisseur.

The year she was still at school I didn't know who she was, only how her father was Doctor Grey and some talk I overheard once at a Bug Section meeting about how her mother drank. I heard her mother speak once in a shop, she had a la-di-da voice and you could see she was the type to drink, too much make-up, etcetera.

Well, then there was the bit in the local paper about the scholarship she'd won and how clever she was, and her name as beautiful as herself, Miranda. So I knew she was up in London studying art. It really made a difference, that newspaper article. It seemed like we became more intimate, although of course we still did not know each other in the ordinary way.

I can't say what it was, the very first time I saw her, I knew she was the only one. Of course I am not mad, I knew it was just a dream and it always would have been if it hadn't been for the money. I used to have daydreams about her, I used to think of stories where I met her, did things she admired, married her and all that. Nothing nasty, that was never until what I'll explain later.

It's the seventh night.

I keep on thinking the same thing. If only they knew. If only *they* knew.

Share the outrage.

So now I'm trying to tell it to this pad he bought me this morning. His kindness.

Calmly.

Deep down I get more and more frightened. It's only surface calm.

No nastiness, no sex thing. But his eyes are mad. Grey with a grey lost light in them. To begin with I watched him all the time. I thought it must be sex, if I turned my back I did it where he couldn't spring at me, and I listened. I had to know exactly where he was in the room.

Power. It's become so *real*.

I know the H-bomb is wrong. But being so weak seems wrong now too.

I wish I knew judo. Could make him cry for mercy.

This crypt-room is so stuffy, the walls squeeze in, I'm listening for him as I write, the thoughts I have are like bad drawings. Must be torn up at once.

Try try try to escape.

It's all I think of.

A strange thing. He fascinates me. I feel the deepest contempt and loathing for him, I can't stand this room, everybody will be wild with worry. I can sense their wild worry.

How can he love me? How can you love someone you don't know?

He wants desperately to please me. But that's what madmen must be like. They aren't deliberately mad, they must be as shocked in a way as everyone else when they finally do something terrible.

It's only this last day or two I could speak about him so.

All the way down here in the van it was nightmare. Wanting to be sick and afraid of choking under the gag. And then being sick. Thinking I was going to be pulled into some thicket and raped and murdered. I was sure that was it when the van stopped, I think that was why I was sick. Not just the beastly chloroform. (I kept on remembering Penny Lester's grisly dormitory stories about how her mother survived being raped by the Japanese, I kept on saying, don't resist, don't resist. And then someone else at Ladymont once said that it takes two men to rape you. Women who let themselves be raped by one man want to be raped.) I know now that wouldn't be his way. He'd use chloroform again, or something. But that first night it was, don't resist, don't resist.

I was grateful to be alive. I am a terrible coward, I don't want to die, I love life so passionately, I never knew how much I wanted to live before. If I get out of this, I shall never be the same.

I don't care what he does. So long as I live.

It's all the vile unspeakable things he *could* do.

I've looked everywhere for a weapon, but there's nothing of any use, even if I had the strength and skill. I prop a chair against the iron door every night, so that at least I shall know if he tries to get in without my hearing.

Hateful primitive wash-stand and place.

The great blank door. No keyhole. Nothing.

The silence. I've got a little more used to it now. But it is *terrible*. Never the least sound. It makes me feel I'm always waiting.