

"YOU AND DADDY have got to like Sandy," Pat insisted. "He—he's a beautiful guy."

"If he's one half of all you say, we'll like him," her mother said smiling.

Relief softened Pat's eyes. "I'll go and get ready. I mustn't be late meeting his train."

As Pat hurried out of the room, Mrs. Corton said to her husband, "I've never seen her so on edge. George, supposing we don't approve of Sandy?"

"Don't let's jump the gun. Let's assume he's all we ever wanted for Patricia."

"You're right. And I love you for it." She glanced at the clock. "I'd better start fixing lunch."

It was odd, Mary Corton pondered, how little one's children actually told you. They might talk by the

hour, or write reams as Pat had done, but somehow they seemed to miss the essentials. This Sandy, was he stable? Considerate? Did he understand that the road of marriage was long and would not always lie in the sunlit valleys of first love? That, later, the journey would be richer and more glorious?

She sighed. Her own life with George was so complete. Nearly 25 years of happiness, and the future something to look forward to with gratitude.

Pat poked her head round the kitchen door. "I'm off, darling."

"Let me take a look at you."

Pat came in. Excitement added a faint flush to her cheeks, and her gray eyes were shining.

Mrs. Corton nodded in smiling approval. "You'll do." The girl touched the large mole beneath her right eye. "This horrible thing," she frowned. "It sticks out like a gargoyle."

"People don't notice; especially when you smile," her mother reassured her.

"It feels as big as a house," Pat answered with a quick trace of bitterness.

"Sandy hasn't complained, has he?"

MARY HAD often wondered what it would be like when Pat fell in love seriously. She had tried hard to visualize the young man, and how she and George would react.

Each week end Pat had come home from her job in the city and talked of the men she had met. No particular beau seemed to have captured her interest until Mary and George noticed Sandy's name creeping more and more frequently into her conversation and letters. He had been shot down by the Reds in Korea and had survived the bitter cruelty of a

by Hugh Corbett



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