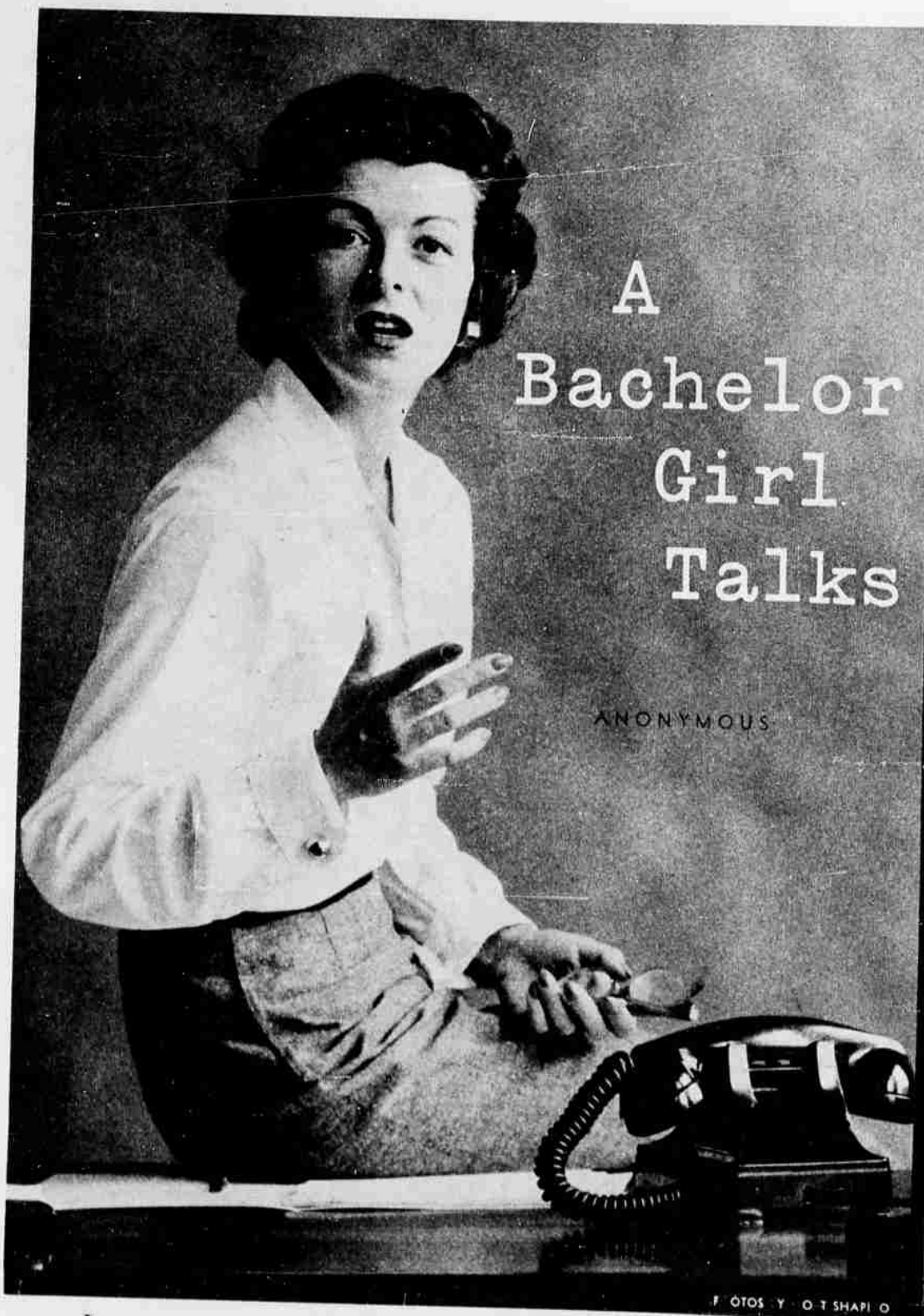




A Bachelor Girl Talks Back!

ANONYMOUS



career girl!" (Well-tailored, perhaps, but some of the most feminine and understanding women I know are single.) "Hey," ask the men I date, "how come you've never married?" (That question is reversible, too, but I have the prudence not to ask it.)

At least once a week a woman friend will call to ask me to a party. "Alice, dear," she will say, "I feel terrible, but I can't dig up an extra male." Or, "Alice, dear," she will whine, "I've a date for you—not very attractive—but, well, a man!"

To all hostesses, relatives, and friends let me say: "Alice, dear, doesn't expect to get married every time she goes out! There is nothing wrong with me! If all I wanted was a man, I'd have married long ago!"

I will add further that this is 1957 and not the 19th century. In Jane Austen's day a single daughter might have been a family worry, an extra mouth to feed, a clinging vine. But today's spinster—what an ugly word!—can face with pride the prejudice of modern society.

Take my friend Lois, for instance, who grew up in an era "when nice girls didn't work." Lois did, however. She had to work to help put her five brothers and sisters through school!

First she taught. Then she took special training in child guidance. Years ago she opened one of the first girls' camps in America. Today that camp flourishes and so does Lois. Contrary to being a "family worry or a clinging vine," Lois is the backbone of her large family, the beloved and respected aunt who has helped brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, and now great-nieces through school, camp, college, and an assortment of problems.

Of course, Lois will admit that marriage, with the love and companionship of a husband and children, is the best possible way of life. But it is not the only way of life. For Lois, and for me, there are real satisfactions in managing a single life well.

A pay check, for instance, is really a certificate of one's worth, a periodic pat on the back. "Alice," a friend said recently, "in some ways you're lucky! You know you can care for yourself. If anything happened to Mike . . ."

The extent to which married women worry about their financial dependence was brought out sharply when a life-insurance company surveyed dozens of

John is tall, 35, and single. Hostesses love him. Married men envy him. Society generally considers John a gay and extra-special person, for almost everyone loves a bachelor!

I happen to be John's cousin. I'm also tall, 35, and single. But I happen to be female. As a result, hostesses fret about me. Relatives worry about me. Society in general considers me an extra, for almost everyone pities a bachelor girl!

I'm sure I'm speaking for thousands of women like me when I say, "Your pity is poisonous and undeserved, and so is your guilt!" For most single

women lead busy and happy lives, and most of us have actually chosen our pattern of life—not because we're opposed to marriage, but because we're unwilling to settle for second-rate mates or second-best unions.

When I decided to live alone, I also decided to like it—that is, until the right man comes along! I've done just that—liked it!

By day I'm a busy executive secretary with a firm that manufactures children's wear. My salary—and it's increased steadily over the years—provides a comfortable apartment, good

books, nice clothes, and first-class vacations and holidays.

By night I'm a hostess to my friends, a hospital volunteer, an amateur painter, and a sports fan. Between my work and my play, I have neither time nor inclination to bask in self-pity.

Unfortunately, society is far less comfortable about my type of life than I am. "Poor Alice," my mother explains to friends, "all those nice boys she let slip by." (How distance and time lend enchantment!)

"Hmmm," says my brother, "so you're going to be a well-tailored, man-killing