

MARY MARIE

By Eleanor H. Porter

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SYNOPSIS

PREFACE.—Mary Marie explains her apparent "double personality" and just why she is a "cross-current" and a contradiction. She also tells her reasons for writing the diary—later to be a novel. The diary is commenced at Andersonville.

CHAPTER I.—Mary begins with Nurse Sarah's account of her (Mary's) birth, which seemingly interested her father, who is a famous astronomer, less than a night. Her name is a compromise, her mother insisting on Abigail Jane. The child quickly learned that her home was in some way different from those of her small friends, and was puzzled thereat. Nurse Sarah tells her of her mother's arrival at Andersonville as a bride and how astonished they all were at the sight of the dainty eighteen-year-old girl whom the sedate professor had chosen for a wife.

CHAPTER II.—Continuing her story, Nurse Sarah makes it plain why the household seemed a strange one to the child and how her father and mother drifted apart through misunderstanding, each too proud to in any way attempt to smooth over the situation.

the brook and river meet." (I read that last night. I think it's perfectly beautiful. So kind of sad and sweet. It makes me want to cry every time I think of it.) But even if I don't know all of what's happened since I was born, I know a good deal, for I've seen quite a lot, and I've made Nurse tell me a lot more.

I know that ever since I can remember I've had to keep as still as a mouse the minute Father comes into the house; and I know that I never could imagine the kind of a mother that Nurse tells about, if it wasn't that sometimes when Father has gone off on a trip, Mother and I have romped all over the house, and had the most beautiful time. I know that Father says that Mother is always trying to make me a "Marie," and nothing else; and that Mother says she knows Father'll never be happy until he's made me into a stupid little "Mary," with never an atom of life of my own. And, do you know? It does seem sometimes, as if Mary and Marie were fighting inside of me, and I wonder which is going to beat. Funny, isn't it?

Father is president of the college now, and I don't know how many stars and comets and things he's discovered since the night the star and I were born together. But I know he's very famous, and that he's written up in the papers and magazines, and is in the big fat red "Who's Who" in the library, and has lots of noted men come to see him.

Nurse says that Grandma Anderson died very soon after I was born, but that it didn't make any particular difference in the housekeeping; for things went right on just as they had done, with her giving the orders as before; that she'd given them all alone anyway, mostly, the last year Grandma Anderson lived, and she knew just how Father liked things. She said Mother tried once or twice to take the reins herself, and once Nurse let her, just to see what would happen. But things got in an awful muddle right away, so that even Father noticed it and said things. After that Mother never tried again, I guess. Anyhow, she's never tried it since I can remember. She's always stayed most of the time up in her rooms in the east wing, except during meals, or when she went out with me, or went to the things she and Father had to go to together. For they did go to lots of things, Nurse says.

It seems that for a long time they didn't want folks to know there was going to be a divorce. So before folks they tried to be just as usual. But Nurse Sarah said she knew there was going to be one long ago. The first I ever heard of it was Nurse telling Norma, the girl we had in the kitchen then; I did the minute I got a chance I asked Nurse what it was—a divorce.

My, I can remember now how scared she looked, and how she clapped her hand over my mouth. And that's the first time I ever saw her give that quick little look over each shoulder. She'd done it lots of times since.

As I said, she wouldn't tell me, so I had to ask some one else. I wasn't going to let it go by and find out—not when Nurse Sarah looked so scared, and when it was something my father and mother were going to have some day.

I didn't like to ask Mother. Some way, I had a feeling, from the way Nurse Sarah looked, that it was something Mother wasn't going to like. And I thought if maybe she didn't know yet she was going to have it, that certainly I didn't want to be the one to tell her. So I didn't ask Mother what a divorce was.

I didn't even think of asking Father, of course. I never ask Father questions. Nurse says I did ask him once why he didn't love me like other papas loved their little girls. But I was very little then, and I don't remem-

ber it at all. But Nurse said Father didn't like it very well, and maybe I did remember that part, without really knowing it. Anyhow, I never think of asking Father questions.

I asked the doctor first. I thought maybe 'twas some kind of a disease, and if he knew it was coming, he could give them some sort of a medicine to keep it away—like being vaccinated so's not to have smallpox, you know. And I told him so.

He gave a funny little laugh, that somehow didn't sound like a laugh at all. Then he grew very, very sober, and said:

"I'm sorry, little girl, but I'm afraid I haven't got any medicine that will prevent—a divorce. If I did have, there'd be no eating or drinking or sleeping for me, I'm thinking—I'd be so busy answering my calls."

"Then it is a disease!" I cried. And I can remember just how frightened I felt. "But isn't there any doctor anywhere that can stop it?"

He shook his head and gave that queer little laugh again.

"I'm afraid not," he sighed. "As for it's being a disease—there are people that call it a disease, and there are others who call it a cure; and there are still others who say it's a remedy worse than the disease it tries to cure. But, there, you baby! What am I saying? Come, come, my dear, just forget it. It's nothing you should bother your little head over now. Wait till you're older."

Till I'm older, indeed! How I hate to have folks talk to me like that! And they do—they do it all the time. As if I was a child now, when I'm almost standing there where the brook and river meet!

But that was just the kind of talk I got, everywhere, nearly every time I asked any one what a divorce was. Some laughed, and some sighed. Some looked real worried 'cause I'd asked it, and one got mad. (That was the dressmaker. I found out afterward that she'd had a divorce already, so probably she thought I asked the question on purpose to plague her.) But nobody would answer me—really answer me sensibly, so I'd know what it meant; and most everybody said, "Run away, child," or "You shouldn't talk of such things," or "Wait, my dear, till you're older"; and all that.

Oh, how I hate such talk when I really want to know something! How do they expect us to get our education if they won't answer our questions? I don't know which made me angrier—I mean angrier. (I'm spelling of two things, so I must, I suppose, I hate grammar!) To have them talk like that—not answer me, you know—or have them do as Mr. Jones, the storekeeper, did, and the men there with him.

It was one day when I was in there buying some white thread for Nurse Sarah, and it was a little while after I had asked the doctor if a divorce was a disease. Somebody had said something that made me think you could buy divorces, and I had suddenly determined to ask Mr. Jones if he had them for sale. (Of course all this sounds very silly to me now, for I know that a divorce is very simple and very common. It's just like a marriage certificate, only it "unmarries" you instead of marrying you; but I didn't know it then. And if I'm going to tell this story I've got to tell it just as it happened, of course.)

Well, I asked Mr. Jones if he could buy divorces, and if he had them for



Well, I asked Mr. Jones if he could buy divorces, and if he had them for sale.

sale; and you ought to have heard those men laugh. There were six of them sitting around the stove behind me.

"Oh, yes, my little maid" (above all things I abhor to be called a little maid!) one of them cried. "You can buy them if you've got money enough; but I don't reckon our friend Jones here has got them for sale."

Then they all laughed again, and winked at each other. (That's another disgusting thing—winks when you ask a perfectly civil question! But what can you do? Stand it, that's all. There's such a lot of things we poor women have to stand!) Then they quieted down and looked very sober—the kind of sober you know is faced with laughs in the back—and began to tell me what a divorce really was. I can't remember them all, but I can some of them. Of course I understand now that these men were trying to be smart, and were talking for each

other, not for me. And I knew it then—a little. We know a lot more things sometimes than folks think we do. Well, as near as I can remember it was like this:

"A divorce is a knife that cuts a knot that hadn't ought to ever been tied," said one.

"A divorce is a jump in the dark," said another.

"No, it ain't. It's a jump from the frying pan into the fire," piped up Mr. Jones.

"A divorce is the comedy of the rich and the tragedy of the poor," said a little man who wore glasses.

"Divorce is a nice saucy poultice that may help but won't heal," cut in a new voice.

"Divorce is a guidepost marked, 'H—l to Heaven,' but lots of folks miss the way, just the same, I notice," spoke up somebody with a chuckle.

"Divorce is a coward's retreat from the battle of life," Captain Harris said this. He spoke slow and decided. Captain Harris is old and rich, and not married. He's the hotel's star boarder, and what he says goes, most always. But it didn't this time. I can remember just how old Mr. Carlton snapped out the next.

"Speak from your own experience, Tom Harris, an' I'm thinkin' you ain't fit to judge. I tell you divorce is what three-fourths of the husbands an' wives in the world wish was valid; for 'em at home this very night. But it ain't there," I knew, of course, he was thinking of his wife. She's some cross, I guess, and has two warts on her nose.

There was more, quite a lot more, said. But I've forgotten the rest. Besides, they weren't talking to me then, anyway. So I picked up my thread and slipped out of the store, glad to escape. But, as I said before, I didn't find many like them.

Of course I know now—what divorce is, I mean. And it's all settled. They granted us some kind of a decree or degree, and we're going to Boston next Monday.

It's been awful, though—this last year. First we had to go to that horrid place out west, and stay ages and ages. And I hated it. Mother did, too. I know she did. I went to school, and there were quite a lot of girls my age, and some boys; but I didn't care much for them. I couldn't even have the fun of surprising them with the divorce we were going to have. I found they were going to have one, too—every last one of them. And when everybody has a thing, you know there's no particular fun in having it yourself. Besides, they were very unkind and disagreeable, and bragged a lot about their divorces. They said mine was lame, and had no sort of snap to it, when they found Mother didn't have a lover waiting in the next town, or Father hadn't run off with his stenographer, or nobody had shot anybody, or anything.

That made me mad, and I let them see it, good and plain. I told them our divorce was perfectly all right and gentle and respectable; that Nurse Sarah said it was. Ours was going to be incomparable, for one thing, which meant that you got on each other's nerves, and just naturally didn't care for each other any more. But they only laughed, and said even more disagreeable things, so that I didn't want to go to school any longer, and I told Mother so, and the reason, too, of course.

But, dear me, I wished right off that I hadn't. I supposed she was going to be superb and laughy and disdainful, and say things that would put those girls where they belonged. But, my stars! How could I know that she was going to burst into such a spasm of sobs and clasp me to her bosom, and get my face all wet and cry out: "Oh, my baby, my baby—to think I have subjected you to this, my baby, my baby!" And I couldn't say a thing to comfort her, or make her stop, even when I told her over and over again that I wasn't a baby. I was almost a young lady; and I wasn't being subjected to anything bad. I liked it—only I didn't like to have those girls brag so, when our divorce was away ahead of theirs, anyway.

But she only cried more and more, and held me tighter and tighter, rocking back and forth in her chair. She took me out of school, though, and had a lady come to teach me all by myself, so I didn't have to hear those girls brag any more, anyway. That was better. But she wasn't any happier herself. I could see that.

There were lots of other ladies there—beautiful ladies—only she didn't seem to like them any better than I did the girls. I wondered if maybe they bragged, too, and I asked her, but she only began to cry again, and moan. "What have I done, what have I done?"—and I had to try all over again to comfort her. But I couldn't.

She got so she just stayed in her room lots and lots. I tried to make her put on her pretty clothes, and do as the other ladies did, and go out and walk and sit on the big piazzas, and dance, and eat at the pretty little tables. She did, some, when we first came, and took me, and I just loved it. They were such beautiful ladies, with their bright eyes, and their red cheeks and jolly ways; and their dresses were so perfectly lovely, all silks and satins and sparkly spangles, and diamonds and rubies and emeralds, and silk stockings, and little bits of gold and silver slippers.

And once I saw two of them smoking. They had the queer little cigarettes (Mother said they were) in gold holders, and I knew then that I was seeing life—real life; not the stupid kind you got back in a country town like Andersonville. And I said so to Mother; and I was going to ask her if Boston was like that. But I didn't get the chance. She jumped up so quick I thought something had hurt

her, and cried, "Good Heavens, Baby!" (How I love to be called "Baby!") Then she just threw some money on to the table to pay the bill and hurried me away.

It was after that that she began to stay in her room so much, and not take me anywhere except for walks at the other end of the town where it was all quiet and stupid, and no music or lights or anything. And though I teased and teased to go back to the pretty, jolly places, she wouldn't ever take me; not once.

Then by and by, one day we met a little black-haired woman with white cheeks and very big sad eyes. There weren't any spangly dresses and gold slippers about her, I can tell you! She was crying on a bench in the park, and Mother told me to stay back and watch the swans while she went up and spoke to her. (Why do old folks always make us watch swans or read books or look into store windows or run and play all the time? Don't they suppose we understand perfectly well what it means—that they're going to say something they don't want us to hear?) Well, Mother and the lady on the bench talked and talked ever so long, and then Mother called me up, and the lady cried a little over me, and said, "Now, perhaps, if I had a little girl like that—!" Then she stopped and cried some more.

We saw, this lady real often after that. She was nice and pretty and sweet, and I liked her; but she was always awfully sad, and I don't believe it was half so good for Mother to be with her as it would have been for her to be with those jolly laughing ladies that were always having such good times. But I couldn't make Mother see it that way at all. There are times when it seems as if Mother just couldn't see things the way I do. Honestly, it seems sometimes almost as if she was the cross-current and contradiction instead of me. It does.

Well, as I said before, I didn't like it very well out there, and I don't believe Mother did, either. But it's all over now, and we're back home packing up to go to Boston.

Everything seems awfully queer. Maybe because Father isn't here, for one thing. He wrote very polite and asked us to come to get our things, and he said he was going to New York on business for several days, so Mother need not fear he should annoy her with his presence. Then, another thing, Mother's queer. This morning she was singing away at the top of her voice and running all over the house picking up things she wanted; and seemed so happy. But this afternoon I found her down on the floor in the library crying as if her heart would break, with her head in Father's big chair before the fireplace. But she jumped up the minute I came in and said, no, no, she didn't want anything. She was just tired; that's all. And when I asked her if she was sorry, after all that she was going to Boston to live, she said, no, no, no, indeed, she guessed she wasn't. She was just as glad as glad could be that she was going only she wished Monday would hurry up and come so we could be gone.

And that's all. It's a Saturday now, and we go just day after tomorrow. Our trunks are "packed" (Mother says she wishes she'd planned to go today. I've said good-bye to all the girls, and promised to write loads of letters about Boston and everything. They are almost as excited as I am; and I've promised, "cross my heart and hope to die," that I won't love those Boston girls better than I do them—especially Charlie Heywood, of course, my dearest friend.

Nurse Sarah is hovering around everywhere, asking to help, and pretending she's sorry we're going. But she isn't sorry. She's glad. I know she is. She never did appreciate Mother, and she thinks she'll have everything her own way now. But she won't. I could tell her a thing or two if I wanted to. But I shan't.

Father's sister, Aunt Jane Anderson, from St. Paul, is coming to keep house for him, partly on account of Father, and partly on account of me. "If that child is going to be with her father six months of the time, she's got to have some woman there beside a meddling old nurse and a noisy servant girl!" They didn't know I heard that. But I did. And now Aunt Jane is coming. My! how mad Nurse Sarah would be if she knew. But she shan't.

I guess I'll end this chapter here and begin a fresh one down in Boston. Oh, I do so wonder what'll be like—Boston, Mother's home, Grandma Desmond, and all the rest. I'm so excited I can hardly wait. You see, Mother never took me home with her but once, and then I was a very small child. I don't know why, but I guess Father didn't want me to go. It's safe to say he didn't, anyway. He never wants me to do anything—hardly. That's why I suspect him of not wanting me to go down to Grandma Desmond's. And Mother didn't go only once, in ages.

Now this will be the end. And when I begin again it will be in Boston. Only think of it—really, truly Boston!

CHAPTER IV.

When I Am Marie.

Boston.

Yes, I'm here. I've been here a week. But this is the first minute I've had a chance to write a word. I've been so busy just being here. And so has Mother. There's been such a lot going on since we came. But I'll try now to begin at the beginning and tell what happened.

Well, first we got into Boston at four o'clock Monday afternoon, and



Well, first we got into Boston at four o'clock Monday afternoon, and there was Grandpa Desmond to meet us.

there was Grandpa Desmond to meet us. He's lovely—all tall and dignified, with gray hair and merry eyes like Mother's, only his are behind glasses. At the station he just kissed Mother and me and said he was glad to see us, and led us to the place where Peter was waiting with the car. (Peter drives Grandpa's automobile, and he's lovely, too.)

Mother and Grandpa talked very fast and very lively all the way home, and Mother laughed quite a lot. But in the hall she cried a little, and Grandpa patted her shoulder, and said, "There, there," and told her how glad he was to get his little girl back, and that they were going to be very happy now and forget the past. And Mother said, yes, yes, indeed, she knew she was, and she was so glad to be there, and that everything was going to be just the same, wasn't it? Only—then all of a sudden she looked over at me and began to cry again—only, of course, things couldn't be "just the same," she choked, hurrying over to me and putting both arms around me, and crying harder than ever.

Then Grandpa came and hugged us both, and patted us, and said, "There, there," and pulled off his glasses and wiped them very fast and very hard. But it wasn't only a minute or two before Mother was laughing again, and saying, "Nonsense!" and "The idea!" and this was a pretty way to introduce her little Marie to her new home! Then she hurried me to the dearest little room I ever saw, right out of here, and took off my things. Then we went all over the house. And it's just as lovely as can be—not at all like Father's in Andersonville.

Oh, Father's is fine and big and handsome, and all that, of course; but not like this. His is just a nice place to eat and sleep in, and go to when it rains. But this—this you just want to live in all the time. Here there are curtains 'way up and sunshine, and flowers in pots, and magazines, and cozy books with cushions everywhere; and books that you've just been reading laid down. (All Father's books are in bookcases, always, except while one's in your hands being read.)

Grandpa's other daughter, Mother's sister, Hattie, lives here and keeps house for Grandpa. She has a little boy named Lester, six years old; and her husband is dead. They were away for weeks, but they got here a little after we did Monday afternoon; and they're lovely, too.

The house is a straight-up-and-down one with a back and front, but no sides except the one snug up to you on the right and left. And there isn't any yard except a little bit of a square brick one at the back where they have clothes and ash barrels, and a little grass spot in front at one side of the steps, not big enough for our old dog to take a nap in, hardly. But it's perfectly lovely inside; and it's the inside of houses that really count, just as it is the inside of people—their hearts, I mean; whether they're good and kind or hateful and disagreeable.

We have dinner at night here, and I've been to the theater twice already in the afternoon. I've got to go to school next week, Mother says, but so far I've just been having a good time. And so's Mother. Honestly, it has just seemed as if Mother couldn't crowd the days full enough. She hasn't been still a minute.

Lots of her old friends have been to see her; and when there hasn't been anybody else around she's taken Peter and had him drive us all over Boston to see things—all kinds of things; Banker bill and museums, and moving pictures, and one play.

But we didn't stay at the play. It started out all right, but pretty soon a man and a woman on the stage began to quarrel. They were married (not really, but in the play, I mean), and I guess it was some more of that incompatibility stuff. Anyhow, as they began to talk more and more, Mother began to fidget, and pretty soon I saw she was gathering up our things; and the minute the curtain went down after the first act, she says:

"Come, dear, we're going home. It isn't very warm here."

As if I didn't know what she was really leaving for! Do old folks honestly think they're fooling us all the time, I wonder? But even if I hadn't known then, I'd have known it later, for that evening I heard Mother and

Aunt Hattie talking in the library.

No, I didn't listen. I heard. And that's a very different matter. You listen when you mean to, and that's unkind. You hear when you can't help yourself, and that you can't be blamed for. Sometimes it's your good luck, and sometimes it's your bad luck—just according to what you hear!

Well, I was in the window-seat in the library reading when Mother and Aunt Hattie came in; and Mother was saying:

"Of course I came out! Do you suppose I'd have had that child see that play after I realized what it was? As if she hasn't had enough of such wretched stuff already in her short life! Oh, Hattie, Hattie, I want that child to laugh, to sing, to fairly tingle with the joy of living every minute that she is with me. I know so what she has had, and what she will have—in that—tomb. You know in six months she goes back—"

Mother saw me then, I know; for she stopped right off short, and after a moment began to talk of something else, very fast. And pretty quick it went out into the hall again.

Dear little Mother! Bless her oh, heart! Isn't she the dearest dear to want me to have all the good times possible now so as to make up for the six months I've got to be with Father? You see, she knows what it is to live with Father even better than I do.

Well, I guess she doesn't dread it for me any more than I do for myself. Still, I'll have the girls there, and I'll try to see them again—and I won't have to stay home much, only nights, and meals, of course, and Father's always pretty busy with his stars and comets and things. Besides, it's only for six months, then I can come back to Boston. I can keep thinking of that.

But I know now why I've been having such a perfectly beautiful time all this week, and why Mother has been filling every minute so full of fun and good times. Why, even when we're at home here, she's always hunting up little Lester and getting him to have a romp with us.

But of course next week I've got to go to school, and it can't be quite so jolly then. Well, I guess that's all for this time.

ABOUT A MONTH LATER

I didn't make a chapter of that last. It wasn't long enough. And, really, I don't know as I've got much to add to it now. There's nothing much happened.

I go to school now, and don't have so much time for fun. School's pretty good, and there are two or three girls most as nice as the ones at Andersonville. But not quite. Out of school Mother keeps things just as lively as ever, and we have beautiful times. Mother is having a lovely time with her own friends, too. So as if there is always some one here when I get home, and lots of times there are tea and parties, and people to dinner.

There are gentlemen, too. I suppose one of them will be Mother's lover by and by; but of course I don't know which one yet. I'm awfully interested in them, though. And of course it's perfectly natural that I should be. Wouldn't you be interested in the man that was going to be your new father? Well, I just guess you would! Anybody would. Why, most folks have only one father, you know, and they have to take that one just as he is; and it's all a matter of chance whether they get one that's cross or pleasant; or homely or fine and grand-looking; or the common kind you can hug and kiss and hang round his neck, or the stand-off, don't-touch-me-I-mustn't-be-disturbed kind like mine. I mean the one I did have. But, there! that doesn't sound right, either; for of course he's still my father just the same, only—well, he isn't Mother's husband any more, so I suppose he's only my father by order of the court, same as I'm his daughter.

Well, anyhow, he's the father I've grown up with, and of course I'm used to him now. And it's an altogether different matter to think of having a brand-new father thrust upon you, all ready-made, as you might say, and of course I am interested. There's such a whole lot depends on the father. Why, only think how different things would have been at home if my father had been different! There were such a lot of things I had to be careful not to do—and as many I had to be careful to do—as account of Father. And so now, when I see all these nice young gentlemen (only they aren't all young; some of them are quite old) coming to the house and talking to Mother, and hanging over her tea and sitting at the table, and handing her tea and lit-cakes, I can't help wondering which, if any, is going to be her lover and my new father. And I am also wondering what'll have to do on account of him when I get him, if I get him.

There are quite a lot of them, and they're all different. They'd make very different kinds of fathers. I'm sure, and I'm afraid I wouldn't like some of them. But, after all, it's Mother that ought to settle which to have—not me. She's the one to be pleased. 'Twould be such a pity to have to change again. Though she could, of course, same as she did Father, I suppose.

As I said, they're all different. There are only two that are anywhere near alike, and they aren't quite the same, for one's a lawyer and the other's in a bank. But they both carry canes and wear tall silk hats, and part their hair in the middle, and look at you through the kind of big round eyeglasses with dark rims that would make you look awfully homely if they didn't make you look so stylish. But I don't think Mother cares very much for either the lawyer or the bank man, and I'm glad. I wouldn't like to live with those glasses every day, even if

they are stylish. I'd much rather have Father's kind.

Then there's the man that paints pictures. He's tall and slim, and wears queer ties and long hair. He's always standing back and looking at things with his head on one side, and exclaiming "Oh!" and "Ah!" with a long breath. He says Mother's coloring is wonderful. I heard him. And I didn't like it very well, either. Why, it sounded as if she put it on herself out of a box on her bureau, same as some other ladies do. Still, he's not as bad, maybe; though I'm not sure but what his paints and pictures would be just as tiresome to live with as Father's stars, when it came right down to wanting a husband to live with you and talk to you every day in the year. You know you have to think of such things when it comes to choosing a new father—I mean a new husband. (I keep forgetting that it's Mother and not me that's doing the choosing.)

Well, to resume and go on. There's the violinist. I mustn't forget him. But, then, nobody could forget him. He's lovely; so handsome and distinguished-looking with his perfectly beautiful dark eyes and white teeth. And he plays—well, I'm simply crazy over his playing. I only wish Charlie Heywood could hear him. He's a traveling violinist with a show; and he came home once to Andersonville. And I heard him. But he's not the real thing at all. Not a bit. Why, he might be anybody, our grocer, or the butcher, or there playing that violin. His eyes are little and blue, and his hair is red and very short. I wish she could hear our violinist play!

And there's another man that comes to the parties and teas—oh, of course there are others, lots of them, married men with wives, and unmarried men with and without sisters. But I mean another man specially. His name is Harlow. He's a little man with a brown pointed beard and big soft brown eyes. He's really awfully good-looking, too. I don't know what he does do; but he's married. I know that. He never brings his wife, though; but Mother's always asking for her, clear and distinct, and she always smiles, and her voice kind of tinkles like little silver bells. But just the same he never brings her.

He never takes her anywhere. I heard Aunt Hattie tell Mother so at the very first, when he came. She said they weren't a bit happy together, and that there'd probably be a divorce before long. But Mother asked for her just the same the very next time. And she's done it ever since.

I think I know now why she does. I found out, and I was simply thrilled. It was so exciting! You see, they were lovers once themselves—Mother and this Mr. Harlow. Then something happened and they quarreled. That was just before Father came.

Of course Mother didn't tell me this, nor Aunt Hattie. It was two ladies. I heard them talking at a tea one day. I was right behind them, and I couldn't get away, so I just couldn't help hearing what they said.

They were looking across the room at Mother. Mr. Harlow was talking to her. He was leaning forward in his chair and talking so earnestly to Mother; and he looked just as if he thought there wasn't another soul in the room but just they two. But Mother—Mother was just listening to be polite to company. Anybody could see that. And the very first chance she got she turned and began to talk to a lady who was standing near. And she never so much as looked toward Mr. Harlow again.

The ladies in front of me laughed then, and one of them said, with a little nod of her head, "I guess Madame Desmond Anderson can look out for herself all right."

Then they got up and went away without seeing me. And all of a sudden I felt almost sorry, for I wanted them to see me. I wanted them to see that I knew my mother could take care of herself, too, and that I'd have said so. But they didn't turn.

I shouldn't like Mr. Harlow for a father, I know I shouldn't. But then, there's no danger, of course, even if he and Mother were lovers once. He's got a wife now, and even if he got a divorce, I don't believe Mother would choose him.

But of course there's no telling which one she will take. As I said before, I don't know. It's too soon, anyway, to tell. I suspect it isn't any more proper to hurry up about getting married again when you've been unmarried by a divorce than it is when you've been unmarried by your husband's dying. I asked Peter one day how soon folks did get married after a divorce, but he didn't seem to know. Anyhow, all he said was to stammer: "Er—yes, miss—no, miss, I mean, I don't know, miss."

Peter is awfully funny. But he's nice, I like him, only I can't find out much by him. He's very good-looking, though, he's quite old. He's almost thirty, he told me. I asked him, He takes me back and forth to school every day, so I see quite a lot of him. And, really, he's about the only one I can ask questions of here, anyway. There isn't anybody like Nurse Sarah used to be. Olga, the cook, talks so funny, I can't understand a word she says. Really. Besides, the only two times I've been down to the kitchen Aunt Hattie sent for me, and she told me the last time not to go any more. She didn't say why. Aunt Hattie never says why not to do things. She just says, "Don't." Sometimes it seems to me as if my whole life had been made up of "don't's." If they'd only tell us part of the time things to "do," maybe we wouldn't have so much time to do the "don't's." (That sounds funny, but I guess folks'll know