

A stranger in the mirror.pdf assignment



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A Stranger in the Mirror By: Sidney Sheldon Category: Fiction Suspense

Synopsis: Toby Temple is a superstar, the world's funniest man. He gets any woman that he wants, but under the superstar image is a lonely man. Jill Castle is a sensuous starlet. She has a dark and mysterious past and has an ambition even greater than Toby's. Together they rule Hollywood. Last printing: 05/21/02 `;/91' ISBN: 0-2366-102-9772-1 Sidney Sheldon has had a most remarkable career. The New York Times acclaimed his novel. The Naked Face, as ' the best first mystery novel of the year '.

At the age of twenty-four Mr Sheldon had three hit musicals playing simultaneously on Broadway. A theatrical motion picture, and television producer-writer-director, Mr Sheldon has been awarded an Oscar for his original screenplay of The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer, Screen Writers Guild Awards for Annie Get Your Gun and Easter Parade and a Tony for Broadway show Redhead. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, actress Jorja Curtright, and their daughter Mary. Books by Sidney Shelton A STRANGER W THE MIRROR THB OTHBK SIDE OF MIDNIGHT THH NAKED FACE A STRANGER IN THE MIRROR y Sidney Sheldon First published 1976 by Hodder and Stoughton Ltd © Sidney Sheldon 1976 First Indian edition published 1976 by the macmillan company of india ltd under arrangement with Pan Books Ltd, Cavaye Place, London SW10 9PG Reprinted 1981 This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser Export of this book is a violation of the Printed by T K Sengupte at

Macmillan India Prcu, Madrai 600002. note TO THE reader The art of making others laugh is surely a wondrous gift from the gods. I affectionately dedicate this book to the comedians, the men and women who have that gift and share it with us. And to one of them in particular: my daughter's godfather, Groucho. This is a work of fiction. Except for the names of theatrical personalities, all characters are imaginary. If you would seek to find yourself Look not in a mirror For there is but a shadow there, A stranger... —silenius, Odes to Truth PROLOGUE.

On a Saturday morning in early August in 1969, a series of bizarre and inexplicable events occurred aboard the fifty-five-thousand-ton luxury liner S. S. Bretagne as it was preparing to sail from the Port of New York to Le Havre. Claude Dessard, chief purser of the Bretagne, a capable and meticulous man, ran, as he was fond of saying, a "tight ship". In the -fifteen years Dessard had served aboard the Bretagne, he had never encountered a situation he had not been able to deal with efficiently and discreetly. Considering that the S. S. Bretagne was a French ship, this was high tribute, indeed. However, on this particular summer day it was as though a thousand devils were conspiring against him.

It was of small consolation to his sensitive Gallic pride that the intensive investigations conducted afterwards by the American and French branches of Interpol and the steamship line's own security forces failed to turn up a single plausible explanation for the extraordinary happenings of that day. Because of the fame of the persons involved, the story was told in headlines all over the world, but the mystery remained unsolved. As for Claude Dessard, he retired from the Qe. Transatlantique and opened a bistro in Nice, <https://assignbuster.com/a-stranger-in-the-mirrorpdf-assignment/>

where he never tired of reliving with his patrons that strange, unforgettable August day. It had begun, Dessard recalled, with the delivery of flowers from the President of the United States. One hour before sailing time, an official black limousine bearing government license plates had driven up to Pier 92 on the lower Hudson River. A man wearing a charcoal-gray suit had disembarked from the car, carrying a bouquet of thirty-six Sterling Silver roses. He had made his way to the foot of the gangplank and exchanged a few words with Alain Safford, the Bretagne's officer on duty. The flowers were ceremoniously transferred to Janin, a junior deck officer, who delivered them and then sought out Claude Dessard. "I thought you might wish to know," Janin reported. "Roses from the President to Mme. Temple." Jill Temple. In the last year, her photograph had appeared on the front pages of daily newspapers and on magazine covers from New York to Bangkok and Paris to Leningrad.

Claude Dessard recalled reading that she had been number one in a recent poll of the world's most admired women, and that a large number of newborn girls were being christened Jill. The United States of America had always had its heroines. Now, Jill Temple had become one. Her courage and the fantastic battle she had won and then so ironically lost had captured the imagination of the world. It was a great love story, but it was much more than that: it contained all the elements of classic Greek drama and tragedy. Claude Dessard was not fond of Americans, but in this case he was delighted to make an exception. He had tremendous admiration for Mme. Toby Temple.

She was — and this was the highest accolade Dessard could tender -galante. He resolved to see to it that her voyage on his ship would be a memorable one. The chief purser turned his thoughts away from Jill Temple and concentrated on a final check of the passenger list. There was the usual collection of what the Americans referred to as VIP's, an acronym Dessard detested, particularly since Americans had such barbaric ideas about what made a person important. He noted that the wife of a wealthy industrialist was traveling alone. Dessard smiled knowingly . and scanned Ae passenger list for the name of Matt Ellis, a black football star. When he found it, he nodded to himself, satisfied.

Dessard was also interested to note that in adjoining 10 cabins were a prominent senator and Carlina Rocca, a South American stripper, whose names had been linked in recent news stories. His eyes moved down the list. David Kenyon. Money. An enormous amount of it. He had sailed on the Bretagne before. Dessard remembered David Kenyon as a good-looking, deeply tanned man with a lean, athletic body. A quiet, impressive man. Dessard put a C. T. , for captain's table, after David Kenyon's name. Clifton Lawrence. A last-minute booking. A small frown appeared on the chief purser's face. Ah, here was a delicate problem. What did one do with Monsieur Lawrence?

At one time the question would not even have been raised, for he would automatically have been seated at the captain's table, where he would have regaled everyone with amusing anecdotes. Clifton Lawrence was a theatrical agent who in his day had represented many of the major stars in the entertainment business. But, alas, M. Lawrence's day was over. Where once
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the agent had always insisted on the luxurious Princess Suite, so this voyage he had booked a single room on a lower deck. ' First class, of course, but still... Claude Dessard decided he would reserve his decision until he had gone through the other names. There was minor royalty aboard, a famous opera singer and a Nobel Prize-declining Russian novelist. A knock at the door interrupted Dessard's concentration. Antoine, one of the porters, entered. " Yes — what? Claude Dessard asked. Antoine regarded him with rheumy eyes. " Did you order the theater locked? " Dessard frowned. " What are you talking about? " " I assumed it was you. Who else would do it? A few minutes ago I checked to see that everything was in order. The doors were locked. It sounded like someone was inside the theater, running a movie. " " We never run films in port," Dessard said firmly. " And at no time are those doors locked. I'll look into it. " Ordinarily, Claude Dessard would have investigated the report immediately, but now he was harassed by dozens of urgent last-minute details that had to be attended to before the twelve o'clock sailing.

His supply of American dollars did not tally, one of the best suites had been booked twice by mistake, and the wedding gift ordered by Captain Montaigne had been delivered to the wrong ship. The captain was going to be furious. Dessard stopped to listen to the familiar sound of the ship's four powerful turbines starting. He felt the movement of the S. S. Bretagne as she slipped away from the pier and began backing her way into the channel. Then Dessard once again became engrossed in his problems. Half an hour later, Leon, the chief veranda-deck steward, came in. Dessard looked up, impatiently. " Yes, Leon? " " I'm sorry to bother you, but I thought you should

know... ” “ Hm? ” Dessard was only half-listening, his mind on the delicate task of completing the seating arrangements for the captain’s table for each night of the voyage.

The captain was not a man gifted with social graces, and having dinner with his passengers every night was an ordeal for him. It, was Dessard’s task to see that the group was agreeable. “ It’s about Mme. Temple ... ” Leon began. Dessard instantly laid down his pencil and looked up, his small black eyes alert. “ Yes? ” “ I passed her cabin a few minutes ago, and I heard loud voices and a scream. It was difficult to hear clearly through the door, but it sounded as though she was saying, ‘ You’ve killed me, you’ve killed me. ’ I thought it best not to interfere, so I came to tell you. ” Dessard nodded. “ You did well. I shall check to make certain that she is all right. ” Dessard watched the deck steward leave.

It was unthinkable that anyone would harm a woman like Mme. Temple. It was an outrage to Dessard’s Gallic sense of chivalry. He put on his uniform cap, stole a quick look in the wall mirror and started for the door. The telephone rang. The chief purser hesitated, then picked it up. “ Dessard. ” “ Claude –” It was the third mate’s voice. “ For Christ’s sake, send someone down to the theater with a mop, would you? There’s blood all over the place. ” Dessard felt a sudden sinking sensation in the pit of his 12 stomach. “ Right away,” Dessard promised. He hung up, arranged for a porter, then dialed the ship’s physician. “ Andre? Claude. ” He tried to make his voice casual. I was just wondering whether anyone has been in for medical treatment.... No, no. I wasn’t thinking of seasick pills. This person would be bleeding, perhaps badly.... I see. Thank you. ” Dessard hung up, filled with a growing sense of

unease. He left his office and headed for Jill Temple's suite. He was halfway there when the next singular event occurred. As Dessard reached the boat deck, he felt the rhythm of the ship's motion change. He glanced out at the ocean and saw that they had arrived at the Ambrose Lightship, where they would drop their pilot tug and the liner would head for the open sea. But instead, the Bretagne was slowing to a stop. Something out of the ordinary was happening.

Dessard hurried to the railing and looked over the side. In the sea below, the pilot tug had been snuggled against the cargo hatch of the Bretagne, and two sailors were transferring luggage from the liner to the tug. As Dessard watched, a passenger stepped from the ship's hatch onto the small boat. Dessard could only catch a glimpse of the person's back, but he was sure that he must have been mistaken in his identification. It was simply not possible. In fact, the incident of a passenger leaving the ship in this fashion was so extraordinary that the chief purser felt a small frisson of alarm. He turned and hurriedly made his way to Jill Temple's suite. There was no response to his knock.

He knocked again, this time a little more loudly. "Madame Temple... This is Claude Dessard, the chief purser. I was wondering if I might be of any service." There was no answer. By now, Dessard's internal warning system was screaming. His instincts told him that there was something terribly wrong, and he had a premonition that it centered, somehow, around this woman. A series of wild, outrageous thoughts danced through his brain. She had been murdered or kidnapped or — He tried the handle of the door. It was

unlocked. Slowly, Dessard pushed the door open. Jill Temple was standing at the far end of the cabin, looking out the porthole, her back to him.

Dessard opened his mouth to speak, but something in the frozen rigidity of her figure stopped him. He stood there awkwardly for a moment, debating whether to quietly withdraw, when suddenly the cabin was filled with an unearthly, keening sound, like an animal in pain. Helpless before such a deep private agony, Dessard withdrew, carefully closing the door behind him. Dessard stood outside the cabin a moment, listening to the wordless cries from within. Then, deeply shaken, he turned and headed for the ship's theater on the main deck. A porter was mopping up a trail of blood in front of the theater. Mon Dieu, Dessard thought. What next? He tried the door to the theater.

It was unlocked. Dessard entered the large, modern auditorium that could seat six hundred passengers. The auditorium was empty. On an impulse, he went to the projection booth. The door was locked. Only two people had keys to this door, he and the projectionist. Dessard opened it with his key and went inside. Everything seemed normal. He walked over to the two Century 35-mm. projectors in the room and put his hands on them. One of them was warm. In the crew's quarters on D deck, Dessard found the projectionist, who assured him that he knew nothing about the theater being used. On the way back to his office, Dessard took a shortcut through the kitchen.

The chef stopped him, in a fury. "Look at this," he commanded Dessard. "Just look what some idiot has done!" On a marble pastry table was a beautiful, six-tiered wedding cake, with delicate, spun-sugar figures of a

bride and groom on top. Someone had crushed in the head of the bride. “ It was at that moment,” Dessard would tell the spellbound patrons at his bistro, “ that I knew something terrible was about to happen. ” BOOK ONE In 1919, Detroit, Michigan, was the single most successful industrial city in the world. World War I had ended, and Detroit had played a significant part in the Allies’ victory, supplying them with tanks and trucks and aeroplanes.

Now, with the threat of the Hun over, the automobile plants once again turned their energies to retooling for motorcars. Soon, four thousand automobiles a day were being manufactured, assembled and shipped. Skilled and unskilled labor came from all parts of the world to seek jobs in the automotive industry. Italians, Irish, Germans — they came in a flood tide. Among the new arrivals were Paul Templarhaus and his bride, Frieda. Paul had been a butcher’s apprentice in Munich. With the dowry he received when he married Frieda, he emigrated to New York and opened a butcher shop, which quickly showed a deficit. He then moved to St. Louis, Boston and, finally, Detroit, failing spectacularly in each city.

In an era when business was booming and an increasing affluence meant a growing demand for meat, Paul Templarhaus managed to lose money everywhere he opened a shop. He was a good butcher but a hopelessly incompetent businessman. In truth he was more interested in writing poetry than in making money. He would spend hours dreaming up rhymes and poetic images. He would set them down on paper and mail them off to newspapers and magazines, but they never bought any of his masterpieces. To Paul, money was unimportant. He extended credit to everyone, and the

word quickly spread: if you had no money and wanted the finest of meats, go to Paul Templarhaus.

Paul's wife, Frieda, was a plain-looking girl who had had no experience with men before Paul had come along and proposed to her—or, rather, as was proper—to her father. Frieda had pleaded with her father to accept Paul's suit, but the old man had needed no urging, for he had been desperately afraid he was going to be stuck with Frieda the rest of his life. He had even increased the dowry so that Frieda and her husband would be able to leave Germany and go to the New World. Frieda had fallen shyly in love with her husband at first sight. She had never seen a poet before. Paul was thin and intellectual-looking, with pale myopic eyes and receding hair, and it was months before Frieda could believe that this handsome young man truly belonged to her. She had no illusions about her own looks.

Her figure was lumpy, the shape of an oversized, uncooked potato kugel. Her best feature was her vivid blue eyes, the color of gentians, but the rest of her face seemed to belong to other people. Her nose was her grandfather's, large and bulbous, her forehead was an uncle's, high and sloping, and her chin was her father's, square and grim. Somewhere inside Frieda was a beautiful young girl, trapped with a face and body that God had given her as some kind of cosmic joke. But people could see only the formidable exterior. Except for Paul. Her Paul. It was just as well that Frieda never knew that her attraction lay in her dowry, which Paul saw as an escape from the bloody sides of beef and hog brains. Paul's dream had been to go into* business for himself and make enough money so that he could devote himself to his beloved poetry. Frieda and Paul went to an inn outside Salzburg for their

honeymoon, a beautiful old castle on a lovely lake, surrounded by meadows and woods. Frieda had gone over the honeymoonnight scene a hundred times in her mind. Paul would lock the door and take her into his arms and murmur sweet endearments as he began to undress her. His lips would find hers and then slowly move down her naked body, the way they did it in all the little green books she had secretly read.

His organ 18 would be hard and erect and proud, like a German banner, and Paul would carry her to the bed (perhaps it would be safer if he walked her to it) and tenderly lay her down. Mem Gott, Frieda, he would say. I love your body. You are not like those skinny little girls. You have the body of a woman. The actuality came as a shock. It was true that when they reached their room, Paul locked the door. After that, the reality was a stranger to the dream. As Frieda-watched, Paul quickly stripped off his shirt, revealing a high, thin, hairless chest. Then he pulled down his pants. Between his legs lay a limp, tiny penis, hidden by a foreskin. It did not resemble in any way the exciting pictures Frieda had seen. Paul stretched out on the bed, waiting for her, and Frieda realized that he expected her to undress herself.

Slowly, she began to take off her clothes. Well, size is not everything, Frieda thought. Paul will be a wonderful lover. Moments later, the trembling bride joined her groom on the marital bed. While she was waiting for him to say something romantic, Paul rolled over on top of her, made a few thrusts inside her, and rolled off again. For the stunned bride, it was finished before it began. As for Paul, his few previous sexual experiences had been with the whores of Munich, and he was reaching for his wallet when he remembered that he no longer had to pay for it. From now on it was free. Long after Paul

had fallen asleep, Frieda lay in bed, trying not to think about her disappointment.

Sex is not every she told herself. My Paul will make a wonderful husband. As it turned out, she was wrong again. It was shortly after the honeymoon that Frieda began to see Paul in a more realistic light. Frieda had been reared in the German tradition of a Hausfrau, and so she obeyed her husband without question, but she was far from stupid. Paul had no interest in life except his poems, and Frieda began to realize that they were very bad. She could not help but observe that Paul left a great deal to be desired in almost every area she could think of. Where Paul was indecisive, Frieda was firm, where Paul was stupid about business, Frieda was 19 clever.

In the beginning, she had sat by, silently suffering, while the head of the family threw away her handsome dowry by his softhearted idiocies. By the time they moved to Detroit, Frieda could stand it no longer. She marched into her husband's butcher shop one day and took over the cash register. The first thing she did was to put up a sign: No credit. Her husband was appalled, but that was only the beginning. Frieda raised the prices of meat and began advertising, showering the neighbourhood with pamphlets, and the business expanded overnight. From that moment on, it was Frieda who made all the important decisions, and Paul who followed them. Frieda's disappointment had turned her into a tyrant. She found that she had a talent for running things and people, and she was inflexible.

It was Frieda who decided how their money was to be invested, where they would live, where they would vacation, and when it was time to have a baby.

She announced her decision to Paul one evening and put him to work on the project until the poor man almost suffered a nervous breakdown. He was afraid too much sex would undermine his health, but Frieda was a woman of great determination. "Put it in me," she would command. "How can I?" Paul protested. "It is not interested." Frieda would take his shriveled little penis and pull back the foreskin, and when nothing happened, she would take it in her mouth — "Mein Gott, Frieda! What are you doingy -until it got hard in spite of him, and she would insert it between her legs until Paul's sperm was inside her.

Three months after they began, Frieda told her husband that he could take a rest. She was pregnant. Paul wanted a girl and Frieda wanted a boy, so it was no surprise to any of their friends that the baby was a boy. The baby, at Frieda's insistence, was delivered at home by a midwife. Everything went smoothly up to and throughout the actual delivery. It was then that those who were gathered around the bed got a shock. The newborn infant was normal in every way, except for its penis. The baby's orgjan was enormous, dangling like a swollen, outsized appendage between the baby's innocent thighs. « 0 His father's not built like that, Frieda thought with fierce pride.

She named him Tobias, after an alderman who lived in their precinct. Paul told Frieda that he would take over the training of the boy. After all, it was the father's place to bring up his son. Frieda listened and smiled, and seldom let Paul go near the child. It was Frieda who brought the boy up. She ruled him with a Teutonic fist, and she did not bother with the velvet glove. At five, Toby was a thin, spindly-legged child, with a wistful face and the bright, gentian-blue eyes of his mother. Toby adored his mother and hungered for

her approval. He wanted her to pick him up and hold him on her big, soft lap so that he could press his head deep into her bosom.

But Frieda had no time for such things. She was busy making a living for her family. She loved little Toby, and she was determined that he would not grow up to be a weakling like his father. Frieda demanded perfection in everything Toby did. When he began school, she would supervise his homework, and if he was puzzled by some assignment, his mother would admonish him, “Come on, boy — roll up your sleeves!” And she would stand over him until he had solved the problem. The sterner Frieda was with Toby, the more he loved her. He trembled at the thought of displeasing her. Her punishment was swift and her praise was slow, but she felt that it was for Toby’s own good.

From the first moment her son had been placed in her arms, Frieda had known that one day he was going to become a famous and important man. She did not know how or when, but she knew it would happen. It was as though God had whispered it into her ear. Before her son was even old enough to understand what she was saying, Frieda would tell him of his greatness to come, and she never stopped telling him. And so, young Toby grew up knowing that he was going to be famous, but having no idea how or why. He only knew that his mother was never wrong. Some of Toby’s happiest moments occurred when he sat in the enormous kitchen doing his homework while his mother ²¹ stood at the large old-fashioned stove and cooked.

She would make heavenly smelling, thick black bean soup with whole frankfurters floating in it, and platters of succulent bratwurst, and potato pancakes with fluffy edges of brown lace. Or she would stand at the large chopping block in the middle of the kitchen, kneading dough with her thick, strong hands, then sprinkling a light snowflake of flour over it, magically transforming the dough into a mouth-watering Pflaumenkuchen or Apfelkuchen. Toby would go to her and throw his arms around her large body, his face reaching only up to her waist. The exciting female smell of her would become a part of all the exciting kitchen smells, and an unbidden sexuality would stir within him. At those moments Toby would gladly have died for her.

For the rest of his life, the smell of fresh apples cooking in butter brought back an instant, vivid image of his mother. One afternoon, when Toby was twelve years old, Mrs. Durkin, the neighbourhood gossip, came to visit them. Mrs. Durkin was a bony-faced woman with black, darting eyes and a tongue that was never still. When she departed, Toby did an imitation of her that had his mother roaring with laughter. It seemed to Toby that it was the first time he had ever heard her laugh. From that moment on, Toby looked for ways to entertain her. He would do devastating imitations of customers who came into the butcher shop and of teachers and schoolmates, and his mother would go into gales of laughter.

Toby had finally discovered a way to win his mother's approval. He tried out for a school play. No Account David, and was given the lead. On opening night, his mother sat in the front row and applauded her son's success. It was at that moment that Frieda knew how God's promise was going to come

true. It was the early 1930s, the beginning of the Depression, and movie theaters all over the country were trying every conceivable stratagem to fill their empty seats. They gave away dishes and radios, and had keno nights and bingo nights, and they hired organists to accompany the bounding ball while the audience sang along. And they held amateur contests.

Frieda would carefully check the theatrical section of the newspaper to see where contests were taking place. Then she would take Toby there and sit in the audience while he did his imitations of Al Jolson and James Cagney and Eddie Cantor and yell out, "Mein Himmel! What a talented boy!" Toby nearly always won first prize. He had grown taller, but he was still thin, an earnest child with guileless, bright blue eyes set in the face of a cherub. One looked at him and instantly thought: innocence. When people saw Toby they wanted to put their arms around him and hug him and protect him from Life. They loved him and on stage they applauded him.

For the first time Toby understood what he was destined to be; he was going to be a star, for his mother first, and God second. Toby's libido began to stir when he was fifteen. He would masturbate in the bathroom, the one place he was assured of privacy, but that was not enough. He decided he needed a girl. One evening, Clara Connors, the married sister of a classmate, drove Toby home from an errand he was doing for his mother. Clara was a pretty blonde with large breasts, and as Toby sat next to her, he began to get an erection. Nervously, he inched his hand across to her lap and began to fumble under her skirt, ready to withdraw instantly if she screamed.

Clara was more amused than angry, but when Toby pulled out his penis and she saw the size of it, she invited him to her house the following afternoon and initiated Toby into the joys of sexual intercourse. It was a fantastic experience. Instead of a soapy hand, Toby had found a soft, warm receptacle that throbbed and grabbed at his penis. Clara's moans and screams made him grow hard again and again, so that he had orgasm after orgasm without ever leaving the warm, wet nest. The size of his penis had always been a source of secret shame to Toby. Now it had suddenly become his glory. Clara could not keep this phenomenon to herself, and soon Toby found himself servicing half a dozen married women in the neighborhood. ²³ During the next two years, Toby managed to deflower nearly half the girls in his class.

Some of Toby's classmates were football heroes, or better looking than he, or rich — but where they failed, Toby succeeded. He was the funniest, cutest thing the girls had ever seen, and it was impossible to say no to that innocent face and those wistful blue eyes. In Toby's senior year in high school, when he was eighteen, he was summoned to the principal's office. In the room were Toby's mother, grim-faced, a sobbing sixteen-yearold Catholic girl named Eileen Henegan and her father, a uniformed police sergeant. The moment Toby entered the room, he knew he was in deep trouble. " I'll come right to the point, Toby," the principal said. " Eileen is pregnant.

She says you're the father of her child. Have you had a physical relationship with her? " Toby's mouth suddenly went dry. All he could think of was how much Eileen had enjoyed it, how she had moaned and begged for more. And now this. " Answer him, you little son of a bitch! " Eileen's father bellowed. " Did you touch my daughter? " Toby sneaked a look at his mother. That she

was here to witness his shame upset him more than anything else. He had let her down, disgraced her. She would be repelled by his behavior. Toby resolved that if he ever got out of this, if God would only help him this once and perform some kind of miracle, he would never touch another girl as long as he lived.

He would go straight to a doctor and have himself castrated, so that he would never even think about sex again, and... " Toby... " His mother was speaking, her voice stern and cold. " Did you go to bed with this girl? " Toby swallowed, took a deep breath and mumbled, " Yes, Mother. " " Then you will marry her. " There was finality in her tone. She looked at the sobbing, puffy-eyed girl. " Is that what you want? " " Y-yes," Eileen cried. " I love Toby. " She turned to Toby. " They made me tell. I didn't want to give them your name. " Her father, the police sergeant, announced to the room at 24 large, " My daughter's only sixteen. It's statutory rape. He could be sent to jail for the rest of his miserable life.

But if he's going to marry her... " They all turned to look at Toby. He swallowed again and said, " Yes, sir. I — I'm sorry it happened. " During the silent ride home with his mother, Toby sat at her side, miserable, knowing how much he had hurt her. Now he would have to find a job to support Eileen and the child. He would probably have to go to work in the butcher shop and forget his dreams, all his plans for the future. When they reached the house, his mother said to him, " Come upstairs. " Toby followed her to his room, steeling himself for a lecture. As he watched, she took out a suitcase and began packing his clothes. Toby stared at her, puzzled. What are you doing. Mama? " " Me? I'm not doing anything. You are. You're going away from

here. " She stopped and turned to face him. " Did you think I was going to let you throw your life away on that nothing of a girl? So you took her to bed and she's going to have a baby. That proves two things — that you're human, and she's stupid! Oh, no — no one traps my son into marriage. God meant you to be a big man, Toby. You'll go to New York, and when you're a famous star, you'll send for me. " He blinked back tears and new into her arms, and she cradled him in her enormous bosom. Toby suddenly felt lost and frightened at the thought of leaving her.

And yet, there was an excitement within him, the exhilaration of embarking on a new life. He was going to be in Show Business. He was going to be a star; he was going to be famous. His mother had said so. / ^ 2 In i939» New York City was a mecca for the theater. The Depression was over. President Franklin Roosevelt had promised that there was nothing to fear but fear itself, that America would be the most prosperous nadon on earth, and so it was. Everyone had money to spend. There were thirty shows playing on Broadway, and all of them seemed to be hits. Toby arrived in New York with a hundred dollars his mother had given him. Toby knew he was going to be rich and famous.

He would send for his mother and they would live in a beautiful penthouse and she would come to the theater every night to watch the audience applaud him. In the meanme, he had to find a job. He went to the stage doors of all the Broadway theaters and told them about the amateur contests he had won and how talented he was. They threw him out. During the weeks that Toby hunted for a job, he sneaked into theaters and nightclubs and watched the top performers work, particularly the comedians.

He saw Ben Blue and Joe E. Lewis and Frank Fay. Toby knew that one day he would be better than all of them. His money running out, he took a job as a dishwasher.

He telephoned his mother every Sunday morning, when the rates were cheaper. She told Toby about the furor caused by his running away. " You should see them," his mother said. " The policeman comes over here in his squad car every night. The way he carries on, you would think we were all gangsters. He keeps asking where you are. " 26 " What do you tell him? " Toby asked anxiously. " The truth. That you slunk away like a thief in the night, and that if I ever got my hands on you I would personally wring your neck. " Toby laughed aloud. During the summer, Toby managed to get a job as an assistant to a magician, a beady-eyed, untalented mountebank who performed under the name of the Great Merlin.

They played a series of second-rate hotels in the Catskills, and Toby's primary job was to haul the heavy paraphernalia in and out of Merlin's station wagon, and to guard the props, which consisted of six white rabbits, three canaries and two hamsters. Because of Merlin's fears that the props would " get eaten", Toby was forced to live with them in rooms the size of broom closets, and it seemed to Toby that the whole summer consisted of one overpowering stench. He was in a state of physical exhaustion from carrying the heavy cabinets with trick sides and bottoms and running after props that were constantly escaping. He was lonely and disappointed. He sat staring at the dingy, little rooms, wondering what he was doing here and how this was going to get him started in show business. He practiced his imitations in front of the mirror, and his audience consisted of Merlin's smelly

little animals. One Sunday as the summer was drawing to a close, Toby made his weekly telephone call home. This time it was his father who answered. "It's Toby, Pop. How are you?" There was a silence. "Hello! Are you there?" "I'm here, Toby." Something in his father's voice chilled Toby. "Where's Mom?" "They took her to the hospital last night." Toby clutched the receiver so hard that it almost broke in his fist. "What happened to her?" "The doctor said it was a heart attack." Not his mother! "She's going to be all right," Toby demanded. "Isn't she?" He was screaming into the mouthpiece. "Tell me she's going to be all right, goddam you! From a million miles away he could hear his father crying. "She — she died a few hours ago, son." The words washed over Toby like white-hot lava, burning him, scalding him, until his body felt as though it were on fire. His father was lying. She couldn't be dead. They had a pact. Toby was going to be famous and his mother was going to be at his side. There was a beautiful penthouse waiting for her, and a limousine and chauffeur and furs and diamonds... He was sobbing so hard he could not breathe. He heard the distant voice saying, "Toby! Toby!" "I'm on my way home. When is the funeral?" "Tomorrow," his father said. "But you mustn't come here. They'll be expecting you, Toby. Eileen is going to have her baby soon. Her father wants to kill you. They'll be looking for you at the funeral." So he could not even say good-bye to the only person in the world he loved. Toby lay in his bed all that day, remembering. The images of his mother were so vivid and alive. She was in the kitchen, cooking, telling him what an important man he was going to be, and at the theater, sitting in the front row and calling out, "Mein Himmel! What a talented boy I!" And laughing at his imitations and jokes. And packing

his suitcase. When you're a famous star, you'll send for me. He lay there, numbed with grief, thinking, I'll never forget this day. Not as long as I live.

August the fourteenth, her Appointment in Samarra If it's going to happen, it'll happen. Fate will find you. You don't have to go looking for it. " Alan would stay in bed long after Jill had gone out looking for work. When she returned home, she would find him in an easy chair, reading or drinking beer with his friends. He brought no money into the house. " You're a dope," one of Jill's girlfriends told her. " He's using your bed, eating your food, drinking your liquor. Get rid of him. " But Jill didn't. For the first time, Jill understood Harriet, understood all her friends who clung desperately to men they did not love, men they hated. It was the fear of being alone. Jill was out of a job.

Christmas was only a few days away and she was down to her last few dollars, yet she had to send her mother a Christmas present. It was Alan who solved the problem. He had left early one morning without saying where he was going. When he returned, he said to Jill, " We've got a job. " " What kind of job? " " Acting, of course. We're actors, aren't we? " Jill looked at him, filled with sudden hope. " Are you serious? " " Of course I am. I ran into a friend of mine who's a director. He's got a picture starting tomorrow. There's parts for both of us. A hundred bucks apiece, for one day's work. " " That's wonderful! " Jill exclaimed. " A hundred dollars! With that she could buy her mother some lovely English wool for a winter coat and have enough left over to buy a good leather purse. " It's just a little indie. They're shooting it in back of someone's garage. " Jill said, " What can we lose? It's a part. " The garage was on the south side of Los Angeles, in an area that in one generation had gone from exclusivity to middle-class gentility to seed. They

were greeted at the door by a short, swarthy man who took Alan's hand and said, " You made it, buddy. Great. " He turned to Jill and whistled appreciatively. " You told it like it is, pal. She's an eyeful. " 174 . Alan said, " Jill, this is Peter Terraglio. JiU Castle. " I " How do you do! " JiU said. Pete's the director," Alan explained. " Director, producer, chief bottle washer. I do a little of everything. Come on in. " He led them through the empty garage into a passageway that had at one time been servants' quarters. There were two bedrooms off the corridor. The door ; 1 to one was open. As they approached it, they could hear the l sound of voices. JiU reached the doorway, looked inside and | stopped in shocked disbelief. In the middle of the room four j, naked people were lying on a bed; a black man, a Mexican man, and two girls, one white and one black. A cameraman was lighting the set while one of the girls practiced feUatio on the Mexican.

The girl paused for a moment, out of breath, and said, " Come on, you cock. Get hard. " Jill felt faint. She wheeled around in the doorway to start back down the passageway, and she felt her legs start to give way. Alan had his arm around her, supporting her. " Are you all right? " She could not answer him. Her head was suddenly splitting, and her stomach was fiUed with knives. " Wait here," Alan ordered. He was back in a minute with a bottle of red pills and a pint of vodka. He took out two of the piUs and handed them to Jill. " These will make you feel better. " Jul put the piUs in her mouth, her head pounding. " Wash it down with this," Alan told her. She did as he said. Here. " Alan handed her another pill. She swallowed it with vodka. " You need to lie down a minute. " He led JiU into the empty bedroom, and she lay down on the bed, moving very slowly. The piUs were beginning to work. She

started to feel better. The bitter bile had stopped coming up into her mouth. : Fifteen minutes later, her headache was fading away. Alan handed her another piU. Without even thinking about it, “ I am sitting still. ” Jill thought that was funny and began to laugh. She laughed until the tears streamed down her face. “ What -what were those pills? ” “ For your headache, honey. ” Terraglio peered into the room and said, “ How we doin’? Everybody happy? ” “ Every — everybody’s happy,” Jill mumbled. Terraglio looked at Alan and nodded. “ Five minutes,” Terraglio said. He hurried off. Alan was leaning over Jill, stroking her breast and her thighs, lifting her skirt and working his fingers between her legs. It felt marvelously exciting, and Jill suddenly wanted him inside her. “ Look, baby,” Alan said, “ I wouldn’t ask you to do anything bad. You’d just make love to me. It’s what we do anyway, only this time we get paid for it. Two hundred bucks. And it’s all yours. ” She shook her head, but it seemed to take forever to move it from side to side. “ I couldn’t do that,” she said, fuzzily. “ Why not? She had to concentrate to remember. “ Because I’m -I’m gonna be a star. Can’t do porno films. ” “ Would you like me to fuck you? ” “ Oh, yes! I want you, David. ” Alan started to say something, then grinned. “ Sure, baby. I want you, too. Come on. ” He took Jill’s hand and lifted her off the bed. Jill felt as though she were flying. They were in the hallway, then moving into the other bedroom. “ Okay,” Terraglio said as he saw them. “ Keep the same setup. We’ve got some fresh blood coming in. ” “ Do you want me to change the sheets? ” one of the crew asked. “ What the fuck do you think we are, MGM? ” Jill was clinging to Alan. “ David, there are people here. “ They’ll leave,” Alan assured her. “ Here. ” He took out another pill and gave it to Jill. He put the bottle of vodka 176 to

her lips, and she swallowed the pill. From that point on, everything happened in a haze. David was undressing her and ' saying comforting things- Then she was on the bed with him. i He moved his naked body close to her. A bright light came on, blinding her. " Put this in your mouth," he said, and it was David talking. " Oh, yes. " She stroked it lovingly and started to put it in her mouth and someone in the room said something that Jill could not hear, and David moved away so that Jill was forced to turn her face into the light and squint in the glare.

She felt herself being pushed down on her back and then David was inside her making love to her, and at the same time she had his penis in her mouth. She loved him so much. The lights bothered her and the talking in the background. She wanted to tell David to stop them, but she was in an ecstasy of delirium, having orgasm after orgasm until she thought that her body would tear itself apart. David loved her, not Cissy, and he had come back to her and they were married. They were having such a wonderful honeymoon. " David... " she said. She opened her eyes and the Mexican was on top of her, moving his tongue down her body. She tried to ask him where David was, but she could not get the words out.

She closed her eyes while the man did delicious things to her body. When Jill opened her eyes again, the man had somehow turned into a girl with long red hair and large bosoms trailing across Jill's belly. Then the woman started doing something with her tongue and Jill dosed her eyes and fell into unconsciousness. The two men stood looking down at the figure on the bed. " She gonna be all right? " Terraglio asked. " Sure," Alan said. " You really come up with 'em," Terraglio said admiringly. " She's terrific. Best looker yet.

“ “ My pleasure. ” He held out his hand. Terraglio pulled a thick wad of bills out of his pocket and peeled off two of them. “ Here y’are.

Wanna drop by for a little Christmas dinner? Stella’d love to see you. ” “ Can’t,” Alan said. “ I’m spending Christmas with the wife and kids. I’m catching the next plane out to Florida. ” “ We’re gonna have a hell of a picture here. ” Terraglio nodded toward the unconscious girl. “ What kind of billing should we give her ? ” Alan grinned. “ Why don’t you use her real name? It’s Josephine Czinski. When the picture plays in Odessa, it’ll give all her friends a real kick. ” 178 23 They had lied. Time was not a friend that healed all wounds; it was the enemy that ravaged and murdered youth. The seasons came and went and each season brought a new crop of Product to Hollywood.

The competition hitchhiked and came on motorcycles and trains and planes. They were all eighteen years old, as Jill had once been. They were longlegged and lithe, with fresh, eager young faces and bright smiles that did not need caps. And with each new crop that came in, Jill was one year older. One day she looked in the mirror and it was 1964 and she had become twenty-five years old. At first, the experience of making the pornographic film had terrified her. She had lived in dread that some casting director would learn about it and blackball her. But as the weeks went by and then the months, Jill gradually forgot her fears. But she had changed.

Each succeeding year had left its mark upon her, a patina of hardness, like the annual rings on a tree. She began to hate all the people who would not give her a chance to act, the people who made promises they never kept.

She had embarked on an endless series of monotonous, thankless jobs. She was a secretary and a receptionist and a short-order cook and a baby-sitter and a model and a waitress and a telephone operator and a salesgirl. Just until she got The Call. But The Call never came. And Jill's bitterness grew. She did occasional walk-ons and one-liners, but they never led to anything. She looked in the mirror and received Time's message: Hurry. Seeing her reflection was like looking back into layers of the past.

There were still traces of the fresh young girl who had come to Hollywood seven endless years ago. But the fresh young girl had small wrinkles near the edges of her eyes and deeper lines that ran from the corners of her nose to her chin, warning signals of time fleeting and success ungrasped, the souvenirs of all the countless dreary little defeats. Hurry, fill, hurry! And so it was that when Fred Kapper, an eighteen-yearold assistant director at Fox, told Jill he had a good part for her if she would go to bed with him, she decided it was time to say yes. She met Fred Kapper at the studio during his lunch hour. "I only got half an hour," he said. "Lend me a room where we can have some privacy. He stood there a moment, frowning in deep thought, then brightened. "The dubbing room. Come on." The dubbing room was a small, soundproof projection chamber where all the sound tracks were combined on one reel. Fred Kapper looked around the bare room and said, "Shit! They used to have a little couch in here." He glanced at his watch. "We'll have to make do. Get your clothes on, sweetheart. The dubbing crew'll be back in twenty minutes." Jill stared at him a moment, feeling like a whore, and she loathed him. But she did not let it show. She had tried it her

way and had failed. Now she was going to do it their way. She took off her dress and pants.

Kapper did not bother undressing. He merely opened his zipper and took out his tumescent penis. He looked at Jill and grinned, " That's a beautiful ass. Bend over. " Jill looked around for something to lean against. In front of her was the laugh machine, a console on wheels, filled with laugh-track loops controlled by buttons on the outside. " Come on, bend over. " Jill hesitated a moment, then leaned forward, propping herself up by her hands. Kapper moved in back of her and Jill felt his fingers spreading her cheeks. An instant later she felt the rip of his penis pressing against her anus. " Wait! " Jill said. " Not there! I- I can't -" | " Scream for me, baby! and he plunged his organ inside | her, ripping her with a terrible pain. With each scream, he | thrust deeper and harder. She tried frantically to get away, | but he was grabbing her hips, shoving himself in and out, ' holding her fast. She was off balance now. As she reached out ' to get leverage, her fingers touched the buttons of the laugh machine, and instantly the room was filled with maniacal [laughter. As Jill squirmed in a burning agony, her hands ^pounded the machine, and a woman tittered and a small crowd guffawed and a girl giggled and a hundred voices cackled and chuckled and roared at some obscene, secret joke. The echoes bounced hysterically around the walls as Jill cried out with pain.

Suddenly she felt a series of quick shudders and a moment later the alien piece of flesh inside her was withdrawn, and slowly the laughter in the room died away. Jill stayed still, her eyes shut, fighting the pain. When finally she was able to straighten up and turn around, Fred Kapper was zipping up his

fly. " You were sensational, sweetheart. That screaming really turns me on. " And Jill wondered what kind of an animal he would be when he was nineteen. He saw that she was bleeding. " Get yourself cleaned up and come over to Stage Twelve. You start working this afternoon. " After that first experience, the rest was easy. Jill began to work regularly at all the studios: Warner Brothers, Paramount, MGM, Universal, Columbia, Fox. Everywhere, in fact, except at Disney, where sex did not exist. The role that Jill created in bed was a fantasy, and she ; acted it out with skill, preparing herself as though she were i playing a part. She read books on Oriental erotica and bought f philters and stimulants from a sex shop on Santa Monica j Boulevard. She had a lotion that an airline stewardess brought | her from the Orient, with the faintest touch of wintergreen in it. She learned to massage her lovers slowly and sensuously. " Lie there and think about what I'm doing to your body," she whispered. She rubbed the lotion across the man's chest and down his stomach toward his groin, making gentle, circling motions. " Close your eyes and enjoy it. Her fingers were as light as butterfly wings, moving down his body, caressing him. When he began to have an erection, Jill would take his growing penis in her hand and softly stroke it, moving her tongue down between his legs until he was squirming with pleasure, then continuing down slowly, all the way to his toes. Then Jill would turn him over, and it all began again. When a man's organ was limp, she put the head of it just inside the lips of her vagina, -and slowly drew him inside her, feeling it grow hard and stiff. She taught the men the waterfall, and how to peak and stop just before an orgasm and then build again and peak again, so that when they finally came, it was an ecstatic explosion.

They had their pleasure and got dressed and left. No one ever stayed long enough to give her the loveliest five minutes in sex, the quiet holding afterward, the peaceful oasis of a lover's arms. Providing Jill with acting parts was a small price to pay for the pleasure she gave the casting men, the assistant directors, the directors and the producers. She became known around town as a "red-hot piece of ass", and everyone was eager for his share. And Jill gave it. Each time she did, there was that much less self-respect and love in her, and that much more hatred and bitterness. She did not know how, or when, but she knew that one day this town would pay for what it had done to her.

During the next five years, Jill appeared in dozens of movies and television shows and commercials. She was the secretary who said, "Good morning, Mr. Stevens", and the baby-sitter who said, "Don't worry now, you two have a good evening. I'll put the children to bed", and the elevator operator who announced, "Sixth floor next", and the girl in the ski outfit who confided, "All my girlfriends use Dainties". But nothing ever happened. She was a nameless face in the crowd. She was in the Business, and yet she was not, and she could not bear the thought of spending the rest of her life like this. In 1969 Jill's mother died and Jill drove to Odessa for the funeral.

It was late afternoon and there were fewer than a dozen people at the service, none of them the women her mother had worked for all those years. Some of the churchgoers were there, the doom-saying revivalists. Jill remembered how terrified she had been at those meetings. But her mother had found some sort of solace in them, the exorcising of whatever demons had tormented her. A familiar voice said quietly, "Hello, Josephine." She

turned and he was standing at her side and she looked into his eyes and it was as though they had never been apart, as though they still belonged to each other. The years had stamped a maturity on his face, added a sprinkling of gray to his sideburns.

But he had not changed, he was still David, her David. Yet they were strangers. He was saying, " I'm very sorry about your mother. " And she heard herself replying, " Thank you, David. " As though they were reciting lines from a play. " I have to talk to you. Can you meet me tonight? " There was an urgent pleading in his voice. She thought of Ae last time they had been together and of the hunger in him then and the promise and the dreams. She said, " All right, David. " " The lake? Do you have a car? " She nodded. " I'll meet you there in an hour. " Cissy was standing in front of a mirror, naked, getting ready to dress for a dinner party when David arrived home.

He walked into her bedroom and stood there watching her. He could judge his wife with complete dispassion, for he felt no emotion whatsoever toward her. She was beautiful. Cissy had taken care of her body, keeping it in shape with diet and exercise. It was her primary asset and David had reason to believe that she was liberal in sharing it with others, her golf coach, her ski teacher, her flight instructor. But David could not blame her. It had been a long time since he had gone to bed with Cissy. In the beginning, he had really believed that she would give him a divorce when Mama Kenyon died. But David's mother was still alive and flourishing.

David had no way of knowing whether he had been tricked or whether a miracle had taken place. A year after their marriage, David had said to Cissy, " I think it's time we talked about that divorce. " Qssy had said, " What divorce? " And when she saw the astonished, look on his face she laughed. " I like being Mrs. David Kenyon, darling. Did you really think I was going to give you up for that little Polish whore? " He had slapped her. The following day he had gone to see his attorney. When David was finished talking, the attorney said, " I can get you the divorce. But if Qssy is set on hanging on to you, David, it's going to be bloody expensive. " " Get it. When Cissy had been served the divorce papers, she had locked herself in David's bathroom and had swallowed an overdose of sleeping pills. It had taken David and two servants to smash the heavy door. Cissy had hovered on the brink of death for two days. David had visited her in the private hospital where she had been taken. " I'm sorry, David," she had said. " I don't want to live without you. It's as simple as that. " The following morning, he had dropped the divorce suit. That had been almost ten years ago, and David's marriage had become an uneasy truce. He had completely taken over the Kenyon empire and he devoted all of his energies to running it. He found physical solace in the strings of girls he kept in the various dties around the world to which his business carried him.

But he had never forgotten Josephine. David had no idea how she felt about him. He wanted to know, and yet he was afraid to find out. She had every reason to hate him. When he had heard the news about Josephine's mother, David had gone to the funeral parlor just to look at Josephine. The moment he saw her, he knew that nothing had 184 changed. Not for him. The years

had been swept away in an instant, and he was as much in love with her as ever. / have to talk to you... meet me tonight. All right, David.... The lake. Cissy turned around as she saw David watching her in die pier glass. " You'd better hurry and change, David. We'll be late. " " I'm going to meet Josephine.

If she'll have me, I'm going to marry her. I think it's time this farce ended, don't you? " She stood there, staring at David, her naked image reflected in the mirror. " Let me get dressed," she said. David nodded and left the room. He walked into the large drawing room, pacing up and down, preparing for the confrontation. Surely after all these years. Cissy would not want to hang onto a marriage that was a hollow shell. He would give her anything she -He heard the sound of Cissy's car starting and then the scream of ores as it careened down the driveway. David raced to the front door and looked out. Cissy's Maserati was racing toward the highway.

Quickly, David got into his car, started the engine and gunned down the driveway after Cissy. As he reached the highway, her car was just disappearing in the distance. He stepped down hard on the accelerator. The Maserari was a faster car than David's Rolls. He pressed down harder on the gas pedal: 70 ... 80... 90. Her car was no longer in sight. xoo... no ... still no sign of her. I He reached the top of a small rise, and there he saw the (car, like a distant toy, careening around a curve. The torque was pulling the car to one side, the tires fighting to hold their traction on the road. The Maserati swayed back and forth, yawing across the highway. Then it leveled off and made it Ethe curve.

And suddenly the car hit the shoulder of the road and shot into the air like a catapult and rolled over and across the fields. David pulled Cissy's unconscious body out of the car moments before the ruptured gas tank exploded. It was six o'clock the next morning before the chief surgeon came out of the operating room and said to David, " She's going to live. " Jill arrived at the lake just before sunset. She drove to the edge of the water. Turning off the motor, she gave herself up to the sounds of the wind and the air. / don't know when I've ever been so happy, she thought. And then she corrected herself. Yes, I do. Here. With David. And she remembered how his body had felt on hers and she grew faint with wanting. Whatever had spoiled their happiness was over.

She had felt it the moment she had seen David. He was still in love with her. She knew it. She watched the blood-red sun slowly drown, in the distant water, and darkness fell. She wished that David would hurry. An hour passed, then two, and the air became chilled. She sat in the car, still and quiet. She watched the huge dead-white moon float into the sky. She listened to the night sounds all around her and she said to herself, David is coming. Jill sat there all night and, in the morning, when the sun began to stain the horizon, she started the car and drove home to Hollywood. 186 24 Jill sat in front of her dressing table and studied her face in the mirror.

She saw a barely perceptible wrinkle at the corner of her eye and frowned. It's unfair, she thought. A man can completely let himself go. He can have gray hair, a potbelly and a face like a road map, and no one thinks anything of it. But let a woman get one tiny wrinkle... She began to apply her makeup. Bob Schiffer, Hollywood's top makeup artist, had taught her some of his

techniques. Jill put on a pan-stick base instead of the powder base that she had once used. Powder dried the skin, while the pan-stick kept it moist. Next, she concentrated on her eyes, the makeup under her lower lids three or four shades lighter than her other makeup, so that the shadows were softened.

She rubbed in a small amount of eye shadow to give her eyes more color, then carefully applied false eyelashes over her own lashes, tilting them at the outer edges at a forty-five-degree angle. She brushed some Duo adhesive on her own outer lashes and joined them with the false lashes, making the eyes look larger. To give the lashes a fuller look, she drew fine dots on her lower eyelid beneath her own lashes. After that, Jill applied her lipstick, then powdered her lips before applying a second coat of lipj stick. She applied a blusher to her cheeks and dusted her face [with powder, avoiding the areas around the eyes where the [! powder would accentuate the faint wrinkles. Jill sat back in her chair and studied the effect in the mirror. She looked beautiful.

Someday, she would have to resort to the tape trick, but thank God that was still years away. Jill knew of older actresses who used the trick. They fastened tiny pieces of Scotch tape to their skin just below the hairline. Attached to these tapes were threads which they tied around their heads and concealed beneath their hair. The result was to pull the slackened skin of their faces taut, giving the effect of a face lift without the expense and pain of surgery. A variation was also used to disguise their sagging breasts. A piece of tape attached to the breast on one end and to the firmer flesh higher on the chest on the other provided a simple temporary solution to the problem. Jill's breasts were still firm.

She finished combing her soft, black hair, took one final look in the mirror, glanced at her watch and realized that she would have to hurry. She had an interview for "The Toby Temple Show". Eddie Berrigan, the casting director for Toby's show, was a married man. He had made arrangements to use a friend's apartment three afternoons a week. One of the afternoons was reserved for Berrigan's mistress and the other two afternoons were reserved for what he called "old talent" and "new talent". Jill Castle was new talent. Several buddies had told Eddie that Jill gave a fantastic "trip around the world" and wonderful head. Eddie had been eager to try her.

Now, a part in a sketch had come up that was right for her. All the character had to do was look sexy, say a few lines and exit. Jill read for Eddie and he was satisfied. She was no Kate Hepburn, but the role didn't call for one. "You're in," he said. "Thank you, Eddie." "Here's your script. Rehearsal starts tomorrow morning, ten o'clock sharp. Be on time, and know your lines." "Of course." She waited. "Er — how about meeting me this afternoon for a cup of coffee?" Jill nodded. "A friend of mine has an apartment at ninety-five thirteen ; Argyle. The Allerton." "I know where it is," Jill said. "Apartment Six D. Three o'clock." show.

That week's talent included a spectacular dance team from Argentina, a popular rock and roll group, a magician who made everything in sight disappear and a top vocalist. The only one missing was Toby Temple. Jill asked Eddie Berrigan about Toby's absence. "Is he sick?" Eddie snorted. "He's sick like a fox. The peasants rehearse while old Toby has himself a ball. He'll show up Saturday to tape the show, and then split." Toby Temple appeared on Saturday morning, breezing into the studio like a king. From a <https://assignbuster.com/a-stranger-in-the-mirrorpdf-assignment/>

corner of the stage, Jill watched him make his entrance, followed by his three stooges, Clifton Lawrence and a couple of old-time comics. The spectacle filled Jill with contempt. She knew all about Toby Temple.

He was an egomaniac who, according to rumor, bragged that he had been to bed with every pretty actress in Hollywood. No one ever said no to him. Oh, yes, Jill knew about the Great Toby Temple. The director, a short, nervous man named Harry Durkin, introduced the cast to Toby. Toby had worked with most of them. Hollywood was a small village, and the faces soon became familiar. Toby had not met Jill Castle before. She looked beautiful in a beige linen dress, cool and elegant. "What are you doing, honey?" Toby asked. "I'm in the astronaut sketch, Mi. Temple." He gave her a warm smile and said, "My friends call me Toby." The cast started to work. The rehearsal went unusually well, and Durkin quickly realized why. Toby was showing off for Jill.

He had laid every other girl in the show, and Jill was a new challenge. The sketch that Toby did with Jill was the high point of the show. Toby gave Jill a couple of additional lines and a funny piece of business. When rehearsal was over, Toby said to her, "How about a little drink in my dressing room?" "Thank you, I don't drink." Jill smiled and walked away. She had a date with a casting director and that was more important than Toby Temple. He was a one-shot. A casting director meant steady employe