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*Dramatic Publishing*

A Play in Three Acts

It Happens  
Every Summer

by  
DAVID ROGERS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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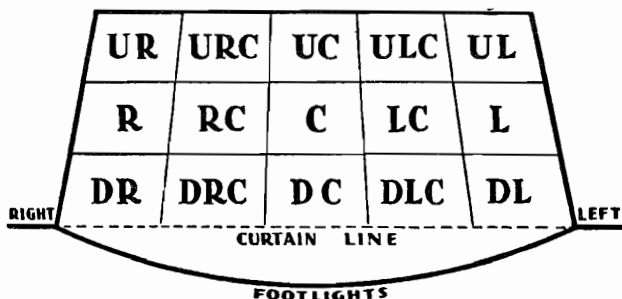
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(IT HAPPENS EVERY SUMMER)

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**This Play  
—and everything else—  
is for June**

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



### STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

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NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

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# It Happens Every Summer

*A Comedy in Three Acts*

FOR SEVEN MEN, THIRTEEN WOMEN AND EXTRAS

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## CHARACTERS

LUCY JENNINGS WOODRUFF . . . *Editor-in-Chief of Debutante*

GRETCHEN DANA

LARAE DONOHUE

MARGE POWELL

} . . . . . *members of her staff*

GERT . . . . . *the Receptionist*

JENNIFER TRUEX

FLIPPY WONDER

ANNABELLE AMES

M. K. ROBERTS

ANDREA MATLINS

OLGA STONE

BITSY STELLING

CHARITY BARNES

} . . . . . *the Sub-Deb Guest Editors*

TOD COLBERT

PUDGY ROULETTE

ZACHARY BRYAN

KENYON MCCLINTON

COUNT MARCELLO DI GIACOMO

CUSTIS GAYLORD OGLETHORPE

} . . . *the men in their lives*

BARNARD SANDS . . . . . *a publisher*

ROCCO, M. RENE, PERC, DELIVERY MEN, PARTY GUESTS.

SMALL PARTS AND EXTRAS.

*(The part of M. Rene can be changed to Mlle. Rene and played by a girl if that is preferable.)*

PLACE: *New York City.*

TIME: *Last June.*

### SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE, *Scene One: The Office of Debutante Magazine, the first Monday in June.*

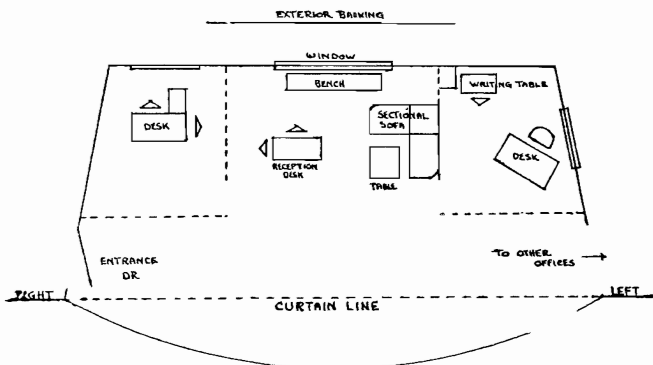
*Scene Two: The same, a few days later.*

ACT TWO, *Scene One: The office, two weeks later.*

*Scene Two: The same, a week later.*

ACT THREE: *The office, the next morning.*

## STAGE CHART



## PROPERTIES

**GENERAL: RECEPTION ROOM:** Elegant table (reception desk), two chairs, telephone, bench or window seat, sectional sofa, table; water carafe and glass, vase of flowers, magazines and papers, attendance sheets on reception desk. Sign, **DEBUTANTE**, printed on outside of entrance door. Act Two: Gert's purse in desk drawer, small telephone book on desk. For Act Two, Scene Two, add table with punch bowl, glasses, candlesticks, refreshments, etc. for party. Act Three: Aspirin, manicure set and mirror in desk drawer, pad and pencil on desk.

**RIGHT OFFICE:** Desk, typewriter, telephone, two chairs, picture or bulletin board, hassock.

**LEFT OFFICE (MRS. WOODRUFF'S OFFICE):** Writing table and chair, desk and chair, telephone, hassock, small filing cabinet. Act One: Papers, several photographs, typed sheet, on desk. Act Two: Flippy's purse on desk.

**M.K.:** Large book in tote bag, large manuscript (Act One); several small manuscripts and one large one, large envelope (Act Two); several typewritten sheets (Act Three).

**GRETCHEN:** Bundle of manuscripts, memorandum and script (Act One); vase or basket of flowers (Act Two).

**TOD:** Camera in case with neck strap, large portfolio (Act One).



FLIPPY: Hatbox, money, steno pad and pencil (Act One); copy attached to clipboard (Act Two).

TWO MEN: Three suitcases each.

MRS. WOODRUFF: Typed sheet of paper (Act One).

JENNIFER: Hat (Act One); Annabelle's article (Act Three).

ZACHARY: Dress box (Act One); box containing fur scarf (Act Two); large manila envelope (Act Three).

COUNT: Wrist watch (Act One); jewel box containing diamond clip (Act Two).

BITSY: Half-eaten cupcake (Act One); tray of food (Act Two).

PERC: Guitar in case.

KENYON: Corsage in box (Act One); huge package (Act Three).

GERT: Cupcake, container of coffee, purse in desk drawer, carton of ice (with Bitsy) (Act Two).

BITSY, CHARITY, OLGA *and* ANDREA: Clothing boxes (Act Two); containers of coffee (Act Three).

M. RENE: Barber shears and comb.

ANNABELLE: Sheet (draped over herself), diamond clip, hair curlers, glittering wrist watch, purse (Act Two); watch and clip (same as in Act Two) (Act Three).

MARGE: Two containers of coffee (Act Three).

CUSTIS: Sheet of paper.

PUDGY: Two or three crumpled napkins (Act Three).

LARAE: Large tray of canapes (Act Two); M.K.'s article, pencil, few sheets of paper (Act Three).

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# ACT ONE

## Scene One

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SCENE: *A cross-section of the office of Debutante Magazine.*

*D R* there is a large entrance door to the entire office, the word "Debutante" printed on the outside. Upstage of the door is a small office with a desk facing front, with a typewriter and telephone on it, and two chairs. A wall behind the desk is parallel to the footlights and decorated with a picture or bulletin board. The downstage and left walls of the office are imaginary, as is the door, which is left, leading into the reception room. The dimensions of the room can be marked by a low (one-foot) wall on the downstage side and/or a small hassock or ottoman in what is the downstage left corner of the room. The center, and by far the largest, section of the stage is the reception room. There is an elegant writing table right of center, used as a reception desk, a chair behind it and one left of it for visitors, facing front. On the table are a telephone, a carafe of water, a small vase of flowers, some magazines and papers. *U C* there is a large window opening on a view of New York skyscrapers. Before it is a long bench or window seat. Left of center, about halfway downstage, is a sectional sofa. One side faces front, the other is angled along the imaginary wall of the small office at left. There is a table in the angle of the sectional sofa. The left office is constructed like the right one but is perhaps a bit larger. Before the upstage wall are a small writing table and chair. There is a window in the wall *L*, and in front of the window, angled out, a larger desk with a telephone on it. Another hassock or ottoman marks the imaginary downstage walls of this office. The door, also imaginary, is just below the sectional sofa. The area downstage of the offices is a corridor leading to a door or archway *D L*, which leads to the rest of the office.]

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *MRS. WOODRUFF is at work in her*

office L. *She is smartly dressed in a business suit, a fancy hat and what seems to be an armload of jangling charm bracelets. She is an attractive woman of indeterminate age, but mature enough to be the editor-in-chief of a major fashion magazine. In the reception room, CHARITY BARNES, a college Sophomore from Baltimore, very quiet and painfully shy, ANDREA MATLINS, a Junior at Northwestern, and OLGA STONE, a Brandeis Senior who has long, flowing hair, are seated on the window seat. The girls are neatly dressed, carry purses and gloves; one or two might wear a hat. Their attitude suggests that they are waiting in a strange, new place. Down right of center, seated behind her desk, is GERT, the receptionist. A young, attractive New Yorker, she is a bit suspicious of everyone and everything. She is using the telephone.]*

GERT [*angrily*]. Hello . . . hello! Why did you go away after you answered? Well, who are you? An answering service or just a girl? *Please*, is this Tod Colbert's studio or not? Certainly, I'll tell you! This is *Debutante Magazine* and I'm calling for Mrs. Woodruff, the editor-in-chief, and Mr. Colbert is supposed to be here as of one hour ago. . . . Look, did he leave a number? M-U-5-1—that's our number! So he's on the way! Well, he oughta be here! If he calls in, would you just mention that all *Debutante Magazine* is waiting for him? Thank you very large. [*Hangs up, annoyed.*]

[BITSY STELLING, a Junior from Idaho State College, runs in from D R. *She is attractive, but her rather plump figure gives a clue to her main interest in life.*]

BITSY [*hurtling up to desk*]. I won the contest! I'm one of the Sub-Deb Guest Editors. Bitsy Stelling.

GERT [*checking a list on her desk*]. Elizabeth Stelling?

BITSY. That's what I said—Bitsy. I'm sorry I'm late but at the hotel they told me to take a Third Avenue bus and that runs on Lexington Avenue and Lexington Avenue goes the wrong way.

GERT. This your first trip to New York?

BITSY. Yes.

GERT [*the voice of experience*]. Everything goes the wrong way. [*Gestures.*] Wait with the others.

[*BITSY sits with the others and begins a quiet conversation with OLGA and ANDREA. As she does, LARAE DONOHUE enters D R. She is tall, cool, glamorous, an ex-model who is now Beauty Editor of Debutante. She crosses to the reception desk and signs an attendance sheet.*]

GERT. Good morning, Miss Donohue.

LARAE. I doubt it. It's the first of June and the invasion of Sub-Deb editors is down upon us like the locusts. [*Sits left of desk.*] Have you any aspirins?

GERT [*taking some from drawer*]. A headache?

LARAE. No. But I'm expecting one. [*Pours water from carafe on desk.*] To the rest of the world, June means roses and romance. To me, it means a gawky college girl who entered the annual Debutante contest, wrote an assignment, won the contest and, for a prize, gets to stare over my shoulder for a whole month! [*Makes a toasting gesture with water and takes aspirin.*]

[*M.K. ROBERTS enters D R and crosses to desk. M.K. is a beatnik, stern, principled and usually hostile. She wears dark stockings, a skirt and sweater, and carries a tote bag. She wears no makeup and her hair style is casual by the most relaxed standards. She has a no-nonsense attitude.*]

M.K. [*to GERT*]. M. K. Roberts.

GERT [*checking list*]. Mary Katherine Roberts?

M.K. [*positively*]. M. K. Roberts.

GERT [*indicating others with a nod of the head*]. Wanna wait? [*M.K. sits on sofa, takes a large volume from her tote bag, and reads.*]

LARAE [*to GERT*]. I'll bet my false eyelashes that one's mine.

GERT. Why?

LARAE. She's the ghastly type that always turns out to be Sub-

Deb beauty editor. [*Rises and goes out L. MRS. WOODRUFF picks up some papers and comes from her office.*]

MRS. WOODRUFF. Gert, my dear, did you contact Tod Colbert?

GERT. No. But I think he's on his way.

MRS. WOODRUFF. Terrible boy! He should've been here an hour ago! He's supposed to photograph the Sub-Deb editors' whole month with us and the series certainly should start with their arrival. [*Going L.*] I'll be in the Promotion Office. [*Goes out D L.*]

[*ANNABELLE AMES enters D R. She is a breath of the Old South—beautiful, although she seems to wear too many crinolines and curls. She crosses to the desk.*]

ANNABELLE. Mah name is Miss Annabelle Ames. [*Curtseys.*]

GERT [*startled*]. Oh, boy!

[*As GERT checks her list, MARGE POWELL, the art editor, so sensibly dressed in tweeds as to appear almost dowdy, enters D R and crosses to sign in at desk.*]

GERT. Good morning, Mrs. Powell.

MARGE [*signing*]. Hi, Gert. [*Cheerfully, to ANNABELLE.*]

Good morning. [*Goes out D L.*]

ANNABELLE [*looking after her*]. Does she work heah?

GERT. She's the art editor.

ANNABELLE. Lawsy! Annabelle surprised!

GERT. Is she?

ANNABELLE. Whah, yes. The art editor of a fashion magazine—in tweeds?

GERT. But she's kind to her aged mother. You wanna sit down?

ANNABELLE. Thank y'all so much.

[*GERT rises and curtsies to ANNABELLE, who giggles happily and joins girls upstage. As she does, JENNIFER TRUEX enters D R. She is a Senior from the University of Nebraska, pretty, neatly dressed, and wearing a simple hat. She crosses to GERT'S desk.*]

GERT. Name?

JENNIFER. Jennifer Truex. I'm sorry I'm late. I walked.

GERT [*astonished*]. All the way from the Malmaison?

JENNIFER. There's so much to see in New York.

[GRETCHEN DANA enters D R, *overhearing this. She is a smart, witty young woman carrying a bundle of manuscripts.*]

GRETCHEN [*overhearing*]. There sure is. I'm Gretchen Dana, the fiction editor.

JENNIFER [*impressed*]. Really? I—I've looked forward to meeting you. I admire the stories you run. They're far above the usual fashion mag stuff.

GRETCHEN [*coldly*]. I've been flattered by experts. . . .

JENNIFER [*embarrassed*]. But I really . . . I mean I've made comparative studies . . . I . . . [*Realizes GRETCHEN isn't listening.*]

GRETCHEN [*who has crossed to GERT and given her a memorandum and a script*]. Refer this one to Mrs. Woodruff.

[GERT *nods and puts it aside.*] I'll see you. [GRETCHEN *goes to office R and sits at desk, removing hat and gloves.*]

[TOD COLBERT enters D R. *He is a handsome young man in his mid-twenties, with a certain boyish charm. He is dressed in sports clothes, a hat pushed well back on his head. He has a camera slung around his neck. He has a flip, sardonic attitude.*]

TOD [*making his usual flamboyant entrance*]. Gertrude, you little bit of salt and sweetness! Drop your steno pad, marry me and we will fly to the enchanted Grecian Islands—or at least to Atlantic City.

GERT. Some day I'll say yes, Tod Colbert, and you'll drop dead. Where have you been? Mrs. Woodruff is fit to be tied.

TOD. I tell you truly, Gert, I started out for the salt mine in plenty of time but I passed a construction site—big, big hole in the ground. . . .

GERT. And you had your pail and shovel so you helped 'em dig?

TOD. No—but—I took some pictures. Not the diggers in their honest toil, but the digger-watchers. Ever watch a digger-watcher watch diggers? Fascinating. They get this rapt expression—like they're watching the creation of the world and it's only the afternoon of the third day.

GERT. Let me know when they lock you up. I think you're allowed one phone call.

TOD. I got some great shots . . . one old man—he had a face like an Old Testament prophet—puffing on a pipe watching a young guy with a pneumatic drill. You could see this old man's whole life—empty now. Once he could handle a shovel with the best of them, but now there's nothing for him to do but watch this young twerp with a tool do more in an hour than he could do in a day. His face, Gert, it had more character than all the bright young Sub-Deb editors put together.

JENNIFER [*to GERT*]. Excuse me. Is there something I could do?

TOD [*looking at JENNIFER, crossing to her, turning her to a better light*]. Take this one. Pretty? Well, not bad. Some shadows under the eyes—but when M. Rene comes over from the House of Delmar for the makeup analysis, he'll put on enough makeup base to kill whatever character she has.

JENNIFER [*annoyed*]. I beg your pardon.

TOD [*turning her face*]. Left profile is the good one. Too bad your dimple's on the right, honey, but never fear, *Debutante* will glamorize you to a point where the folks back home will hardly recognize you, and that's just what you want, isn't it? [*Snaps cover off his camera.*]

JENNIFER. No. I want to work and learn something.

TOD. Ah, a tourist in the creative arts!

JENNIFER [*angry*]. Look, this job is very important to me. The chance to work on a magazine is everything I've ever wanted. Maybe I'm not a sophisticated New Yorker—yet—

so maybe I don't understand, but in Nebraska, we try to be polite and helpful to strangers.

TOD [*snapping her picture*]. I got a great one, Gert. Nebraska Princess lost in dark forest snapping at Dragon—or, for a shorter caption—"Snap Dragon."

JENNIFER [*furious but restraining herself, sarcastically*]. Thank you. You're very kind, understanding and sweet.

[*MRS. WOODRUFF enters L overbearing JENNIFER's last speech. She has a typed sheet in her hand.*]

MRS. WOODRUFF. Tod, I will not have you interfering with my Sub-Deb editors, and you, young lady, are here to work. I will not tolerate any of you girls flirting with my staff.

JENNIFER [*misunderstood*]. But—I——

MRS. WOODRUFF. Will you join the others, please? I'll be with you in a minute. [*JENNIFER, upset at the misunderstanding, sits on sofa near M.K. To GERT.*] Are all the girls here?

GERT [*checking sheet*]. All except Flippy Wonder.

MRS. WOODRUFF [*stunned*]. Flippy Wonder! I suppose when girls' names start sounding idiotic it means I'm getting old?

TOD. Never you, Mom Woodruff, eternally young and lovely.

MRS. WOODRUFF. Hogwash! Just keep your gamey charm to yourself, Mr. Colbert. It's barely five years since I plucked you from the mail room here and gave you a chance with your Brownie—an opportunity that has made you an extremely successful New York photographer.

TOD. Is that any reason to pay me slave wages?

MRS. WOODRUFF. The slave who earned what you earn is probably the man who shot Lincoln. [*Seriously.*] Now listen, Tod, this Sub-Deb editor contest is very important to me. We had ten thousand entries this year. Do you realize what that does for our circulation? And having these girls here for this month is very good for me and my whole staff. These girls are our average readers and by having them here working with us, we find out what the typical American girl is thinking—how she feels politically—what she wants to read—what she wants to wear. I am no longer college age



and I don't know. [TOD *opens his mouth.*] None of your absurd compliments!

TOD. So okay, it's good for the magazine, but I hate working with them. They're either giggling idiots or earnest like that one—[*Indicating* JENNIFER.]—putting their noses into everything and complicating the job.

MRS. WOODRUFF. I am aware that you don't like this assignment, but it happens to be the most important one on the magazine and you owe me a good job. And part of that job is getting along with these girls.

TOD. I'll do my best—but I don't promise.

{LARAE and MARGE enter D L.}

LARAE. Well, here we are. The shepherds ready to be slaughtered by the lambs.

MRS. WOODRUFF [*a crushing insult*]. You have lipstick on your teeth.

[GRETCHEN *comes out of her office as* FLIPPY WONDER, *a Bennington Junior, flies in D R. She is an attractive girl in high-fashion clothes, carrying a hatbox. She is extremely vivacious; indeed, her high spirits are constant and wearing.*]

FLIPPY. Honeys! I'm so sorry I'm late but the second plane was late and I missed the first plane 'cause I was snarfing around in this divinish little perfume boite at the airport. [*Calls off D R.*] Just bring the luggage in here, boys.

[TWO MEN *enter carrying three valises apiece, and pile the luggage near the door.*]

FLIPPY. Aren't they heavenish? This one's the cab driver and the other one I just picked up on Lexington Avenue. [*Gives them some money.*] Here you are, boys. [*They exit.*]

MRS. WOODRUFF [*half to herself*]. It's a Flippy Wonder. I know it's a Flippy Wonder. I can recognize them every time.

MARGE. Seven pieces of luggage for one month?

FLIPPY. I left the trunk at the airport 'cause I didn't remember

where we were staying. [*To GERT.*] Could you have them pick it up, *cherie*? Where are we staying?

GERT [*swept away*]. The Malmaison Hotel.

FLIPPY. Malmaison? That means sick house. What's the matter with it?

GRETCHEN. It's just for girls.

FLIPPY. I should've known. Well, it's sweet, sweet, sweet of you kids to wait for me. What do we do now?

MRS. WOODRUFF [*even she is a little overpowered*]. Would you—ah—like to join the others?

FLIPPY [*doing so*]. Oh, I love this office! It's absolutely Fat City! So luxury-ish! [*Sits beside JENNIFER.*] It's something else!

JENNIFER. Something else?

FLIPPY. You know—far out . . . it swings . . . *ça balance* . . . it swings!

TOD [*ready with camera and gesturing toward girls, to MRS. WOODRUFF*]. Will Madame greet the typical American girl? [*Takes photographs as the action proceeds.*]

MRS. WOODRUFF [*crossing U C to talk to girls*]. All right, girls, this won't take long. I am Lucy Jennings Woodruff, the editor-in-chief of *Debutante*, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome you here. This month will be exciting and fun for you, I'm sure. You will learn a little bit about the magazine world and we will learn a lot about college girls. [*They laugh.*] You will be lunched, dined and given more samples by more manufacturers of clothing, cosmetics and so on, than you dreamed existed. You'll meet and interview celebrities from the publishing world, the theatre and the arts. But this won't all be fun; you'll have to work, too. We'll start by assigning you to your editors, you'll have a short conference with them, and then they'll take you out to lunch and really get to know you. Now. [*Refers to typed sheet she carries.*] Jennifer Truex?

JENNIFER. Yes?

MRS. WOODRUFF [*seeing who it is*]. Oh! . . . You will be

my guest editor. Sub-Deb Editor-in-Chief! [*Shakes hands with JENNIFER as TOD snaps photograph.*]

JENNIFER. Oh, that's wonderful! Thank you! [*The girls ad lib congratulations to her.*]

MRS. WOODRUFF. Charity Barnes? [*CHARITY shyly raises her hand.*] You will work with Marge Powell as Sub-Deb Art Editor. [*As MRS. WOODRUFF continues, MARGE crosses to CHARITY. They shake hands and TOD snaps the scene. This business is repeated as each girl gets her assignment. MARGE takes CHARITY into office R.*] Annabelle Ames?

ANNABELLE [*rising and curtsying*]. Present.

MRS. WOODRUFF. Sub-Deb Fiction Editor working with Gretchen Dana. Mary Katherine Roberts. . . .

M.K. [*standing*]. I prefer to be called M.K.

MRS. WOODRUFF. Very well, M.K. You will be working with Larae Donohue as Sub-Deb Beauty Editor.

LARAE [*standing, crushed*]. I knew it.

MRS. WOODRUFF. Now Tod and the rest of you come with me—[*OLGA, ANDREA, FLIPPY and BITSY rise and start for door D L with her.*—and I'll introduce you to your editors and we'll continue with the pictures. . . . Oh—[*Pausing at door.*—my assistant. . . .

JENNIFER. Jennifer Truex.

MRS. WOODRUFF. Yes; will you wait for me in my office, my dear? [*Goes out D L with the girls and TOD. JENNIFER goes into the office L, removes her hat, then sits quietly. GRETCHEN, LARAE, ANNABELLE and M.K. remain in reception room talking quietly, and we hear MARGE in the office R.*]

MARGE. Well, Charity, I suppose this all seems wild and strange and confusing, but as soon as you settle down and come out of your shell, it will all be perfectly simple. [*She pauses, expecting a reply. There is none.*] Don't you think? [*Faced with a direct question, CHARITY nods shyly. MARGE attempts to settle down for a chat.*] Well . . . why don't you tell me something about yourself, Charity? [*CHARITY struggles to think of something to say and just ends by*

*sbrugging.*] You're from Baltimore? [CHARITY *nods.*] Lovely place, Baltimore. So friendly. [CHARITY *nods again.* MARGE *is getting nervous.*] But awfully hot, don't you think? [CHARITY, *defending her home town, shakes her head "no" violently.*] Well, I'm glad you feel strongly about Baltimore. [Trying another tack.] I thought those sketches you sent in as your Sub-Deb assignment were just lovely, Charity. [CHARITY *smiles and bobs her head "thank you."* MARGE *makes an all-out attempt with a direct question.*] Have you been painting long? [CHARITY *nods "yes."* MARGE, *gamely.*] Which medium do you like best? [CHARITY *waves her hand, indicating any one.*] Why did you want to be a Sub-Deb editor? [CHARITY *thinks that over, finally shrugs in embarrassment.*] Well, I don't know when I've had such a stimulating chat. [Smiles at CHARITY, who smiles back. They both sit there, smiling. ANNABELLE'S voice comes up in the reception room. She is seated on the left angle of the sofa, LARAE and MARGE on the right. M.K. is seated in chair left of GERT'S desk, leafing through a copy of *Debutante.*]

ANNABELLE [*finishing a story*]. . . . and that's whah Ah decahed to wrahte about a pa'ty Ah gave as mah assignment to win the Sub-Deb Editor contest.

GRETCHEN. I didn't know people gave simple little parties for three hundred any more.

ANNABELLE [*making it clear*]. Well—it was mah debut.

LARAE. Dinner, dancing, champagne breakfast and strolling gypsy violinists. My!

ANNABELLE. They were so romantic. The only thing that marred the whole beautiful effect was one o' them put a foot through one o' Momma's croquet hoops and fell over right in the middle of "Play Gypsy, Dance Gypsy."

M.K. [*holding up magazine*]. Do people really read articles called "Beautiful Beige for a Sophisticated Summer"?

GRETCHEN. We have a very large circulation.

M.K. Disgusting! What's a toast accent?

LARAE. A contrasting color. It makes beautiful beige so gorgeous, you can't stand it.