

the other side of the bed, as though she were looking down at another person. She smiles, as though in answer to something he had said, and gently moves a lock of hair from his imaginary face. She continues to size up the bed; then she sees George. George, wagging a finger at her.) Good morning. Sleep well? (*Jill sits up and smooths her sweater.*) I'm sorry. I didn't mean to embarrass you.

JILL. Why didn't you cough or something?

GEORGE. To be perfectly frank, I was enjoying watching you. You seem to have a true appreciation of good old fifty-four.

JILL. Of what?

GEORGE. Good old fifty-four. The width.

JILL. Oh. Well, I've always slept in a single.

GEORGE. (*Remembering her antics on the bed.*) Oh? About to be married?

JILL. No. Just divorced.

GEORGE. Well, I don't wonder, sleeping together in a single bed. (*He laughs at his bad joke.*)

JILL. We slept together in *two* single beds.

GEORGE. I see.

JILL. "So much better when either of you gets a cold," his mother said.

GEORGE. Do you get colds?

JILL. No. His mother got the colds. I got a divorce. (*She tests the bed by striking it in some way which George finds mysterious.*) He was a born bachelor. I think getting up and going back to his own bed gave him the comforting impression he wasn't really married.

GEORGE. This day and age, I'm surprised you didn't find that out before you were married.

JILL. That was my fault. I only had this thirty-inch bed. I couldn't very well expect him to spend the whole night in that.

GEORGE. (*Indicating the double bed.*) I take it next time you're going to know beforehand.

JILL. What I'd really like is one of those old canopy beds, with curtains, or a big brass bed. I was born in an old brass bed. Conceived in it too.

GEORGE. I think you'll find this very congenial. It has my unqualified endorsement. My wife and I have slept on one for twenty-five years, and it would have held up for another ten at least, but my wife decided it was time for single beds.

JILL. You've been married for twenty-five years?

GEORGE. Yes.

JILL. Well, men *do* keep in better shape than women.

GEORGE. (*Pulls in his gut.*) Yes. . . . Well, I try to get to the club three times a week . . . play a little squash, keep down the old midriff.

JILL. I think men improve with age, mostly. They know what they want and how to get it, and what to do with it when they get it. Now, women . . . they get their men, feather their nests, and then let themselves go. That's cheating in my book. I'm not talking about your wife, of course.

GEORGE. Oh, Harriet's still—

JILL. (*Going right on.*) It was all right when we were an agrarian society and women's function was to breed children to help on the farm. But now she has a responsibility to keep herself attractive. I wrote a paper on that in college.

GEORGE. (*Amused at her.*) I'm sure the man gave you an A-plus.

JILL. It was a woman. She gave me a C-minus.

GEORGE. You sound very fair about the whole thing.

JILL. I should keep my mouth shut, but I think your wife is taking a terrible risk, an attractive man like you who plays squash.

GEORGE. Well, after all, times change. People change.

JILL. But the point is, you haven't changed. Things are very unfair in our society for men. They get these drives and urges when they're twelve or thirteen—

GEORGE. Twelve. Twelve.

JILL. And they keep them for years and years, and what are they supposed to do about them? A wider bed would be better, but I haven't the room for it.

GEORGE. One of those cookie-cutter apartments?

JILL. Never. An old brownstone. Way up at the top. A walk-up.

GEORGE. That's a curious location for a girl who admires older men.

JILL. I wouldn't be caught dead in one of those new places. The bedrooms are so gleaming and sharp and . . . antiseptic, a man wouldn't know if he was supposed to make love or operate.

GEORGE. My hopes for the younger generation are rising every minute. I lived in a brownstone once. East Fiftieth Street.

JILL. (*Fussing with swatches, not looking at him.*) I'm on East Fifty-first.

GEORGE. I had a view of the river.

JILL. I don't.

GEORGE. I was between Second and First.

JILL. I'm between Second and Third.

GEORGE. Oh, I had a friend who lived at two forty-two.

JILL. (*Matter-of-factly.*) Two twenty-six.

GEORGE. No. He was at two forty-two.

JILL. I'm at two twenty-six. (*She has been studying the mattress during this ritual of giving the address.*) I like a firm mattress.

GEORGE. So do I.

JILL. Do you call this firm?

GEORGE. (*Sits on the mattress and tests it.*) More or less.

JILL. How tall are you?

GEORGE. Five . . . uh . . . nine.

JILL. Weight?

GEORGE. One seventy-five. . . . Stripped. (*He beams.*)

JILL. Mmmmmmm. Could I be a nuisance and ask you to lie down? (*She lies down.*)

GEORGE. (*He hovers over the side of the bed she's lying on, awkward.*) Of course.

JILL. What's the matter?

GEORGE. I . . . uh . . . This is usually my side of the bed. (*Jill squirms across to the other side. George looks toward the various exits for signs of Harriet, and then lies down, carefully keeping away from her.*)

JILL. Does this embarrass you?

GEORGE. No!

JILL. It doesn't seem to sag, does it?

GEORGE. No!

JILL. I mean, I don't roll downhill toward you?

GEORGE. Unfortunately not. (*A quick laugh.*)

JILL. How much room do you have on that side, between you and the edge? (*She hitches up and leans over him to look at and feel the distance and measure it with her hand.*) Oh, quite a bit. (*He suffers pleasantly from her hovering proximity.*)

GEORGE. (*Sits up.*) I'm a little overweight at the moment. I should take off four or five pounds. But I haven't been able to exercise lately.

JILL. Oh?

GEORGE. I had an operation on my knee.

JILL. Torn cartilage?

GEORGE. Yes.

JILL. I have a bad knee the doctor's been itching to operate on, but I don't want my knee all scarred up. It does leave a nasty scar, doesn't it?

GEORGE. Well, it's not so bad. (*He rolls up his trousers to show her his knee.*)

JILL. That's a very nice job he did. Anyway, scars on a man are rather attractive. I noticed you have a small scar on your upper lip. The war?

GEORGE. (*Looks at Jill a moment.*) No. My dog bit me. (*Jill lies down again. George, still sitting up:*) Of course, the proper technique in a fifty-four-inch is not to lie like two mummies, but entwined.

JILL. Yes, all snuggled around each other. I'm an indiscriminate snuggler. Cats, dogs, dolls, stuffed animals, et cetera.

GEORGE. Are you a morning person or a night person?

JILL. What do you mean?

GEORGE. Some people are wide awake and full of vigor in the morning . . . others at night.

JILL. I guess you could say I'm a morning person. . . . But I'm adaptable.

GEORGE. I'm a morning person.

JILL. *Are you?* (*Popping up.*) Well, this is all daydreaming anyway. (*She starts to put on her shoes and jacket.*) I can't afford a new bed yet. I'll probably have to wait till Mom and Dad die and I get the old brass one I was born in. Thank you very much. I have to be getting back to work.

GEORGE. What kind of work do you do?

JILL. I want to do something in design. But at the moment I do jobs of typing at home . . . manuscripts . . . short stories, novels . . . that sort of thing.

GEORGE. I see . . . I started a novel when I was in college.

JILL. Did you?

GEORGE. I never finished it.

JILL. That's too bad.

GEORGE. Maybe I ought to get back to it.

JILL. Well, if you want it typed, you have the address.

GEORGE. What? Oh. Oh, yes . . . two forty-two.