
FICTION

CORRIE

BY ALICE MUNRO



“It isn’t a good thing to have the money concentrated all in the one family, the way you do in a place like this,” Mr. Carlton said. “I mean, for a girl like my daughter Corrie here. For example, I mean, like her. It isn’t good. Nobody on the same level.”

Corrie was right across the table, looking their guest in the eye. She seemed to think this was funny.

“Who’s she going to marry?” her father continued. “She’s twenty-five.”

Corrie raised her eyebrows, made a face.

“You missed a year,” she said. “Twenty-six.”

“Go ahead,” her father said. “Laugh all you like.”

She laughed out loud, and, indeed, what else could she do? the guest thought. His name was Howard Ritchie, and he was only a few years older than she was, but already equipped with a wife and a young family, as her father had immediately found out.

Her expressions changed very quickly. She had bright-white teeth and short, curly, nearly black hair. High cheekbones that caught the light. Not a soft woman. Not much meat on the bone, which was the sort of thing her father might find to say next. Howard Ritchie thought of her as the type of girl who spent a lot of time playing golf and tennis. In spite of her quick tongue, he expected her to have a conventional mind.

He was an architect, just getting started on a career. Mr. Carlton insisted on referring to him as a church architect, because he was at present restoring the tower of the town’s Anglican church. A tower that had been on the verge of toppling until Mr. Carlton came to its rescue. Mr. Carlton was not an Anglican—he had pointed that out several times. His church was the Methodist, and he was Methodist to the core, which was why he kept no liquor in the house. But a fine church like the Anglican ought not to be let to go to wrack and ruin. No hope looking to the Anglicans to do anything—they were a poor class of Irish Protestants, who would have taken the tower down and put up something that was a blemish on the town. They didn’t have the shekels, of course, and they wouldn’t understand the need for an architect, rather than a carpenter. A church architect.

The dining room was hideous, at least in Howard’s opinion. This was the mid-fifties, but everything looked as if it had been in place before the turn of the century. The food was barely all right. The man at the head of the table never stopped talking. You’d think the girl would be exhausted by it, but she seemed mostly to be on the verge of laughing. Before she was done with her dessert, she lit a cigarette. She offered Howard one, saying, quite audibly, “Don’t mind Daddy.” He accepted, but didn’t think the better of her.

Spoiled rich miss. Unmannerly.

Out of the blue, she asked him what he thought of the Saskatchewan Premier, Tommy Douglas.

He said that his wife supported him. Actually, his wife didn’t think Douglas was far left enough, but he wasn’t going to get into that.

“Daddy loves him. Daddy’s a Communist.”

This brought a snort from Mr. Carlton that didn’t squelch her.

“Well, you laugh at his jokes,” she told her father.

Shortly after that, she took Howard out to look at the grounds. The house was directly across the street from the factory, which made men’s boots and work shoes. Behind the house, however, were wide lawns and the river that curled halfway around the town. There was a worn path down to its bank. She led the way, and he was able to see what he hadn’t been sure of before. She was lame in one leg.

“Isn’t it a steep climb back up?” he asked.

“I’m not an invalid.”

“I see you’ve got a rowboat,” he said, meaning that as a partway apology.

“I’d take you out in it but not right now. Now we’ve got to watch the sunset.” She pointed out an old kitchen chair that she said was for watching the sunset, and demanded that he sit there. She herself sat on the grass. He was about to ask if she would be able to get up all right, but thought better of it.

“I had polio,” she said. “That’s all it is. My mother had it, too, and she died.”

“That’s too bad.”

“I suppose so. I can’t remember her. I’m going to Egypt next week. I was very keen on going, but now I don’t seem to care so much. Do you think it’d be fun?”

“I have to earn a living.”

He was amazed at what he’d said, and, of course, it set her off giggling.

“I was speaking in general terms,” she said grandly, when the giggling finished. “Me, too.”

Some creepy fortune hunter was bound to snap her up, some Egyptian or whatever. She seemed both bold and childish. At first, a man might be intrigued by her, but then her forwardness, her self-satisfaction, if that was what it was, would become tiresome. Of course, there was money, and to some men that never became tiresome.

“You mustn’t ever mention my leg in front of Daddy or he will go apoplectic,” she said. “Once he fired not just a kid who teased me but his entire family. I mean, even cousins.”

From Egypt there arrived peculiar postcards, sent to his firm, not his house. Well, of course, how could she have known his home address?

Not a single pyramid on them. No Sphinx.

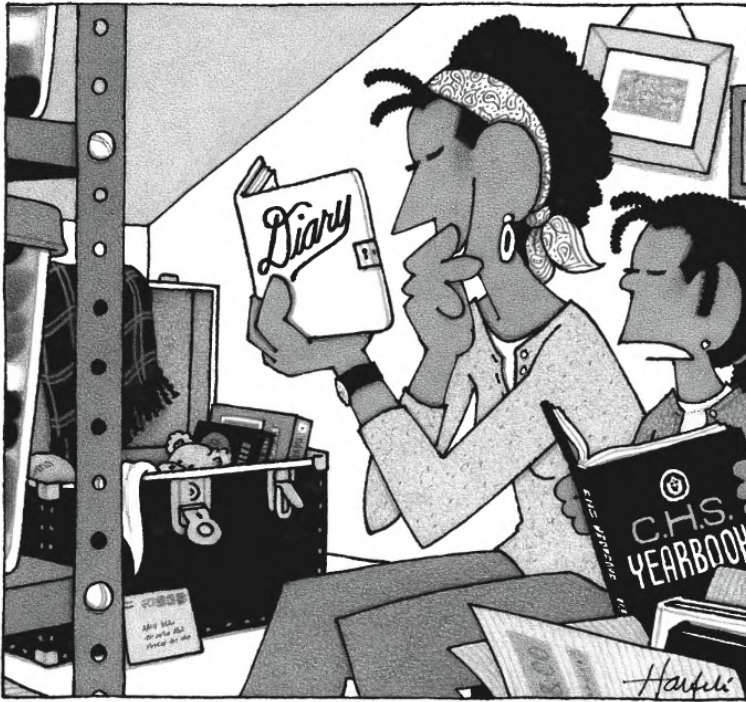
Instead, one showed the Rock of Gibraltar with a note that called it a pyramid in collapse. Another showed some flat dark-brown fields, God knows where, and said, “Sea of Melancholia.” There was another message in fine print: “Magnifying glass obtainable send money.” Fortunately, nobody in the office got hold of these.

He did not intend to reply, but he did: “Magnifying glass faulty please refund money.”

He drove to her town for an unnecessary inspection of the church steeple, knowing that she had to be back from the Pyramids but not knowing whether she would be at home or off on some other jaunt.

She was home, and would be for some time. Her father had suffered a stroke.

There was not really much for her to do. A nurse came in every other day. And a girl named Sadie Wolfe was in charge of the fires, which were always lit when Howard arrived. Of course, she did other chores as well. Corrie herself couldn’t quite manage to get a good fire going or put a meal together; she couldn’t type, couldn’t drive a car, not even with a built-up shoe to help her. Howard took over when he came. He looked after the fires and saw to various things around the house and was even taken to visit



"What was the point of writing a blog that nobody else could read?"

Corrie's father, if the old man was able.

He hadn't been sure how he would react to the foot, in bed. But in some way it seemed more appealing, more unique, than the rest of her.

She had told him that she was not a virgin. But that turned out to be a complicated half-truth, owing to the interference of a piano teacher, when she was fifteen. She had gone along with what the piano teacher wanted because she felt sorry for people who wanted things so badly.

"Don't take that as an insult," she said, explaining that she had not continued to feel sorry for people in that way.

"I should hope not," he said.

Then he had things to tell her about himself. The fact that he had produced a condom did not mean that he was a regular seducer. In fact, she was only the second person he had gone to bed with, the first being his wife. He had been brought up in a fiercely religious household and still believed in God, to some extent. He kept that a secret from his wife, who would have made a joke of it, being very left-wing.

Corrie said she was glad that what they were doing—what they had just done—appeared not to bother him, in spite of his belief. She said that she herself had never had any time for God, because her father was enough to cope with.

It wasn't difficult for them. Howard's job often required him to travel for a daytime inspection or to see a client. The drive from Kitchener didn't take long. And Corrie was alone in the house now. Her father had died, and the girl who used to work for her had gone off to find a city job. Corrie had approved of this, even giving her money for typing lessons, so that she could better herself.

"You're too smart to mess around doing housework," she had said. "Let me know how you get along."

Whether Sadie Wolfe spent the money on typing lessons or on something else was not known, but she did continue to do housework. This was discovered on an occasion when Howard and his wife were invited to dinner, with others, at the home of some rather important people in Kitchener. There was

Sadie waiting on table, coming face to face with the man she had seen in Corrie's house. The man she had seen with his arm around Corrie when she came in to take the plates away or fix the fire. An unknown woman with him, who, the conversation soon made plain, was his wife. It was also made plain that his wife had not come recently into the picture. Her time had overlapped with Corrie's.

Howard did not tell Corrie about the dinner right away, because he hoped it would become unimportant. The host and hostess of the evening were nothing like close friends of his, or of his wife. Certainly not of his wife, who made fun of them on political grounds afterward. It had been a social business event. And the household wasn't likely the sort in which the maids gossiped with the mistress.

Indeed, it wasn't. Sadie said that she had not gossiped about it at all. She said this in a letter. It was not her mistress whom she had a notion of speaking to, if she had to. It was his own wife. Would his wife be interested in getting this information? was the way she put it. The letter was sent to his office address, which she had been clever enough to find out. But she was also acquainted with his home address. She had been spying. She mentioned that and also referred to his wife's coat with the silver-fox collar. This coat bothered his wife, and she often felt obliged to tell people that she had inherited, not bought, it. That was the truth. Still, she liked to wear it on certain occasions, like that dinner party, to hold her own, it seemed, even with people whom she had no use for.

"I would hate to have to break the heart of such a nice lady with a big silver-fox collar on her coat," Sadie had written.

"How would Sadie know a silver-fox collar from a hole in the ground?" Corrie said, when he felt that he had to break the news to her. "Are you sure that's what she said?"

"I'm sure."

He had burned the letter at once, had felt contaminated by it.

"She's learned things, then," Corrie said. "I always thought she was sly. I guess killing her is not an option?"

He didn't even smile, so she said very soberly, "I'm just kidding."

It was April, but still cold enough that you would like to have a fire lit. She had

planned to ask him to do it, all through supper, but his strange, sombre attitude had prevented her.

He told her that his wife hadn't wanted to go to that dinner. "It's all just pure rotten luck."

"You should have taken her advice," she said.

"It's the worst," he said. "It's the worst that could happen."

They were both staring into the black grate. He had touched her only once, to say hello.

"Well, no," Corrie said. "Not the worst. No."

"No?"

"No," she said. "We could give her the money. It's not a lot, really."

"I don't have—"

"Not you. I could."

"Oh, no."

"Yes."

She made herself speak lightly, but she had gone deathly cold. For what if he said no? No, I can't let you. No, it's a sign. It's a sign that we have to stop. She was sure that there'd been something like that in his voice, and in his face. All that old sin stuff. Evil.

"It's nothing to me," she said. "And, even if you could get hold of it easily, you couldn't do it. You'd feel you were taking it away from your family—how could you?"

Family. She should never have said that. Never have said that word.

But his face actually cleared. He said no, no, but there was doubt in his voice. And then she knew that it would be all right. After a while, he was able to speak practically and he remembered another thing from the letter. It had to be in bills, he said. She had no use for checks.

He spoke without looking up, as if about a business deal. Bills were best for Corrie, too. They would not implicate her.

"Fine," she said. "It's not an outrageous sum, anyway."

"But she is not to know that we see it that way."

A postal box was to be taken, in Sadie's name. The bills in an envelope addressed to her, left there twice a year. The dates to be set by her. Never a day late. Or, as she had said, she might start to worry.

He still did not touch Corrie, except for a grateful, almost formal goodbye.

This subject must be altogether separate from what is between us, was what he seemed to be saying. We'll start fresh. We will be able again to feel that we're not hurting anybody. Not doing any wrong. That was how he would put it in his unspoken language. In her own language she made one half-joke that did not go over.

"Already we've contributed to Sadie's education—she wasn't this smart before."

"We don't want her getting any smarter. Asking for more."

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. Anyway, we could threaten to go to the police. Even now."

"But that would be the end of you and me," he said. He had already said goodbye and turned his head away. They were on the windy porch.

He said, "I could not stand for there to be an end of you and me."

"I'm glad to hear that," Corrie said.

The time came quickly when they did not even speak of it. She handed over the bills, already in their envelope. At first he made a small grunt of disgust, but later that turned into a sigh of acquiescence, as if he had been reminded of a chore.

"How the time goes around."

"Doesn't it just?"

"Sadie's ill-gotten gains," Corrie might say, and though he didn't care for the expression at first, he got used to saying it himself. In the beginning, she would ask if he'd ever seen Sadie again, if there

had been any further dinner parties.

"They weren't that kind of friends," he reminded her. He hardly ever saw them, didn't know if Sadie was still working for them or not.

Corrie hadn't seen her, either. Her people lived out in the country, and if Sadie came to see them they weren't likely to shop in this town, which had rapidly gone downhill. There was nothing now on the main street but a convenience store, where people went to buy Lotto tickets and whatever groceries they had run out of, and a furniture store, where the same tables and sofas sat forever in the windows, and the doors seemed never to be open—and maybe wouldn't be, until the owner died in Florida.

After Corrie's father died, the shoe factory had been taken over by a large firm that had promised—so she believed—to keep it running. Within a year, however, the building was empty, such equipment as was wanted moved to another town, nothing left, except a few outmoded tools that had once had to do with making boots and shoes. Corrie got it into her head to establish a quaint little museum to display these things. She herself would set it up and give tours describing how things used to be done. It was surprising how knowledgeable she became, helped by some photographs that her father had had taken to illustrate a talk that perhaps he himself had given—it was badly typed—to the Women's Institute



Advertisement

ON THE TOWN

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM NEW YORKER ADVERTISERS.



British Airways' Business Opportunity Grant Initiative Honors IdeaPaint

As part of its Business Opportunity Grant initiative, an element of its Face-to-Face program, British Airways has awarded a hundred small to medium-sized U.S. businesses free travel to anywhere British Airways flies, along with valuable products and services to help support them.

IdeaPaint is one of these businesses.

Conceived by a group of buddies at Babson College in 2002, IdeaPaint lets your creative juices flow by offering a paint that essentially turns any smooth surface into a dry-erase canvas.

Learn more about IdeaPaint and British Airways' Face-to-Face program at ba.com/facetoface.



newyorkeronthetown.com

when they were studying local industries. Already by the end of the summer Corrie had shown a few visitors around. She was sure that things would pick up the next year, after she had put a sign up on the highway and written a piece for a tourist brochure.

In the early spring, she looked out of her window one morning and saw some strangers starting to tear the building down. It turned out that the contract she'd thought she had to use the building so long as a certain amount of the rent was paid did not allow her to display or appropriate any objects found within the building, no matter how long they had been considered worthless. There was no question of these ancient bits of hardware belonging to her, and, in fact, she was fortunate not to be hauled up in court now that the company—which had once seemed so obliging—had found out what she was up to.

If Howard had not taken his family to Europe the previous summer, when she embarked on this project, he could have looked at the agreement for her and she would have been saved a lot of trouble.

Never mind, she said when she had calmed down, and soon she found a new interest.

It began with her deciding that she was sick of her big and empty house—she wanted to get out, and she set her sights on the public library down the street.

It was a handsome, manageable red brick building and, being a Carnegie Library, was not easy to get rid of, even though few people used it anymore—not nearly enough to justify a librarian's wages.

Corrie went down there twice a week and unlocked the doors and sat behind the librarian's desk. She dusted the shelves if she felt like it, and phoned up the people who were shown by the records to have had books out for years. Sometimes the people she reached claimed that they had never heard of the book—it had been checked out by some aunt or grandmother who used to read and was now dead. She spoke then of library property, and sometimes the book actually showed up in the returns bin.

The only thing not agreeable about sitting in the library was the noise. It was made by Jimmy Cousins, who cut the grass around the library building, starting again practically as soon as he'd

finished because he had nothing else to do. So she hired him to do the lawns at her house—something she'd been doing herself for the exercise, but her figure didn't really need it and it took forever with her lameness.

Howard was somewhat dismayed by the change in her life. He came more seldom now, but was able to stay longer. He was living in Toronto, though working for the same firm. His children were teen-agers or else in college. The girls were doing very well, the boys not quite so well as he might have wished, but that was the way of boys. His wife was working full time and sometimes more than full time in the office of a provincial politician. Her pay was next to nothing, but she was happy. Happier than he'd ever known her.

The past spring he had taken her to Spain, as a birthday surprise. Corrie hadn't heard from him for some time then. It would have been lacking in taste for him to write to her from the birthday-present holiday. He would never do a thing like that, and she would not have liked him to do it, either.

"You'd think my place were a shrine, the way you carry on," Corrie said after he got back, and he said, "Exactly right." He loved everything about the big rooms now, with their ornate ceilings and dark, gloomy panelling. There was a grand absurdity to them. But he was able to see that it was different for her, that she needed to get out once in a while. They began to take little trips, then somewhat longer trips, staying overnight in motels—though never more than one night—and eating at moderately fancy restaurants.

They never ran into anyone they knew. Once upon a time they would have done so—they were sure of it. Now things were different, though they didn't know why. Was it because they weren't in such danger, even if it did happen? The fact being that the people they might have met, and never did, would not have suspected them of being the sinful pair they still were. He could have introduced her as a cousin without making any impression—a lame relation he had thought to drop in on. He did have relatives whom his wife never wanted to bother with. And who would have gone after a middle-aged mistress with a dragging foot? Nobody would have

stored that information up to spill at a dangerous moment. *We met Howard up at Bruce Beach with his sister, was it? He was looking good. His cousin, maybe. A limp? It wouldn't have seemed worth the trouble.*

They still made love, of course. Sometimes with caution, avoiding a sore shoulder, a touchy knee. They had always been conventional in that way, and remained so, congratulating themselves on not needing any fancy stimulation. That was for married people.

Sometimes Corrie would fill up with tears, hiding her face against him.

"It's just that we're so lucky," she said.

She never asked him whether he was happy, but he indicated in a roundabout way that he was. He said that he had developed more conservative, or maybe just less hopeful, ideas in his work. (She kept to herself the thought that he had always been rather conservative.) He was taking piano lessons, to the surprise of his wife and family. It was good to have that kind of interest of your own, in a marriage.

"I'm sure," Corrie said.

"I didn't mean—"

"I know."

One day—it was in September—Jimmy Cousins came into the library to tell her that he wouldn't be able to cut her grass that day. He had to go to the cemetery and dig a grave. It was for someone who used to live around here, he said.

Corrie, with her finger in "The Great Gatsby," asked for the person's name. She said that it was interesting how many people showed up here—or their bodies did—with this last request and bother for their relatives. They might have lived their entire lives in cities nearby or distant, and seemed quite satisfied in those places, but had no wish to stay there when they were dead. Old people got such ideas.

Jimmy said that it wasn't such an old person. The name was Wolfe. The first name slipped his mind.

"Not Sadie? Not Sadie Wolfe?"

He believed it was.

And her name proved to be right there, in the library edition of the local paper, which Corrie never read. Sadie had died in Kitchener, at the age of forty-six. She was to be buried from the Church of the Lord's Anointed, the ceremony at two o'clock.

Well.

This was one of the two days a week

that the library was supposed to be open. Corrie couldn't go.

The Church of the Lord's Anointed was a new one in town. Nothing flourished here but what her father had called "freak religions." She could see the building from one of the library windows.

She was at the window before two o'clock, watching a respectably sized group of people go in.

Hats didn't seem to be required nowadays, on women or men.

How would she tell him? A letter to the office, it would have to be. She could phone there, but then his response would have to be so guarded, so matter of fact, that half the wonder of their release would be lost.

She went back to "Gatsby," but she was just reading words, not taking in the meaning—she was too restless. She locked the library and walked around town.

People were always saying that this town was like a funeral, but in fact when there was a real funeral it put on its best show of liveliness. She was reminded of that when she saw, from a block away, the funeral-goers coming out of the church doors, stopping to chat and ease themselves out of solemnity. And then, to her surprise, many of them went around the church to a side door, where they reentered.

Of course. She had forgotten. After the ceremony, after the closed coffin had been put in its place in the hearse, everybody except those close enough to follow the dead and see her put into the ground would head for the after-the-service refreshments. These would be waiting in another part of the church, where there was a Sunday-school room and a hospitable kitchen.

She didn't see any reason that she shouldn't join them.

But at the last moment she would have walked past.

Too late. A woman called to her in a challenging—or, at least, confidently un-funereal—voice from the door where the other people had gone in.

This woman said to her, close up, "We missed you at the service."

Corrie had no notion who the woman was. She said that she was sorry not to have attended but she'd had to keep the library open.

"Well, of course," the woman said, but

Rotman
a new way to think

**Rotman School of Management
Design Thinking
Experts Speaker Series**

OCTOBER 27 – NEW YORK CITY
OCTOBER 28 – TORONTO

17h00-19h00: discussion, cocktails

SPEAKER:

Hilary Austen, Author, *Artistry Unleashed*

Michael Beirut, Partner, Pentagram,
Author, *79 Short Essays on Design*

Claudia Kotchka, Former VP of Innovation,
Design and Strategy, Procter & Gamble

Roger Martin, Dean, Rotman School
Author, *The Design of Business*

TOPIC:

*Artistry Unleashed:
Pursuing Great Performance
in Work and Life*

FEE: \$35 per person

FOR DETAILS OR TO REGISTER:

rotman.utoronto.ca/events



Rotman School of Management
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**THE CLASSIC
IS BACK**

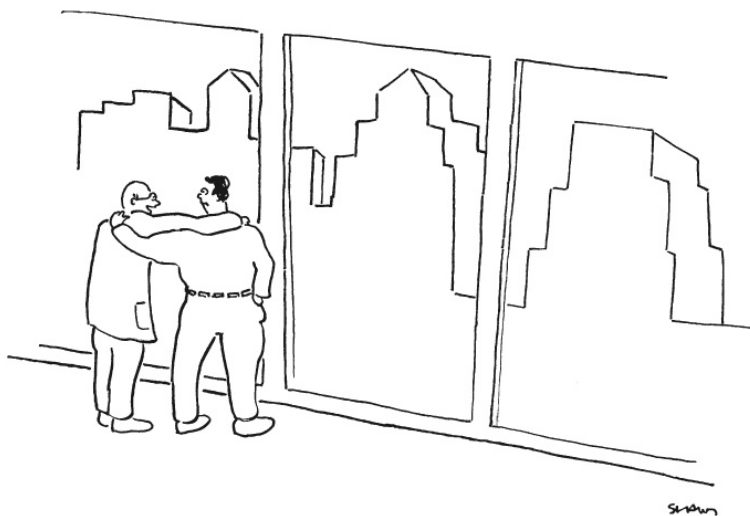
Our 2011 collection of New Yorker Desk Diaries is shipping. Stay organized in style while enjoying a New Yorker cartoon with every turn of the page.



View all six cover colors online at:

NewYorkerStore.com/Diaries

or call 877.408.4269 to order.



"One day, son, all this will belong to the youngest woman willing to make her body my playground."

had already turned to consult with somebody carrying a pie.

"Is there room in the fridge for this?"

"I don't know, honey, you'll just have to look and see."

Corrie had thought from the greeting person's flowered dress that the women inside would all be wearing something similar. Sunday best if not mourning best. But maybe her ideas of Sunday best were out of date. Some of the women here were just wearing slacks, as she herself was.

Another woman brought her a slice of spice cake on a plastic plate.

"You must be hungry," she said. "Everybody else is."

A woman who used to be Corrie's hairdresser said, "I told everybody you would probably drop in. I told them you couldn't till you'd closed up the library. I said it was too bad you had to miss the service. I said so."

"It was a lovely service," another woman said. "You'll want tea once you're done with that cake."

And so on. She couldn't think of anybody's name. The United church and the Presbyterian church were just hanging on; the Anglican church had closed ages ago. Was this where everybody had gone?

There was only one other woman at the reception who was getting as much

attention as Corrie, and who was dressed as Corrie would have expected a funeral-going woman to be. A lovely lilac-gray dress and a subdued gray summer hat.

The woman was being brought over to meet her. A string of modest genuine pearls around her neck.

"Oh, yes." She spoke in a soft voice, as pleased as the occasion would allow. "You must be Corrie. The Corrie I've heard so much about. Though we never met, I felt I knew you. But you must be wondering who I am." She said a name that meant nothing to Corrie. Then shook her head and gave a small, regretful laugh.

"Sadie worked for us ever since she came to Kitchener," she said. "The children adored her. Then the grandchildren. They truly adored her. My goodness. On her day off I was just the most unsatisfactory substitute for Sadie. We all adored her, actually."

She said this in a way that was bemused, yet delighted. The way women like that could be, showing such charming self-disparagement. She would have spotted Corrie as the only person in the room who could speak her language and not take her words at face value.

Corrie said, "I didn't know she was sick."

"She went that fast," the woman with the teapot said, offering more to the lady with the pearls and being refused.

"It takes them her age faster than it does the real old ones," the tea lady said. "How long was she in the hospital?" she asked in a slightly menacing way of the pearls.

"I'm trying to think. Ten days?"

"Shorter time than that, what I heard. And shorter still when they got around to letting her people know at home."

"She kept it all very much to herself." This from the employer, who spoke quietly but held her ground. "She was absolutely not a person to make a fuss."

"No, she wasn't," Corrie said.

At that moment, a stout, smiling young woman came up and introduced herself as the minister.

"We're speaking of Sadie?" she asked. She shook her head in wonder. "Sadie was blessed. Sadie was a rare person."

All agreed. Corrie included.

"I suspect Milady the Minister," Corrie wrote to Howard, in the long letter she was composing in her head on the way home.

Later in the evening she sat down and started that letter, though she would not be able to send it yet—Howard was spending a couple of weeks at the Muskoka cottage with his family. Everybody slightly disgruntled, as he had described it in advance—his wife without her politics, him without his piano—but unwilling to forgo the ritual.

"Of course, it's absurd to think that Sadie's ill-gotten gains would build a church," she wrote. "But I'd bet she built the steeple. It's a silly-looking steeple, anyway. I never thought before what a giveaway those upside-down ice-cream-cone steeples are. The loss of faith is right there, isn't it? They don't know it, but they're declaring it."

She crumpled the letter up and started again, in a more jubilant manner.

"The days of the Blackmail are over. The sound of the cuckoo is heard in the land."

She had never realized how much it weighed on her, she wrote, but now she could see it. Not the money—as he well knew, she didn't care about the money, and, anyway, it had become a smaller amount in real terms as the years passed, though Sadie had never seemed to realize that. It was the queasy feeling, the never-quite-safeness of it, the burden on their long love, that had made her unhappy.

She'd had that feeling every time she passed a postbox.

She wondered if by any chance he would hear the news before her letter could get it to him. Not possible. He hadn't reached the stage of checking obituaries yet.

It was in February and again in August of every year that she put the special bills in the envelope and he slipped the envelope into his pocket. Later, he would probably check the bills and type Sadie's name on the envelope before delivering it to her box.

The question was, had he looked in the box to see if this summer's money had been picked up? Sadie had been alive when Corrie made the transfer but surely not able to get to the mailbox. Surely not able.

It was shortly before Howard left for the cottage that Corrie had last seen him and that the transfer of the envelope had taken place. She tried to figure out exactly when it was, whether he would have had time to check the box again after delivering the money or whether he would

have gone straight to the cottage. Sometimes while at the cottage in the past he'd found time to write Corrie a letter. But not this time.

She goes to bed with the letter to him still unfinished.

And wakes up early, when the sky is brightening, though the sun is not yet up.

There's always one morning when you realize that the birds have all gone.

She knows something. She has found it in her sleep.

There is no news to give him. No news, because there never was any.

No news about Sadie, because Sadie doesn't matter and she never did. No post-office box, because the money goes straight into an account or maybe just into a wallet. General expenses. Or a modest nest egg. A trip to Spain. Who cares? People with families, summer cottages, children to educate, bills to pay—they don't have to think about how to spend such an amount of money. It can't even be called a windfall. No need to explain it.

She gets up and quickly dresses and walks through every room in the house, introducing the walls and the furniture to this new idea. A cavity everywhere, most notably in her chest. She makes coffee and doesn't drink it. She ends up in her bedroom once more, and finds that the introduction to the current reality has to be done all over again.

But then there is a surprise. She is capable, still, of shaping up another possibility.

If he doesn't know that Sadie is dead he will just expect things to go on as usual. And how would he know, unless he is told? And who would he be told by, unless by Corrie herself?

She could say something that would destroy them, but she does not have to.

What a time it has taken her, to figure this out.

And after all, if what they had—what they have—demands payment, she is the one who can afford to pay.

When she goes down to the kitchen again she goes gingerly, making everything fit into its proper place. ♦

Advertisement

THE EXCHANGE

To be a part of this special advertising page devoted to education and recruitment opportunities, contact your *New Yorker* sales representative, or call 877-843-6967.

WHY YALE MBA-e

“My management decisions are more effective because I've debated with other healthcare stakeholders, and learned to trust and incorporate their points of view.”

Ramon, Class of 2008

Yale has created an MBA program that brings experienced professionals from all spheres of the healthcare industry into the classroom. On alternate weekends, students work closely with top business and clinical faculty, learning management and leadership skills and gaining valuable new perspectives to innovate and influence change in their workplaces and the world.



Yale SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

MBA for Executives: Leadership in Healthcare

LEARN MORE www.mba.yale.edu/mba-e 203.432.4649

EDUCATION