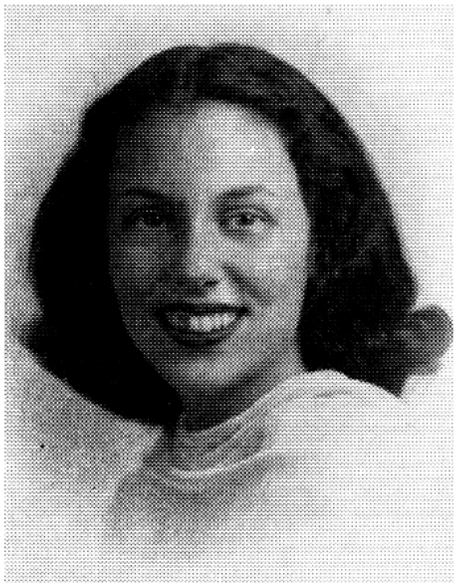
Chapter 16. Grade 10

I

Josy started Gratz High in early February 1939. The school, a five-story building about a mile from Logan, stood at the intersection of three streets, Seventeenth, Luzerne, and Hunting Park Avenue. Though pleased to be going to school with Frances Jacobs and Miriam Hoffman, her friends from Cooke, she felt displaced and unhappy. She saw them in only two of her classes, Geometry and French. The rest of the day she was with new students who talked only about dating, jitterbugging, the latest songs on the Hit Parade, and little else.

The classwork bored her to distraction. Her English teacher, a pleasant lady who was especially kind to Josy, spent every lesson on grammar. Over and over she drilled on the parts of speech. Amazingly, few in the class seemed to understand. For days on end,



Miriam Hoffman.

lesson after lesson, she repeated the rules, giving fresh examples, stopping again and again to explain, once more hammering out the basic definitions. Josy almost wept from boredom. When she thought no one was looking, she bit her fists to keep from screaming or falling asleep. The best part of the day was walking to school with Miriam and Frances. Each morning Miriam, who lived a block away on Sydenham Street, stopped by for her at the Faliks' house, and together they walked to Frances's one block further on Smedley Street. Then they all three crossed under the railroad bridge at Windrim Avenue, following small meandering back streets, chatting, exchanging confidences, comparing impressions of the new school. Frances and Miriam extolled how wonderful their teachers were and how much they liked their new classmates. Josy felt envious and isolated.

At school they went their separate ways, each reporting to her own advisory class for the first fifteen minutes of the day. Then Josy followed her uninspiring roster, knowing that elsewhere some thirty-five pupils with the highest IQs and grade point averages were spending the day in the accelerated program.

After two weeks Miriam told her father, Head of Gratz's English Department, about Josy's situation.

"Is that the girl whose essay I heard at the Cooke graduation?" he wanted to know. "Anyone who writes like that belongs in the accelerated program!"

The next morning during English class, Miriam came into the room with a note from her father. Josy was being moved into the accelerated program immediately and given a new roster.

She was speechless with delight. The minute she walked into Mrs. Margaret Smith's English class and saw familiar faces, it was as if a cloud had lifted. From that moment on she loved Gratz High fervently, and the three years she spent there were among the happiest of her school experiences. This same group of students remained together all through high school, getting to know few others outside the group. As a result they bonded closely, growing fond of each other in attachments that, for many, lasted a lifetime.

Mrs. Smith was also their Class Sponsor. A remarkably pretty woman in her late

Mrs. Margaret Smith.

twenties, she was vivacious and enthusiastic, yet an authoritative figure and highly demanding. Instead of tedious grammar lessons, the class was studying Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Mrs. Smith stressed the poetic sweep of the great passages while also analyzing the behavior of the characters, going into particular detail about Marc Antony's pause midway through the "Friends Romans, Countrymen" speech so he could assess the effect of his words on the crowd. At the end of the play, she asked everyone to select two speeches to recite from memory. Josy chose "Friends, Roman, Countrymen" and "Here lies the noblest Roman of them all".

Mrs. Smith also suggested that volunteers put together a class newspaper to be printed at the end of the term. Josy wrote an article with Frances Jacobs titled "What does the expression 'The Ides of March' mean?" based on answers they got from pedestrians on Broad Street. Another she wrote by herself was "Contents of an Adolescent Girl's Pocketbook". The project delighted her so much that she joined the staff of the school newspaper *The Spotlight*.

This was a voluntary after-school activity. She began by proofreading articles written by other students. Gradually she advanced term by term until, by the beginning of her senior year she would become Features Editor. Mr. Edgar Williams, an English teacher, sponsored the newspaper. He assigned her to work with Ted Freyman, who was one semester ahead of her in school. (Ted eventually became Senior Co-Editor.) He encouraged Josy from the first day, helping her with many practical suggestions. Josy always thought of him as her "very first boss". As an adult he would enter the printing profession, a direct outgrowth of his extra-curricular activities on *The Spotlight*.

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Delighted as she was with her *Spotlight* activities, she was equally unhappy in her attempts to join the school orchestra. Dr. Alec Washco, music teacher and sponsor, was a short bespectacled, mustachioed man with a spring to his step who was extremely pompous. He had a supercilious way of talking. Officious and overbearing, he conveyed

the impression that he was overwhelmed with his own importance. Josy watched uneasily as he sniffed disdainfully through his bristling black mustache, ogling the girls who waited with her in the auditorium to apply for the job of orchestra pianist.

Her mother had strongly encouraged her to try out. For her audition, she chose Beethoven's "Six Variations in G Major" (upon a theme from a duet in Paisiello's opera *La Molinara*). This was the most difficult piece she was studying at the time. As with most numbers of this type, the opening theme was simple, forming the basis upon which later intricate variations, with tricky runs, trills, arpeggios, octaves, key changes, and elaborations in melody, harmony and rhythm, would be built. When her turn came, she announced the title, sat down at the piano and began to play. She got as far as the sixth measure of the theme before Dr. Washco stopped her.

"What's this?" he interrupted. "This is what you call difficult? That's all! Next!" he shouted, turning to the other candidates.

Josy thought of explaining that he should at least listen to the first variation before judging her, but instinctively changed her mind. Without a word, she got up and left the auditorium, secretly delighted and relieved to get away from this eccentric and pompous man. Future encounters confirmed that she had made the right decision.

A few older students later told her that no girl should ever go alone with Dr. Washco to his office in the basement below the stage. "He had to marry one of his students a couple years ago," they whispered. "He got her pregnant!"

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Pupils in morning homeroom classes were grouped alphabetically. Josy was the only one in hers taking the academic course. Once a week they met with the other tenth grade homerooms in the auditorium for Assembly, where they listened to announcements, speeches from the principal, and advice from administrators. Occasionally a special activity took place.

One morning it was announced that, starting the following week and for the next month, a quiz program would be conducted during Assembly. Each homeroom was to appoint one student to participate. Before she knew it, Josy's classmates selected her.

"You're the only smart one in here!" they insisted, ignoring her vehement protests.

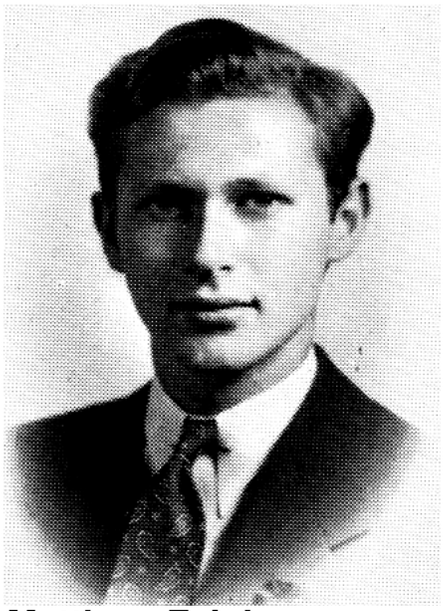
Embarrassed at the prospect of appearing on stage in front of four hundred students,

she resisted, but her classmates would have nobody else, and her advisor submitted her name. Fortunately (because it spared her further appearances) she failed the first question on the opening program. The topic was "The Bible".

"Name the first five books of the Old Testament," the teacher at the podium demanded.

Josy's mind went blank. Glancing dazedly out over a sea of faces, her eyes lighted on Matthew Feinberg, the class clown in her homeroom, gawkily leering, ever ready with an embarrassing remark. He sat in the audience grinning stupidly up at the stage, making faces at her.

"Matthew?" she offered waveringly, seizing upon the only biblical name she could think of.



Matthew Feinberg.

"Wrong!" the teacher responded sternly. "The correct answer is, of course, as everyone knows, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy! Sit down!"

Amid groans from her homeroom classmates, she slunk back to her chair. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Matthew Feinberg wriggling up and down in his seat, giggling as he sang out loudly, "See, she likes me! She likes me! I told you! She likes me! She mentioned my name on stage! I'm famous!"

II

In mid-February, just a couple weeks after she started at Gratz High, Jacques set off for Mexico. The project of setting up an import-export business with Malvina's brother Stashek never worked out, but Jacques remained away for six weeks looking into it. He went by train, making a brief stop in Chicago on the way to see friends and relatives, then continued on to Mexico City.

Meanwhile Josy and Malvina lived at Mr. Falik's, Malvina keeping house, cooking, and taking care of the two young children. It was a trying time for her. She was desperately lonely, and insecure about the future, and Mr. Falik made things especially difficult. He was a martinet, moving stiffly from room to room, smiling icily, and then only occasionally. Usually he kept his lips tightly pressed in disapproval. Nose held high, he voiced

Josy, Diana, and Maurice Falik.

Herby, Josy, and Diana.

his criticism about everything.

He vigorously objected to Josy's practicing the piano.

"It disturbs the household," he told Malvina, who tried to get Josy to fit in half an hour of practice immediately after school before Mr. Falik came home. That failed when his son Herby, full of mischief and taking advantage of the disagreement he sensed, clomped by noisily, whistling, banging doors, and singing loudly. When Malvina mentioned this to Mr. Falik, he coolly announced that this was his home, and his children could do as they pleased. Encouraged by his father's approval, Herby grew wilder and more uncontrolled. He went out of his way to pick fights with Josy, poking her, cursing and teasing, while Malvina pleaded with her to ignore him.

One day he exasperated Josy so much that she addressed him formally.

"Apologize now and start behaving better," she declared "or I won't speak to you again."

This drew fire from Mr. Falik. Taking his son aside, he strictly forbade Herby ever to apologize to a girl.

The bickering stopped, but the atmosphere in the house became unbearably tense. Except for occasional encounters with six-year-old Diana, Josy lost the feeling of family she had so looked forward to with these children. Before long Herby wanted to set things straight, but every time he approached Josy, Mr. Falik glared at him and remarked menacingly, "Remember what I told you, Son." The boy scared of his father, backed off.

One Sunday Malvina announced that she and Josy were going into Center City. Mr. Falik asked her to take Herby along, since he had an appointment to keep and Diana was at a friend's house. Malvina readily agreed, and she, Josy, and Herby set out to spend the

day together. They ate lunch at Horn and Hardart's automat, getting sandwiches and dessert from behind the tiny glass windows in the wall after inserting nickels and dimes. Herby chatted amiably with Malvina, glancing frequently at Josy as if to include her, but he stopped short of addressing her directly. Josy, true to her promise and hoping to coerce him into behaving better, waited for the apology that never came.

After lunch they went to the movies (*Idiot's Delight* with Norma Shearer, Josy's favorite, and Clark Gable). Not once did she and Herby exchange a word. Malvina subtly encouraged the boy to speak, but not wanting go against his father, kept from addressing the problem openly. He glanced at Josy throughout the afternoon, talking more and more to Malvina. They could both see that he badly wanted to mend the breach, but was afraid. Every time there was an opportunity, he hesitated. Late in the afternoon, they got off the Broad Street Subway and slowly walked up the lane between Lindley and Windrim Avenue for the remaining few blocks home. Herby squirmed as they approached the house, but with great effort maintained his silence toward Josy, though his disappointment was clear. The minute they set foot inside the house, Mr. Falik pulled him aside.

"Did you apologize?" they overheard him ask. Miserably, Herby shook his head.

"Good fellow!" Mr. Falik beamed, smirking at Malvina as he patted the boy on the head.

The next day Josy's mother made a special effort to prepare a particularly elaborate dinner. For dessert she baked her famous cheese pie, prized among her friends for its creamy texture and flavor. This was years before cheesecake was commonly served; at that time it could be found only at Lindy's Restaurant in New York. She proudly brought the pie to the table, presenting it on a beautiful platter, then cut slices for everyone. She served Mr. Falik first. Wrinkling his nose, he disdainfully turned the slice upside down with his fork. Sniffing, he minutely examined the crust, light brown and delicately crumbly. Malvina had made it from graham cracker crumbs, which required no cooking.

"Don't touch that, Children!" he ordered, reaching out to intercept the piece Malvina was handing to Herby. "It's still raw. It hasn't been baked properly!"

Shocked and offended, Malvina removed the pie from the table. Without a word, she beckoned to Josy and both left the room. After that, she and Mr. Falik barely spoke to each other.

Josy could see how dispirited her mother was. The situation in the house became more uncomfortable day by day. With Jacques away and their future uncertain, Malvina was despondent. She desperately needed the support of friends, and what hurt her most

was having her letters to Celia Kirson go unanswered. Celia, it turned out, was simply neglectful and, true to character, disorganized. But Malvina in her despair felt abandoned. After everything she had done for Celia when Frieda died, Malvina felt betrayed. It was a severe blow to their friendship. Eventually they would reconcile, with Celia desperate to make amends, but a rift of sorts always remained.

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For several years Malvina and Jacques had encouraged Josy to write to her cousin Krysia in Poland. Krysia, six months older than Josy, was the only child of Jacques' younger brother Heniek, the one he had felt closest to while growing up. Krysia soon became Josy's pen pal, and they exchanged several letters. Josy wrote in English, then her mother translated the letter into Polish, and when Krysia replied, Malvina translated again back into English.

While Jacques was away, Josy wrote a particularly long letter to Krysia, but Malvina in her dejected frame of mind, kept postponing the translation. The letter lay around for weeks. One night Josy scolded her mother for the long delay, and Malvina lost control. Angrily she stomped out of the house, and stayed away for three hours. It was well after ten o'clock before she returned. A policeman who had seen her walking alone sobbing brought her home. Josy never mentioned the letter again. It was the last time she or Krysia ever wrote to each other. World War II had broken out, and no mail from Poland got through again till the war was over.

III

Though the visit Jacques made to Mexico failed to establish the import-export business he had hoped for, on his return trip home he had an experience he never forgot. At the end of March only business people were traveling. At the border in Laredo, Texas, after going through customs, he boarded an American train, planning to stop overnight at San Antonio and again in Chicago before continuing on to Philadelphia

The start of the journey was dull, with little to do and not much to look at outside the window. He spent the first couple hours reading John Gunther's book *Inside Europe*,

and after a few hours put it aside and sat back to relax. At that point a man seated across the aisle addressed him.

"What do you think of the book?" he asked.

Jacques commented briefly.

The man smiled and declared, "I once met John Gunther personally."

The man described conversations he had had with the author, recounting anecdotes and going into detail. Before long, Jacques and the stranger were discussing literature, politics, and the world situation. The man was highly educated and well informed on a variety of topics. The time flew by as they talked.

By lunchtime they had introduced themselves. Mr. Davis was returning from Mexico after several weeks of business there. When the dining car opened, they walked in together and agreed to share a table.

They continued to converse. Mr. Davis had visited several countries in Europe. His experiences were riveting, and Jacques enjoyed hearing references to parts of France and Germany that he himself knew well. Mr. Davis had also met other well-known public figures, and his accounts put a new slant on events Jacques knew only from newspapers.

The afternoon passed quickly. When Mr. Davis learned that Jacques would be stopping in San Antonio before continuing on to Chicago and later Philadelphia, he mentioned that he himself was going to Chicago.

"Then we might even find ourselves on the same train tomorrow," Jacques declared. "It would be nice to have company on the trip."

Mr. Davis mentioned the name of his hotel in San Antonio, and since Jacques had made no previous arrangements, he decided to stay there also.

"It's a good choice," Mr. Davis assured him. "Near the station, clean, comfortable. We can even share a taxi, if you like."

After reaching the hotel, they agreed to meet in the lobby an hour later and have dinner together. Mr. Davis knew a good Mexican restaurant, he said, where they could enjoy a pleasant meal.

They met at six o'clock and walked to a restaurant two blocks away. Here they ordered dinner, and just as they were starting their first course, a man tapped Mr. Davis on the shoulder.

" I don't believe it!" he exclaimed. "It *is* Mr. Davis!"

The two shook hands. The newcomer was Mexican, speaking English with a heavy accent. He was on his way back to Mexico after a business trip in the States. Apparently

he and Mr. Davis had met a while back, but had not seen each other in a long time.

Mr. Davis introduced Jacques, and then the Mexican waved to a man at a nearby table, calling him over and introducing him as his business partner. They pulled up chairs and agreed to join the others for dinner.

After a pleasant meal, the first Mexican asked, "What are you gentlemen doing for the rest of the evening? It's still early."

"It's too hot to go anywhere," replied Mr. Davis. "We're catching a train early tomorrow morning. We'll just go back to our rooms and relax."

"Would anyone care for a game of cards?" inquired the other.

"I only play bridge," Jacques stated.

"Wonderful!" replied Mr. Davis. "We already have a foursome. Why don't we have a game of bridge? No money!"

Agreeing, they returned to the hotel. The heat was intense, and huge ceiling fans were going full blast all over the lobby. They bought a deck of cards, went upstairs to Jacques's room, and sat down at a small table there. After hanging their jackets over the backs of their chairs, they rolled up their sleeves and started to play.

After about an hour one of the Mexicans stood up and stretched.

"I'm sorry, Gentlemen" he said, "I'm really tired. I have a five o'clock train to catch tomorrow morning. You'll have to excuse me. I'm going to call it a night."

Shaking hands all around, he took his jacket and departed, leaving Mr. Davis and the other Mexican with Jacques.

The three put away the cards and continued to chat for the next few minutes. Suddenly, the telephone rang. Turning to answer, Jacques heard the first Mexican on the line.

"I'm really sorry," he apologized, "but can I talk to my friend? I seem to have forgotten my key. I can't get into our room."

Jacques handed over the phone and, after a few brief words, the fellow hung up and apologized.

"I guess I better go now," he laughed. "My friend can't get into our room and I have the key. Anyway, it's getting late. Let's call it a night."

They all stood up, shook hands, and the Mexican left.

At this point, Mr. Davis reached for his jacket. "Well, I guess I better be going, too," he said. "We have a long trip tomorrow, and it's getting late."

"I'll walk downstairs with you," Jacques replied. "I want to get a paper."

"Why not wait till tomorrow?" Mr. Davis suggested. "It's late. You can read your

paper on the train."

"No, I'd like to know what's the latest in Spain," Jacques answered. The Spanish Civil War was in its final days, with Generalisimo Francisco Franco's Nationalist forces about to enter Madrid.

Taking his jacket from his chair, he accompanied Mr. Davis down to the lobby. Stopping at a newsstand, put his hand into his trousers pocket for change, but finding less than he needed, reached into his jacket for his wallet. Unable to believe his eyes, he found it empty.

He turned pale in disbelief.

"What's wrong?" asked Mr. Davis.

"There's nothing in my wallet," Jacques exclaimed. "My money's gone!"

"What?" gasped Mr. Davis.

"My money's gone," repeated Jacques.

"How could that happen?" cried Mr. Davis. "I was with you all evening! I didn't see anybody take anything!

"Calm down," he continued. "Let's walk a little and think. What could have happened?"

They stepped outside into the street.

"Now try to remember," reasoned Mr. Davis. "When did you see the money last?"

"In the restaurant," Jacques replied, "when I paid for my dinner!"

They came to a curb and getting ready to step down into the street, Jacques reached for Mr. Davis's arm.

"Why are you grabbing me?" Mr. Davis snapped, "It's hot! Let go of my arm!"

"I'm just trying to cross the street," Jacques replied, astonished.

"Don't touch my arm!" Mr. Davis's voice began to rise. "What's the matter with you? Don't you trust me? Are you accusing me of taking your money?"

Jacques stared at him, incredulous. "I'm not accusing anybody!" he returned. " I just want to figure out what happened."

"Well, you don't have to hold my arm. Let go of me!" Mr. Davis's voice turned high-pitched and shrill. By now they had reached the island in the middle of the street, where a policeman stood directing traffic.

"Officer, my money's gone!" Jacques called out. He still held on to the arm of Mr. Davis, who was squirming and by now shouting.

"How dare you accuse me?" he shrieked. "How dare you?"

The officer glanced back and forth from one to the other. "What's going on here?" he demanded.

With both continuing to talk at once, he finally shook his head. "I don't know what's going on here," he declared, "but I better take both of you to the station and get this straightened out!"

The patrolman pushed them both into a van parked nearby and sped off.

At police headquarters, Mr. Davis shouted, "I want a lawyer!"

Shrieking at Jacques, he continued, "You have some nerve accusing me of taking your money!"

"I'm not accusing anybody," Jacques replied firmly. "I had exactly thirty-seven dollars in my wallet, and I just want to know where it is."

"Well, I certainly didn't take it!" Mr. Davis retorted red with anger.

The officer in charge went to the telephone. At length he turned to Jacques and said, "You're the one without money, but you seem to be registered at the hotel. This fellow, now"(he pointed to Mr. Davis) "they never even heard of him there!"

Mr. Davis fell silent.

"Go back to your hotel." the officer advised Jacques. "You have a place to sleep. Get a good night's rest and come back in the morning. Now this fellow, it seems, has no place to stay, so he can sleep here in the jail!"

In shock, Jacques left, walking back to the hotel alone. Early next morning he returned. Mr. Davis and the two Mexicans were now all behind bars, conferring with a lawyer. On seeing Jacques, the lawyer ran over.

"My clients are willing to settle with you, sir," he announced. "They are offering you fifty dollars in cash immediately if you drop all charges."

Noting Jacques' look of astonishment, he quickly added "No, make that one hundred, all right? How much do you want?"

"What I want is my thirty-seven dollars!" Jacques replied firmly. "That's what I had last night, and that's what I want to leave with."

"Well then," replied the lawyer, "that's easy. Now how about dropping the charges?"

"Not on your life!" returned Jacques coldly.

As the lawyer ran back to confer with Mr. Davis again, the officer in charge called Jacques into the next room.

"Those three men," he indicated Mr. Davis and the two Mexicans, "We've been

looking for them for months. They're members of a gang that operates between here and the Mexican border. We just received a wire with their photos from the police in Laredo. They've been robbing travelers for several years. Now, thanks to you, we finally have them!

"It seems," he continued, "that since you were traveling off-season, they mistook you for a wealthy businessman instead of a tourist. They hoped to make a financial haul by robbing you. It was all set up ahead of time!"

In going over the situation with the police, Jacques finally concluded what must have happened. When the telephone call came to his room and he turned his back to answer, either Mr. Davis or the Mexican still there must have reached into Jacques' jacket and emptied his wallet. Then they had quickly returned it to the inside pocket sure that he would never touch it till morning. Had he not gone downstairs for a newspaper and run out of change, their scheme might have worked.

The officer returned the thirty-seven dollars to Jacques. "You're an honest man," he commented, "You could have gotten a lot more out of those scoundrels! The three of them will be cooling their heels in jail here for a nice long time, you can be sure. Thank you again for helping us catch them, Mr. Feldmark!"

As Jacques turned to leave, Mr. Davis called out to him from behind the bars of his cell. In Yiddish, he cried out, "Hob rachmonis off ein Yid!" ("Have pity on a fellow Jew!") Disdainfully, Jacques approached the cell.

"You should be ashamed of yourself!" he lashed out. "A man of your intellect and ability, with so much to offer, so cultured, so well informed! Is this the best you could do with your life? You could have made something of yourself if you had some decency, not stoop to this!"

With that he turned on his heel, thanked the sergeant, and walked out. Returning to his hotel, he dashed off a quick letter to Malvina relating his adventure, and headed for the railroad station.

IV

Now fifteen, Josy was old enough to travel to Frank Potamkin's home for her weekly piano lessons instead of having him come to the house. She took the number 39 trolley from Strawberry Mansion to Broad Street, then switched to the subway and, at the end of

the line, boarded the number 6 (or, sometimes, the 55) bus from Olney Avenue to Elkins Park. A mile past the city limits, she got off and walked down Church Road, crossed a small bridge above a stream and, one block later, finally arrived at Cadwalader Road. His boxy two-story house was the one next to the corner. The trip took over an hour each way.

In addition to having Josy perform at the end-of-the-year recital that spring Mr. Potamkin insisted she give a solo concert of her own. She played a dozen numbers, works by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and a couple short pieces that Mr. Potamkin had composed himself. As usual, several rows of chairs were placed facing the two baby grand pianos standing side by side in the living room, and Josy was urged to invite as many guests as she wanted. Many came, among them several girls from her class at Gratz. It was an ambitious project well beyond what she had done to date.

She got through everything fairly well, except for a couple measures in the first movement of the Beethoven Sonata #15 Opus 2 which she suddenly felt unsure of and skipped over (though nobody except the Potamkins, listening from behind the hallway curtain, seemed any the wiser). Afterwards they told her that this concert was a big step forward in her piano work.

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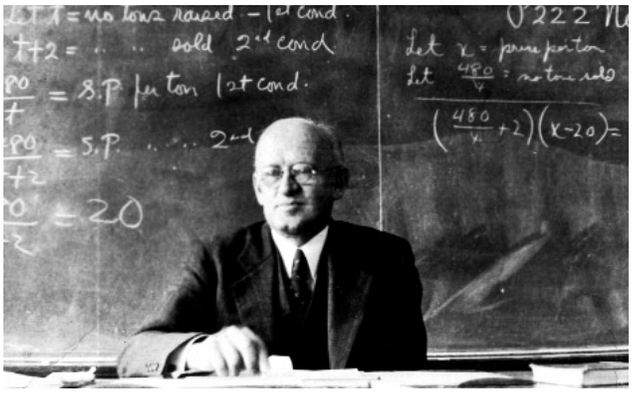
At school she felt newly encouraged. Having had her essay chosen for the junior high graduation gave her a feeling that she was making a fresh start, and when she moved into the accelerated program at Gratz she determined to apply herself diligently from the very beginning. With Jacques out of town, she had to rely strictly on herself in math, so as soon as anything came up that was not completely clear, she asked about it at once.



Mr. Eugene Anders.

Mr. Eugene Anders, her geometry teacher, turned out to be the best teacher she ever had. Elderly, gruff, strict, and methodical, with a no-nonsense attitude, he made every minute count. When he assigned seats (alphabetically) the first day, his brusque manner cowed everyone. By the second day, however, they all realized this was just a mask for a warm and kindly disposition.

Five minutes into the course he defined an angle. He was about to move on when Josy raised her hand.

"I just want to make sure," she asked diffidently. "Does the size of the angle have anything to do with the length of the lines that form it?"

"No," he snapped, then continued with the problem. She was satisfied, but from behind her a voice muttered, "What a dumb question!" It was her classmate Arthur Ostroff, innately talented in math, with little patience for anything so trifling.

Embarrassed though she was, Josy was glad she had clarified things immediately. Better than fretting about an uncertainty, she told herself, she had cleared away an early obstacle so she could devote full attention to the main problem without missing anything.

She never regretted this decision. She ended the report period with an "A" in Geometry, a grade she kept for all four marking periods of the year.

She grew to love Geometry, especially the purity of its logic and reasoning. She appreciated how this branch of mathematics helped widen her way of thinking. Now she understood Edna St. Vincent Millay's famous line, "Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare".

Her enthusiasm for Geometry led her to all kinds of odd speculation.

She wondered naively how people who reason logically could possibly arrive at a wrong conclusion.

"How could the Nazis in Germany," she thought childishly, "accept Hitler's anti-Semitic teachings if they reasoned clearly step by step?"

"His premises are so flawed!" she reflected. "If the Germans would only apply geometric principles to their political ideas, logic would lead them to see the fallacies of their conclusions!

"Yet they certainly must teach Geometry in Germany today. So how is it possible for Germans to become Nazis? And with all the accomplishments of Jewish scientists, mathematicians, artists, writers, and musicians, how can they view Jews as an inferior race? Surely there must be some way for precise mathematical thinking to clear up such fallacies!"

Mr. Anders had a habit of calling students by their surnames. No "Mr." or "Miss", just the last name, so he addressed Josy as "Feldmark".

"Now, Feldmark," he barked when she gave a wrong answer, "You know better than that!"

When her parents came to the Open House at Gratz one April evening, he greeted

them with, "Oh, you're Feldmark's parents. A good student, Feldmark! A fine student! Excellent work in math!"

Jacques' jaw fell open in amazement.

Mr. Anders' favorite retorts when students made errors in reasoning were "Now don't go comparing apples with oranges!" and "So you want to go to City Hall by way of Bucks County!" This was as close as he ever came to joking. He never digressed from the topic at hand, always remaining stern and direct, never wasting a second.

He insisted that when they drew a line, they should keep their eyes fixed on the spot where they wanted it to end, so that it would come out straight. He had a gift of wording queries so that his pupils came out with the correct answers despite themselves. Yet he never asked a leading question. Artfully he elicited correct responses from students who remained bewildered at their own unexpected "aptitude". Many times Josy watched students leave the blackboard dazed, scratching their heads in wonder at their own "brilliance" as they returned to their seats. This, she decided, was teaching as an art. It planted the idea that some day she, too, might want to become a teacher.

One time during the second semester of Geometry, Mr. Anders offered a problem that volunteers could tackle for extra credit. He gave them two weeks to finish. Fifteen tried, but only Arthur Ostroff and Ephraim Catsiff (the class genius) succeeded.

Josy toiled at the problem diligently, but Mr. Anders refused to accept her solution. "This is nonsense," he muttered as he handed her paper back.

After class she persisted in asking him where she had gone wrong. When he tried to shoo her away, busying himself with preparations for the next class, she insisted that she had worked long and hard on the problem and wanted to understand her mistake.

Sniffing dubiously, he examined her paper again. The minute he read her opening premise "Let Line AB = Line CD, and let Angle X = Angle Y", he snapped, "You can never make two different assumptions at the same time!"

She would remember this basic principle of logic long after she forgot the details of the problem itself.

When tenth grade drew to a close, school was abuzz with the rumor that Mr. Anders was retiring. It turned out to be true, much to the disappointment of most students, especially those whom, like Josy, he had inspired to continue on to Solid Geometry next term.

Her classmates made a party for him on the final day and they urged her to write a poem for the occasion, which she then read aloud:

ODE TO MR. ANDERS

His round blue eyes that quickly snap
Are full of life and energy,
His gray head round, and partly bald
Is crammed full of geometry.

Quite light in weight, he is not hard
Upon his twinkling elfin toes,
And only merriment shines forth
From out his upturned cherry nose.

His voice is gruff, his words are quick,
And yet, quite often, smiles appear
Upon his wise and shaven lips
That spread in glee from ear to ear.

His pupils love him, every one,
And yet a certain dignity
Surrounds each word and rule he speaks
Our teacher of geometry.

Mr. Anders sniffed a bit as she read it, then barked gruffly, "Thank you, Feldmark!"

Years later, she was happy to learn that, although he left teaching in his mid-sixties, Mr. Anders had a happy retirement and was still alive at the age of one hundred.

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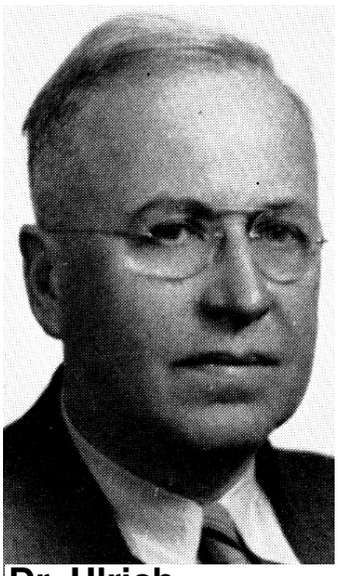

Dr. Ulrich.

Dr. Ulrich was her 10A Science teacher. An elderly man, kindly and somewhat absent-minded, he taught Biology. One girl whose name nobody could remember transferred out the first week, but he seemed unable to remember this. Each day when he called roll, checking students by their number on his seating chart, he looked up startled, fluttered his eyelids in confusion, and called out, "Number 32? Where is Number 32?" Somebody always reminded him that "Number 32" had been dropped early in February. This continued through every class until the very last day of June. Students waited for it, giggling and winking at each other in anticipation, but he never noticed.

He assigned two pupils to each lab table. Josy sat with

Anna Federspiel, whose mouth continuously hung open, yet who never said a word. Josy's friend Frances Jacobs, a few places away, had a lively seatmate William Junius, one of the two black students in the class. His junior high school guidance counselor had advised William against taking the academic course since, according to her, "Negroes didn't usually get into college anyhow". It had taken a personal visit by William's father, who argued vehemently with the school principal, to finally get his son into the academic course. (William eventually went on to medical school and became a surgeon.) Charming and well mannered, every once in a while he would delight his classmates and teachers with a sly remark.

One time Dr. Ulrich distributed microscopes, one to each table, and giving out scraps of material, directed students to work in pairs, examining the samples and writing answers to an assigned set of questions. One of the scraps was the skin of an onion.

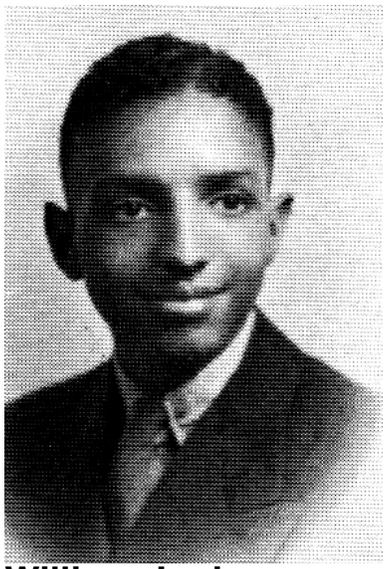
"Notice the concentric circles," Dr. Ulrich instructed. "You'll see they look almost like eyes."

A moment later a howl went up from William Junius. Springing out of his seat in mock terror, he turned to Frances and yelled, "Girl! One of them thar eyes just winked at me!"

During one of his tests, Dr. Ulrich asked the question "What is the function of fruit as part of a plant?"

Several students raised their hands and asked for clarification.

"Take the lemon as an example," he elaborated. "What is the reason nature put the part you eat into the lemon? Why do you cut the lemon open and eat it?" And he licked his fingers as if tasting.



William Junius.

For Josy, this example clouded the issue. It was difficult for her to imagine someone licking his fingers over a lemon. The answer, Dr. Ulrich explained later, was "to get people to eat the food, and by doing so, release the seeds of the plant so they could disperse, take root and reproduce".

"If only he had used a peach as an example," she thought, "or an apple, I might have guessed it. But a lemon?"

She got that question wrong. Later Dr. Ulrich explained that he had purposely chosen a lemon so as not to give the answer away.

Another of his examples that she was unable to picture

was his description of mold. She had never seen or heard of mold. When he described it as "the stuff you sometimes see on the bread your mother keeps in the kitchen", she was completely baffled. But a few other students, especially John Brunner at the lab table in front of hers, nodded vigorously in recognition. Josy's mother always bought bread sparingly and, although in recent months it was day-old, there never was enough in the house to get moldy. John, however, reported that during summer vacation he had collected snakes, as well as rats to feed to them, so nothing he said ever surprised her.

When Dr. Ulrich assigned oral reports, he gave Josy the topic of "Gregor Mendel's Theory of Heredity". Using the encyclopedia on Mr. Falik's bookshelf at home, she became engrossed in the subject. When she gave her report, explaining the "one to two to one" ratio, she used drawings of red, white, and pink roses as an example. Dr. Ulrich gave her an enthusiastic A for the project.

V

At the end of May, Jacques and his partner Daniel Berkowitz moved their store from Logan to Strawberry Mansion. Business had been especially slow, and the new location at the northwest corner of Thirty-first and Diamond looked more promising. Across the street on one corner stood the Park Movie, and diagonally across from the store was Muller's Bakery. The area was a hub of activity, especially on weekends.

In June Josy and her parents moved out of Mr. Falik's house to 2205 North Thirty-third Street, just two blocks from the new store. Just before leaving, Malvina ordered Josy to shake hands with Herby, breaking their long feud and parting as friends. She and Jacques also parted amicably from Mr. Falik, kissing both Diana and Herby good-bye. Josy never saw them again, but she heard that a year later Mr. Falik married for a third time.

The move to Strawberry Mansion still permitted her to go to Gratz High, since the school drew students from Strawberry Mansion as well as Logan west of Broad Street. She now had to take the A bus, except for the few occasions when she and a couple other girls got a ride with her classmate Flora Kaplan's father on his way to teach at Philadelphia College of Optometry.

Their new apartment overlooked Fairmount Park. Occupying the second floor of a three-story house, it encompassed an enormous living room with a bay window facing the park, a dining-room-kitchen area, two large bedrooms, and a bath in the back. Upstairs the

neighbors on the third floor were a working couple who fried herring for supper every night. Josy never saw them, but the stairwell outside the Feldmarks' door reeked from the smell.

Downstairs lived a childless German couple, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Geise. He spoke very little English, his wife none at all. Every day a German newspaper was delivered to them on the outside front porch. Mr. Geise played bass for the Philadelphia Orchestra. When not at rehearsals or concerts, he practiced at home. The grinding sounds, unaccompanied by any melody, drifted up into the second floor apartment, sometimes for eighteen hours at a stretch.

Once, when Josy was practicing her piano before supper, Mr. Geise came knocking on their door.

"Could you tell your daughter to stop playing?" he asked Malvina in halting English.

"But she has to practice," Malvina pointed out.

"Well, maybe you can ask her to play softer," he suggested.

"Mr. Geise," Malvina protested, fixing him with a reproachful stare, "surely you, as a musician, know that is not advisable. A musician must play with expression!"

At this, Mr. Geise retreated down the stairwell without another word. After that, he rarely even nodded when passing them on the front porch.

He and his wife must have been extremely lonely. No one came to visit, nor did anyone ever see Mrs. Geise go out. Dozens of cats could be seen through the front window of their first floor apartment, which the Feldmarks passed to enter the building. Once on a warm spring day, when Malvina was hanging laundry out to dry, she overheard Mrs. Geise's voice from below cooing to the cats in German, "Sweet little kittens! Wouldn't you love to have a baby brother or sister of your own?"

Many years later, long after they had moved away, the Feldmarks heard that Mr. and Mrs. Geise were found dead in their same first-floor apartment, having committed suicide together!

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Josy's classmate Flora Kaplan lived in Strawberry Mansion, on the 3000 block of Diamond Street, just down the block from Jacques' store. Now that Josy lived in the

neighborhood, she and Flora saw each other often, sometimes every day. After school they went for walks or studied together, taking their books to Fairmount Park to do homework and talk.

About a block from Thirty-third and Diamond Streets, well into the park, was a path that intrigued them. If they followed it to the end, it brought them to East River Drive along the Schuylkill River. Usually, though, they stopped midway at a clearing with a small bench near a tiny footbridge over a brook. Here they sat reading, chatting or joking until dark.

Just past the foot-bridge the path diverged, the main branch leading down to the river, the other meandering steeply up an incline through the trees and then over to a ledge high above the river. One time there by herself, Josy found another bench where she sometimes sat and wrote poetry. Many months after she discovered the spot, a policeman on horseback came riding by, shocked to find her there by herself.

"Don't ever come up here alone," he warned her. "It's dangerous!"

Indeed, the spot was entirely isolated. After that she never went back. But she always remembered the solitude and quiet, with an occasional distant rumble of traffic from the Drive below, and the chirping of birds echoing in the trees around her.

She had just finished reading H.G. Wells's *The History of Mr. Polly*. When Mr. Polly was young, he had walked down to the river, vowing to return when he grew old. Eventually he did so, reminiscing about what life had given him. Josy found the idea romantic, and promised herself that she would one day return to the Schuykill River area where the footbridge crossed the brook.

A few years later, soon after they were married, she took her husband to see the place. But decades after that, when they looked for the spot again, the path no longer existed. The underbrush was so thickly overgrown that it engulfed all signs of the path. Sadly Josy realized that Thomas Wolfe's line "You can't go home again" applied not only to cities, neighborhoods, and people, but even to nature itself.

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Her French teacher was Miss Bessie Bernstein. In her early thirties, petite and attractive, she was extremely demanding. Students arrived to class everyday finding an English expression on the blackboard to translate into French before the lesson began. The


Miss Bessie Bernstein.

first student to get it right received an extra credit point. One that came up repeatedly (with slight variations) was "Who has the shirts? I saw them". After hastily scribbling an answer, pupil after pupil would race up to Miss Bernstein's desk, only to be sent back to make corrections. Finally somebody would call out in recognition, "Oh yes! Past participle agrees in gender and number with preceding direct object!" and hurriedly replacing a letter or two, would stumble up front again with the correct response: "Qui a les chemises? Je les ai vues" (stressing the final "es").

The strict French instruction that Josy had gotten from Miss Pollard at Cooke now stood her in good stead. Miss Bernstein remarked from time to time (almost reluctantly, it seemed to Josy), "Very good! How did you know that answer?"

When Josy mentioned Miss Pollard, Miss Bernstein replied coldly, "Yes, I hear she's a fine teacher."

Josy wondered if Miss Bernstein preferred Flora Kaplan to her. She was constantly fawning over Flora, giving her every benefit of the doubt, while coming down hard on Josy.

One day during a reading lesson, Miss Bernstein asked, "What is the French word for 'spoon'?"

Without thinking, Josy replied, "Cucharita".

"What?" exclaimed Miss Bernstein. "The French word for 'spoon'?"

"Cucharita!" repeated Josy.

"Stand up!" Miss Bernstein directed. "Now give me the right answer."

For the third time, Josy replied, "Cucharita".

"Sit down!" sniffed Miss Bernstein. "We're not playing games! What is the word, Class?"

Somebody called out, "Cuillère".

"Of course," snapped Miss Bernstein, with a glare in Josy's direction.

Puzzled, it took Josy several minutes to realize that she had given the answer in Spanish. It must have been buried in her subconscious from her visit to Mexico three years earlier. After class she approached Miss Bernstein to explain, but the teacher brushed her off, miffed by what she probably thought was a deliberate prank.

Flora Kaplan and Ephraim Catsiff.

On the last day of 10A, Miss Bernstein announced that she was presenting the coveted prize, a French-English dictionary, to the pupil who had done the best work all semester. Everyone knew it had to be either Josy or Flora Kaplan. They had been in friendly competition all term. The prize went to Josy. Though elated and honored, she still had the feeling that Miss Bernstein's true favorite was actually Flora.

The following day, the first of summer vacation, she invited Flora to go for a walk. Flora replied that she had to wait until after lunch. The same thing happened every day for the next several weeks. Flora made it clear that her mornings were now occupied: she was busy studying German. Her parents, she explained, had gotten her a German primer, and she was teaching herself German two hours each day. From time to time, as they took their afternoon walks together, Flora would quote a phrase in German to show her progress.

"Yaydes kihnd hut ein fater und eina muter," she would recite, translating for Josy, "Each child has a father and a mother."

When 10B started in September, Flora's French vocabulary had more than doubled. In addition she was familiar with new concepts being presented in class for the first time.

"I never saw a student make so much progress in so short a time!" Miss Bernstein exclaimed in wonder. "However did you do it, Flora?"

"I studied every morning for two hours all summer!" Flora replied.

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Claire Goldstein, another of Josy's new friends from Gratz, came to visit soon after Josy moved into Strawberry mansion. On that firstvisit, Malvina opened the hallway door of the second floor apartment after buzzing her in. Later she told Josy, "I didn't like her from the first minute I saw her down at the bottom of the steps."

"Why not?" Josy wanted to know.

"I just didn't like her. Nothing!"

"What do you mean by 'nothing'?"

"Nothing," Malvina reiterated. "There's nothing to her."

"But how could you tell from the top of the steps," Josy demanded, irate. "Without even saying a single word to her?"

"I know people," Malvina replied assuredly. "I could just tell."

Despite this, Josy and Claire continued to be great friends for the next year or two.

One time Malvina came to pick Josy up at the Twenty-ninth Street fruit store that Claire's parents owned.

"I don't understand it," she and Mrs. Goldstein exclaimed to each other, nodding at the two girls. "All they do is giggle."

Josy resented her mother's interference and pronouncements about her friends. She and Claire eventually drifted apart, but Josy promised herself that some day when she had children of her own, she would allow them to make their own decisions in choosing friends. It would not be until some sixty years later, when she would meet Claire again and spend a bit of time talking to her, that she would find her with little of interest to say. Whether it was the passage of time, or apathy that the years had brought to Claire, or the diversity their paths in life had taken, she was unsure. But at that point she would suddenly stop in her tracks, recall Malvina's words, and wonder in disbelief, "By God, could my mother have been right after all?"

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Although Josy was friendly with several classmates living in Strawberry Mansion, she continued to visit Frances Jacobs in Logan almost every other week.

She loved the home atmosphere there, the warmth and hospitality, how Frances's brother Bertrand, only thirteen, practiced the Vivaldi violin concerto upstairs, and how after supper, they turned the radio on to classical music. Frances's elderly grandmother cooked wonderful meals and always fussed over Josy.

"You're like mine own child!" she exclaimed in her heavy Russian accent, hugging Josy warmly. Often after Frances left to go out on a date, Josy would stay on and play Chinese checkers with the old lady, who seemed thrilled with her company. Frances dated frequently by the time she turned fifteen. Josy was often left alone with the grandparents

once Frances's father set out for his lady-friend's house after dinner, and Bertrand retreated upstairs to do his homework.

Frances's mother had been committed to an asylum with schizophrenia when Frances was four years old and Bertrand two. Mr. Jacobs' parents brought up the children. In the 1930s, divorce was illegal in such cases. Mr. Jacobs, a physics teacher at West Philadelphia High School, had a "lady-friend" named Bluma. He stayed at home after school was out and until dinner was over. Then he left to go to Bluma's for the night.

Josy with Frances Jacobs in 1940.

Many years later, when Frances was in her twenties, a medication controlling schizophrenia was discovered, and her mother finally released from the asylum. As soon as this happened, Mr. Jacobs divorced her and married Bluma. Surprisingly, Frances's mother and Bluma remained on friendly terms, inviting one another to dinner and often ignoring Mr. Jacobs when they talked. When Josy once told Frances, "How lucky you are to have your mother returned to you!" Frances exclaimed angrily, "Don't you ever say that! My mother is a total stranger to me. I treat her well, but I feel absolutely nothing for her! You had your mother when you needed her, while you were growing up! And not only that! Your mother was actually more of a mother to me than my own mother ever was!"

By the time she was sixteen Josy's visits to the Jacobs grew less frequent, but Frances' grandmother continued to welcome her warmly each time, always begging her to keep coming back.

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At the end of 10A, to celebrate the closing of school for the summer, some fifteen girls took a boat ride on the Delaware River on the Wilson Line. Malvina and another mother accompanied them. They spent a delightful few hours on the water, vowing to remain friends forever. It was a perfect ending to a wonderful first term at Gratz.

Josy made a party for her school friends. Inspired by a booklet "Party Games for All Occasions" that she had bought from the five and ten cent store in Logan, she organized a scavenger hunt. When some of the girls asked if they could bring dates, Josy agreed unenthusiastically, because this meant that she must also provide a date for herself. She decided that only a tall boy would do. That left her two choices: Ephraim Catsiff, the class genius, whose only response to any conversation was a terse "yup" or "nope", and Samuel Fiederer, who sat next to her in Homeroom. She picked Samuel as the lesser of two evils.

Working up her courage, she finally asked him and, to her surprise, he accepted. But when the evening came, Samuel never showed up. Josy was appalled. She was the only one without a date. Despite this, the party turned out to be fun. After meeting at her apartment, they set out armed with a list of items to find and bring back in an hour. Josy went with Frances and her date. Later they displayed the junk they had all collected, ate cake and ice cream, and went home happy.

Monday back at school, Josy let Sam Fiederer know how angry she was. He offered a lame excuse, and after this she refused to talk to him. It was two years later before he apologized. Because both their last names began with F, she got assigned to sit next to him daily in twelfth grade Physics class, unable to avoid him. By this time he had matured somewhat, and he seemed sincere in asking forgiveness. He invited her to go out with him now to make amends, but she refused. She continued to ignore him as best she could for the rest of the term.

On the whole, though, she was delighted with the new friends she had made at Gratz. Most would remain together in the accelerated program there for all three years. They grew extremely attached to one another, forming a bond that lasted many years. Even though most of their paths would diverge later in life, she always remembered them with deep affection as an integral part of her growing up.

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In 1939 the World's Fair opened in Flushing Meadow, New York City. Though Josy visited it for only one day in 1939 and another day in 1940, it made a powerful and lasting impression.

The first time she went with her father. They took the train early one autumn morning when school happened to be closed for the day, and on the ride to New York Jacques

planned their itinerary. Local newspapers all featured maps of the fairgrounds along with schedules of the many activities, so by the time they got there they knew exactly what they wanted to see.

Among the numerous spectacles were pavilions of many different nations. Josy was most impressed by the Russian pavilion. Inside was a life-size replica of the Moscow subway, resplendent with chandeliers, artwork, and paintings hanging on the walls. Enormous mirrors at both ends of the tracks created the illusion of never-ending rails in both directions, and beautiful Russian folk music was piped through all the halls.

The French pavilion was another magnificent structure, filled with chic displays of perfumes, tasteful artwork, and the latest fashions. Many regarded this as the crowning achievement of the fair.

A small Czechoslovakian Pavilion, beautiful with folk art, exuded an air of poignancy, since Germany had invaded that country only months before.

Another charming, though disproportionately small pavilion, was the one from China. Hardly larger than a tent, it looked like a glorified antique shop. Josy's father bought her a ring there, green jade inscribed with large Oriental letters in red, which she found charming and kept for many years. Japan had been at war with China for several years now, and the frugality of the Chinese pavilion stood in sharp contrast to the luxury of the Japanese pavilion nearby.

The design of the Japanese pavilion was a masterpiece of simplicity. Graceful and delicately beautiful, its most pronounced feature was a life-size replica of Philadelphia's liberty bell, its entire surface encrusted in white pearls. A ridge of pale blue pearls running down one side of the bell delineated the famous crack in the original. This Japanese bell, they were told, was worth $2 million, $1 million alone for the single gigantic pearl at the base of its clapper. When she visited the fair again the following year, relations between the United States and Japan had become so strained that the Japanese pavilion and its bell were gone. But later, in 1967, when Josy and her husband would visit Mikimoto's Pearl Island in Japan, there to her delight and surprise she would find that same bell on display. It was like meeting an old friend again after many years.

On her second visit to the fair she and Malvina went with Sonia Estes from Chicago (visiting Sonia's Philadelphia cousin Jean Hersh) along with Jean's son Joe, a year younger than Josy, and Sonia's son. The others wanted to see the General Motors display, which was touted to be the highlight of the fair because of its numerous exhibits displaying life ten or twenty years into the future. Lines waiting to get inside were several blocks

long; Josy and her group waited for over six hours. By the time they got inside, everyone was exhausted.

Each person was immediately placed into an upholstered chair with armrests and footrests, and the chair moved slowly along on rails, taking the viewer through all parts of the exhibit. They observed countless wonders: replicas of super highway networks, their multilayered expressways weaving intricately in and out, above and around miniature cities; television sets (unfamiliar to the public at that time); and cars and planes of the future. Josy always suspected that because the spectators were so exhausted from standing in line, just sitting in a comfortable seat was enough to fill them with enthusiasm. Of her two visits to the fair, she much preferred the one in 1939 with her father.

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Though she had liked and done well in Biology back in 10A, her 10B teacher was less inspiring. Dr. Weierbach was an elderly woman who reminded her of a praying mantis. She moved her arms from side to side, and appeared to be masticating while she drawled on monotonously, moving her eyes slowly from one side of the classroom to the other. Josy found it hard to ignore this image and concentrate on what the teacher was saying.

Dr. Weierbach occasionally alluded to some fascinating topics like the possibility that one day scientists might clone human beings and transplant organs. These digressions, though enthralling, were few and far between. Most of the time Josy found her presentations dull, hard to follow, and soporific.


Dr. Weierbach.

Dr. Weierbach must have sensed this. Once, she stopped abruptly in mid-sentence, fixing one of her penetrating stares on Josy. Singling her out on the back row, she directed a sudden question at her.

"Where on the body of this dog," she asked, pointing to a life-sized model of a canine skeleton atop a demonstration table, "will I find--" (and she named a particular bone).

Josy's heart sank. Not only had her thoughts wandered, but she had neglected to memorize the names of the bones the night before. She decided that the only way to save face was to

brazen her way out of the situation.

"It's right next to the collarbone," she answered authoritatively.

"Where exactly? Come up to the front and show me!" Dr. Weierbach demanded.

Heart in her mouth, Josy strode purposefully to the front of the room. At random, she selected one particular bone of the skeleton, resolving to insist, when told she was wrong, that she had really thought it was that bone, and she must have learned it incorrectly.

"Right there," she declared, pointing firmly to a spot on the dog. To her amazement, her choice happened to be correct. Divine Providence must have been watching over her.

Dr. Weierbach stared at her in amazement.

"That's right! Sit down!" she murmured in disbelief.

As Josy walked back to her seat, she caught Dr. Weierbach scratching her head, puzzled. A few students, alerted by Josy's expression, guessed the truth and grinned.

The only time she actually got in trouble at Gratz was when she was caught combing her hair in the lunchroom. This was a serious offense, and the teacher took down her name and sent it to the School Court (a group of students serving as judges). Josy was mortified. Appearing in front of them in a mock trial was shameful. She got through the experience with her dignity badly shaken.

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It was when Josy got to 10B that her English teacher, Miss McCleary , was teaching her last class. The following semester she would be promoted to Assistant Principal. She left a profound impression on Josy. One of the things she emphasized was how important it was to develop an assortment of interests in life so that one could counter loneliness by enjoying one's own company.

After they studied Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, they went on to a unit on poetry, detailing the mechanics of rhyme schemes, types of rhythm, metaphor, simile, alliteration, and onomatopoeia. Each student had to write an original poem using as many of these devices as possi-

Miss Jane McCleary.

ble. Walking along Thirty-third Street, Josy got inspired to write and turn in the following:

The whistling night winds chase the clouds
About a wintry sky,
As soft white flakes swirl lightly down
To sweep upon each field and town
And swiftly hurry by.

A lonely poplar, ghastly grim
In evening's shadows stands,
An aged woman, cloaked in white,
Who clutches through the misty night
White snowflakes in her hands.

The rolling hills and country roads
Have vanished long ago,
And, as a foamy frothy sea
That sinks to surge again, the lea
Is white with glistening snow.

The dreary, dreamy darkness dim
Grows thicker, as the sweep
Of snow and flake and wind subsides
While all the world beneath it hides
To bathe itself in sleep.

The following day, while the class did written work, Miss McCleary called students one by one up to her desk to look over their poems. As the period wore on, her expression grew ever more glum. When Josy's turn came, Miss McCleary scanned her page, circled the second stanza and moved it to the end of the poem, changed the word "who" in that stanza to "she", and then rapped sharply on her desk with a pencil.

"This is something I want you to hear, Class" she announced. She read that newly moved verse to them, launching into an analysis of the poetic devices used. Then she announced, "This is what I call real poetry! Really excellent!"

Such praise from Miss McCleary was rare. Out of the corner of her eye, Josy noticed a couple of her classmates looking jealous.

Josy's art teacher was Miss Turner (referred to behind her back as "Miss Annabel Turner"). Miss Turner and Miss McCleary were good friends, eating lunch together every day. Miss Turner was a gifted teacher as well as a talented artist, but wildly eccentric. Two huge sharp crimson spots of unblended rouge on her cheeks often gave her the appearance of a clown. Her egotism was extreme, to the point of comedy. Almost every sentence was

punctuated by her announcement "I am Miss Annabel Turner!" with a loud, emphasis on the word 'I' (as if anyone could ever forget). The class all listened for it continuously, giggling every time it came up.

She pranced back and forth, emoting, gesturing, pirouetting, virtually dancing her way around the room as if on stage. Every motion was a curtsy or a calculated twirl as she distributed supplies or issued directions. Interrupting herself repeatedly with trivia, she recurrently turned to the class to announce yet one more time, "I am Miss Annabel Turner!" Students covered their mouths to keep from bursting into open laughter.

Miss Annabel Turner.

After they had finished the poetry unit in English class Josy, for her own amusement, wrote a poem about Miss Annabel Turner. She scribbled it into a small spiral tablet in her purse, satisfied that she had captured in parody the essence of the teacher's personality:

ODE TO MISS ANNABEL TURNER
HEAD OF THE ART, MUSIC, AND HOME ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT,
ASSISTANT TO THE ASSISTANT OF THE PRINCIPAL, ETC.

Oh, she is quite famous, and she is quite known,
Although she is adult, her brain has not grown,
And everyone knows her by just this alone:
I am Miss Annabel Turner!

I head the department of music and art,
More often than not, my pupils will start
To learn that I have all their welfares at heart.
For I am Miss Annabel Turner!

To say nothing less of the home economics
Which, truly, I say, will develop their stomachs
And tastes to something much higher than comics
For I am Miss Annabel Turner!

I am round as a cylinder, round as a ball,
And everyone comes to my each beck and call,
Yet at times I do wish I did not head it all
But I am Miss Annabel Turner!

She showed the verse to several classmates, who snickered appreciatively. The next day her classmate Mollie Potash approached Miss McCleary.

"Miss McCleary," she sang out, "Why don't you ask Josephine to show you her poem on Miss Turner?"

Miss McCleary turned an inquiring eye on Josy.

"Oh no!" exclaimed Josy, "I really can't show you that!"

"Why not?" Miss McCleary asked.

"Oh, I couldn't!" Josy repeated. "It's not written up well. It's all scribbled. You wouldn't be able to read the writing. Anyhow, it's not something you'd want to see!"

"Yes, I would," Miss McCleary retorted.

The more Josy blustered, the more Mollie (and, by now, several other girls) insisted, "Oh, make her show it to you, Miss McCleary! It's really something! You really should see it!"

Miss McCleary turned to Josy and commanded, "Show it to me!"

Sheepishly Josy got out her small spiral tablet. As Miss McCleary read, they all saw her frown. The further she went, the harder she bit her lip. At last finished, she handed the tablet back to Josy without a word.

"That's all for today," she announced.

As the girls left, they glanced back at Miss McCleary doubled over in laughter. She never mentioned the matter again.

When Parent Visitation night approached, Miss McCleary announced a class project for the occasion. The students presented a scene from *Twelfth Night*, acting out various roles with puppets. Anyone who wanted could make a puppet of a character from the play. Josy chose Sir Toby Belch. Drawing an outline on cloth, she cut out two layers, then basted them together, stuffing the figure with cotton and rags. She designed and cut out of colored cloth an Elizabethan outfit, and her mother sewed the finishing touches onto the figure.

Miss McCleary asked Josy to also write a prologue and read it as an introduction to the performance. It went as follows:

In far Illyria many years ago
The court of Duke Orsino rose above
A seaside town, where dwelt a countess fair
Olivia, object of Orsino's love.

The lady, who had lost a brother dear
And vowed to mourn him seven years or more
Repulsed the suit, and hid her beauteous face
'Neath a black veil which she always wore.

About this time, to Duke Orsino's court
A maiden, saved from recent shipwreck came,
Viola, known as Page Cesario, swore
For him the fair Olivia's love to claim,
Although she loved Orsino much herself,
We find her going to woo his lady fair,
So if you patiently attend our play
A moment more shall find us also there.

The entire project was received enthusiastically by the visiting parents, and left the students with a sense of accomplishment and many fond memories. Josy kept the doll and eventually passed it on to her daughter Lois, who kept it permanently on display in a glass-fronted cabinet in her home.