Chapter 23. Senior Year

I

Early in the summer just before her senior year, Josy went with her classmate Flossie Halpern for one week to a camp in New York State. Changing trains in New York City, they traveled north till they came to the edge of the Connecticut border. Governor Thomas E. Dewey, they heard, lived in the area, and the newscaster Edward R. Murrow also had a summer home nearby. Josy felt exhilarated to be traveling this far north. She had never been to New England before, and she hoped to cross the border into Connecticut that week on at least a short hike just to say she had been there. On the train she tried to imagine what emotions the pioneers must have felt when they first entered new and uncharted territory. It was a sensation she would later experience over and over again every time she traveled to a new state or foreign country.

On the first day at camp she and Flossie met two girls from Brooklyn, Sara Gunther and Millie Wender. The four immediately became good friends and spent all their time together. A fellow from Brooklyn (they called him "Whitie" because of his pale, almost albino complexion) joined them, and the five spent a companionable week hiking, eating together, joking, and sharing several camp activities. On one occasion they all went out on the lake in a rowboat and, before long, found themselves unable to control the direction they were going. Around and around they kept rowing in circles, laughing uproariously, until two lifeguards finally came out in another boat to rescue them. The week flew by quickly, and after returning home, Josy continued to keep in close touch with these New York friends for a long time to come.

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Back at school, because of the war the University had recently introduced summer courses for the first time, making it possible for undergraduates to finish sooner. Several of Josy's classmates got their bachelor degrees in three years rather than four by including two summers of classwork. She decided to go for only one summer, hoping to graduate in February 1946 instead of June that year and then take Practice Teaching (a fifth year course) in the spring semester to get her teaching certificate.

Now in the summer of 1945 she took "Non-Shakespearean Elizabethan Drama" with Dr. Matthew Black, and "English Drama from 1850 to the Present" with Dr. Frank Laurie. Both courses were rich in literary criticism, analyzing in great detail the interpretation of plot and character.

Dr. Black was an outstanding professor. His course on "Non-Shakespearean Elizabethan Drama" was powerful and insightful, leaving his students with a deeper understanding of the period. He made especially clear the dilemma of authors who had had the ill luck to be born in the time of Shakespeare. Had they lived in a different age, Dr. Black emphasized, most of them would now be regarded differently and remembered for their own greatness.

"But instead," he pointed out, "history judges them only in comparison to their exalted contemporary, Shakespeare."

"You should look upon the Elizabethan dramatists," he insisted, "as a group of very high mountains, each in itself a lofty summit, yet mere foothills when viewed against an

Alp like Shakespeare, that one mighty peak towering above all the rest."

In discussing Christopher Marlowe's play *Dr. Faustus*, he traced the Faust legend from its origin in the medicine books of the Middle Ages through to its famous handling by the German Goethe. He pointed out why Marlowe's version lacked the greatness and power of Goethe's.

"Think how superficial," he noted, "for Faust in Marlowe to request as his reward from the Devil something as trivial as out-of-season grapes. Then compare this to the Faust in Goethe (and in Gounod's opera 'Faust' as based on Goethe) who asks for love, youth, and virility in exchange for his soul."

One play they had to read for the course was Ben Jonson's *Volpone*. Josy put it off until the weekend just before the midterm exam. Then she devoted all day Saturday to reading it, and realized in panic that she understood nothing in it at all. She had no idea who the characters were, what they were talking about, what the plot was all about. In despair she racked her brains about whom to call for consultation and help, but she knew not one person in that class. To make matters even worse, the free public library had already closed for the night and would remain closed all the next day Sunday. And the test was scheduled for Monday morning. Not knowing what else to do, she reread the play on Sunday. To her intense amazement she found that this time not only did she understand it, but she actually reveled in the antics of the characters and was able to follow the whole plot from beginning to end. It was a startling discovery, one that opened her eyes to what rereading unclear material could accomplish.

For the final exam, Dr. Black announced that he had too many other papers to grade, so the class would have to take oral exams. Students waited in the hall outside a classroom to be called in and tested one by one. Several came out ashen-faced and discouraged, not even sure they had passed. When Josy's turn came, she entered hardly knowing what to expect.

"Tell me just one thing," Dr, Black demanded. "The heroine in this play, how did she die?"

"Well," Josy replied nonplussed, "she wilted away from suffering."

"But why?" Dr. Black persisted.

"Because she had no news of her lover, because she languished, because—"

"Yes? Yes?" he insisted, waiting for her to go on.

"Well, she felt engulfed by tragedy, she wept continuously, she didn't eat anything—"

Aha!" he shouted. "So she starved to death! O.K. You read the play! You pass! You get an A! That's all!"

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The other professor that summer, Dr. Laurie, was a short man with silvery white hair and a fierce manner. He had the deep, throaty voice of a Shakespearean actor. Peering out from behind heavy black-rimmed glasses, he glared at everyone as he lectured, but his gruff manner belied a kindly and gentle spirit.

"George Bernard Shaw," he commented in a lecture one day, "has been labeled a heartless individual in real life. But I'm not so sure."

He then recounted how a young man (whom the class suspected might even have been Dr. Laurie himself) once visited Ireland shortly after receiving his doctorate in English Drama and, making his way to the apartment building where Shaw lived, gained access to the vestibule. There he remained, gazing in veneration at the mail-slot bearing the playwright's name. Too much in awe to even ring the bell, he simply stood there dazzled by the thought that he was in the same building as the great man.

Suddenly the inner door flew open, and Shaw himself appeared. Stepping into the entryway, he pulled the young fellow into the inner hall and then back to his apartment. For almost an hour he rambled on, declaiming about his work, his current manuscripts, and his opinions on literature and fellow writers. Then, as unceremoniously as before, he threw the young man out without so much as a good-bye, slamming the door in his face. It was an experience the fellow would never forget.

"Now was this really cruel behavior?" Dr. Laurie demanded of the class. "I think not. Rather, he gave that young man exactly what he had been dreaming about but never dared hope for, a personal interview, the memory of which he would treasure for the rest of his life." Dr. Laurie sniffed and, without pause, continued on to his next topic, leaving the class again to ponder the exact identity of the young man.

In that course she sat next to a girl from Newark, Delaware who commuted by train every morning for this eight o'clock class. Often she and Josy arranged to meet later for lunch. They stayed friendly until one morning when Josy arrived ten minutes late for class. Making her way past other students in the row, trying to slip unobtrusively into her seat, she heard Dr. Laurie reading aloud from an essay he was about to return. As she sank into

her chair, he got to a sentence stating that Beethoven had been able to create music despite his deafness because, the writer claimed, he was "intrinsically so much of a musician".

At this point, the girl leaned over and whispered to Josy, "Isn't that awful!"

Josy listened for a moment, then began to laugh. "It's my paper," she whispered back. "It's the one I turned it!"

The girl drew in her breath. "Oh, I'm so sorry!" she gasped.

"That's all right!" Josy giggled. "I think it's hilarious! I just had to grind out something! But you're right! It's awful!" And she laughed some more.

Later she wondered if this had not embarrassed the girl so much that it cooled their friendship. Josy felt not the slightest resentment, and even found the situation genuinely amusing. But after the course was over, she and the girl saw little of each other. This may have been because their fall schedules diverged, but Josy missed her. Later, when she got married, the girl sent her a wooden candy dish that remained in her home for a long time, bringing back warm memories of this lovely friend. Sadly, after some years passed Josy was unable to even recall her name.

II

At the end of July her parents went for a week's vacation to the Catskill Mountains with Elio and Jean Hersh, cousins of their friend Sonia Estes, who had moved back to Chicago. Although they were merely on casual terms with the hershes, they decided to try a vacation together. Josy assured her parents that she would be all right at home by herself, safe and busy with school. When they hesitated about leaving her alone, she asked her classmate Flossie Halpern to come sleep at the house every night, and knowing that she would have somebody there with her reassured them.

Jacques and Malvina left on a bright Sunday morning, traveling in the Hersh's car. Jean Hersh was a sweet plump lady with a dimpled smile, accommodating to everyone. She ran a hairdressing business from her home, and got along well with everybody. Her husband Elio, however, was a different sort. Highly excitable, he was subject to fits of temper, and flared up unexpectedly over the most trivial detail.

Their trip proved bizarre from beginning to end. The car was extremely old and in poor condition. Many of its parts barely held together. Later Josy heard in full detail about their ride to and from the Catskills. On the way there they stopped repeatedly to fill the

gas tank which, because of a suspected leak, held only a couple gallons at a time. It took ten hours instead of the usual five to arrive in upstate New York. By the time they got there everyone was exhausted. It took several days to recover.

Throughout the week Mr. Hersh excused himself from one activity after another to tend to the car. Dragging buckets of water from a nearby pump to splash over the engine, he doused the car every afternoon. In the evening he brought several blankets out of his cabin to throw over the hood to protect it from the cold. It was like taking care of a pet. One day he drove to a garage in a nearby town to have the car checked for various wheezing and coughing noises coming from different parts of the engine. The mechanic stared in disbelief.

"Does this thing still run?" he asked. When he heard that they planned to travel all the way back to Philadelphia in it, he shook his head without saying a word. Mr. Hersh had insisted that Jacques come with him to the garage and, at one point when the vehicle stalled on a steep incline, he shouted directions from the wheel while he made Jacques get out and push.

Everything came to a head, however, on the ride home. They left at five in the morning, remembering from the long drive there that they needed extra time. They prepared for the worst, and this came when the car and its passengers reached the Holland Tunnel in New York City (this after four hours of repeatedly stopping for gas and checking for suspected problems). They entered the tunnel, and no sooner were they inside than they heard a series of sharp thumps.

"Something's broken!" Mr. Hersh yelled. "I've got to stop the car and get out and look!"

"You can't stop the car here!" Jacques retorted. "We're in the middle of the Holland Tunnel, for God's sake!"

"I have to!" he shouted back. "How else can I know what's wrong?"

Jean and Elio Hersh.

Meanwhile the steady thumping continued as they rolled along at thirty miles an hour, barely a few feet from the cars in front and in back of them.

"Please, Mr. Hersh," Jacques begged, almost down on his knees, "please don't stop here! I'll do anything you say. Just don't stop the car or we'll get hit."

Mr. Hersh kept hesitating, muttering to himself as

he wavered, moving his foot up and down on the brake.

"At least wait until we get out of the tunnel!" Jacques implored.

"I don't know," drawled Mr. Hersh. "Something's definitely wrong and it could get worse. Maybe I should stop now!"

Jacques continued to plead as the two women, frozen in terror on the back seat, sat motionless in fright.

At last daylight appeared at a distance ahead of them.

"Just a little further, a little bit further!" Jacques cajoled, as Mr. Hersh shook his head, repeating, "I have to stop! I really have to stop!"

They finally pulled out of the tunnel into open sunlight and, as they did, the truck ahead of them veered off to one side. There they saw a huge pile of logs coming loose and bumping all around the rear platform. These had been what had caused the thumping all along.

It was with immeasurable relief that Josy's parents finally arrived home. They thanked the Hershes and waved good-bye as the sputtering car pulled away.

"That's the last vacation we ever take with them," they promised each other as they entered the house, hardly able to believe that they had made it back alive.

III

Soon after their return, August rolled around. A few days into the month, newspaper headlines screamed that the atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima.

Two days later, another fell on Nagasaki.

"The war will soon be over," Malvina predicted.

Many people spoke in shuddering voices about how a weapon as dreadful as this signaled the end of civilization. In the next letter that Josy received from José he had enclosed a clipping from an army newspaper cartoon showing a caveman holding a large rock saying, "Look at this! A new weapon to bring an end to all civilization!"

On August 14 the announcement finally came: the war was officially over! Whistles shrieked, church-bells clanged, sirens blared all over the city, and shouts of joy rang through the streets. Malvina, pleading fatigue, wanting to stay home and listen to the radio reports, but Jacques and Josy convinced her to take the bus with them into Center City to be part of the celebration. The crowds in the streets were so dense that their bus could only

reach a point three blocks from City Hall. Getting off there, they struggled through swarms of jubilant people, shouting joyously, many singing. Some even jitterbugged in the middle of Broad Street in the few empty spots that had been cleared. Many people weeping with happiness, embraced anyone they could grab. A couple of sailors shoved past, seizing girls and kissing them. One girl, shouting hysterically, found herself tossed into the air by a group of sailors, chanting in rhythm as they bounced her up and down; she seemed not to mind at all. Trucks stuck in the middle of the crowds with no place to turn blasted out announcements interspersed with booming music. Car horns blared everywhere.

Josy and her parents finally made their way into a small restaurant across from the Academy of Music. There they settled at a table and ordered sodas. Jacques bought a newspaper and perused the four-inch-high headlines proclaiming the end of the war.

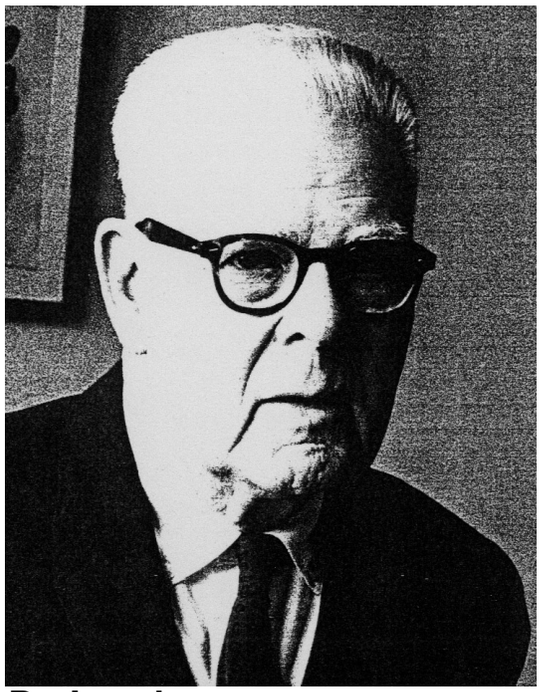
"Look at this," he exclaimed. "The fighting's hardly over, and already they're saying we shouldn't trust the Russians!"

IV

At Penn most of the instruction in the English Department continued to be excellent. Early on Josy had learned that the best way to find the good pedagogues was to consult other students. Back in her freshman year she had crowded into a classroom with eighty girls because someone had told her that Dr. Lee was an outstanding professor; he specialized in American folk songs, often accompanying himself on the guitar to illustrate a point. The room held only forty chairs, and Josy was one of those thrown out and reassigned when the Dean arrived to whittle the class down to half its size.

The teacher she got instead was Dr. MacEdward Leach, who later became her undergraduate adviser. Slightly portly, with a shock of bright yellow hair and horned rimmed glasses, he eventually organized and headed his own department of Folklore. After he got to know her, he repeatedly encouraged her to continue on towards a doctorate (she would eventually do so, but because of child rearing and financial concerns this would wait for almost forty years). When she eventually did return to Penn in the 1980s to pursue a doctorate in Sociolinguistics, she would unexpectedly come upon a photo of Dr. Leach on the wall of a fourth floor room in Logan Hall. By then he had been dead for many years, but the presence of that familiar face in a school that had changed so radical-

ly since her time there in the 1940s moved her deeply. He seemed to be encouraging and welcoming her back to the graduate studies he had constantly suggested she pursue.


Dr. Leach.

Josy had taken several classes with him in her third and fourth years, and also immediately afterwards when she started work towards her Master's. "The Arthurian Legend" was a particularly memorable course. It traced numerous interpretations of the King Arthur story through the ages, and Dr. Leach taught it with a passion that made it unforgettable.

Although he was an outstanding teacher, interesting, challenging, and spirited, he proved completely ineffectual as her adviser. He never questioned any of her decisions, especially when it came to selecting courses. He allowed her to take everything she wanted with no regard for consequences, simply beaming at her enthusiasm. This eventually landed her in an uncomfortable situation towards the end of her senior year.

Although other commitments had kept her from taking Ethics and Logic, two courses she thought might be interesting, she balked at giving up a particular single-semester class course called "The Philosophy of Ibsen, Tolstoy, and Nietche". Taught by Dr. Flaccus, this was offered only from 3:00 to 5:00 on Monday afternoons every spring. In her sophomore and junior years it conflicted with other requirements, but when the problem arose again during her senior year, she realized that it was now or never. The course, she felt certain, would be given nowhere else but at Penn. Once again she had a conflict, for it met at the same hour as the first semester of Educational Psychology, a yearlong requirement for all education students. Throwing caution to the winds, and with Dr. Leach's blessing she signed up for the philosophy course the first half of her senior year.

"I can always start that first half of Educational Psychology next semester in the second half of my senior year," she convinced him, "and then complete it in my fifth year while I'm doing Practice Teaching."

"Go ahead," he responded.

They both failed to see that this would result in the University's refusal to issue her

Bachelor's Degree on time, claiming that even though she had nine credits over what she needed to graduate, she still had not yet met all her requirements.

It would prove extremely embarrassing when in February 1946, just two days before commencement, the Dean's Office would phone demanding that she return the tickets for her graduation exercises that she had been issued and had already distributed to friends and family. Her graduation had to be postponed till June, after she would complete the second half of Educational Psychology, by which time her other fifth year classes would also be over.

But she never regretted having taken that philosophy course. The content in "Ibsen, Tolstoy, and Nietche" was so enthralling, and the juxtaposition of its authors' views so interesting that even its dull presentation by Dr. Flaccus failed to squelch the pleasure she derived from it.

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She tried to take every psychology course she could. The more she took, the more fascinated she became. She had even considered majoring in psychology before finally settling on Secondary Education. During the last half of her senior year she signed up for a course called The Psychology Clinic that involved working with young children who were patients. At the opening session of class, more people showed up than could be accommodated.

"We'll have to eliminate some of you," the instructor Frances Seidman announced. First she asked all sophomores to leave, then all juniors.

"You'll have a chance again to take this course in your senior year," she assured them.

Still too many people remained, so she asked those in the first half of their senior year to leave.

"You can still fit this course in during your last semester," she promised. Never did it occur to her to ask if anyone there was not a psychology major, which would have eliminated Josy immediately.

She enjoyed the course immensely, learning a great deal, much of which would later serve her well as a teacher. One technique they practiced was the Oak Tag Method. This they used on children with reading problems. Instead of pen, pencil, or crayon, the child

was asked to make direct contact with the page by using a finger, tracing on oak tag paper the word to be spelled while at the same time chanting it out loud. The idea was to use not only vision and sound, but also a tactile approach.

Josy got assigned to work with a ten-year-old girl. Though docile and obedient, the child made little progress, and working with her proved frustrating. At one point Josy asked her to trace the word "use" by the Oak Tag Method. When this failed, Josy demanded, "Do you know what the word means? Try to make up a sentence with it", to which the girl beamed and smiling proudly, responded, "Would youse like some potatoes?"

V

By September 1945 Josy was taking courses more directly related to the classroom experience. One was Professional Ethics with Dr. McMullen, a kindly senior faculty member. Many of the things he pointed out seemed obvious to her; she wondered why they even had to be mentioned. Teachers, administrators, and other staff, he explained, should discuss only in private, never in front of students, matters on which they disagreed.

"Doesn't everybody know this?" she thought.

When she asked him why such a course was necessary, he replied, "Wait till you get out into the teaching world."

Later, she would remember his words well, astounded to see that for many people this remained far from obvious.

"Another thing," Dr. McMullen mentioned in passing one day. "World War II is now over. Those of you who will be teaching history should realize that, although we've just finished fighting a war with Germany, Italy, and Japan, those nations may soon become our close friends."

Seeing disbelief on many faces, he continued, "Yes, yes, it can happen. And in the same way, present-day allies may someday become the bitterest of enemies. You never know. One day, who knows, there could even be a war between," and here he paused to search for the most unlikely example, " say–England and Argentina!"

Everyone in the class laughed. It was with an eerie shock of recognition years later, in 1982, Josy would recall these words when war in the Falkland Islands broke out.

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It was not until the last half of the fourth year that education majors actually got into a classroom. Under supervision in a course called Classroom Observation, they were assigned to junior and senior high schools throughout the city. There the initial contact with a real classroom proved a shock for many. One girl in Josy's group finished her first day of observation so disillusioned that she announced she was changing her major immediately.

"I never knew it would be like this!" she stormed at Dean Minnick, Head of the School of Education.

"There was this Dr Faust there," she told him, referring to that day's experience at Girls High, "a teacher with a bald head. He had a long, long swatch of hair growing from near the nape of his neck, and he wrapped it around and around his head like a ribbon!

"And by the time I'm middle-aged," she continued, "if I'm going to turn out like that Miss Duncan I saw today, in tiny ballet slippers prancing around in a long raggedy dress teaching *Silas Marner*, then I don't want to be a teacher!"

"But this is your senior year," the Dean pointed out. "If you switch now you won't have all your requirements for graduation, and graduation's only four months away! What will you do?"

"Not teach," she snapped back. "I'll stay an extra year if I have to, but I don't want to do this for the rest of my life!"

To everyone's shock, she switched out of the School of Education and over to pre-law. Some years afterward, to address this kind of problem Penn would adjust its curriculum, moving the classroom observation course from the fourth year into the early part of the third.

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For part of her observation, Josy was assigned to West Philadelphia High School. No sooner had she arrived than the teacher she was to observe announced, "They're reading Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. You take over!"

Without another word, she disappeared, leaving Josy stranded facing twenty high school seniors. Shocked, she turned to the class and snapped, "Any trouble from you and I walk out of here!"

To her surprise, the pupils sat docilely through the whole period. She taught her first

lesson without incident, coming away exuberant and extremely proud of herself, certain that she would be able handle any teaching situation in the future. Little could she guess what lay in store for her when she would later get a job in an inner city school.

VI

One day in mid-October she arrived home from school about 5:00 in the afternoon. The sickening odor of vomit coming down the corridor hit her as she opened the front door. Malvina had suddenly taken ill. Alone in the house during the afternoon, she had grown dizzy, vomited, and fainted. Coming to, she had dragged herself to the phone to call Jacques at work. By the time Josy got home, he was already there.

Soon their family doctor arrived. When he examined Malvina and was unable to detect a pulse in her left wrist, he called their cardiologist, Dr. Fitz-Hugh, who immediately ordered her into the University of Pennsylvania Hospital. Jacques and Josy got her there by taxi.

Josy's first reaction once her mother had been admitted was one of relief. Malvina would now be under the best of care, she told herself. By the next day, however, her anxiety returned. How serious was her mother's illness? What had caused the problem? It turned out to be coronary thrombosis. Blood clots formed unexpectedly from time to time, and one might settle at any moment in a vital spot. It had been a blood clot in her upper arm that had prevented the doctor from locating a pulse. Years later this condition would become treatable through the use of blood thinners, but in 1945 there was little that could be done.

Jacques and Malvina in 1945.

Malvina remained in the hospital for two and a half months. She lay in a ward of ten beds. Visiting hours were Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon, then from 7:00 to 8:00 these evenings. They also permitted visitors on Sundays from 1:00 to 2:00. Josy visited at all of these times; Jacques came on evenings and Sundays.

Once Josy tried to sneak into the ward on a

Josy and Malvina in 1945.

Wednesday afternoon, but the head nurse caught her and threw her out. Another time, seeing no way to get in undetected, she hastily scribbled a note in French and convinced one of the nurses to deliver it to her mother. The next day, even before she could say hello, Malvina greeted her with a lecture on French, sternly explaining that the word "nourice" referred to a baby's nurse, and that Josy should have used the term "infirmière" in her note instead.

About a month after she was admitted to the hospital, Malvina's brother Ben came with his wife Liba to visit her. Jacques, hearing that Ben had a cold, pleaded with him to delay his visit, but Ben stubbornly refused. Just as they feared, he passed his cold along to Malvina. She developed a high fever, suffering a relapse. Dr. Fitz-Hugh, however, remained cheerily optimistic.

"We have a new drug available to us now," he reassured them. "Something that just came out. It will handle that cold beautifully. It's called 'sulfa'." (Penicillin would not become available for another couple of years.) The sulfa worked and Malvina soon improved, but she remained extremely weak. A few days before Christmas, Dr. Fitz-Hugh announced that she could be discharged. Their friend Simon Sokoloff came in his car to help bring her home.

She remained bed-ridden, staying upstairs while Josy prepared the meals and brought them upstairs to her. Malvina worried about how they were going to manage, uneasy that she was unable to fend for herself and was taking time from Josy's studies. But Josy assured her that this was the Christmas break and nothing at school needed her attention for the next few weeks.

Two days after Malvina's return home, Josy caught a cold. Fearing that she might pass it along to her mother, she insisted on wearing a surgical mask each time she entered her parents' bedroom. Later Jacques mentioned that he would never forget how she looked, her entire face covered except for the eyes, which darted back and forth between her parents in appreciation of seeing them together again.

One week after returning home, Malvina fell ill once more. When they called Dr. Fitz-Hugh, he immediately ordered her back to the hospital. Again Simon Sokoloff came, this time to drive them back. Josy sat in the back seat of the car, her mother lying with her head on Josy's lap as they drove along Thirty-third Street, winding its way down towards Girard, then across the bridge over the Schuylkill and down Thirty-fourth to the hospital. It was a ride filled with anxiety, one Josy would alway remember.

Once again they placed Malvina in the same ward, this time in a bed adjacent to the nurses' station at the entrance. A few days later, during Sunday's visiting hours, Josy was able to tell her mother that she had just been granted a scholarship with full tuition for her coming fifth year at Penn. Malvina was overjoyed. She spread the news all over the ward, to every patient, nurse, and doctor who would listen.

The following afternoon (Monday) Josy again sneaked into the ward between classes. On seeing her, Malvina burst into tears. She wasn't expecting Josy, and she shook her head from side to side to indicate that she wasn't feeling well. Before she could say anything, the head nurse came storming over, scolding Josy for breaking the rules.

"This is a ward, not a private room," she cried, insisting that Josy leave at once.

"I'll see you tomorrow," Josy called out as she left her mother's bedside. "Tuesday's visiting hours!"

But the next morning (January 8, 1946) Malvina died, just hours before Josy was to have visited her.

In the years to come, Josy would look back and treasure every time she had broken those rules of the ward. She regarded these times as having given her a few extra precious moments out of a lifetime to spend with her mother.

All her life she mourned the fact that Malvina had never lived to see her married, that she had died just weeks before José returned from the Army, and just five months before their wedding.

"She most certainly guessed that we would be married," José comforted her, and Josy believed him.

Perhaps the cruelest blow of all was that Malvina never lived to see her grandchildren (the oldest of whom would be named after her). As the years passed, Josy grew to feel ever closer to her mother, Malvina's image becoming ever clearer and sharper in her mind. She always pictured Malvina's face with a clarity that grew ever more distinct as the years went by.

She was deeply grateful that at least her mother had gotten to know José well

through the numerous talks they had had before he left for the army. When he used to come to the house then, sometimes arriving before Josy got home, he would sit in the kitchen with Malvina as she prepared dinner, and they talked earnestly about many things. Josy had sometimes teased her mother, joking that Malvina was her strongest rival for his affection. As the years went by, she continued to remind herself how much Malvina had liked him. Knowing with certainty how happy her mother would have been about their marriage continued to console her ever afterwards.