

ard rowed his boat over to us
 excuse me, Mrs. Burr. I'll have
 cool now. Six-thirty."
 Come on, I'll race you
 he pool.
 in, and the cocker spaniel fol-
 was a close race all the way, and
 anaged to win. The spaniel was
 s third. As we were leaving, I
 ard tying up the boat. "Olivia,"
 at lifeguard necessary?"
 inly is!" Olivia said. "If he
 here one day there might have
 ly."
 ppened? Who was rescued?"

utes of seven, Olivia tapped on
 said. "Mother is waiting on the

ownstairs and through the long
 y which served as a sort of
 gallery to the large one on the
 On its walls, hung in the most
 shion, were a few oil paintings,
 hographs. An Italian primitive
 a Chinese scroll. A fourteenth-
 lonna was alongside a faded
 of Jay Gould. There was also
 picture: a charcoal drawing of
 dedicated and signed by the
 Mother. Love from Finley Jay
 3."

salon at the end of the hall ap-
 a combination living room and
 ainst the walls were wooden
 ed with curios and souvenirs.
 am were remembrances of more
 ze: trophies of the hunt, pre-
 plorers and missionaries from
 Congo and the Nile. The glass
 a lion and an alligator followed
 nd Louis Quinze chairs and a
 sk.

ugh the salon was like going to
 by way of darkest Africa. Once
 r, the atmosphere was refresh-
 t. The dominant motifs:
 intz and Mrs. Shepard's smile.
 e room with arms outstretched
 e on the cheek. "Celeste—my
 -how sweet of you to come."
 sant to be here," I stammered.
 down," she continued. "We
 er any moment now—immedi-
 : whippoorwill calls."
 and Mrs. Shepard continued
 little sentences. "I hope you
 t journey. I see that you and
 eady acquainted."

I said
 !" Then she paused. Suddenly
 me animated. "Do you like
 go crimson at the direct ques-
 answered without hesitating,
 ery much indeed."
 d. Finley Jay and Helen Anna
 : until next week."
 in from the salon and said,
 whippoorwill gone off yet?"
 Miss Stebbins said, "hut it

from a clump of hushes near
 heard Nature's dinner bell:
 vll, whip-poor-will, whip-poor-
 mediately Sitwell appeared and
 med it: "Dinner is served."

oom was the only room in the
 which approached simplicity.
 nd airy room with an immense
 ge crystal chandelier hung over
 he furniture was Victorian
 rench windows framed a flam-
 which flooded the room with
 This evening the sun disap-
 than usual; Sitwell came in
 urchains.
 hree corners there was a niche
 ured in a black marble
 at the nearest me. Yes,
 that face anywhere. It was
 bronze. I looked at the head in
 —it was Finley Jay. The next
 st niche, however, was empty.
 explained, "Helen Anna goes

in there if Signor Paulo ever gets her to sit
 still long enough."

Mrs. Shepard started conversation at
 once: "Do you like it here, Celeste?"
 "It's wonderful," I answered. "Why,
 when I was walking back from the swimming
 pool, I saw a hummingbird."
 "A hummingbird," Miss Stebbins re-
 peated. "Wherever was it?"
 "On a honeysuckle vine."
 "What kind of hummingbird was it?"
 Mrs. Shepard asked.

"I don't know. It had a little red patch
 around its throat."

"That's the ruby-throated hummingbird.
Archilochus colubris. They are very common.
 You'll see many birds here, Celeste, if you
 keep a sharp eye. Watching and identifying
 them is a rewarding pastime. No wonder
 they inspired poets like Shelley, and Keats,
 and William Cullen Bryant!"

Mrs. Shepard was voluble on any subject
 to do with Nature—at times, even lyrical.
 This was so different from her limited con-
 versation in the city. On almost every subject
 at 579 she talked in isolated words and
 phrases. But at Lyndhurst, among the birds
 and the flowers, she was always at home.

"Of course, Celeste," she went bubbling
 on, "you know what we are all waiting for?"

"I think so—the night-blooming cereus."
 "Exactly, my dear, the *Hylcoereus und-*
ulatus."

"Last year the blossoms were rather
 small," Louis said.

"Yes," she said, "but they did their best."
 Louis apologized, "I meant no offense."

"Of course you didn't, but we shouldn't
 talk about our flowers without thinking,
 should we?"

AFTER dinner on the way out of the dining
 room Mrs. Shepard asked me if I hadn't for-
 gotten something; and I replied, "I don't
 think so, but I'll go back in the dining room
 and look."

"I mean, dear," she said, "have you signed
 the guest book?"

"No," I answered, "but I will immedi-
 ately," and I went over to the desk and
 signed in. Then we sauntered back to the sun
 porch to have coffee.

There wasn't much to do at Lyndhurst at
 night, so bedtime was early. At ten o'clock,
 we all kissed Mrs. Shepard good night cere-
 moniously and went up to our rooms.

I undressed and went to bed and soon was
 fast asleep. I dreamed that I was walking in
 a great garden, and the garden was filled
 with monstrous honeysuckle vines. Feeding
 on the honeysuckle were thousands and
 thousands of ruby-throated hummingbirds,
 making a terrible humming noise.

The dream ended abruptly, and I awoke
 with a start. I still heard the buzzing of the
 birds, but as my head cleared I realized it
 was really the telephone. I reached over and
 lifted the receiver. It was Louis. "Celeste,"
 he said excitedly, "the night-blooming cere-
 us—it's blooming! Throw on anything.
 Meet us downstairs in front. We're all going
 to the greenhouse."
 "All right, Louis."

Instinctively I looked at the clock. It was
 three-thirty! Suddenly the bells in the tower
 began to ring like an alarm in the dead of the
 night. I dashed cold water over my face,
 threw a coat over my nightgown, and started
 downstairs. Every light in the castle had
 been turned on. I ran through the main hall
 and out the front door to the porte-cochere.
 Louis was already there with Olivia. They
 were both in dressing gowns, and there was
 excitement written plainly on their faces.

The door opened and out stumbled Miss
 Stebbins still in the process of wrapping a
 blanket around her.

Then we heard Mrs. Shepard's voice: "At
 last! Isn't it thrilling?" and she rushed
 through the door. She wore a white, woolly
 bathrobe, and on her head a lace nightcap.
 To help guide her through the night, she car-
 ried an enormous flashlight.

"There is not a moment to lose," she cried.
 "Follow me."

The street lamps along the cinder paths
 had been lit, and it was as bright as day. We
 hurried after Mrs. Shepard, who trotted as



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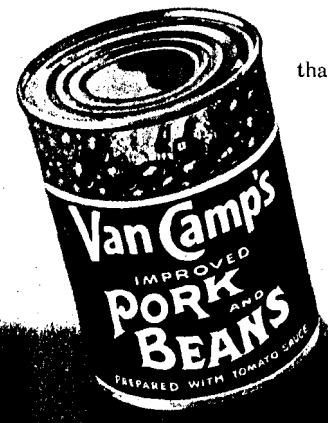
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