

MRS. MULLIN. Those fool girls keep askin' for you. They miss you, see? Are you goin' to be sensible and come back?

BILLY. And leave Julie?

MRS. MULLIN. You beat her, don't you?

BILLY. (*Exasperated.*) No, I don't beat her. What's all this damn-fool talk about beatin'? I hit her once, and now the whole town is... The next one I hear... I'll smash...

MRS. MULLIN. (*Backing away from him.*) All right! All right! I take it back. I don't want to get mixed up in it.

BILLY. Beatin' her! As if I'd beat her!

MRS. MULLIN. What's the odds one way er another? Look at the thing straight. You been married two months and you're sick of it. Out there's the carousel. Show booths, young girls, all the beer you want, a good livin' – and you're throwin' it all away. Know what? I got a new organ.

BILLY. I know.

MRS. MULLIN. How do you know?

BILLY. (*His voice softer.*) You can hear it from here. I listen to it every night.

MRS. MULLIN. Good one, ain't it?

BILLY. Jim dandy. Got a nice tone.

MRS. MULLIN. Y'ought to come up close and hear it. Makes you think the carousel is goin' faster. You belong out there and you know it. You ain't cut out fer a respectable married man. You're an artist type. You belong among artists. Tell you what – you come back and I'll give you a ruby ring my husband left me.

BILLY. I dunno – I might go back. I could still go on livin' here with Julie.

MRS. MULLIN. Holy Moses!

BILLY. What's wrong?

MRS. MULLIN. Can y' imagine how the girls'd love that? A barker who runs home to his wife every night! Why, people'd laugh theirselves sick.

BILLY. I know what *you* want.

MRS. MULLIN. Don't be so stuck on yerself.

BILLY. I ain't happy here, and *that's* the truth.

MRS. MULLIN. 'Course you ain't.

(She strokes his hair back off his forehead, and this time he lets her. JULIE enters from house, carrying a tray with a cup of coffee and a plate of cakes on it. MRS. MULLIN pulls her hand away. There is a slight pause.)

BILLY. Do you want anythin'?

JULIE. I brought you your coffee.

MRS. MULLIN. (*To BILLY in a low voice.*) Whyn't you have a talk with her? She'll understand. Maybe she'll be glad to get rid of you.

BILLY. (*Without conviction.*) Maybe.

JULIE. Billy – before I ferget. I got somethin' to tell you.

BILLY. All right.

JULIE. I been wantin' to tell you – in fact, I was goin' to yesterday.

BILLY. Well, go ahead.

JULIE. I can't – we got to be alone.

BILLY. Don't you see I'm busy? Here, I'm talkin' business and...

JULIE. It'll only take a minute.

BILLY. Get out o' here, or...

JULIE. I tell you it'll only take a minute.

BILLY. Will you get out of here?

JULIE. No.

BILLY. What did you say?

MRS. MULLIN. Let her alone, Billy. I'll drop in at Bascombe's bank and get some small change for the carousel. I'll be back in a few minutes for your answer to my proposition.

(Exits above JIGGER. She looks at JIGGER as she goes. JIGGER looks at BILLY, then follows MRS. MULLIN off.)

JULIE. Don't look at me like that. I ain't afraid of you – ain't afraid of anyone. I hev somethin' to tell you.

BILLY. Well then, tell me, and make it quick.

JULIE. I can't tell it so quick. Why don't you drink yer coffee?

BILLY. That what you wanted to tell me?

JULIE. No. By the time you drink it, I'll hev told you.

BILLY. *(Stirs coffee and takes a quick sip.)* Well?

JULIE. Yesterday my head ached and you asked me...

BILLY. Yes...

JULIE. Well – you see – that's what it is.

BILLY. You sick?

JULIE. No. It's nothin' like that.

(He puts cup down.)

It's awful hard to tell you – I'm not a bit skeered, because it's a perfectly natural thing –

BILLY. What is?

JULIE. Well – when two people live together –

BILLY. Yes –

JULIE. I'm goin' to hev a baby.

(She turns away. He sits still and stunned. Then he rises, crosses to her, and puts his arms around her. She leans her head back on his shoulders. Then she leaves and starts for the house. As she goes to the steps, BILLY runs and helps her very solicitously. JIGGER has re-entered and calls to BILLY with two short whistles.)

JIGGER. Hey, Billy!

BILLY. *(Turning to JIGGER.)* Hey, Jigger! Julie... Julie's goin' to have a baby.

JIGGER. *(Calmly smoking his cigarette.)* Yeh? What about it?

BILLY. *(Disgusted at JIGGER.)* Nothin'.

(He goes into the house.)

JIGGER. *(Ruminating.)* My mother had a baby once.

(He smiles angelically and puffs on his cigarette. MRS. MULLIN enters.)

MRS. MULLIN. He in there with her?

(JIGGER ignores the question.)

They're havin' it out, I bet.

(JIGGER impudently blows a puff of smoke in her direction.)

When he comes back to me I ain't goin' to let him hang around with you any more. You know that, don't you?

JIGGER. Common woman.