

# The Inevitable Day

SHIRLEY BRADLEY

The grandfather clock slowly boomed out ten times. Each sound it made carried the slender, sweet-faced woman huddled in the corner of the faded red sofa back across a span of years. She slowly turned the pages of a worn photograph album. Lisa was tired, but she could not make herself go to bed any more than she could keep herself from remembering. A tear trickled down the worried face as she gazed at a laughing little girl with short curly hair. It was her daughter at the age of six. A nervous finger traced the chubby little figure.

"Ellen was always so beautiful", she thought. It was true. It wasn't all just physical beauty; she radiated warmth and charm from within. Lisa sighed. Ellen had never got into mischief as the other children did. She was unbelievably sweet and considerate.

Lisa remembered Ellen's eighth birthday party. It had been a rainy afternoon and the children were disappointed at not being able to play on the lawn. Ellen had brought her toys in and let each child select one to play with and to keep. Lisa could see that it hurt the child when a boy or girl picked up a favorite teddy bear, toy car, or ball, but Ellen had smiled bravely. Lisa had whispered, "We'll get you others". But Ellen had shaken her head stubbornly. That's the kind of person Ellen was.

Lisa sighed again. Had she done everything she could to provide Ellen with a feeling of love and security? A mother and daughter should always be the closest of friends. These last few months Ellen had seemed so distant!

Another page in the album revealed Ellen at fifteen, that was last summer, in blue jeans and halter, sitting in her favorite rowboat at the lake. Lisa had been carefree and gay then, little dreaming that the time would come so soon when she

would be grieving over Ellen permission to go picnic last month brought to Lisa's eyes. Ellen wanted to go.

"Why did it have to be so soon?" Lisa moaned aloud. She was selfish, but she had had Ellen for too long themselves.

It must have begun long ago, for ever since then she wandered around with a look in her blue eyes. She would not eat, and Lisa suspected the light burned far into the night.

Lisa dozed. A hand on her shoulder startled her into wakefulness. She blinked at the face of Bob.

"Get up, Lisa, and get ready for bed. Ellen won't be home for an hour yet. Don't worry about her. Every girl has to have a first love and have a first heartache."

## Boast And Shame

I have been told that I am a city, an integral part of man's civilization. Some have said that my skyscraping structures, countless industries, and precision of operation are both the aim and the end of man's aspirations. But while others may see only the glare and facade of my innumerable signs contrasted against the stately walls, I must look down into the canyons between those walls and probe at the very heart of my being, the people.

People there are, many and varied. And rather than in the incessant flow and roar of the mechanical tide, it is in the pulsating human tide that I find my sustenance. Even in this, my lifeblood, there is much that tends to form eddies, obstructing the advancement of the whole. Indeed, as the flood tide of midday wanes into the ebb tide of

night, I find that the shoals and backwater areas are revealed by the flashing of my innumerable signs and lights. Am I justified in saying that the shoals and backwater areas are then revealed? No, for they are as much a part of me as is the most dignified businessman or the proudest edifice. Moreover, many of the derelict souls existing within the bounds of my slum areas are my products, mine and mine alone. Old, frustrated, disillusioned, many came to me in a better day, only to become a means to my end of development. Is that to say that I cannot develop except at the expense of others? No, it is to confirm the fact that my developing is largely spontaneous and that as a result of this incalculable spontaneity many are overwhelmed.

Herein does my glamor become

harsh reality, reality which the businessman endeavors to conceal. I find reality in which the people exist, reality which makes me feel my head and wish that I were different. Yet, I ask myself, am I mine to be different, for I am cold stone evolve into something different? How can life be so different? I ask, but I hear only the answer. Then I am told that things will change, my industry will come and go, my precision of operation may improve, but underneath there will be a change. Thus I am to remain an integral part of man's civilization. Outwardly, and in popular opinion, I am his boast; and in reality, I am his shame.

DON KROE