

Thirteenth Floor

Her hand lingered on the receiver as she placed it back in its cradle; time seemed to hang suspended as the chimes of the Catholic Church four blocks away began to strike the hour of noon. Below her window the hot city streets pulsed with the noise of people and machines. A woman's amplified voice floated up from the parking lot across the street . . . "Ticket 439, green '51 Chevrolet". A policeman's whistle screamed at passing cars, and the rowdy laughter of the city workmen mingled with the other sounds. From the hallway came the noise of hammer blows, objects being moved, and indescribable sounds of construction.

Why should sounds be so inevitable? Chimes, laughter, whistles, hammers! She tried to jerk herself into reality, but it faded from her as the chimes droned louder.

She was back years before when bells had pealed on her wedding day, not Catholic chimes, but the bells of a small white church on the edge of town. Two years later on the same day the bells had rung again, but this time they tolled. He had died so young, but thank God, she had their infant son to rear. Now he was her life. She remembered the lonely years that followed, and how Bobby's childish laughter had gradually pulled her life into normalcy.

Would the noise from the hallway never stop! What were they doing? And those chimes!

Her memory slipped back again. When Bobby was a few years younger she had stood in the church with his tiny hand in hers as the preacher prayed a final prayer over the body of her father, her last fortress of strength on earth. Hers alone was the struggle now of raising a fatherless son. Each day she had left him with Mrs. Carter, and each night she had hurried home to share his smiles and tears. He was a beautiful child, so full of life and . . .

The hammer blows from the hallway seemed as though they were



JANET LETT



her very heartbeat. She drew her hand from the receiver and pushed away from the desk. The office teemed and vibrated with the echo of the last Catholic chime, but the hallway was cool, and without feeling she walked more quickly toward the east side of the building. All she had to do was turn the corner and there would be the window, open, and thirteen floors above the pavement. It was a long way down, and so cool.

A workman rounded the corner with tools and a work-case. Another followed. "Mornin', Mam, nice day".

She reached the corner, turned, and stopped. The hammers—that noise—those workmen! There were bars at the window, cold, black, iron bars.

Back at her desk she again picked up the receiver and dully dialed a familiar number. Distantly she heard her voice saying,

"Frances, can you pick me up? Mrs. Carter called. A truck hit Bobby; he's in the emergency clinic at Grady. Yes, I'm at the Hurt Building, thirteenth floor. No—no, I'm all right."

Evening

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plain. *They looked like the tracks of a barefoot man.* I really got scared!

We instinctively squatted right there. As I used my ears and nose, I felt the hair rising on the back of my neck. There was a distinct scent of dog about the place. Our dogs were back where we had left them, and they were down wind. We didn't speak. We didn't have to. We left that place as quickly as possible and have never been back. Someday it may be that curiosity will get the best of me and I will go back, but I doubt it.

"Thine To May Li

To you, Mars Hill, two of the most important moments in our lives, years in which personalities develop, and toward life are formed, leadership we commit our guidance and inspiration turned aside in the on life to seek a richer, you as a stepping stone

Inspire us to greater and higher aspirations. Anoint us with wisdom. Crown us with zeal and that will endure depth of success. Mold us that with Robert Browning's message is not to remake made. The absolute best made."



LUCY WILSON



The Hill

Every hill has a voice, A particular voice Which immediately points Sometimes the voice Is a ridge, the way it bends Sometimes a meadow, The way it lies. Sometimes a rock in a pebble Has a voice all its own. Here is a fallen log Which lies below the big With a hole. It has its voice This hill has a voice, and So does that one, But only those who listen Can hear the voice of the It's a soft voice that the A voice so soft that I have my ears So that I can hear.

—Douglas