



"Swanning--trying to capture the talking/book voice"

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Swanning--trying to capture the talking/book voice.

...stewmeat wrapped in pink butcher paper in her hand. The record she was going to play for a girl friend up on the fourth floor; the stewmeat was the errand she was on for her aunt. That's sort of the way she was. Young. It wouldn't occur to her that the kind of meat sold around here should have been simmering in a pot three days ago, and walking around [tk] street, and playing records for girl friends, that meat would cook itself, if you know what I mean. By the time her auntie got it, that beef would be old enough to eat her. Young, she was. And willful, like they all are. She never got to the fourth floor. Not that day. Violet stopped her in the vestibule.

"You a Manfred? You look like one."

The girl said no, no ma'am.

"You ain't kin to Alice Manfred?"

"No, ma'am. Garnett. My--"

Violet didn't let her finish. "Used to be a girl near here named Dorcus Manfred. You the picture of her but prettier."

The girl smiled. "Thank you."

"You want to see a picture of her? You'll see what I mean when you see it. Let me show you. I'm right up the stairs on two. You won't beleive it, same hair, same eyes, everything. Only difference is the way you smile. The picture don't have a smile..."

She went on like that, chatty, walking the girl up the stairs and I still think it was innocent, that she didn't mean her any harm. She may even have forgotten Joe in there wiping his face every five minutes. And she certainly couldn't have thought what might happen if he looked up from his handkerchief and saw the girl and the picture both. And it's hard to say what made her do it. The men on the rooftops? Somebody had hauled a bass up there. Must have, because you could hear the strut it gave to brass, how it changed the horns, spaced them out, and you could hear the young men laughing in between. That and the far away sound of the M 11, and Packards unwilling to toot their horns on a day that pure, that steady, that kind. Violet invited her in, and the girl, Marie, went, smiling, eager even, to see the photograph of the girl she was so much prettier than.

Violet and Joe lived 2J. Two bedrooms, a big dining room, but situated as it was in the middle of the hall the windows gave no view. The bathroom has the best light, since it jutted out past the kitchen and caught the afternoon light anyway. Still it was one of the nicest in the building. Cozy. And the two of them had arranged their things in a way that might not have reminded anybody of those color pictures in [tk] magazine, but it suited the habits of the body, the way a person walked from one room to another, and what he wanted to do when he sat down. You know how some people put a chair or a table in a corner where it looks nice but nobody in the world is ever going to go over to it, let alone sit down there? Violet didn't do that in her apartment. Every thing was

put where a person would like to have it, would use or need it. So the dining room didn't have a dining table. It had a couch and big deep down chairs and a card table by the window covered with jade and doctor plants until the times they had card games or played tonk between themselves. Her front room, or parlour was not a wasted room, waiting for a funeral or a wedding to be worthy of. It had bird cages and mirrors for the birds to look at themselves in, but now, of course, there were no birds, Violet having let them all out on the day she went to Dorcus' funeral with a knife. Now there were just empty cages, the lonely mirrors glancing back at them. As for the rest, it looked like a schoolroom with wooden chairs with small tables in front of them so you could put your coffee cup or a dish of ice cream down in front of you, or if you wanted to read the Amsterdam News and find out what [tktk] or General Garvey was up to, you could do it easy without tearing the paper up. The mantle over the fireplace used to have shells and pretty colored stones, but all of that was gone now and only the picture of Dorcus Manfred sat there in a silver frame. Joe, of course, couldn't stay out of that room. He'd sit there in a wooden chair, his elbows on a tiny table and cry. There's a name for that. Crying without stopping. I've heard it said it can go on for years, as long as the tear ducts hold out, and they can keep going for a long long time. Lucky for Joe, in a way, Violet did bring the girl in. It sure stopped him crying. Sure did.

Violet looked like she'd hit the number.

"Joe, don't this favor her? You want to rest yourself a

[Right after "It sure stopped him crying. Sure did.]

I didn't hear a thing. Not a god damned thing. I looked up and saw a Dorcus on the mantle and a Dorcus in a mirror that once had nothing but a birdcage to show. Two boxes. One little one, one big one both with her face and neither was looking at me.

Could be I would have sat like that the remains of the day, but Violet walked over to the fireplace and handed down the picture in the silver frame and give it to the one in the mirror.

"You see it?" she said. "You see the resemblance?"

I turned round then. To see what the hell was going on. Violet had her finger on the picture, tracing the mouth, the nose of Dorcus and this new Dorcus was looking down at it smiling, saying "Maybe. Maybe." Then she looked right at me "You think I favor her?"

Well, I did. There was a likeness. More than a likeness. But when I gave her a good going over, it was clear. Whoever she was, she wasn't my Dorcus. Something was missing in her and whatever wasn't there was important. But my heart was kicking so fast, making such a rhumba in my chest, I didn't trust myself to say a word. I just nodded and let her take it like she wanted: hello or yes, you do.

Violet looked like she'd hit the number.

"Joe, don't this favor her? You want to rest yourself a

minute? We got any more root beer? What about a sandwich? Let me put your meat in the cool box. You prettier though. Much, I'd say." She lived on [th] with an uncle, a father and a mother, but her. Made me mad. Saying this here Dorcus was prettier than mine. Look like she was trying to out do me, Violet. Bringing in a false Dorcus off the street and offering her ham sandwiches. Like my Dorcus wasn't nothing and this was the genuine article. There wasn't a hoof mark on her, her skin was clear as water, and she was dressed different, like a schoolgirl where my true Dorcus wore long skirts and green high heeled shoes, not those men-looking shoes with cotton stockings.

They clicked, the two of them. Once the girl sat down and said she didn't mind a root beer. Violet ran out to get it and I got my tongue back.

"What's your name may I ask?"

"Marie."

Nothing sang in her voice. That was the true test, so I quieted down. "Where you know Violet from?"

"Violet?"

"The woman brought you in here."

"Oh, she didn't tell me her name. Just asked me mine."

"Her name is Violet Trace and I'm Joe Trace, her husband by marriage."

"Here you are," Violet was back with a glass of root beer--on a tray, too, and that girl drank it down without stopping for breath.

[re-write above: too much like encounter in previous book]

She lived on [tk] with an uncle, a father and a mother, but her mother worked up in Tuxedo and came home on Sunday afternoons, Mondays and the day after Christmas. She had been up there a couple of times with her mother. Took the train all the way and once she rode in a big black car with a driver to spend the night up there, and fool around in the kitchen long as she was quiet and didn't get in the way. But that was a long time ago, she said, when she was little.

The grandfathers, way past slinking but still able enough to kind stalk or feed the sugar vats, used to be thought safe. That is until the men the grandfathers called Hunters Hunter got together