



GREETINGS, SCARAB

By KALMAN PHILLIPS

THE SLENDER dark-haired girl sat up straight on the edge of the divan, her blue eyes drinking everything in with the shy eagerness of seventeen in the middle of a dream come true. She tried to keep her fingers from trembling as she sipped her tea, lest the tide of smartly dressed Gammas, ebbing and flowing through the room, notice her excitement. They wouldn't like it. Poise and sophistication were as much the mark of the Gammas as were the tiny jeweled pins they wore.

Jinny shivered with expectancy: She'd soon be wearing one of those pins with the same exquisitely casual unconcern. Everything was the way she had hoped it would be -- the college with its lovely trees and walks, the classes and, most of all, the fraternity and sorority life. Her plans for college -- sometimes dubious of realization -- had always included a sorority. The warm

companionship of other girls ... dances ... teas ... being rushed like this. Every fibre in her body thrilled to it.

"Bored?" It was Irene Wells, the sleekly blond girl in her philosophy class who had invited her. There was a slight smile on Irene's face, as if she knew Jinny wasn't. "How do you like the old shack?"

"I love it, Irene."

"That helps. You may be living in it, you know. Come along. I'd like you to meet some of the girls."

Jinny, following her, had to swallow down her nervousness. This was it, she knew: the interview with the rush committee.

They were very friendly. Jinny was given another cup of tea with the renewed problem of keeping her hands from trembling. A tall handsome girl named Marilyn, sitting on the desk, seemed to be the guiding spirit. Her smile was warm. "Tell me, Jinny, how did you happen to come to Yates? Any of your family

been here before you?"

Jinny shook her head. "I'm the first. I -- I think I've always wanted to go to Yates, reading so much about it and everything. It's even nicer than I thought it would be."

Marilyn nodded. "I think we all feel that way. What college did your mother go to?"

"Mother?" Jinny looked around her. Their smiles were all friendly and interested. "Why, she -- that is, she didn't go to college. Mother is very musical -- piano. She taught me."

"You play, then?" Marilyn seemed delighted. "Splendid. And your father?"

Jinny smiled. "Oh, he can't play at all. Or maybe I don't do daddy justice. He knows a few tunes on the harmonica."

"I mean what was his college?"

Jinny's eyelids flickered. She could feel her face flushing slightly. "Why, I-I don't believe daddy went to school much. He was always too

busy, I guess."

The blond girl on her right leaned forward. "There's nothing I admire more than a self-made man. It's Jinny Prentiss, isn't it? Your father wouldn't be the Prentiss Insurance Company, would he?"

Jinny shook her head. Something in their attitude made her feel warm and confused. "Daddy's in the trucking business."

Marilyn pursed her lips. "Why, so is my Uncle John. He owns a fleet of those enormous things that carry freight all the way across the country; at least he does if he can keep getting priorities on tires. Perhaps they do business with one another."

Jinny's lips were dry. "Daddy doesn't own any. He -- he drives one. He's a truck driver."

The room was quiet suddenly. Marilyn said, "How quaint." She was still smiling, but the smile was only on her face now, not in her eyes. "I'm sure that must be awfully interesting."

There was a tight feeling, like a clenched fist, in Jinny's chest. She wanted to tell them that it wasn't interesting to a man who had been an artist

until he'd seen the necessity of giving his child some of the advantages his landscapes and portraits had never been able to give his wife. She wanted to tell them how hard her father worked, how wonderful he was and how much she loved him. But their faces didn't care. They were shut off; pleasant, but with the light turned out. It was as though her father's driving a truck had pulled down a wall between them. She wondered whether they thought she couldn't see the accusing glances flashed at Irene, and Irene's own tiny apologetic shrug disclaiming pre-knowledge of anything about Jinny. They didn't want her. She wasn't like them. Her father drove a truck.

Jinny stood up suddenly, her blue eyes bruised. "I -- I'm sorry but I have to go now. I have an appointment. Thank you for the tea."

"Not at all." Marilyn seemed relieved. "Nice of you to come. I'm sure we'll see you

on the campus."

THE SUN was still high when she emerged. The emerald-green campus rolled away before her, dipping for the tree-fringed stream and then losing itself in the blue hills. Jinny had loved the campus, loved the richness of its flower-trimmed grass against the deep red of the buildings. It was different now, strangely cold. It didn't seem to belong to her any more. It belonged to girls like the Gammas, who had made it only too clear that she was outside the fold. For it wasn't Jinny that people there cared about, evidently; it was where she came from and what her parents were. And that wouldn't ever change.

Her chin went up suddenly. And what of it? Her father and mother were the finest people in the world. She was proud of them. But her chin wouldn't stay up. Her eyes started to brim over, and she ran for the sheltering seclusion of the trees.

She threw herself face down on the bank of the brook and sobbed bitterly into the grass.

"Look," a voice said, "it can't be that bad. Nothing could."

Jinny rolled over and sat up, dabbing at her eyes hastily with a handkerchief. A tall long-nosed young man with a camera dangling from around his neck was looking down at her. There was deep concern in his hazel eyes. She swallowed. "I-I'm all right."

"You'd better communicate that information to your face. You don't look it. Anything I can do?"

She shook her head. "Just go away and leave me alone."

"Sure. Do you mind if I get a few pictures first?"

"Of what?"

"You. To sort of round out a series. I got a couple of you lying in the grass. Now I want one sitting up with your eyes all shiny like that, and then, to top them off, another with a smile right through the tears."

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