

THE PRICE OF HAPPINESS

A Novel
David Orsini

CHAPTER ONE

A NEW WAY TO SEE

“My granddaughter represents, of course, a special case,” Gerald Marnham said. “But I have no reservations about leaving her in your care.”

It was not difficult to offer the Aubrays his unqualified approval. After spending a week with them here in his home in Newport, Rhode Island, he was certain that they would be of immense assistance to his granddaughter. But when their visit ended on Monday morning, he had not yet invited them to join the well-qualified staff who maintained the smooth workings of his household. Never precipitate in his judgments, he resumed his business schedule and waited for three days before inviting the Aubrays to return. During this period, they permitted themselves a brief vacation in nearby Nantucket. There, they had been swimming and sailing with friends from Alan’s Harvard days.

They were conferring now within the burnished amenities of Gerald’s study, sequestered as it was inside the southwest wing of the ample house. Every Thursday he permitted himself to be away from his New York office for

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a few hours. It had been his custom to arrive in Newport promptly at nine o'clock, after Sommers, his driver for three decades and more, and Robert Finley met him at the train station. He had never admitted to anyone except himself that in their different ways both Sommers and Finley were of immense value to him. His keen-sighted Amanda had known without his ever speaking of the matter. She had known much about him of which she had had the good sense not to speak. Because she had been a more-than-ordinary wife, she understood when it was not necessary to remark upon his habits or his ambition or his business travel across the globe. Nor had she ever questioned his expectation that those in his service must be as punctual and efficient as they were capable.

Death had taken her away from him after they had enjoyed what in retrospect he now told himself had been a marriage of modulated compatibility for thirty-eight years. During these four years without her, he had chosen to remain both ambitious and productive. Rarely did he find time for his Newport home. Most of the time, he was living in New York or in Pittsburgh, London, Paris, and the Orient. But he did not care to sell it, so much did he value the memory of the years he had spent there with Amanda and with their son Austin, who was thriving as a junior executive in the Marnham Steel Corporation, and with their daughter Rebecca and her husband, Kevin Farrell, who had

recently died together in a plane crash en route to Pittsburgh.

For this reason most of all, his desire to keep alive his recollection of those happier days, he had regarded Robert Finley as absolutely essential to the efficient management of his Newport estate, with its Federal-period stateliness, ocean-front setting, and twenty-five acres. Trained as a civil engineer, Finley had not merely monitored the upkeep of the property. He had redefined both the natural and the man-made beauty of the land which carried forward the Marnhams' prestige as well as their history. But he, too, had died.

"He just wore out," Evelyn had explained, though no explanations were necessary. An autopsy had revealed a subtle heart malady which had eluded detection even from an eminent cardiologist. But he had appreciated Evelyn Finley's remark, nonetheless. She was a matter-of-fact woman who had loved her husband very much and who would not embarrass his memory with a show of maudlin pieties.

He knew that Finley's death could not be avoided or postponed. Nor had he imagined that anyone coming to the position that Finley had held for twenty-nine years would be as effective—at least, not in the first year. But this week had convinced him that Alan Aubray would—within the mere span of a year—gradually equal and then exceed

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Finley's successes. That Alan would accept only a year's appointment to the post dismayed him, at first. But his decision to move forward to other challenging assignments, once he completed his work of restoration and enhancement, was not surprising. There were many other formidable commissions which even now were beckoning him, not only as a civil engineer and landscape architect, but also as a mechanical and aeronautical engineer.

Strong-bodied and handsome, Alan wore his knowledge and his assurance with a nice understatement. If he was aware that his six-foot stature and his rugged physicality gave him an advantage over those men who were not similarly favored by nature, his quiet authority gave no evidence of narcissistic self-reflection or of a careless displacement of the less impressive persons about him.

There was within his appearance something extraordinary and altogether promising. The well-honed muscularity and the even-tempered manner were, if the truth be told, auspicious elements of his personhood, as were his ruddy complexion, dark hair, brown eyes, and full, sensual lips. His beige linen suit, azure shirt, and royal blue tie with beige and azure swirls enhanced his confident appearance. But his knowledge as a multi-faceted engineer and as a landscape architect, his brave service as a first lieutenant in the recent war, and his realistic view of the

world were the elements which gave him a distinctive gravity.

In the years before the war, he completed his undergraduate and graduate studies in civil, mechanical, and aeronautical engineering at the École Polytechnique in Paris. He also spent a year completing a second master's degree in landscape architecture and urban planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Returning to France, he assisted major companies in the designs of roads, canals, and an apartment building, as well as in the planning of pipelines, water distribution systems, and drainage facilities which included bridges, dams, and levees. When the war came a year later, he fought in the French Sixth Army within the center of many savage battles, including the Second Battle of the Marne. There, at Dormans in the summer of 1918, he survived a grievous wound to his chest and wounds just as grievous to his left arm and leg.

Once the war ended, he married Charlotte Dussollier, whom he had met when she was a student at the Sorbonne. By then, after the war when he married her, he was twenty-seven years old. Two years younger than he, Charlotte was a light-skinned beauty with a full-bodied figure. She had titian hair, green eyes, a turned-up nose, and lips that must have brought him a special pleasure when she smiled. At this meeting, she wore with feminine poise a light blue silk chiffon dress. Her genuine

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interest in the well-being of others made her, Gerald believed, as warm-hearted as she was quick-witted.

She, too, had served in the war. Determined to be of use during that hard time, she enrolled in an accelerated nursing program sponsored by the French Red Cross and by the French Army. Skillful and empathetic, she worked long hours attending the wounded whose bodies the war had left intact and the maimed whose bodies had been deprived of one or more limbs. She also took care of those soldiers who were dying. In the first days when she was assigned to their ward, her nurse's composure nearly failed her. All of these men were young, and their torn bodies and bruised minds still craved life.

The Aubrays had come to New York in May 1920, eighteen months after the war ended. Alan had spent many of those months convalescing in a Paris hospital. He and Charlotte were grateful that they had survived the war. But no longer did they believe that whatever worthwhile contributions they made to the world would change its speckled nature. Still, they were hoping to do their part. They were, in fact, looking to find a measure of contentment through careers that challenged and excited their aspirations.

"Let's bring something original into our work-lives," Alan told Charlotte on the day that they had embarked for

an altogether new experience in the United States. "And let's explore our sensuality in new ways, too."

He was pleased at how readily she agreed.

"That might help us to make sense of things," she said.

Their path was made easier than it might have been because of Alan's Harvard connections and because of his friendship with Philippe Fontaine, the curator of the fashionable Courtney Art Gallery in Manhattan. Within a short time, they settled in Greenwich Village and for the next three years made a modest success. Alan secured engineering commissions in New York City, and Charlotte took a teaching post at a private school for girls in Manhattan.

By chance, while he was attending the exhibit of canvases by Caillebotte, Pissarro, and Matisse at the Courtney, Gerald mentioned to Philippe and to his wife Emmanuelle that he was in search of a teacher and companion for his granddaughter. Mrs. Fontaine had been a loyal friend of Amanda ever since their days at Bryn Mawr. Through the years she and Philippe had shared many festive occasions with the Marnham family. It was only natural that she should inquire how Eleanor, who was still grieving because of the death of her parents, was faring now that she had graduated from her school in Connecticut. Though he did not explain the girl's troubled residence at

the school, Gerald did remark that he had decided that his granddaughter would—for the next year, at least—continue her studies privately, with an excellent teacher as her guide before she began her college days.

“Could you recommend a suitable young woman for the position?” he asked.

He was not surprised that Emmanuelle could recommend such a woman. Mrs. Fontaine knew everyone who mattered in New York, from the Mellons, Rockefellers, and Astors to the designers and builders of the city. She knew, as well, the significant hoteliers and chefs, the most notable jewelers, milliners and couturiers, and highly regarded painters, musicians, and playwrights. She also knew the Aubrays. Before the war, when she and Philippe spent part of their summers on the French Riviera, they traveled in the same circle as Alan’s parents. Georges Aubray was a distinguished surgeon who had made a fortune for himself through his wise investments in New York and Paris real estate. When he and Bérénice retired to their home in South America, she and Philippe saw them less often. Then the war came, and—except for an extended visit to their home in Buenos Aires—they saw them not at all.

But during the three years just passed, Philippe and Emmanuelle had renewed their friendship here in New York with Alan. They had heard about his brave war service

and about his plan to rely upon himself more than upon his father's wealth to make his way in the world. There was no enmity between him and his father. He counted himself among the fortunate, of course, that his father had insisted that, as a wedding gift, he now accept as an early portion of his inheritance a substantial portfolio of stocks and bonds and real estate holdings and an impressive bank account.

By launching himself on a path different from that of his father, he was actually carrying forward an Aubray tradition. Both his grandfather, who had made his mark as a general in the French Army and later as a prime minister of France, and his father had thrived in different careers. Already, Alan had proved himself as a brave soldier. If he were alive, his grandfather would have been very pleased by his conduct in the war. Now Alan was beginning to make a success as a civil engineer. His recent commissions had honed his excellence as an environmental designer and as a landscape architect.

Alan's wife, Charlotte, had also enjoyed a privileged upbringing. Her father was a senior officer in the French Diplomatic Corps. Currently, he represented France in Indochina. Charlotte had recently completed her third year of teaching at the excellent Newbury School in Manhattan. There, she had guided girls from privileged backgrounds not unlike her own through advanced studies in foreign languages, modern history, the sciences, and mathematics.

But, according to Emmanuelle, she had grown dismayed by the school's old-fashioned pedagogy, which she believed constrained her students' academic venturing and their originality. It was her plan now to seek a teaching post independent from the confines of Newbury or of any school that in subtle ways sponsored lock-step conformity. A formalist with a modern perspective who appreciated none the less the wisdom of tradition, she wanted to help a young woman of eighteen to become not merely knowledgeable, but also self-reliant and inventive. Properly educated in this regard, the girl—who was no longer a girl but a bright and inquiring woman—would bring to the wider world a pragmatic realism, a discreet aptitude for self-testing, and decorous *joie-de-vivre*.

Hearing all these good things about the Aubrays, Gerald began to think about inviting both Alan and Charlotte to join his Newport staff for a year—Charlotte as teacher and confidante to his granddaughter and Alan as the manager of the estate, a worthy replacement for Finley. But he would move cautiously.

"I'll invite them to spend a week in Newport," he told Emmanuelle after she had offered a favorable biography of young Aubrey and his wife. "I'd like to find out whether they relate well to the place and to my granddaughter."

That they related supremely well to the Newport

scene, their success with the other members of his staff, with the friends whom he invited to meet them at a week-end party, and with his granddaughter made very clear. What impressed him most of all, probably because his need of a timely replacement for Finley seemed far more crucial than his acquiring a governess for his granddaughter, was the genuine fervor which Alan brought to his comprehensive survey of the property. No sooner had he mentioned to the young man that he wanted to revise and expand both the landscape and the buildings which defined his Newport estate, than Alan set to work photographing with his Leica every portion of the property. Using these photographs as a frame of reference, he then composed a set of architectural design plans that meant to invoke changes as functional as they were beautiful.

Accompanying him on many of these photo sessions, Gerald became aware that Alan found his proper niche in the direct statement and precise rendering of a scene. He was a gifted landscape architect drawn to photography as an instrument for documenting designed space and exploring the many reciprocal facets of an environment. He studied all of space in terms of its natural forms and human alterations, its urban and rural extensions, and its multiple possibilities for current use or for future transformation.

Insightful as much as it was empirical, his camera-eye keenly apprehended within the twenty-five-acre

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property the elegant interplay of glacial history, ocean expanse and human habitation. His photographs recorded the full character of the place. Their imagery showed the sumptuous in association with the stark, the vast with the intimate. Now the place must advance the good work that Finley had accomplished. Prudent revisions and additions must link the current with the timeless.

The plans that Alan designed would maintain the Federal-period stateliness of the house and, at the same time, introduce a modernism which carried itself with minimalist sweep and elongated lines.

Discreetly, the Marnham estate would assert that tremendous natural forces had yielded compatibly and handsomely to the presence of human beings. It was this authentic statement which would give to the property an extraordinary solidity fashioned from a shared design at once pragmatic and civil. Already, the main house claimed its own expressive individuality. It was located not at the water's edge, but farther back into the land, gaining thereby elevation and foreground and prospect. Yet a new configuration would neither neglect nor compromise Gerald's desire to be near the ocean. A swimming pool and pool house and pergola, emblematic of the human will activating its own propensities, would fan outward to the water's edge below the main house. These forms would be enhanced by and imbued with the luster of the main

house's ocean perch.

Compelling, too (so Alan's plan indicated) would be the indigenous fraternity of seventy-five native oaks. Transplanted from a meadow nearby, they would define in various locations on the property their admirable congruence with the pristine land and with the billowing ocean. Although they had been stunted by salt air and strong winds, several of these trees would find their places in the arrival area of the estate. Each of them would be pruned and replanted to emphasize their mottled bark and natural distortions and to claim this seaward habitation as their proper heritage.

Gerald was equally impressed with Alan's revision of the entry drive as one confronted it from a southerly direction. Idiosyncratic, his plan accentuated topography. It enabled the drive to traverse rolling dips and knolls and to skirt contours before arriving at the main house. Not far from the house he would build a new garage and several guest cottages, each of them stone-clad and hunkered into the earth. According to his plan, one must step down three feet in order to enter them. These buildings would catch and distill the undulating land into a singular plane, which would then descend from the north side toward the ocean. The banked expanse of lawn would address without challenging the restless sea's monumentality.

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As a landscape architect and as a civil engineer, Alan translated the truth of his seeing through direct statements about the external environment. His was a precise apprehension of implicated structures and symbiotic relationships.

“It’s all about connectedness,” Alan explained after Gerald praised his ingenuity. “It’s all about the ways that we relate to one another and to the natural and man-made forms which surround us.”

“Well, I like your plans very much,” Gerald told him on the Monday that the Aubreys were leaving for their brief visit to Nantucket. They would drive there in the reliable comforts of their Bentley.

He was happy to tell Alan so once again on the bright Thursday morning in the week following the Aubrays’ first visit. They were conferring in his study, where he had just announced to him and to Charlotte their appointments to his staff. “I think both of you will be very good for this place.”

Conferring with him in his study more than a week after she and Alan had first met him, Charlotte found herself ambivalently impressed by Gerald Marnham’s command of a scene. He was a tall, stately assurance made austere and gaunt by time’s unflinching ordinances. Yet to her eyes he was no less a resilient aptitude and a staid ballast withstanding the world’s confusion and

indecorousness. How supremely well-ordered he was and perhaps always had been. The coherent accuracies that defined him were reflected not only in the color coordinates of his navy linen suit, royal blue silk shirt, and sky-blue paisley necktie. Those accuracies were also reflected in the very room where they were conversing.

In this specific moment of their meeting, just after he had invited Alan and her to join his staff, he was seated, implacable and straight-backed, at his desk. It was a nineteenth-century bow-fronted mahogany pedestal partnered handsomely with a green leather top. The round brass pulls on its drawers embellished a distinctive aesthetic. During a carefully modulated encounter, she recognized the balance and proportion and intricate clarity of this special room of Gerald's.

While maintaining the requirements of their own discreet equilibrium, she and Alan were seated within the comforts of Carlyle chairs. Their generously padded, button-tufted backs and fixed seat cushions were an Edwardian abundance, as were the serene-rich hues in stripes of beige and gold and navy. Their maple legs on brass casters enhanced a correct and amplified solidity.

Quietly seated on Alan's right, she noticed how effectively the room became a metaphoric continuation of the exterior life unfolding around and upon his property. For there, on the high-ceilinged, pale-yellow wall behind

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and above the desk where Gerald sat, the vivid splendors of Monet's *Regattas at Argenteuil* complemented and intensified the summer day's grand propensities—all the excited imagery informing the expansive arched windows that opened to a garden and to the sea nearby.

That imagery offered to her glance as she faced Gerald and faced, as well, the windows' sumptuous prospect beyond and to the right of him, colorful sailboats that rose upon her seeing like bright flares in the distance hurrying across cerulean, sun-mottled waters. Mastering its own ascension, inhabiting as it did the wall directly behind and above Gerald's desk in vaulted, cathedral space, the extraordinary *Regattas* with correspondent powers also vitalized the spacious circumference of a discriminating man's study. Surely, on this canvas Monet not only emulated Nature's implicated harmonies. He also taught the spectator visiting it how, more authentically, to see.

Subtly and deftly, Monet teaches us to see. So, in keen attentiveness Charlotte mused as she first entered the room and before she imparted her wish to be for Eleanor Farrell the auspicious influence the young woman needed if she was to be rescued. Braced by new perceiving (she told herself), we accept the aggregate of blotches in the lower part of the picture as gestures of paint translating colored ripples on the water. Broad, italic strokes clarify the painter's act even as they reflect and guide us to the upper

part of the canvas and the instantly discernible reality of amber-luminous sailboats, cobalt-green hedges and trees, and houses wearing emphatic red roofs beneath an understated azure sky.

Still the bright flares that were sailboats flourished within sight of Gerald's property and upon her scanning glance toward the arched windows of his study before which she sat. Still their kinetic, sailing rhythms went on hurrying across sun-mottled Newport waters in the cerulean distance.

There was, she felt, something happily artful about this juxtaposition of Monet's canvas on the wall behind and above Gerald's desk and of the Newport seascape quickening the prospect beyond the windows of his study. This melding of literal and metaphoric and of outside world and inner reflected the balance and coherence of the life that Gerald Marnham invited to unfold around him. It was this disciplined symmetry and its scrupulously designed perfection which (she imagined) he sought as the most meaningful pattern of life—his life in particular and the lives of his son and his granddaughter.

Yet, Monet's complicity with Nature located the spontaneous in energetic daring. His peerless seeing was an extemporaneous gesture or seemed so. There was little of that art in Gerald's engagement with reality. In fact, there was very little of that liberality we call instinct or intuition and,

sometimes, adventure. For Monet (and, yes, for Eleanor, too—she had the same spirit) all of life was an astonishing kaleidoscope. It was a veritable stereopticon inviting each of us to define our own arts through its many colors. But Gerald, though an immensely successful corporate leader, did not seek the full spectrum of life. It was not his way to experience the manifold colors of life or to test their vibrancies and hidden values. Instead, he worked from the subdued palette which hesitates to identify its proficiencies through unconstrained gesture or willful experiment or impulsive daring.

So, Charlotte believed. From his casual remarks about his relations with the daughter who had died and with a son who strove to fulfill his father's will, she was aware that Gerald had become inflexible in his prescriptions for their well-being. Even while experiencing a subdued dismay at his paternal arbitrariness, though, she respected him for heeding the voice of his own conscience. Yet that respect and admiration would not keep her from quietly invoking a more realistic program concerning Eleanor's future.

Before she expressed herself once more as the teacherly advocate of Eleanor's happiness, Gerald reinforced his own opinion of his granddaughter's situation. At this time, he moved away from his desk and took his place in the handsome Chelsea wing chair beside

her. Its navy vintage linen was trimmed with antiqued brass nail-heads, which represented another clarified proportion upon her senses. Since they had been speaking about Eleanor, he directed his words now to her rather than to Alan, who observed them in tactful silence. While facing her with a courtliness which pleased her womanly self-regard even as it revealed his patrician reserve, Gerald mentioned once again that she was going to be the essential component in his rescuing plan for Eleanor.

“You must bring her back to life again,” he said.

After the deaths of her parents, Gerald had explained in their first meeting, his eighteen-year-old granddaughter suffered a breakdown. But, when she read the reports of Eleanor’s teachers and of the psychiatrist who had lately counseled her, Charlotte believed that the girl’s emotional problems had begun long before her parents had died. Eleanor’s fear that they had abandoned her began when she was a little girl of four or five. Then and later, her parents were often away, busy with their careers as corporate executives. Their responsibilities often required them to be not only in Pittsburgh, but also in New York, London, Paris, and Shanghai.

Her mother and her father had, nevertheless, carefully monitored her education in the earliest years when an aged governess was teaching her at home, when a young married couple named Sheffield were also guiding

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her education, and after that, when she attended Miss Porter's, a private school in Farmington, Connecticut. They wanted their daughter to be as knowledgeable and as poised as she was lovely and successful. They had little empathy for her shy reticence. To win their favor, Eleanor had always excelled in her studies and in other learning activities, which included horse-riding, swimming, and skiing. She had also become a fine painter and a gifted pianist. At school, she had willed herself to be a leader. She became the captain of the tennis and swimming teams and the president of her class.

Although she enjoyed her popularity and the feminine loveliness which she had inherited from her mother, her uneasiness about her relationship with her parents never left her. When they did find time to be with her, they wanted to hear not that she had missed them, but that she had made many new achievements at school. Only then, after she had shown them the favorable reports of her teachers, did they permit themselves to embrace her and to allow her to kiss them.

"But this success is only the beginning," her mother most often and sometimes her father would remind her. "There is a great deal more that you must accomplish if you want to take an important place in the world."

After they were killed while traveling in their private plane to the headquarters of the Marnham Steel

Corporation in Pittsburgh, Eleanor struggled through the hard days of her grief. Through those last months of her senior year, the affection of her peers and the motherly counsel of her teachers did assuage her grief, though without dispelling it. In those last months before her graduation, enhanced as it was by academic honors, she spent some after-school hours conferring with a psychiatrist who specialized in the care of young adults. Because of his wise treatment and her willingness to explore with unstinting honesty the person that she had thus far become, she began to be well again. After many months of receiving wise counsel from her psychiatrist and after her graduation from her private school, she made her new home with her grandfather. That was two weeks ago. Her grandfather's plan for her—endorsed as well by her psychiatrist—required her prudence and patience. She must push back her entrance into Bryn Mawr. A year of home study, a more relaxed schedule of New England travel, and convivial fellowship with her peers would help her retrieve her lost happiness and the young woman named Eleanor Farrell, whose confident identity she believed she had also lost.

Aware of the challenge that he was setting for his granddaughter and for himself, Gerald was counting on Charlotte's proficiencies as Eleanor's teacher and as her confidante.

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"Eleanor needs a teacher who can also be a helpful friend," Gerald said. "She needs to believe that even without her parents she can make her way in the world very effectively."

"You want her to become self-reliant," she said. "I, too, believe that is the essential lesson which she must master."

With quiet intonations, she was reinforcing his point of view.

"After spending last week in her company, I am confident that with the proper guidance she will learn how to believe in herself."

"Ah, yes," he said. "*That* is what she has lost."

"I'll teach her how to meet the surprise of the world." Already, she could see, he appreciated her solicitous regard of his granddaughter. So, perceiving, with carefully measured timbres he offered new words to reinforce his approval of her plan for Eleanor.

"The timing could not be better. She's eighteen years old now and must soon make her way in the wider world. Before losing her parents, she had learned to be a confident young lady. She must retrieve what she has lost. She must win back her self-assurance. You can help her to win back her best self. Keep in mind that, after this year of home study, she will be in Pennsylvania at Bryn Mawr College, her grandmother's alma mater. Even with teachers and

friends around her, she will have to rely upon her own capacities if she's going to succeed at being an individual." "She was learning to be very successful as a self-determining individual before she lost her parents. She can learn to be so again."

Once again, he found matter-of-fact words meant to reaffirm the importance of Eleanor's new schedule.

"Her Bryn Mawr plans for next year make her association with you even more important. You are the one person who can help Eleanor to become her best self again. In fact, your positive influence will help her to rally from her grief and at the same time to advance in her studies."

"A year from now she will be strong again and well-prepared," she answered him. The cool poise of her voice defined her conviction. "On her own, Eleanor is going to make you very proud of her."

She rose gracefully from her chair. Alan's glance upon her intimated that her subdued beauty was a proper ascension in that moment dominating the room, until he and Gerald rose to meet her. As Gerald brought to her the manly composure that was his ingrained authority, his formality was as harnessed as he cared to make it. He took her delicate hands, decorous now with white summer gloves, into his own and clasped them in a finely measured expression of his gratitude for her belief in Eleanor's value and in that troubled girl's ability to make a scrupulous

grandfather proud.

“I must confess that I am looking forward to such a time,” he said. “For then I’ll be convinced that she has come to know herself better.”

He watched as she turned to join Alan just before the three of them began making their way out of his study.

“You can be a part of this, too,” he told Alan. “Eleanor might even come to see both of you as replacements for her parents.”

His remark prompted them to pause momentarily. In this year, Alan was thirty-two years old, and Charlotte was thirty. They were too young for Eleanor to regard them as her parents. Besides, they had no interest in playing those roles.

“Oh, we will not be her parents,” Alan said. His words were direct and clarifying. “At this point in her life, nobody could replace them. She has already built a history of loving and needing them. If she thought we were trying to be her parents, she would surely resent us.”

“We will be her teachers and her advisors,” Charlotte quickly added. It was, she knew, important for Gerald to understand the persons that they would be for his granddaughter.

Hearing her explanation, he permitted himself a broad smile. He was accompanying them through the long, shadow-tintured hall out to a waiting car, their handsome

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Bentley, and to the extraordinary May afternoon, itself another ascension flourishing around them.

“You will be wise counselors,” he said. “You’ll guide her to a realistic view of things. That is what she needs most of all.”

As soon as she and Alan were seated in their car, which would bring them to their townhouse in Greenwich Village, she peered through the open window. With warmhearted intonations creating subtle intensities, she declared the very thought which had inspired their visit.

“I think we will teach her a new way to see.”

Then it was that she noticed, as the car began a modulated departure—as if cars wisely instructed could make even departures charming—how pleased Gerald was with them, while he stood regarding their leave-taking. Her extemporary remark had, she hoped, drawn his keen mind toward an even firmer trust of them.

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