

AXEL. (Brightly.) Well! I guess you cheered *him* up!

TANSY. (Watching after Willum, concerned.) All right, I'm doing my best, okay?

AXEL. (Referring to the note.) So what have we here?

TANSY. Never mind.

AXEL. One more little endearment to make it that much tougher on him when you're gone?

TANSY. That wasn't my intention.

AXEL. Come on. You know you're not doing the guy any favors with that kind of stuff. I'm gonna hate watching a perfectly good landlord walking around with his guts scrambled because some little brown-eyed patootie decided to toss him an extra couple of macaroons before she hit the road.

TANSY. Axel—.

AXEL. The guy used to be a pretty good laugher, I don't know if you remember.

TANSY. It's his birthday.

AXEL. So give him a tie. (Pause. She turns away.) Or else give him what he really wants. (Tansy shakes her head.) The guy's thirty-four, for God's sake—he needs somebody to look after him in his dotage.

TANSY. Not me.

AXEL. Come on. Does Washington really need one more weather girl?

TANSY. Ax—I am leaving here one week from tomorrow, and nothing, but *nothing*—.

AXEL. Hey. Hey.

TANSY. Look—oh, I know how I must look to you—like a parody of the New Woman, casting off her chains to go be the Washington Weather Girl—.

AXEL. I didn't say that. You put it awfully well, but I didn't say that—.

TANSY. And all right, so maybe it's not the loftiest goal ever pursued by womankind, or anything, but to me it happens to be that damn thing—that one chance that comes along in your life that you just gotta grab, 'cause if you don't, then before you know it, your eyes glaze over—and whatever or whoever you gave it up for, you start to resent. And I'm not gonna do that to Willum.

AXEL. Some favor you're doing him. "Willum—there's something bigger than us—a wonderful something called—meteurology."

TANSY. Willum will be all right.

AXEL. Think so?

TANSY. He's told me so.

AXEL. What does he know? Does he know you sneak up here

every day and untangle this place?

TANSY. He's just been busy with his hotel—and he needed someone—.

AXEL. So, what, when you're gone he won't still need someone?

TANSY. Oh, I should give up my career to shelve a man's books?

AXEL. All right, so he's a little sloppy. I mean, if that's what you don't like about him—.

TANSY. There's nothing I don't like. Willum is wonderful; he's talented, he's the gentlest man I've ever known, he's—he could use a little gumption, I think, but—.

AXEL. "Gumption"? You've said that before. What is that? What is "gumption"?

TANSY. Just, something people have.

AXEL. I don't think so. Not anymore. I think they found the cure. It's like neuralgia. Who was the last person you ever heard of having "gumption"? Marjorie Main, right?

TANSY. All right.

AXEL. So now, what—Willum can't be perfect for you without "gumption"?

TANSY. No. Please—let him be imperfect. Somebody perfect right now would really louse things up. Willum has his hotel, I've got my Weather Girl, so that's that. And besides, here I am, fresh out of one relationship, I've got no business—.

AXEL. Fresh? Fresh? It's two years, Tansy, that what you call *fresh*?

TANSY. Well—.

AXEL. I'll remember never to send you out for seafood.

TANSY. Fresh enough. Fresh in memory.

AXEL. Come on. So you once came close to marrying a bastard.

TANSY. Interesting bastard, I tell you that.

AXEL. Interesting to the vice squad, maybe.

TANSY. He was gifted. He could make people laugh.

AXEL. Too many appetites, that was his trouble. Cravings for things—*evil* things—booze, dope . . . people in show business. Candy-stripers. . . .

TANSY. Oh, I could've put up with all that, I think. That hunger. That wasn't really the problem.