

Nettie's Journal  
Saturday, May 9, 1946

I stopped by Mother's house tonight. She was watching "It's a Gift" as always. She loves game shows. Willis was at Mother's house, and he was looking at me as if to ask "Where's Timmy?" Just like yesterday. Maybe mother mentioned Timmy was coming back. I wonder if Willis understood. We did promise to bring Timmy over. I offered to keep Willis for the night and then maybe he could see Timmy in the morning. Mother said he's not doing too well though...but this is the natural process, the doctor said.

Mother and I didn't talk much. She was so involved in her game show and started talking about how she had never seen "Missus Goes A-Shopping" before it was cancelled. That reminded me that I needed to go to the grocery store to get some eggs.

Everything I told John and Timmy was true. I did spend all my coins. I did go to the movies. I did walk around. I did have dinner. I did go to Radio City Music Hall. But first, I went to the grocery store, forgetting that Timmy acts like he doesn't even know what waffles are anymore. So why bother buying eggs? Why buy anything? Nobody ever thanks me for the meals anyway. I stood in the aisle and wondered what I was doing there with that squeaky old cart. Then someone dropped a head of cabbage on my foot.

It was Thomas. “What happened to your blue shoes?” He asked with a smile. That was years ago. How would he remember those shoes from so long ago? I used to wear them to work all the time. I still have the matching blue coat. My shoes always matched the rest of my outfit.

I looked down at the green cabbage beside my shoes. Brown...dull shoes. I looked up at Thomas and he was bright...almost fluorescent. His coat was blue, his hair was silver, and he stood by the yellow flower and garden sign near a picture of red roses. I was a dark cloud floating down the aisles. I left the cart and took a walk with Thomas.

We walked by Radio Music City Hall and I was getting cold, so we stopped by an empty restaurant. There were plastic red roses on the tables. I insisted that Thomas not pay for my dinner, so he said I should at least give him the pleasure of updating him on my life. I told him I was married to John. He remembered John and asked how his business was doing. I didn't know. I never know.

Then Thomas decided to update me on his life. To my disappointment he sounded just like John-always talking about work. So my mind wandered. I started thinking about the night before. John was talking in his sleep again. Must have been the alcohol. Some woman he kept mumbling with a smirk on his face. I don't even want to stay in the same room with him anymore. I'd rather sit alone in the dark.

Thomas offered me some of his lasagna. I declined and he continued to talk. My mind wandered again. I thought about Timmy and how he should move out. I think he would drink less if he wasn't around John so much.

I wondered what would have happened if Timmy had not of had to go to war. What if he had gone to college? He can still be a writer if he wants to. Sometimes I think if he does everything his father doesn't want him to do then he will be okay. John says I treat him like a child. He tells me Timmy is a grown man. I know that, but he is my son...a son I could have lost.

When I came back down to earth, Thomas was crying over his lasagna. His son was still overseas, he said. I could imagine how he felt. He probably goes into his son's room, trying not to move anything- just inhaling whatever is left of his son's presence. He probably looks at the young men who open the door for their grandmothers. I bet he looked at the boy that works at this family restaurant.

Thomas told me he is widowed. The waiter offered us wine. He said he doesn't touch the stuff.

He talked to me for an hour. I handed him my dinner napkin to wipe the tears, and he did something that set him apart from John- he asked me about me.

I didn't tell him anything about myself. I wasn't used to that. We just finished our dinner. It was getting late. Thomas gave me his business card and said I should stop by- to see the office of course. It had changed since I worked there. He said maybe we could talk about what is going on in my life...since I listened to him cry in his lasagna, he joked.

On my way home it started to rain, but I still didn't want to go back home yet. I went to the movies...I'm angry because I couldn't sit through either of the two movies without thinking about Timmy and John.

If Timmy does move, I thought as I sat in the theatre alone, John claims I will be the one that misses him because John has his business. As if his business is something to keep him distracted. Well I have something to keep me distracted too- this business card. I'm sure John won't mind. After all, he has his business, the woman in his dreams, and a son that gives him gift ideas.

Tomorrow I'm going to the grocery store to buy my own roses.

