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ALSO BY
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A L I F E

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to his father's side in the family business. Rather, that damned fool boy had sought another way, which, at the time, appeared to be insane. When I told him I was entering the Yale Drama School, where I would study acting, his response was: "Didn't you look in the mirror?" I would resent that for years, just as he resented me for walking away from him when he needed me in his store. Even late in life, when he used to carry clippings about my shows in his pocket and make purposeless trips to New York on the commuter train so he could show these clippings to his old friends, I pitied him but still didn't love him. It would be years before I did, and it came about only when I'd made a voyage back to where he was born and brought up, and where I'd had something of the same experience that he'd had. But by then it was late, almost too late, and I was left with a persisting regret that I had never come to know my father.



I READ photographs; for many years that was my profession. Here is the first one I have of Athena Shishmanoglou, my mother. She is the determined-looking infant on her mother's lap. Notice her mouth. Do you detect a stubborn streak? It will serve her well.

This is the Shishmanoglou family a generation after they'd come to Constantinople out of Kayseri, in the backcountry of Turkey. Read the photograph with me. Isn't there something "Western" about this family? What is it? The clothes they're wearing? The quality of the background and furniture? Or the unclenched postures of their bodies? What struck me most was that they're all touching each other and especially that the eldest son's arm and hand are on his father's shoulder. Clearly there was love and trust there. Altogether you can see they were a devoted family, at ease with each other. In the U.S. now, the members of a family separate as soon as they can put together the airfare.

The head of the Shishmanoglous and his oldest son are wearing fezzes,

the head cover of their Mohammedan oppressors. And indoors—which is the Mohammedan way. I've tried one on. A fez is hot. It doesn't protect the nape of the neck from the sun or shield the eyes from its glare. But all the Greek men of that time and place wore them. Why? A captive people since the fall of Constantinople in 1453, their tactic for safety was to blend in with the Turkish population. I've found evidence of deeper accommodations to the conqueror's culture. My mother's grandfather's first name was Murda. My mother's grandmother's "Christian" name was flamboyantly Turkish: Sultana. The family Bibles—I have one—were in Turkish. In Kayseri, the women stayed at home for the most part, but when they went out they covered their faces as did the Turkish women, and they stayed within the bounds of the Christian neighborhood.

The men, on the other hand, were everywhere on the streets, rubbing shoulders with the Turk, trading with him in the bazaar, competing with him and usually winning. But from the instant they walked out of their front doors, they said hello and goodbye in Turkish. On the streets they wore a mask of deference. They survived by "passing." The tactic persisted when some of these people came to America. In New York, many merchants in the rug trade had family names of Turkish derivation but concealed their Christian forenames, even in our polyglot city. By compressing them into initials. My father's brother, the man who brought us to America, was known in New York not as Avraam Elia Kazanjoglou but as A. E. Kazan. His nickname was Joe. What could be more American?

You who live in safety may call this self-betrayal. Don't be so superior. I've noticed the same kind of thing here among many other races and peoples who changed their names in order to "fit in." I've come to question last names. Many people in this democratic society still wear the fez.

The photograph of the Shishmanoglous was taken in 1889. The family had come out of Anatolia (you call it Asia Minor), I don't know precisely how many years before. *Anatolia* is the Greek word for "East," and from before Homer's time, people thought of the regions that darken before their own as mysterious and threatening. In the West, the golden light endures. Apollo, the sun god! Civilization!

Arriving in Constantinople, the men of the family prospered. The Greek Orthodox Church of the area had its headquarters in that city, and the Hellenic culture, industrious, international, mercantile, was the dominant one. Greeks were the majority of the urban population, and their cunning became legendary. The successful Greek traders of recent times (Onassis) came out of Anatolia or from the islands close to the shore of Turkey, but rarely from Greece proper. Their marketplace victories caused resentment as well as admiration; another reason for minimizing their differences and disguising their identities.

Mother's father is the man in the father's chair. His name, Isaak Shishmanoglou, is made up of a Christian forename and a Turkish descriptive

package. Shishman-oglou is a run-together of three Turkish words to mean "fat man's son." Isaak, of course, is out of the Old Testament. Athena's mother was Anna Karajosifoglou, which means, if you take it apart, "black" (Kara), "Joseph" (Josif), "son" (oglou)—Anna the daughter of Black Joseph's son. I knew my maternal grandfather for a few weeks when I was four years old, and I think of him as a gentle person. I didn't know my maternal grandmother, who'd died early, but to judge from this photograph, she was rather severe. Can you see that? The gentleness and the austerity?

The eldest son, Odysseus, standing behind his father, hand on his shoulder, didn't prolong his schooling but entered his father's business. That was the tradition, and he complied with it. The second and third sons were sent to German universities—in those years a German education was the most respected. When they graduated, they entered the family business. Importing cotton goods from Manchester and the English Midlands, they found outlets throughout Anatolia and quickly became affluent and respected.

Athena was born in Makrikeu, a predominantly Greek suburb of the capital city of Constantinople. *Makri* is the Greek word for "far." *Keu* is the Turkish word for "village." In this name, too, the cultures overlapped. Distant village? Distant as space was measured in their day but, when I made a visit in 1960, a twenty-minute cab ride from the center of Constantinople. The community, orderly rows of medium-size homes, sits on the shore of the Sea of Marmara and is about as far west as Turkey extends.

Athena was put to school with the nuns, young French and Italian women who wore soft gray vestments. As soon as she learned to read, she made reading a habit—in her very last years I recall her, always a book in hand. When she was a girl she read about America, and that roused a will to go there. But also something mysterious, an unexpected independence.

A kind of daring sparked in the girl. Her school building was on the edge of the sea, and it had a bathhouse at the end of a narrow pier, a small, square structure over head-high water. In the summer months, the young nuns bathed, changing in the windowless huts, then descending an interior ladder to where, shielded by a crosshatch grille, they dunked themselves without leaving the enclosure. But Athena and another student would pass through a trap exit and strike out for deep water. It was, in that culture, an act of bravado.

After Athena there'd been another pregnancy. Anna Karajosifoglou's seventh. She gave birth to a son, then died. I don't remember an explanation of what brought her down. People died more easily in those days.

After his wife's death, Isaak-pappou retired. Finding he no longer had a stomach for business, he threw it to his sons so he could spend his last years enjoying the ease he'd earned and the company of his favorite, Athena.

He'd wait until her school let out so they could do the family shopping together. Though it wasn't as quickly or as efficiently done at that hour, it

was far more pleasurable. It often took the best part of an afternoon, but father and daughter were in no hurry, not in each other's dear company. They went from stand to stand, until they found fish pulled out of the sea that morning, gills still red, and octopus that quivered, and squid glistening with life. They studied the lamb carefully; it had to be freshly butchered. Isaak taught Athena how to tell if it wasn't. The stems of the vegetables and fruit had to be green, not withered brown. After which Isaak would take his daughter to the *zacharoplastion*, the sweet shop, and let her choose anything she wanted. Athena was to recall the *lokum* in pastel colors, with pistachios embedded in the transparent jelly.

At night, in the house, there was music. His Master's Voice on the gramophone. There'd be an occasional evening at a theatre. Those were the years when French operetta companies toured, coming up from the cultural capital of the Ottoman Empire, Gevur Izmir—"Infidel Smyrna," so called because, as the puritanical Turk saw it, most of the Greek population there lived for pleasure. "Oh, those cafés where women misbehave! Oh, those *thé dansants*!" Even the inside of the cathedral, Hagia Fotini, glittered shamelessly with rare metals and precious stones.

But for the Shismanogious there were, above all, the pleasures of family life. Before radio and TV, people entertained themselves. Each meal was a prolonged party, enjoyed slowly to stretch out an evening with talk and stories, new jokes and old parables, fables told to make children laugh before bedtime. That society might have reminded you of the old South of this country. There were servants to do the drudge work, Turks instead of blacks. The middle-class Greeks loved their servants and vice versa. My mother was born into a kind of domestic paradise. But it couldn't last, and it didn't.

Athena was naturally and simply in love with her father, appreciated his loneliness and gave him the devotion he needed, the kind only a young girl has to offer, bright as her eyes and peppered with just enough mischief. Athena was trained to love. When, in the years that followed, she didn't have what she'd had then, it was a lack she felt as a deprivation.

Isaak never had the need to remarry. Now, for contrast, look at my other grandfather's family, in a photograph taken in Kayseri, a meaner, dustier environment. After his first wife died, grandfather Elia, needing to be married, quickly found a sixteen-year-old girl and "bought" her from her parents, accepting her without a dowry. Here you see the woman after she'd borne six children. You can read what that cost her. Evanthia was younger than she looked.

I've studied the faces of my two grandfathers. On Elia-pappou's face, I see that he was determined, crafty, stubborn, cunning, unwavering in desire, tough-hearted. He'd lived his life with his back to the wall, and it shows. He had no time for gentle concerns. Kayseri was not a place for



culture; the struggle was too severe. Elia-pappou passed those traits on to his eldest sons; I cannot remember my father reading a book.

Equally I am the grandson of Isaak-pappou, a man who surrounded his children with love, who was, at one point in his life, glad to throw over a successful business so he could enjoy the more "human" things in life, a man for whom family came first and who enjoyed the life of conviviality.

What Elia-pappou was and what Isaak-pappou was are the two sides of my character. As you might expect, they have at times warred with each other.

THE YEAR came for Athena to marry; she was eighteen and her girlhood days were over. Her father and her brother began to look around for a husband. In the tradition, it was their duty. And so her fate was decided.

Tolstoi uses that phrase in connection with his heroine, Natasha, in *War and Peace*. I thought the phrase excessive when I read it. Her fate? But in that society, at that time, it was precise. A simple decision by her father and her brothers would determine, at one stroke, the rest of Athena's life. She had little to do with the choice—well, judge for yourself.

My father, at age thirty-two, having decided it was time to marry and

begin a family, returned to his native land on a buying trip while, at the same time, looking for a wife. Greeks did this, went back to the "old country" to find their wives. George was a handsome man in his prime and doing well enough in his brother's business, the Kazan Carpet Company, Inc., where he was second in command, to take this drastic step.

Here is their engagement photograph. She is nineteen. You can read the independence and the sturdiness there; my father was lucky. He'd found a good woman.



This is how the union was arranged. I have their own words, recorded a few years before his death, while she was still in excellent health and he was still able to remember parts of his life. I taped this conversation in my country home on a warm summer's afternoon, in a room with open windows through which a soft breeze flowed. My mother was unusually happy that day, my father a bit sulen. He didn't like to talk about the past.

I asked Mother how she'd met Father.

"How did I first meet you, George?" she asked. Father wouldn't respond, so she went on.

"My sister had a summer place on the island of Prinkipo." (Leon Trotsky was living there at the time.)

"George, so it happened, was looking for a wife. I imagine he heard about me, so he and his mother came visiting. It wouldn't have been proper without his mother."

"She was not my mother," George said. "Not my true mother."

Then my voice comes on the tape. "What did you think of him, Mom?"

"I thought he was a nice-looking young man."

I remember she laughed; it's on the tape, a jolly, confident laugh. But my father, who was sitting at her side, close to the mike, made a grumpy sound.

My mother went on: "Then he went to Father, I suppose, and asked to marry me."

Father spoke up, and his voice trembled. He had the Parkinson's by then

and his strength was fading. "Some ladies," he said, and his voice quavered, "made the remark that I should cut off my mustache. And she said, your mother, 'Never mind, it's fine, leave it.'"

"You liked that, Pop?" I asked him.

"Why not? That's the first thing I remember about her."

Then my mother: "So later, when the summer was over, my father and I went visiting to my sister. She lived in Kadiköy, across the bay from Constantinople. And George made a visit there, again with his mother. He'd just come back from America and everybody was asking how it was there and George spoke very well. I remember how we all listened. Then we went for a walk, first time alone, he and I, went to the boat station to see the boat from Constantinople come in. And there was his cousin, waiting to take the boat."

"Not my cousin," my father interrupted. He sounded impatient. "My brother Seraphim."

"George waved to them, his cousin and his friends, they were. But they didn't come near us. So later, George told me he asked his cousin, 'What you think of her?' And his cousin said, 'She looks fine—from behind.'"

She had to stop because she was laughing so hard. She used to laugh a lot at that time of her life, though I don't remember her laughing much before my father was sick. Only after time had pulled his teeth.

"Later," she said, "your father told me that, 'From behind.' Yes, it wasn't his cousin, I remember that now, George is right. It was his brother Seraphim."

"That's what I told you, damn fool," my father said. He turned to me. "Always has her own ideas on everything," he said.

"We got engaged," she said.

"How did you ask her, Pop?"

"He asked my father," Mother said.

"I didn't ask him," my father said. "She forgot everything. Her father was too old. I asked her brother Odysseus; he was head of the family at that time."

"So what did he say?"

"He said they'd think it over," Father said.

"And then?"

"They began making certain inquiries."

Mother laughed like a young girl.

"What you laughing all the time?" Father said on the tape. "Am I telling it wrong? Then you tell it, how it happened."

"You're telling it all right, George."

"What kind of inquiries, Pop?"

"I don't know what her people talked about. What was there to talk about anyway?"

My mother picked up. "I remember they had family conferences. They wouldn't let me go in there," she said, "so I don't know exactly what they said."

That was the extent and intimacy of their courtship.

"What's the difference?" Father said. "It's all finished now."

"How about your family, Pop? They had conferences too?"

"No. Nothing. We hadn't brought them out from Kayseri yet. My mother died long before. And Father married right away, a sixteen-year-old girl, damn fool. They had six children already, and he's waiting—I mean at that time he was waiting—for my brother and me to send money."

"You supported your father?"

"Fine man. But business? Kaput! Nothing! He was selling charcoal at this time. A few rugs maybe, here and there. But charcoal. Made from fruit pits and so forth. Imagine! Also God knows what kind small stuff. Meantime, six children. Who knows, maybe seven by now, damn fool. . . ."

"George, that was long ago. He's dead, George."

"I know. I know."

From the picture of that family you can see how backcountry Father's family was, compared with Mother's. Coarser stuff. But it was precisely this hungry, unsettled quality that drove them to America. Athena's family had a comfortable and secure life within the walls of their home, so they didn't press to leave Constantinople. They lived through the turmoil of two wars, survived by locking the doors and bolting the windows. Their descendants are still there.

But the Kazanjoglous, one and all, made it to America. Only a couple of years after the family picture was taken, and almost immediately after George's engagement to Athena, the two brothers brought their father, his second wife, and their six half-brothers and sisters to Constantinople, which was a stepping-stone to America and to safety.

Later on in the tape, my mother confesses, "Before George, there was another young man asked to marry me. But my brother Odysseus, he knew this man and he didn't want him. He said, 'I wouldn't give my sister to this man!' He was a nice-looking young man, but he wasn't educated. He didn't have the ability to read much. So then George came and they had this conference. I wasn't there, but after, Odysseus told me, 'Yes, George, he's a fine young man.'"

"And that was it?"

"That's how it happened. See, those days, the young lady had to like the young man, but first the family had to like him."

Athena loved her family, and that made her a dutiful child.

"They asked questions about my business," Father said sourly, and turned his head away.

"George had taken them all out to dinner, I imagine, because Odysseus

said, 'He knows how to make the money and he knows how to spend the money.' I remember that; they all liked how George spent money."

"So then he brought you to America?"

"Oh, no, not while Father was alive. That was the agreement. Father made sure of that. The idea was that George should stay in Constantinople and buy rugs for his brother's store in New York. If George had to go there on business, you understand, he would go alone. There was no idea then that I'd go to America and stay there; oh, no, not then."

"Would your family have agreed to the marriage," I asked, "if they knew he would take you to America for the rest of your life?"

"Maybe no," Mother said. "Father wanted me close. But I knew the day would come when he wouldn't be there, and I made up my mind, when that happened, I would go. Well, what else could I do? George?"

He'd fallen asleep. There the tape ends. I had a tennis game.

Fifteen days after they married, George received an urgent letter from his brother in New York, ordering him to come back immediately. "Business reasons," Mother said.

What she didn't tell me, because nice Anatolian girls don't, is that when he left her to go to America, he left her pregnant. With me.

I've often wondered what she thought of his abrupt departure. For "business reasons"? The only evidence I have of her buried feelings is the expression on her face in another photograph, taken shortly after her husband left her. She looks stunned. It had certainly happened quickly! What her life would be—her "fate" for the next fifty-two years—had been determined. Irrevocably.

Was he there when I was born? Not necessarily. Those were the big growth years of the Kazan Carpet Company, Inc.

I was named, as tradition required, after my paternal grandfather.

In 1912, Isaak-pappou died and Father was free to move his wife as he wished. My uncle in New York had the notion of setting up a rug-washing plant in Berlin—then considered a safe place—and he sent Father there, with his personal baggage, Athena and their son, Elia, to set it up. Uncle Avraam already had such a plant operating in Long Island City, with great success. It not only cleaned carpets but left them with the glossy finish American homemakers favored.

Father took an apartment on Bambergerstrasse, I had a German nanny, my brother Avraam (now a psychiatrist) was born there. The first fluid he took was not his mother's milk but, as was the custom, a teaspoon of good brown beer. At the age of three, I spoke German.

There we had a stroke of luck—though it didn't appear so at the time. It had quickly become evident that the taste of Berliners was not the same as that of Americans; Germans liked the more primitive colors and the coarser textures of rugs as they came off the loom. The plant failed and was aban-



The author

done. Father quickly decided to move his wife and two sons to New York City. There was a rumbling premonition that a great world war was coming. We were hustled back to Constantinople while Father went to New York to prepare for our journey and arrival. He secured an apartment on Riverside Drive, then sent one of his brothers, the same Seraphim who'd said Mother looked okay from behind, to bring us across the sea. We left Europe a short time before "that damned foolish thing in the Balkans." Our history is one of moving from place to place, just ahead of catastrophe.

The snapshot on the next page was taken on board the *Kaiser Wilhelm*, the flagship of the German passenger service, which brought us to America. It shows a sailing-away party; they often had them in those days. The frightened little boy in the white sailor suit is the author of this account. In the middle of the group, dressed in black, is his mother. She is still mourning her father, as are the other Shishmanoglou women. At the extreme left edge of the picture is Athena's older sister, Vassiliki ("Queenie"). After that day, the girls never saw each other again.

Behind Athena's right shoulder, dressed in white, with a rather unbecoming white hat, is her best friend, Lucy Palymyra. She is the only friend I can remember Mother having—I mean ever!—and she is going with us.

I recall her story now as through a mist.

When Athena was a young girl, living in the suburb of Constantinople, her constant companions were the three little girls next door. She remembered them all her life, and their names were Dolly, Nellie, and Lucy Palymyra. Dolly and Nellie died young, at sixteen and fourteen. The Armenian doctor who tended the girls gave their parents this explanation: "It was natural for them to die." The survivor, Lucy, became the companion of Athena's soul. Lucy's health was uncertain too, and her body frail. Athena remembered that she was about to marry when all the other girls did, at eighteen or nineteen. But she or her husband-to-be called it off. Lucy never married, never had children.

She had Athena and Athena's children.

When her husband informed Athena that he was going to bring her to



America, she was ready for an adventurous change in her life. Years later, she told me she was eager to go because she believed her sons would have a better chance to become something in the States.

She asked only one thing of her husband. Since she was being separated from her brothers and sisters, perhaps for a long time (it turned out to be forever), and since she had no friends in the new land and didn't speak the language (as her husband did), she asked if she could bring Lucy with her. Lucy, she pointed out, would help her with the two boys.

The reason she did not mention was that Lucy would give her someone to talk to. She also did not say that she hoped a change of climate and better medical advice might reconstitute her friend's health. From time to time, Lucy ran a fever that no doctor in Constantinople could explain.

I have, as one of my brothers has often pointed out, a shameful tendency to ascribe unflattering motivations to my father's actions. I've wondered why he agreed to take Lucy to New York. Perhaps since he was bringing his brother and one of his half-brothers into our Riverside Drive apartment to live, eat, and be served, he figured that Lucy's keep would be less than what he'd have to pay a servant.

I know this next will seem unfair too, but I believe it: Perhaps Lucy's being there would relieve him of the burden of making conversation with his young wife. They had little to talk about. Later in life, one of Father's favorite observations about someone, usually a woman, an Armenian, or a Jew, was: "He talks too much!" or "She don't close her mouth five minutes!" and he'd make a little clapper gesture with his thumb and forefinger. Lucy's presence would keep Athena satisfied and, once out of the kitchen, silent.

Then there were the two boys to take care of. And, no doubt, more on the way. Birth control? I doubt whether, at that time, it consisted of anything more than not doing it. I once found some condoms in my father's bureau, but that was years later. Very likely Athena would soon be expecting again. She was.

Lucy's chief charge was me. I can recall her from those years, a tall, delicately made woman with a proud bearing and a face sensitized by pain. She had innate culture. I can recall her lovely voice; it eased my night fears and gentled me to sleep.

No sooner had my father brought her over than he resented her being around the apartment. Perhaps she was secretly scornful of him, did her best to control it, therefore was overly polite. Which, in turn, he took as a criticism of his own blunt manners, as he must have caught Lucy's quick glance, then downcast eyes, when he summoned his wife to attend him. "*Ah-thee-nah!*" he'd shout, in the way he'd been taught to command a woman in Kayseri. Perhaps he thought Lucy had a bad influence on his wife. He must have resented how close they were, because Athena remembered, years later, that he said they were always "whispering in a corner."

Finally he lost all control—perhaps he'd had a bad day at the store or the track—and spoke his mind directly, letting his feelings run unchecked.

Lucy left. I'd say "quickly," except where could a lone woman go quickly in an alien society, with no money in her purse and an uncertain command of the language?

This I remember: Suddenly she was no longer there.

She died in her mid-thirties, at a place in Long Island where she'd taken a position as nurse to a family with many children. The American doctor did diagnose Lucy's illness: tuberculosis. Which must have been what her sisters had died of. Athena went to Long Island, packed Lucy's trunk, and shipped it back to her people in Constantinople. She did not describe the details of that day except to say that the people with whom Lucy had been living were "very kind" and loved Lucy.

I can only imagine what Mother felt as she packed her friend's trunk. Now she was alone in the strange country. She never complained about it until the day she died, but half a century later, when she described the event to me, I could feel the bitterness still in her voice.

She once told me that Lucy and she used to sing together. In all my memory, I can't remember hearing Athena sing.

With Lucy gone, Mother turned to me. We entered a secret life together, which Father never breached. That is where the conspiracy began.

CONSPIRACY? A word with criminal connotations. Do I mean what that word means? Of course not. But what would you call it?

Mother wanted to send me to the Montessori school. This had been

Lucy's idea, a gift in parting. I don't know how Mother convinced Father that it was worth the extra cost. Perhaps he was so busy, therefore so indifferent, that he let her have her way to silence her. Those were his big years, the mid-1920s. After a quarrel with his elder brother, Father was doing very well on his own. He had all his heft then and the confidence that a steady flow of money gives. The one education he did want me to have was religious. I can't explain this; he didn't go to church himself, but he insisted I attend a Catholic service every Sunday and once a week go to catechism school. At intervals I was asked to tell my sins to an invisible priest through a dark screen. I didn't have any sins to tell, so I'd make them up—I'd stolen a candy bar, I confessed. I couldn't just sit there in silence, could I? And masturbation I couldn't talk about.

In our tradition, children were, up to a point, a mother's concern. That point came when the son was expected to begin "learning the business." One of the first things I can remember my father saying to me was: "Who going support me my old age, my boy?" To which I'd answer, "I will, Pop, sure thing, Pop, don't worry, Pop." That was a pledge spoken out of fear, which I never made good on and never intended to. My mother had other ideas. So did I—although I didn't know what they were.

He'd turn to me in the evening. "What you been doing all day, my boy?" I'm sure it seemed to him that he'd been knocking himself out to get up the wherewithal, while the rest of us did nothing to help carry the load. It was during these years that he gave me a nickname: "Good-for-nothing." "Hey, Good-for-nothing, bring your bicycle here for God's sake, go down delicatessen, buy half-pound ham, half-pound tongue, I give these Jews coming play cards something to eat after I take their money."

I remember the cardplayers—dark, well-fed Jews for bridge; sawlow, tangle-haired Armenians for pinochle; black Irish from across the street for poker. I particularly remember one night when one of them, a Mr. Metzger, chose to compliment Father on his wife. I suppose the man thought it was his social duty, although most of the players barely acknowledged her presence in the house. I recall Father's response: "She's all right, minds her business." This angered me, but like all fez-wearers, I concealed my resentment.

While he napped on the sofa—"Wake me up, fifteen minutes sure"—Mother and I cleared the dining room, covered the table with a soft velvet cover, and placed four ashtrays around its circumference. While the cardplayers portioned out the chips or the pads and pencils, and cracked open the new packs of playing cards, Mother and I would do the dishes, she washing, I drying. The plates having been put away in the cupboard, we'd move to the living room, sit close together—the younger boys had gone to bed—and we'd read. I lived through the adventures of Tom Swift, then on to O. Henry and so to *Treasure Island* and *Les Misérables*. I can't remember what she read, only that she'd soon be asleep. I'd go to her and gently