

have been good-looking,"
 nically. "Me growing out of
 pants, a brace on my teeth."
 out you, Jane," Dan said.
 t long before Alice Shearer
 the conversation possessively
 long paths strange to Jane
 haps she was a little nervous.
 ne wasn't meaning anything
 Jane's—it was getting off on
 ot at the first family dinner,
 then Kirk was glancing her
 own puzzled.
 ok tired, dear," Mrs. Shearer

fifth time," Dan noted. Jane
 the least tired. That is, she
 ng at the airport.
 d into the kitchen to help
 with something of relief. He
 much about women, even
 ars of marriage. Perhaps it
 right for his mother to keep
 Jane's dress, with apologetic
 after she'd changed for din-
 dress had looked all right.
 Aunt Bella say something?
 ot, troubled.
 said once, "we must help to
 ne's visit a success. We—must
 "She was forcing her words.
 said.

hear Kirk's voice, and it
 clear and jubilant. He could
 low laugh, so perhaps things
 better. When he went back
 smiled at him.
 e now?" He sounded protec-
 d taken a protective stance,
 r her. If he could ease her
 gaiety of the ride home! She
 they were both so young. A
 ng came over him, looking
 room toward his mother.
 young," he wanted to say.
 nds me so much of Martha."
 oughed a little. "She's quiet."

Kirk's denial was
 t Jane, puzzled.
 you two children hop out
 Dan's smile felt cold.
 Jane's first evening! We
 a chance to talk or—" We
 ve all week to talk," Dan
 "This little girl has been sit-
 ne half the day, Mother. Go
 se her dancing."
 with mother for a while, and
 Kirk decided it that way.
 finally gone, and Dan got up
 nk I'll go out and look around
 ther," he said abruptly.
 much fun, sitting alone in a
 r. He had one drink, and lin-
 t a long time. He got up at
 was living downtown now,
 ed to her apartment house,
 n the other side of the street.
 d what had moved him to
 by Martha's house, slowly.
 ee days later. Dan took the
 car, and Kirk and Jane rode
 seat, going home. They'd
 p at the office again.
 voice was suddenly low and
 h feeling. "I wanted to—
 ything in the world I wanted
 doesn't like—"
 nitwit."
 t."

ever knew my own mother,
 t—" Jane's voice was lower.
 's it."
 hat, Kirk?" It was a mere
 et waiting.
 dor. "m up to mine."
 to breathe, and his chest was
 ed his motor. "Go it, kid,"

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 pleased you, Mam.
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