

She was aware that she was not really thinking at all. Not yet. "Well, sit down, please," she said.

He waited until she was seated, and then he drew up a chair, facing her. He was so strangely, so dreadfully indifferent. A *black-mailer*, she thought. *This is blackmail.*

"My daughter ——" she said. "There's hing in her letters ——"

Would you like to see one?" He took a pigskin wallet out of an inside pocket, drew out a sheaf of folded papers, selected one and handed it to her.

Ted: I just wasn't alive until I met you. But you came like a fresh wind blowing through a stuffy room. I don't know if I can make up my mind to do what you asked yesterday. But just the fact that you *did* ask, and that you thought I had the courage to take such a chance, makes me feel proud.

Ted, I'm thinking about it. I'm not sentimental; you know that. But just the same, it is hard to break entirely with the past, and go against everything you were taught.

See you Friday, and maybe by that time I'll have made up my mind. BEATRICE.

"That doesn't mean anything," said Lucia. "She's only a child."

"It looks like something," he said, and held out his hand for the letter.

"No!" she said, putting it behind her. "I shan't give it to you. I—the police will make you give me those letters."

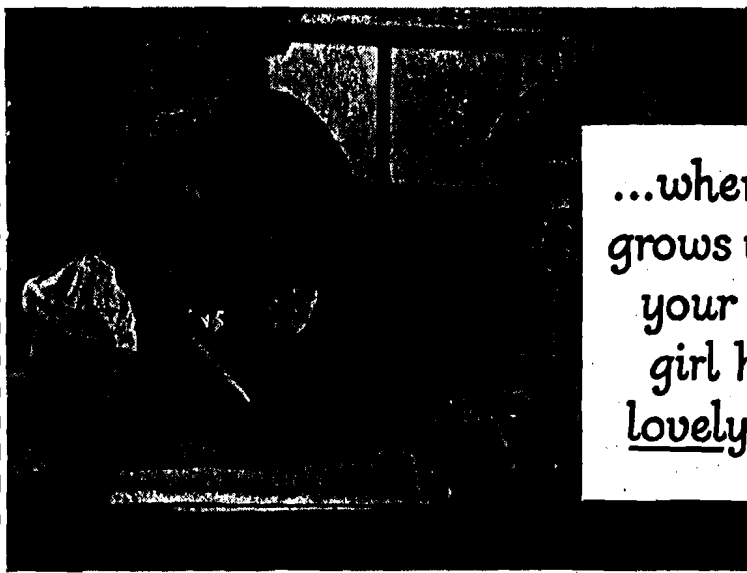
He didn't bother to answer that. He sat leaning forward a little, holding the wallet open on his knee. Simply waiting.

"I'm going to put this in my lawyer's hands," she said.

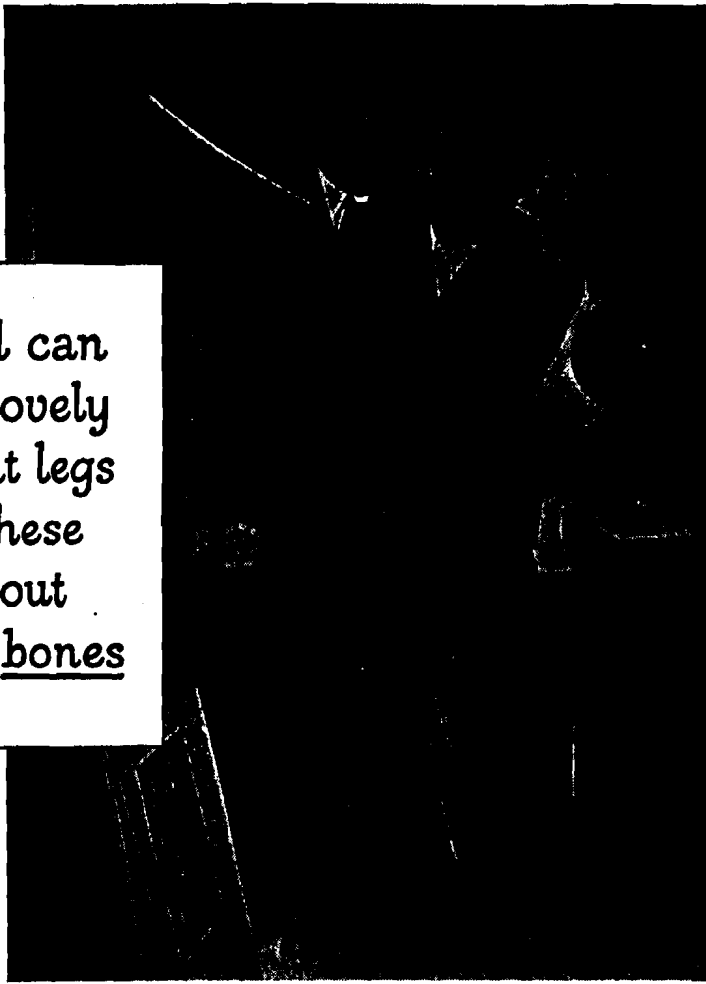
"Why do you not pay the money and forget all about it?" asked Donnelly.

"There's nothing else you can do at all."

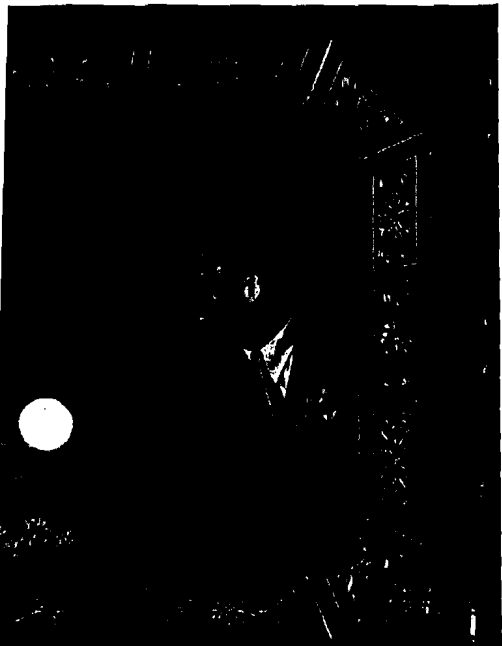
"No!" said Lucia. "I wouldn't pay black-mail. Never!"



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