

THE EVERLASTING SIPPERS

I sip the coffee almost stealthily, while I wait.

Within my purview, the receptionist drinks something.

“Liz, darling!” the receptionist exclaims when she looks up. She says, “Would like something more to drink while you wait?”

In my mind, there isn’t anything in my mind until I know that I want more coffee with milk.

“Do you want more—” the receptionist asks, “coffee?” The receptionist is drinking something.

Mrs. Fox enters, drinking something. Mrs. Fox’s bright blue dress, her vibrant voice, when she says to me, “Liz, darling!” add drama to her appearance.

“You want this?” the receptionist is waving a carafe of coffee at both of us. The receptionist’s face is small and round. She seems to have a nervous tic in one eye, squints it unexpectedly several times. She is the most faithful picture of tenderness I can call forth.

At length I rise, saying, “I see nothing against that.”

That night, after I bathe, I put on my sumptuous robe, brocade. I spoon raspberry sherbet into my mouth with a sherbet spoon. I drink wine from a fine glass. I take a piece of fruit in my hand, not to eat it, to gaze lovingly at it! It is made of stone. There is no problem here with this pattern of reality. There should be no additional people here at all, doing things, causing problems, that are then solved.