

things. With writing I can overcome everything. I'm prey to no one. I dare more when I'm writing. My life has balance . . . I don't try to do anything but entertain . . . I don't try to present a picture of life . . . If there is a message it is to make life as it comes. Life can be ordered because look at me, I am ordering it through this story, even if I have to live in a dream world to do it . . . Creation is not a random butterfly flight. New art is anarchic. Traditional art is reinforcing to the culture. Art is not concerned with morals, only with faith. Art believes in the world and in man. It is a statement of hope, however disguised . . . I'm still learning how to write. I really have a lot of things wrong in my thinking abt stories but I've been coming to my senses for thirty years, no reason I should stop now . . . (from A Diary of Women, Della, "A Sequel to Monique," and letters to the editor)

Not to Worry

The terrace was in utter darkness but at every flash of lightning the harmonious figure of a woman was revealed, illuminated by a bluish light.

From the garden came the sound of rain hitting the earth, and the scent of wet roses somewhere in the blackness. Wet rose bushes and wet roses. No telling what was out there.

"Not to worry," she said.

She put a reassuring arm around my shoulders. "No telling what's out there," I said. "Maybe crocodiles."

"Not to worry."

She put a reassuring arm around my shoulders. I was having a nervous breakdown. Not to worry, she kept repeating with every flash of lightning. Her arms exerted a gentle pressure that I loved. Many women had put their arms around my shoulders.

I turned and buried myself in the woman's arms, still standing there next to me in the dark. I thought she was a childhood sweetheart. I was having a nervous breakdown. I used to bury myself in Jane Allen's wonderful girth. Where was that Jane Allen now? If this were really Jane Allen she would be gray headed.

Edna May Oliver scurried through my mind, a flash from my frightened childhood, where the Bride of Frankenstein was born.

I was being held. It was rainy and dark.

I struggled in her arms. The lightning flashed and I saw her face, strong

and tender and affectionate. I gave up the struggle. She patted my head and pushed it down against her bosom.

How bizarre this life is, I thought. What am I doing in this woman's arms in the rain?

I was feeling sad and lonely and I was crying crocodile tears into her bosom. She didn't appear to notice. If they had been real crocodiles she would have.

At that moment I became aware that one of them was moving fast through the garden and I heard it slithering up the terrace steps. I broke away in a run.

I ran into a stone pillar. Amidst the stars, I felt her hand in mine, and I grasped it. I followed her into the house.

One of the nurses came up to us. "Where have you been? What have you been doing out there?"

My bodyguard took a swing at her, and laid her out on the floor.

I went to bed. "Not to worry," I said to myself and fell asleep.