

SAMMY. You certainly look nice. That's a very beautiful dress.  
FLIRT. Isn't it cute! I helped her pick it out. (*Cora quietly takes hold of Flirt's arm and prevents her from taking over*) Ouch!

SAMMY. Gee! I didn't expect you to be . . . like you are. I mean . . . well, Punky told me you were a friend of Flirt's so I just naturally thought you'd be . . . well, kind of like Flirt is. Although Flirt is a very nice girl. I didn't mean to imply anything against her. But . . . you're very nice, too, in a different way.

REENIE. (*Still a little distrustful*) Thank you . . .

SAMMY. Would you call me *Sammy*?

REENIE. Sammy.

SAMMY. And may I call you Reenie?

REENIE. I guess so.

SAMMY. It's awfully nice of you to let me take you to the party. I know just how a girl feels, going out with some crazy guy she doesn't even know.

REENIE. Oh . . . that's all right. After all, you don't know anything about me, either.

SAMMY. You know, I've never been to many parties, have you?

REENIE. Not many.

SAMMY. I always worry that maybe people aren't going to like me when I go to a party. Isn't that crazy? Do you ever get kind of a sick feeling in the pit of your stomach when you dread things? Gee, I wouldn't want to miss a party for anything. But every time I go to one, I have to reason with myself to keep from feeling that the whole world's against me. See, I've spent almost my whole life in military academies. My mother doesn't have a place for me, where she lives. She . . . she just doesn't know what else to do with me. But you mustn't misunderstand about my mother. She's really a very lovely person. I guess every boy thinks his mother is very beautiful, but my mother really is. She tells me in every letter she writes how sorry she is that we can't be together more, but she has to think of her work. One time we were together, though. She met me in San Francisco once, and we were together for two whole days. Just like we were sweethearts. It was the most wonderful time I ever had. And then I had to go back to the old military academy. Every time I walk into the barracks, I get kind of a depressed feeling. It's got hard stone walls. Pictures of generals

hanging all over . . . oh, they're very fine gentlemen, but they all look so kind of hard-boiled and stern . . . you know what I mean. (*Cora and Lottie stand together, listening to Sammy's speech with motherly expressions. Flirt is bored, Punky is half asleep, and gives now a sudden, audible yawn that startles everyone*) Well, gee! I guess I've bored you enough, telling you about myself.

CORA and LOTTIE. Oh, no. You haven't either.

FLIRT. (*Impatient to get to the party*) Come on, kids. Let's hurry.

SAMMY. (*Tenderly to Reenie*) Are you ready?

CORA. (*As though fearing Reenie might bolt and run*) Reenie?

REENIE. Yes.

SAMMY. May I help you into your wrap? (*The word wrap is a false glorification of her Sunday coat, which he offers her, helping her into it*)

REENIE. Thank you.

CORA. (*Whispering to Lottie*) I wish I could have bought her one of those little fur jackets like Flirt is wearing.

FLIRT. Stand up straight, Punky, and say good night to everyone. (*Punky tries again, but remains inarticulate*)

CORA. (*Assuming that Punky said good night*) Good night, Punky. Tell your mother hello for me.

FLIRT. Very pleased to have met you, Mr. and Mrs. Lacey. Good night, Mrs. Flood.

CORA. Good night, Flirt.

LOTTIE and MORRIS. Good night.

SONNY. (*Pulling at Sammy's coat tails*) Do you have to go?

SAMMY. I'm afraid I do, Sonny.

SONNY. Can I go, too? Please? Can I go, too?

SAMMY. Gee, I don't know. (*He thinks a moment and then consults Flirt and Punky*) Hey, is there any reason Sonny can't come along? I promise to look after him. Think what a great time he'd have. (*Flirt and Punky look dubious*)

SONNY. (*Takes his welcome immediately for granted and dances about the room joyously*) Goody, goody! I'm going to the party. I'm going to the party.

REENIE. (*Running to Cora's side*) Mother, I'm not going if Sonny goes, too. Other girls don't have to be bothered by their little brothers.

