

ming in the blue sky, as if it said: You are the enigma!
Oh, I love Life!!

Courtesy of SK-Forlag, Randerup, Denmark

A Nightly Talk

PER JESPERSEN

Kimberley and Mairead were lying in their beds whispering. They were joining their class on a camp in the hills, far away from everything. They had been here for two days and had really enjoyed it. The wild nature with woods, shrubs, and brooks — it was like a fairy tale, as they were only used to city life with busy streets, polluted air, and thousands of houses.

The two girls had been friends for years and talked with each other about everything. It was midnight, everybody was asleep, but they still had a lot to tell each other.

"Why do we whisper," said Mairead.

"Don't know. Because it's dark, I guess."

"So you're afraid that the darkness should hear us?"

"Nonsense," said Kimberley. "Let's talk, then. You love David, don't you?"

"Sure. How do you know?"

"Your eyes," Kimberley laughed. "They tell everything."

"So do yours," answered Mairead. "Why do you love him?"

"He's just gorgeous, isn't he. But, honest — I love him more here on this camp."

"So do I."

"Strange, isn't it. He's only eleven."

"And we?"

"Oh, we're old people," laughed Kimberley. "Imagine — we're twelve!"

They both laughed. Then Kimberley continued, "I know why we love him. I think, it's because we feel pity for him."

"You're right. His father is dead. His big brother is simply tyrannizing him. He's too soft."

"That's what I like. Look at his eyes. You see the softness there. A boy with softness! Oh God, I love him!"

"Is pity and softness the same?" Mairead wondered.

"Maybe. I don't know, really! Listen. I've got it! Pity is

the basis of love. You can't love anybody if you don't pity them."

"I don't wanna be loved that way!"

"Yes you do! It's the only way. Pity and love are so close. If you don't pity you don't care, and we do have to care — about everything. Take this beautiful nature here! Nature — I pity it, which means that I love it, which makes me do a lot of things to protect it. Don't you see?"

"Sure. But all love is not based on pity, is it?"

"I think so." Kimberley did not whisper anymore. She was so eager, that she almost shouted. "We have to be conscious of ourselves. That's very important. We must know our own limits — the boundaries of our knowledge — the boundaries of our feelings. The only way is to meet ... I don't know what to call it ... to feel hostility"

"What?? You don't know what you're saying!"

"I do know. When we feel hostile to something, we're distressed, because we don't like it. We get so frail in our minds, that we try everything to get out of this feeling. But the distress makes us see our limits, and it makes us pity ourselves. So in this way we meet the pity — we can now pity other people, because we can pity ourselves. It's a mental uncertainty which teaches us to pity and to love. Don't you ever feel hostile to things?"

"I sure do. But I've never seen it that way. But you might be right. The distressed soul — the pity and the frail love! It's very beautiful!"

"But not easy. It's there all the time. You feel hostile and you do have to know, why this feeling is growing in you. It's the way to love."

"Marvellous!!"

"The universal love," said Kimberley. "The frail minds and the great love. In this way it can be nice to know your own limits, but it's sort of strange, that you do have to suffer for it. Anyway, that's the way it is!"

Mairead had tears in her eyes. "It's so beautiful. If you didn't suffer you wouldn't be able to love."

"Oh!" Kimberley sighed. "Oh God! When I see David tomorrow morning I'll kiss him!"

Mairead laughed. "I feel pity for him!!"

"No, you don't. You would envy me, and that's definitely not love!"

"No," said Mairead, still laughing. "It's suffering — and that's the way to love!"

The moon was shining over the house, and the shadows of the trees danced on the roof, trying to catch the two girls' thoughts.

Hostility and love, pity and love, suffering and love. Just think about it!!

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