

For two years following the death of Martha Minnis it was Mary Coulter who scrubbed and made sandwiches and polished floors for the five ladies of Mayfair Crescent, and she knew she was giving satisfaction from the fact that she was retained. Maids came and went, gardeners flourished and faded, but Mary Coulter continued steadfastly on her schedule. She was not praised, neither was she blamed, and in her little world, bounded on all sides by other women's houses and other women's affairs, no news certainly was good news. She would have loved to receive a word of appreciation—it would have lightened her load and rested her feet—but her employers were busy women, concerned with bridge and golf, trips abroad, and alterations in their houses, visits to specialists and dressmakers, variations in styles, and in blood-pressure, calories, vitamins and complexes, and they couldn't be expected to know that the dirt-destroying, quick-moving Mary might be craving a friendly word with them.

Another gray day in November came in with deep leaden clouds and a moaning wind, and Mary Coulter, rising from her bed with a throbbing headache, found she was too dizzy to stand. She went wretchedly back to bed and a panic seized her . . . She wondered if she were going to die like Martha Minnis. She looked around her plain little bare room. There was not a thing in it that seemed to coax her to live. And would she, like Martha, be heaped up with crimson roses when she could no longer see or smell them?

She sat up in bed, holding her head with both hands, and she decided to do something. . . . She reached for her writing pad and pen and began