"Sho saw what Rodney went through while you were away, I expect," Portia suggested.

"That, of course," said Rose. "And then—well, my going away like that, especially as she began to see what the idea was, must have seemed a sort of criticism on her own way of life, which she's every reason to feel perfectly satisfied with. And that, after she'd let herself get really fond of me, and had brought me up by hand—which is what she did that first season, must be pretty hard to forgive. She has forgiven me, of course. She's a dear. But we've—sort of got to begin again."

Portia wanted to know about all the others: that pretty Williamson woman, and a few more whose names she remembered.

Rose told her; showed a feverish interest in the rather indifferent topic just to bury the memory of the one that had failed so dismally. She described a dinner or two she had been to since her return, and told of the little triumph that had been made for her on the occasion of the Chicago opening of *Come On In.* Everybody had been there and the Crawfords had given a supper dance for her at the Blackstone afterward. And driving in the last nail, she told of the feeble little witticism old Mrs. Crawford had made apropos of her return—a remark whose tinge of malice was so mild that it was felt by all to constitute an official sanction of her social rehabilitation.

Portia honestly enjoyed all that, but Rose went back to the hotel feeling pretty blue. (They were stopping at the hotel. The twins alone, to say nothing of Miss French and herself, would have been too much for the modest confines of the bungalow.) She wished she could have a good long talk, to-night, with Rodney.

She had a sense of somebody, away up above all mundane affairs—not responsible for them, perhaps, but capable, at all events, of thoroughly taking them in—smiling at them all with a sort of ferocious cynicism. In the foreground of this impression were the good friends—the really good friends she had just been telling Portia about, who had taken her back