

Tryphena smiled at me. I thought a little.

"How long have you thought of this?" I asked at last.

Tryphena sobered down a trifle.

"Years and years," she said. "I'm crazy about babies—I just *love* 'em. Why, these years past I've cut the babies out of every magazine."

She smiled.

"I got the loveliest collection."

Again her hands fluttered.

"Oh," she said, "there's one—I had it framed so I can see it always! And there's another—in its tiny shirt—the little thing!"

Her voice trembled.

"Now," she said, "I got a real one."

"Where," I said, "is your baby's mother?"

Tryphena clouded over. Something dark and threatening seemed to emanate from her.

"She's dead," she said. "The baby's mine."

She rubbed a little while—kneading with two strong thumbs—in silence. When she looked up her face was wistful.

"She'll grow. . . ." Tryphena said.

Her voice was tender.

"Think—only think," she said, "a tiny, crumpled thing like that can grow a woman!"

Tryphena's clear, pale eyes met mine.

"And I can share my pension with her—when I'm old," Tryphena said. "I'll have Tryphosa."

"Who?" said I.

I never would have asked a silly thing like that but that my wits had gone wool-gathering. I was thinking—thinking.