

Bella

PS-12-15

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LOST IN YONKERS

JAY. Aren't we your nephews?

BELLA. Of course you are. My cousins, my nephews, my boys. Come here, give your Aunt Bella a kiss.

(She puts down her purse, pulls JAY and ARTY into her arms, and kisses them both.)

Let me look at you. You both got so much bigger. You're growing up so fast, it almost makes me cry... Where's your father? I haven't seen your father in so long...

(Calls out.) Eddie! It's Bella... Is he here?

ARTY. He's in there, talking to Grandma.

BELLA. *(Suddenly nervous.)* Oh, I'd better not disturb them... Did she ask for me?

JAY. Pop said her back was hurting. She wanted you to give her a back rub when you came in?

BELLA. Oh. Did you tell her I was here?

JAY. No. You just came in.

BELLA. Did you tell her where I went?

JAY. We didn't know where you went.

BELLA. Well, let's not tell her I'm here yet. Then we won't be able to visit.

(She takes off her sweater.)

Oh, you're both getting so handsome.

JAY. Thank you.

ARTY. Thank you, Aunt Bella.

BELLA. I bet I look much older to you two. Do I? The truth. Tell me.

JAY. I don't think so.

ARTY. No.

BELLA. I was hoping you'd say that. I'm thirty-five. And I don't even look it, do I?

JAY. No.

ARTY. Not to me.

BELLA. And how old are you boys now? About twenty?

ARTY. I'm thirteen and a half.



JAY. I'm fifteen and a half.

BELLA. Well, that adds up to about thirty-five. So we could be brother and sisters. Isn't that wonderful?

JAY. Yeah.

BELLA. Yeah... I just got back from the movies. I had the most wonderful time. I wish I knew you were here, we all could have gone.

JAY. What did you see?

BELLA. I don't know. I couldn't find the theater I was looking for, so I went to the one I found. But it was better than the picture I wanted to see. It was with Bette Davis and George Brent... Maybe we could all go again next week, if I can find the wrong theater again.

ARTY. Sure. I'd love to.

BELLA. Why don't you take your jackets off, you two? Look at you both perspiring.

ARTY. We're fine, we're cool in here with the fan.

BELLA. They had air conditioning at the movie house. I was actually cold. I felt so happy for the actors to be in an air-conditioned theater.

JAY. (*Looks at ARTY, then at BELLA.*) I don't think the actors feel it. They're just pictures on the screen.

BELLA. Well, I know that, silly. I meant they'd be happy to know that people who were watching their movies were nice and cool so we enjoyed the movie better.

JAY. Oh. Right. I bet they would.

BELLA. I bet I know what would make you two cool in a second. How about a big ice cream soda deluxe? With everything in it? Look at your faces lighting up. Come on. I'll make it for you downstairs.

JAY. I think we have to wait here. Pop'll be out in a second and he wants us to see Grandma.

BELLA. Well, I'll bring them up here. That's no trouble. What kind? Chocolate? Vanilla? Butter Pecan? What's your favorite, Arty?

ARTY. All of them.

BELLA. I can make that. With three different kinds of ice cream. I used to make one with *four* different kinds. They were selling like crazy, but we lost a fortune... How long ago did she ask for me?

JAY. Grandma? A couple of minutes ago.

BELLA. Did you tell her I was here?

JAY. No, we told Pop we saw you from the window. But maybe he didn't say anything to her.

BELLA. It doesn't make any difference. She heard my footsteps coming up the stairs.

ARTY. How? Isn't she partly deaf?

BELLA. Oh, sure. But the other part hears perfectly... What about a small sundae? Chocolate ice cream with hot-fudge sauce and some whipped cream and chopped walnuts? Are you going to say no to that, Arthur? I bet you can't. Say no. Let me hear you.

ARTY. (*Looks at JAY.*) It sounds like just a small one.

JAY. (*To BELLA.*) He can't. We're having dinner soon. It's just that Pop told us to wait.

BELLA. Oh, your father. He never takes anything from anybody. I couldn't even give your mother a cup of coffee... Did you know that? ...Where is she, anyway?

JAY. (*Looks confused.*) She's dead. Mom is dead.

BELLA. (*Looks confused a moment.*) Yes. I know... I mean where is she buried?

JAY. At Mount Israel Cemetery in the Bronx. You were at the funeral. Remember?

BELLA. You mean the first time?

JAY. What do you mean, the first time?

BELLA. When I came in the car. Not the bus.

ARTY. The bus?

BELLA. (*Thinks...*) No. No. I'm thinking of someone else. Sometimes my mind wanders. The kids in school used to say, "Hey, Bella. Lost and found called and said, 'Come get your brains.'" ...

(*She laughs.*)

...But I didn't think that was funny.

(The BOYS nod.)

I bet you miss Mom a lot, don't you? Don't you, Arty?

ARTY. Yeah. A lot.

BELLA. She was a lot like your father. Very independent. Stuck to her own family mostly.

(Lowers her voice.) She didn't get along too well with your grandmother. Nobody does. My sister, Gert, was once engaged to a man. She brought him over to meet Grandma. The next day he moved to Boston.

JAY. That's too bad.

BELLA. Don't tell Grandma I said that.

ARTY. I won't.

BELLA. You're both so shy. I used to be shy. Grandma didn't like me to talk too much... I had a lot of friends, but I didn't talk to them... It's a shame your mother couldn't have had more children... She didn't, did she?

JAY. No.

BELLA. No... Because it would be easier for you now that she's gone. Big families are important when you have trouble in your life. We were a big family... Me and your father and Louie and Gert... That was before Rose and Aaron died... Rose was just a baby but Aaron was almost twelve so I didn't know Rose as well as Aaron... You never knew them, did you?

JAY. I don't think we were born yet.

BELLA. No. I don't think so... My father died before I was born. But I wasn't sad about that.

JAY. That's good.

BELLA. Because I loved him so much. Did you know you could love somebody who died before you were born?

JAY. I guess so.

BELLA. Because I knew he would have taken care of me... Like your father takes care of you. You know what I mean?

JAY. I think so.