

Delia

DELIA. Maybe you can, but can I? I have to go on living here. I have to face my relations and worse than that, I have to face your father's family. The Whittingtons will want an explanation. I could

tell them what really happened, but they won't want to hear it. They won't want to hear the string of facts that tell the real story. I know those facts. I went to college too. That's where your father and I met. At a tea dance. They don't even have them anymore. Do you know what a tea dance is? See? You don't know. You don't know what fun you missed. Running through the arboretum to get back before curfew. Curfew! (*Delia laughs.*) That's a good one. Most kids don't know how to spell it, much less what it means. Sweaty palms and one good-night kiss, just before the doors of the dormitory are locked for the night. (*She continues on pleasantly distracted, drawn into the past.*) That's where we fell in love, your father and I, right in front of those big oak doors, and the earth moved. Did it ever move. We fell in love and the world went to war. I always thought there was a connection there. He took my breath away, standing there in his uniform, armed with a satchel. And off he went, dashing around the world, making it safe for democracy again. All of those exotic addresses on his love letters. I spent my hours waiting for the mail, biting my nails over coffee with all the other girls who were waiting ...

DELIA. ... waiting and wondering if they'd be attending a funeral rather than a wedding, when the war ended. If it ended. Living in limbo, aching for any message. And then it came. The news. The biggest news ever. The best. It's over. Life can go on. Peace and quiet and a shade tree to sit under when a baby makes three. Your father calls from six thousand miles away, wondering if I'm still ready to marry him or if he should just roam around the globe. Yes, yes, of course, I say, yes, I have no fingernails left. I need him. He arrives home to ticker tape and bride-to-be. Everybody's doing it. The whole world is getting married and having babies. In the greatest celebration of life I've ever seen on my own block. We ache for life, hoping to flood the world with innocent children, replacing the smell of death with baby powder.