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Sisters

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SISTERS

You won't believe what Steve did yesterday.

Steve who?

Steve Peanutbrain.

What?

He bought two porcupines and expected me to wear them as earrings.

So? Did you?

I did not. They weighed twenty pounds apiece and started moving. For starters.

Ralph the boinkologist last week invited a squirrel to breakfast in our house and fed it eggs and jelly at the table. I said what the hell was going on and Ralph said, "Hey, this guy went to the fifth grade." The squirrel looked up from the industry of chewing through a jelly pack and tipped his hat to me. Ralph had put a hat on him. He was the size of a small bear.

Maybe he *had* been to fifth grade.

That's what I'm thinking about then. I asked why Ralph didn't give the guy some jelly from the jar and he said he'd already been through that with the guy. The squirrel had found the jelly pack at a picnic and wanted to eat it and he wanted to open it himself. We watched him nibble around the jelly pack. He dropped it and retrieved it from the floor and was back in the chair with unbelievable quickness. His hat fell off and Ralph put it back on his head.

So all in all you had a better time of it than I did with Steve offering me porcupine earrings.

I guess I did.

When will it ever end?

What?

Life, I guess.

Has it begun?

I think it has.

Well if it has, it is going to end soon enough. We don't have much in the way of prospects. Our husbands are bringing rodents into the house for odd purposes. They arguably are not of sound mind.

We are with them, so we are not of sound mind either.

Would we be any worse off, really, had you strapped the porcupines to your head and had I had a bite with the squirrel at my own table?

I'd be worse off, you might have gotten away with it. I'd be in the hospital.

People must talk about us.

Yes. And tell me, do you want to hear what they have to say?

No.

Life can go on as it must as long as I do not have to listen to people *talk*.

Maybe this is what Steve and Ralph are onto. They aren't exactly out there soliciting the approbation of people or listening to them. Steve finds it funny that the Indians think they duped him.

What Indians?

The Indians who sold him the porcupine earrings, telling him apparently they were ceremonial headdress.

That's funny.

That's why he bought them, I think. I maybe overreacted.

I think you did.

Maybe you were a little short with the fifth-grade squirrel.

Maybe I was.

Maybe we owe some apologies.

I think we do. Let's have a cookout.

Steve's pretty mad.

We'll wear teddies, like a Hefner scene. Or I have this very sexy old-fashioned tan two-piece. Get the squirrel a case of jelly packs.

What do the porcupines eat?

Treated plywood, I think.

We have that.

I really don't like people, you know that?

We are sisters!

I will try a little P.T. plywood myself.

The Lord is my shepherd. Shall I want?

You shan't.

What do you mean, tan two-piece?

It's like flesh-colored. Hideous. Very sexy in 1959.

There is something so noble about cheap, bad clothing.

The whole business of being a refugee. What is more noble than that?

Are we refugees?

We are. We are armchair refugees, but still refugees.

We have refuged, or *been* refuged ... how does the word work?

I do not know. I only know that it is the club you want to be in, short of starving to death. If you are not in the club of the refugee then you are with the oppressors, the people who listen to themselves talk.

The people who dismiss your bathing suit as out of fashion.

Who scoff at squirrels to breakfast and porcupine earrings.

We better be careful. We have a narrow line to toe.

That we do, sister Yanniling. I feel a pop-tart hankering coming on.