

RUTH. Not if you were going to have it.  
BESSIE. You can have it.  
RUTH. I didn't really have time for a lunch.  
BESSIE. This is too far for you to come, Ruth. I don't think you should visit me again.  
RUTH. You visited me every day when I was in for my cure. It's nice for me to visit you.  
BESSIE. It's too hard on you.  
RUTH. It's such a lovely walk.  
BESSIE. Besides, you're needed at home now.  
RUTH. I wish we could do something about that garage door. I feel like the whole street knows my business.  
BESSIE. How is Dad?  
RUTH. Oh, he's fine.  
BESSIE. Does he miss me?  
RUTH. Well, I haven't actually told him you're gone.  
BESSIE. What?  
RUTH. I didn't know what to say.  
BESSIE. Doesn't he wonder where I am?  
RUTH. When he asks I say you're just in the other room busy with something. Then he falls asleep for a while and when he wakes up I say he just missed you.  
BESSIE. Ruth.  
RUTH. It would upset him.  
BESSIE. Who does he think that nurse is living with you?  
RUTH. Well, I pretend not to notice her.  
BESSIE. What do you mean?  
RUTH. If she comes in the room while I'm there I pretend she's not real. That she doesn't exist.  
BESSIE. Then what does Dad think?  
RUTH. I think he thinks he's hallucinating.  
BESSIE. What?  
RUTH. I never told him he was hallucinating. He came up with that himself. I didn't know what to do. I was going to try to tell him you were in the hospital and — and she walked in before I was ready so I didn't — I — I pretended she wasn't there.  
BESSIE. You have to tell him.

RUTH. But he's used to it now. The only time it seems to bother him is when she carries him to the bath. And I say oh, look Marvin, you're flying. Bessie will want to see this. And I go into the other room to get you.

BESSIE. He must think he's losing his mind.

RUTH. But it's better than telling him. You don't know. He would be so upset. He's still your father. What am I supposed to tell him? That his little girl is — ? How can I tell him? Then he'll really think he's losing his mind. He'll be so upset. It would be so upsetting to him. He's your father.

BESSIE. All right. All right.

RUTH. I wouldn't know what to say.

BESSIE. Tell him that I'm going to be fine and I'll be home soon and there's no reason to be upset.

RUTH. You want me to tell him?

BESSIE. Yes. Because there is no reason to be upset. I'm going to be fine, Ruth. I know I am.

RUTH. Nothing happens that God doesn't have a reason for.

BESSIE. I'm sure He does.

RUTH. He tries to teach us things. He tries to reach down and shake us out of our ignorance.

BESSIE. I'm sure that's it.

RUTH. I know He made me crippled for a reason. He wants me to learn something. It may be patience or it may be forbearance or it may be how to dress without standing up. He doesn't tell you what it is, you just have to learn it.

BESSIE. I don't think it's how to dress.

RUTH. Oh, it wouldn't surprise me. I often ask Him why I'm crippled. I also ask Him why he let Marvin buy this house down here to take care of me then struck Marvin with a stroke. Why? And then have him lose his colon to cancer. Why? And then lose the sight in one eye and the use of one kidney and yet keep a full head of hair. Why?

BESSIE. I don't know.

RUTH. But God knows. He has His reasons. And I'm not upset.

BESSIE. Then tell Dad his nurse is not a hallucination and