

401C. he had been a bit late for visiting me because he had stopped to change into one. My father was kind with me for saying that and he said to me in a very loud voice "Don't you get all snooty with me girl!" but by then the laughter had spread all round the ward and when my father looked around and realized that everyone was laughing at him and staring at his scouts uniform he quietened down a bit. Everyone thought that my father was a big joke but my mother was annoyed with me and told me that my father looked very smart in his scouts uniform but she sounded as if she was alarmed that she had not told my father herself that he looked an ass before he had left home with her. I told my mother that my fathers scout uniform was for a boy scouts meeting not for visiting a hospital and my Father chimed in that scouts were a universal organization and that to be smartly dressed in a public place gave them a good name. I told him that it was alright for scouts to be properly turned out at the right place and at the right time but if he could not bother to change to come and see his own daughter it did not look very good. He was furious and he asked me if I was not proud to see him in his uniform, I said no and he looked really puzzled and said that he was really surprised at me and that he thought I would have been thrilled to bits to see him in his scout uniform after all I had done for scouting. I told him that helping out twice at scout functions was not doing a lot for scouting and I would not have helped out if they had not been short of help as it was for little boys not me. My mother had been looking around at the other

402c visitors and the patients and she told my Father to shut up because it was not the place for a Scout uniform and she said that I was right. She was looking around at the other patients and she said in a rather alarmed voice that I looked shabby in my nightwear compared to the other patients and she remarked at all the flowers the other patients had. I had pulled the bedclothes up to cover myself well so that my Father did not see me in my nightdress but I knew that my clothes were shabby and that next time I would be sure to wear my dressing gown so that I could sit up more and still be modest. My mother and Father asked me if I wanted some flowers and my mother said that if I had any money they could go and get me some. I said no because I had very little money, just a few pence that I had not used on the telephone the night before, and even if I had more money I would not have spent it on flowers for myself but as she spoke a beautiful picture of the flowers they would buy me came into my head and I could not bear them to get me any. I could not bear such beautiful flowers to be brought into all that heat in the ward because I knew they would not last and more than that I could not bear to watch them fade and die as all cut flowers do. They seemed so beautiful that they reminded me of my beautiful daughter but they were also very fragile and the very thought that they would die so quickly in the heat sent fear and terror through my heart because I knew that my daughters chances were just as fragile. I impressed on my parents very firmly that under no circumstances

403C. were they to bring me any flowers at all and for some reason they agreed not to quite willingly. My mother produced some more fruit and a jar of honey and a bag of sugar incase the hospital would not allow me any. She said that she had had to sneak it into my Grandfather when he was in hospital when he was diabetic and she told me that she would not be surprised if I was diabetic too. I was quite used to the way my mother spoke and I told her that I was not diabetic. I said that if there was some medical reason why I should not have sugar then I would not touch it and my mother looked at me with disgust and said that I was not like her because if they told her not to have it, then she would have it and not tell them. My mother got out a book that she had brought from home called "God so loved the world" by Elizabeth Goudge and my knitting which she put in my locker. I gave her the nighty that I had just changed out of and asked her if she could wash it for me and bring it back. She asked me if it was the one that I had given birth in after all and when I told her that it was not the one both my parents looked annoyed about it. I felt disgusted that my father could show such an interest in a nightdress with blood on it and I was appalled that my parents could be so eager to get their hands on it. My mother leant towards me in her sickening way and asked me if I knew which ward I was in. I said "C3" and my mother said "no, Do you know its name?". When I said that I did not, she told me that it was Bellingham Ward and she said that it meant that the war in my life was over for me because she had gone to 'Bellingham' to work in the Gas works when the war was over. My Father told my mother quietly

404C. but furiously that she must not tell me that the war was OVER! He told her that she had got to keep pushing me on and on beyond what I could take and he said to her that if she wanted 'that baby' she must do it to me. I was used to the way my parents talked about the war and what they said did not worry me then although I did not want to listen to such rubbish when I was so worried about my baby. My mother kept on and on talking and she was eager for news of the baby which I could not tell her. She said that after she had left me in the afternoon, she had gone back into the office and had another long chat with those two 'nice' sisters. My mother said that she had told the Sisters that she was so worried about the baby that they had given her the telephone number of Great Ormond Street Hospital and my mother told me that she had already been on the telephone to the babys hospital and had a long talk with them. I felt panic rising inside me that it was all so unfair; my baby was mine and yet my parents had wasted no time at all in trying to prize us apart, in fact they seemed to have leapt at the opportunity handed to them because my baby was sick and I was weaker than expected. I would not be defeated and I told my parents for my that there was no need for them to telephone because I would see to all that sort of thing myself. My mother was really pleased with herself and she said that the hospital had told them that they could phone whenever they wanted to and moreover, the Doctors had asked them to go up there at 2 o'clock the next afternoon as they wanted to speak to them. I resolutely told my

405c. parents very firmly that they were not to go because it was only parents who should visit a premature baby and that when I was well enough I would go. My mother said that it was quite alright for them to go because they had made the arrangement with the hospital that they could go because the baby had no father. I said that as there was no father I counted for both mother and father and that under no circumstances were they to go to the hospital at all. My father sneered at me and said "How can you be a FATHER?" and my mother said that as far as Great Ormond Street thought, I did not count as the babys mother let alone the babys father and that they were taking responsibility for the baby because they were the next of kin. I laughed and said that there was no question of it and at that my mother looked afraid and said that they did not have to go to the hospital if I did not want them to and she asked me what the sister had told me about it all. I told her that she had just said to me that the baby had gone to Great Ormond Street because she had a blockage and that the Doctors were going to try to pass it through without an operation. When I said that my father became very spiteful and in the same voice that he had used when he was sadistically illtreating me as a child he said to me "Now just be careful what you are saying young girl, because it seems to me that these people here are trying to pull the wool over your eyes about whats going on because they are telling you one thing and us another and we've been told the truth by Great Ormond Street so You had better watch what they're telling you because what they've told you is not whats going on with that baby of yours at all". I felt as if I was going mad with

406 c. what they were saying and the despair
in my face must have shown. I
determinedly said that I believed what
I had been told by the Sister, but because
I was too helplessly weak to get up
out of that bed and walk into the
office and put my foot down, I had to let
my parents get away with what they
had said to me without finding
out what was really going on. I was
afraid that if I created a fuss the
nurses would give me an injection
to make me sleep or send me home
and either way that would give my
parents an extra advantage over
me because it would look as if
my parents were more in control of
the situation than I was. I knew that
I had to calmly maintain my dignity
and make it look as if it was me
who knew everything that was going
on. I did actually believe what the
sister had told me, although that
might have been because I was in
such a state of nervous exhaust-
ure that I just could not accept in
my mind that the people who were
looking after my baby could be
lying to me. I told my mother that
my parents were not to go to Great
Ormond Street at all and that the
Doctors were definitely going to try
to pass the blockage through
without an operation. My mother looked
puzzled and right in front of me
she turned round and said to my
Father that it was not what the
Sister had just told them and that
perhaps they did not want me to
know the truth. She seemed genuinely
puzzled and so did he, and then my
mother said to him that perhaps
the staff did not want me to know
the truth, because I was too ill to
know and they did not want to

407c. worry me. She told my father to look around at the other mothers because there was no one else as ill as I was. She told me to sit up properly like the other mothers but when I said that I did not want to because I was alright as I was, my father noticed my limp arms on the counterpane of the bed and he asked me if I could move them. I had noticed myself that my arms had become very limp since the last lot of tablets that I had been given had started taking effect and it felt to me as if the drugs were making my body useless rather than my mind sleepy because I was so determined to stay awake in order to see what my mother was doing. I knew that my arms had become terribly limp but I told my Father that my arms were perfectly alright. My Father completely ignored what I said and said to my mother gleefully "She CAN'T move them, she can't bloody move at all". My Mother and Father stared at my body lying awkwardly in the bed and I cringed as I saw smiles of sinister delight spread across their faces. They were looking at my weak body as if it had just dawned on them that I was not as strong as I was making out and they both seemed so relieved about it as if they were suddenly thinking to themselves that I was like a child again and not strong enough to resist them if they wanted to give me 'a damn good smacking' as my father had always called it when he had wanted to have his sadistic fun out of me as a child. My Father kept saying gleefully to my mother "We've done it, the luck of the Gods is on our side, the luck of the Gods is on our side". Then he said to my mother "She's got apoplexy, she's a bloody cripple!, That baby's ours" my

408 c. Father told my mother that "This is a piece of cake, just keep it up and that baby is ours" then my father bent down towards me in the bed which I hated and started talking to me very loudly so that the other patients and visitors could hear, but very simply as if I was stupid that if I did not know what was wrong with my baby then he and my mother could explain it to me simply so that I could understand and my mother kept saying to me that was not to worry that I had got myself into trouble AGAIN as she and my father could sort it all out for me and that they were going to carry this little bundle of trouble through life for me. I took no notice of them but I was beginning to feel worn out because I should not have had to deal with them when I was so tired.

My mother told me patronizingly that people in her church were praying for me, and then not to be outdone my father said that they were praying for me in his church too and that Mr. Auckland, the Vicar, would be coming to see me instead of them tomorrow afternoon because they could not make it. I felt panic rising inside me because I knew that many people in that church including the vicar were more on Norman and Mrs. Clark's side than mine and since his family were parishioners in that church, and only my father from our family was in the church of England as the rest of us had gone with my mother to the Roman Catholic Church, the people at St. Catherines Church and especially the vicar did not approve of us. They tended to think that such a nice boy as Norman had been unfortunate to get involved

409c, with someone like me from a family of 'Gypsies' as they called us. I did not want the Vicar involved and I did not want anyone from that church to go and tell Mrs. Clark that I had already had the baby especially since there was something wrong with my baby. I knew that Normans German blood ran thickly through his veins with the same cruel attitude that his Nazi father had once had and he for my believed that all damaged babies should be put to death at birth. He just did not believe that anyone handicapped should live and be a burden to the state and I knew that it would only take a doctor to give Norman an honest opinion about my babys chances and then he would make it his business to pull out plugs on respirators and so on as he had said that he would do if any child of his was born with anything wrong with it. He believed that he had a right to destroy anything that was not perfect and his motto was 'if its not whole, its not human' and so there was nothing wrong in killing it according to him. I knew that if he was spiteful enough to kill my baby he would be put away for life but I also knew that even if he was put into prison it could not give me my baby back and I wanted her so much. I knew that Norman was vindictive as well and that if he knew that it would really break my heart to loose my baby then he would see to it that it happened and that even if he went to prison for doing it he would take the satisfaction of knowing that he had hurt me as much as possible to prison with him. I was afraid of him and I wanted as few

410c people as possible to know that my baby was born and in another hospital incase the Clark family got to hear of it and went to the babys hospital while I was not there. I asked my father how Mr. Auckland knew and he proudly said that it had been St. Catherines Church Christmas Bazaar that afternoon and when he had got there he had walked in and announced it to everyone. I felt sick and I told him that I had asked that no one outside the family be told and he looked aghast. My mother was furious and said to him 'I told you not to tell them.' My Father looked genuinely upset and said to my Mother that he had thought it was HER who had not wanted them to know and that if he had realized it was ME who did not want them to know he would not have told them. I had known that if my Mother had been spiteful to my Father then it would only be a matter of time before he was spiteful back to her and now I knew what the piece of spite was that he had done back to my mother for having found out second hand from the neighbours that the baby had been born already. When my Mother had told him not to tell anyone at the church he had gone straight round and done it, and so he had already started off the very trouble that I did not want. I said that I did not want Mr. Auckland to come to the hospital because I had already seen the Catholic priest and did not want anyone else but my Father said very nicely that it was very nice of Mr. Auckland to come since I was not 'one of his flock' and if he came I could not be rude to him. I wanted to explain that I

411c. did not want men visiting me when I was sitting up in bed in my nightdress and that the Catholic priest with his gentle polite ways and his vow of chastity had been so different. I did not want Mr. Auckland coming or other people knowing but my Father just seemed to think that I had some very strange ideas and that I would get over them when I grew up a bit.

At that moment Janet our next door neighbour arrived. I was pleased to see her and I would have liked to see her alone for a quiet chat as we had a lot in common and she was so nice but my parents would not give us any chance to talk at all. They thought it was their right to be there the whole time and in charge of who came and saw me. They reminded me of people at a road accident who do not help but feel they have a right to stand and stare at the poor victim never mind the embarrassment it causes and they will not go on their way and mind their own business if they can not do anything to help. My brother and sister and Stellas friend Geraldine arrived next. They had been to the League of Friends shop and bought themselves some sweets with money my father had given them. When polite greetings had been exchanged my Father gave up his seat to Janet and Clive and Stella found themselves chairs. There were no chairs left after that as there were a lot of visitors in the ward because because it was the weekend so my Father tried to sit on my bed. I told my father to get off the bed because it was a hospital rule that visitors were not allowed to sit on a patients bed. I hoped that it was still a hospital rule that he should not sit on the bed because I could not bear him to be near the bed while I was in it. My father told me cheerfully that it was alright because nobody would see but I told him icily to get straight off the bed and he

412c. did it but he made a sneering face
and tut-tutted because he could
not understand why I was so fussy.
My father stood beside the end of the
bed and in the polite conversation that
followed Janet, our neighbour, who had
been in the same ward that I was in
when she had her son Iain, told me that
there was a television room upstairs
if I wanted to watch television if I got
bored. She said that they came round
with newspapers in the morning and
evening and that there were other
facilities to relieve the long hours
between visiting times if I had no
baby to look after but although
I thanked her politely I could not find
any spark of interest in myself for
anything like that because I was
too concerned about whether my
baby was alright. I was glad that
Janet had come to the hospital
because all the time that she was
there my parents left me alone and
they became almost normal but when
Janet mentioned the television my
father asked her if she had seen
Uri Geller on the television the
night before. There was a general
excitement about it and my mother
explained to me that Uri Geller was
a man on the television who could bend
metal. She said that he had been on the
television the night before and the
newspapers were full of him because
he had 'sent the whole of Britain Bending'.
My mother rambled on and on about
him and I just lay there listening politely
but with my mind far away with my
tiny baby in Great Ormond Street. The
way my family were talking made
me feel so alone because I wondered
how they could show such excitement
in a man who could bend metal when
my precious baby was so ill that she

413C might die. I felt as if I had come to the end of everything and still everyone around me chatted on and on about such rubbish and made so much noise and confusion that they were quite oblivious to my feelings. My mother asked me if I had seen the programme on the television and I tactfully reminded her that no, I wasn't watching television because I was having the baby at that time. I knew that my family were ignorant and that they couldn't see farther than the ends of their noses unless they had found some dishonest catch in something and then their wits became unusually perceptive but it was too unfeeling of them to ask me if I had been watching television at a time when I had suffered so much. When my mother realized that I might have had the baby at the same time the whole family thought it was marvellous. I asked them what time all that had happened with Uri Geller as if I was trying vaguely to show some interest in what they were talking about, and when they told me, I said that it was not the same time at all because my baby had been born later than that but my mother said that the time was near enough and the whole family thought it was a great joke. My mother went on to say that clocks all over Britain had started up or stopped at that moment and that even our kitchen clock had broken at exactly the same time. I remembered having sat in the quiet, warm kitchen before I had gone into hospital and of having listened to the steady homely tick of the clock on the mantelpiece and the last thing I wanted to hear was that the clock was now broken. A look of worry crossed my face but before I could say anything my mother chattered on and on.

414C. saying that it was alright now because my father had spent ages trying to mend it and that they were hoping that it was properly mended because they were not sure that it was keeping proper time because it had gone backwards at first and it was not only the clock that had broken because the glass had shattered too.

At the mention of the clock my brother innocently noticed his watch on my wrist and he asked me if he could have it back. My mother was furious that he had lent it to me and she asked if it was broken. I said no and I was aghast that they could expect everything that I touched to break when I had taken good care of it. My mother asked me where my own watch was and she said that she knew I had it on me when I went into hospital because it was not amongst my things at home because she had looked. She told my father that my own watch must have broken as if she knew all about it and expected that, and she said to my father "Nobody thought she would have two watches on!" My mother was beside herself with fury and she told me to keep to my own things but my father was delighted about it and he asked me if I had taken the watch off since Clive had lent it to me. I said that a woman had changed it from one wrist to another but apart from that I had not let it out of my sight, but then my heart sank as I realized what I had said. My father turned to my mother and told her that she was a fool and he asked her what she was worrying for about not getting hold of the

415C. nightdress that I had worn because the watch was better. My mother suddenly agreed with him in delight and I knew they wanted it for their witchcraft meetings. My father told me that I had got to give the watch back to my brother because it was not mine and when I handed it over I watched in dismay as my parents greedily took it away from him. My father promised my brother that he would go and buy him a new one that was smashproof and water proof and because my brother thought it sounded good and he did not know any better he let my father have the watch quite willingly. My father took charge of the watch and wrapped it in his clean handkerchief and put it in his pocket to take it home. He said to my mother "this Geller Chap is going to have another go tomorrow at lunchtime and then: 'SMASH'" as if he was telling her a secret that they both shared and I saw my mothers eyes greedily fixed on the baby in its cot beside the next bed as if a baby was the only thing she could think about. I felt concerned about what they were talking about and Janet our neighbour was puzzled. She said that if my watch was missing then my parents should do something about it because things did get lost or even stolen in hospitals but my mother was not concerned and she said that it was only a cheap one. She kept chatting on and on and saying that it was very exciting that a baby had been born in the family at the same time as this Uri Geller business but Janet looked concerned and said that it was strange if my baby had been born then because it had been on

416c. the news that the press were looking for a mother and a baby who had been born in a South London hospital because the dials on the machine that the woman in labour was wired up to had gone wild and she was just beginning to wonder if it was me. My mother said that it could not be me because the hospital was in South London and this was South-East London. Janet looked at my mother as if she was exasperated with her and she said to her that it was still South London because we did not live in North London and if you looked at London with the River Thames running through the middle of it we were on the South side. When my mother stopped to think about it she realized that we were in South London and then she turned and asked me how I would like to be on the television. She said that they might give me money for doing it and that if I was on the news and people knew that I was an unmarried mother with a baby and no husband, then they might send me money and things but I felt panic rising inside me that things were getting really out of hand because I had craved for quiet and privacy and on top of everything that I had been through there was now talk of the National Press getting involved. I told my mother furiously that there was no quicker way to let Norman and his family know that the baby had been born than to go on television and she laughed nervously and said that they would soon find out anyway. I told her that I knew they would do so sometime but that my baby was not actually due for another month and so if

417C. we all kept quiet then it would give us all more time especially since my baby was in Great Ormond Street because if the Clark family found that out they could go there and cause trouble. Janet looked alarmed and told my mother that if that was what I wanted then my mother should not have gone around telling everyone because it would not have hurt to keep it quiet and both my parents looked a bit worried as if they had done it on purpose but they had not given enough thought to the common sense behind what I had asked for. Then my mother seemed annoyed with me for being so sensible and she said that if she was me she would go on the television and let everybody know and then see the cash come rolling in but I was disgusted with her and I told her quietly and firmly that I did not want the press near me, or for anyone to know any of mine or my baby's medical details which that was, and that I would never accept money like that from anyone, which annoyed my mother because she told me that I never made the most of opportunities that offered themselves to me.

A look of sheer exhaustion passed over me as if I had gone a long way past the depths of human endurance and I was just carrying on and on and on not knowing when to stop. The whole delivery had been far more than most women have to go through and the mental pain had just gone on and on, and yet I was still not even getting a fraction of the concern and consideration that most mothers of a new born baby are shown. My family and even the nursing staff treated me as if I had no baby and so motherhood had

418c not happened to me. Janet asked my mother if I was quite alright because she was looking at my face and she told my mother that I looked seriously ill. My mother reassured her that I was fine, and that it was the baby who was seriously ill. Janet said that she knew that but she said that she thought that something was wrong with me as well. She said that I looked much worse than I should be and she said that she had not been that bad at all when she had had her baby Iain. Janet said that she wondered if something had happened to me because she thought I looked as if something had gone very wrong indeed with me on the labour ward. She asked my mother if she was sure that everything had gone alright with me the night before because after all I had not had anyone with me. Janet said that the Doctors would not tell them about it if something had gone wrong unless they asked the Doctors specifically. Janet told my mother that she and my Father ought to speak to the Doctors and ask what was going on, but my Mother just laughed it off and said that they had already had long talks with the Sisters on the ward and with the Doctors at Great Ormond Street Hospital on the telephone. my mother said that the Sisters had said that I was under heavy sedation and that I was just as well as could be expected for me. I had no idea that I was heavily sedated as my mind was so clear but the drugs that I was being given seemed to be wrecking my body and taking all my strength away.

419 C. AS I listened to what my mother was telling Janet it sounded as if my mother was really telling Janet to mind her own business and not to interfere and that she and my father would deal with everything themselves. Janet was too polite to argue or interfere but what she said did make my mother look at me and see that I was not only weak but hot and sweaty. My mother asked me if I had flu and told Janet that a lot of people had flu in November but Janet said that if I had got flu after having a baby the nurses should be taking better care of me than they were. Janet said that from the look of me she thought I ought to be in the small intensive care unit that they had got in the hospital not in the ward with no attention and both my parents began to look a bit guilty and say that perhaps she was right. Janets kindness was so different from the nurses attitude that it was all my own fault that everything had gone wrong but I did not really think I needed more attention because all I needed was peace and quiet and for my baby to live. Janet said that she thought I had too many visitors round me and she said that she would not have come herself if she had realized that I was so ill. By now both my parents were listening to her because it did not take much to make them see sense but they would never have given it a thought for themselves before. Janet said that just one person to sit with me was enough and that I needed rest and quiet and perhaps I did not want to talk. My mother still did not understand properly and she turned to me and asked me loudly if I wanted Janet to take my brother and sister (who were hardly making a fraction of the noise that my mother was making) off home so that she and my

420c. Father could sit beside me and talk even if I did not want to say anything. I said that I would rather Janet stayed and that everyone else went home which annoyed my father because he always thought that he had a right to see anyone in bed and watch what was going on but my mother quickly asked me if I had something to say to Janet in private. She told Janet that the Sister in the special care unit wanted to know if I 'confessed' that I had done anything to try to get rid of the baby. She told Janet that the Sister had given her time to be alone with me that morning to see if I would tell her anything because she was my mother but I had not told her anything. My mother told Janet that if I told her anything that I did not want anyone to know then the nursing staff must be told at once because it was important for the babys sake that the hospital should know everything. Janet looked shocked and told my mother that I was not the type of person to do that sort of thing. I was shocked as well because I had wondered what the sister had wanted to know about in the special care unit because she had not told me what it was that she was asking about and she did seem to have sent my mother into the room ahead of her to ask me something. I quickly said that of course nothing like that had happened and that I had nothing to say to anyone in private. I said that Janet was my friend and that she was quiet and so I would not mind her staying to talk to me but that I had seen the rest of the family once that day and that I had asked them not to come again. I ignored the fact that I had not seen my father that day because as far

421C. as I was concerned he should not have come at all anyway but I saw my mother look at my father's ridiculous scouts uniform and then she looked guilty and said that visiting time was nearly over and that they were not coming the next afternoon anyway. She asked me if I had got a headache and before I could answer her that I had not she was carrying on talking to Janet and telling her that she had never had a headache after she had just had any of her children but Janet only looked at her and said nothing as if she was exasperated that my mother was so blind to my feelings.

At last the bell went for the end of visiting and they all went off. Almost as soon as my visitors had gone several nurses in a group came and asked me if I was in the 'girl scouts' as they had seen a scout leader come to visit me and they needed to know what I did in my spare time for the baby's social report! Panic rose inside me because I had known that my father's inconsiderateness would cause the nurses to get the wrong impression about me and the fact that I had just been told that it could have formed part of the assessment of whether I was fit to be my baby's mother or not was so unfair because I could not help what clothes visitors, that I did not want to see turned up in. I calmly smiled at the nurses and told them that the Scout leader was my father and that he had called in to see me on his way to a scouts meeting (infact he was supposed to be going to something that the church was holding after that afternoon's Christmas bazaar at which the scouts had run one of the stalls.). I told the nurses that I was too old to be in the girl GUIDES' and that I never had anything to do with my father or his scouting.

422c. One of the nurses said nastily that I was not too old to be in the girl guides and she asked me why the Scout leader had saluted at me if I had no connection with that sort of thing. I said that my father was a bit of a joke and the patient on my left said to the nurses very nicely for me that I had been cross with that man that he had come dressed like that. The nurses seemed to believe me a bit and they went off and left me alone.

When all the visitors had gone and the ward was clear of men I got myself up, collected my washing things from my locker and went off to the loo. My legs were worse to walk on than ever because I just could not feel them at all and I had to walk slowly and sedately incase I fell right over. Even so I swayed about a lot and I felt ashamed of anyone seeing me. I was tired and I wished that visiting time had not lasted so long because an hour and a half of my parents had been a very long time. I had felt that I had needed to go to the loo during visiting time but I would never have got out of bed with men around and so I had just had to wait. It was not only my father and brother that mattered because even if they had gone I would still not have got out of bed until every man who was visiting other patients had been removed from the ward because I just did not think that it was ladylike and I would not change my ways for anything. In the toilets I felt very weak and as I sat down heavily on the toilet I suddenly felt as if I was going to give birth to another baby and just as I had done the night before I became

423c. completely unable to move. I thought that I was passing something about a third of the size of the baby that I had delivered the night before and I wondered what on earth it was. It passed too quickly for me to move to catch it and it fell heavily into the toilet. As soon as I could move I stood up to look and see what it was and there in the toilet pan was a huge clot of thick blood about four inches by six inches and oval in its solid shape. It was covered all over in hundreds and hundreds of half inch filaments of what looked like red 'Spirogyra': the green plant stuff that grows in ponds. I stood there looking at it and I saw that inside it was a baby boy, like a huge humpty dumpty and he had been very dead for a very, very long time. I stood there for what turned out to be ages but at the time I was not aware of any time passing at all as time and I stood frozen in absolute numb shock. When thoughts began to stir in my brain again, all I could think of in one moment of complete irrationality was a picture in my head of all the Doctors and people who had crowded into the delivery room the night before and taken my live baby girl away from me and not looked after her properly as I had trusted them to and that here, alone, safely closed in the privacy of a toilet, this poor dead scrap of a human being who must have died months before, was my son. He was all that I had left that no one else had touched and taken away from me and even though he was very dead and awful looking, he was mine and no one else was going to have this baby. If there had been a scrap of hope for it to live I would have pulled it out of the toilet and rushed out to the ward calling

424C. for the nurses to bring a respirator to try to save it but it was a very dead three month foetus and it had been dead a very long time. I knew that the doctors would only dissect it or something and I could not bear it to be hurt even more. Without even thinking what I was doing I became desperate to hide him and as if I was in a dream I put my hand up and mumbled in a sort of demented way "David Christian" which was what I would have called him and I took hold of the toilet chain and pulled it. Somehow in a demented sort of way I had a vague sort of feeling that I was 'cleaning' him by putting the pouring water over him and when the flush of the toilet had finished I did not expect him to be gone. I thought he was too big to flush away because he was too big but when the water had subsided I found myself leaning very heavily with my back against the side of the toilet wall and staring at a clean empty toilet pan. My David Christian was gone and because I thought that the water in the toilet flushed out to the sewer and the sewer emptied into the sea I felt that he was safe now because he had gone out to sea like Tom and the water babies. I don't know how long I stayed there for but I can remember other patients coming into the toilets and using the other toilet next to the one that I was in and I heard one woman saying that someone must be in the toilet that I was in but I did not say anything because I just stood mutely leaning against the wall of the toilet and staring at the opposite wall

425C. of the little toilet that I was locked in. When everyone had gone, the silence brought me out of the toilet and I washed my hands and stared at my deathly white face in the mirror above the hand wash basin. Then I started the long and difficult walk back to my bed. I was desperately weak and I bent right over as I walked and as I went along my heart was beating loudly and unsteadily in my chest. As I got to my bed I saw a nurse who was two beds further down the ward beyond a glass partition taking a patient's temperature but I could not get to her because she was too far away because the distance of walking down to that nurse seemed like walking for miles. I knew that I needed a nurse but I could not stand up long enough to get one nor could I call to her because I just did not seem to be able to put into words what I needed to say. I pulled down the coverlet of my bed enough to be able to get into bed but it seemed as if I was lifting a dead weight when I tried to pull the coverlet down. I got into the bed but I just lay there in an awkward position because I was so weak that I could not even move to get comfortable. Mrs. Carter in the next bed asked me if I was alright and without my brain even having to function to think of the words to reply with I said 'yes thank you' as if I was some kind of machine that gave out automatic replies to people. I hardly knew what I was saying and it seemed to me as if even though I knew that I had just been through one of the worst moments of my life I was registering no feelings about it as if my brain had completely switched itself off rather than react

426C. to something that would have sent so many emotions running through me that it would have blown every fuse in my mind. Somehow it was as if a bomb could have exploded and I would still have sat in the middle of all the wreckage and politely said that I was 'quite alright' to anyone who asked me that and I would not have given a thought to the fact that I was sitting in the middle of total wreckage with all my limbs blown off and that I was quite unable to stand up let alone stand on my own two feet. Mrs. Carter took no notice of my polite 'yes, thank you,' and on the insistence of the patient in the opposite bed she went to ask the nurse who was taking temperatures and who had not seen me come out of the toilets and get into bed, if she could come to see me. The nurse was annoyed when she heard that it was me who needed her and without even looking in my direction she said that she would be along in a minute. When she had taken the blood pressure of the patient who she was seeing to, the nurse came along to my bed and asked me what it was that I wanted. I struggled and struggled with my mouth to say something because I knew that something very terrible had just happened to me but my mind was completely blank of what it was. I knew where I was, who I was and what I was doing but it seemed as if my mind had just completely blotted out the memory of what had happened to me and I seemed to have great difficulty in speaking, partly because I could not think of what to say and partly

427C because it cost so much effort to move my mouth to speak the words. I just lay there obviously struggling to know what to say to the nurse and in a moment of despair I said to her "I don't know" to which she replied very nastily "I didn't think so" and she just walked off. When the nurse arrived at my bed some minutes later as part of her temperature round, she took my pulse and blood pressure without speaking to me and then she went to get a sister quickly to check it. I was too submissive and afraid of them to ask what it was that was the matter but there must have been some concern over it as she went straight down to the office to phone the doctors. Within minutes she came back and told the nurse that they would not come and they had just told her to tell me that I could go home if I wanted to. She came to the side of my bed and told me that I could go home in the morning as if she was certain that it was only being in hospital that was worrying me and that to tell me that I could soon go home was the one thing that would reassure me and make me feel better. It was the last thing that I wanted to hear and it struck terror in my heart at the thought of being separated from my baby, but I said nothing and I just lay there too ill to be bothered and worried sick about my baby girl. The Sister quickly went away back to the office and at about nine o'clock the Sister from the premature baby Unit came down to see me. I was very glad to see her as she seemed to be one of the few people who was on my side. She repeated what the Pupil midwife had said to me about my baby having arrived safely at

428c. Great Ormond Street and that the doctors were doing tests on her. She spoke to me as if she was not allowed to tell me anymore herself, and she told me that I really ought to telephone Great Ormond Street myself to ask exactly what was going on. She seemed to be urging me to do it and she told me where the telephones were and she would even have lent me the money for the telephone call. She told me that no one would tell me anything that I did not ask but I could not see what she meant because they had told me all about the tests that they were going to do at Great Ormond Street and that the doctors were going to try to pass the blockage through without an operation so I was quite satisfied about that but I lay there thinking about what the Sister had said and wondering how on earth I could get it across to her that I could not possibly telephone Great Ormond Street because I just could not talk properly. My fingers were so numb that I could not have dialled the number and even if I had got through to them, I just could not have spoken. I was in such a desperate state of shock and worry about my baby that I just could not ask because I could not speak. I had lost my speech but I could not even find the words to explain that and I just kept on struggling to find the words to explain the agony that was locked in my mind but I could only seem to come up with the words, I just said yes or no to everything she asked me. If I could not have held a conversation with the Sister and

429c. got across to her what I wanted to say even though she was sitting right beside me, I could hardly have made myself understood on a telephone line to a hospital miles away. When I got through on the telephone all they would have heard was silence on the other end of the line as I struggled for words to say and if they had not done the obvious thing and put the telephone down thinking that it was a dead line, but had listened for a very long time the only sound they might have heard was me crying because I could not speak. I was so afraid to ask the people who had got my baby, how she was that it was as if I was struck dumb even though I desperately wanted to know. The Sister carried on talking she asked told me that I knew best and that if I did not want to ask about it then it was up to me. She asked me if I was still going to keep my baby and I said 'yes' very firmly and I felt puzzled that she could ask me that. I felt really ill and pictures were creeping back into my mind of what I had just seen in the toilet and I wanted to tell the Sister who was sitting beside me because I knew that she could help me but I just could not say anything to her. I could not think of what to say and even if I had been able to tell her there were terrifying pictures going through my mind of all the people who had crowded around me in that delivery room along with all their noise and confusion and I knew that if I told her that I had just had another baby then she would have to get all those Doctors back again and I knew that I was just not mentally capable of standing that humili -

430c ation all over again. I could not stand even one more episode of the mental ordeal of even one more Doctor coming to examine me with a nurse watching it all because it was all too much and I really and truly could not bear it. So I could not say anything to the sister for fear of all those people coming back and also because I did not have enough energy to start the impossible task of trying to tell her WH7 I did not want all those people to come back around me.

I was vaguely aware of the Sister asking the questions about if I was going to breast feed my baby or not and that I was still trying to be polite by mumbling yes and no where it seemed appropriate. The Sister mentioned my family and she seemed more interested in my brother than in anyone else. She said that my brother had been very concerned that I would be alright getting back to the ward from the special care baby unit and that she liked the way he had said to her that he would look after me in the lift. I agreed with her that my brother could be very kind when he wanted to and I told the sister sadly but proudly that I had practically brought my brother and sister up. The sister said that she could well imagine that I had. She asked me if my brother and I were 'very close' and when I said 'yes' because I knew that I spent a lot of time and energy looking after him, she lowered her eyes as if she did not want to say what she had to and

431C she asked me if my babys father and I were 'very closely' related, and then if it was my brother who was my babys father. I was horrified and said no because it was so unthinkable that I could have slept with my younger brother. Norman had been nine years older than I was and very much a man. He had been what was considered locally as a 'very good catch' but even so I had not thought that he was good enough for me because I wanted to be a nun and only God himself was good enough for me to marry, and so what the Sister was suggesting about my little brother was revolting. The Sister explained to me that sometimes babies were born with congenital abnormalities when the parents were too closely related and that if that was so in my case then Great Ormond Street would like to know about it. She told me that what I said to her would be in confidence and that she could not promise, but she did not think that Great Ormond Street would go as far as to tell the police about it. I told her that there was no question that anything like that had happened and I felt utterly sickened by what people must be thinking. The Sister seemed a bit put out that I was not saying what she seemed to have expected me to say but I was perfectly right in what I had said to her and there was nothing else that I could have said to her. She carried on talking to me and saying that people were very broad minded these days, but I was taking no interest in what she was saying and her constant talking was making me feel that

432c I was getting beyond caring about listening to what people were saying to me and that I was beginning to feel very ill. The Sister suddenly paused quietly in mid sentence and said no more. A look of horror crossed her face and she quickly and gently took my pulse. Noiselessly she quickly got up and pulling the sheets gently up to keep me warmer she quietly pushed her chair under my bed and went quickly down the ward to the office. Moments later a Sister came up the ward to my bed and checked my pulse and blood pressure. She seemed to be trying to reassure me and she repeated what she had said to me earlier that I could go home as soon as I could, even though that was the last thing that I wanted to hear as the thought of not being at the hospital when my baby came back terrified me. The Sister said that the night nurses would give me something to make me sleep in a moment but when they came round with the white drug trolley the nurses were annoyed when I politely refused the two sleeping tablets they offered me. They just did not seem to realize how weak I was and I felt that my body was just not physically capable of taking any more drugs than they gave me. I was so weak and so desperately tired that if I took them they would knock me out so much that I just would not wake up at all. I said very rationally that I was very tired and that I could go off to sleep straight away by myself, which was quite true. One of the nurses said to the other one that they could not force them on

433c. me but that she did not want any trouble in the night as that was when 'they usually started'. They reluctantly put the tablets back and when they saw that I was settling down they passed my bed with the grim warning that if I was not asleep when they came back, or if I started any row in the night they would be back with an injection. I did not doubt that and I was afraid of what they could do to me and so I settled down feeling alone and afraid. It just did not dawn on me in the state I was in that I was not capable of making any row as I was unable to speak or walk properly and I was too weak to do anything but lie there. Even if I had made any attempt to do anything I would only have asked how my baby was as I was so quiet and gentle as a person that I would never have made any row about anything at all and I never did. I did not even consider what row they might be talking about anyway. Somehow the rough way they were treating me was all so familiar and because I had never been in hospital before I did not dream to question it in my mind and I just thought that that was how they treated unmarried mothers.

Around the ward the other mothers were feeding and settling their babies and a nurse came round to draw all the curtains round each bed to give each patient privacy for the night and when the curtains were drawn around my bed it came as such a relief to be alone and to have some privacy that I lay there awake and enjoyed being out of the way of all the prying eyes in the ward. Long after the lights went out and the dimmed night lights came on and the ward grew quieter and quieter, I lay alone in the Peace and Quiet that I had waited so long for and I cried and

434C. cried for my beautiful baby girl.
This was the second long night since Elizabeth had been born and tonight we were spending it even miles further apart than we had the night before, when I had considered that to be far enough apart. It did not seem possible that things could have gone from bad to worse like that and my head ached with worry about what was going on and my heart ached so much for my baby but all I could do was to wait and hope that she would get well and live. During the night people tiptoed along the ward, babies were fed and changed during the night and I still lay and silently cried for my baby. Halfway through the night the drugs that I had been given during and since my labour, began to wear off at long last and my head became clearer. I began to get my old self confidence back and even though things were in a bit of a state I began to feel my old attitude of dealing with trouble before it began come back again. I began to plan things positively and I decided that I would act at my earliest opportunity in the morning to get Mr. Tuckland the Church of England vicar on the telephone to stop him going to the Clark family and causing any trouble that I did not want. I decided to be firm with my parents over my baby as I had a right to her and she was my child and not theirs. After a long time I lay saying my prayers silently and I prayed clearly in my heart begging God to let Elizabeth Christiana live as it did not matter what was wrong with her, I just wanted her

435c. to live. I climbed up and up in my prayers on my usual solitary mountain until I found a restful plateau in my prayers and then I stayed on it, while I watched the beautiful stars out of the window in the ward beside my bed, adding the depth of the darkness of the night sky and the longevity of those beautiful stars to the depth of anguish in my prayers and considering how they complemented each other in agony and beauty. I fell into a sound restful sleep while I lay watching them.

Early the next morning two nurses woke me up while they were going around the ward taking the first temperatures of the day, and only after they had done it did a sister come along and tell them that it would have been kinder to have left me asleep since I had no baby to feed. The tea trolley came round and I stuck to my blackcurrant juice and water as I remembered what had happened the day before only too well but I knew that it HAD happened and that the danger was over. Within a short while the nurse in white came to my bed and remembering what it had said in the book on Psychosprropyaxis that I had read in the afternoon before I came into hospital where it said that if you did not know the rank of a nurse call them all 'sister' and you can not go wrong, I called her sister and she told me that she was an auxilliary and my aim at politeness, especially since she was a lot older than the sisters and seemed in some ways to be more knowledgeable than the other nurses, was taken for ignorance and she said that I knew nothing about hospitals at all did I?. The nurses asked me if I had never been in a hospital before and I said no but far

436 C. from that being a sign that I had kept well, it was taken as a sign that there was something wrong with me. They asked if I had never broken my ankle as a child and been in hospital or anything and I said no. The nurses asked me why I did not like them and I said that I did like them. They seemed puzzled and did not know whether to believe me or not. The nurses were busy but the auxiliary stayed and talked to me. She was very nice, older than the other nurses and very friendly and chatty. She said that she had come back to nursing part time now that her children were older. She asked me about my baby and I answered her telling her that the baby had gone to Great Ormond Street and that she had a blockage. Even as she began to speak to me I felt as if there was something about the way she spoke that made me think that she already knew all about what was wrong with my baby and that she was only asking me to see what I told her. I felt that if she knew already then she had no right to torment me by making me speak about it just to let her see what I knew. Her behaviour was hurting my feelings but I did not let her know that and I remained politely friendly towards her. She began to tell me that a young relative of hers had been born sick as a baby and she said that it was called a Congenital Abnormality but as I listened to her there was something about the way that she was talking to me that was putting my back up. There was absolutely no doubt

437c. that she seemed to be tactfully explaining my own situation to me in a way that sounded as if she had been told to put it to me like this because no one would face me and talk openly to me about what was wrong with my baby. She seemed to think that I would have great difficulty understanding it all and she kept simplifying her way of speaking to me as if she was playing a game with me in which I had to try to imagine what was wrong with my baby and guess what it was. What she was doing was building up a terrible frustration in my mind that made me feel a horrible feeling of suffering and it seemed as if it was making me less able to speak. When I spoke to her I could hear myself stammering and stuttering which made me look even more simple minded because I could only speak with difficulty. The more difficulty I had to speak, then the more simply she spoke to me because she did not know me and she did not know the mental suffering it was causing me. What made it even worse was that she put on such a very friendly manner as she was saying it all and so I began to feel small feelings of dislike and mistrust towards people showing me that kind of friendship because in the midst of all the flourishing friendship she was pushing towards me I had never felt so alone in all my life. I had never been able to stand anything false, especially a pretence of friendship to get me to talk about things that were hidden inside me that I could not and did not want to talk about. I needed someone to talk to me openly and tell me the facts about what was wrong with my baby and not to play with my

439c. understanding person who was listening to her. The gossip that she was telling me was nothing to do with my baby and my mind felt very desperately that I needed to know the truth from a Doctor and not a lot of speculation from this very informal and talkative woman. As she spoke to me she told me that her relative had been a patient at exactly the same hospital as my baby. I guessed exactly what was coming next in her conversation and I was perfectly right because she asked me which ward my baby was on. To please her I showed her ward '4AB' on the outpatients card given to me by the pupil midwife the day before and I knew that she was going to say that not only the hospital but the ward was the same too, to get me talking about it. If she had been there to visit him, she obviously had the upper hand over me since I had not seen the place and it would be strange new territory to me and in the face of her pretence I felt lost and as if no one was being very open with me and strange new feelings of resentment began to creep over me. If a Doctor had come to me and told me frankly what was wrong with my baby, what was going on and in trying to be of as much help as possible had mentioned truthfully that he had been to Great Ormond Street perhaps in his student days and that he knew the very ward that my baby was in then I would have asked so many questions about what it was like and what went on there, but the more the Auxiliary talked the more she was upsetting me and the less I was able to talk or cry. When she exclaimed that it was exactly the same ward I remained friendly and in calm control but I put

440c. a hint of ice into my voice when I said really?" She noticed and went on more carefully to say that perhaps exactly the same thing was wrong with them both and I saw a look of alarm cross her face when I said icily "I hardly think so because there are so many different Congenital Abnormalities that a child can be born with and also your relative is a boy and my baby is a girl." She looked shocked but she carried on talking and three times she took the conversation away from the subject of what was wrong with both the children and then brought it back again but each time she came back to it, I was calmly and gently ready for her with another non-committal answer as I felt a complete mental block in my mind towards the woman. I did not want to know what was wrong with her relative as it was hardly likely that it was the same as what was wrong with Elizabeth and to try to guess what was wrong with my baby from what was wrong with another patient on the same ward could have been misleading and have caused me a lot of unnecessary worry. By the third time the auxiliary brought the conversation back to talk about what was wrong with her relative and my baby without telling me what it was that was wrong with her relative, as if she was trying to get me to ask what it was, which I would never have done because it was a very rude thing to do to ask somebody that sort of thing, she was getting alarmed that her conversation had not gone as she had expected it to. She stood there and asked me almost desperately if there was anything that I wanted to know and because I

441C. was glad of a break in the embarrassing conversation I thanked her and asked her if she could tell me where the telephone was, even though the sister from the special care unit had told me that the telephone was out in the corridor. The auxiliary nurse told me where the telephone was in the corridor as if she did not really want to and when I began to get out of bed by myself, a sister came over to my bed and asked the auxiliary what had gone wrong. The auxiliary looked really afraid and she told the sister that I had listened to her but that I had not asked her anything and that now I was going off to the telephone. The Sister told the auxiliary that she hoped that I was not going to telephone Great Ormond street, she said to the auxiliary nurse "If she finds out what is going on then she will go up there and Great Ormond Street don't want HER up there TODAY." The Sister turned and asked me firmly who I was going to telephone and if my telephone call was anything to do with my baby because if it was and I was going to telephone Great Ormond Street Hospital then she could not allow me to make the telephone call. A slow feeling of panic arose inside because my telephone call was about my baby and if I could not telephone Great Ormond Street Hospital then I knew that I must still telephone Mr. Auckland the Church of England Vicar to stop him causing any trouble. I knew that it was Sunday and if he mentioned my baby and I in his prayers for the sick, which he was likely to because he believed in mouthing everybody's business to his whole congregation, then he might either be announcing my baby's birth straight to Normans mother if she was in church, or if she was not, then it would be a race between all the

442c women neighbours to get the gossip to her first. I knew that the only way that I could stop that was to get to the Vicar first and so I decided that for my baby's sake I had to tell a lie and say that my telephone call was not about my baby. The Sister and auxiliary nurse wanted to know who I wanted to telephone and so I reluctantly lied to them and said that I wanted to telephone my sister, thinking that they would think I meant our neighbour Janet who the nurses had seen on the ward the day before and who looked a sensible, acceptable sort of person. The Sister said that it was alright and she told the auxiliary nurse that it would probably do me good to talk to her. The auxiliary nurse seemed doubtful and she asked me if I knew that it was only seven o'clock in the morning and that most people would be asleep on a Sunday morning. I said that my 'sister' had a little boy and that she was always up early, which Janet did have and it was true even though I knew that I was going to telephone the Vicar and not Janet. The auxiliary nurse told me that perhaps I ought to have my breakfast first and that after breakfast I was going to have an injection that would make me very sleepy so I might like to make the telephone call after that. I said that I would like to do it first and the Sister told the auxiliary that it was alright if I was only going to telephone someone from my own family, and she spoke to the auxiliary nurse in a voice that sounded almost guilty and said that they had got to think about

443c. me as well as the baby because I had just had a baby and that they had got to think about what all this was doing to me. The auxilliary nurse told the Sister that I was not subnormal at all and that I knew what I was doing. She said to the Sister "Shes got as much intelligence as you or I, if not MORE and I'm sure she 'knows' whats going on but she won't say. She talked to me but without telling me anything if you know what I mean." The Sister agreed with her and said that I was not at all like they had been told that I was. She said that as far as she was concerned I had had a shock and although I might be sulking because my baby had been taken away from me she was still rather worried about me. I carried on getting myself carefully ready to go to the telephone as I listened to them talking and I completely ignored the way they spoke so openly in front of me as if I could not understand them anyway because I did not want to let it hurt my feelings anymore. I found what little money I had and I went to walk to the telephone. I found that I could walk easier than I had done the day before even though my arms and legs felt numb and my back felt strange. The auxilliary offered to get me a wheelchair and push me to the telephone and stay with me until I had made the telephone call but I did not want her to listen to my telephone conversation and I was so determined to let them see how capable I was that I thanked her, said no, and just walked off as best I could in the direction of the way that she had told me to go, leaving them standing by my bed and almost looking sorry for me as I tried my best

444C. to walk along as gracefully as I could and although I managed it nobody would ever have guessed how very difficult it was and it was wrong that I should have had to cover up how ill I was in front of the very people who should have been trying to help my baby and I, and keep us together.

When I got to the telephone in the corridor there was another woman already on the telephone who turned out to have come from the next ward. She turned to see who had come along and smiled at me and when I smiled back at her as if I felt quite sure of myself I had the surprise of my life when she turned into the telephone and told whoever she was talking to that she had got to go because someone far worse than her had come along. She must have had an operation and have been recovering from it because she told who ever it was that she was talking to on the telephone for a joke that she hoped that she did not look as bad as me. She could not have been talking to who ever it was for as long as they expected her to because she had a bit of a friendly argument on the telephone before she could get them to say goodbye. She was saying "never mind the money, I'll ring you later because I can't let her stand there waiting, she's walked a long way from her ward and it is a long way when you're not well" and then "Well, they haven't brought her in a wheelchair" as if she was trying to convince someone of the validity of her reason for going so quickly. Finally and quickly she said goodbye to whoever she was talking to,

445C. put the telephone down and she turned round and apologized to me. She said that she had been talking to her husband and she laughed and said that although he was a good man he was so mean that he would not even waste the change from a 10^p telephone call and he had not wanted her to go until all the money had run out even though he was coming in to see her that afternoon. She asked me what I had 'done' as if she expected me to say that I had been in a massive road accident or something and she had a shock when I told her that I had had a baby. She asked me if I had been given a caesarian section operation and when I said 'no' she said that I should not be as bad as I was. She asked me what I had had and when I said a baby girl she started to say how nice and talk about what the baby was like as if she thought the baby was in a cot beside my bed. I had to explain that my baby was very ill in Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and she said that she was very sorry about that. The lady chatted to me very kindly for some moments and when she realized that I was an unsupported unmarried mother she asked me if I had parents and if they had stuck by me and although I really wished that they had not turned up at all because I would have done better without them, I politely said 'yes'. The more the lady talked to me the more concerned she became about the way I was walking and the bruises on my face. She told me that she had had an operation and she asked me very nicely if the nurses knew that I was out of my bed. I said that they did and she told me that she was surprised that they had let me get up and she asked me if one of them

446 c. could not have brought me round to the telephone in a wheelchair. I said that I was alright and I was surprised that she thought I was so ill when I felt so much better and could walk much better than I had done the day before. The lady said that she understood but that I must take care of myself and not overdo things as I looked very tired and I was very thin. She asked me if I needed any help to dial the number but I thanked her and said that I could do it alright and just then a nurse came out of her Ward 83 to look for her as the nurses were giving out the drugs and they had put some on her locker for her to take so she had to say goodbye and go off with the nurse anyway.

After she had gone and I was alone in the corridor by the telephone I wondered if I really would be able to make the telephone call but as soon as I saw the dial and the receiver, and the slots to put the money in, it all came back to me. In fact the telephone was only one on the wall with a shelf of directories and a metallic canopy overhead and as soon as I stood under the metallic hood to make the telephone call I began to be able to think more clearly. It somehow reminded me of the electricity of a railway station but I had no idea of how or why it took away the feeling of submission and I felt free to be 'myself' as I usually was. It was not the telephone, it was the metal canopy above my head and as my mind cleared itself completely all my self confidence came back. As I stood by the telephone I knew that I had the choice of either telephoning Great Ormond Street or the Church

447c. Of England vicar and I could not do both because I did not have enough money. I decided that Great Ormond Street hospital would take proper care of my baby but that if I did not stop Mr. Auckland from interfering then it could cause my baby and I so much trouble that even though I wanted to telephone Great Ormond Street to find out how my baby was, I had to decide to use the money to telephone Mr. Auckland to stop him causing any trouble. I did not know his telephone number and so I had to look it up but although I found the telephone directory very heavy to lift and I also found it very difficult to breathe while I was lifting the heavy weight, I did not find it difficult to find the number I wanted. As I dialled the number I remembered what the auxiliary nurse had said about my 'Sister' being up so early on a Sunday morning and I had no qualms about telephoning Mr. Auckland so early. He was a respectable church of England vicar and as I knew it, any respectable vicar would be up, washed and dressed and saying his prayers at 7am on a Sunday morning and so it would hardly get him out of bed and if it did wake him up then he deserved it as he should have been up and saying his morning office at that time of morning. The telephone only rang twice and after I had pushed the money in a sleepy voice said 'hello' quite amiably. It was Mr. Auckland and when I said who I was he was not pleased that it was me telephoning him but I was determined to talk to him.

As I spoke to him my thoughts cleared and I knew that I was right that he had intended to put the baby's name on the sick list for the morning service at

448C. his church and to publicly announce the news of what had happened to us to his whole congregation. Once everyone knew and was talking about it, and especially if other people told Mrs. Clark and her family, then Mr. Auckland was covered against not having kept what he knew confidentially, which I had already asked him to do. I knew that I had to stop that happening and so as soon as I started to talk to the vicar I tackled him about that first. He seemed surprised and he said yes that he had planned to announce it to the congregation in church at the Sunday Service as he had decided that it was the best thing to do. My baby's name was already on the sick list ready for the service but he did not recall having mentioned it to my Father when he had spoken to him the evening before and he asked me who had told him and he sounded genuinely surprised and puzzled. No one had told my Father and he had not told me - I just knew what he was planning to do, in a way that was more than just being able to guess what he was likely to do because I knew him - but I said nothing and just carried on without making any remark about it and I heard his voice change to one of caution as if he had got to be a bit careful because someone else must have told my Father or I and he had not expected that. He became a bit more respectful towards me for a bit but when I said firmly that I wanted no announcements in church because it was no ones business but mine and I wanted my business kept

449 c. confidentially, he became annoyed and said that the Clarkes had a right to know and it was not something that was to be kept hidden from people. He said that everyone had got to know what I had done sooner or later and it was best if it came from him in church. For a second I was puzzled at his words 'what I had done' and thinking he was talking about me being an unmarried mother I felt annoyed but I let it go as I wanted to get on with telling him firmly that he was not to go to the Clark family and I did not want him to side-track me away from what I wanted to say to him or let him talk down to me. I told him that my baby was early and that it was not necessary for all the neighbours to even know that she had been born yet because it was my business and not theirs. He sounded a bit mystified as if he had not meant that and as if I did not seem to know what he was talking about and that for a moment he wanted to be bothered to listen to my version of what I wanted to say. He asked me what had happened to the baby and I told him that she had a blockage in her abdomen and that she had been taken to Great Ormond Street. He said to me "yes, but what have You done to her?". I said that I had done nothing because there was nothing that I could do for her. I said that the baby had been taken straight to the Intensive Care Baby Unit as soon as she was born and that although I had held her yesterday morning, there was nothing I could do to help her as she needed the expert attention of Doctors at Great Ormond Street. He listened to me and when I had finished he laughed sneeringly and said that he had known that the baby would

450c. be taken straight away from me
when it was born but he spoke
so nastily that I just thought he
was being spiteful and I took no
notice of him. He talked to me as
if he wanted a longer conversation
with me and he said that he would
come in to see me that afternoon
while my parents went up to see
the baby in hospital. I felt panic
rising inside me that all this
could have been arranged behind
my back without even asking me
or considering my feelings towards
my baby as we had only had so
little time together. I spoke to him
defensively and said that I had
spoken to my parents and told
them not to go to the hospital
and that they were not going. I
felt sure that I had dealt with that
question adequately and that my
parents had genuinely agreed not
to go but Mr. Auckland told me
sarcastically that I could not
tell my PARENTS not to go because
I was only a child and must do
as I was told. He said that he
would be seeing my parents that
morning anyway so he would
talk to them and that he would
still come in to see me. I definitely
did not want him coming in to
see me because I did not like
men and I would be in my night-
dress as my mother had taken
the case and my clothes away.
I did not want any men seeing
me in my nightdress as it was
embarrassing and if any clergy
man had called to see me then I
would have liked it to be Fr. Nolan
who had been so kind to my baby
and I the day before. I did not
want Mr. Auckland to come at all