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ONE

It was the last letter in Irene Redfield's little pile of morning mail. After her other ordinary and clearly directed letters the long envelope of thin Italian paper with its almost illegible scrawl seemed out of place and alien. And there was, too, something mysterious and slightly fur-tive about it. A thin sly thing which bore no return address to betray the sender. Not that she hadn't immediately known who its sender was. Some two years ago she had one very like it in outward appearance. Furtive, but yet in some peculiar, determined way a little flaunt-ing. Purple ink. Foreign paper of extraordinary

size.

It had been, Irene noted, postmarked in
New York the day before. Her brows came to-gether in a tiny frown. The frown, however, was more from perplexity than from annoy-ance; though there was in her thoughts an ele-ment of both. She was wholly unable to compre-

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PASSING
hend such an attitude towards danger as she was sure the letter's contents would reveal; and she disliked the idea of opening and reading it. This, she reflected, was of a piece with
all that she knew of Clare Kendry. Stepping al-ways on the edge of danger. Always aware, but not drawing back or turning aside. Certainly not because of any alarms or feeling of outrage on the part of others.
And for a swift moment Irene Redfield seemed to see a pale small girl sitting on a ragged blue sofa, sewing pieces of bright red cloth together, while her drunken father, a tall, powerfully built man, raged threateningly up and down the shabby room, bellowing curses and making spasmodic lunges at her which were not the less frightening because they were, for the most part. Ineffectual. Some-times he did manage to reach her. But only the fact that the child had edged herself and her poor sewing over to the farthermost cor-ner of the sofa suggested that she was in any way perturbed by this menace to herself and her work.

ENCOUNTER
Clare had known well enough that it
was unsafe to take a portion of the dollar that was her weekly wage for the doing of many errands for the dressmaker who lived on the top floor of the building of which Bob

of