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Friday, May 7th

Was another day loaded with beautification. In the morning I worked some with Ashton before boarding an 11:30 plane to New York with Liz, lunching on the way to save every moment for shopping in New York.

Shopping, for once, inside the Carlyle was fruitful, efficient, and fun. Bess in her smooth quiet way had gone up ahead of me and had some clothes brought in. And also the designer, Mollie Parnis, who had made clothes for Mrs. Eisenhower. I bought the first thing I put on: a summery, peach-colored brocade dress and coat, a 6 o'clock dress that was just right for the Salute to Spring this very night! In a great hurry, Miss Parnis arranged to have the hem shortened, to lend me some of ^{her} ~~my~~ shoes if I couldn't get mine dyed or buy some, and to give me a purse!

I found two other after-six dresses, the great gap in my wardrobe. One is an elegant white for Fall, the sort of thing that I would leave to the Smithsonian and be proud of. And a very feminine dress for the Korean dinner.

Then I got down to the business of the day. Anna Rosenberg Hoffman, Lyndon's friend from the war days, who is Co-Chairman of the Salute to Spring, and the Mayor came at four to fetch me,

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and we went out in the grey and drizzling rain to see Mary Lasker's flowers on Park Avenue, the tulips and the azaleas. We stopped at 67th and Park, under umbrellas, with the dripping newsmen, and again at Rockefeller Plaza. Such a beautiful display of azaleas! It was just changed for me that morning, they tell me, from the Easter lilies, which were just about spent.

And then on to the Plaza Hotel, where the Fifth Avenue merchants combined to keep up the display of tulips -- a three-seasonal change to begonias and chrysanthemums.

Not too bad. They've had it for eight years, the Salute to Spring. It never rained on The Day before. I guess we ought to take it in good grace. It had been dry, and the scarcity of water forced a city ordinance to prevent watering.

Mary, whose brain child all of this is, was in Europe with ^{Deed}~~Della~~ Blair, having, Anna said, two wonderful but tiring weeks, going to a round of parties.

Naturally it was disappointing. But you make these engagements ahead of time and then when the day comes, prepared as best you can be, go ahead with a smile and don't let the Chairman know if you're disappointed.

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So it was with the ceremony that was scheduled to be in front of the Public Library, where the big lions are. Trees had been roped off for several blocks. They had had 10,000 people in past years.

With a beautifully decorated stage, an Armed Services color guard, a band, Carol Channing from Hello, Dolly, Sammy Davis from Golden Boy, the Radio City Music Hall ballet, quite a group from the Metropolitan Opera, including Rise Stevens, John Fiorito and Janet Pavick, to give some star-studded entertainment before my small part.

Alas, ^{it} had to be cancelled! Rain fell in torrents until shortly before time for the show, so it was moved inside to the Library into cramped quarters and a telescoped ceremony, where Carol Channing gave some amusing chatter, Sammy Davis a small salute to beautification in general. And Anna was the woman we really listened to.

Then the Mayor presented me with the city's gold Medal of Honor. It is usually given to only visiting Chiefs of State. And none of them was ever as impressed as I to get it! My speech was just to congratulate New York on setting an example and leading

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the way, but saying, "Don't rest on your laurels." And it was a real piece of news from the Mayor that he had called a Gracie Mansion Conference on Beautification, similar to the White House Conference, involving business leaders, landscape designers, garden clubbers, recreation people, all of the facets that touch it.

And then the business of the day was over. Bows and autographs and handshakes as we made our way through the little group, three or four hundred, in the Library lobby and steps, and out to our cars and to the gay business of the evening, a party at Anna Rosenberg Hoffman's.

What a beautiful house it was! Right on the river, in the heart of New York with a big garden shared by about 15 other families, I think -- a jewel of a house of four or five floors. Salvadore Dali watercolors.

There were about 24 of us there. Jean and Bob Kintner, the Ed Weisls, Andre Myer -- Anna told me he had been a very substantial contributor to the fortunes of the Democratic Party and a real admirer of Lyndon.

The Laurance Rockefellers, Mark Childs. There are some evenings that deserve the title of brilliant. This one was.

I sat next to Mr. Hoffman. I had never known him well before. They were leaving for Africa the next morning, and he talked about

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the economy of Africa, the development of the continent. He spoke of a sort of poll he had taken among business men, government leaders, people who know what's going on in the two dozen or more countries of that continent. He had asked them 1) what percentage of the resources of the country did they think were being utilized at present, 2) what percentage of the human resources, the brains of the people, were being utilized at present.

The answer to the first was 20%; the answer to the second was 10%. So that means that could sure be a busy continent for the new few decades in the development of goods and people.

What a nice life for Anna. They are both so smart, give so much to living, and love it. Between them, they have about 24 grandchildren -- Anna has only one, Mr. Hoffman all the rest.

I had good talks with Laurance Rockefeller about all of our current enthusiasms: the Conference, ^{Watts} ~~Watts~~ Branch Parkway, the trip to Virginia.

The very French, hard to understand but very interesting André Myer, who is one of the White House's greatest benefactors, gave the Houdin bust (but it's supposed to be absolutely secret), ^{and} the rug in the Red Room.

Anna and Ed Weisl are concerned about Bobby Kennedy,

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thinking the bridge between him and Lyndon is uncrossable, the hostility deep and unbending toward Lyndon and toward Mayor Wagner also.

Anna is a fighter -- a good person to have on your side -- an intellectual with a heart.

There were toasts. A very nice toast about me from Anna. I liked it because she used the word "useful." I want very much to be. And for once I was satisfied with myself, because I felt it, I could make a really good toast about our host and hostess.

We left the fabulous city at midnight, got into deserted Dulles, and reached the White House about 2. I thought back on the day and its riches, its unfilled potential -- but who could help the rain -- and especially ^{about} ~~after~~ an invitation I had given over the phone to Mr. Joseph Hirshhorn to come and have lunch with me at the White House on the 24th. He has a vast private collection of sculpture and a good many paintings. Roger Stevens said more than two dozen ^{Eakins} ~~Aikens~~. And ^{Russ} ~~more~~. Carter Johnson said some Mary Cassats. Dillon Ripley hopes that he is going to give it to the Smithsonian. Roger Stevens says that it is almost settled that he will, and that it will be comparable to the Mellon gift to the government in the early 30's, an event of great significance in the art world and, if it should

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happen, a laurel for the Administration. He was delightful over the telephone. We had met when I had gone up for the dinner at the Metropolitan Art Museum. He told me also what I didn't know -- that he was an admirer of Lyndon's and was working on the Presidential Club dinner to be held late in May.

When I crawled into bed I was[^] sleepy. I couldn't bear to go in and maybe wake Lyndon up at two o'clock, so I read until 3, being like a child having the third piece of candy, greedy but satisfied.