

1965

Wednesday, August 18th

Was a quiet summer sort of day. Gloriously, I woke up at 9:30, the latest I have slept in ages, in Lyndon's big comfortable bed.

I spent about two hours with the dentist in the morning, and then had lunch with Liz -- hard-boiled egg -- autographed a stack of books, A More Beautiful America, which Laurance Rockefeller had given us, one for all of our chief donors. This has been one of many jobs lying piled up waiting for me.

The house is bouncing with young people. Lynda had brought back Beth Jenkins with her and Mary Ellen Trimmell. Betty Beale had been returning from somewhere up East and had stopped by for the night, bringing a boy friend, Pete. And Pat Nugent is over all the time. The house is full, and Luci is happy.

And Aunt Ellen so thrilled with them all!

At four o'clock Mrs. Sevilla-Sacasa came for tea, and Virginia Rusk, and Bess. I wanted to acquaint Lillian Sevilla-Sacasa with my plan to invite the new Diplomatic wives in groups of five or ten, those who had come to this country since the big party for the diplomats May 5th, over for a quiet cup of tea and perhaps a stroll through the House -- a chance to meet them informally and make them feel more welcome and more a part

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of Washington's life. She was quick to say she would help me by giving me information about them, because each of them is supposed to call on her as soon as they present their credentials, and she responded by wanting to have a tea for me to which she would invite the wives of all the 117 or so countries. That would be good, that would be fine, if it did not open the floodgates for invitations from many countries. Perhaps being the wife of the Dean would set it apart as being different.

She's a most extraordinary woman, very outspoken, hilariously funny, and quite beautiful if she'd only lose a sizable number of pounds. She has 9 children and for the last year has been going through one of life's sorest tragedies. ^{for} Her child Julia ^{has} with an undiagnosed but severely crippling nerve disease. At first she was partially paralyzed, now she can get around, but she needs a lot of help, and only from her Mother can she take it without that feeling of being an invalid. So Mrs. Sevilla-Sacasa is closely bound to her, helping her up and down stairs, taking her to the hospital for therapy. But it would be hard to feel sorry for her, because she always has a witty, laughing word. A spicy woman, and not at all the cautious diplomat's wife.

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At six I had expected to have the Members of Congress, House and Senate, from whose committees the Beautification Bill is to be reported. Congressman Fallon of Maryland and his wife, Blatnik and Kluczynski, Bob Jones of Alabama, Senator McNamara and Senator Young, and Senator Randolph and several more. I had wanted to hear the state of affairs, what we could expect, and just let them know that I realized this late in the season we were faced with the possibility of Beautification Bills being lost in the shuffle, but that I hoped it wouldn't happen, and I wanted to thank them for anything they could do to get it up for a vote before Congress was over this session.

I didn't have a chance. About 5:30 we began to get frantic calls from our legislative people on the Hill -- a poverty vote was coming up and it was going to be 42 to 43 and maybe a tie -- couldn't we possibly call off, or at least tell the Senate Members we would postpone their invitation? We did. Later we got the same hurried request concerning the Congressmen, so we cancelled it all. Now it's uncertain whether I will have a chance to re-set a date for it.

But sometimes it's pleasant just to be lazy, and this is my day for doing that. I had had a bit of a nap in the afternoon, so I now asked Lynda and Aunt Ellen if they wouldn't like to play

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bridge. We found Willie Day, and the four of us had a couple of good hours of bridge, Lynda being very cross with me because I didn't keep my mind on the game well enough to play her really expert fighting game.

And then at 10 o'clock I called Lyndon and asked him when we could expect him to come join us for dinner. He gave me the rejoinder that he was over having fun with an office full of beautiful women and did I want to come over and see him. I did. There was Larry O'Brien, Jack, and Lee White. He was telling Lee White that he didn't want him to leave the Government, that he'd just send him to Vietnam if he didn't like what he was doing now. Jokingly, of course, but earnest, too. I think perhaps that five and a half years of working in the same job has taken enough of the edge off it that Lee really wants to go. He kept on trying to sell Lyndon on how fine McPherson was.

Presently I extracted Lyndon. We picked up Marie and we went home for dinner, Aunt Ellen and Willie Day sitting down with us -- Lynda had already eaten. Lyndon was gay and ebullient, riding the high tide of work that was yielding some achievements.

I mentioned George, and it was only one second between his name and Lyndon's picking up the phone to put in a call for him. He had walked that day, on his heels, with canes. He might even be able

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to skip crutches. He was in a good mood, and we all felt the happier for it.

And then we called Homer. I did not think he would know until Friday the results of the tests, of the operation that he had had on Monday. But they'd already gotten the answer -- it was benign. We all felt a little heady with elation at the good news of our friend.

Nobody can spread delight, express pleasure in a more sparkling way than Lyndon when he feels it. And today he does. When he had come when we were having tea with Mrs. Sevilla-Sacasa, he delivered a whole armload of compliments about the Dean, who is indeed the most industrious and warmest of diplomats, and to Virginia he said, "You know, it was practically embarrassing to the rest of us. I got up to make a speech, they clapped politely. Bob McNamara got up and rattled off his facts and figures, and they clapped politely. Your husband got up and they gave him a standing ovation and ROARED. I never have seen him better," he said, "And I never have heard a more persuasive speech. Lyndon feels it and has often said it -- all sorts of good things about Dean Rusk -- but I think a little bit of fire under this speech was sparked by the derogatory remarks made about Dean Rusk in some of the memoirs of the Kennedy Administration these last few weeks.

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It was a good family evening and a very mild day. Massage and to bed by 12.