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The senior girl was helping Tiffany adjust her celluloid collar. A quick glance at the cuffs, the pleats of the skirt. It seemed alright. They had to hurry now, to catch up with the others. They were running. The refectory was that way, and over here, the bathrooms. Now they were tearing down the stairs. The infirmary, the laundry, the chapel, the parlor. At the back the classrooms, and at the far end, the gymnasium. Back that way, the kitchens. Here the playground.

In the schoolyard were many boarders already: younger ones, less young ones, older ones, all in navy blue: pleated skirts with collars biting in their whiteness. So many of them! Some walking two by two; solitary ones standing, their backs against the wall; groups forming enclosures so tight that they seemed to fit into each other like puzzle pieces. They were everywhere. Her guide had disappeared. Near the door, a nun was saying her rosary.

Should she interrupt a conversation or a sorrow to interfere where it wasn't her place? Tiffany felt in the way. Beating a retreat, she approached the nun, silently muttering away, hands in her