

## Capricorn: Ambition

The drawings were excellent, especially considering that they had been made by a high school senior with no formal training in architecture. Mr. Creighton had agreed to look at them only because he felt sorry for Diane and admired her persistence, and had been startled by the talent that they showed.

For as long as she could remember — even before she knew what the word meant — Diane had been interested in architecture. Drawing “plans” for houses was a favorite pastime as a little girl, and when she grew older and began seriously to study the subject on her own, her childish drawings gradually were transformed into sophisticated and surprisingly accurate blueprints.

With a large family to feed, and receiving only marginal wages, Diane’s father found it impossible to provide a college education for his children. Once Diane fully understood this situation, however, she determined to make her own way through architectural school. Well-meaning acquaintances insisted on pointing out that women architects were still comparatively rare, and suggested that, although going to college was commendable, she ought to specialize in some other subject in which more doors, both in school and in the world, might be opened to her. Diane, however, had made up her mind to become an architect and, as she said, “No bunch of pessimists is going to scare me off!”

Knowing that she would get a scholarship only if she displayed unusual ability, Diane, in addition to working for consistently good grades in school, also devoted a great deal of time to independent study of architectural principles. She had read all the library books on the

subject that she could comprehend, and in the last year her drawings had ceased to be "fun" things. She agonized over and perfected each practice blueprint as though it were to be submitted for approval. She had also been lucky enough to get an after-school typing job in Mr. Creighton's architectural firm, and lost no time in acquainting him with her ambitions.

"All right, Diane," he said with amused tolerance one day, "I'll look at your blueprints."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Creighton, they're out in the other office. I'll get them," she said.

He smiled after her, then frowned. How was he going to break it to her gently that she should forget all this nonsense about becoming an architect? She was a nice and lovely girl, and certainly there were many more suitable things she could do with her life. Those "blueprints," whatever they were, were bound to be amateurish squiggles that couldn't remotely be related to structural realities.

He took the carefully rolled blueprints from Diane and leaned back in his chair, intending only to give them a cursory glance. His attention, however, was quickly riveted to the paper in disbelief. They were surprisingly good — in one way, almost professional. Of course there were flaws, and the prints were lacking in some of the most modern conceptions. But a knowledge of architectural principles, not acquired without considerable study, was evident, and the basic plans were sound.

"Are you sure *you* did these, Diane?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, Sir, honestly," she answered nervously.

Mr. Creighton examined them some more, and then looked at Diane for a long moment. "They are good, Diane. You show real talent," he said finally.

"Thank you," she said simply, and breathed a sigh of relief.

"You've done a lot of studying and practicing, haven't you?" Mr. Creighton asked.

"I've read everything about architecture I could understand — and quite a bit that I couldn't," Diane answered ruefully.

"Yes, some of that gets pretty technical," Mr. Creighton chuckled. Then he grew serious. "You realize the hurdles you're going to face, don't you? It's not all that simple for a woman to establish herself in architecture."

"I realize that, Sir," said Diane calmly. "Plenty of people have warned me."

"And you're still determined to go ahead?"

"Absolutely."

"Very well," the architect continued. "I guess you also know I'm on the board of trustees of the university — in fact, I'll wager you had that in mind all along, eh?"

Diane blushed and looked down. "Er — yes, Sir, I did," she confessed.

"That's all right," Mr. Creighton laughed. "I like the way you go after what you want. I'm going to recommend you for a scholarship, and with my backing I have no doubt you'll get it. But that will be just the beginning. You've worked hard to come this far, but you'll have to work even harder to make your dream come true. I can help you get into the university, but you're going to have to keep yourself there."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Creighton," said Diane, her face radiant. "You can count on me."

Later that evening, Mr. Creighton's wife was somewhat surprised to hear him say, unexpectedly, "My dear, we may have a very promising young lady architect in the firm in about five years,"