

Aunt Florence was a 1940's fashionista dragged into 1962 without her permission. She remembered yesterday as if it were today and today as if it wasn't quite here yet.

Flo lived in Queens, New York with my Uncle Max. They came to visit a few times a year. A tall woman with blue eyes; she wore hazy nylons, 3-inch platform heels and brightly colored dresses. Growing up in a small town, my clothes were often ordered from the Sears catalog and I remember thinking she looked glamorous, like a movie star.

In warm weather, Flo's arms were often exposed to show her jewelry and as she liked to tell me, "a woman's arm, dear, is a lovely thing, be sure to wax yours weekly." At eleven, I had no idea what that meant. Her hair was as fascinating as her personality; shades of red that changed with the seasons. Her nose was large but not unattractive, making her face very appealing. Uncle Max loved her and treated her like the queen she knew she was.

Max was a big man. He loved his cigars, my aunt, and his scotch. When they came to visit they drank all day but never seemed to get drunk.

One day my father got a call from Max, who said he was at his wit's end. He'd just spent an hour on the phone with one of New York's top-line charities calling to thank Flo for her \$10,000 donation.

"What? Ten thousand dollars?" he wailed, "I am so sorry. Flo means well but that check is no good. Please destroy it."

Hanging up he lowered his head; that was the third call this month! No point explaining to Florence again, that he wasn't made of money. He walked over to the couch where she was still watching their favorite show, Bonanza; bent down, and kissed her. She smiled and continued knitting hats for the homeless.

Hopefully, we won't be one of them, he thought.