



EVERYTHING FLAMBE

Though Margaret's favorite drinks had been wine and French champagne, she now grew fonder than ever of hard liquor. Margaret II, who walked across the lawn mornings to visit with her, often found her having breakfast in bed with a daiquiri on her tray. "The colors in daiquiris are so romantic," she would explain.

Practically all her food became flambe as well. She flambeed meats, she flambéed omelets and desserts, she even flambeed the salads she had for lunch.

Still, she at times continued to function. She reported to Ellen Watumill after the Indian Conference that the government health officers had told her the Hindus were trying old contraceptives like oil and cotton plugs with some success. The least successful method was rhythm, the people either couldn't keep it up or counted wrong. Also both men and women had come to family-planning talks and listened with interest, but though at first few had taken the talks seriously, now more did.

A few weeks later, she was asking the Watumill Foundation for more expense money for her international work. She kept begging the Rockefeller Foundation to increase its twenty-five-thousand-dollar annual grant, as well as the Brush Foundation its thirteen-thousand-dollar grant, and the Doris Duke Foundation its five-thousand-dollar grant.

Yet she told the Massachusetts chapter of the PPFA that she felt it was timid and weak to wait for money. The women there told her "When hard cash comes in, hard work will go on." She replied, "Every experienced campaigner knows that money follows hard work. It is not the other way about."

Meanwhile she continued her own fund raising. When John D. Rockefeller III was in Tucson, she gave a dinner in his honor so that she could casually bring up the subject of her cause. Dorothy McNamee warned her that he was a teetotaler and might be offended if she served liquor. "I always serve liquor at my parties, and I make no exception," she replied. She seated him at her right hand and so charmed him that before he left he wrote her a check for one hundred seventy-five thousand dollars. "That's more like it," she exclaimed after he had gone, waving the check about.

The Ford Foundation, which she solicited vigorously, wouldn't contribute, however. The wife of Henry Ford II was a devout Catholic, and as William Vogt, president of the National Planned Parent Federation recognized, "We can't jam birth control down his throat, even if three out of his nine trustees do feel it is one of the most important problems, if not *the* most important, facing the world."

Margaret wanted to keep after the Ford Foundation just the same, but her health was too unpredictable for sustained effort of any kind.

Meanwhile, Abraham Stone was having a hard time running the Bureau. This was mainly because he was not an experienced fund raiser, and patients' fees alone could not keep the place in operation. Nonetheless, in Tucson Margaret kept on charging the Bureau for such comparatively petty expenses as stamps and phone calls connected with birth-control work. She even sent the Bureau all the gas receipts for running her Cadillac, asking Stone to explain to the accountant that "every time I go out it is on an errand connected with birth control."

Stone decided he simply had to apply to William Vogt, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation, for money. She was extremely upset.

I could help you by giving up the International work and thereby save you a few grand a year. I often think it was not doing you a favor to let you take on the Bureau, no matter how much you wanted it. But it's rather late to look back. I note your request

of the P P F's help and it will be a miracle to me if you get a dollar out of Vogt

When Stone wrote her that Vogt said he would take on the financial burden of the Bureau on condition that the PPFA assume direct supervision, Margaret was even more upset "I am deeply disturbed, as I hope you are," she wrote back And when Vogt went further and asked Stone to show him the Bureau's books, Margaret wired "Am flying to New York immediately Don't show anybody the books" Eventually, however, Vogt had his way He got to see the books and made her assume some of the expenses she had asked him to pay She left New York in a huff, flying on to Stockholm with Jonathan Schultz to try again to realize the great ambition of her life—to get the Nobel Peace Prize She was sure that if she and Schultz personally kept lobbying for it, she would stand a better chance of winning it But nothing came of their efforts She went to Stockholm and lobbied again the following year and the year after that The results were no better This particular honor eluded her to the end

By 1954 Margaret's health was deteriorating rapidly She had a bad seige of bronchitis and double pneumonia and had to stay in the Columbia Presbyterian Hospital for weeks Amazingly, she pulled through

It didn't help that her weight was way up either But after each heart attack, Stuart had advised a diet low in fat and salt, only to have Margaret defy him Once, for six months she ate nothing but pancakes slathered in butter, blintzes heaped with sour cream, and salty caviar When he tried to stop her, she answered as always "I am rich I have brains I shall do exactly as I please"

In 1954 she suddenly stopped this mad diet and went on a sensible one, with the result that in a few months she got down to her goal of 125 pounds, telling Juliet that she was "praying hard to the gods that I can keep that weight for the rest of my life"

She worked hard in 1954 toward another goal—helping Pincus raise funds to continue his research on what he now called simply "the pill" John Rock had at last come out openly in support of the project and was also doing his own birth-control research in a limited way at his clinic in Brookline All that stood in the way was the money needed to do the necessary large-scale testing on women themselves Luckily

Stanley McCormick died in 1954, and when the long legal complications over his will were settled, his wife got control of fifteen million dollars. She could now help the cause to the fullest extent. Margaret went East for the pleasure of personally presenting her to Rock.

Rock remembers being told by his secretary that he had an appointment with Margaret Sanger, whom he had never met, and a Mrs McCormick of whom he had never heard. At the appointed time two ladies arrived, one small and frail and dressed with great chic, the other tall and stately and dressed in old-fashioned, severe clothes. He mistakenly assumed the severely dressed woman was Mrs Sanger, for didn't all crusaders resemble Carrie Nation? When Mrs McCormick identified herself and offered him forty-five thousand dollars a year for five years as a starter, promising him more later if he needed it, he knew that he and Pincus were really on their way.

Originally they planned to do the testing in Japan, but they could not get the full cooperation they needed, they switched to Puerto Rico instead. It took ten years and over two million dollars from the time the research on the pill was started until it was finished and accepted as safe by the Federal Drug Administration.

With the help of Rock, Pincus, Mrs McCormick, and a host of other dedicated workers, Margaret had at last put a nearly foolproof contraceptive into women's hands. She had found her Holy Grail.