

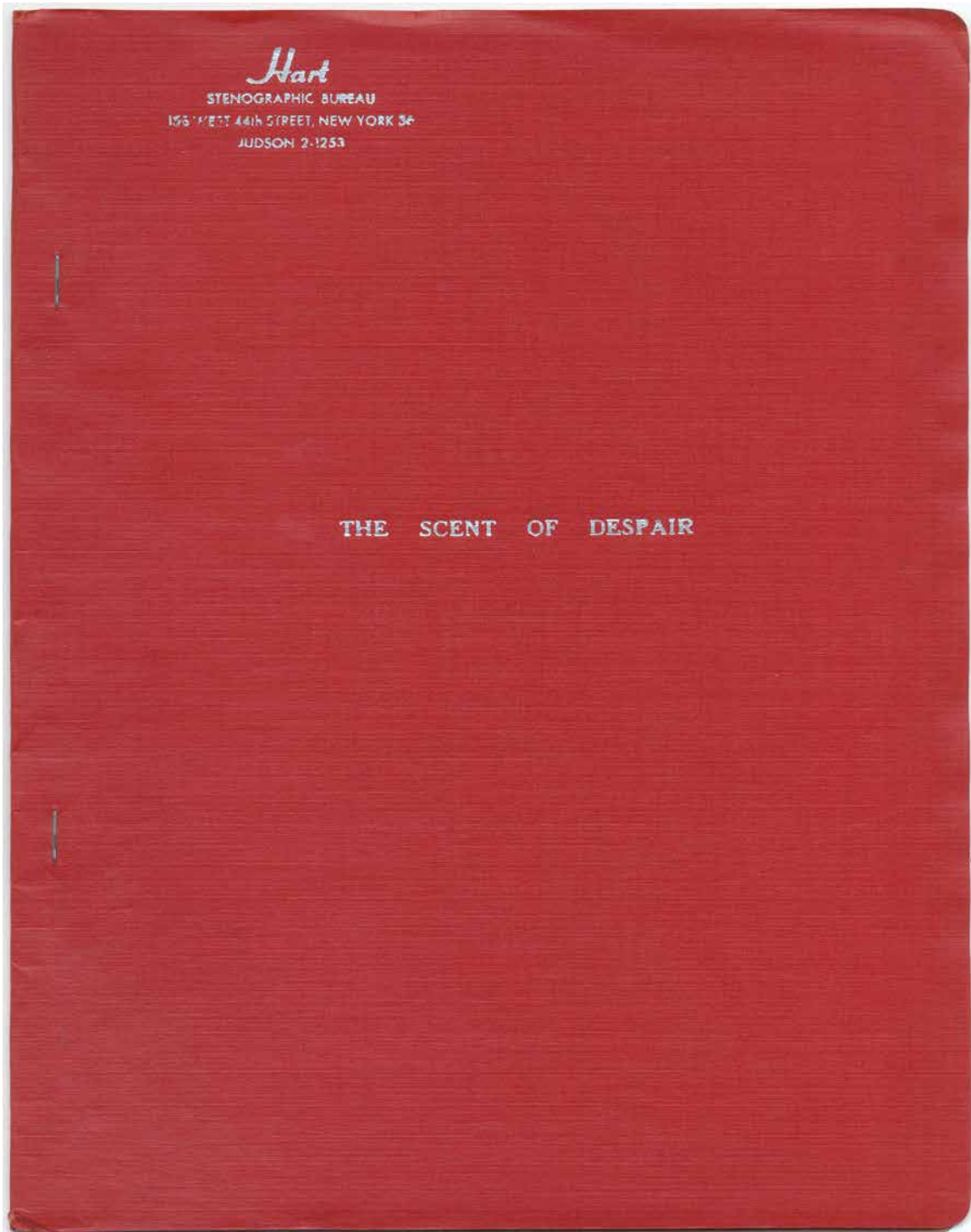


Marian Seldes

The Scent of Despair

New York

\$1200



Quarto. 18pp. Stapled in red Hart Stenographic duplicating wrappers. Fine. An unpublished short story by Seldes, the Tony and Obie Award-winning actress, about a woman forced to confront her mother's lifelong depression that's she always denied when her father leaves town on a business. *OCLC* locates no copies. [BTC#419925]

All day Saturday they had sat in the sun and talked
and drunk iced tea and laughed and if it seemed strange to
Richard that Carol's mother had not come out of her room,
she gave no sign of it. When they were hungry she would go
to the house and make them sandwiches or salads and bring
them out to him on a tray. They spoke softly though neither
of them referred to the sleeping woman.

THE SCENT OF DESPAIR

That night Carol heard her mother moving in her
room and went downstairs to see her. But something about the
sounds made her stop at the door and not knock and not go in.
She stood in the dark and felt helplessly childish. She
realized that it was the first time in her adult life that
she had been with her mother without her father being there.
And that always in the past if she had doubted what to do
she would ask him. He would usually say, "Why don't you
just leave her alone for a while, darling? It's just a mood."
And in time her mother would reappear as though nothing had
happened. She might have spent the whole day in her room,
but the conversation would resume where they had left it off
and they would become a family of three again easily, magically.

But now the magician was not there. Carol wondered
if she should try to call him in the morning. He must have
left a number somewhere. No. Whatever it was, she could
handle it. Just a mood.

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