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ADVENTURE IN CONTENTMENT

SOMETIMES I say to myself: I have grasped happiness! Here it is: I have it. And yet, it always seems at that moment of complete fulfillment as though my hand trembled, that I might not take it!

I wonder if you recall the story of Christian and Hopeful, how, standing on the hill Clear (as we do sometimes—at our best) they looked for the gates of the Celestial City (as we look—how fondly!):

“Then they essayed to look, but the remembrance of that last thing that the shepherds had showed them made their hands shake, by means of which impediment they could not look steadily through the glass: yet they thought they saw something like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place.”

How often I have thought that I saw some of the glory of the place (looking from the hill Clear) and how often, lifting the glass, my hand has trembled!

DAVID GRAYSON
(Ray Stannard Baker)

Contributed to the *Flamingo*

THE FLAMINGO

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NOTE

DOROTHY EMERSON

IF EARTH would end
When I died,
I could die
Satisfied.

MUCK LAND

STELLA WESTON

HANNAH wiped her hands on the blue-checked apron. It was already soiled. Remnants of the last five meals could be found upon its faded surface. A large rust-colored splotch testified to the red flannel hash which she had whipped up that night for supper. One corner of it flapped in charred and brittle tatters where she had used it to grasp the handle of the soup caldron when it had boiled over the day before. This time an ugly scarlet stain remained where she hastily scrubbed off her hands.

She held her fingers out to the smoking lantern and scrutinized them cautiously. They were grubby from helping with the planting that week. The nails were ragged and splintered, while a thick triangle of black lay just beneath their points.

“Muck land,” she snorted contemptuously.

As she lifted the lantern, it creaked on its rusty handle. The barn expanded as the light searched out

its boundaries. The roof lifted higher and higher into a yawning black dome, while the corners shrank deeper and deeper, forming tunnels of darkness. Even the floor seemed to fall away into the gloom, leaving a well of pitch into which the lantern's light dropped widening circles of ripples. Hannah, herself, seemed to be standing on an island of brightness, and as she moved, the island followed her with silent precision.

She paused as a gleam broke through the blackness. A point of flame seemed to dance by the open door. It drew the brilliance of the lantern away from her until all the light was gathered into one small spark. Hannah hurried nearer as the darkness pressed down on her. She could feel it clutching at the neck of her dress and tugging at the hem of her skirt. She hastened toward the flame and felt the darkness sag and fall limply away as she reached it. Weak with relief, she saw that a tangle of harness had been looped up over a nearby stall, and the buckle on the dangling bridle was the source of the wavering flicker. She sniffed the familiar smell of warm horsehide and the musty tang of old leather, and her surroundings returned to their normal appearance. Again the island of light encompassed her as she moved through the stable door toward the house.

Outside the night was heavy with stars. They stretched like festoons above the trees which gleamed with fruit and leaves of powdered silver. Hannah lowered her arm and let the lantern bump dully against her knee. There was no need to hold it above her in such whiteness. She noticed as she mounted the steps to the house that her shoes made sucking sounds on her feet.

"Muck land," she murmured.

Stacks of dirty dishes cluttered the kitchen sink. She

wished now that she had washed them before she had followed Ep to the north meadow. She would have had plenty of time to tidy up the place and still reach Ep while he yet remained out there. She had wondered for several days past whether he was going crazy, spending all his evenings out in the dark, just staring with a strange smile at the rich mire which stretched out to the north fence. Yes, she would have had plenty of time to do both.

She had no trouble in finding the dish-cloth. It hung in a slithering gray mass upon the pump. Funny thing. It reminded her of something dead, hanging there like that, dripping a melancholy drizzle into the sink. It looked like something hateful and yet helpless. She snatched it down and slammed it vigorously into the dishpan.

The house was curiously silent. The windows and the doors seemed to be reproaching her. They didn't need to. She hadn't done anything to be ashamed of. Not even anything that she would have to cover up. She was thankful for that. Yet she dreaded telling the neighbors when they began wondering. She supposed that when Henry Sikes stopped the next morning for the milk, he would have to know. Well, tomorrow was plenty of time.

She blew out the lamp in her room and undressed in the dark. It made her feel safer. She always had thought that the elm tree which stood outside her window was an inquisitive old thing. It was always peering this way and that and at the same time nodding wisely as though it knew a secret. Well, she was the only one who would keep secrets that night.

The bed stretched miles and miles wide. She reached out her arms on either side and could not find the edge of it. She supposed that she had not taken

up so much room in a bed since the day she had been married. From habit she unconsciously drew herself compactly together, as near to the wall as she could lie. Then she remembered, and reached for the other pillow. She had always wanted to sleep on two pillows at once, and tonight she would do it.

Morning found her curiously numb. She had lain in one position until she no longer seemed to possess herself. Her feet were quite unfeeling. She wondered whether they were crossed or whether they were not touching one another at all. She realized that as soon as she moved them, she would know, so she kept rigid for a few minutes and made vague guesses. When at last she stretched, she found that they were crossed, and again they became a part of her.

She dressed with a luxurious slowness. She even paused to study her face as she screwed up her hair. It was the first time in years that she had done such a thing. Her face had never been good to her. It had always frightened people away. Or if it had not frightened them, it had made them laugh, and that was even worse. She was sorry that she had looked at herself again, and turned the mirror to the wall. Ep had seldom used the mirror either. When his uncle had died and left them the farm, it had been hanging there on the wall and they had never bothered to remove it. Suddenly it occurred to her that Ep had never laughed at her face. Had he ever been frightened by it? She hardly thought so. When he was courting her, he had told her that she had nice eyes, but only once had he ever repeated it.

Henry Sikes was already at the gate when she got downstairs. She opened the door and waved at him. His look of perplexity at finding the milk can empty, amused her. She would not shout the reason to him.

She would make him come up to the porch and ask her. She dusted off the cane chair and sat down. She knew that she would not have to wait long. Much as Henry Sikes disliked her, he could not bear an unusual thing unless he knew the reason. He had bragged that he knew all the news long before anyone else because he was first to visit the farms each day. Well, he would certainly have something to make the tongues wag that day. Something more startling than anything that he had spread over the countryside before.

"What's the matter, Hannah?" Henry lifted a long leg over the porch railing and straddled it. "Cow died on ya?"

"No, of course not. Fan's as healthy a critter as ever had twin calves."

"Then why ain't the milk can ready? Land knows, I never did see much sense in selling milk when you got but one cow. Sh'd think you'd use all her milk yourself. Howsomever, if you want me to haul your milk, I'll haul it. But why ain't it ready this morning?"

"Because Ep always milks the cow, and Ep ain't here any more. Nor he won't be back neither."

Henry raised his bushy eyebrows like startled question marks. "Ain't here? Why, where is he?"

"Ep's gone away. Doubt if he'll come back to these parts ever again. We had an argument to settle and that's the way we settled it. No, Ep won't milk the cow no more."

It was going to be more difficult to explain the matter to Henry than she had supposed. Already he was edging away from her with a curious air. She felt his eyes upon her in a new searching way which made

her vaguely uncomfortable. He seemed to be pulling her face into shreds and sorting out the pieces. She felt as though she had always kept her face bundled up before, and now he had caught it undressed.

"Yes,—you see, Henry, Ep's been acting sort of crazy lately. Soon as evening come, he'd tike down to the north meadow and just stare at it. Now you and me know that that north meadow never done nobody any good. And 'twouldn't ever be useful 'til 'twas drained. I kept telling Ep so, but he couldn't see it. Said 'twould take money that we ain't got. Said he had a better idea than that and 'twould cost 'most nothing. So off he'd go soon as it got evening and leave me at the house all alone.

"'Twouldn't of been so bad, had we had any hired hands or girl-help around. But we never could afford none except during harvest. So I knew that there'd be lonesome evenings all along until fall if Ep kept on. Finally he told me his idea. 'Twas pigs! Ep said that bacon was steadily on the rise and there'd be more money in it than in vegetables. He knowed we hadn't gone in for livestock to any extent, but he thought the north meadow was just a natural-born place to raise pigs. He muddled over the idea and mooned about it evenings, because he didn't have time to give it thought during the days, till he went plumb crazy about it. He'd measure and calculate and dream whole pig-pens, whitewashed and shining, into the north meadow.

"You see how foolish 'twas, don't you, Henry? And Ep knew I never could abide pigs,—not since that soft-speaking Angela Lee brought one here for a pet last summer.

"Course you recollect Angela, our summer boarder last season. She was a lazy thing,—always writing

words on paper. Said there was beauty in everything,—even pigs. Beautiful pigs! Imagine! And she left that squirming greedy little hog here when the time came for her to go. Said she knew that Ep had got attached to it and she couldn't keep it in the city anyway.

"Well, I see'd as how this was going on forever, if I didn't put a stop to it. So I didn't say anything, but last night after supper, I sat down by myself on these steps here and tried to think it out. Ep had left me alone again. Then right by the steps I sees a rose slip that was going to seed, and all of a sudden I thinks, 'If Ep's going to have beautiful pigs, I'll have more roses. Yes, I will. White ones busting open like snowballs and yellow ones like store butter.' And I reaches for the garden knife to trim off that rose slip.

"Jus' then I hears a squeal down in the meadow. It sounds jus' like that ornery pig. So I naturally decides that now if any was the time to tell Ep that two could play this game of beauty, and if the farm was going to be neglected, I was going to do the neglectin' myself.

"You don't know all the things I thought goin' down that stubbly path to the north meadow. The night was real bright, almost like day, but I fetched along a lantern to be right sure I didn't meet up with those boggy spots at this end. Twice I did go in up to my ankles, huntin' for Ep.

"And you wouldn't believe it. There sat Ep a-holdin' that pig. His knees was huddled up under his chin and the pig was tight against his chest. And he was lookin' over it into the north meadow like he was seein' snakes—or pig-pens. I remember even his shoes looked crazy, all slimy around the heels from

the clay and all soppy at the toes which were still seeping at the edge of a boggy spot. Fact is, he looked like a swimmer, almost, all posed for a settin' dive.

"Well, I speaks to him real sharp and asks him what's the idea—leavin' me alone at the house, and with all the prowlers we've had around the place lately, too. I tells him I should think he'd be ashamed of himself.

"Ep doesn't seem to care any more what I says to him though. He just sits there without budging, a-hugging that pig and a-patting it when it grunts now and then. I reckon I was mightily provoked because I'd had a hard day, but most any woman'd get riled with such a man.

"All of a sudden I jerks the pig away from him. That moves him all right. He jumps up and looks at me hard and says, 'Hannah, you've got nice eyes, but you've got an ugly face. I should have knowed that folks need beauty' And quick-like then, I stuck the pig with the garden knife.

"Oh I wasn't sorry I did and I'm not sorry now. It don't do to be encouragin' crazy folks. Of course the pig gave a squeel and Ep knowed what I'd done when he sees the blood drippin' down on my apron. For a minute I thought Ep's going to kill me, and I throwed the pig in the bog, so's to be ready for him. But he doesn't touch me after all . . . just stands there tremblin' and swayin' like a dishrag what ain't quite dry. He was all gray and clammy. And I most felt sorry for him.

"Then Ep says, 'There ain't nothin' left in you for me and there ain't nothin' left in me for you,' and I knowed it was the truth. So now you see, Henry, how Ep couldn't ever come back to be with me again.

I even reckon that perhaps he thought I was crazy, while all the time I knowed he was. So you needn't wait for the milkin' today. Will have to go now until tomorrow's load."

"I'm right sorry, Hannah. Right sorry." Henry Sikes was already half way down the path. "I'll stop by at Doc Graves and see if the Missis don't want to come up and help you straighten things out. She's a good body about such things."

Hannah smiled at the haste with which Henry unhitched his team. "There, guess that'll give 'em all something to talk about. And every word of the truth, every word."

She reached up and fastened the morning glory vine more securely to the porch stay. She kicked a loose clump of mud off the steps onto the ground. Just inside the door, she picked up a soiled gingham apron from the floor where it lay in a disorderly heap, and poked it gingerly into the stove. The kindling-box yielded a few skimpy strips of pine, and she dropped these onto the apron. She had to adjust the damper carefully to divert the stream of acrid smoke which seeped out into the room, making the place reek with a stale odor. As she pushed the window high above her head in order to freshen the room, she observed the north meadow lying furtive and sullen beyond the gooseberry bushes. It was ugly like herself. It had frightened most people away, but she had laughed at it.

"Guess I won't drain the north meadow after all." Hannah laid a speculating finger behind her ear. "I recollect now what Missis Graves says about muck land. That a little bit of it mixed in with the soil, is the best there is . . . for raisin' roses."

FRANCIS ANN

WILLIAM HINCKLEY

How queer that Frances Ann should exhibit the traits that dominated her whole early life when she was but eight months old! On the very morning that she attained eight months she followed the fashion—probably for no other reason than because it was always done by the best babies—and spoke a distinct “da.” It was her first word. At least her father who had heard it and all her attendants, thought it was her first word.

But just before Father came into her room that morning she had executed a distinct “me”—the first word, together with its nominative and possessive forms that dominated her impulses and feelings from that time on. That was one thing. There was still another. She had fooled her first man.

Frances Ann grew to be a clever girl of eighteen. Then, just as when she was a baby, she could not always speak of what she felt right off, before people, because she hated egotism. Why, everybody hated egotistic people! She tried not to make a definite appraisal of herself in any way. It may be truly said that she did not think about herself. Probably it would be even more true to say that neither did she think about other people, nor about anything. She had feelings and impulses, likes and dislikes, and her mind was filled with much she had heard and read. Words rippled continuously from her lips without her knowing or even caring how they came there. As a result her college friends often spoke of her:

“Isn’t Frances Ann clever?” or “Hasn’t she the most original ideas?”

She attended the Delta Phi dance with Harry. The Delta Phis really did not rate as well as the Kappa Chis, but Harry was a Kappa Chi and all the Kappa Chis were there. Frances Ann got a big rush from the Kappa Chis. The fifteen minute intermission was almost over. Frances Ann, slim, lovely, alluring, modern to her pointed finger tips, stood leaning against the white panelled door of the hotel blue room and chattered to two boys in tuxedos. Her shoulders shrugged to emphasize her chatter.

“And why not, Harry? Don’t be so victorian!”

“Victorian?”

“Why,—Sara, Catherine McKay was over there, wasn’t she, Dick. Everybody went over after a coke.”

“There, they’re starting ‘My Suppressed Desire’—you two argue it out while you dance. I gotta go and find—” Dick had turned and gone.

“Harry, you aren’t mad are you?”

“Oh, no. Only I don’t think you ought to go over to the drug store with Dick when you—you wished on the way down that you and I would have the intermission together.”

“Well, Dick cut me. I had to—”

“I don’t know what will ever become of you.”

“—Had to go on with him. And all the rest went to get a drink.”

“Dick’s cut you too much tonight.”

“Harry, I’m awfully sorry I didn’t have the intermission with you. You ought to know that.”

Of course, the argument was then and there settled. Harry was fooled. She wished Harry to be an ardent suitor for her favor, and by his ardor and excitement a sort of advertiser for her.

Ten minutes later Dick cut Frances Ann again.

“Hello, Dick, isn’t this a keen dance?”

"Yeh, what's the matter with Harry? He oughtn't to be like that, people won't like him. Guess he thinks he's a gallant or something. Somebody's goin to pop him some day."

"Dick, promise you never will hit him? Please promise me that! You never can tell what might happen. You might—why you might kill him." She paused and questioned with a naive look for a reply.

"O. K. I promise if you'll give me a date for Friday night."

"Friday night?" She rolled her brown eyes. "Friday night. Let me see. Oh, yes! I am going to my aunt's for dinner. I'm sorry, Dick. Really I'm awfully sorry. But you will promise me anyway that you won't hit Harry, won't you? We can do something some other time."

Frances Ann knew men. It was one of her iron clad rules never to give a boy a date the first time he asked her. She wanted to seem hard to get. She wanted the boy she went with to appreciate her.

Dick came by the house to see her every afternoon for the next ten days. She never allowed him more than ten minutes of her time. She knew she had to appear busy and in demand.

Thursday he dropped in just as she was going out with a group of girls.

"Aw, sit down, and let me tell you the fable of the fair co-ed."

"Once upon a time there was a fair young co-ed who owned twenty evening gowns and just the right roadster. She picked out just the right college and when she got there she enrolled for just the right courses.

"She attended the first college dance with just the right boy. She wore just the right one of her twenty

gowns. Not a single cut did she get the whole evening.

"The next day she consulted the wise one. 'My dear girl, you may have a roadster and twenty evening dresses, but if you don't have 'it' you'll never go over with the men.'"

Everyone of the five girls laughed. So did Frances Ann, but she realized that that was what she had lived by. That was her whole philosophy of life. It was truth to her. Still, she laughed. The others all thought it was funny.

"If there's anyone with more 'it' than the little girl on my left," he looked down at Frances Ann and she smiled coyly up to him, "if there's anyone on the campus with more 'it' than you, we would have to call it 'those.' What do you say about taking in our dance over at the Moose Manor Club with me Saturday night two weeks from day after tomorrow?"

"Let me see," she counted on her fingers though there was nothing to count. "I'll let you know tomorrow afternoon. It that all right?" She did not wait for a reply. "Come on you fair co-eds with 'it.' I get to drive." The five girls thundered across the sorority house porch. The starter clicked, the roadster whirled off.

Frances Ann and Dick were at the Kappa Chi dance together two weeks later. Frances Ann got the rush of the evening. She went over like a dirigible. In the archaic phraseology of her grandmother, she was the "belle of the ball."

A new boy broke in on her. Harry had cut her only four dance steps previously.

"Frances Ann, this is Mike Adle." Harry introduced them.

"How do you do." Frances Ann knew she must be on her guard.

The orchestra stopped and the drummer shouted "Intermission." The two looked at each other.

A funny feeling came over Frances Ann. She felt as if she had just been in bathing in the salt water of the Pacific, and was drying in the red evening sun. There was a burning—a sort of glow like that which follows salt water bathing. She took hold of Mike's arm with both hands and stood close to him.

"What shall we do for fifteen minutes? I don't want a coke. Let's walk out on the course. The moon is wonderful and no one will take a walk tonight. It's too cold for them."

The two walked slowly. Neither spoke. Frances Ann cuddled close and Mike put his arm around her and held her hand.

"I've seen you often and heard a lot about you," at last he ventured shyly.

She looked up into his face.

"But I never knew anyone could be so lovely," he continued boldly.

"I guess I wouldn't be lovely if you only knew me." She almost gave herself away to a complete stranger. He squeezed her hand gently.

When the two returned twenty-seven minutes later, Frances Ann was pink, her cheeks having been slapped by the chill wind. As she danced with Mike she closed her eyes and smiled.

They danced four steps and Dick broke in.

"How's the dance?" he enquired.

"It's just grand, Dick. Tell me, who is Mike? When did he arrive? Are you rushing him?"

"I say not. He's just a fellow that's been here for two years—works every afternoon pressing pants and studies all night most nights. He's a guest of Larry's

and Larry didn't come to entertain him. Naw, old funny had to stay home and study for an exam. But Mike came—probably celebrating after pulling down an A average."

"Let me tell you the fable of the fair coed. Did you ever hear it?"

"No. Tell me."

Dick promptly started on with "Once upon a time there was," and Frances Ann promptly let him go on without interrupting. It gave her an opportunity to think about things.

It was funny, but there was something distinctive about this boy who had worked his way. No man had made her feel that way before. She felt as if he had been dressed in brown, though she thought that tuxedos are never made of anything but black broadcloth.

"And the wise one said, 'You may have twenty Paris gowns and a sport roadster, but if you don't have 'it' you'll never be a success with the men!'"

Frances Ann woke up and squeaked a silly laugh. She knew she was supposed to. And to think that was the way she had always looked at things. But she laughed anyway. The attitude must be all right. Every girl who rates looks at things that way, she thought. Another Delta Phi broke in. He didn't talk much and Frances Ann was glad.

This Mike was all right but why should she think so much about him. He was just another man. He would probably ask her for a date before the night was over and she would promptly refuse as was her custom.

Later Mike did cut in. Again not a word was spoken between the two. Frances Ann closed her eyes and again she felt as if Mike was dressed in brown.

Harry broke in. Mike had not asked for a date

as she expected. He had said nothing. She wondered if she would ever see him again as the orchestra played "Sleep" as the final waltz. What would she do if she should never see him again. She knew they were meant for each other.

For three weeks Frances Ann stayed at home every night. When her male admirers called she would send them away, excusing herself to doctor her headache or her cold or because she had to study. She thought only of Mike Adle.

The three weeks of mourning soon passed. She threw off her veil and came down stairs joking with the girls that she felt like a new person—once again she was her old self. She made up her mind to accept the next date that the boys asked her for.

"Tell the next guy that calls that I have jumped out of the casket and am ready for big things."

Of course, she made allowances in her own mind for those first daters—the ones who had never asked her before. She couldn't accept the first invitation from a boy. That would break her rule and would give the wrong impression. Once again she was hard to get.

"Phone, Frances Ann."

"Already! Gee!"

"Hello."

"Mi—My goodness! Where—have—you—I mean—Who is it?"

"We did have a good time. I certainly did."

"Oh, I'd love to."

"The Baby Grand—yes it's a good movie."

"All right, at eight o'clock then."

"Goodbye."

And he was a first dater. She did it,—she broke the rule.

PIGEONS

MARY LEE KORNS

CHIAO SAN, the *k'an men ti*, sat near his gate house in the shade of a mimosa tree smoking a long pipe and fanning the flies away from his closely shaven head. A flock of pigeons wheeled above him. He listened to the plaintive, wavering tones of the whistles under their wings and to the increasing of the sounds as the circle formation in which they flew grew smaller. Faster than his eyes could follow they were sailing downward and lighting in the courtyard.

The small son of Chiao San's master ran out of the center building at this moment, his amah following him.

"Oh look at the pigeons," he cried, "I shall feed them some grain!"

"Pigeons!" said Wang *nai-nai*, the amah, "That is a very bad omen. It must mean that something terrible is going to happen. Ta Ertza, you must not feed them anything. Come with me."

"Why must I not feed them anything? They are looking everywhere for some food."

"Oh father, listen to the cannon outside the city wall," called a boyish voice from the gate house. "When are the soldiers coming here? I wish I were a soldier, father! Don't you wish you were a soldier?" and Chiao San's own small son ran out of the gate house up to his father.

"I want to feed the pigeons," whined Ta Ertza. "What bad thing can happen to us?"

"What bad thing?" queried Chiao San's boy turning round eyes upon his playmate. "Many things! An airplane might drop a bomb on us—we might be in the war—"

"Where is war? What is a bomb?"

"Did your father not tell you about the war? Wang *nai-nai*, don't let Ta Ertza play with Tchwer. I will send the master out if I see them playing together."

"What did I tell you?" cried Wang *nai-nai*. "It was a bad omen that the pigeons came. Trouble is starting already. Ta Ertza, you must come in at once. *K'wai k'wai ti!*"

"Son," screamed the voice from within, "you are not allowed to go near Tchwer anymore. Come in I tell you!"

Chiao San produced a cock feather weighted with a copper and said:

"See who can flip the cock feather from one foot to the other without a miss for twenty times. A moon cake will go to the winner."

Ta Ertza flipped the coin-weighted feather only four times and missed. Tchwer took it eagerly. Again the discordant notes of the harsh voice came from the *fangtza*.

"Why don't you come in? *Wo Chiao ni!* You little villain! Where is Wang *nai-nai*? I will send your father out for you."

At this point the master did come out of the side building, but he did not order his young son indoors. The pigeons scattered as he approached Chiao San, who rose to greet him with a bow of humble devotion.

"Chiao San," the master whispered, "I want you to admit no one. Let me know as soon as there is any unusual stir outside the gate in the *hutung*. I have just received a message warning me that my name is at the head of the list of men to be killed by General Chang. If we cannot fool the soldiers, my family and I will have to escape through the back alley. Then I shall have to trust you to guard my possessions. You are a faithful servant."

Chiao San bowed in deferential acquiescence. Once more the voice of the sharp-tongued mistress sounded, this time from the side of the courtyard. She hurried toward the group as fast as her bound feet would permit and caught her young son by the ear.

"You are incorrigible! Have you not learned that in disobeying your parents you are committing the greatest sin? It is a sin which the heavenly spirits will not forget. And you, spiteful one," she said turning to Tchwer, "who told you about the war?"

"My father said—" Tchwer started.

"Your father told you that?" She squinted her eyes in the sun, and cried to her husband, "That man is a spy!"

"What man?" The master's face changed color.

"Chiao San! He has been telling his son about the war and that the soldiers are coming here. He is probably in league with them. *Ke liao pu ti!* We shall all be killed!"

"Nonsense," replied her husband wiping his forehead with a handkerchief. "Your ridiculous fears disturbed me for a moment. Chiao San will himself assure us that your suspicions are unfounded. Speak, Chiao San!"

"Master, I can say nothing?"

"How is that," demanded the mistress. "You see he cannot defend himself. It is not safe to keep him here any longer. Order him to leave and to take his unmanageable child with him. I will not have Ta Ertza contaminated by Tchwer. He is a hateful child who talks of war and bombs."

"The words of my wife will be as wind in my ears when you justify yourself. Certainly what she says is not true."

"There is nothing I will not do for my master," Chiao San reiterated.

"Order him to go!" cried the mistress. "He is a spy."

The master's eyes flamed in anger. "You can say nothing and yet you will do anything for me! A strange attitude! Go! My wife is right! Your son is corrupting my son, and you are a spy! Go, I say—but wait—*tung-i-tung*—what is that noise I hear outside the gate?"

The clash of arms and the shuffle of many feet in the *hutung* were heard.

"Open the gate," shouted a voice.

Chiao San moved toward the entrance.

"Oh, my husband! Did I not tell you that he was in league with the soldiers? Stop him!"

Chiao San looked through a crack in the gate, and then returned to his master. He said:

"They are looking at the list to make sure this is my master's house. There is no time to lose. My master must escape through the back alley."

"Do you think I would take your advice? This is probably a trick of yours. I will see for myself."

"I implore my master not to go near the gate. I hope that he may entrust me with his valuable papers and precious jewels. I will bring them to him tonight when it is safe for me to pass through the streets. The master should leave his house immediately and go to his brother's *fangtza*."

"We will break through!" shouted several voices. Fists and guns pounded on the gate.

"Yes, yes we must not delay. Come, my wife and son. Wang *nai-nai*, you remain with Chiao San. . . . My papers and other possessions are locked in that carved leather chest in my office," called the master, already out of sight.

Armed soldiers and a crowd of street brawlers poured into the courtyard when the gate crashed in. Tchwer and Wang *nai-nai*, very much frightened, waited in the gate house, and Chiao San pushed the red leather chest into a dark corner, covering it with a piece of tapestry. He mingled with the looters who shouted to each other, "Give me that! I found it!" and "This foreign-devil clock will bring a great deal of money." Chiao San picked up a few small things and stuffed them into his tobacco pouch. He inserted the most valuable jewels of his mistress under the straps binding his trousers to his ankles.

"Who are you?" a soldier thrust a bayonet at him. "What are you taking? Get out into the street. Wait! Hold up your arms. I will search your pockets. Only two *mao*!" he threw the silver piece on the floor disgustedly. "You are a poor one. I don't want that."

"Well, I do," and Chiao San stooped to pick up the two *mao* piece.

"Who is this man?" cried another soldier. "Can he tell us where the family jewels are kept? What has he in his pockets?"

"Nothing," replied the first soldier, "nothing but an *er mao* piece."

"Take off your outer *kwatza*, and we shall be able to search you better," the second soldier commanded.

Chiao San did not lower his arms or make an attempt to remove his coat.

"The fellow is stubborn. Take it off for him."

Several men fell upon Chiao San and tore off his garment. In doing so they stepped on a loose end of the cloth strap bound around one ankle. The jewels spilled out on the floor.

"Ah! He is a thief! There are many things one can do to a thief. Some bury them alive. There is nothing worse than a thief."

"I am not a thief!" Chiao San declared.

"Perhaps you would rather be killed by this bayonet than buried alive . . ."

"I am not harming anyone . . . I am only a servant doing his duty . . . let me go, I beg of you! Give me the jewels."

"You want the jewels!" mocked the soldier who had first accosted Chiao San. "These jewels are enough to make all of us rich. We will take them, and you may have this . . ." he stabbed him. "You are of no use to anyone."

Before many hours had passed, all moveable valuables had been taken from the house. Wang nai-nai and Tshwer had not been disturbed beyond receiving a few curses from the street mob. When they dared emerge from the gate house, the courtyard was silent. It was strewn with papers, broken glass, and pieces of furniture. Several pots of flowers had been crushed. Wang nai-nai peered through the torn paper windows of the side building and called twice. Then:

"*Ke liao pu ti!* Where can he be? Tshwer, did you see your father go out? Perhaps he took the chest to our master."

"I think I saw my father go out with the soldiers," said Tshwer proudly.

"Go out with the soldiers! How can that be? I am frightened to stay here any longer. Let us go to the master's brother's house before it grows dark. We shall probably find Chiao San there. Come!"

She and Tshwer wound their way in and out of the *hutungs*. They met only the man selling peanut oil. He cried, "*Hua sheng yui er-r-a!*" A blind, dumb man was mumbling on a corner. They reached the dwelling of the master's brother and knocked on the gate.

"Is my master here?" asked Wang nai-nai.

"Yes, he is here . . ."

"Tshwer, where did you come from?" cried Ta Ertza, running out of the center building.

"I came from your house. The soldiers took all the things except the chest which my father has."

"Where is your father? Where is the chest?"

"Is not Chiao San here, then?" questioned Wang nai-nai. "*Ke liao pu ti!* He must be dead!"

"My father is brave! He went off with the soldiers!" Tshwer boasted.

"Oh . . ." breathed Ta Ertza.

"What is this I hear?" a rasping voice shouted from the house. "What are you telling my son? What about the soldiers?"

"The soldiers have taken everything in your house, and my father has gone off with the soldiers . . ."

"This cannot be true!" moaned Wang nai-nai. "I did not see your father go out, but your eyes are better than mine."

"Gone off with the soldiers!" shrieked the voice of the mistress. "My husband, did you not hear that Chiao San has gone off with the soldiers?"

"Is this true?" demanded the master.

"Yes, and all our things have been taken! *Aie-yu, aie-yu!*"

"The scabby-headed tortoise! May the heavenly powers curse him evermore for his deceit! The unfaithful wretch!"

"May the gods have pity on us!" sobbed Wang nai-nai. "Ta Ertza, Why did you try to feed the pigeons this morning?"

"They only wanted some food," and Ta Ertza began to cry. Tshwer cried too.

THIRTEEN

CAROLYN HEINE

THIS is my birthday, but somehow I don't feel birthdayish at all. I can't figure out whether it's being thirteen and almost a woman like Uncle Clarence says I am, or because school starts next week, or because of what happened yesterday. But I think it's because ever since Mrs. Lawrence left I've been feeling like I'd had one of those dreams where you always wake up just before you get to eat your ice-cream—only worse.

Last year Miss Jones, that was my teacher and about the nicest one I ever had, said we ought to pick somebody in a book with a beautiful character and pattern after them.

Well, Mrs. Lawrence is a born pattern, at least I thought so the minute I saw her get off the train here at Holly Springs that day. She had on the prettiest black dress and hat that sort of matched her hair, and her face was white like the facings on her dress. There she was, all black and white, even her eyes were black, only her mouth was red, red like a strawberry.

Usually many people don't come out to Holly Springs on the morning train, but everybody goes to meet it anyway just like they do the other three because there isn't much else to do.

Mr. Perkins he owns the Holly Springs Hotel, at least he's supposed to, but Mrs. Perkins, she does most of her work. The boys work for their folks in the summer and go to college in winter, that is Hal and Malcom do, but David and Lucia are still in Junior High.

Well anyway, the day Mrs. Lawrence came an old man, and two fat Jew women, and Bobby—that's Mrs.

Lawrence's little boy—came too. But Hal and Malcom and David who are supposed to look after people and take them to the hotel didn't pay any attention to anybody but Mrs. Lawrence. Hal and Malcom had a fight over which one was to carry her bags, and that left David to help Bobby with his toys.

I couldn't eat any lunch that day for looking at her. She had changed her dress for a thin one the color of her lips. She smiled the nicest smile. It made me crinkle all up inside.

Afterward I got a book and sat in the lobby to read, only I wasn't really reading, I just wanted to see what she would do next. And what do you think happened? She came right up and asked *me* when was the best time to go swimming. I told her we generally went to the three o'clock train and then went to the pool.

She said, "Who is 'we'?"

Malcom and Hal and David and Lucia," I said, "but maybe you'd rather go later with some ladies when it's cooler." I was awful scared maybe she would, but she said no she would go with us.

When she came down to go to the train she had already put on her suit. It was red, too, with a sun-back. Right then and there I made up my mind to always hold up my shoulders so when I got big enough to wear evening dresses my back would be pretty and perfect like hers.

When she saw I had on a dress she seemed surprised. "I thought you'd be ready to go swimming," she said.

Then without thinking I said, "Aunt Agatha doesn't think it is very nice for people to go around in bathing suits unless they're ready—" about that time I realized what I was saying. I got all red and hot because I thought she'd be mad, but she wasn't. She just made

a funny little face and said, "It's too hot for clothes anyway. Come along."

There were lots of people in swimming that day, all of us kids, and two of what Lucia and I call old grandpas from the hotel, and a few ladies, but most of them sat and watched us. Gee, it was fun! Mrs. Lawrence laughed and splashed and pushed the boys in, and everybody had the best time.

After that she went in every day with us. Only after a while Aunt Agatha and the other ladies quit coming. It got to be just Mrs. Lawrence and Lucia and me and the Perkins boys. We'd swim and splash and duck each other for a while and then we'd lie in the sun and get sun-tan. Mrs. Lawrence would tell the funniest jokes! At least I guess they were funny because the boys would almost die laughing. Lucia and I would laugh too because we didn't want anybody to know we didn't see the point.

We never could swim but an hour because Hal and Malcom had to take turns going to Eustice every day on the truck for ice. They always took Mrs. Lawrence with them. Hal would take us, too, sometimes, only he almost always made us kids stop at the creek and fish till he and Mrs. Lawrence came back. But Malcom never would take us. He'd get all red and stamp around and cuss sometimes when we'd ask to go.

But I always hated the week-ends because such crowds would come and take Mrs. Lawrence away from us. Hal and Malcom would get real mad every time she played tennis or went swimming with any other men when they had to work. They'd dress up on Saturday nights, though, and rush her at the dances. All the other men would, too. I never saw anybody so popular.

One night when there wasn't any regular dance but

we were all just out in the pavilion, she did a solo dance for us. Hal turned out all the lights but one rosy one, and played a real weird sort of record. Gee, she was pretty when she danced, not exactly pretty either, but sort of fascinating, like the Egyptian princess I saw dance in the movies once for the sheik. It gave me the queerest feeling to watch her, kind of an empty ache way down in the bottom of my stomach.

Then one night Aunt Agatha ate too much ham or something and got ptomaine poison so that Uncle Clarence had to shut up his office and come out to the springs. Aunt Agatha got better soon but he decided he might just as well stay for a little vacation. So he'd go swimming with us and take walks, and at night the grown people would play bridge, only not Aunt Agatha because she was still sort of sick.

Then yesterday morning Lucia and I and Uncle Clarence and Mrs. Lawrence went for a walk. Lucia and I looked for Indian arrow-heads because David has more than we have, but Uncle Clarence and Mrs. Lawrence just walked and talked.

Once I heard her say, "Of course, Clarence, I think Agatha is a very fine woman in a great many respects, but somehow she doesn't seem just the type for you. She is a clinging vine, and you know what ivy eventually does to a building, my dear."

Well, that started me to getting mad. It was the first mean thing I'd ever heard her say. I didn't know what she meant about the ivy, but I didn't like her calling my Aunt Agatha a vine.

When we got back to the hotel there was a telegram saying for Uncle Clarence to come back to town at once. Then Mrs. Lawrence said she had been intending to go to town and get a birthday present for Mr. Lawrence, he was working so hard back home, poor

dear. So if Uncle Clarence didn't mind, she'd just ride in with him and stay a day or two at the hotel. She'd get Mrs. Perkins to keep Bobby while she was gone.

They had to start right away because it takes four hours to drive in from Holly Springs.

I don't know what it was, maybe the flustered sort of way Uncle Clarence kissed Aunt Agatha good-bye, or the way Aunt Agatha looked, or the way Mrs. Lawrence waved from the front seat by Uncle Clarence, but all of a sudden I just hated her.

After they had gone I went into Aunt Agatha's room and cried and cried. She wanted to know what was the matter, and then she cried too, and she explained lots of things I didn't know or understand before.

Then we felt better but I still feel queer even today. It isn't much fun without Mrs. Lawrence, still I don't know what I'll do when she comes back because I don't want to be friends anymore. So I guess it's a good thing we're going back to town in a few days and that school starts next week.

IRONY

DOROTHY EMERSON

HE CHAFED against the pattern of his life,
And thought to slash it with a sharpened knife;
He never knew his suicide did fit
Exactly in the hated plan of it.

MEMORANDUM

DOROTHY EMERSON

THIS memorandum in my life:
My anger was a keen-edged knife,
But ruin that my anger made
Has cut me with a sharper blade.

YELLOW CHRYSANTHEMUMS

CAROLYN HEINE

NATALIE dallied long before her cluttered dressing-table that night, her slim fingers darting discriminatingly in and out of the varied assortment of small jars and boxes, filled with sweet-scented creams and powders.

She displayed the same meticulous care in choosing each dainty garment; and, when her toilette was complete, her mirror framed a charming picture.

The saffron chiffon of her frock and the pearls roped loosely around her throat enhanced the ivory pallor of her skin and the luster of her dark hair.

As she bathed the tips of her ears in some new French perfume, she realized what a farce it all was, this fastidious regard for detail. Henry would propose to her if she were gowned in gingham because Henry was the type who, having once made a decision, clung tenaciously to it. And Henry, she surmised, had fully made up his mind to propose. Why try to tempt him by putting perfume behind her ears where little tendrils of hair curled so bewitchingly? He would never have the audacity to kiss her there. It took men like Phil to make love delightfully. Phil—

Had it actually been nine years this month since she and Phil had taken that ramble through a countryside mellow in the autumn sunlight, walking hand in hand, saying little, each conscious of an inexpressible ecstasy?

Rounding a bend in the road, they had caught sight of myriad rich yellow chrysanthemums, overrunning the door-yard of a drab farmhouse. Their scent, cool and invigorating as earth upturned after a rain, permeated

the air. That sudden, sheer loveliness had been breathtaking, and somehow it had precipitated their bliss.

Phil had uttered a sharp cry, and run forward to the woman on the porch. Natalie had not heard what he said. She only knew that he returned bearing an armful of the blossoms, and had transferred them to her arms, saying, "For you, because I love chrysanthemums and I love you."

Then, quite heedless of the gaping farm-woman, he had gathered her to him and kissed her for a heavenly-long time. Would she never forget the tart fragrance of those yellow chrysanthemums, crushed, it seemed, into her very soul by Phil in that embrace?

Her mother's quick step on the stair interrupted Natalie's reverie. It had been mother who had brought her back to earth nine years before by insisting that she was much too young for marriage, and Phil—quite impossible, his family, his future, his temperament, everything. She had sent him away, no longer gay and debonaire, but wounded to the depths of his sensitive soul.

"Henry is down stairs," puffed Mrs. Nevin entering. "You didn't tell me he was coming tonight," she reproached.

"Thanks, but you might just as well have sent Bertha to tell me." Bertha wrinkled her nose questionably and turned around. "Where did you get that?" she demanded.

"Oh, the chrysanthemums? They gave each woman one at the club this afternoon. I thought perhaps you'd like to wear it. It goes beautifully with that gown."

Natalie took the flower, inhaled its pungent perfume for a moment, hesitated, then tossed it down. "You know I abhor chrysanthemums," she snapped.

Her mother picked up the offending flower. "Nat-

alie," she began timidly, "if Henry proposes, I-I hope you won't refuse him."

"I probably shall." There was something hard and bitter in Natalie that made her torture her mother thus, the mother who grew more and more anxious as the years passed and her daughter stubbornly refused to encourage the few men who did seem interested. Most of them thought her an iceberg.

With a last glance in her mirror, Natalie went down stairs and accepted Henry's matter-of-fact proposal in a matter-of-fact manner. He had used exactly the words she had known he would, and—he had not kissed behind her ears.

Next morning Henry's chauffeur came bearing a florist's box and a note. "With Mr. Henry's compliments, Miss," he said, grinning broadly.

Natalie read the note before turning her attention to the flowers. It was a mere line, "When may I see you again?" Henry was not one to commit himself too daringly.

She smiled as she untied the box. After all, life with Henry was going to be rather nice. He would never forget the little niceties of convention. The flowers, of course, would be roses. They would always be roses.

They were, however, not roses that day, but a magnificent bouquet of yellow chrysanthemums. Natalie gasped and buried her face in their poignant depths.

The chauffeur gazed uncertainly at the young woman who stood motionless. Finally he ventured, "Pardon me, Miss, but I think Mr. Henry expects an answer to the letter."

She lifted her face, "Ah, yes," she said in a distant, toneless voice, "take him this," and slipping off her newly acquired engagement ring, she gave it to the chauffeur.

LITTLE SAINT HILDA

CHRISTIE MACKAYE

LITTLE Saint Hilda
 Where have you been
 With your hair brushed back
 Till it stretches your skin?
 Your eyes are like gentians
 Looking out of a tomb
 Your face is like Michael's
 Leading the angels
 Lovely and thin
 And wan as pale straw,
 But you have such a flower like
 Stare of surprise
 That I think the wind
 Just blew open your eyes.

A BIRD BLOWING

CHRISTIE MACKAYE

WILD and low
 The clouds
 In the call of the running wind.
 Wild and high,
 My heart
 Like a bird in the blowing.
 How life shall come and go
 There is no knowing.
 Only I,
 Like a bird blowing
 Wild and high—
 Burst apart
 The seed of my heart.

LITTLE THINGS AND FAR

CHRISTIE MACKAYE

IF ONLY I could forget
 Little things and far—
 The smaller they are the lovelier
 The lonelier they are:

The sun in a wood;
 A certain way
 The wind blows through the trees;
 The desolate scream of a train at night;
 The undersong of the seas.

AFTERGLOW

CHRISTIE MACKAYE

IN A GOLDEN, tempest-smitten hour
 I saw a haughty smiling god,
 A laughing promise in his face,
 And in his hands
 The shining, clanging
 Elements of power.

But when the skies so silently
 Draw back at night
 And show a wilderness
 Of distance to my sight,
 Oh, then I know
 There is a greater thing than this.
 I cannot reach unto its untried bliss:
 But only find its lingering afterglow
 In a white flower
 That the dawn winds blow.

LONELY PEACE

CHRISTIE MACKAYE

THE SILENCE of stars and snow
That the lost winds blow

Across a wilderness of plain in silver smoke,
And the loneliness of rain falling forever

Steeply with a whisper down
Deeply through space.

TO H. D.

CHRISTIE MACKAYE

ARE you dark, sharp browed—
The swift fervour of your spirit
Beating smokily through darker iris
Protectively harsh—clouded?

Or have you a face like a pansy—
Eyelids delicate as wilting petals,
Slight arms
And grace like fluttering shade?

SKETCH

ELEANOR HORNER

MARDA STEVENS sat in the window of her hotel and stared at the traffic below. It was nearly six—the rush hour. There was a great deal of noise. She hated the sound of ill-shifted gears, and of tires rudely slid over pavements. It hurt her ears. Still it was fun to sit here in a great, luxurious hotel, no voice lessons to accompany, no squirmy, dense younglings to teach, no haphazard radio engagements to fill; it was nice to be at last an accepted person in the world of music, the accompanist of an internationally known soprano.

She considered the possibility that she had been wrong in accepting this so lucrative position instead of the scholarship they had offered her at school; but the memory of her struggles in the past four years, and the vision of new experiences ahead, and above all, of money to put in the bank reassured her, and her thoughts slid into easier grooves.

This amusing little city. Not so little. It was really much larger than home, but it had such a bustling and sprawling youngness about it along with an unconscious charm, and beauty in unexpected places. It was the first big city of their tour, for Madame had been filling a few small town lyceum dates before beginning her eastern and middle western tour. Madame Yolanda Ulick-Coreli, soprano, Marda Stevens, accompanist—how fine it sounded!

There was dinner to be considered. Madame would doubtless dine out with M. le Manager who had taken them driving in the afternoon and whose obsequiousness, Marda thought, ill concealed his avarice. Madame would also, doubtless, choose to appear in the gold gown. In that case she would wear her white taffeta

instead of the green chiffon. Contrast; black hair, white dress—gold hair, gold dress.

There was an imperious knock at the door. Marda started and then sat back. "Come in," she said, but the door had swung open as her words were uttered, and Madame came into the room.

"So— sitting here in the dark mooning, my child," she said, all smiling.

Marda had not noticed that but for the flashing of the huge electric sign across the street it had grown quite dark in the room. She rose slowly and snapped on the light.

"Did you want me, Madame?"

Madame seemed to grow taller and more beautiful now that the white light in the ceiling touched the gleam in her golden hair and the sparkle of the magnificent jewels at her throat. She stood resplendent in the golden gown and ermine wrap, smiling at Marda.

"Only to let you know, my child, that I will not be with you at dinner, but the car that M'sieu has so kindly put at our disposal will come for you in good time to take you to the hall."

"I see. Thank you very much for telling me, Madame. I wonder—" Marda hesitated, hating herself for staring. "I wonder if I could use the piano for a while after dinner?"

Madame smiled again and wrapped the ermine coat over the shimmer of the golden gown.

"You are most welcome, Marda. Au revoir!"

The room shrank back to its natural size, and the light seemed to dim a little. Marda stood still, frowning. She thought: Why did Madame come in here? I wasn't ready to have the light turned on. I was having fun by myself. Still it was nice of her to tell me instead of leaving it to that lousy clerk. Madame

is always very considerate of me, she is really very nice to me, all the same—I wonder—. Ho hum, I believe I'm hungry. I wonder if the hotel dining room is very expensive."

Slowly the big hall filled up. It was a bare, boney place, thrown together for a political convention, and needed the warmth of the bright-garbed people. Marda eyed the crowd through the peekhole.

Half the enormous, oval auditorium was curtained off, and on the stage this side of the curtain they had built a little box of a dressing room, looking ridiculous standing there alone. The vacant part of the hall was still and shadowy. She could imagine how sharp her heels would resound if she should walk across the floor. Back to the crowd again. How many had come in since her last glance!

M. le Manager bustled around, officious and beaming. Now he was coming to the peekhole, watch in hand, to see how the house was filling. It was 8:27 and he prided himself on his prompt curtains.

Now comes Madame, blonde and statuesque, sailing graciously out of the dressing room with her glance and smile all set for her audience.

Well—here goes.

Out they went through the rough grey curtains, tall, golden singer, dark, slender accompanist, and there arose a thunder of applause. Marda felt a little dizzy for a moment when she saw the vast sea of faces, but after she was seated, the keyboard stretched before her, a sense of joy and power possessed her. Madame nodded her signal graciously, as she did everything. The house lights dimmed, and the concert began.

It was just like the rehearsals had been, only grand, dramatic, but a curiously detached and isolated feeling surrounded her.

In what seemed a trice the first Italian group was over. Behind the grey curtains Marda smoothed her dark hair, drank some water, chatted with the manager's associate, and—it was time to go on again. She gathered up the second pile of music and followed the rustling, golden-radiant singer out. This was the important number of the concert, the aria, *Ah, fors e lui*, from Traviata, long and difficult. Marda adored it, and Madame sang it divinely.

The opening measures—beautiful, beautiful! Then that high, melting voice. On the aria spun itself until the long recitative. Marda dropped her hands in her lap, and head forward watched the rise and fall of the music.

Suddenly she went cold with a sinking feeling in her middle. Was it possible? Automatically her eyes followed the music. Could it be? Yes, she was right. Madame,—Madame Yolanda Ulick-Corelli was flatting. So gradually had the tone slipped down that only the acute ear could note the change. On the diva sang, beautifully, deliciously, but flatly.

Five measures more before the piano came in again; now three. In another second Marda would have to play, and when she did what horror! Madame on a long sustained note and herself on the chord half a tone higher. There was only one thing to do—transpose the whole difficult and tricky remainder of the aria half a step. Her fingers curved over the keys ready to think and play in E major instead of F.

The rest of the aria was a nightmare to Marda. Again the applause was enthusiastic, but there was no encore, and back stage at last, feeling upset and exhausted, she dropped into a chair as far from any one as possible, thankful for the few minutes intermission.

The program went on—the German group, the English group and the several encores passing strangely and automatically.

After the concert she refused the manager's invitation to join their supper party, and asked to be let out at the hotel. She endured the ride in silence, unable because of her embarrassment to enter into Madame's enthusiasm. As the car stopped at the hotel she hopped out as quickly as possible. She could not look at Madame, who called out:

"Good night, my child, sleep well."

Confused, angry, and unreasonably humiliated, she sipped a malted milk in the coffee shop, and then went to bed, pondering.

The next morning Marda took breakfast in bed. On the tray lay the morning papers. Curious and a little excited she turned to the reviews of last night's concert. Unanimous praise!

"—and the musical and dramatic height of this perfect evening was the aria *Ah, fors e lui* perfectly rendered by the gorgeous nightingale—" and so on and on.

And then "Miss Marda Stevens lent her musicianly assistance as accompanist with precision and delicacy of interpretation—"

That was all.

Marda threw the papers on the floor. "Marda Stevens also ran," she muttered, and thought of the rejected scholarship. . . .

"Oh, well."

She yawned and stretched—and turned her attention to grapefruit, coffee and toast.

RACHELL

CHRISTIE MACKAYE

AFTER supper I went into Kate's room. I had come to ask her for the tenth time if she would go to see Rachell with me. I never could get Kate and Rachell together, perhaps because I tried so hard. They were so totally unlike that it was like trying to mix oil and water and yet on that very account I thought that they might interest one another.

Kate lay on the bed reading a magazine and eating chocolate dutifully. She had a headache and felt rather sick, she said, but she was enjoying herself and to do so conscientiously she had to eat chocolate. She was lying on the mattress surrounded by pillows. The blankets hung indecisively between the bed and the floor while the sheets, looking like a white tornado were on the other side of the room. Papers, shoes, books and a few other things, companionably confused, lay on the floor and one end of the curtain rod had fallen so that it hung down over the window like the arm of a scarecrow.

Kate, herself, was anything but disreputable, although today she looked pale and disagreeable. She was thin and seemed tall although she was not. She had crisp, short hair, almost black, and dark restless eyes. Her face had a certain precision about it that one could not trace unless it was that her lips came together delicately as though she were tasting something pleasantly bitter. Her mother had died when Kate's brother was born and as her father couldn't be bothered much about the children, they were bundled off to boarding school as early as possible. So Kate was somewhat of an orphan.

She was irritated that night. She had been digging herself into a bad mood for the past week and I wrangled with her for a long time before at last she flared at me and said, "All right, I'll go tomorrow night and now get out and leave me in peace."

Rachell held a great influence over me. There was always a particular atmosphere about her—an imperturbability and strength. How deep it went I never was quite sure and especially lately I had come to fear lest it should turn out to be a mere trick of expression. She was like a statue into which one can read a hundred thoughts—a hundred personalities and I never knew which of the Rachells I imagined her to be was the real one.

Whenever I went into her room I felt a little as I used to in the theatre when I was small—wonder at the dreamlikeness of the lights—the cool silken ladies and then the breathless moment when the curtain swished up.

* * * *

It was growing dark as Kate and I crossed the campus the next day. The lightness of the spring gave an added clarity to sound. The sharpness of our footsteps on the brick walk, the thin whine of a hurdy-gurdy down the street increased the unreality of the evening. A magnolia tree just beginning to bloom stood out whitely as though made of paper against the dusky violet sky and a few lights shone palely from the dormitory windows. A day or two ago I had come along here with Rachell at just this time of day and in the mystery of shadow and motionless quiet she had seemed like a more vivid part of the twilight. It surprised me for I had always associated her with the deliberate beauty of hothouse

plants rather than with any thing so intimate and fresh as spring.

Kate was light headed from lack of sleep and wanted to walk slowly and enjoy everything, but I was impatient to get her into Rachell's room. She had promised to go with me so many times and always something had happened to prevent it.

We went up the broad stone steps of the dormitory into the darkness of the hall and after a long climb reached Rachell's door. It was always closed, and always it took a little courage on my part to knock, though why I couldn't tell.

Kate pushed open the door and I followed her in, closing it behind me. A tall bridge lamp with a black shade threw a dull spot of gold light on the carpet leaving the rest of the room in shadow. Back in a dark recess were bookcases heavy with handsome, strange, old books, and on one of them stood brass dragon candle sticks that looked hushed as though they had been frozen into silence. The curtains and couch cover were dimly lavender. In front of us was the square of the open window through which glimmered the town lights. Just outside swung the long, thin branches of an elm and beyond a moth-ridden street lamp swayed over an empty street. The bed was drawn along-side the window and Rachell was sitting there leaning against a pile of cushions, one arm resting along the window sill. Her hair was a golden copper color, her face delicate and firm of outline, and of an overpowering tranquility. Only her eyes were curiously alive, contrasting with the immobility of her features. They were blue and it seemed that they had no surface but only depth as though they were made not of substance but of light. She had a habit of drumming on the sill with her fingers. Her hands were

small and somehow constrained and pettish looking, but the fingers were very perfectly formed.

Kate said little at first but sat watching Rachell with admiration. When at last she began to take in what we were saying she grew irritated at Rachell's calm self assurance and sweeping statements. Something had started us talking about war and Rachell thought that the only true bravery was fearlessness. "If someone advances when they are horribly afraid of what is ahead, it is only because they're more afraid of those behind them, or perhaps afraid of themselves," she said. "If they were brave they would go home and be pacifists."

Kate broke in indignantly. "Do you mean that a person isn't brave who goes ahead and does what terrifies him?"

"You'll always find that there is something else that terrifies him more," Rachell answered unheatedly.

"Sometimes it's to protect another person that a man fights, even though he is afraid."

"Yes, in that case it's legitimate but still he is a coward. A truly brave man conquers his fear because he sees how useless it is."

Kate was scornful. "Perhaps you can do that?"

"Yes—so far I think," said Rachell impersonally.

Kate looked contemptuous but did not answer.

There was an uncomfortable silence. I went to sit on the foot of the couch. Kate jumped up and moved nervously around the room looking at the pictures. The quietness grew heavy—even sleepy. I forgot about Kate. It was good just to be in the familiarity of the room, the mellowness that took its note from the glint of Rachell's hair—a color as dark as anything very bright can be. The sound of far voices rose ghostly, unevenly from the street. A trolley passed.

Kate came back to her arm chair on tiptoe. She relaxed slowly, watching Rachell from under her lashes till she was like another member of the room; her identity for the moment completely lost in Rachell's. I supposed that I looked like that too. Who was Rachell, I thought resentfully, to so absorb our personalities, to make us sit there like two idiots—even if her pale profile against the darkness was astoundingly mysterious and, well—lovely, I was tired of always internally kowtowing to her. I wished that I could get away from her.

We started talking again and Kate, roused from her apathy, started a violent discussion.

It certainly had been a mistake to bring her. All through the evening they quarreled. Kate furiously, Rachell always scrupulously polite. She never attacked Kate as Kate attacked her but as time went on she became indirectly more and more cutting, and always her arguments were infallible. I grew increasingly disgusted with her and watched like a lynx for a rancorous word, for something that I was really sure she had meant to be mean. If I should hear it, I decided, that I would get up and walk out of the room feeling free of her—then the spell would be broken. Soon the enamel would split and I would see what she was really like. How glad I should be to have her no longer uneasily on the edge of my thoughts!

Kate's bitter voice called me back to reality. She was no longer righteously indignant but sarcastic and curt and desperately bent on winning her point. She looked miserable, poor thing. I turned accusingly toward Rachell and found myself suddenly looking into her eyes with no time to think of their expression only lost in amazement at the intensity of their sting-

ing blueness. No—after all, perhaps there was no enamel to split, I thought.

"Let's go up on the roof to cool off," Rachell laughed. "You have just time before the bell rings," and we followed her up the stairs to the attic and climbed out through the sky light.

The wind had arisen and was blowing up a storm from the west but the moon was still bright for it had only just risen. Kate was hot and trembling with anger and now she shivered in the cold wind as we walked along the flat part of the roof and sat down near the chimney.

Beyond the town lay the mountains stretched out long and smooth like heavy draperies that have been dragged along the ground and dropped there.

"Let's go over and sit on the edge of the roof," said Rachell.

"No thank you," I answered.

"Will you come?" she asked Kate, not challengingly exactly, but interested to see what she would do. Kate lit a cigarette under cover of my coat and I could see that she was battling between pride and a great distaste for the edge of the roof.

"For goodness sake don't be foolish," I said. "That's a stupid, childish idea, and I want someone to stay here with me."

But Rachell had a fascination for dizzy heights. She got up now and walked over toward the side where there was no railing and Kate followed her. Standing near the edge of even a four-story building on a windy night makes me uncomfortable, so I stayed where I was.

I couldn't quite hear what they were saying because of the wind, but after a few moments I saw Kate turn towards Rachell eagerly with a gesture of surprise

and they talked together quickly and excitedly. Then Rachell turned back toward me. What were they quarreling about now! I looked at Kate. She had turned away from Rachell and found herself unexpectedly near the edge. The moon was out and she must have seen the objects below very clearly. The magnolia tree, the broad granite steps leading down to the sidewalk. I saw her lift her arms and push with them against the air as though it were water—a long push to send her back into safety. But she was looking down and at the same time she took a bewildered step forward. In a lull of the wind I heard her say, “Oh!”—rather quietly—indiscisively. Then again as though in wonder and protest. The two sounds floated plaintively towards me. I remember that they seemed like two bubbles coming across the roof slowly but inevitably and that I tried stupidly but with all the power of my will to *wave* them back.

I moved stiffly to my knees. Rachell was standing there alone, in her hand a torn piece of black dress was blowing softly against the greyness of the oncoming storm.

I felt suffocated and choked and it was long—so miserably long before Rachell moved. Then we both rushed toward the skylight. My mind was very clear then. I saw the black clouds like a thick smoke rolling up the sky, the slate roof of the next house darkly silver in the moonlight and the tops of the elms moving as though grief-stricken in the wind.

An idea was hovering above my mind like a bat that I kept beating off. Something had happened but I would not give it time to take form in my mind. Instead I thought of Rachell. Would she be as calm as ever or was this the time when I should see her serenity broken? After all, it had been a little bit her fault.

I pictured her face distorted with horror and I wanted to keep away from her—to see her looking ugly would be terrible—and all the dread that I was feeling concentrated in that one thought. I would not look at her. We reached the skylight and scrambled in with all the haste and efficiency we were capable of.

I kept my head averted, but half way through the window as we sat for a moment side by side on the sill, Rachell turned toward me. I didn't want to turn but involuntarily my neck jerked and I saw her. She was looking down so I couldn't see her eyes. Her hair under the unshaded attic light looked like something wrathful and triumphant, sucking the life from her face which was very white and unspeakably tired—as though something like this happened every day and she was wearied with it through and through. Otherwise her features were as still and composed as ever. No, I thought with relief—she isn't ugly.

As I waited only a fraction of a second for her to speak I felt an awe of her. She seemed like a tragic heroine in some old forgotten book. What must she now be thinking—feeling. She spoke as usual, lovely and with almost no intonation and yet in a manner practically impossible to disobey. And I felt ashamed of myself for having played with her like a toy in my imagination.

“Go and telephone for a doctor,” she said, “and promise me that then you'll go home the back way. You'll have just time before the doors close and don't go out the front way whatever you do!”

HOME GRAVES

PENELOPE PATTISON

I WONDER is she cauld out thar alone.
 It's done been a-snowin' fer taw days a-now
 and thar aint ne'er a-mite o' the earth a-showin'
 'ceptin' near that cross y'stuck overn her grave.
 Ain't y' better go out ta see?
 Things don't allus go jest right
 Wi' newly-laid. I think I done hear't them wild
 goats a-steppin' thar right on her heart.
 Don't set thar that-a-way a-starin' in the fire!
 Di'n y' hear what I jest said?
 (Ain't got no one ta talk wi' now she's gone.)
 Why di' n y' put a shed overn her
 like I axed y' to? Then I won't ha' to be afeart like
 Like I am now . . .
 Y' di'n set the grave true East 'n West aneather.
 Jest atter noon whan I's out thar, the sun
 het that board in sich-a-way hit made
 a blue shadder fall square crosst her breast,
 and that ain't right fer that-a-time o' the day.
 And I di'n want no cross a-fallin' ont' her, no ways
 Y' say y' di'n want no shed a-keepin'
 the sun offe'n her in the spring?—Spring!
 She wuz born'd in the spring—bless my soul,
 jest fo'teen year ago goin' on this comin' one.
 It jest don't seem quite right
 You and me ta be auld 'n her sa young,
 and her allus sa good 'n cheerful like.
 Think I hear't her a-cryin' out thar in them trees.
 Ill take a look ta see. Naw, I won't ketch no cauld,
 hit's done quit snowin' now. Gaud—
 Gaud shore made the wairld beautiful wi' her
 goin' . . . Come, look, her little soul,
 pure wite 's a-restin' on the tiniest twigs.

* * * *

Pore auld soul! 'Twas time she was a-goin',
 yit folks out our way tho't she'd hold on
 another winter. But this was a hard one—
 sa much snow.—Her man'll be thar aside a-her,
 afore long, now's he's got no one ta look atter—
 He built that little shed for ta keep the sun
 offen her—y' know
 the sun all'us made her sad like
 ever since she got ta lovin' winter sa.
 Pore auld soul . . .
 Gaud! Ain't th' wairld beautiful?

THE WIDOW

STELLA WESTON

WHEN loneliness sits down with me
 And settles back as if to stay,
 I proffer loneliness some tea
 And coffee cookies sugared gray.
 When loneliness stirs as to go,
 I loose the door with heavy hands
 For of all callers that I know,
 My loneliness most understands.

INTENSITY

STELLA WESTON

SINCE dusk and darkness deepen
 Feeling and thought,
 By night the day-sown gaping seams
 On star points are caught.
 Glances clash like heart-shafts.
 Words string into song.
 I would that my life might be
 All . . . night . . . long.

THE FLAMINGO

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TWO COMMENTS

I have read in leisurely fashion all the poems in the "Rollins Book of Verse" with satisfaction, delight and wonder. I am sending the book to one of the members of our English Department with the query as to whether we have pulled out all the stops in the organs of the brains and hearts of our own undergraduates. To me the performance is astonishing!

WILLIAM J. HUTCHINS,
President of Berea College.

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