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THE FLAMINGO



SPRING 1945

THE FLAMINGO

ROLLINS COLLEGE

WINTER PARK, FLORIDA

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Spring 1945

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The Russian Spirit

BY JANET HAAS

THE Russian spirit, like all intangibles which control men's lives and actions, is complex and provocative of study. At a cursory glance, it seems artificial and mechanical—wholly devoid of spontaneity and life. They are coming under the sway of a colorless impersonalism. Socialism is a science, with no room for emotion—no concern for the individual except as he is a member of mankind. Yet, in this very concern for man rather than for the individual men might there not rest a realization of the eternal verities? Jesus himself said that one could only save his life by losing it; that is, he could only live in truth and reality by becoming absorbed in the welfare of his fellow-men. Then, and only then, will he fulfill his responsibility toward life's pattern. Communism forces men to do what is right; it presses them into a mold of high ethical standards in the hope that the day will soon come when this will be done voluntarily by all, as a result of the expanding of material and spiritual life. Meanwhile, a man has no choice other than submission to remaking. It presents, therefore, a metaphysical question; that is, does the end justify the means? It is agreed by a large majority that the Soviet ends—social justice, economic equality, abolition of discrimination, substitution of an ethical code for fear-religions, and the true brotherhood of man—are worthy ones. However, the means the Communists used to attain these ends are greatly criticized by the friends of socialism, as well as by its enemies. Nevertheless, Anna Louise Strong, in her book, *This Soviet World*, gives the impression that the new order in Russia has brought to its people a new joy in life, a new strong individuality, a new sense of brotherhood. Hindus is convinced that it is not the material, but the ideal in Communism that is new to man. The very core of the spirit of this new system is socialization—a dynamic proletariat, imbued with the “we-feeling”, marching shoulder to shoulder toward the fuller life for all. Fired with enthusiasm, the people feel themselves for the first time a part of the living, growing, striving thing that is Russia. The keynote of the spirit of this new movement, then may be summarized in: equality, cooperation, brotherhood.

This alive, pulsating order of things is so new to our tradition-bound world that we must look at the era which gave birth to it. On this arid soil did the seeds of the equality of man fall. Czarist Russia may be likened to a gangrenous limb, rotten, putre-

fying, spreading its poison throughout the entire body, attracting flies which hovered about it and thus spread the diseases of fear, superstition, bigotry, oppression, and hate. Bolshevism severed this limb with the clean, sharp blade of revolution. Nothing could be salvaged from the "Dark Age" of Russia—the Romanoffs held the peasant masses in abject terror, in deadly fear of their very lives. Education of the common people was forbidden, as a possible cause of rebellion against the authoritarian government. The one thing a despotic ruler dreads is the enlightenment of the people and their subsequent demand for a greater share in government; therefore, we may note that the literacy rate in Czarist Russia was four percent, a far cry from the eighty-eight percent of today. Not only were the peasants kept in fear and ignorance, but also in squalor. They lived *like* pigs, and often *with* them. Russia was an outstanding example of rank inequality, with the privileged few living in gross corruption off their infamous exploitation of the wretched masses.

Small wonder, then, that those in Russia with the smallest grain of social consciousness and human decency determined that this system could not continue. There were, however, two distinct schools of thought in regard to the methods to be used in reaching the goal of equality. The victorious party, the Bolsheviks, forerunners of the present-day Communists, held that there must be revolution in order to bring about social and economic change efficiently. The vanquished Mensheviks, forerunners the Socialists, stood for peaceful, democratic evolution. Because of the ignorant nature of the Russian people, who were completely unready for self-determination, the revolutionary method was the only possible one. So it was that during the chaotic period of World War I the Communist whirlwind set upon the decadent Czarist system. Within an unbelievably short span of time, the workers had seized the means of production, which is the yardstick of power in any country; had seized the government; had either killed or exiled to the Siberian salt mines all nobility and all great industrialists; and were re-making Russia with a fist of iron.

Long will Russia carry the stigma of those evil days of the beginning of the Bolshevik era. For many years there were wholesale murders, terrorism, starvation and fear throughout the country. This is the Russia most people know; they do not realize that Russia has taken unbelievably gigantic steps toward democracy and a high economic standard. We aren't qualified to judge the Communists beyond our standards, for where else has an entire society been destroyed overnight and its antithesis set up in its place? Drastic ends necessitate drastic means, and so we must focus our attention on the Russia of today to see if the

Communists principles are, indeed, bringing to the Russian people "the fuller life."

When Lenin, apostle of proletarian rule, died, the choice of his successor was a momentous one, affecting the entire world. Trotsky was determined that Communism must be brought about in every country by a wave of revolutions. Stalin stood for the perfection of Communism within Russia, which was his prime interest, holding that the other countries might follow if they so desired. Stalin was elected by an overwhelming majority, and the safety of the world from Russian aggression after World War II was thus ensured.

In 1927 the first Five Year Plan went into effect, and by 1932 Russia had become an iron monolith. Complete industrialization had been the Soviet aim, and it was in large measure achieved. In 1932 the second Five Year Plan for increased production and development of resources went into effect. This goal was reached in 1935, and the Soviet embarked upon its Third Five Year Plan for equalization and the raising of the standard of living. Even now Russia's standard of living is lower than that of the United States, but there are no sharp contrasts such as are found here, and after the war the standard will continue to rise until each man's needs—and most of his desires—are fulfilled. Pitiful though it is that there had to be purges, fear, and starvation, that the Utopian ideal has not yet been reached by any means; let us see what progress has been made in relation to the short life of the Soviet system.

The political life of the Russians puzzles and outrages many. In the first place, the Communist party takes good care that the truth be on its side. Russians have the most rigid political censorship in the civilized world. And within Russia, absolutely no criticism of Communism, or advocating of return to free enterprise, is tolerated. The workings of the system, and its officials, are subject to unlimited public opinion. Barring the question of return to free enterprise there is nothing whatever that the Soviet voters cannot change. True, there is a one-party system, but this is the only way that the Communists can be sure of holding their power in order to achieve the ends which, they are so earnestly convinced, are for the betterment of mankind. Voting in Russia is far from being a token affair. The Soviet Union has today the largest body of voters anywhere in the world. Moreover, a larger percentage of them came out to elections than in any other country, they give more time to their elections and decide a greater variety of questions. When the day comes when Communism shall have proved itself to be workable and desirable, then it will subject itself to criticism.

Perhaps the change wrought by the Communists which is the most abhorrent to many is the religious upheaval. In understanding the present religious life of the Russian people, we must first understand what this supposedly precious thing of which the people were robbed was. Karl Marx has been quoted as saying, "Religion is the opium of the people." This was certainly the case with the Russian Orthodox Church, built on fear, superstition, ignorance, oppression. There was nothing spiritual about it, but rather a horde of ritualistic excrescences. The Russian people were as sheep, completely without self-determination under the sway of this gross, swollen monstrosity. In order to uproot this evil, the Bolsheviks went to the other extreme. A new movement of "Godlessness" sprang up, sweeping the youth of the country, who had no reason to believe in a just God under the Czarist regime. In a determined effort to rid Russia of its pestilential orthodoxy, priests, churches, religious worship, even God, were abolished. The Bolshevik theory is that by a scientific ethical code the application of Christian principles can be made without the "hocus-pocus" of calculated formalism. They are confident that they can rid Russia of religion by the spread and application of science, art, morality, sociability, social service, and a new faith. One of Russia's most outstanding successes is in the field of social justice. There is no such thing as race discrimination in this great land where one hundred and fifty nationalities live side by side in peace and concord. From the Kremlin to the outermost stretches of Siberian tundra, each group of people is a member of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Every "toiler" above the age of eighteen, regardless of race, nationality, creed or sex, may vote for the officials who govern him. Hatred of one of another race is unknown in Russia; if anyone is heard to express or seen to exhibit hatred for or exploitation of another, he is immediately imprisoned. Then, too, Russia is unique in her treatment of the criminal. Her criminal system is not vindictive or expiatory, but redemptive. Each lawbreaker is treated as an individual, and is helped toward cure, rather than merely punished. Criminals are placed on collective farms, where they work in a healthy atmosphere and have their thinking and values readjusted. The Russians feel that this treatment, together with the removal of the economic and social causes of crime, will solve the problem. That this system is working is clearly shown by the fact that crime has dropped fifty percent, and prostitution seventy-five percent, since the inception of the Bolshevik regime.

It is the contention of the enemies of socialism that the abolition of the profit motive robs the worker of ambition. The actual situation in Russia seems to provide a whole network of incentives

which result in similar behavior reactions to the displaced profit motive. The aim of Communism is to raise the worker's standard of thinking so that in place of greed, lust for power, and avarice as motives, they will be stimulated to strive for a productive Russia, for a well-fed nation, for the creative joy of achievement. Material self-interest in Russia is not abolished, merely limited. It is only natural to work for personal property; it is the ownership of the means of production that belongs to the proletariat, instead of to a few capitalists.

Authorities envisage the Russia of tomorrow as a combination of the three ideals of man's relationship to man—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Equality and Fraternity are theirs today; Liberty will come only when men know how to use it in the spirit of Christianity.

BYSTANDERS

Chinese children, sandaled with mud,
Huddled on homeless earth; and we cried.
With pity we answered hasty prayers;
We looked at pain-dulled eyes and cried.

Russian wheatlands, reaped by fire,
Lay bare as a shipless tide.
We tossed and groaned in troubled sleep,
And when we awoke—we cried.

Emotional and motionless, we watched the nations die;
But fear has clenched far whiter fists,
Hate's eyes are hard and dry;
Hearts are harnessed with sinew—no time to cry!

—*Muriel Fox.*

Ticket to Midvale

BY JOAN SHERRICK

A loud crack echoed through the stadium as ball met bat, and a small white sphere hurtled through the air. The centerfielder, moving a few steps to the left, caught the ball as it looped downward; and the game was over. Bill, trotting in from third base, tried to look happy. After all, this win boosted the Indians to first place and practically clinched the pennant for them.

He felt a hand on his shoulder and turned to see Red, the stocky shortstop, who shouted in his ear, "We're in, boy. We're in!" and then rushed past.

"Yeah, we're in," thought Bill with a derisive smile. "Everybody's in but me." He slowed down to a walk and looked up at the crowds pouring out of the huge concrete horseshoe. They looked the same as always and made the same sounds, but Bill stared at them as if he'd never seen the sight before. He stopped and turned around, just as a shadow slid across the field. The dust which fills sunlit spaces disappeared, leaving a clear-cut image of the diamond and the black and white scoreboard by the exit in centerfield. Bill took it all in—the greenness of the field, the black cinder track encircling it, and the rows of bleacher seats beyond. The stadium was almost empty by now, and few saw the tall, sandy-haired player touch the visor of his cap, wheel, and plunge into the passageway to the clubhouse.

Once there, he headed straight for his locker. Number five it was, and as his long fingers spun the knob to the right and left, his thoughts went back to May tenth, nine years ago, when he'd first opened that door. He drew out his street clothes, let them fall to the bench, and sank down beside them. As he bent to untie his shoelaces, Al Starling, a big southpaw who'd just come up from Baltimore, yelled to him, "You think we'll take the Series, too?" Bill became conscious for the first time of the men around him, of the warm steam from the showers, and of the smell of perspiration and liniment.

He raised his head, and with a note of sharpness in his usually soft voice, replied, "You better not challenge the fates, kid," and strode toward the showers. Al flushed and concentrated on buttoning his shirt.

"What's eatin' old Bill?" drawled Tip Evans from the corner. "D'ya suppose he's worryin' about that error he made on Barne's grounder?"

"No, he's been acting strange for a week now," replied Powell, the little, dark-haired catcher. "I swear I've never seen him so low. You can't even get him interested in a game of hearts, and that, coming from Bill, is a pretty bad sign."

"Well, it seems to me he could at least show some enthusiasm after the win today. Or does he think the fates will get mad if he gives out with a cheer or two?" scoffed Al, who was still nettled by Bill's remark.

"Cut it out, Al. Bill's been in this game a lot longer than you, and if he doesn't want to count on a pennant before it's wrapped up and ready to take home, that's his business," said Mike Barry, a broad-shouldered hard-hitting outfielder. The contagious grin, so characteristic of him, had been replaced by tightly-closed lips. Mike had been Bill's roommate for the last five years, both at home and on the road, so any unfavorable comments about him were treated as if they were personal affronts.

"Probably not one of them knows what's really wrong," he thought. But his own knowledge of Bill's trouble gave him no pleasure. He almost wished that he'd never stumbled across the pink slip of paper lying on the floor at the foot of Bill's bed. It had been crumpled and later smoothed out, as if by an indecisive hand. On its shiny pink surface was printed the news of Bill's transfer, effective September twentieth, to the Class C team of Midvale. Mike remembered the town. It was a small one down in the southern part of the state. He'd spent two months there years ago. It wasn't a bad place. The ball park was run-down, and the fans a bit scarce, but other than that, he'd enjoyed it. Of course, he'd been on his way up then, and baseball looked good to him, no matter where he played. It would be different with Bill. After nine years as a star in the majors, a Class C league with its continual round of night games, tedious trips on rickety busses, and meagre pay looks pretty disheartening, especially to a man with Bill's pride.

"No, it can't be pennant nerves," the catcher was saying, "Bill's too calm for that. Remember last year when the whole team started to crack just two weeks before the end of the season? It was Bill who pulled us through then and kept us out of the lower division. And, if Al thinks Bill is merely aiming to outsmart the fates with that downcast look, he's got the wrong idea. Bill hasn't any more superstitions than the average ballplayer; maybe even less."

"Certainly less than you," interrupted Tip. "You've got more lucky charms than the rest of the club combined. And how about that left sock of yours? I've caught you wearing it inside out five or six times."

"Well, so I am a bit superstitious. The fact remains that something deeper than that is bothering . . ."

Bill's return cut the speech short, but if he noticed the sudden pause, he gave no indication. Dressing hastily, he gathered up his baseball shoes, glove and other belongings and, without being seen, stuffed them into his well-worn leather kit. He crossed the room hastily and paused at the door long enough to mumble, "So-long, fellows."

"So-long, Bill."

"G'bye."

"Goodbye, Bill. See you tomorrow."

And that was all. It was exactly as he'd planned. He had intended to walk out of that door on his last day just as he had done hundreds of times before. No big farewell speeches for him. He didn't want the team's pity. He wanted their respect. That was it. Respect. A lot of respect he'd get on a bush league team like Midvale, where he'd be nothing more than a has-been. His thirty-six years would stand out like a sore thumb in the midst of all those youngsters. He was glad he'd decided to ignore the transfer. He'd make a clean break. Baseball had been his life, and now he would just find himself another one, back home in Kansas, maybe.

He heard a noise behind him, and there was Mike, falling into step with him.

"You didn't think I'd let you get away that easily, did you?"

"You know?"

"Yea, I know. You'd better not scatter your correspondence around next time."

"What about the others?"

"They don't know anything about it."

"I'm not going to Midvale," Bill said after a pause.

"No?"

"No. I'm getting out of baseball."

The street car for which they'd been waiting rumbled up, ground to a stop, and they climbed aboard. Neither of them spoke after they had located two empty seats near the rear of the car and settled into them. The tall buildings and the sidewalks, swarming with late shoppers, passed by unseen. Bill's eyes were viewing, instead, the ball field as it had been when he first signed with the Indians, with Holt at first, Johnson on second, Peters behind the plate, and a long list of other old names that had been missing from the roster for years. It struck him, then, that his name would be among the missing now. He'd never be on a baseball roster again. Nor would he attend any more of those wild celebration parties which the players were always giving. He re-

called one, especially, which had been held right after he was chosen the most valuable player of the year. That had been three years ago, and the champagne consumed that night was enough to sink a battleship. Bill grinned, for he remembered that that was the very thing he had been bent on doing, until two less fuddled minds convinced him of its fallacy.

He saw again the final day of his first season in the majors. With a three and two count, he'd smashed a hit to the right field wall, and scored a home run inside the park. That drive had meant the pennant. Odd, that he should come in on a pennant year, and from the looks of things now, go out on one, too. Only he hadn't done much to bring this flag. Bench-warming mostly. Oh sure, his batting average was still near the top, and he'd driven in some timely hits; but they were depending more and more on the new kid from Columbus as regular third baseman. He wasn't bad either. Not as smart, perhaps, but a few years of playing would fix that. Right now it was his speed that made him good. That was what Bill lacked. Oh, not when he first came up. He could have run rings around anyone then. It was only last year that he began to slow up, and even then, not many people noticed. This year, though, his slowness showed up on almost every play. Well, the new kid could take over in earnest now. Maybe they'd even put him in with Mike, since they both liked company, and since the kid was rooming by himself at present. They would click, too. Who wouldn't, with Mike? Hundreds of thoughts rushed at him—Mike rough-housing after a game; Mike losing at cards, he always lost, but that didn't keep him from playing; Mike missing trains at least four times a year; Mike he shoved the thoughts away.

Glancing over at the outfielder, he saw that he, too, was gazing into space. Mike, becoming conscious of the stare, looked up, and after a hasty glance through the window, announced, "We get off in a minute or two." Bill picked up his leather kit, and the two of them pushed through the crowd to the door.

They didn't say much on their way to the hotel, either. There wasn't much they could say. Mike wanted to break through that wall of pride, but didn't quite know how. When they arrived at the hotel, Bill started to pack immediately. Mike mumbled something about buying a pack of cigarettes and left the room. By the time he returned, Bill was just about ready to leave for the station.

"Well, this is it."

"I guess it is," Mike replied. "Aren't you going to eat first?"

"I'll grab a sandwich at the station. I'm not very hungry any-

way. There's a train for Kansas at 7:55, so I'd better start moving."

"There's a lot I'd like to say, Bill, but I'd only twist it all up. You ought to be able to read my thoughts by now, anyway."

"I can, Mike, and thanks."

"So-long."

"So-long."

The west-bound was marked up as forty minutes late, so Bill settled down on one of the long, wooden benches and thumbed through a *Life*. The words and pictures meant nothing to him though. Baseball blotted out all else. Twenty-five minutes later he walked up to the ticket window and resolutely said, "Ticket for Midvale."

DEAD LOVE

I left the hill and walked away
Slowly on a summer's day,
While behind me, dead and still,
He lay there smiling on the hill,
Smiling as he only could
From the heart where love had stood—
Love that filled my eyes with tears,
Love that crushed my heart with fears—
Fears that in a rage had thrust
The blade that turned his heart to dust.
And terrified, I fled and ran,
Searching for the world of man,
'Til I came upon the wood
Where the hearts of life now stood.
They struck me weeping to the ground
And called the ghosts of love around,
While up above the summer sky
Stretched on upwards
Higher than high.

—June Stern.

BITTER VICTORY

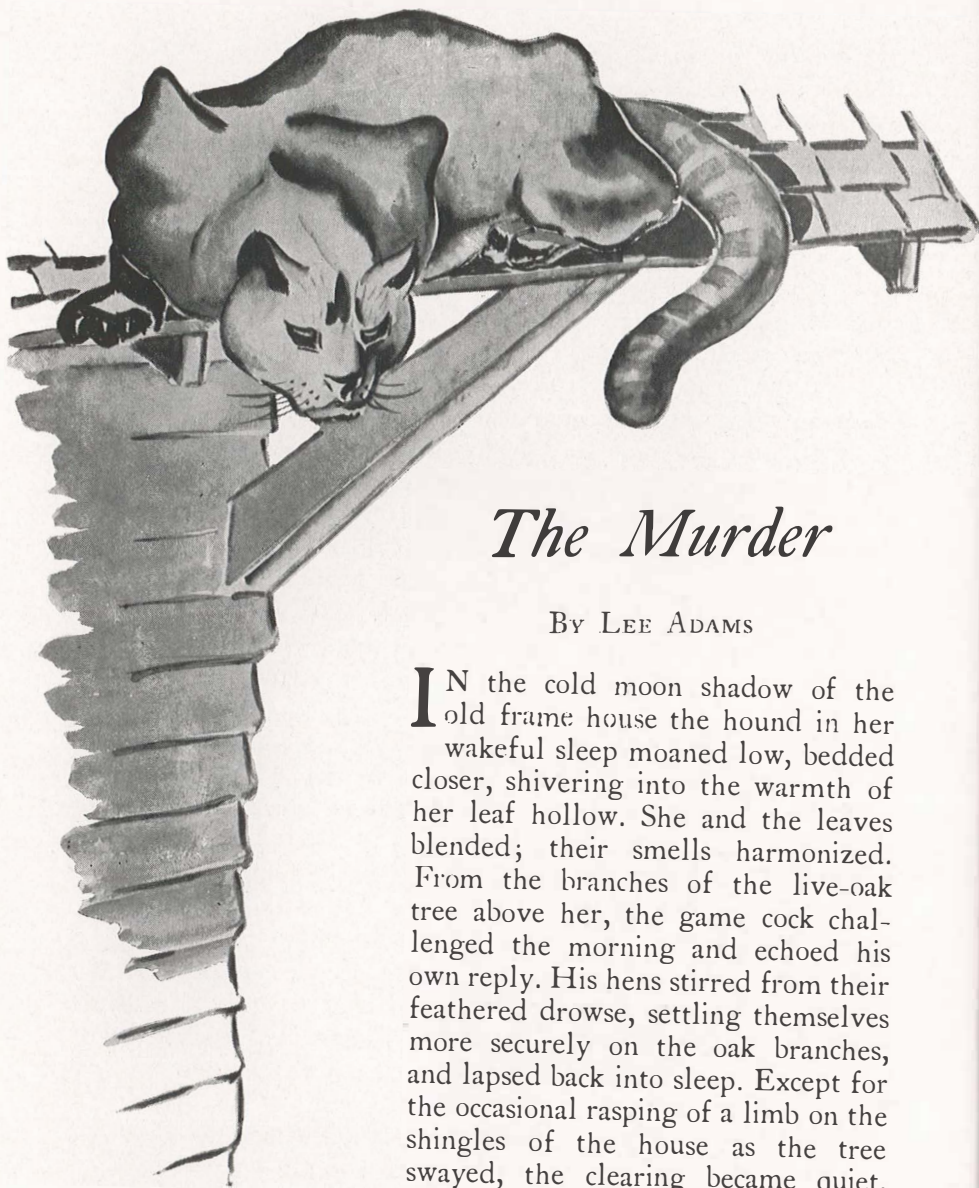
Behold! the grim and ghastly war is won.
Ring out, glad bells, rejoice, O world, once more
From bloody slaughter, quivering fear released!
The booming cannon, howling bomb are still.
No more shall frigid terror grip our hearts
When overhead an airplane motor roars.
For screaming Death no longer rides the blue.
The bright red blood of vibrant youth has ceased
To flow. Ours now the benison of peace.
Triumphantly we sing and shout. Aloft
Our banners to the skies proclaim our joy.
Our jubilation knows no bounds. The earth,
Exhausted, shaken by its long travail,
Lies spent in calm serenity at last.

But what of the dead—our honored dead—
Who lie on foreign soil, their lives
Snuffed out abruptly? Shall they hail
The spoils of victory—those who see
Their loved ones prone on stretchers, or
With sight-robbed eyes through darkness grope
Toward long-lost voices? Heroes all
They are—but will a medal bright
Restore the light to darkened eyes?
The Purple Heart replace the one
That throbbed with warmth and life?

A speech

Extolling deeds of bravery can
Be but poor comfort for the one
Who listens for his step
Upon the stair. Exult no more,
O thoughtless world, at victory won.
The price we pay is far too high
For empty glory, worthless power.
Fall on your knees, O men of war.
And beg with tears and penitence
The pardon of your fellow men.

—Janet Haas.



The Murder

BY LEE ADAMS

IN the cold moon shadow of the old frame house the hound in her wakeful sleep moaned low, bedded closer, shivering into the warmth of her leaf hollow. She and the leaves blended; their smells harmonized. From the branches of the live-oak tree above her, the game cock challenged the morning and echoed his own reply. His hens stirred from their feathered drowse, settling themselves more securely on the oak branches, and lapsed back into sleep. Except for the occasional rasping of a limb on the shingles of the house as the tree swayed, the clearing became quiet. Then out of the stillness rang a cry,

an unearthly sound, low pitched, ominous, insistent. From the shadow of the live-oak tree slunk a low, dark form. It was a cat, returning from a night's excursion. Halfway across the clearing he paused in the weird half light and glanced about him.

Inside the house, Emma was sleeping a troubled sleep. For a fitful moment her Aunt Maud loomed into her consciousness; her hand twitched. She awoke. Again the marauding cry, deep-chested, from within, expressive of secrecy turned loose—alien

to the oaks, to the clearing, to the snugness of Emma's bed, to anything but Maud herself. Emma shuddered. "I hate you, cat," she whispered.

Emma extracted her scant black self from beneath the patch-quilt she was allowed to use, and skipped across the cold, hard floor. She kindled a fire in her Aunt Maud's cavernous stove, let the door clang shut, leapt back into bed, and abandoned herself to its exquisite snugness. It was daylight when she awoke again. Unwilling to relinquish her new found luxury, she lay there, not caring to think, suspended between the idea of lounging until an unaccustomed hour and the habit of rising dutifully at the appointed time. Slowly she became aware that the day was Monday, and that her Aunt Maud would be coming from down the river, expecting to find wood cut. She decided that she could not predict when her Aunt Maud might come. She rose, slipped into her clothes, cut a piece of cold cornbread for her breakfast, and slammed the back door with a carelessness that she knew would not be tolerated if her Aunt Maud were at home.

Speculating, Emma sat down on the back porch steps, but a soft, friendly whine roused her from her reverie: it was the hound.

"Bess!" Emma screamed with delight. "Bess—you's come back!" Emma ran to the old dog and put her arms around her. Over and over she repeated, "You's come back—you's come back—you's come back—".

Presently she said, "Bess, how you been makin' out? Is folks been treatin' you right?" Then for the first time that morning, she really looked at the hound. For a moment Emma sat there, too shocked, almost, to think. She looked at Bess—surveyed her languid ears, her friendly brown eyes, sunken within her skull. Her tail drooped, her head hung listlessly; her belly sagged with a strange fullness that belied the gauntness of her bony frame: Bess with with pup.

Bitterly Emma recalled what a handsome dog old Bess had been. Her child's eyes narrowed with a hatred unbecoming a child as she remembered how her Aunt Maud had driven Bess away. Nearly a month had passed since then—a month of hardship for both child and dog, both orphaned by the same event. Emma's father, Cotton, had drowned in the St. John's River. She had never known a mother, for Cotton's wife had died at Emma's birth, and he had never bothered to marry again. So, when nearly a month ago, after Cotton and his brother Jack had drowned, Maud—fulfilling the obligation of an Aunt who lived by duty—took her, it had seemed natural to Emma that Bess should also come. But Maud had whipped the dog. And when

Emma had cried, "You can't whip Bess! Ain't no hand never been laid on her!" Maud had whipped her, too.

"There ain't food enough to go around now," Maud had said. "Ain't food enough to stuff yo mouf, let alone that sorry bitch of Cotton's." Emma had winced. She knew that Bess had been her father's pride, for out of Bess had come the finest pups in Mandarin. He had hunted with her, he had spoiled her, he had groomed her until she shone. Cotton had just bred her to a Walker hound; but Maud ignored all this, for she had driven Bess away. Bess had been a friend to Emma, and the girl, bereft of both father and of friend, had ached from sleepless nights of crying. But today was better, for Bess had come, and Maud was not at home. Again Emma looked at her. The dog was not starving, but hampered by the awkwardness of her condition, she could not hunt for herself; consequently, food was scarce. Emma held out to the dog what was left of the cornbread she had been eating. Feebly wagging her tail, Bess took the offering gently, ate it, then licked the child's hand. Emma hugged her close. "You smell good, old dog," she murmured. "You smell like leaves." Bess whined, and nudging Emma's hand, begged for more cornbread. "Poor Bess! You's so hongry! But jes ain't nothin' here to eat, less you could tree yo' self a 'possum for me to cook for you. But you jes cain't hunt like you is, pore thing!"

Suddenly something dropped from the roof to the ground beside them. Bess turned and waddled back to her bed in the leaves—it was the cat. The cat surveyed her idly. His tail lashed. The skin on his back undulated softly, then lay quiet. Moving as though he were oiled, he strolled to the steps where Emma sat, casually stretched his claws, and leaped up beside her. Fascinated, she let her eyes wander over his supple body, tracing the dark, rich pattern of his fur, his muscles, his powerful head. He seemed almost too sleek, too well groomed. For a moment he stared at her, catlike, slowly narrowing his eyelids into a condescending leer, began to purr, and rubbed himself against her insinuatingly.

"I hate you cat!" Emma whispered. "You belong to Aunt Maud. And Bess needs meat!" Impulsively she swooped him into her arms and ran toward the long open shed where chickens were killed, picked, and deprived of their entrails. For a moment Emma hesitated, then still wondering at what she was about to do, Emma slipped the cat into the crate where she put chickens when she was going to kill them. She looked at him for a moment, wavering in her impulse, but when he thrust his claws through the slats of the crate and clawed helplessly at the air, mewing plaintively, she was filled with a strange elation. As his plaintive mewings grew into a deeper menacing cry, Emma grabbed some fat

pine sticks, quickly laid them beneath the iron pot where water was boiled for picking chickens, and nursed them into a flame. She snatched a bucket from a nail on the wall of the shed, ran to the pump, and filled it. The fire was licking about the edges of the pot by then. Into it Emma dashed the water. There was a sudden rush of steam, a cloud of vapor, and then the quiet methodical bubbling of water about to boil.

Gathering her instruments, Emma rushed about—the long thin knife from the kitchen, the hemp rope with which she usually tied the chickens' legs, the ax, the block of wood. But this block wouldn't do, she thought, it had to be larger; the cat was big.

By this time, though, the water was boiling furiously. Everything was ready, so Emma fixed her attention upon the cat. Through the slats in the crate she could see his green eyes fixed upon her. She shuddered and was tempted to let him go. Then something warm pressed against her. Bess had come from the house. "Bess," Emma asked, "how would you like some meat?"

Frantically, the cat strained at the rope tightening about his neck. His tail lashed. Rising on his back legs, he weaved from side to side. Then he crouched and dug his claws into the sand and wood chips and scraps of pine bark that littered the ground, pulling to free himself from the noose. Emma waited. His eyes were bulged. Emma raised the ax over her head, calculating. The rope became taut. There was a sickening crack, a scream, and the tautness of the rope relaxed. She had crushed his skull.

For a moment a strange blankness settled over Emma, as she stood there wondering at what she had done. Suddenly, she realized that her Aunt Maud would be coming, and she could well imagine what Maud would do. The cat was her pet. Quickly Emma picked it up. It felt limp and warm and heavy, strangely different from the lithe, muscular creature it had always seemed to be. From around its eyes, which seemed to gaze at nothing in particular, blood was oozing. A little trickle of blood ran down from its nose into its mouth and spilled over its black lips. Methodically, as if she were about to skin a 'coon for the table, Emma ripped the skin from around the cat's neck. She peeled back the edges and made another long cut at its throat. Blood spurted out, pulsating in long streams that spurted, flowed quietly, then spurted again. The blood splattered on the pine chips and sand and seeped in. It was dark red. Emma thought, "This would make good broth." Holding the cat by its tail, she lowered it over the pot where the water boiled. She dropped the cat into the bubbling yellow foam. As its body writhed and twisted, as its legs ran madly through the boiling water, churning violently, the thought stampeded through Emma's mind that it was not dead.

Quickly she seized a stick and tried to rescue the cat from the water. But the fire scorched her arms and legs. She ran with the bucket to the pump, and came flying back to douse the flame.

The ashes sizzled and spit. When Emma looked into the pot, the blinding steam swirled up about her, but through the yellow foam and vapor she glimpsed great gasps of protest bubbling from the cat. She seized a paw that stretched stiffly out and yanked the cat from the water. It groaned weakly and lay still. Its fur lay close and wet in streaks that dripped diluted blood. Its eyes had boiled a glassy blue. Into Emma's being seeped a musky odor that permeated her whole body, sank deep within her, pursued her within herself. She held her nose, but vainly, for still she tasted it. She closed her eyes, yet still she could not escape it. It was musk; it was the odor of the male cat—intimate, nauseating. Emma felt sick. The cat dangled, slipped from her grasp, and fell to the ground.

Emma looked at the thing she had done, at the wretched animal covered with blood and sand and ashes and pine chips, at the foam that had drifted out of its mouth and was billowing over its chin, at its pathetically limp body, and felt within herself a strange emptiness. She took up the ax, laid the cat's head on the block of wood she had brought, and hacked the head from its body. Slowly she skinned it, cut the muscles of its belly, and plunged her hands into her entrails. Again the insinuating odor of musk swept over her. The warm entrails felt disgustingly intimate, and a strange longing flowed into Emma's mind. She thought how she had seen dogs wallow in rabbit's entrails. Savagely she tore intestine and stomach from the cat. Then she ripped out the kidneys and lungs and heart and threw them into the pot. After finding the little green gall bladder which bulged from a crevice in the liver, she cut it away, and removed the liver itself.

"Here, Bess," she called. The old hound crept up to her. "What you shamed for, Bess? You ain't done nothin'." As Bess sniffed at the liver, her lip curled. Her nose watered, and little bubbles foamed at her jowls. Turning, she slunk to a nearby pile of hay and lay down. She would not look at Emma. Wearily, Emma cut the legs from the cat's body, let limbs and torso fall into the water, and tossed the liver in after them. She found the salt which was used to cure pork at slaughtering time, and dumped some into the pot. Then she wrapped the intestines and skin and head into a bundle and buried them deeply behind the shed. By this time the fire beneath the pot had revived and was burning slowly. "Maybe Bess will eat it when it cooks," Emma reasoned.

Emma went to where the old dog lay, and sank limply into the straw beside her. Dimly Emma lay there, not caring to think, trying to close her eyes and forget that the thing was so, but the smell of cat musk pursued her, unrelenting. The sick empty feeling settled down upon her, and again her Aunt Maud loomed into her consciousness. Her Aunt Maud! Her Aunt Maud! That was it! Emma became aware that she was glad, somehow, that she had done it. The pungent smell of pitch and pine smoke drifted in and mingled with the musk odor. A satisfaction filled her and she was glad.



SONG OF THE SEA

Scream your might from the spaces —
 Roar of your strength to the land.
 Pound of your terror for the shipwrecked man —
 Talk of your power to the sun and the sand.
 Sing of your glory — sing of it loud —
 Above your waves and misty shroud.
 Sing of the secrets you hold so close —
 The Spanish Armada and dead men's ghosts.
 Talk of it, whistle it,
 Tell it to me.
 I'll listen — for I am a god of the sea.

— June Stern.

Who's the Teacher?

BY PATRICIA JONES

THE periods in our lives can almost be marked off like a school program, with special "teachers" for each. When we're babies, the pros are mother and dad; in childhood, our school teachers and playmates influence us; but in our teens, important as families and teachers are, the people who make the biggest dent are friends our own age.

We buy loafer moccasins because our friends do, wear our skirts short and our hair long for the same reason. We go to Joe's Grill for hamburgers or Doc's for cokes not because these places are charming, or the food good—but because the crowd goes. Most of our surface habits are picked up from people our own age.

But we are also learning much deeper things from each other. We may sometimes deceive our older teachers, but we don't take the trouble to fool each other. We know whether Cissy is really studious or chisels her way through science; whether Bob does go to the library in the evening or stays out until all hours of the night; whether Polly is frequently sick or is telling fibs. We know the best and worst about our friends, and we're watching them carry out their good or bad ideas in living. Psychologists would say we're learning attitudes.

Some of the things we're learning can be unlearned later, but some of the attitudes are very much like the shoe-prints we used to put in the tempting wet cement on sidewalks—they're there for keeps. And one of the most important is the attitude we're getting toward boys—and they towards us. We're learning in classes, in sports, on dates, and even in our scraps and arguments. Do we ever stop to think what kind of a foundation we're building?

Remember, we're not talking about mere popularity. We're not even talking about a guarantee of a wedding, which isn't really very hard to achieve. We want a *happy* marriage with all those qualifying words—someone to live with whom we will *continue* to love and rely on. Picking out the right man is only part of the secret. The rest depends on our attitude and habits, how we treat men and they us.

In class, do they see us as intelligent girls who do their present jobs as thoroughly as possible? Or are we playing it another way—making a career out of being a pin-brain, featherweights who stumble because we make no effort to do the work. We or some other women will pay for such a mistake in the way those

boys later look at their wives. If we're learned to play the village dimwit when there's a job to be done, we will pay in our own marriage. We've seen the type—the helpless women whose house is never quite clean, whose meals are quick sketches, and whose husband soon learns to work late and eat downtown.

Don't be fooled by Jeanie's popularity. The boys think she's so cute. She "never does homework" and "just can't learn that silly trig." Jeanie will get married. Oh, yes, but as "someone to love, trust, and rely on," Jeanie will not be among those present very long. Marriage is a working job for adults, and she is permanently under-age.

What are the boys learning from us about women? Do we realize that many of the things we don't like about boys, many of the tricks and habits we fear and dislike—they learned from us? Where did Bill learn that unreliable habit of standing up his dates? Some girl once accepted an invitation from him and broke it when someone she liked better came along later.

Boys form their impressions of how to cope with women through their dates. If Elaine goes out with Bob and spends her evening trying to collect a following of other boys, Bob learns that he is merely a convenience, used to take Elaine to her destination. He'll quickly learn to go stag or play the same rude game in reverse. If Patty insists on Charles buying loge seats to the movies or riding in a taxi when a bus would do, Charlie begins to believe the female of the species is a dollar-and-cents matter. When Tom overhears Louise telling a group what a horror he is to dance with, he may improve his dancing, but he'll be slow to regain his trust in feminine kindness. When most of the boys see most of the girls make a big fuss over Ray because he's a smooth dancer, wears clothes like Alan Ladd, and has a line like Bogart's, they wonder why the girls don't seem to mind the fact that Ray never goes out for a school team, never does any work, barely skims through his exams with extra-legal help, and even lets a girl pay for his cokes. Not too surprisingly, boys begin to wonder if women recognize important things.

Boys are idealists—maybe more so than we are. We are a little more elastic. We can get an awful sock and come back for more. If a boy stands us up, we're hurt and angry, but we don't jump to the conclusion that most boys will stand us up. If a boy lies, we often give him another chance. We break our hearts for a time, then start all over again. We're a lot like that old fable of the willow and the oak. A storm bends us, but it breaks the apparently stronger but more rigid tree. Boys don't bend and come back as easily or as often. They are badly damaged when they discover

us lying, cheating, golddigging. And we are badly damaged if they don't discover it—because we come to think a girl can live in an unfair, dishonest way—and get away with it.

Boys and girls must work together and build together. They're meant to be friends, not rivals playing a bitter match. And the boys need us. Strongly as they would deny it, they lean on us, count on us to help them, to stand by and defend them. They need us most when they argue the hardest—when they ask us to do the very things they hope we'll refuse to do. They'll offer us liquor—and later boast that we didn't drink. They'll do their darndest to pitch warm woo and be glad we didn't let ourselves be persuaded. They'll beg us to go up to the juke-box joint that's tough and out of bounds, and be relieved the next day that we refused. They'll ask us to stay out later than we should—and be grateful when we won't. Often they will offer us their worst, bad-boy selves—and count on us to demand their best, most adult selves.

We may not have realized that men are learning about women from us—and that we are learning about men from them. But none of it means that we have to be a prude, a moralizing sound-box. We'll all muff things occasionally. We learn from each other by what we are, not by what we say.

THE SECRET

Stage props, one by one, arose,
 Red moon, glass stars, palms against motion,
 Behind far-flung out-there,
 (About the time world stands still,
 Not day, not night, but unfathomed in-between)
 You whispered, "never tell!"

My ears, like devils' horns, sprang up,
 Pin-points pricking past my promise—
 "I swear!"

Rushes in the brook, I am a woman, and—
 Oh! How my tongue burns—

—*Rosalind Darrow*

IN DEFENSE OF ANOTHER VERSAILLES

How easy to sail with relentless winds!
 Who follows the tide cannot sink.
 How simple to slash, with a knife in your hand.
 How awfully trying to think!

We wanted to salve the foe's sick soul,
 But had no time to give;
 And told him to go on and live.
 So we plunged a dagger beneath his heart

But he drew our blade from the festering wound
 And hurled it at us. How strange,
 When we had prayed for love and peace!
 But barbarians never change.

They say it was not sharp enough
 To heal him. By God, that's true!
 It failed us once, so thrust it again;
 Yes, that's the thing to do.

The chorus cries Hate! so sing along,
 And louder than all the rest;
 None would hear your hymn to Christ;
 The choirmaster knows what's best.

To teach him love means years of work;
 We heard what the leader said.
 The foe lies sick, let's trample him
 And then go home to bed.

---*Muriel Fox.*

A Shot of Rye

BY ROSALIND DARROW

THE young woman's name was Cornice. She was small and blonde, almost pretty if you cared to study her. She was, in fact, beautiful the way most people are when you look at them long—and get to like them. Cornice was a quiet person. She had blue eyes and wore glasses for reading. She was wearing them now as she sat in the green-plush coach, her lunch-bag on her lap and the heavier traveling bag under the seat. The coach was hot and stuffy, but Cornice was so busy looking out of the window at the trees and telegraph poles shooting past, that she didn't think about the soot in the train and the stuffy air.

The other passengers, sprawled in their seats, were reading "Nifty Nineties," "Gay Gazette," and the Sunday papers. Lots of them were talking and laughing and eating. There were babies, too, fat sleepy infants, too hot and bewildered to cry. And there were soldiers, sleeping, talking, laughing, playing cards. Altogether, everybody was having a gay, noisy trip, and lots of fun.

A little negro staggered through the car with an armful of sandwiches and ice cream. The passengers pounced on him. They bought the basket clean, and he went out, counting nickels. Cornice had a parasol in her bag. She thought of opening it against the sun streaming in through the train window, but changed her mind. The train slowed down, and pretty soon the conductor opened the squeaky door. "Mer-cer! Mer-cer!" he called. "Next stop, MER-cer" The train lurched to a stop. People scrambled for their bags, their hats, their magazines, and their children. They tripped over each other and piled out onto the small platform of Mercer. Cornice saw a small boy with his nose running, holding a little sister who was eating a chocolate ice-cream cone. A tall soldier walked quickly out of the station and then she saw him showing his ticket to the conductor.

In a few minutes, when she looked up, there he was, swinging his little overnight bag up on the rack above her head. He dusted himself off and sat down opposite her. Cornice peeked at him out of the corner of her eye. He was homely. Nice homely. He had a magazine on his lap. P-o-e-t-r-y, (of all things) she read upside down. What was he doing with poetry? Maybe some maiden aunt had given it to him to read on the train. Cornice didn't know anything about poetry so she neither liked nor dis-

liked the idea. She wondered about it, that's all.

The soldier was leaning his chin on his hand and apparently he was deeply engrossed in the scenery. Cornice was looking at him, and when he glanced at her, their eyes met. They were not embarrassed, but they both turned very quickly to look at the trees, for they had not meant to look at each other at the same time. He pulled out a package of cigarettes and began to smoke. Cornice liked to watch the blue haze curling away to nothing at all. Ladies did not smoke, but at home, Cornice knew, Maybelle Wilkins smoked in the back of the saloon that old Pete Wilkins owned.

The soldier said, "Pardon me, ma'am, but would you care to look at this?"

Cornice smoothed the lines of her gown over her knees.

"Why, yes," she said softly, and took the magazine from him. As her eye fell on the date she gave a little gasp of surprise. December 1, 1915. The magazine was six months old.

Cornice shared her lunch box with the soldier and he read some of the poems to her out of the magazine. His name was Corporal John Fields, and he told Cornice that the war was something he believed in because this was a war to end fighting for all time. It sounded glorious to her and she liked the way his eyes shone when he said it and the way he smiled at her when he spoke. Cornice liked him very much.

PART TWO

Major and Mrs. John Fields sat opposite each other in the Pullman car. It was air-conditioned, but nevertheless it was very hot.

"John," said Mrs. Fields, "I would so like something to drink." The Major rang the bell for the porter.

"What would you like, Cornice, coca-cola or beer?" asked the Major.

"Ginger-ale," said Mrs. Fields. The porter came back with a tray and two glasses and a bottle of ginger-ale. The attractive young lady sitting opposite them ordered ginger-ale, too.

"What is the next stop, Porter?" asked Mrs. Fields.

"Mercer, Ma'am," said the porter.

"I'd like to send a wire when we get there."

"Yes, ma'am. I won't forget."

The train lurched to a stop. A red-faced conductor came through.

"Mer-cer" he called "MER-CER! MER- cer-r-r!"

The Major looked at his wife fondly and she at him and they smiled. The porter came by with a yellow telegraph pad and a

pencil. Mrs. Fields took the pad and wrote rapidly for a moment. "Oh dear," she said, "what's today's date?"

"July second, nineteen forty-four, ma'am," grinned the porter.

"Oh, thank you," said Mrs. Field, writing it down. "Send this right off, porter."

The Major tapped absently on the thick-glassed window. "Almost a quarter of a century ago," he said, "we passed through here. We were fighting a war then." Mrs. Fields studied her husband's face a moment. "I remember," she said softly. "You said that our cause was a glorious thing. You believed in it, didn't you, John? Didn't you?" she asked, her voice rising. "Didn't you think it was a war to end all wars?" The Major did not answer.

A soldier got on at Mercer and stowed his bag under the seat opposite them. The young lady who was sitting there murmured, "You can put my heavy bag in the hall if it's in your way."

"Not at all, Miss," the soldier answered and he sat down opposite her and immediately gazed out of the window. The train eased slowly out of the station and Mercer slipped into the past. Light drops fell a-slant against the window, splattering the clean glass. Then it began to rain in earnest. Presently the soldier got up, and putting a cigarette in his mouth went off to the lounge car to smoke. The young lady picked up the magazine he had left on his seat and with her delicate fingers began slowly flicking over the pages. An article caught her eye. She began to read about "HOW SHALL WE HAVE A LASTING PEACE?" Trees and scenery in summer glory slid past but the wonder of swiftly moving landscape was lost upon her as she became absorbed in her reading. She did not even notice when the soldier came back to his seat. His trouser leg brushed gently against her ankle. She looked up.

"Excuse me," he said, and then he turned again to the window.

"Excuse *me*," the young lady answered. "I hope you don't mind if I picked up your magazine?"

He ran his nervous fingers through his hair. "Not at all," he said. He thought a moment, before addressing her. "What are you reading there?" The soldier leaned forward with interest as she held the open page towards him.

"Oh," he said, "are you interested in *that*?"

She was puzzled at his question. "Why," she answered wonderingly, "aren't you?" He did not answer right away, only looked out of the window. Hard lines formed between his eye-

brows and around his mouth. He looked up and around, and glanced at the Major and his wife sitting quietly in the Pullman. He drew his breath in sharply. "I wish," he said, "that I could believe like the men did *last* time, I wish I could think that this time it will be for *lasting* peace," and he clenched his hands till the veins showed blue and hard.

The Major started in his seat. He gazed at the soldier and then at the young lady and then at his wife. There were tears in her eyes.

"Porter!" he called, "Porter! Bring me a shot of rye."

PRELUDE

It came softly
No one heard
No one guessed.
No one except the land
For the animals fled
Birds took to the wing
And the earth made its stand.

Its might was muted
No one heard
No one guessed.
No one except the water
For the lakes wept to be rivers
The rivers to be the sea
And the sea surged forward.

Now, everyone knew
Space declared war,
The sea to offend
The land to defend
And a mad planet
Slid from its orbit
And was seen no more.

—June Stern.

A Look Over Jordan

BY LALEAH SULLIVAN

CHARACTERS

LILLIOM: *a middle-aged, stout, Negro woman.*

FLOWER: *a young, frail, gentle Negro girl, about 18, somberly dressed.*

RACHAEL: *a young, hard, bitter Negro woman, about 22, boldly dressed.*

JOHN: *a very old, stooped, bearded Negro man with a cane.*

BOOKER: *a young, gaudy, medium height Negro man.*

HENRY: *a young, flashy, taller Negro man.*

SADIE: *a young, over-dressed, brittle, cheap Negro woman.*

ELIZA: *a middle-aged, thin, primish, soberly dressed Negro woman.*

SCENE: A very humble room, sparsely furnished; a few steps leading up to stage level up center; cracker boxes left; rocker right, cheap couch back left; golden steps leading offstage back center.

Time: just before day. Henry, Booker and Sadie are walking down back steps. John seating Rachael in rocker. Rachael pacing floor from far l. to c. and Eliza following her.

CURTAIN

HENRY:

Ah found it mighty hard to tell
Ef dat 'oman wuz fitten fo' Heab'n or Hell.

ELIZA:

Well, dat wuz de reason we'ze called up heah
So'ze to tell de Judge widout shame or feah
An' Ah tole Him, an' ah tole Him straight,
She ain't got no place in de Heab'nly Gate.

RACHAEL:

In Heab'n! Why, 'cord'n to whut Ah tell
Dat Flower is far too bad fo' Hell.
Whut Ah did dis' night wuz pow'rful hard
But Ah'll swear 'fo' you, lak Ah swo' 'fo' Gawd,
Dat Ah'm glad Ah kilt 'er, an' dat's fo sho'
She won' be eyein' my man no Mo'.

LILLIOM:

(seating herself in rocker)
Now all o' you hesh, an' you list'n at me
Mah Flower's as good as a chile kin be—

Ah birthed 'er, shouldn't Ah ought to know?
Ah reared 'er an' Ah see'd 'er grow.
(to Rachael) She loved dat man a'long 'fo' you
An dare ain' no 'oman could 'a bin mo' true.
(Eliza sits on cracker box, Rachael and Booker start toward Lilliom).

BOOKER:

True?? Great Gawd pleze t' Bless mah life!!
Ain' Rachael his lawful, wedded wife?

RACHAEL:

Dat's de Gospel, Booker, an' mah Creat'a'
Ain' got no time fo' a 'dulterata.

ELIZA:

Yo'se right dare, Rachael, yo'se sho'ly right,
She wuz wit yo' man dis' bery night,
An' who gonna' tell yo' dat ain' no sin?
It's as big a wrong as dare's eber bin;
Moses writ it on de' Tablet, plain,
As sho' as shootin' an' as right as rain,
It wuz writtin' dare fo' de' worl' to see,
Writtin' dare fo' yo' an' me,
Writtin' dare fo' Lilliom's chile,
Writtin' dare in d'Almighty style.

JOHN:

(coming forward)
Wait now, chillun', didn't Gawd above
Say 'bout His'self dat Gawd wuz love?

SADIE:

(sitting down by Booker on cracker box)
Lissen' at ole John tawkin' brave
When him got one foot firm in de' grave.

HENRY:

Yeah, lissen at 'im *(to John)* Yo' betta tawk low
Or Gawd'll heah yo' an' dat's fo' sho'.

BOOKER:

He'll heah yo' takin' de' cawze o' sinnin'
An' tawkin' up lowd fo' de' fall'n women.

JOHN:

(taking center)
All o' yo' hesh, d'yo' think yo're smart
Stomp'n so hard on Lilliom's heart?
Think whut yo're sayin'! Mind
Fo' yo' shout an' try bein' kind—

RACHAEL:

Bein' kind?!
 Bein' kind!! Why Gawd knows Ah
 Ain' restin' till Ah sees dat Flower fry.

SADIE:

An' right too, Rachael, sho' yo' am—

BOOKER:

She am—

HENRY:

An' Ah don' give one damn
 'Bout Lilliom, Flower, an' ole John, too,
 'Caze Ah'm givin' de debil he' rightful due.

SADIE:

(up to talk to Lilliom)
 Ef it warn' dat Flower know'd dat man
 Wuz Rachael's e'b'n 'fo' she b'gan
 To hunt 'im up an' seek 'im out 'den—

LILLIOM:

(rising and coming toward Sadie)
 Whut right yo' got to tawk 'bout men?
 A-stan'in' heah shakin' yo' filthy haid
 Ova' mah li'l Flower who ain' cole daid
 Yet. Yo' op'ns yo' nasty mouf' oncet mo'
 An' Ah'll fix yo' where you ain' eb'n fit to—

JOHN:

(stops Lilliom with his hand) Whoa,
 Lilliom, Ah knows its mighty hard
 T' heah dese sinna's who don' lied t' Gawd.
 But dare's nothin' now dat we kin do
 'Cept'in wait till de final word come thu'.
 We bin call'd up heah, 'bout as neah t' Death
 As we'll eb'a cum while we draws a breath.
 We done faced Sain' Peta' in our human clo'ze
 An' we each done tole 'im jes' whut we knows
 'bout Flower—An' now he's a-tellin' de story
 T' Gawd A'mighty, de King O' Glory.

LILLIOM:

(sitting back down)
 You're right, John, ain' no use arguin' now,
 But Ah cain' but anger, wonderin' how
 Dese cheap, black niggers figga' dey gain
 In causin' mah Flower e'b'erlastin' shame.

JOHN:

Le's not git arguin' who's t' blame.

HENRY:

(pulling out dice and juggling them)
 Well, guess might leave as well hab us a game.
 C'mon, Booker, les' roll us some bones.
*(Booker and Henry sit on the floor left and Sadie
 pulls cracker box over to watch the game).*

BOOKER:

Set down easy dare, 'tirement stones.

HENRY:

Lay out de' cash wid' yo' stronges' han'
 Dis' game jes' take a one-arm'd man.

ELIZA:

(walks over to Sadie and puts hand on her shoulder).
 Sadie, we might's leave go an' set
 Wid Lilliom, she's in a pow'rful fret.
 Tho' Ah'se sho'ly takin' Rachael's part,
 Still dat 'oman's got a bleedin' heart.

SADIE:

*(gets up and goes over to Rachael, after answering
 Eliza).*
 Cain' do no ha'm—bein' civil-lak
 C'mon Rachael, yo' can str'a'k
 De' blackness out'n yo' soul an' sho'
 Yo' Maker a spi'it He ain' seen befo'.

RACHAEL:

(getting up and starting to follow)
 Ah reck'n ah will—but it sho' do hurt
 To—

LILLIOM:

(rises to stand against Rachael).
 Yo' stay 'way f'um me—yo' nigger dirt
 A-killin' a gal fo' lovin' dat skunk
 Ob a man dat cum to 'er stumblin' drunk.
 An' her havin' loved 'im all 'er life,
 An' neber goin' as no man's wife
 Ner foolin' 'round wit yo' cheap black lice—
 Lak Henry an Booker dare shootin' dice,
 But livin' an' lovin' him eva day,
 Lovin' so hard she wuz wastin' away,
 Lovin' so deep dat she couldn't see
 No udder man. An' tak' it frum me
 Dare wuz plent'y uv 'um hangin' round
 A-struttin dare stuff—an' mos' were bound
 To have her—an' Jesus knowed dey tried

(she sits down and lowers her voice)
But whoeber said dey did done lied.

ELIZA:

T'ain't yo' Lilliom we'ze agin' up heah
An' it ain' yo' fault, but it's mighty clear
She done strayed frum de' chosen sheep o' Heab'n.

BOOKER:

(on knees in game)
Cum to Pappy! Lawd, look-a dat seb'n!
Pay up, Henry, yo'ze met yo' match.

HENRY:

You'ze countin' yo' chickens befo' dey'ze hatched.
Pay dirt, baby, bring back de' prize.

BOOKER:

Praise sweet Jesus! De' reptile's eyes!

SADIE:

(laughing with Booker)
Lauze a'mussy pon' mah soul
Dat Booker sho' knows jes' how to roll!
Cum on, big boy, yo' looks mighty sweet
T'ole Sadie heah. Ah'd lak to meet
Up wif yo' atter da' trial's thu—

JOHN:

(coming to center)
An' you callin' down Flower! Whut 'bout you?
Yo' cain' tell me 'bout yo' intenshun,
Jes' let a man mak' de' lee'l'pest menshun
O' de greenback's roll dat kin buy yo' booze
An' it's all yo' kin do t'stay in yo' shoes.
Whut kin' uv a—

BOOKER:

(standing) Slow dare', John,
Da's mah noo 'oman yo'ze rantin' on.

SADIE:

G'wan, Booker, git back a' yo' game,
Ah kin git dis ruffled rooster tame.
Aw right now, John, dassa nouf out'n yo'
Ain' no sense makin' one case two.
(John goes slowly back to place by Lilliom)

HENRY:

Roll 'em agin! Ah'll stan' yo' one mo'
But ef'n Ah sees yo'ze crooked sho'
Ah'll spread yo' guts all ob'a de groun'.
Now roll 'em out an' shoot 'em sound.

ELIZA:

Ah neb'a seen de' lak's o' dem spo'ts
A-gamblin' dare time in de' Jedge-ment Cou'ts.

SADIE:

Lookit ole Booker blowin' dem dice.

BOOKER:

(rising up on his toes and laughing)
Praise sweet Jesus! Boxcars twice!

HENRY:

(getting up slowly and deliberately, very mad)
Dey's loaded! Fo' Gawd Ah know'ze it!
(pulls razor) Look
Out, Booker, yo' name's in de' book.
(All rush over calling Henry to stop)

BOOKER:

(struggling)
Watch out, man! Put dat razor down!
Jee-sus! He'p me!

LILLIOM:

Henry, quit dat! I'll be bound
If dis don' reach an all-time low
Aimin' to kill anudda befo'
Yo' words 'ginst Flower's good out'n yo' lips.
(to Sadie)
An' yo', yes' a-standin' theah shakin' yo' hips
An' smilin'. All o' yo' full o' lies
An' ready fo' mo' while my innards dies
Inside me. An' yo' dare, Liza, passin' decishun
Jes' 'cause yo' body don out a' commishun.

HENRY:

We'ze sinnin', Booker, I done went
Plum' out'n mah haid. I wuz jes' hell-bent
An' didn' stop to 'sider none.

BOOKER:

Lemme shake yo' han', caze whut's done
Is done.

HENRY:

I'ze sorry.

BOOKER:

Dat's aw right.

JOHN:

(taking center)
Let dare be no mo' sinnin' heah dis' night.
Set down, chillun, an' ast yo' hearts

Fo' whut's right an' wrong befo' yo' starts
 Nothin' new. 'Sider good wheah yo'ze at
 An' act solemn fo' eberthing dat
 Comes out'n yo' moufs done went to Gawd
 An' de Judge-ment is ser-ous an' mighty hawd.
 So hol' yo'selves an' study it well
 Dat Flower is up fo' heab'n—or Hell.
(Pause. Lilliom breaks the silence with weeping).

LILLIOM:

Sweet Jeesus, Ah cain' take it fo'
 Long—thinkin' 'bout neba' mah chile no mo'.
 An' her so smilin' bout'n her day,
 Such a gen-rus lovin'-hearted way
 'Bout her—

RACHAEL:

Lovin'-hearted's right!
 Lovin' mah man dis bery night.

JOHN:

Set down, Rachael, an' leave 'er moan.
 Ain' she got a loss as big as yo' own.

ELIZA:

Leave 'er rant dare, Rachael, we'ze standin' by
 Fo yo', eben up to de Lawd on High.

LILLIOM:

(not noticing the interruption and speaking almost as though she were in a trance at first).

When Ah clozes mah eyes, Ah see'ze 'er plain,
 Not big 'nough to get out'n the rain,
 Jes' playin' 'round mah skirts all day
 An' laughin' an' cludin' me in 'er play.
 An' den growin' up an' slickin' 'er hair,
 But always 'ones' an' fair an' square
 In eba'thing; hep'n me wid de clo'ze,
 An' ne'ba no 'plain'n', eben po'ze
 We is. An' den' losin' 'er heart
 To dat black nigger who neba made no start
 Tow'rd lookin' 'er way. An' her wawkin' proud
 An' neba speakin' 'er hurtin' out loud,
 But neba lookin' at no udder one
 An' neba j'inin' de young'uns fun—
 Jes' settin' an' dreamin' an' dyin' inside
(speaking to Rachael).
 While he pick yo'! Yo' who done lied
 To yo' Maker!!

RACHAEL:

Ah ain't takin' dat
 Fu'm nobody. What yo'—

JOHN:

Set back wheah yo' sat.

SADIE:

She got 'er rights to stan' an' shout.

JOHN:

Hesh dare, nigger, heah Lilliom out.

HENRY:

Quiet, Rachael, we'll leave 'er rave
 Flower'll git no peace in 'er sinna's grave.

LILLIOM:

(takes near center)

De merciful Gawd'll see 'er side
 An' he'se sho' to know dat dem' tales wuz lied.
 She'll stan' wid 'im in Heab'n above
 Ca'ze he know'd mah Flower done died o' love.

HENRY:

(turns to the accusers and speaks)

Aw right, she done had 'er say
 An' now it's time to show de way
 We'ze feelin'.

ELIZA:

Ah 'grees. Rachael is took
 Bout 'nough o' yo' jibes, an' in mah books
 It's 'er whose heart is bleedin' bad
 An' as far as Flower goes, Ah'ze glad
 To be heah when she gits 'er due
 An' it's comin' soon.

BOOKER:

Yeah, Ah'ze glad too,
 An' Ah'm waitin' to wush Sain' Peter well
 When he sends dat 'oman down to Hell.

RACHAEL:

Waitin'? Why, Ah cain' ha'dly wait
 An' ef she put one foot to de Pearly Gate
 Ah'll snatch 'er bald! Dat nasty slut
 A-bidin' 'er time an' a-savin' 'er strut
 Fo' dat man dat's mine! Ah don' natch'ly take
 To knifin' a 'oman, but fo' his sake
 Ah'ze glad to do it. An' Ah sho'ly feel
 Ah had jes' cauze, an' Ah ain' gonna kneel
 To no man astin' his pardon, cawze
 Ah did right 'cordin' to mah own laws.

ELIZA:

An' mine, too, Rachael. an' Lilliom heah
Paintin' a coal-black soul so cleah—

SADIE:

Yeah, reasonin' sinnin' into good
An sayin' dat gal is all yo' could
Ast fo'.

BOOKER:

Seem dat man didn'n haf t' ast
Fo' whut he got.

HENRY:

Sho, it 'uz past
To 'im 'fo' he got hisse'f good inside de do'.

ELIZA:

Dat gal ain't nothin' but nigger who'.

HENRY:

Yo' named it better'n anyone could.

LILLIOM:

(screaming)
Mah Flower's good!
(sobbing)
Mah Flower's good.

HENRY:

Ain' no sense reasonin' why or which
*(Flower appears still unseen to the actors at foot of
the steps going up to stage level center)*
We'ze tellin' yo' Lilliom, Flower's a bitch!!

JOHN:

When yo' speaks agin' Flower, yo'ze pullin' a star
Out'n Heab'n.
*(Flower appears in view, thin and on the verge of
tears. Her back is to the audience and she is searching
the stage for Lilliom).*

FLOWER:

Ma?
(She sees her and runs to her, half-sobbing)
Ma?
*(she sinks to the floor by Lilliom's chair and puts
her head in Lilliom's lap, and cries).*

LILLIOM:

Flower, chile, Praise Gawd on High.
He done answered a moanin' mother's cry.
Ah got mah baby, leas' fo' a while—
A li'l bit longa—He'sh, now, chile.

*(the others start for Flower, led by Rachael, as if to
strike her).*

RACHAEL:

Lemme at dat dirty nigger who'
Ah thought Ah'd neba see 'er no mo',
A-snivelin' an' simperin' 'roun' mah man.
Ah'll twist 'er wid mah naked han'.

BOOKER:

Lookit 'er bawlin' dare lak she ain' lied
In a bed o' sin, an' screamed an' cried
When she seen 'er rightful end cum neah

SADIE:

(incredulously)
Lookit how she kin see an' heah
An' cry, an' 'er bein' jes' fresh daid.

JOHN:

De ways o' Gowd am oba mah haid.

ELIZA:

(rises and speaks to other accusers authoratively)
She bin brung up heah in 'er human fo'm
So'ze to betta feel de wraf' an' sto'm
O' Hell, when de Lawd Gawd High Crea'ta'
Pass de jedgement on dis 'dulterata'.

FLOWER:

Ma, make 'em hesh. Ah done tried to be good
An' whut Ah done seemed lak whut Ah should
A'done. It di'n' seem no sin
Jes' seem lak whut should-a rightful bin.

HENRY:

Rightful bin! Lawd, hep me figga
De rea'nin'-how o' dis cheap, black nigga!

RACHAEL:

D' Lawd bes' cum soon, or live or daid,
Ah'll scratch ha' eyes right out'n her haid.

JOHN:

Stop it! Ef'n ah heahs one mo' soun'
Out'n anybody, Ah'll call Sain' Peta down
An hab 'im 'po't to de Lawd o' yo' carryin's on.
Den evy las' one o' yo's good as gone.

LILLIOM:

(to Flower)
Sh, mah baby, don't yo' fret
No mo'. Dare ain' nothin' dey kin' get
T' hurt yo' now. Yo' ole ma knows
You'ze da sweetes' Flower dare is dat grows.

FLOWER:

Oh, ma—mah ma, yo'ze so pow'rful kine
 Ah cain' think o' leavin' yo' behin'.
 Ah ain' scar'd o' de Jedge-ment. If it's ha'd
 Its right to be,—caze it's up t' Gawd!
 Ef Ah done wrong'd, den Ah'm ready fo' Hell
 Caze Ah knows whut Ah did, an' Ah knows it well.
 An' Ah knows de' rule, an' de rule say SIN
 Fo' whut Ah done—but ef dat'a bin
 Na'r 'nodder man in Gawd's creashun
 Ah wouldn' a-studied 'bout 'dulterashun.
 But Ah lov'd dat man mo' dan any rule,
 Mo' dan any misa could-a luv he jool,
 Mo' dan de debil could-a luv he strife
 Mo' dan Ah eber could luv mah life!

LILLIOM:

Ah knows it chile, an' Ah don' blame.
 But dese—'cept'n John, don' see de same.
 An dey wan' de pun'shment put on you.
(breaks and cries)
 Oh, Gawd, Ah jes' cain' see dis thu'.

FLOWER:

(gets up and puts her arm around her)
 Shh, now ma, Ah ain' a-scar'd—
 An' when de' final word is read
 Don't yo weep none—ca'ze 'fo' Gawd abuve
 De hell-fi'ah cain' burn out mah luv.
*(Saint Peter appears at the top of the golden steps.
 By this time, and for several minutes before he ap-
 pears, there are signs of day breaking. The light
 grows stronger behind him till he is clearly visible
 at the end of Sadie's speech. However, John first sees
 him, because he alone is standing half facing back-
 stage.)*

SADIE:

She'll change 'er tune w'en de debil greet 'er.
(John falls back and faces backstage as he says)

JOHN:

Stan' back, yo' sinna's! It's SAIN' Peter!
(he gains his composure enough to step toward him)
 Greetin's Sain' Peter, we wushes yo' well.
*(This breaks the ice and the accusers go toward him,
 leaving Lilliom, and Flower in their original posi-
 tions)*

RACHAEL:

Is yo' cum fo' to tak' dat bitch t' Hell?

HENRY:

Take 'er, Peter, she 'serves t' go.

ELIZA:

Sh' ain' fitten' fo' Heab'n, an' dat's fo' sho'.

BOOKER:

G'on quick dare man, yo' tryin' t' tease us?
 We'ze waited all night.—

LILLIOM:

Oh, Jeesus! Jeesus!

SADIE:

Quit standin' dare lookin'. Hurry an' take 'er!

ELIZA:

Ain' yo' got de word o' de Lawd our Maker?

HENRY:

Le's pull 'er out'n f'um Lilliom's skirt.

BOOKER:

Yeah, she still sniv'lin' an' whinin'. Cheap, black dirt.

RACHAEL:

Drag 'er cross de flo' by de hair ob 'er haid,
 It's time fo' de sentence. She bin too long daid
 A'ready, not to feel de flame.

LILLIOM:

(stands and shields Flower)
 Yo' tech 'er, an' bah Gawd's Holy Name
 Yo' won' see de sunset one mo' time.
 Fo' dis' chile Flower is Gawd's an' mine.
*(The light is brighter at the top of the golden steps.
 Saint Peter moves to the edge of the steps and speaks
 sternly to the wild group at his feet.)*

PETER:

All o' yo' stan' back. Fo'm an aisle.
*(this is done. Flower and Lilliom are still nearest
 upstage. Saint Peter alone is facing the audience full).*
 An' don' one o' yo' makes a moshun while
 Ah speaks dese words—be dey sweet or ha'd.
*(there is some whispering but there are no speeches
 for a few seconds. Flower has come timidly to the up-
 stage end of the formed aisle to hear the sentence.
 Saint Peter stretches out his arms toward her)*
 Flower—you'ze cumin' to liv' wid Gawd.
*(All turn and stare at her; Lilliom falls to her knees;
 Flower stands gazing for a few seconds. Then,
 straightens shoulders and walks through the open
 space up the golden steps as the CURTAIN FALLS.)*

Benedictus qui venit . . .

HE was a great man. His name was not well-known at the time, and not even every one where he lived and taught knew him or knew of him, for he was humble, and that was part of his greatness. He considered himself only as an instrument toward the betterment of mankind, and if he knew more than another, it was not his doing, a thing of which he could boast, but a gift which he must impart to others while he might. He was not seeking perishable fame; his search was for the eternal values, which his life reflected.

His was a simple life: he loved his fellow men, and he spent his days in doing for them—talking with them, teaching them, banishing even their deepest troubles by the power of his great love and understanding.

Gentleness lay at the very bottom of his soul; though he saw with the penetrating mind of a child, he spoke softly and with compassion. He could be stern, even impassioned, in his chastisement of those who strayed too far from his way; but his patience was enduring and his forgiveness ever ready.

He was truly a great teacher. His followers came from many different places and were of varying backgrounds, yet he was able to influence all their lives with goodness and the inspiration of his life. It was as if the greatness of his heart shamed them of pettiness, and the encouragement of his belief in them urged them on to greater things.

Like many Jews, he suffered scorn and contempt from the prejudiced and accusations from the suspicious—things that never occurred to those who really saw his greatness. People who knew him saw in him the spirit that sustained him after the flesh had done its best, for he never spared himself as long as there was something to be done. We are all beneficiaries of the great spirit and untiring devotion of this man, who gave his life doing good for others. His name—Richard Firestone.

—Becky Hill.

The Cup and The Lip

BY BEN BRIGGS

“OLD Peter Rostoff is a Nazi.” The people in Mosir, a little Russian town that fell to the Germans in the first week of their attack, agreed with that statement to a man. Children threw stones at him, men cursed him, and women looked at him with hate burning in their eyes. But his hair was thin and white with age and he excused himself, “An old man takes what comes—he fights no wars.” Yet he was tall and straight for all his years. His eyes were clear blue and there was a likeable, gentle way about him that had once made him a good friend to everyone in the town.

The German invaders had been especially glad to acquire his friendship. Mosir was a rail center and he was the station master. When they found he routed German trains as efficiently as he had Russian, they were glad to allow him to keep his position—with careful supervision, of course. “Moving trains is my business. Fighting war goes to other people,” he told Rudolph Waller, the short, stout Nazi resident commander.

The German’s round, rather pleasant face beamed over his dull gray uniform. “I am glad to find a man with that attitude. It makes things easier for us all.” And soon almost every night the Nazi commander was a visitor at Peter’s home. They were well matched chess players and vied in make-believe war for endless hours.

The role that the old man had chosen was not without difficulties. His wife could not endure smashed windows, crude white-wash swastikas drawn on their doors and windows, or jeers and contempt of her one-time friends. She went to a nearby village to live with her sister. But Nadia, his only daughter, was his greatest sorrow. Her vivacious young beauty had been his pride. The sight of her cold black hair tossed by the wind and the flashing brown eyes that belonged to her mother had been the fairest sight on earth to him. Tears came to the old man’s eyes when he thought of how he had talked and read to her while she sat cozily in his lap, so small, so fresh, so precious. In the first days of the mobilization she had met a soldier, Ivan Marvitch, stationed in their town. Within a week they had pledged their love. But there was no time for marriage as the legendary German panzers thrust fingers on either side of their town with unexpected speed.

The fingers closed before Ivan Marvitch's unit could escape and he fled to the woods to become the leader of a guerilla band preying on German supply lines.

Nadia reviled old Peter with the bitterest vehemence of all. She did not raise her voice as she spoke, actually her voice was low, each word barbed with acid contempt. "Yes, I saw Ivan last night. I've seen him many nights. When I was supposed to be at Lee's house for the night, I was really in his arms. Wouldn't you like to know where? Then you could inform the Nazi dogs so they could catch him. They'd like you for that." She laughed remorselessly. "Or perhaps it would embarrass you to have me found with him."

"But you're not married, Nadia. The people will say unkind things," he protested.

"I've heard your Nazi friends weren't too particular about marriage. I have emulated them. I'm going to have a child. It will keep me safe from having a Nazi in case you decide to sell me to one of them. I'm sorry to disappoint you. I'm very beautiful, and I could have gotten you an important Nazi friend."

"Please, Nadia . . ."

She turned even his protest to denouncement. "No, father, I'd rather breed myself to a dog. And as soon as this one is born, I'll do it again unless the Nazis are gone."

After this she went from his house to live with an aunt of her mother. She would not see him again or speak to him in the streets. He reproached himself for having mentioned that she had not been at Lee's house, although her nocturnal rendezvous had become common gossip in the town. He sorrowed more for her than even his brother who had perished in an air raid in the first day of the conflict.

But Peter Rostoff continued to manage vital German transportation with unconcerned efficiency. Actually he was so deeply involved with the Nazis that any effort to extricate himself would have been difficult as well as dangerous. He was an old man and the Germans were the path of least resistance. He seemed unable to comprehend that decency screamed in every direction for him to betray the Germans for the sake of the precious things that were slipping away from him. The German commander watched him a bit more carefully for the days that followed but he could see no change.

The swastikas continued to appear on the door, and window, and shrubs were repeatedly destroyed. But the Germans carefully repaired all the damage even if it required taking material from public buildings. While other families were cold, a comfortable pall of smoke always rose from Peter's house. Rudolph Waller

continued to play chess as the winter nights lengthened. He found himself defeated more and more often by the old Russian until the two wars vied in importance in his concern. As the severe winter progressed Germany was stung by her first defeats—not serious but enough to break the tradition of victory. He and the commander listened to Hitler's speeches of reassurance on the radio. The German translated, and Peter often smiled approvingly at some words of the Fuehrer. "The man has good ideas," he said.

Rudolph was really glad to have a friend in the physically and spiritually cold land. He talked of his home in Southern Germany near the Bavarian Alps. He described his family—his wife, three daughters and a son besides innumerable relatives who lived in the same village. "We used to raise Persian cats," he related. At last the time came when I could understand cats better than men. So I began to try to fit the characters of men to the cats I knew. I found I could understand and predict many people."

"Have you a cat for me?" Peter laughed as he moved a queen from a dangerous position.

The commander gazed first at Peter, then into the brilliant fire beside their table. "I don't know. I hope not."

"What does that mean?"

"I had a very nice old cat that slept docilely most of the time. Then one day it went berserk and bit me."

"I am a cat that feels contented to live its life quietly and docilely."

"Of course; it is good to have a friend."

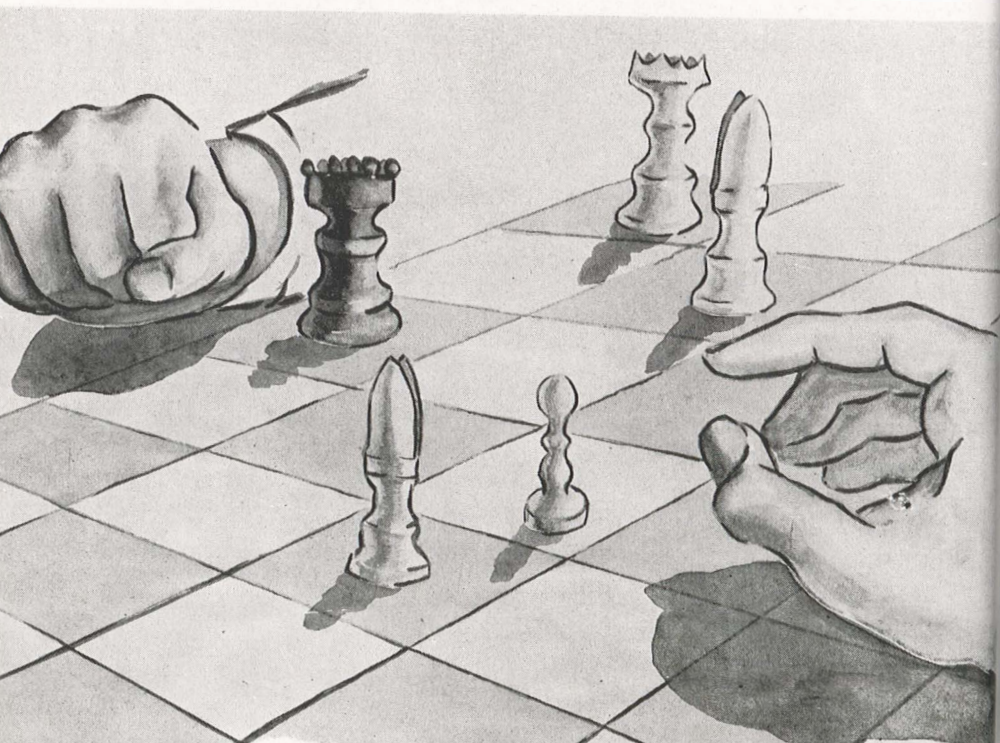
As winter deserted its alliance with the Red Army, the Germans struck with a fury that brought them to the gates of Rostov and Rudolph played with such high spirits that he won as often as he lost now. But he discussed the war now instead of his family.

Except for Rudolph's information Peter would not have known that he was the grandfather of a healthy eight pound boy. The townsmen would not even speak to him unless it was necessary. Peter had often thought of the time that Nadia would have a child. It distressed him a little to think of her youthful loveliness rent by such an ordeal, but he had smiled when he thought of a grandson. He would do so much for him, give him the best that money could buy. They would be such friends. They would ride together in the locomotive—boys always liked that. He would take him to Moscow. Show him the wonderful stores and factories. Or if it were a girl, then he'd have the joy of Nadia all over again.

Peter received a second blow when the villagers refused to believe the child was Russian. Her relation to the man they considered their traitor together with what they liked to call immorality gave every street gossip fuel for the flame of scandal. "A dirty Hun, that's what it is." Of course, the father who was a hero to all Russia could not show himself to quell them. She was forced to stay in the house at all times served by the few people who knew the truth. Peter tried to see her, but she would not hear of it.

The German commander permitted him to use the railroad workshop to make gifts for the child, a bed, a high-chair, and a stove for the nursery. Nadia's aunt accepted them as anonymous together with precious milk and other unobtainable foods. The German joined him and tried to make some toys himself, but his unpracticed hands made repeated clumsy mistakes with dangerous power tools until he abandoned the effort. Peter agreed to make some toys and furniture for him to send back to his home in Germany.

But the old man grew less attentive to their chess games as the summer turned at last to autumn. His grandson was very ill once, but Nadia refused the German army physician he had sent to her. One cool autumn evening, Rudolph came in especially high spirits. "They have promised me a furlough this winter," he said. "It will be so good to see my family again. I've been worried



about the bombings. They say Hamburg is a shambles."

Peter smiled but did not reply at once. Finally, "It will be very nice for you."

"I'm sorry, Peter, about your family. I wish I could help. Maybe it will all come out all right."

"Maybe." Rudolph produced French champagne for the occasion, but the sparkle was gone from the wine as it was from Peter's eyes.

"My oldest daughter," the German said, "she will be a great poetess some day. She wrote a poetic drama and they presented it at her boarding school. It was an excerpt from the Siegfried legend."

"Is she married yet?"

"Married? She is too young—scarcely fourteen."

"I didn't know. I thought Hitler approved of young marriages. Thirteen is old enough for his purposes."

Rudolph looked at him wordlessly. This was the first break in the utter tranquility of their discussions. The German had tried to be tactful, but he had not always been thoughtful. "They say they can see the towers of Moscow today," he went on so idly that one would not have noticed the revival of the conversation.

But the next evening Peter seemed to try to be cheerful, and he actually led the German out on discussions of his family.

Winter came at last and the incredibly battered Red Army struck back with savagery that had once seemed impossible. The Nazi situation grew from concern to alarm and finally in some sectors to desperation. Rudolph had few evenings to himself now and his face was graven with worry. The Russians chose the eve of his furlough to launch a drive with a heavily armored column straight at the supposed security of Mosir. Mosir was the focus of important rail linkings with the entire local sector of the front. Could the fantastic Red effort occupy the city even briefly, the German supply problem would become a hopeless tangle. The Nazi army would have to retreat seventy miles to cover such a disaster. Guerilla bands became increasingly active, and two trains were wrecked within a kilometer of the town. Ivan Marvitch actually raided the town and set fire to the German headquarters and Peter's house. Both were saved from the flames, but the morale of the local garrison had suffered a telling blow.

At first the threat seemed distant but each day made the danger more omnipresent. The townsmen were restless. A German staff car was wrecked when a wheel came off. Rudolph lost interest in his endless chess games for a time, but resumed them when he decided that they calmed his nerves. But in the midst of a game

he would rise and pace the long carpeted study. "We will be doomed if Marvitch and his men cut the rail line. We haven't nearly enough reinforcements. And they don't dare send them to us until they are sure that the Red column would not sweep aside in a new direction. They are crafty—the Red generals."

"Surely you could destroy his few men."

"They are phantoms. We should have destroyed the woods by fire this summer when they would burn, but we could not know that we would ever be imperilled here."

And the Red column drew inexorably closer. Street demonstrations became frequent, and the Germans suppressed them with thoroughness in direct proportion to their alarm. When the advance guard of the column was scarcely fifty kilometers from the town, the High Command decided to reinforce the Mosir garrison powerfully. And supplies and troops began to roll into the town in awe-inspiring quantity. The streets became field-gray with the many uniforms until citizens whispered, "it is like a plague of locusts that colors all the land."

Waller remained in the railroad station constantly, for he knew only too well that the numbers arriving were not yet sufficient to assure stopping the break. "I am depending upon you, Peter," he said suddenly. "My life and reputation depend upon you. The future of my nation depends to some extent on this battle." But for all his declarations, Waller supervised the dispatcher's office with care that could admit no major error.

A day later the Russian column stopped to strengthen its sides against growing enemy pressure. But as if in coordination, the guerillas seized a stretch of the rail line and demolished a section they could not hold. Mosir's communications were severed. Then Marvitch's band, firmly entrenched in the cover of the forest, was further supported by parachutists dropped in the night. German tanks could not pass through the forest in sufficient force to escape disaster, nor could heavy artillery batter down a forest. But the Germans were now made acutely aware of a situation they had never believed could become so dangerous. They hurled a portion of a motorized division at the stalled column and prepared to bring up more force as they could spare it along their trembling front. The Russian column held and was reinforced, but it could make no further progress.

Waller and Peter were bent over a map in the little office on the third evening of the stalemate. "Just like a dagger in our line," he indicated the position of the Red column. "It's against military precedent to try to hold anything of that shape."

"But holding this vicinity long enough to tear it up personally would be an advantage to the Russians." He spoke of his countrymen in a detached manner.

"If we only had some way to secure reinforcements by rail. Trucks bog down and we have so few here."

Peter hesitated for a moment. "Suppose you had another rail line—going around the forest. It would only take a few miles of track over fairly level, open country."

The German smiled a little though he had forgotten how to beam with delight. "That would be nice. Maybe we could arrange it with Saint Nicholas to bring us one for Christmas."

"We have rails here and plenty of men. Perhaps your army could begin to build from the other side."

"I didn't know we had rails here—just a few for repair work, perhaps."

"But I have been station master here a long time. Just before the war we were going to build a new rail line from Mosir. The rails and equipment were here ready for work when the war began."

Waller's face lighted. "Where are they? Maybe we have a chance."

"Buried. When we knew your army would be here, every able man helped dig a pit and we dumped the rails inside and covered them—planted trees and grass over them."

"You will tell me where they are," the commander was nearly pleading with eagerness.

"Outside the town beside the main road. There are enough rails there to lay a track half way to Berlin. With all your men pressed into service directed by your engineers the line can be completed before the Russians can complete the reinforcement of their column."

The German suddenly looked at him queerly. Peter saw his expression and answered him. "Every spark has been snuffed out. What becomes of Russia is no concern of mine."

"I really think you mean that. I was never quite sure before."

At midnight the work of excavating the rails began under floodlights and by morning the task was finished. With tools from the railroad workshop, engineers were already busy with the first rails. The townspeople stood around the pit in the largest numbers that were permitted to gather and cursed Peter in impotent fury. The little joke they had among themselves of seeing their enemies, desperate for communications, walk and ride daily over such a cache had struck back hard at them. Their faces were gray as the winter sky. Peter saw their hate and feared even for the safety of Nadia and the child. Peter's house was well guarded, and he wished that Nadia might share its sanctuary.

Nadia's aunt came just before dawn to Peter's house. She was a short, corpulent woman with a maternal attitude about herself.

Now tears streaked her face as she spoke and her voice was high-pitched with near hysteria. "Oh, Peter, the day should never have come." Her tears drowned her next words.

"What happened?" Cold fear clutched the old man.

"I feared the people—they were so angry. I kept Nadia hidden, but they found the child. It had toddled to a side-door that I had overlooked. They were wild animals in their fury, and Nadia looked on while I and my husband held her with all our force. They held it up and called out, 'Behold the Hun'." She relapsed into sobs again. "The Germans came too late and machine-gunned the mob. Never have you seen such a sight. Men and women lying in the streets writhing with their faces shot away. The street around my house was slippery as I walked in the darkness to this house."

Peter was silent for a time—his face buried in his hands. "I never dreamed this would happen, Trinkä," for that was her name. "I had believed a providence would keep this horror from going so far that there would be no returning. What of Nadia? Where is she?"

"I left her at my house. She screams endlessly and in a way to chill you more than any winter. She carries a child conceived for five months and I fear very much." The woman's words came mixed with more sobbing. "Such screams you never want to hear on earth again."

"What do you want? Should I have her brought here?"

"I think it wise. But you must use a staff car. General Waller will do it for you."

"I'm sorry, Trinkä, but you'd better keep Nadia with you . . ."

The woman was silent for a moment. "You would not even give your child the protection you have bought at such a terrible price."

"No, Trinkä, that is final." She saw in his expression that he meant the words. She turned to leave, her mind seething with fury.

"One thing you must remember, Trinkä. As a thing becomes more valuable, it becomes more expensive. A man would pay more for a tractor than a horse, yet both would plow his field. I made a purchase. Payment was a long time off, and it has increased in value since I bought it. I have to pay the full price. Remember what I say."

"I have no patience with your stories." She returned wordlessly to the street and Peter could see her bulky figure disappear down the dimly lighted sidewalk.

He paced the floor for nearly an hour until exhaustion cast him into a chair with his face buried in his bony, ancient hands.

After that Peter could only wait with all the problems of justice and ethics that man knows sifting through his brain. After hours had made days as tracks made the desperate German railway, Waller came to his house again. The Russians had reinforced their salient in preparation for an imminent all out attack. Meanwhile the German rail terminals west of Mosir bulged with war material and troops to strike down the audacious Red plan. They flung their own line half the distance while Waller's engineers made their part.

"There are many questions I would like to ask you, Peter," the German began. "Why did you do it?"

"My brother was blown to bits by one of your bombs before he knew was was declared. After that there were many reasons." Peter spoke slowly, unhurriedly.

"You have doomed us all, you know," Waller went on, not angrily. "I'll never see Bavaria again."

"I'll not see my brother or my grandchild."

"You planned this all along, Peter. You never at any moment planned anything but our destruction. You let yourself be called a Nazi—let your family turn away from you."

"As the price became higher to you, it became higher to me. Whoever keeps the books on fate and destiny must be a mathematician with a mania for securing balance."

"Yes, did anyone know what you did."

"Marvitch, the guerilla leader knew. That's why he cut your rail line and raided your rail supply dump. He made that raid so you would be forced to use our equipment. While I made toys for your children, I also made track width gauges and meter sticks—all measuring a little wrong. After you used my gauge, no train could run on those tracks."

"That's right. You are to be congratulated. All the soldiers we moved here before the rail was cut will be destroyed. This entire sector of our front must be evacuated. You have made me think that we should evacuate all Russia. I never knew but one cat quite like you." Peter sighed and walked to a window. Waller watched him thoughtfully.

"One thing, Peter, the Germans won't let you live and the Russians won't let me live," he went on. "Before our court-martial convenes, I would like to extend an invitation to you. Would you care to join me in a game of chess a week from today—in Hades?"

Henry

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY JOSEPH DIEDRICH

CAST OF CHARACTERS

HENRY: *An old Quebec halfbreed guide.*

MICHAEL: *A fortyish gov't official from the states who has come to Quebec to recover from the effects of a nervous breakdown.*

DOROTHY: *His pretty, sophisticated wife.*

HARVARD: *An unexpected visitor.*

WALTER: *CONSTABLE WALTER LE TELLIER of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.*

SCENE: *A cabin somewhere in Canada; complete with fireplace and woodpile, three doors back R. to outside, back L. to kitchen, up right to woodshed-storeroom, and two or three small windows. In corner up R. is a stepladder leading to the upstairs. A largish table heaped with miscellanea such as might be found in the cabin of a trapper stands at stage L. The room is furnished crudely but well. It is cluttered.*

AT RISE: *The outside door opens and the two men and a woman enter. The first is wearing a flying helmet. He is carrying a large amount of expensive looking luggage. The other man, MICHAEL OWEN, is tall, aristocratic, fortyish and nice, though rather soft looking. He is dressed expensively and much too well for his surroundings. The woman, his wife DOROTHY, is handsome and perfectly groomed. Her taste of dress corresponds to MICHAEL'S.*

DOROTHY. Well, so this is the sturdy, comfortable, commodious hunting lodge that realtor in Montreal talked you into buying!

(PILOT puts down luggage, exits.)

MICHAEL. It certainly isn't Chatham-on-the-Hill; but it does meet the requirements. It is in Canada and it is isolated.

DOROTHY. I suppose so; but you might have looked into it a bit further before paying such an outrageous sum for this. Really, Michael, it's lucky for us that you went into government; you always have been such a child when it comes to business.

1945

HENRY

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MICHAEL. Dorothy, stop picking. You know as well as I do that I never would have come into this howling wilderness if Dr. Samson hadn't ordered it.

DOROTHY. Six months of absolute peace and quiet! No club, no parties, no concerts—away from everything. Horrible!

MICHAEL. This place certainly is that. There isn't another house or even a road within eighty miles.

DOROTHY. What a perfectly awful country. Nothing but woods and lakes and hills and swamps ad infinitum. I wonder what ever prompted the natives to come up here and live?

MICHAEL. I'm sure I can't imagine. They can't have all had nervous breakdowns.

(The PILOT has entered and deposited another load of luggage.)

PILOT. Excuse me, Mrs. Owens, but we'll have to be leaving in a few minutes. There won't be a moon tonight for a landing so we've got to make it to Waterways by sundown. *(Exit.)*

DOROTHY. Didn't that man in Montreal say that there was a guide living here who would look after you? I'm certainly not going to go off and leave you in this God-forsaken place alone!

MICHAEL. Don't worry, dear, he must be about some place. I think his name is Henry.

DOROTHY. Well, I'm not leaving until I'm sure that there is someone here to take care of you. Henry? . . . Henry!

MICHAEL. *(Looking about. Opens door up R.)* What ho! The woodshed!

DOROTHY. Michael, will you pay attention! Henry? Michael, I don't believe that man is here. You're coming back with me!

MICHAEL. Darling, I would if I could, you know that, but I can't; Dr. Samson said that—

DOROTHY. I don't care what Dr. Samson said. I will not leave you here to your death. No guide, no phone, no radio, no water, no plumbing, and you're to spend six months here to recover from a nervous breakdown!

MICHAEL. *(Walks toward wall switch behind door R. C.)* At least we have electricity.

DOROTHY. *(Continuing)* It's absolutely out of the question—

MICHAEL. (*Tries switch—nothing happens.*) Or should I say had electricity.

DOROTHY. Michael, will you listen. I—

(*There is a banging clatter from the kitchen and the door bursts open. HENRY emerges carrying a metal rod about seven feet long; it is bent slightly in the center. HENRY is an oldish man of rather small stature who could be fifty or seventy. His white hair wants a cutting badly. He is attired in moccasins, a dirty old pair of pants that could be made of almost anything and an old flannel shirt with several buttons missing. He scarcely gives Mr. and Mrs. OWENS a glance.*)

HENRY. (*Crossing*) The damn shaft from the 'lectric generator is bent.

(*MICHAEL and DOROTHY watch oafishly as he disappears into the woodshed. The door slams jarring behind him.*)

MICHAEL. (*Lamely*) Well, I guess that's why the lights won't work.

(*Uncomfortable pause. Pounding can be heard from the woodshed.*)

DOROTHY. That—that awful old man! Mike—who on earth—could that be——

MICHAEL. That, I think is the man who is going to look after me for these next six months; God forbid!

(*The pounding ceases abruptly and is succeeded by fervent cussing.*)

DOROTHY. You mean—that was Henry?

MICHAEL. Who on earth else could it have been?

(*Renewed pounding.*)

DOROTHY. He—he acts rather mad.

MICHAEL. Who wouldn't be after living in this God-forsaken country all his life?

(*A crash as if something knocked over. HENRY begins to cuss again.*)

DOROTHY. I won't hear of it, Mike! Six months in this place; and that terrible old man!

MICHAEL. It's no use, dear, I have to stay, much as I hate it. Dr. Samson must know what he is doing. He says that six months here is the only way I can get my nerves back in shape. (*Pounding again.*)

DOROTHY. Ha! I should have two nervous breakdowns if I stayed here six days!

(*The pounding stops and the woodshed door bursts open. HENRY reappears carrying the shaft. The bend is gone. He stalks through into the kitchen—not giving them a glance.*)

DOROTHY. (*Recovering*) Mike, I think you should speak to him. (*Pounding again from the kitchen.*)

MICHAEL. Why? I like it much better this way.

DOROTHY. But, Mike—you've got—

(*The outside door opens and the PILOT looks in.*)

PILOT. I'm sorry, Mrs. Owens; we have to take off now. (*Exit.*)

(*There is a particularly violent burst of pounding from the kitchen.*)

DOROTHY. Oh dear! Well, Michael, you've simply got to talk to him, and—oh, Mike, this is just too foolish. Why don't you come home with me now to where you can live like a human being?

MICHAEL. Stop tempting me or I will. (*Kisses her.*) Now run along, dear, and be sure to send in a letter with the provision plane this December. I'll send you a dozen out.

DOROTHY. Oh, Mike, that's only once in six months. Isn't there anyway I can get in touch with you?

MICHAEL. Not unless you hire a plane to fly in, and that's against Doctor's orders. We're pretty isolated here, that's for certain.

(*Sound of gunning airplane engine.*)

MICHAEL. (*Kisses her again.*) He's gunning the engine, dear, hurry. Goodbye, dear.

DOROTHY. Goodbye, Mike. (*She leaves.*)

MICHAEL. Goodbye. I'll be alright.

(*MICHAEL watches out the door for a long moment. He closes the door, looks about him and heaves a long unhappy sigh. The sound of the plane taking off can be heard.*)

MICHAEL. Well, this is it Mr. Owens—home for the next half a year.

(*There is a new burst of pounding and cussing from the kitchen.*)

MICHAEL. My God! I'd forgotten about him. (*He starts toward the kitchen. Stops.*) To Hell with him!

(*Pause, more pounding.*) Now Mike, don't be a coward. You have to speak to him sometime or other—I suppose. (*Pause—silence*) After all, you're to live with him for the next twenty-six weeks. (*Pause—there is subdued conversation from the kitchen.*) Might as well get it over with. Henry? (*Mumbling in kitchen continues.*) Henry!

(*The kitchen falls silent, the door opens and HENRY emerges. Not glancing at MICHAEL he ambles over to the light switch and tries it. It works.*)

HENRY. (*With satisfaction.*) Now the damn things work! (*He disappears into the woodshed, leaving the door ajar.*)

MICHAEL. (*Recovering from his stupefaction.*) See here, are you deaf?

HENRY. (*From woodshed. Pleasantly.*) No. I ain't deaf.

MICHAEL. Well, why didn't you answer then? (*He watches fascinated as HENRY, carrying several tin cans, comes out of the woodshed and heads once more kitchenward.*)

HENRY. (*Matter-of-factly.*) You didn't ask me anythin'. (*He disappears into the kitchen and begins banging pots about.*) Clean off the table. We'll eat in a couple minutes. (*He begins to whistle piercingly.*) (*MICHAEL involuntarily begins to clear the table—stops himself.*)

MICHAEL. See here. That's your job! (*Pause—whistling continues.*) I'm certainly paying you enough! (*Pause—whistling continues unabated. Shouts.*) If you think that you've found a sucker who will do your work for you, you're mistaken! (*HENRY bursts into song.*) Damnation! (*Brushes junk from one end of table onto floor.*) There! Now I'm going to climb up this damned ladder to—(*Picks up a large suitcase*)—wherever it is I'm supposed to try to sleep and change into some appropriate clothing. (*Song stops, the scraping of a dish can be heard.*) If I have anything that old and dirty. (*Navigates ladder with difficulty. Exit.*)

(*There is the bang of a pan being set down heavily and HENRY enters from the kitchen whistling tunelessly to himself. He sets the food on the table, sees the mess on the floor, clucks disapprovingly and begins to pick it up. The sound of a plane landing is heard.*)

MICHAEL. (*From upstairs.*) I hear a plane.

HENRY. (*Walks to window.*) Yep.

MICHAEL. (*Still upstairs.*) It sounds like it's coming down!

HENRY. (*Looking out window.*) Maybe.

MICHAEL. (*As if he were hurrying.*) It must be Dorothy and the man who flew us in. I wonder what's wrong? They must have had to turn back. (*Comes down ladder—excitedly.*) Perhaps—

HENRY. (*Decisively.*) Nope!

MICHAEL. (*Stops in mid-ladder.*) What was that? I just said that—

HENRY. It ain't them!

MICHAEL. Oh. (*Crestfallen.*) I'd thought—(*Continues down ladder.*)

HENRY. (*Continuing.*) It's Walter. (*WALTER enters. He is a well built young man of perhaps thirty years. He is wearing the uniform of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.*)

WALTER. How are ya, Henry? Hello! I didn't know there was anyone staying here with you. I'm Constable Walter Le Telliere.

MICHAEL. Pleased to meet you. My name is Michael Owens. (*Henry goes into kitchen.*)

WALTER. Kind of early for a trip up here isn't it? You should have waited a month or so until the hunting season opens. Even the fishing isn't much good this time of year.

MICHAEL. I didn't come here on a sporting trip. I'm to stay here till February.

WALTER. Oh. Writer?

MICHAEL. No. I'm here for my health. Peace and quiet and all that sort of thing.

WALTER. Well, you couldn't have picked a better spot than this, or a better man than Henry. Best guide in Quebec. (*HENRY enters from the kitchen carrying more food.*)

HENRY. We was just going to eat. Sit down Wallie.

WALTER. Thanks. I'll have to hurry, though. (*Small talk. They sit and begin to eat.*)

MICHAEL. Up here on police business?

WALTER. Nope. Just making the rounds. Fire Watch.

MICHAEL. That's the best fish I've ever tasted. What is it?
 HENRY. Ouananiche.
 MICHAEL. What?
 WALTER. Ouananiche: Sort of a big trout. I guess you call them landlocked salmon down in the States.
 HENRY. Caught 'em this morning over t' Bent Tree Lake.
 WALTER. That reminds me, Henry. Have you been over around Lobstick Lake lately?
 HENRY. Nope. I ain't been over that way since spring trapping.
 WALTER. That's funny.
 MICHAEL. Why?
 WALTER. I saw smoke there the other day so I sat down to have a look. I found a camp fire but couldn't see anyone around anywhere. Thought it must have been Henry, he's the only person that lives around here, and there aren't any hunters in the woods yet.
 HENRY. It wasn't me.
 MICHAEL. Couldn't it have been Indians? There are some that live around here, aren't there?
 HENRY. No, it wasn't no Injuns. Not yet.
 WALTER. The Indians don't come into the woods until around the end of September.
 MICHAEL. Where are they now?
 WALTER. They always spend the summer camped near the Hudson's Bay Co. posts down around Lake St. John or over on James Bay. Hey, I've got to get going. I'm due at East Main over on the bay tonight. Thanks for the grub, Henry. I'll see you again, Mr. Owens.
 MICHAEL. Goodbye, Constable. I'm glad I met you.
 HENRY. If I find out anything about the fella over t' Lobstick, I'll tell you when you come through in December.
 WALTER. Thanks. I don't think it's anything important though. Well, so long. (*Exit.*)
 MICHAEL. Be seeing you. }
 HENRY. 'Bye, Wallie. } (*Together.*)
 (*They watch out the window for a moment.*)
 MICHAEL. (*Turning*) I wonder who would be living out in these woods, and why?

HENRY. (*Beginning to clear table.*) Hell, I don't know. (*Sniffs of Michael with obvious disapproval.*) Oh, it's you.
 MICHAEL. That is insect repellent. Skeeto Skat, the best there is. Guaranteed to keep off deer flies and mosquitoes. What do you use to scare them off?
 HENRY. Nothin'! I fight 'em off. Ya gotta kill those things, not scare 'em to death.
 (*A plane can be heard taking off.*)
 MICHAEL. There he goes. Funny; if that fellow isn't an Indian and he isn't a hunter, I wonder what he could be doing up in these woods?
 HENRY. He ain't one from this country—the North, I mean. That's for damn sure.
 MICHAEL. How do you figure that?
 HENRY. Waal, he'd a' knowed better'n to a' camped near Lopstick.
 MICHAEL. Why?
 HENRY. Lobstick's a muskeg lake. Plenty swamps around there, too.
 MICHAEL. What has that to do with it?
 HENRY. Ain't hardly no fish in a muskeg lake and there ain't never no game in the swamps this time a year 'cause a' the bugs.
 MICHAEL. Now's a bad time for insects?
 HENRY. Yep. Couldn't be any more of 'em in the swamps without they was smaller. No one but a greenhorn or a damn fool would camp up there now, less'n he had something to hide.
 MICHAEL. Oh well, if some darn fool wants to play hide and get eaten alive by the flies, let him; it's none of my affair. What time is it? My watch has stopped.
 HENRY. I don't know.
 MICHAEL. Where's your clock then? I'll look.
 HENRY. Ain't got any clock.
 MICHAEL. My God. That's the trouble with you people up here, you're not at all practical. How can you work out a decent schedule or get ahead without some method of keeping time?
 HENRY. Hell. Who wants to get ahead. I'm happy. Are you?
 MICHAEL. Why—certainly. But, how can you be? Your life must be a hodgepodge, nothing set, no routine—

HENRY. That's right. I just do what I feel like, generally.
(*Moves toward door.*) C'mon.

MICHAEL. Where are you going?

HENRY. I think I'm going fishing.

CURTAIN

SCENE: *The same place. Several months have passed and winter is setting in.*

A cot has been moved into the room; there is a fire in the grate. It is night. Henry enters from the kitchen bringing a teapot and two tin cups which he sets on the table. There is a stamping just outside the door back RC. MICHAEL enters brushing the snow off himself. He is of a healthy ruddy complexion and attired in winter clothing.

MICHAEL. Whew! Cold as Hell tonight; must be around 40 below. (*Sits.*) This trapping is some job!

HENRY. I just got done b'ilin'. Here's some hot tea.

MICHAEL. (*Settling back with a sigh of content.*) Ran the whole lake path today and only got two mink. Most of the traps were snowed under; there's only about three feet of snow in the woods and still falling.

HENRY. Too cold for the animals to be movin' around much.

MICHAEL. (*Beginning to take off boots.*) Fire feels good. (*Pause.*)

HENRY. I set up the north-east path today as far as Lobstick.

MICHAEL. Was the lake all frozen over?

HENRY. Yea. (*Pause*) Someone's livin' in my tilt up there.

MICHAEL. (*Surprised*) Are you sure?

HENRY. Course I'm sure! Fire in the damn stove; wood 'most all gone; tracks all over the place in the snow! What the Hell else could all that mean 'cept that someone's been livin' there?

MICHAEL. It must be the same fellow who was hanging around there last fall. I'd forgotten about him. (*Henry grunts noncommittally.*) I wonder why he wasn't around?

HENRY. The tilt's on top of a big bare hill. Figger he saw me comin' and lit out, the dam' sneak! Et up all o' my food, too. Must ha' been livin there three months or more even.

MICHAEL. Are we just going to let him stay up there?

HENRY. Nope! I figger the only way we can get him out though is just to creep up some night and catch him with his pants down. He ain't up to no good!

MICHAEL. Let's do it tonight! I'd just as soon get it over with; don't like to have him lurking around like that. He could be anything; a criminal, a madman, or God on a night like this.

HENRY. (*Looking at him quizically.*) So you got it too, eh? I kind a' thought you would.

MICHAEL. Eh? I—(*Breaks away.*) What? Have what?

HENRY. I don't know what you'd call it; North mebbe. I got it; that's why I ain't never going to leave here. Most everyone as lives up this way has it.

MICHAEL. See here, I've nothing of the kind. I have been forced to stay here six months, and six months is all I'm going to stay. Not one day more! (*He looks at Henry who shrugs noncommittally.*) Just because I state that it is beautiful outside doesn't mean that I've got this "North" of yours!

HENRY. Mebbe.

MICHAEL. There's no maybe about it!

HENRY. (*Continuing.*) Time we et anyhow.

MICHAEL. Sure is. I'm starved!
(*They begin to eat.*)

MICHAEL. If people back home had told me that in four months knows what!

HENRY. I dunno's tonight's a good time or not. (*Looks out window.*) It's stopped snowin' an' the moon's out. Plenty o' lights too—that generally means that it's going ta get colder, an' colder'n 40 below is dam' cold. I'll put supper on. (*Does.*)

MICHAEL. (*Goes to window.*) The bleak and terrible North! Terrible, and yet beautiful, isn't it? The moonlight on the snow, the absolute emptiness and quiet—it's hard to believe that there can be anything dangerous out there. Sort of an icy Lorelei. (*Pause.*) Northern lights! I wonder what they are?

HENRY. The Injuns say that it is K'eetchie Manido, the Great Spirit, playing in the skies.

MICHAEL. It's not at all hard to believe that He is out there—I'd be eating muskrat and liking it, I would have said—

HENRY. (*Breaking in.*) Wait!

MICHAEL. What is—?

HENRY. Sssssh!

(Pause. They both listen.)

HENRY. *(Goes to door.)* I thought I heard somethin'. *(He opens the door and sticks his head outside. A walking stick hits him over the head and he falls, half in, half out of the door. HARVARD steps over his prostrate form and enters the room. He is wearing an originally expensive business suit and overcoat, though now both are badly tattered. He is tall, well built and around forty. He is carrying a heavy silver-headed walking stick.)*

HARVARD. *(Pulling HENRY into room and shutting door.)* We mustn't leave the door open. Can't have all that snow coming in!

MICHAEL. *(Fuddled completely by the suddenness of events.)* What—Why? Who are you?

HARVARD. Does it matter? I am a gentleman in distress, so to speak. However, if you insist on calling me something, you may call me Harvard.

MICHAEL. *(Uncomprehending.)* What do you want here? *(Goes to HENRY.)* Why did you hit Henry? *(Getting angry.)*

HARVARD. He startled me throwing the door open right in my face like that. I do not like to be startled! As to just what it is that I want here, I'm not quite certain. Must I be specific? All I wish now is a chance to warm up a bit and perhaps a change of warmer clothing; I'm really in frightful shape as you can see.

MICHAEL. *(Having put Henry on cot.)* You're mad!

HARVARD. I don't think I like you! You have an incredibly vapid expression on that face of yours; you say practically nothing in the line of civil conversation; and now you tell me that I'm mad. No, I don't like you at all!

MICHAEL. *(Tending to Henry.)* Thank God his skull isn't fractured. He's only knocked out.

HARVARD. That's a shame; I was hoping I'd killed him. I don't like people that startle me and I don't like to have them around.

MICHAEL. You needn't have hit him! Henry wouldn't hurt a fly! *(Angrily.)*

HARVARD. My! Aren't we arbitrary? You certainly do not make a very compatible host. However, as you seem

to be the only person about here, I suppose I shall be forced to bear you. I rather wish I hadn't incapacitated him. I daresay he is a far nicer person than you.

MICHAEL. *(Angrily.)* He is a wonderful person!

HARVARD. Then I certainly wish that I'd hit you instead.

MICHAEL. *(Threateningly.)* How did you get here anyway?

HARVARD. I don't know why I should bother to answer a question put in that tone, but I shall. Perhaps it is because I have been for so long without conversation. *(Sits. MICHAEL walks softly to woodpile, takes log, and creeps up behind HARVARD during this speech.)* Last May I was sent by my doctors to a resort hotel, so I thought, in the Laurentians. When I found to my dismay that through some mistake I had been sent to a sanitarium, in which I was forcibly detained, I quite naturally decided to escape; which I did. I tramped for days through this horrible country until I finally eluded the guards. I had holed up in that little cabin of your friend's over on that big lake, intending to wait until the thing blew over, when I discovered that you were living here. Quite naturally I came over. *(Pause.)* It is lucky for me that the sanitarium was afraid to seek police aid for fear of the unfavorable publicity it might bring, or I most certainly should have been caught. As it is I was nearly surprised by a Mounty one night by my campfire. He landed in— *(Turns, sees MICHAEL.)* What are you trying to do? *(Jumps up angrily.)*

MICHAEL. Oh—I—I was just—

HARVARD. *(Raises his cane menacingly.)* I told you I didn't like to be startled.

MICHAEL. *(Backing off.)* So?

HARVARD. So in order to make sure that I am not startled again, I shall have to eliminate you!

(During this scene MICHAEL dodges about the room, keeping furniture between him and HARVARD, and trying to avoid the frequent sweeps of HARVARD's stick; which is by far the superior weapon.)

HARVARD. I'm really not at all sorry. You are decidedly poor company. *(Pause.)* Your position is quite hopeless. As you see, I can drive you, eventually, into a corner where you cannot escape. I'm afraid I have quite the distinct advantage with this stick.

MICHAEL. So you have! And only an unfair, ill-mannered, low-bred boor like you would appreciate an advantage. (*Purposely insulting.*) You're afraid to fight fair, aren't you?

HARVARD. (*Losing a bit of his poise.*) Ill-mannered and afraid, am I? Look who's talking. Why I ought to—

MICHAEL. (*Following up.*) I might have been a better host, but I'm used to guests who are well dressed and posses at least a modicum of intelligence. (*Cuttingly.*) How else could I have treated an oafish tramp like you but with contempt? That's all you deserved.

HARVARD. (*Angry now.*) I see you have me quite typed. And where do you think you get the knowledge to judge me?

MICHAEL. (*Deliberately.*) I was raised on a pig farm.

HARVARD. (*Raging.*) Why—you—! I'll wring your damned neck.

(*He drops his stick and leaps at MICHAEL, who has been waiting for just this. MICHAEL dodges and catches him heavily on the poll of his head with his fire-wood. HARVARD drops.*)

MICHAEL. (*Angrily.*) There! Goddam you! (*He grabs some fishline from the table and begins to tie HARVARD up.*)

HENRY. (*Groggily.*) That was a pretty swat you gave him. (*He rises, groans, holds his head, reels.*) Whew! I guess he hit me a good one all right!

MICHAEL. (*Anxiously.*) Are you all right?

HENRY. Sure. My head pains me a little, that's all.

MICHAEL. When did you come to? (*He goes on tying HARVARD.*)

HENRY. Just about when you hit him. (*He walks over and prods HARVARD with his foot.*) Who is he anyhow?

MICHAEL. He escaped from a sanitarium down in the Laurentians.

HENRY. Mad?

MICHAEL. As a hatter! Here; do you feel well enough to help me put him up on the cot?

HENRY. Sure, I'm O. K. (*They lift the trussed-up HARVARD onto a cot. He moans.*)

MICHAEL. Well, I guess Mr. Harvard is O. K. too. He seems to be coming out of it.

HENRY. Too bad.

MICHAEL. That's just what he said about you.

HENRY. Nice of him. (*HARVARD groans and stirs a little.*)

MICHAEL. (*Pokes him.*) C'mon Mr. Highly-educated. Wake up, or die, or do something. I'm not going to wait all day. (*Pokes him again.*) Come on!

HENRY. (*Going to kitchen.*) Hope you die! I'll fix supper again.

MICHAEL. (*Turning.*) Good! I could use some food. This has been quite a day.

(*Behind MICHAEL's back HARVARD sits up quickly and alertly. He has worked an arm loose. Just as he is reaching for his stick, MICHAEL turns.*)

MICHAEL. (*Pushing him gently so that he topples back on bed.*) Now, now! Mustn't do that!

HARVARD. (*Snarls.*) I'll kill you! (*Struggles up.*)

MICHAEL. (*Pushing him back.*) You're not going to kill anyone. And just to make sure, I'll tie that arm up a bit better. If you know what's good for you, you won't struggle.

(*He ties up HARVARD more securely. He is surly but cooperative.*)

MICHAEL. Henry, come here. Look what came to.

HENRY. (*Enters from kitchen with food.*) Lemme put him back to sleep, least 'til we're done eatin'.

MICHAEL. (*Comes over to table.*) Never mind, he won't bother us. I'm afraid he's sulking.

HENRY. Now ain't that just too bad!

MICHAEL. Cuts me to the quick. Let's eat. (*They sit down.*)

MICHAEL. Aren't we going to feed him?

HENRY. Yeah. Might as well get used to it. We'll have him on our hands for the next couple months.

MICHAEL. Can't we send him out on the supply plane? That's due any day now.

HENRY. It's been here already.

MICHAEL. What? — When?

HENRY. This mornin' when you was gone. I was just going to tell you when I was interrupted. (*He rubs his head ruefully.*)

MICHAEL. My God! Walt's been here on his patrol already, and the supply plane has come and gone. Why, we'll have that (*Indicates Harvard*) on our hands 'till spring.

HENRY. Yeah. (*Starts to take food to Harvard.*) Hell, I'll feed him later. I'm hungry. By the way, you got some letters from home. (*Slyly.*) Ain't you interested? That's all you talked about at first.

MICHAEL. Eh? — Oh! — Yes, yes of course I'm interested. It's just that with Harvard and all—

HENRY. They're on the window sill over there.

MICHAEL. This one? Oh yes. (*Shuffles through them.*) Here's one from Dorothy. (*He tears it open and reads it. He looks disappointed and confused.*)

HENRY. What's it say?

MICHAEL. Read it for yourself. (*Goes to window.*)

HENRY. (*Picks up letter and reads with difficulty.*) Mike darling, I have the most wonderful news. You won't have to stay in that horrible place any longer. (*Surprised whistle.*) I did as you told me and as soon as I arrived here I went to see Dr. Gordon— (*To MICHAEL.*) Who's he? I thought your doc's name was Samson?

MICHAEL. It is. Gordon's a society doctor. Gives pink pills to neurotic old women. Doesn't know a damn thing about medicine.

HENRY. Oh. Ummmm, (*Reads again.*) Went to see Dr. Gordon and he said that Dr. Samson's dia—diagnosis was incorrect and that you needn't stay up there any longer. He advises a trip to Mexico. The Van Morgans are having a party at their place in Acapulco in February, and we can just make it. We shall have a wonderful time. Everybody will be there. (*Questionably.*) Everybody?

MICHAEL. (*Disgustedly.*) She means everybody that is everybody; the bunch of neurotic, money-grubbing snobs that make up the social register.

HENRY. Sounds nice. (*Continues.*) I'm going to charter a plane and fly in for you right away. No more time now darling; hurry and get ready; I should be there the 20th. (*Stops.*) Today's the nineteenth.

MICHAEL. (*Glumly.*) I know.

HENRY. Going?

MICHAEL. I—don't know. (*Pause.*) Yes, I suppose so.

HENRY. Want to?

MICHAEL. No, damn it! I mean, yes. I mean—Oh, I don't know.

HENRY. (*Slyly.*) Wouldn't blame you much for going. It'll be warm. You'll meet a lot of high-class people. (*Pause.*) There ain't nothin' much to do here but watch the snow fall, an' run the trapline an' set in front of the fire. (*Pause.*) I reckon I'd be glad to—

MICHAEL. Oh, shut up! You know damn well that you wouldn't leave here for all the gold in China.

HENRY. Maybe I'm crazy.

MICHAEL. (*To himself.*) Maybe I am too.

HARVARD. (*Who has been listening.*) You certainly are if you plan on staying in this place. I, for one, shall be glad to get out of here.

MICHAEL. What makes you think you're going?

HARVARD. I don't imagine you'll leave me here.

MICHAEL. No, that'd be too good for you.

HENRY. Well, you better start gettin' your stuff together if you're goin' tomorrow. I'll help ya. (*Turns.*)

MICHAEL. No, wait Henry. Not yet!

HENRY. Well?

MICHAEL. Henry, what do you do when your mind is all kind of a muddle, when you want to think?

HENRY. I jest get out-a'-doors. Feller can always think best out-a'-doors; by hisself. (*Goes into kitchen.*) (*MICHAEL stands indecisively a moment, then quickly pulls on his parka, opens the door, and steps out. HARVARD watches quietly.*)

HARVARD. Crazy! Absolutely crazy!

CURTAIN

SCENE: *The same place, next day.*
As the curtain rises, MICHAEL is just coming down the ladder from upstairs carrying a suitcase. He navigates the ladder with ease and deposits the suitcase over near the door, where there already is a pile of them. He is dressed once more in country gentleman clothing; HARVARD is still tied up and on the cot.

MICHAEL. (*Setting bag down.*) There! That's the last of them. Now all I have to do is wait.

HARVARD. So you're going, eh? For sure?

MICHAEL. Of course. What gave you the idea I wasn't.

HARVARD. The way you talked last night I rather assumed that.

MICHAEL. (*Doggedly.*) Well, I've made up my mind.

HARVARD. (*Continuing.*) You actually sounded as if you liked this place.

MICHAEL. That's only natural, because I do. (*Impatiently.*)

HARVARD. You're even crazier than I thought.

MICHAEL. (*Mutters.*) Why don't you shut up?

HARVARD. I suppose it follows then that you don't like Acapulco?

MICHAEL. I loath Acapulco and I loath the crowd that winters there, and above all, I loath the Van Morgans.

HARVARD. My dear man, it's you should be tied up here awaiting delivery to a sanitarium, not I. You like it here. You intensely dislike one, Acapulco; two, the society there; three, and above all, these Van Morgans. Therefore you—

MICHAEL. (*Savagely.*) Shut up, I said!

HARVARD. (*Continuing imperturbably.*) Therefore you are leaving here, going to Acapulco to mingle with society, and, to top it off, going to stay with the Van Morgans. Mad!

MICHAEL. Oh, I suppose it is, but I—
(*HENRY enters from outside.*)

MICHAEL. Hello! Where've you been?

HENRY. Gettin' the toboggan ready.

MICHAEL. Toboggan? What for? Where are you going?

HENRY. Don't rightly know. North-west, I guess.

MICHAEL. But—why?

HENRY. 'Cause I feel like it.

MICHAEL. But trapping is best right now. You should—

HENRY. I know; but I'd ruther go over there.

MICHAEL. Why? What's over there?

HENRY. I don't know. That's why I want to go. (*Looks about.*) You all packed?

MICHAEL. Yeah. (*Unhappily.*)

HENRY. What's wrong?

HARVARD. Oh, he wants to stay but he's going anyway. I'm sure I don't know why. You san people are the craziest things I've ever seen! You— Hello, do

you hear that?
(*They listen. A plane is heard.*)

MICHAEL. It's a plane.

HENRY. (*Watches out window.*) It's them. They're comin' in now. (*Sound of a plane landing.*)

MICHAEL. (*Glumly.*) Well, I guess that's that.
(*Voices are heard outside. The door opens and DOROTHY and the PILOT enter, stamping off snow. DOROTHY is wearing an expensive fur coat.*)

DOROTHY. Mike darling! (*Kiss.*) How have you been? You look fine.

MICHAEL. I've been all right.

DOROTHY. What's the matter? You don't act very glad to see me.

HARVARD. He's not!

DOROTHY. (*Seeing HARVARD for the first time.*) Good Heavens, who are you? Mike, He's all tied up. What does this mean? Who—?

MICHAEL. I'll explain in a minute, Dorothy. Henry, you and the pilot had better take him out to the plane.

PILOT. Yes sir. (*They lift.*)

HENRY. Dammit, take it easy! He's heavy on this end.
(*Exit.*)

DOROTHY. Well? Explain!

MICHAEL. (*Irritably.*) All right, all right! He's a madman. Crept in here one night and tried to kill us both.

DOROTHY. I could have told you something awful would happen in this terrible place. It's a shame he didn't kill that horrible old Henry though. But tell me all—

MICHAEL. I'll tell you all about it some other time. I don't feel like talking about it now!

DOROTHY. My goodness, dear, you'd best be in a better mood next week! We're due at the Van Morgan's then, you know. Senator Pollard will be there, and you simply must get to know him, he's so important and influential. (*Glances out window.*) Well, I wonder where he's going?

MICHAEL. Who?

DOROTHY. That old fellow—you know—Henry. He's tramping off up the lake pulling a toboggan or something.

MICHAEL. (*Runs to window.*) He's what?

DOROTHY. Pulling a toboggan. Really, dear, you mustn't get so excited. It's bad for you, you know.

(MICHAEL is not listening. He throws off his city shoes and struggles into a pair of pacs.)

DOROTHY. (Still looking out window.) By the way, Dr. Gordon told me the other day that my case is like nothing else he'd ever seen. Isn't that thrilling? He said it is probably new to medical history. Just wait 'til I tell Mrs. Van Morgan. Oh my, I shall need a new — (Sees MICHAEL pulling on his parka.) Mike! What are you doing? Where—?

MICHAEL. (Kisses her hurriedly; runs toward door.) 'Bye dear. See you in sprnig.

DOROTHY. Where are you going?

MICHAEL. (Goes out door, shouts.) Henry! Wait for me!

CURTAIN

IN PRAISE OF THURSDAY

Who shall abide in the holy place?
Him that hath a broad brow and kindly face,
Who asks (on Thursday mornings) in the second hour
"Why is this poem great? And analyze its power."
We labor much with Keats and Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley.
Then marvel more at his intelligence, how well he
Understands the work, which to our adolescent mind,
Was merely stuff that foolish poets grind!

— Rosalind Darrow

The Man Who Died

By ZELL ROGERS-SESSIONS

ONLY one person was glad that Carl Grieg was dead. All the others wept. His funeral had been held that afternoon at half past three at the Methodist Church on the corner. Everyone went, even the Heaths. Mr. Waddell left Lem, the colored boy, in his grocery store and went over to the church with Purl Lyons. Purl owned the drug store across the street. Guy Fisher just shut up the bar at three-fifteen and told all the drunks to come along with him; he was going to the funeral of a man who would welcome any brother man, rich or poor, sober or drunk. Avery Hawkins got up from the last seat at the bar and tottered after Guy. Everyone came as he was, as he would be any summer afternoon in June. Carl Grieg liked people as they were. Mrs. Raymond Heath was in a powder blue shantung and her daughter, Molly Heath, wore a green cotton dress and a starched eyelet Dutch hat. Both the Mrs. and the Miss Heath had admired Carl Grieg. Miss Heath had thought him quite a nice-looking man, too. Judge Downey, old and majestic, despite the limp in his left leg, sat with his petite secretary, Emma Ruth Higgins, who had worked for the Judge nearly five years now. The Judge and Carl Grieg had been great friends. Emma Ruth had respect for all of the Judge's friends; but for Carl Grieg especially, she had had a profound respect. He had called on the Judge every day, many times during the Judge's office hours, so Emma Ruth had seen him often. She cherished the day he had told her that she should make more of her carrot hair: he'd said it as if he really liked carrot hair. Emma Ruth had thought Carl Grieg very handsome. Miss Lilly Carlyle sat on the other side of Emma Ruth. Rawboned and peaked, Miss Carlyle ran the boarding house where Carl Grieg had lived. Carl Grieg was the only man who had ever dared to call her Miss Lilly.

Everyone in Millerton was at Carl Grieg's funeral. A man was dead. A man who had come in the darkness and appeared on the streets in the early morning, and had asked Jake Weber to let him help deliver the milk: "Just to be friendly," he'd said. A man who had crossed the hearth of every home in Millerton. There was not a person who was without a private, pulsing memory of Carl Grieg. Carl Grieg the man was to all: he was never Mr. Grieg, nor was he ever Carl or Grieg. Always he was Carl Grieg; my friend, your friend. His funeral was in the Methodist Church. No one had known exactly where to have it,

and Judge Downey had said he didn't think it would matter much to Carl Grieg. They had it in the Methodist Church because it was larger than the Baptist. The Reverend Samuels officiated at his funeral. It was a hard task for the Reverend. Carl Grieg had been the one who had said that a church should be filled with light, not darkness nor somberness. He'd told that to the Reverend Samuels; and he'd told it to the architect. The new Methodist Church was filled with light. Yet Carl Grieg had never been inside. The Reverend Samuels didn't know really where to begin or end. He gave a short eulogy. All there knew only a fragment out of the dead man's life; but for that man and that fragment, his twenty months in Millerton, all wept.

Bernice alone sat in a far corner of the vestibule and listened to the mourning town. Her shoulders were rigid; her eyes dry. It was Thursday afternoon and she should be at Mrs. Henderson's, quilting; but she was here in the Methodist Church. Carl was dead.

There hadn't been money enough to do everything at once, so that the new Methodist Church still had plain instead of stained glass in its many windows. The sun came through and made delicate shadow palms on the wall behind the altar. Bernice watched them come and go, grow bold in design and then fade into nothing as the clouds passed over the sun. She had to watch something. If she didn't she was afraid the hurt would get so bad she'd become hysterical. Carl had taught her that one of the best ways, and the pleasantest, to gain self-control was to watch the forces of nature. He'd said that nature had an order and calmness about it that crept into the individual who sought consolation. Over and over again, Bernice remembered what Carl had said. She had had what her grandfather termed temper tantrums when she was a child. Of course, she guessed that most people considered her a child even now; but at any rate she seldom had those terrible tantrums any more, not nearly so much as before she had known Carl. She saw the people get up and leave the church. They would all walk around to the back under the oaks and bow their heads as some men lowered Carl into his grave. Bernice wouldn't go. Inside the church she'd begun to think of Carl as he was when he was living. Dead wasn't a pretty word to her. She didn't want to think of Carl as dead; she wanted just to remember that he had lived. She moved from the church out into the afternoon. She went down the steps and walked away. She'd remember him the way she wanted to. It made her feel better.

Bernice prided herself on having been the first person to have seen Carl Grieg when he came to Millerton. Naturally, there

was Jake Weber with whom Carl had gone on the milk route; but Jake was hardly a person to count, and besides it was dark when Jake delivered. That meant that Jake couldn't have truly seen Carl. Jake couldn't have seen that Carl's eyes were sea-green, like the ocean Bernice had seen once, or that Carl had deep, fixed wrinkles around his mouth that made him look as if he were smiling even when he wasn't. Every morning about six-thirty Bernice fed the chickens in the back yard. In September, for that was the month he came, there was still a lingering summer morning light at that time. She didn't hear Carl come and stop, because she was fussing at the clucking hens. He leaned over the fence next to the sidewalk and asked her if they were her chickens. She was startled at first, but he was nice and she talked to him easily. Somehow, without hesitation, she asked the strange man in to breakfast. Her grandfather hadn't seemed to object too much. He did notice, however, that his granddaughter seemed fascinated by this man whose name she had said was Carl Grieg.

Bernice, though, was not the only person whom Carl Grieg interested. Carl took a third-story room at Miss Carlyle's boarding house, and within a week practically everyone was at least calling him an acquaintance. He had a quiet manner and an understanding heart. He had a repertoire of stories and anecdotes that could keep Mrs. Heath, Judge Downey, and Avery Hawkins all listening at the same time. He had a certain masculine attraction about which such young women as Emma Ruth and Molly Heath thought when they lay awake at night. He treated everyone the same, with the possible exception of Bernice. Twice a week he met Bernice when she came from school. He would have gone oftener to see the little girl, but he knew that her grandfather was not a well man, that there was only money from the pension, and that the girl was needed whenever she was not in school. Carl knew that he could not explain to even such a person as Judge Downey why he loved the elf-like Bernice so much. As for Bernice, from the very first, she loved Carl Grieg with all the fire and possession of her eleven years.

The one particular afternoon in May, the month before he died, that Carl and Bernice had walked out to the Mills Pond had been crowded with happiness. They had walked out about four o'clock, avoided town altogether by cutting across the fields by the Heath house, and struck out through the sand-pine woods. They hit a trail and Carl had said, "Off with the shoes, young lady. We're roughing it today. We're going to get sand between our toes, and be happy about it." He'd pulled off his own shoes too and rolled up his pants legs. The sand was blistering and Bernice squealed when she put her feet in it. Carl yelled, "Yeow,

it is hot," and picked Bernice up and ran all the way to the water's edge with her. He dunked his feet in the pond quickly to cool them, and Bernice sat beside him and made funny ripples in the water by wriggling her toes. They had no swimsuits. Carl took off his shirt and lay down while Bernice jerked her dress off and rolled around on the grass in her slip. She rolled over close to Carl and tickled his ear with a reed. She snuggled up and said, "Carl, tell me a story. Tell me a story about China." Carl grunted and said he felt like a lazy pig wallowing in the sunshine. He sat up and called Bernice's attention to a pair of quail not far away. He had started to tell Bernice about shooting quail when he was a boy, but she interrupted, "Why did you ever go to China, Carl?" One moment Carl had been like an older brother; the next, he had been an old man with a straight mouth and weary eyes. All their happiness had vanished. Carl stood and gripped Bernice's hand hard. He looked out over the pond, as if he were seeing China; and said, "I went as a disciple, Bernice, but I failed in my mission." They walked home together then, but Bernice felt as if she were walking alone.

Carl had frequently said things that puzzled Bernice. She knew sometimes he said things that he didn't expect her to understand. None of them, however, had seemed so important as what he had said that afternoon. At almost any time of the day it would pop into her mind, and she would begin pondering what he had meant. Whatever it was, it was serious, she was sure. She couldn't stop seeing Carl's face and feeling the grip of his hand. The very worst part of all was that Carl hadn't come to see her the next week or the next. Even her grandfather asked where he was. Bernice couldn't tell him, and she herself was worried. Finally late one evening she went over to Miss Carlyle's to see if Carl was home.

Carl Grieg, Miss Carlyle said, had been in his room with a fever. Yes, she thought perhaps it might be all right for Bernice to go up. "But, mind you, child, he isn't full well yet, and you'd best be quiet and quick."

Bernice climbed the stairs and barely tapped at Carl's door. He came and opened it. She was so very glad to see him that she clutched his hand and danced once around. Carl's eyes were too bright a green, and his whole body throbbed with hot and cold sensations. He eased into a chair, and tiny, elf-like Bernice tucked her head into his lap and twined her slender arms about his waist. The nightmare of China came back to Carl. He saw the agony and death of his wife and of Irene, his little girl. The town had been black with plague. The natives had gone to the church to pray. He should have stayed with them, but he had left, sorrow

sapping his soul. He had gone to China as a disciple holding above all his allegiance to Christ and His church. It was treacherous country, and Carolyn and Irene had gone only because he had insisted that they consider God first and themselves second. But when they had died, he had thought of himself. He had deserted his mission; he had lost his discipleship. Not only had he betrayed Carolyn and Irene, but also the allegiance for which they had died. He had allowed death to take away the strength of his life. He had tried to do penance in Millerton; but whatever he did, he never forgot China. He looked down at Bernice and she smiled. He caught her in his arms and swung her high over his head. "You're growing up," he said. She considered that a compliment, and they both laughed. He was weak from the exertion though; the doctor had told him not to get out of bed. "You'd better scoot home for supper, hadn't you?" he asked.

"Guess I better," she said, and turned to go.

"Bernice," he walked over towards her, "remember that almost always someone is glad when a man dies." He kissed her forehead lightly.

Carl Grieg had died that night. Judge Downey went to the house early next morning and told Bernice. He told her that she didn't have to go to school if she didn't feel like it. She didn't cry then, because she couldn't realize it fully. She hadn't cried during the funeral either, but on her way home the tears came. Maybe Carl was right . . . that almost always some one is glad a man is dead. But she couldn't quite understand, and she couldn't go to him and ask him to explain. She'd have to figure this one out herself. She turned and looked back at the church on the corner. The white steeple pierced the summer sunshine. The breeze lulled the elegy. Beyond, the oaks spread their green and gray solace upon the resting souls. Bernice had seen Carl's weary eyes. He was the one person who was glad Carl Grieg was dead.



