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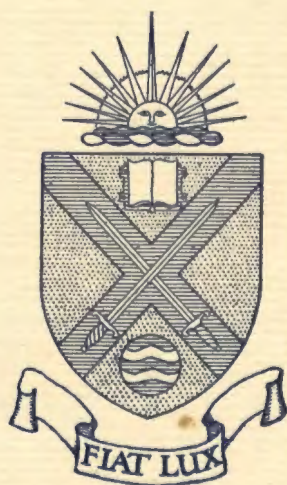
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THE FLAMINGO

DECEMBER, 1941



ROLLINS COLLEGE

Winter Park, Florida

THE FLAMINGO

ROLLINS COLLEGE

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WINTER PARK, FLORIDA

No. 1

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MR. McCLARY'S DOG, MITCH

JANE MILLER

OVER his drink Mr. Joel McClary regarded his dog Mitch with a tender eye. A slight twitching about the nose and tail of Mitch indicated to Mr. McClary that he was dreaming. In a voice benevolent with alcohol he inquired after the custom of many solitary evenings:

"What the hell are you dreaming about, Mitch?"

In accordance with the custom-of-many-solitary-evenings, Mitch awoke, stretched, scratched disinterestedly, and looked at Mr. McClary. Here custom ended abruptly.

"What I'm dreaming," said Mitch, in a clear, ringing baritone, "happens to be none of your business, McClary. And get that patronizing tone out of your voice."

Mr. McClary ejaculated softly and set his drink down so hard that some of the Scotch spilled over the glass onto the table. Solemnly, but without charity, he pinched his nose. His reflexes assured him he was not asleep.

"It's the Scotch," said Mr. McClary, "I've been doped."

Mitch raised himself to the level of the table and began to lap the puddle of liquor.

"Doped or not, it's lousy whiskey," he said, licking critically. "I think in future, you'd better let me go to the package store with you."

Mr. McClary did not reply but picked up his drink and quickly downed it. The Scotch hit his stomach and exploded hotly. He began to feel as if he might not die of shock after all.

"Well," he said. "Well, well."

Mitch sniffed.

"I suppose you're astonished to find that I can speak English," he said.

"Who, me?" Mr. McClary's voice expressed honest indignation. "Nonsense! Of course I'm not astonished — not in the least. Only," he added with the ingenuousness of the slightly intoxicated, "*I am* kind of s'prised!"

"I don't see why you should be surprised," said Mitch. "I'm never surprised when you try to bark — only a little mortified that you do it so badly."

Mr. McClary started to reply, thought better of it and instead lighted a cigarette.

"The trouble with guys like you, McClary," Mitch went on, "is that you think that just because you can speak English you've mastered some difficult art. Look at us. Our language is more complex than yours and calls for subtleties of expression you can't even imagine. As a matter of fact — I hate to sound stuffy — but we're rather scornful of English. Very few of us speak it, except when we see someone in trouble that we'd like to help." Resting his forepaws on Mr. McClary's knee, Mitch looked directly into his face. "McClary, you've been drunk the last ten nights. What's eating you?"

"What makes you think something's eating me?" Mr. McClary asked with that guardedness that made him such a formidable poker player.

"It's as plain as the flea on my left ear," said Mitch, and nodded towards a small crested pin which lay at Mr. McClary's feet. "Look at the way you threw that pin down when you came in tonight. You acted like you were ready to do murder."

Mr. McClary stooped to pick up the pin. Holding it between his fingers he addressed Mitch for the first time as a confederate.

"Insignificant as this hunk of tin may look," said Mr. McClary, "it has come between me and the women I love."

"You are referring of course to Elizabeth — the redhead?" Mitch inquired in the careful, incisive manner of a surgeon probing a wound.

"Yeah. To Liz Domerick. My number one girl. At least," said Mr. McClary bitterly, "she *used* to be my girl before she discovered England. I never see her any more. She's always at her darn British War Aid Society headquarters. That little metal plug is their pin." He kicked the pin across the floor and lapsed into a violent silence.

"These redheaded women," said Mitch, and shook his head. "Why is it you never find a brunette or a blonde that's as unreasonable as a redhead? I speak." he said with a kind of pride, "from experience. You see, I know a redhead, too. She lives in Apartment 5."

"Oh, you must mean that chow of Mrs. Billings," said Mr. McClary and at once could have bitten his tongue for what seemed to him an indelicate allusion. He made rather feeble amends: "She's awfully cute, Mitch."

"Temperamental," said Mitch, pretending not to be pleased by this compliment to his taste. "Impossible to suit."

"At least she isn't mixed up with a lot of gossipy old dowagers armed with knitting needles. This," declared Mr. McClary cynically, "is a war of knitting needles."

"Ah," said Mitch, "That's all you know about it. It was that darned British War Aid Society that turned Ping Pong's head. She won a loving cup at their charity bench show last month. She's hardly looked at me since. The trouble is," he concluded sadly, "I lost my temper and told her what I thought of the whole business. It's fatal to tell a woman what you *really* think."

"That's where I went wrong, too." Mr. McClary sighed deeply and poured himself another glass of whiskey. "It's not that I have anything against the British War Aid Society personally. It's a fine organization. I send it a monthly check. I go to all its charity shows and bazaars. Only it takes too much of Liz's time. Understand, Mitch?"

"Sure," said Mitch, "you're no Lindbergh. You're not Senator Wheeler."

"Liz knows how I feel," Mr. McClary said heavily, "but does she respect my feelings? No. Instead she tries to ring me in on writing the script for a radio program the War Aid Society is putting on in November. Imagine," said Mr. McClary, "She takes on a thing like that, after I've begged her to give up some of this work. And tries to rope me into it, besides. Mitch, I don't know what I can do. I'm going to see her at four tomorrow afternoon. At Corbi's. I've got to give her an answer then. Mitch, what can I say? I love her, but I don't want to give in to her."

"I'll tell you what you're going to say to her," said Mitch. "You're not going to make my mistake. She's a fine girl. Good looking. Knows her way around. She's the right girl for you. Either your pride goes, or Liz goes. You can't keep them both. I'm pitching for Liz. Listen to me, carefully now, McClary."

Mr. McClary listened carefully.

* * * * *

At four o'clock the following afternoon a tall young man, well-dressed but noticeably ill-composed, walked into Corbi's. At precisely fourteen minutes past four he walked out again, this time preceded by a girl. She was a pretty girl, simply but beautifully dressed. Her head was high and her clear cheeks were red beneath their fashionably pale powder.

All this the doorman saw. He was hardly interested, but had you made it worth his while he would have told you that the

young man and the girl exchanged a few annihilating words outside the door before going their separate ways in the pretty snowstorm that was at that moment raging over Manhattan.

* * * * *

"Well, I muffed it," Mr. McClary stated flatly, pushing from him his still well-filled plate. He was dining on the bridge table which Williams had set in front of the fireplace for what he imagined was to be an intimate supper. Very cosy of Williams, thought Mr. McClary: the old roue. The misapprehension on Williams' part had been caused by the two steaks which Mr. McClary had ordered from the grocer's that morning. He had experienced no small difficulty in convincing the deeply chagrined butler that the other steak was for Mitch, not Miss Domerrick.

Mitch raised his head from the ruin of a fine Sirloin cut.

"I thought you had when I saw your face tonight," he said. "Well — what ensued?"

"Things were going beautifully until I asked her to go to the play next Monday night," said Mr. McClary. "Then she got that familiar, pained, apologetic expression in her eyes and said she was sorry but she couldn't go. It seems — get this Mitch," Mr. McClary's voice was richly inflected with sarcasm, "the British War Aid Society is giving a dance for some R.A.F. pilots next Monday night. 'Here Alf Kirke writes the best play of his career,' I said to her, 'and gives us seats in the dress circle for opening night and what happens? You have to go to a dance for some R.A.F. pilots. What I want to know,' I said, 'is what R.A.F. pilots are doing in New York when Britain's supposed to be so hard up for soldiers? Why aren't they carrying the mail to Berlin instead of doing the conga with other men's fiancées?'"

"What did she say to that?" encouraged Mitch.

"Oh, some nonsense about their being over here to receive some specialized training in the use of American bombsights."

"You know what I think?" said Mitch.

Mr. McClary shook his head.

"I think Liz is right. I know you're a smart guy and a writer and everything," said Mitch, "but you don't keep up very well with current affairs. You ought to listen to Elmer Davis once in a while."

"Who writes it?" asked Mr. McClary.

"It's a man, not a script," said Mitch severely. "And don't

change the subject. We are talking about the R.A.F. pilots being in New York."

"All right," said Mr. McClary warmly. "They're over here. Let them stay here. Let them learn anything they like. Let the British War Aid Society give a dance for them. Only let the dowagers dance with them — not Liz!"

Having unburdened his soul, Mr. McClary retired to his study, fortified by a quart of Bourbon and the Literary Guild's latest selection.

The days passed. Mr. McClary spent most of his time in the study. Day and night his neighbors heard the relentless clack of his typewriter.

"That's Mr. McClary," they said to their friends. Apartment 9. He's a writer. He writes for the radio." Then as a fanfare of trumpet music announced the latest installment of that exciting mystery serial, "*Murder Goes Modern*." "That's one of his programs. George thinks he's almost as good as Maxwell Anderson."

Mitch and Mr. McClary did not talk much. Sometimes Mr. McClary, glancing up quickly from the sports page, would catch Mitch watching him. Then he would get up and say briefly, "Let's go for a walk, Mitch."

There came a night when Mr. McClary drank too much and passed out cold in the study. When he awoke the morning was grey in the sky outside the window. He raised his head from the paper-littered desk and looked around him stupidly. Mitch was lying near the door.

"What happened?" asked Mr. McClary.

"Too much of that green liquor," said Mitch. "You passed out. How do you feel?"

"Terrible," said Mr. McClary seeking to bind his throbbing forehead with his hands. "I've got fifty million Russians in my mouth!"

"Your girl wants you to call her," said Mitch with the greatest casualness. He sounded like he was reading the morning weather report.

"Liz?" Mr. McClary sat up very straight and his eyes were suddenly wide open.

"Miss Elizabeth Domerick. She prefers you call early."

"You're crazy," said Mr. McClary incredulously. "she isn't speaking to me."

"She wants you to call her," said Mitch firmly.

"Listen," said Mr. McClary, enunciating very clearly, "I'm probably crazy because I think you can talk. Don't ask me to believe that you can answer the telephone."

"One of my minor talents," said Mitch airily. "Maybe you hadn't noticed but Williams and I sound a lot alike. I'd be willing to bet our voices are identical on the telephone."

A slow dawn of realization was breaking over Mr. McClary's features.

"Wait a minute," he said, "hey, Mitch, you didn't—" He reached for the telephone and dialed a number with shaking fingers. There was a little click at the other end and then someone's sleepy voice said, "Hello?"

"Hello," said Mr. McClary, then, "Oh, Liz, darling, hello."

Mitch, with a fine sense of discretion, retreated to the living room. In about three minutes Mr. McClary came running in.

"Mitch, you old so-and-so!" he shouted. "How did you have the nerve to do it?"

"It was simple," said Mitch. Last night after you passed out I called her up. I said I was Williams. I said you were in bed but you had left a message for her. I told her that you had changed your mind about the British War Aid radio script."

"She loves me," cried Mr. McClary, springing up into the air as he had seen Mr. David Lichine do in the Ballet Russe. "Have you ever been so happy you felt sort of crazy, Mitch?" He stopped short in the middle of a Nijinsky-like leap. "Oh, my God! She has to have that script by tomorrow noon." He fell heavily onto the divan. "I can't possibly have it written by then."

"A writer of your abilities?" said Mitch. "Sure you can. First get a shave. Then have Williams fix you a whopping big breakfast. You've got twenty four hours, haven't you? Of course you can do it. If you can't, I'll have to and that, McClary, would be disastrous. I'm no Archibald MacLeish."

Thus encouraged Mr. McClary sprang into action. He shaved. He had a shower. In the shower he sang, "There'll Always Be An England" in a lusty, off key voice. He ate an enormous breakfast. He sharpened all his pencils and changed his typewriter ribbon. Then Mr. McClary got down to business.

* * * * *

It was the evening of November twenty first, a clear frosty night alive with stars. Vagrant snowpetals drifted on the wind, striking the cheeks of an occasional pedestrian.

Mr. McClary knew nothing of the stars and the snow. If

anyone had said to him, "It's snowing," or "The stars are out" he would have met with solid apathy. Mr. McClary was equally uncognizant of the fire of pine blocks burning on his hearth. and the softly lighted living room in which he sat. His whole being was focused on the large handsome console radio. He held in his right hand a handkerchief which he occasionally touched to his forehead.

"Hot in here, isn't it?" he said to Mitch, who lay at his feet. Mitch nodded.

There was a fanfare of trumpets from the loud-speaker of the radio, only this time instead of "You are about to hear Chapter Twenty of the exciting mystery serial, *Murder Goes Modern*" the announcer said, "The British War Aid Society presents an all-star show," adding impressively, "We are broadcasting directly from Madison Square Garden."

"That's us," said Mr. McClary to Mitch. "Coast-to-coast hookup." He groaned.

The New York Philharmonic played, "There'll Always Be An England" thrillingly. The President of the United States spoke a few well-chosen words. Mr. Alexander Woollcott told one of his husky, heart-catching stories. Miss Lynn Fontanne read "The White Cliffs." Miss Gladys Swarthout sang, "God Save the King."

"Wonderful voice," said Mr. McClary when she had finished, and bit his nails. "We're next."

Everything grew very quiet and only the soft background music of an English folk song could be heard at first. Then rising against this, the beautiful voice of an actress who enriched words merely by speaking them began to read: "Vivid and clear, from the blue sea, from the green English meadows rose that summer morning . . ."

It was the most difficult and the most triumphant hour of Mr. McClary's life. He sat in a daze when the program was over scarcely hearing the announcer's voice saying, "The play you have just heard was written especially for the British War Aid Society by Mr. Joel McClary, distinguished young dramatist of radio." The applause sounded like the roar of the sea on a faraway beach.

Mr. McClary did hear the light step in the hall a little later, however. He rose from his chair and stood tensely waiting. The door swung open and a girl entered. She wore a filmy gown the color of spring apples, green to match her eyes. It was the best

gown in the world to set off her particular shade of warm golden hair.

"Joel," she said and stood there swaying.

Mr. McClary stepped towards her, his eyes lighted. Mitch turned his head away so that he did not see what passed, although he heard a little of it.

"I'm so proud of you, darling," she said when she was sitting beside Mr. McClary on the divan. "It was the most beautiful play. Everyone was crying. I cried, too. That's why my eyes look so strange. I couldn't help it."

"It was pretty good," said Mr. McClary, "but Margo really carried it. She could make Edgar A. Guest sound like Shakespeare."

"We took in over \$200,000," she said, "and some more checks are coming in tomorrow."

"You're wonderful," said Mr. McClary, just looking at her. After a little while she said:

"Joel."

"What, my sweet?"

"Look at Mitch. He's watching us. He seems so terribly human, doesn't he? Sometimes," she said very seriously, "sometimes I almost think he can understand what we're saying!"

Mr. McClary did not reply, but over her head his eyes met Mitch's in a long glance of wordless understanding.

Fluttering thy lashes cloak
All sublimity of thy glance
Color-cool and sparkle
Hidden
Alone to me thy soul doth peer
Accentuated liquid-clear
Unbidden
In their parting's darkle
Appealing radiance of Romance
Incandescent truth there spoke

ANONYMOUS

DARK SEQUENCE

DOUGLAS BILLS

LEON was not, as his name implied, as much lion as the more sinister puna. Under the ebony jetness of his skin flowed the savage blood of his forbears from the darkness of Africa, and a strain of philandering French. Under his kinky head there lay a brain — a brain that European doctors would classify as belonging to modern man. But the workings of the brain were those of a primitive being who often listens to voices of memories echoing down over but two generations from the quivering quagmire of Dark Africa, through fifty years of unbearable enslavement, and into the new freedom of a Haitian revolution. To love meant to worship; to hate meant to kill.

Leon had been a valiant and faithful wall of strength, serving as a lieutenant under Tou Saint L'Ouvateur, the liberator of Haiti. When the last of the French had been driven into the sea by the freedom seeking negroes, Port Au Prince became Negro Heaven. There, their simple minds blossomed forth in the resplendant trappings of the departed French and the garrulous raiment of their own imagination. The President and his black retinue assumed titles — Your Majesty, Highness, Lordship; their pleasure knew no bounds.

It was this simple child's kingdom, this playground for a tortured, enslaved race, which opened its undefended arms for the plucking fingers of the pirate Gasparillo to glut themselves on its still unwasted richness. He and his marauding band of eight hundred bore down upon the picnicking government and wrested the gold from the vaults the jewels from the still warm fingers of its inhabitants. Forgotten in the terror of the moment were the machettes which had won their independence.

The pirates, killing, enslaving, pillaging, and burning, gleaned the last ounce of gold from the city and departed — all in eight short hours. The negroes, the paralyzing effect of surprise gone, returned raving to recapture the city and found only empty coffers and smoking ruins. Short would have been the existence of the invaders had they remained longer. The negroes that had been captured and placed in chains in the boats fiercely began lunging at their captors, and had to be shot — all save Leon. The sly drops of his French grandfather congealed the fierce flow of his native blood, and he presented an air of calm submis-

sion. The observing eye of Gasparillo himself had marked this complacency and he sharply ordered,

"Spare that nigger!"

Gasparillo's younger brother, who though uneducated, was more suspicious by nature, sensed the suppressed animosity of the dark man and he muttered to his superior.

"You can't trust that nigger, Sir. He's a snake."

"Shut up. I know he's got fangs, but I can use them," answered Gasparillo who held his tubercular brother in contempt. "I'll warrant I can trust that nigger farther than I can you after a few weeks' service."

Two months later, it was the gleaming blade of Leon that splintered the merchantman's sword inches short of Gasparillo's unprotected back. The admiral whirled in the melee of the ship's deck in time to see the negro sever the attacker's head in one swishing blow. Snatching a gold pendant from the breast of the dying captain, he reached up and knotted it on the grinning negro's neck.

From then on, Leon's position was secure. With every feat of daring, the admiral presented him with some other bauble. Leon bore them proudly on his great chest and arms, medal for scar, scar for daring deed. He reveled in his new found power for he was by nature a pirate. No blade in the crew was a match for the massive swiftness of his singing sword. A drunken pirate dared to insult the negro and was found the next morning with his back broken as if struck by a great sledge. Cautious eyes observed the knotted ponderousness of Leon's fists and veiled their expressions.

By 1810, Gasparillo was in his declining years. The islands of the Carribean now harbored the ships of a fledgeling American navy that daily grow more ominous. When rumor reached him that his castle stronghold in Tampa Bay had been discovered by the authorities, Gasparillo called his brother, Leon, and four trusted lieutenants into conference aboard his flagship. There, by guttering candle-light, his cut-throat mariners huddled around him, he plotted the hiding of the riches of an empire.

For four consecutive nights Gasparillo and one of the lieutenants set out with a loaded row boat for the sandy shores of Tampa Bay. In the morning Gasparillo returned alone. His casual explanation was the others had gone on to a more distant hiding place.

On the evening of the fifth night, Leon, Gasparillo's brother, and two of the favorites among the women set sail with the remaining bulk of the ship's treasure for Charlotte Bay a hundred miles south of Tampa. Leon had not heard Gasparillo's muttered orders to his brother, but his jungle eyes had seen and guessed the contents of the black leather pouch which had changed hands in the dripping blackness of the hold. As they glided noiselessly over the moon silvered water, he crouched in the bow of the small boat and behind his unblinking eyes grew the animal's understanding of death.

When the shore line finally took consistent form in the soft darkness, they beached the boat and the two men carted the chests along a sparse sandy beach. Leon did not return to the boat. He stood in the shadows and watched the man make laborious markings on the parchment from the leather pouch. The night was sultry. The women drifted into sodden slumber but the man propped himself up, his back to the ocean and watched with wary eyes. Only the slap of his hand against the mosquitos, his racking cough, and the frequent replacing of the rum bottle broke the silence. Leon watched without movement or time and when at last the man dozed, he glided over the intervening yards like a shadow and fell upon the wasted form of the white man. Long after the frantic, fluttering heave of the frail chest under him had ceased, he released his stiffened fingers. Tearing the black pouch from the frilled shirt front, and clutching the pouch and two dueling pistols primed by the pirate, he melted into the stygian undergrowth and plunged northward. In the South lay the vengeance of Gasparillo; in the North there were rumors of a great country, Canada, where all men were free.

* * *

Fall had come suddenly over Montreal that year. Almost without warning the leaves had stiffened and grown smaller and the light that drifted through the window of Dr. Burkow's study was a limpid, colorless grey. Even the colors of the wool in his work basket seemed dull and diffused in tone. To the aged man in the wheel chair, the fall was more than a change of season. There was about it an inevitability, a premonition that sent his emaciated fingers flying feverishly among the bright strands of woolen thread. Ever since the accident and his resultant loss of the Professorship at McGill, he had knitted with ceaseless energy those small gay squares of wool. Someday they were to be sewed into an Afghan blanket. For years they had been

packed neatly in boxes and placed on the shelves of his study.

Today as he knitted and as the afternoon light withdrew from the corners of his room, frequently his cadaverous face lifted and glanced fearfully into the shadows. Once he wheeled his chair completely around staring defiantly into all points of the darkness. When the last red of the setting sun slipped from the panes of the window, he left his work abruptly. and propelling himself toward the door, slipped into place an elaborate and well oiled bolt. For a long time he sat whimpering softly soothingly to himself.

The sound of steps in the corridor and a key turning in the lock aroused him.

"Leon," he quavered. "Leon."

The tall negro did not answer as he switched on a dim light and drew up a table for the tea tray he was carrying. Silently he picked up the finished squares and deposited them in their allotted boxes and then stood by, a magnificent white haired negro, as his master ate. Dr. Burkow was instantly garrulous. He began to talk about the fall, the new thread he had sent for by Leon, and the time when he was Professor of History at McGill.

"History of Colonial America. History of Colonial America. That's what it was," he muttered to himself proudly, but the negro was unlistening and impassive as before.

Finally with a crafty look beneath the straggling brows and with the sure knowledge of success, the old man clapped his hands and spoke suddenly,

"Leon. let's move. South. Anywhere — perhaps Georgia, Florida. How about Florida?" The transformation was incredible. The negro fell to his knees. He shook and wept and pleaded with his Master,

"Not there, Massa, not there."

Dr. Burkow's laugh was a triumphant cackle. He had discovered this device of tormenting his servant quite by accident years ago; and had used it for his own entertainment ever since. They were a strange sight — the weeping huddled negro magnificent in his strength and years, and the emaciated form of the triumphant, laughing doctor. Beautifully and without consideration of audience, they acted out the drama that madness directed.

Tonight however and in retaliation for his own terror which the fall had inspired, he was not content to leave the subject

and to turn once more to the fascinating problem of weaving one colored thread over another. He pursued the subject, laughing, clapping his hands, and wheeling the chair excitedly around the room in his ecstasy over the negro's misery.

"Yep, we got to move. Got to move to Florida, Leon. Go get your things."

Tears mingled with sweat as the great black lips drooled an unintelligible supplication to the white man. The great body swayed with the agony of a terror that had been lived with for fifty years. To the South, to Georgia, Florida, lay the vengeful hands of Gasparillo. the long snake like whip, the long barrelled pistols, the dripping swords. The memory of a fearful journey filled with swamps, mosquitoes, posses, bloodhounds, slave markets, and slow starvation fell over him like a damp suffocating blanket. He shuddered and with insane terror lapsed almost into unconsciousness.

In his high cracked tones the Doctor continued his idiotic chant, "Going to Florida, Leon. Going to Florida. Get your clothes."

The negro made no move and the white man anxious to provoke further demonstration, rolled himself down the hall into the negro's room.

"I'm going to pack up your things," he called back gaily.

The negro was a heavy mass on the study floor.

Leon's room was small and neat and smelled faintly of the negro himself. Dr. Burkow had not been inside it for almost two years now; and his weakened mind relayed with a start that nothing had been changed. Losing interest in his former purpose of packing a bag to frighten Leon, he began haphazardly to collect a few scattered bits of clothing, some of the bedding and an old dresser scarf. When a small compact bundle was discovered under the mattress, like a child with a new toy, he discarded the old idea and began to work at the complicated knot that guarded the package.

Back in the study, the negro stirred. Slowly he lifted his head and investigated the silence. When the realization of the doctor's absence was finally assimilated by the tortured brain, he leapt with the fierceness of the pirate Leon and turned down the corridor toward his room. In a few long lithe steps he was across the threshold.

The old doctor sat peacefully, innocently as a child, his hands folded across his lap. The bundle was not to be seen. One

swift glance toward the bed satisfied Leon that it was as he had left it. The old man began in a wheedling, placating voice,

"Leon, we won't move. We won't go. Roll me back to my room."

Breathing heavily the negro complied, and the old doctor took up his knitting with swift, feigned interest. Long he sat, however, after the servant had gone and chuckled and murmured to himself.

It was early the next morning when the black man was sent out for groceries and to match three difficult shades of wool. The house was hardly silent until once more the crafty, greedy eyes were roaming toward the lock on the study door and the wheels of the doctor's chair set scurrying toward the servant's room. The bundle no longer produced a tell tale bulge at the foot of Leon's bed. A frantic search revealed it stuffed under a pile of dirty clothes. The move had been the slave's pathetic acknowledgement that there was danger. With the scissors of his work basket, the old man cut the string and tore open the yellowed newspaper. Two richly embossed dueling pistols of rusty age and a black tooled pouch on which an ornate "G" showed faintly through the grime of the surface, greeted his lowered, intense face. There was also a crumbling document inscribed in Spencerian style French to "His Majesty Leon," the only survival of Leon's regal days spent in Port Au Prince. The contents of the wallet were equally strange. The ragged parchments were all maps with longitude and latitude markings and on the bottom edge, a skull and cross bones and in faded ink the single letter "G". On the back of the bottom one was written Gasparillo's last instructions regarding the meeting place and the disposition of the booty intrusted to his brother.

Well the old man's Colonial history stood him in stead now. Eagerly the feverish mind recalled the legends of Gasparillo and the wide publicity attracted by his capture and death.

"Dead, dead, dead fifty years," he chanted, "and nobody knows and Leon was afraid."

Hugging his possessions to his bosom he rocked back and forth in timeless, hypnotic ecstasy. The silent presence of Leon in the doorway did not rouse him.

At the rude snatching of his treasures from his lap, he gave a wounded animal like cry, the sound subsiding into a thin whistle as the negro's giant hands closed about his neck.

For once, Montreal reporters kidded, the United States was at least trying to capture a foreign fugitive. There had been giant black streamers describing the murder and zealous cubs had looked up at great length the whole sordid story of the "noted Dr. Burkow's" activity at McGill, the accident which had resulted in lameness and fits of insanity, and his whole solitary existence ever since. Sob sisters were lavish in the description of the affection the two men, one black and one white, had held for each other. Sociology classes used the incident as significant in the study of racial differences. The radio was tireless in its warning, "Be on lookout for mad negro headed south, supposedly in vicinity of Carolina or Georgia."

From Leon's point of view, once more he was the hunted beast of the forest. Over three hundred miles of uncharted, harsh and pine-needed flat lands he staggered for countless days, feverish, thirsty, hungry, and weak. At night he fell in exhaustion in some inaccessible swamp, a throbbing pain in his head. The baying of hounds echoing through the valley drove him on. Through his cracked and swollen lips came the hysterical chant, "Goin' back to Port Au Prince. Goin' back to Port Au Prince. Goin' to be His Majesty. Goin' back to Port Au Prince."

There was no chart to help him find his way — only the instincts of an animal seeking a former hunting or mating ground. Heat, clinging sand, pain, hunger, and endless days. And finally — Charlotte Bay.

The newspapers had almost lost interest in the chase, when early in the morning a gibbering Haitian, tears streaming down his face, crawled, stumbled, and beat his way across the sandy beach. The voice of a hound carries for miles and Leon stood rooted until he was sure of what he heard; then turning, began once more his tortuous journey toward the open water.

The posse cleared the woods and came out on the beach. Far out in the shallows of the bay, they could see the swaying figure of the hunted man. One of the men leapt from his horse and sighted down the barrel of his 30-30 carbine.

"Save it," rasped the sheriff. "There's a channel farther out that'll hold the U. S. navy and there ain't nobody could swim in it. He'll never make it across."

As he spoke, the figure disappeared in the shallow swells. Deep in the channel cut by the torrential tides, the lifeless form of Leon the pirate was tumbled out into the Gulf. On the surface, a black bag bobbed brightly, suddenly, and sank.

SMALL AND BITTER

Sleep against the hill,
For every bed is narrow,
Every heart is cold,
And the darkened marrow

Lies along the bones,
The curving lip is sour;
Leave from magnifying love
For this hour.

Charge the heated darkness,
Close the misting eyes,
Sleep against the hill
Close your ear to cries . . .

High-keyed wailing after
Liberated lust.
Go, sleep against the hill
And stop your mouth with dust.

No need to pile the grass
Or heap the brush.
I can hear the footsteps;
A signal hush

Falls upon my ears
When feet pass overhead,
A strange nostalgia racks me,
Recently dead.

Lay me out with proper keening,
Raise the mourning song,
Place the regular bouquets,
And seat a black-clothed throng
Of friends and relatives, but keep
The entrance closed to one
Whose glance would resurrect me,
Whose sorrow would be none.

PEGGY HUDGINGS

WAR, DEMOCRACY, AND I*

TOM MACCAUGHELTY

LET me begin with a commonplace: It is only a matter of opinion. But opinions guide actions or should. Opinions are psychological results. They reflect biological impulses, environment, and reason. The more reasonable they are, the more they demand respect. To reason is to suspend action until the existent order in nature is seen and justified to the reasoner. It is, like impulse and environment, an individual quality, but it is more objective. The more so the better. This paper is my opinion, the result of my own reasoning. It expresses my motives for future action in America during the war.

First, my opinion about the war. Hitler is winning the war; Great Britain is losing the war. English governors know that they are losing and that only with the complete cooperation of the United States is there any possibility of saving themselves and the empire. I do not believe that Hitler and his allies can be beaten even by such a combine. A military invasion of the continent, and the subsequent defeat of the German armies would be necessary. No feasible plan for such an operation has been proposed to my knowledge. A look at the geography alone explains why no such plan exists.

In war nations must do first what is expedient and then what is honorable. For the United States to enter a European war and lose or fail to win in the name of democracy would be unreasonable. She would not only fail to save democracy, she would become bankrupt. Such a prolongation of England's war would do no good and great harm both to ourselves and to those whom we are supposedly saving. If we enter with England against the Axis (and I fear we shall) only misery can be the result — a stalemate or defeat to be recorded completely in the red.

Now a word about democracy before attempting to relate war, democracy and myself. In a democracy the "majority" can be incorrect about the outcome of events. I placed majority in quotations because the majority in America is a peculiar phe-

* This article was written in the spring of 1941 and was awarded Honorable Mention in the recent Harper's Bazaar Writing Contest for college students. Despite the recent climax in American foreign relations, we, the Editors, believe that it is outdated only in the material at hand. The fundamentals, of War, Democracy, and the individual will always be the same.

nomena. The opinion of the majority is ventriloquised by an interested minority. The majority has no voice of its own until it is completely mesmerized by its master. The majority can not think; it only agrees. Again let me say the majority, real or unreal, can be incorrect as to the outcome of events. There is no way of telling who, minority or majority is correct until the outcome has come out. The minority has the right to seek within the law to become a ruling majority. If it fails, it is obliged to cooperate with the policy of the majority, be it correct or incorrect.

Each citizen in America then is obliged to cooperate with the decision of the majority. Is there a limit to such obligation? Does my entire being belong to the ventriloquists? Is there a higher law?

There are at least two limits to my obligation toward the majority. I am not obliged to sacrifice my life and I am not obliged to take another's life. There is a higher law which at least here must be obeyed. This higher law I shall try to explain. It is based upon a paradox. My life or my consciousness is the most valuable thing there is — to me. Without my consciousness there might as well be nothing. The earth begins and ends with my birth and death. But this is true for every other individual as well as for myself. I have no right to deny another the most precious of gifts, and no one has the right to strike out my consciousness. I have the right to defend my life against him who attempts to strike it out. I may even kill him, if there is no other way to preserve my life.

In peace time even nations respect this hither law, imposing the death penalty for its violation. But see what war does. Murder is honored. What man would steal into a darkened room where slept a mother and her child, and crush their skulls with a hammer for nothing they had done? Not even the vilest of murderers. But how many consider it only a job to release from a high flying plane missiles more vicious than any hammer's head?

Such violence does exist, however. What is a just defence against it? I said personal defence against a murderer may include killing the murderer. What of nations? A nation, I have said, must first do what is expedient. It must act expediently because it has not the right to condemn its members to useless death, and because inexpediency in a nation's actions ruins the nation itself. Applied to the present discussion this requires that

the nation attacked should fight to defeat its enemy unless the price of victory overbalances the advantages of victory, or unless defeat is certain. If defeat can be easily seen, the nation should sue for peace. Needless to say, the earlier peace is sought, the better the peace will be.

But let me escape from this tempting digression, and return to the point concerning my life and the state. I have said that my life belongs not to the state but to myself. This would seem to be an extremely subjective view. It is not really egocentric when it is remembered that all individuals hold their lives dearly. The fact that my life does not belong to the state does not release me from an ethical control of my life. It does mean that the control rests with me and not with the state. I must do which contributes to my happiness without limiting another's happiness. More than that — if my death will bring happiness to more people than my living, I must die. If I felt that sacrificing my life in this most useless of wars would bring happiness to more people than would my continued life, to the army I would go. The majority believes this to be true and will probably see that punishment is awarded me for disagreement. Nevertheless I shall disagree in accordance with a law higher than the state's.

Some causes are worth dying for. Lost causes are not; neither are unworthy causes. Since it is the death of my life we are considering, I must decide whether the cause be lost or unworthy.

My participation in the European war would bring happiness to no one and misery to many. Therefore. I must have no part of it. I must not enlist or be drafted into the American army without guarantee that I would not be sent over seas. No such guarantee is possible under present military law.

America's cause is not lost and democracy, imperfect as it is, is worth dying for. In the event of a military aggression upon the United States, I would sacrifice my life fighting against soldiers, providing our nation had a fighting chance to survive. We will have better than a fighting chance to survive if we do not deplete our defense in a vain effort to save England now.

QUINZAINES

Blood stained the oak-leaf gay;
High noon it was when Cain slew Abel.
The gravest things take on the lightest hue
And mirth is but a fable.
A mind so sobered by the catastrophic flow
Cannot but be inclined
To be resigned — to cry
These things are mad and go
Upon the shore and listen to the roar
And want no more.
Oh, laugh, incoming tides,
Laugh and sob.
Laugh for the land you wreck,
The poor you rob. But weep for me
From whom this life subsides.

II

A jangled dream will sometimes token
The prize to which we cannot gain.
It seemed I stood upon a plain
Mid upcropped stones and ruins broken.
An aged man sat leisurely
By a rock upon the grass
And whistled softly to me
As I made my way to pass.
“Ho, son! What sets the frown
So high upon thy crown?”
My laugh was pulsed with anger.
“It is no light quest
Upon which I am pressed
And ill deserves your jest.”
He smiled in sweetest langour.

WALLACE SCHULTZ

LIFE?

CLIFFORD COTHREN

THE great observatory rumbled with the fervent conversation of those who now made their way through the small door, and drifted in groups toward the cluster of folding chairs beneath the delicately poised telescope. Here the greatest scientific minds of the age had been gathered by "The International Society of Science" to witness — as their letters of invitation had put it — "The greatest scientific revelation ever conceived."

Now they sat in the theatre of demonstration, the older ones positive in their convictions, the younger members more receptive and eager.

From the group bits of conversation projected above the babble.

"Life? Preposterous!"

And sometimes with less decision came,

"I'm not so certain. Perhaps—."

An elderly scholar put it,

"More likely. 'The greatest scientific failure ever conceived'."

Some merely smiled knowingly to themselves, but a few strained forward in their chairs, impatient that the demonstration begin.

In front and slightly above them was a metal platform to which their eyes were suddenly drawn when a speaker called,

"Gentlemen—! Gentlemen, may I have your attention?"

Conversation died slowly, and when all was quiet the speaker stood a long moment gazing at the assembly before he spoke. His voice sounded weak — insufficient to fill the great dome.

"Gentlemen —, first, I must thank the society for their kind permission to use my instrument in connection with this wonderful new reflecting telescope. Without it my demonstration could not be conducted successfully."

He paused to pick up a wooden pointer from the table beside him, and to signal an assistant, who removed the covering from a chart showing the orbits of the planets, and folded back a curtain of shutters revealing a blank screen approximately five feet square.

"If a planet is to support life," he began, "there are certain

obviously necessary requirements, and among these is proper relation to the Sun. It is plainly evident that the orbits of Mercury and Pluto eliminate them from our list of possibilities. These two represent the extremes — Mercury receiving too intense solar radiations and Pluto receiving only the faintest diffusion of them. Somewhere between," his pointer found the middle concentric rings of the chart, "nearer to our own planet, is the body of our search. Also, it must be of sufficient size to hold an atmosphere, if we are to find life resembling our own. This consideration again narrowed my list of potentialities until my choice for observation was made."

Flipping over a page of the chart, he revealed a drawing of his selection.

A murmur arose from his audience. Yes, they had to agree, it was a logical choice. This planet, with its familiar markings, was generally conceded to be most promising.

The speaker indicated areas on the picture with his pointer.

"Notice the clearly defined ice caps. Between these, we have sufficient reason to believe, are moderate and tropical climate zones. Also the existence of land. oceans, rivers and mountains can be easily observed.

He paused and turned directly to his audience.

"Gentlemen, I am convinced this planet is the most logical for our observation."

Another pause, as he indicated the control panel beside him.

"My instrument operates on the theory of magnetic refraction and, for you who are to report your observations of this evening to various subdivisions of the society, I have prepared a pamphlet explaining in detail the workings of my machine. To put the principle simply, however, electro magnets — not lenses — are used to augment rays caught by the telescope's mirror. Rather than being viewed directly through the eyepiece, they are conducted to the electro magnetic chamber where extreme refraction is produced in the strong magnetic field. Also, to avoid the obsolete method of using an eyepiece, my system employs the process of projection. Tonight any discoveries we may make will be projected on this screen so that they can be viewed simultaneously by all."

However, he glanced at the precision timepiece beside him, "you have come for a demonstration, not a lecture. It is now time that we proceed."

Gesturing to his assistant, he asked for the lights to be lower-

ed. Only the screen remained slightly luminous in the darkness.

The speaker's voice continued, "Magnetic refraction will enable us to travel as near the surface as we wish, so powerful is its ability of magnification."

He paused, and was silhouetted briefly as he crossed in front of the screen to the control panel.

"First, I shall set the range for one kilometer above the planet's surface."

A faint anticipatory shuffle came from the audience as they straightened, and each was momentarily blinded by the brilliant flash of a power switch being thrown.

As their eyes adjusted themselves once again to the darkness, a blurred mass of vagaries appeared on the screen. Slowly, the melting nothingness came into focus and a sigh of disbelief ran over the group.

Strange blocklike structures were visible, some with flat tops and some with peaks. Above many of the larger units, projected tall cylinders from which boiled a black vapor. The erections, covered with rectangular indentations, were arranged in rows with narrow openings between. This was surely the result of intelligent planning! Along the stripes between these cubical blocks ran small dark objects, which started and stopped, as if controlled by some creatures within.

"Gentlemen," said the breathless speaker as he indicated the moving object of his choice, "shall we follow this one?"

Back again at the control panel, he followed the object as it moved along various subsidiary strips and arrived at a main artery of the system. Where, joining the stream of other similar objects, it passed from the geometric clusters to a portion of easy-rolling land.

The audience watched fascinated as the object moved swiftly along, passing occasionally lone structures similar to those it had just left. At length it slowed, swung off the white strip on which it had been traveling and came to halt before a single cubical erection.

Intent on his work at the control panel the speaker informed his spellbound audience

"Now to within twenty-five meters."

Again the screen blurred, swam, and returned to focus. To their eyes came a clear view of the object they had been following. It was a four-wheeled machine of metal, perhaps four meters long, two meters wide and two meters high. As they

watched, a portion of the side swung open and out stepped two upright, four-limbed creatures. Without hesitation, the beings went into the cubical structure through a swinging rectangular opening.

Switching on the observatory lights, the speaker stood triumphant before his no longer disbelieving audience.

"And now are you convinced," he exclaimed, the three antenna which sprouted from his forehead quivering with excitement, "that there are intelligent, living beings on the planet Earth, as well as here on Mars?"

AUTUMN NIGHT

(Come, let us steal an interlude with silence!)

Soft as the doom of downward drifting leaves
Into the time drenched hollow of the night.
We'll find a solace for the heart that grieves
And build a fire to give our grief a light.

Then the slow stain of smoke upon an aire
Distended by the wild embrace of trees
Will weave a pattern holier than prayer
To make our separate anguish one with these.

We'll listen to the little brush and fall
Of velvet tempered winds, and never doubt
This is the lovely way that angels call
Who wait beside us while the fire goes out.

ELIZABETH BROWN

LORELEI

Couched on her rock, enchanting still
She spreads to the sun her net of hair;
Sighs damply, remembering a grottoed room
And exquisite entrails hidden there.

Legends ago when the drowned boy swam
Into her hall with the grace of the dead
She set her kiss on his fading lips
And swore he should never leave her bed:

Being enamoured of his pallid face
More desirably wan than buds of pearl,
And stirring like one from an age-long dream
Till out of the goddess waked the girl.

But she found no joy in his slack embrace,
For his troubling beauty was deaf and mute,
And she buried him deep in a dolphin's cave
Beneath coral sprays, with a merman's flute.

But though she yet bends above the whirlpool,
Sweetening the air with insidious song
She hates the sea and the passing ships,
And the sunlight is gray, and the years too long:

And she tunes her lyre in a mournful key,
While her fabled hair steams gold in the sun,
And sings of bright immortality
Made lustreless by the death of one.

JANE MILLER

LOONSPIT

1940

A lonely spit of sand. Picnickers stood
With carefree faces feeling the breeze
Merry chatter rang amid the food
And children played as children please.
 Silence fell and the sun rested
 On the trees, where birds had nested.
The loons cry sadly, madly o'er the leas.

1941

A hunter's gun poked skyward on the spit
And ducks fell headlong in the evening air
The hunter proudly smokes a bit
And then turns toward his friend with care.
 Silence fell and the sun rested
 On the trees where birds had nested.
The loons cry sadly, madly o'er the leas.

1942

A soldier, weary from the battle's heat,
Dropped on his knees to quench his burning thirst.
Far off amid the shriek of shells a bugle calls retreat.
Alone, the soldier listened for a last shell burst
 Silence fell and the sun rested
 On the trees where birds had nested.
The loons cry sadly, madly o'er the leas.

WALLACE SCHULTZ

There was a night that I remember
When there were stars imbedded in the lake
And I knelt down to take
A small one in my glove, when suddenly
I saw your face reflected there blow me
An turned to rise and spurn the stars
for love

ANONYMOUS

THE ANSWER

SALLY McCASLIN

IN THE heavy clip clop of the dray horses' feet there was no acknowledgement of Christmas Eve. The dismal front of the Y stared across at the luncheonette as stolidly as it had done all winter. Only the wind showed a heightening, a rejuvenation, an awareness of the extraordinary. It swept off the Hudson River and twisted through the narrow streets of lower New York in malicious, fiendish glee. In drab little Abbington Square, leaves that had withstood sleet and snow and ice now scuttled hysterically along the grey pavement. Only the warm, ingratiating breath of the subway was completely immune to the wind.

To Eunice, sitting on the foot of the bed in room 503, the day was unusual first because she did not have to work. Thinking of the deserted files of the big insurance company down on Fulton Street, a shiver of loneliness welled into a bitter ache in her throat. They had told her she would have to work and already the neat little letters had gone home to Blackville saying she had to work on Christmas Eve and that she was going to have Christmas dinner in Brooklyn with one of the girls from the office. She had planned it all carefully just as she had planned all the gifts she had sent home to her family and exactly what she would say on the back of the cards. And then Mr. Westbrooke had said they could all have the day off. On hearing the news, the girl working next to Eunice, had said, "My God! Wait 'til I tell Ernie!" and then pretended to faint. Ernie, she had explained later, had taken two days off from the shipyard. They would split the twon wide open. The other girls were equally elated. They expressed themselves in harsh, scornful phrases. "What do you s'pose come over the old fool!" Eunice too had contributed "Don't ask me!" and had laughed as another girl pranced around between the files mimicking his walk; but underneath it all there was a faint unpleasant terror. It would be her first Christmas away from home, celebrated in a city in which in two months she had not come to understand.

From her window which looked out over the black, irregular roofs behind the Y, she could see the day, cold, unfruitful and with a shallow promise of snow. Inside, her room was a small colorless rectangle except for the pale green bedspread. The

walls were spotted with kodak pictures of her family and people in Blackville. There was one of a boy and girl posing proudly beside a new pickup truck. There were several pictures of babies and one of an old man feeding his pigs. Eunice stood up and looked at the pictures, going over the features carefully as if she had never seen them before; and then lay back on the bed, a thin blue eyed, not homely, but unobtrusive looking girl.

The Y was almost deserted. It seemed they had all been going home to Jersey, or upper New York state, or to work, or somewhere. On the fifth floor there was left only the fat, red-headed woman whose room was cluttered with canvasses and who spent her days painting gloriously colored dragons on bright blue backgrounds. On the fourth floor there was the pathetic little widow whose dyed red hair contrasted strangely with the black dress, black hat, black hose — everything that she wore. Eunice had seen her in the bathroom weeping with frenzied horror because the plumbing had commenced a high eerie wail. "It's like the chair" she had gasped between helpless terror frozen lips. It had been almost two weeks later that Eunice heard the rumor that the fourth floor woman was a widow since August 9, when her husband was electrocuted. The bathroom or the laundry formed the only community life of the Y. In the mornings they brushed their teeth, a long line of girls almost defiant in their individuality; each with her own choice of soap, toothpaste, and housecoat. If two spoke to one another or carried on a conversation, the others stopped and listened.

It was not one but all of these things, the loneliness, the frustration that every girl kept to herself; the tramps that peered furtively into garbage cans on Hudson street, the lean, mangy cats that sometimes beat them to the food, that finally broke down her reserve and she put her face, dry eyed and taut, on the cheap, slick material and breathed in sharp, convulsive gasps.

After a while she got up and looked at a worn outdated magazine. She had read all the stories before and this time she only went through and read the love scenes and looked at the illustrations. The men were all handsome with square jaws and tall broad shoulders. One of the handsomest was a sullen brunette with a pained look in his dark eyes. She gazed a long time at his face and then threw the magazine into a corner with a faint protesting cry. When she got up, it was with resolution and she turned toward the closet without bothering to pick up the mag-

azine. The dress she selected was the thinnest, least warm of them all, but they had told her in the store it was a "year round" dress; and she liked the feel of the smooth silk against her skin. Her makeup was put on carefully and after a long search, she found an old worn out tube of mascara in the bottom of the drawer. When she went out, it was a slight girl whose heavy makeup was obviously only on the outside and whose thoughts, personality, and purpose were completely contained in the coat wrapped so tightly around her.

It was about noon and there was no sun but a sort of glassy brightness lent an edge to the wind. As Eunice ran through the biting air, it was like a gauntlet through bare, unadorned pain. It was several minutes before the warmth of the subway station could take the place of the cold. An old Italian woman with a stocking wrapped around her throat was her only companion.

When the doors of the Modern Art Museum had closed behind her, she was again shaking with the cold and her hands were so stiff she fumbled a long time for the quarter in the bottom of her purse. She did not look at the pictures but sat down on a bench and felt a tremulous, melting grief over the pathos of her own life.

"I'm going to cry," she whispered softly, and immediately became so interested in the phenomena that she felt better. Later she said again, "I must be going to get sick or I wouldn't have cried."

It had been a strange, hybrid idea. In the story the man had met the girl at the Museum of Modern Art. They had both come to see a Picasso exhibit and had gotten into a violent argument over the merits of a certain picture. To Eunice, the gesture of making her first visit to an art museum had not been one of hope, or premonition, or faith. It was simply a place to stay — to spend Christmas Eve, a warm place where people walked in and out and were not particularly intent on any one business.

She sat on the same bench and searched curiously the faces of the people until a guard in a blue uniform began to eye her with suspicion. Then she got up and walked around and looked at the pictures. They were strange pictures, red and grey ones with steel skyscrapers or the gaunt derricks of oil wells slashing the backgrounds. The details interested her. She noticed the lunch pails of the workers, their gloves and the muscles rippling

in their bare backs; but the blue and green studies of New England scenery were passed by.

At four there was a movie, a revival of Douglas Fairbanks in "The Three Musketeers" and Eunice lingered around the door until all the people had gone in and then finally she took a seat on the end of an empty row. D'Artagnan was fighting perhaps his twentieth duel when Eunice was aware of a form emerging out of the darkness and a boy sat down beside her. She could see only an indistinct profile, enough to know that he wore glasses; but she could feel a hot blush make a thick covering over her own face; and she shrank into the farthest corner of her seat. She laughed frequently now, loud mirthless laughs at some incident on the screen. When it was over, she came out of the projection room and began to comb her hair with a small unobtrusive comb half hidden by the palm of her hand. The boy lingered too.

He was a slight boy with dank, drooping hair and a sallow unwholesome skin. He kept wiping his glasses and nervous expressions flitted across his face pulling at his upper lip. He looked slyly at Eunice and then back at the pictures, finally remarking to the room at large,

"I don't get this stuff!" There was a defiant sneer in his voice. Then he turned and looked back at the girl, including her in his audience. They were alone and Eunice smiled back in a calm, superior manner. It was all so simple, so like the stories she had been reading and like the endless conversations she had carried on with herself at night.

"What don't you get about them?" she asked.

"This stuff!" he answered scornfully. "Do you?"

"No." Eunice answered as though she were being frightfully frank and then laughed a low, amused laugh. The boy showed a line of crooked yellow teeth for a fleeting instant and then scowled again and hitched his shoulders convulsively.

"I guess we aren't very educated," Eunice pursued the subject.

"If that's education you can keep it," he answered. "It looks like mess to me. Yes sirree, pure, unadulterated mess."

There was an awkward pause. The boy said again, "Yes sirree, pure unadulterated mess!" and slapped his leg.

Eunice laughed again, a free poised laugh. With the intuition of a woman she knew that he liked her, that he was trying to think of something to say. There welled within her a strange,

new joy — a softness that released the long winter's tension in her throat, the throbbing ache behind her eyes, the stiff feeling in her face. Sure of herself, she said lightly, as if it were really of no importance,

"My name's Eunice Yarbrough."

The boy waited a moment and then threw out his hand and said, "Put her there."

They shook hands and his skin was cold and yet slightly sticky to her touch.

"But that's a pretty one sided introduction." she continued. "Now you have me at a disadvantage."

"Oh," he said, "my name's Raymond. Raymond, Ray, Pasty, any old thing."

"Pasty!" Eunice laughed again. "That's awful. I think I like Ray best."

"Call me anything," he reiterated.

From then on it was easy for both of them. Eunice did most of the talking. She was witty, gay, vivacious; and the words already formed in the past, skimmed by her lips with little effort. Every picture, every persons, everything they talked about suggested new topics, new ideas, new examples. Raymond did not listen but he watched her face with a foolish, longing look. Eunice made a great point of saying at frequent intervals, "Stop looking at me. You embarrass me" and then laughing with unrestraint.

Once he interrupted her flow of words to ask her where she was from.

"Blackville, Georgia," she answered readily and waited for the proverbial response.

"Well, honey child," he began, glad for his cue, "How you like it way up here in this old Nawth?"

"I haven't been warm since I been here," Eunice answered proudly.

"How you like Abe Lincoln?" Raymond looked at her with sly, foolish eyes, his mouth already open for the expected laugh.

"I use to punch his eyes out in my history book when I was in the sixth grade."

Raymond laughed and said, "A regular old Honey child," and put his damp hand on her arm.

"Yep." she said, and "proud of it."

They ate dinner in a Chinese restaurant on 49th Street and

Eunice was busy remembering details to write home to Blackville. There were Chinese people eating with chopsticks.

"I couldn't do that in a thousand years," she told Raymond.

She also told him a great deal about her family, about her brother who had gotten his arm broken four times in the same place playing football, and about her little two year old nephew who had uttered a curse word in front of a great number of peo-

ple. He asked her if she lived on a plantation and she answered, "not exactly, but of course, we got niggers and stuff."

When they had finished eating, she handed across a one dollar bill and insisted on paying part of the tip. Raymond took the money and then ducked his head and murmured something inane about how long he had waited to discover oil.

"Don't be ridiculous," as she made an issue of the incident.

"I practically asked you to take me out didn't I?"

Later Eunice asked, "What are we going to do now?"

Raymond said he didn't care.

Eunice wanted to do something exciting like riding a Fifth Avenue bus to the end of the line and back again, or walking in Central Park, or taking the ferry to Staten island. When Raymond agreed, she said, "I always told my family I'd be Bohemian if I ever got to New York."

They went to Central Park and sat on a big rock and looked around them at the city of New York. The tall, fantastic buildings made of the park a dark and bottomless pit. Only the great Buick sign flashing the time as the minutes passed upset the unreality of the scene. Eunice lay back on the hard rock and tried to feel mysterious and alluring but it was so cold that her teeth chattered and the wind swept over them with cutting, unhindered strength. Raymond kissed her with warm loose lips but she could feel his body shaking with the cold. They lay close together on the cold rock for comfort and then Eunice got a cramp in her leg and sat bolt upright bumping Raymond's head with her own.

"Let's go somewhere else," the boy finally suggested.

"Want to go to Staten Island?" asked Eunice.

They ran down the hill together and Raymond was still panting when they got on the subway for South Ferry. Against the roar of the train, conversation was useless so at regular intervals, the girl met the boy's eyes with wide, tight lipped smiles. Before they got on the boat she bought some peanuts and play-

fully fed them to Raymond, who tried clumsily, foolishly to respond to her mood. He kept his arm around her all the time now and as they walked along the deserted deck, he kissed her ear, her cheek, and her mouth with the same soft, formless lips.

It was too cold to stand outside so they sat on one of the long smooth benches behind the glass doors and Eunice put her head on his shoulder and pretended to sleep. There were only a few passengers — some women with bundles and a man with a tiny white, artificial Christmas tree. There was salt between her fingers as Raymond held her hand.

They took the next boat, the "Katy Dew" back. It was while waiting for the uptown train in the deserted station that Raymond began to hold her uncomfortably against his odorous body. Quite suddenly he jerked the zipper in the side of her dress and then laughed a loud, vulgar laugh.

"Stop that," Eunice said, "And I don't mean maybe."

Her anger was amusing to him and he caught her to him and kissed her, a long struggling kiss, holding her with one arm, and rubbing the other swiftly over her body. When she broke away from him again, there was a leering, insane expression in his eyes.

"You got to now," he said in a harsh, shaking voice.

"You nasty thing! You filthy fool!" There was triumph in the weak blue eyes as the uptown train roared to a stop.

At the 14th Street station Eunice said, "We have to get off here. I live on 12th Street." Raymond did not answer. He sat in vulgar, bragging silence.

"Aren't you going to take me home?"

He did not move but with a sudden derisive snarling of his upper lip, he spat on the floor beside her. The girl cried, a startled, wounded cry, and then fled through the sliding doors and up the steps alone. The street was dark and the sudden cessation of the wind gave it a ghostly, unreal stillness. There were only four blocks to go and she whimpered in a low plaintive tone as she made her way over the rough stones. "He tried to spit on me — the old thing." She said simply, over and over to herself.

At Abbingdon Square there was a drunk lying face downward on the walk. She walked around him mechanically, unnoticing and then began to run the last few steps to the Y. Her heels made a shallow inadequate noise against the more somber tone of the night.

The doorman was a long time in coming. She stood on the side walk, wringing her hands and glancing fearfully down the darkened street. It began to snow, a soft fine snow that floated around the street lamps with idle, lazy grace.

Watching it, she stopped crying and let her hands fall to her sides.

"A white Christmas," she thought. She had never seen one. She would write home that she had had dinner in Brooklyn and that it had been a white Christmas.

THE MOAN AND WAIL

Bemoan and wail, you furriers,
No more Russian sable!
No more Persian lamb for you,
Soon you won't be able

To seize the soft Australian wool
From off the little backs,
No more shearing in the west,
A catastrophe that lacks

The saddened note somehow,
For suddenly there'll be
Multiple rollicking little feet,
Padding paws, and tree—

Tops shaking with laughter,
Merry with a glee.
Small European animals
Will at least be free!

PEGGY HUDGINGS

THE CATS

ELIZABETH BROWN

I DON'T like cats. Whenever I see one a shiver of revulsion runs through me. Their feral grace, their cold, detached spirits, the softness of their fur, the mystic significance of their eyes, all these things which once attracted me now repel me and fill me with horror.

I am again aware of that squalid little hovel in the mountains, the stuffy room smelling of stale food and mangy animals and the fetid odor of sickness, and of Patricia Fullerton standing there waiting—and smiling.

A long time ago I spent a summer in Lynxville.

It was a mistake.

Everybody in Lynxville used to talk about Pat and her mother. They were a sort of legend. Most of the time they stayed out in the mountains and kept to themselves. People called the old lady the "Queen." She was an aristocrat gone to seed and the shreds of her reputation now hung about her as bedraggled as her odd, moth-eaten clothes, covered with the cheap glitter of Woolworth beads. She was like that,—old and tired and tawdry under a cheap, bright mask. Pat, the daughter, ran their scrap of farm. That was a tough life for a girl but no one had ever heard her complain. Of course she wasn't a girl when I met her. She must have been well over thirty.

Pete Grady took me out there. Pete was one of the three lawyers in town and he'd met the Fullertons through a lawsuit in which they had testified on the opposite side. But in spite of that Pete idolized Pat. For her sake he tolerated the queen, but he didn't really like her. He used to call her Old Blue Nose. We drove out on a starlit night in early summer over roads with such deep ruts they seemed to snarl at us.

"The roads are good now," Pete said in answer to my comment. "You ought to see them when it rains. People would be shut up in here pretty often if they depended on cars, especially in winter."

"Do they have bad storms this far south?" I inquired.

"Not many, but woppers when they come. That was the tragedy of Pat's life, a bad storm. And yet the old witch keeps cats!"

I couldn't understand the sudden venom in his tone and was

about to ask him to explain. But just then we rounded a bend in the forest road, coming suddenly on a small clearing which contained a black cabin with a light in the window. It was almost startling to find a home of any sort in this wild place, but there it was. The dark, insistent sound of a mountain stream rushing tumultuously by somewhere in the background added to the eerie quality of the scene. When Pete stopped the car and gave a perfectly normal shout to announce our arrival it didn't seem fitting somehow. A woman's figure emerged, as silent as a cat, from the shadows at the gate.

"Hello, Pat," Pete said, "I've brought you a guest."

Her handgrip was hard and firm like a man's. Her voice, when she spoke, was low and a little husky. It had an undercurrent to it like that of a wind instrument,—a lonely voice.

"I had a kind of feeling you'd be out tonight, Pete. You're right welcome, both of you. Come on in and find yourselves some wine. I'm getting supper but mother will entertain you."

I don't know why but the way she said those last words made me wince.

In the light I saw that she was tall, and her tow head was cropped close like a boy's. Her features were fine and extraordinarily stern in repose, which gave her rather the appearance of a young knight dedicated to a cause. Under a pair of faded blue jeans she wore a man's shirt open at the throat. Her feet were bare. I didn't like the tight haunted look of her eyes, but when she smiled I forgot it. She had a smile that warmed one with a deep rich glow, like that of her own homemade wine.

The queen was lying on the sofa muffled with jewels, rugs, and cats. Her white hair sprawled out like a malign halo above a face which must once have been quite beautiful. With the air of courtly condescension which had won her her title she welcomed us to that miserable squalid little room, a room which seemed literally owned by cats. Even the windowsills were draped and occupied.

I liked cats,—then, but these animals made me feel distinctly uncomfortable. They were everywhere, wild, slinky and predominant. They were extremely unattractive cats, too. Some had eyes gouged out; some had stumps for tails; and all of them had sores.

"There are more in the kitchen," the queen remarked, noting my astonishment. "We keep a sort of cat farm, you see. I'm very fond of animals and of course they know it. I like cats better

than people. They're less trouble and more intelligent. No stupid emotions about a cat."

She stopped to cough.

At this moment Pat, coming in from the kitchen laden with plates, stumbled over a huge maltese Tom and almost lost her balance.

"Get out of my way, you beast," The animal, too, let out a shriek of wrath. It seemed to me there was a fleeting expression of horror on Pat's face, but it disappeared so quickly I was scarcely sure I had seen it.

The queen called the miscreant to her and stroked his fur.

"Poor Tom," she crooned. "Poor Tom."

"Oh it didn't hurt him any," Pete growled, and again I was puzzled by the savagery in his voice.

Pat said nothing except, "Supper's ready," as she placed the dishes on the table. Afterwards she fed the cats, refusing my offer of help.

"She never allows anyone else to feed them," the queen drawled. I sensed a covert amusement quite out of keeping with the innocent remark.

Pat was kneeling by the hearth among the cats. She had milk for the small ones and was tossing the larger ones bits of meat. They made a ghastly noise eating it. I wondered at her face as she fed them. It was filled with an unholy fascination, almost as though she were performing some horrid rite. The queen was watching too. She was smiling.

"It makes a pretty picture, doesn't it?" she asked. "Don't forget to leave something for Frisk, Pat." She turned to me. "Frisk is my favorite but Pat won't feed him. She seems to have an aversion to him for some reason. There he is over in the corner. Poor dear, he used to be a beautiful cat but he's getting old now. Frisk and I are getting old together."

Frisk was a ragged tortoiseshell cat, crippled with rheumatism and blind in one eye. He looked at me leeringly out of his one good eye, then rose to arch his scraggly back, and stumble over to the queen. Pat left the room hurriedly. Again I felt disturbed, uncomfortable.

"Let's go up on the hill," Pete said. "The moon should be up by now and I'd like to show you the view."

"Yes, do show him our view, Peter," the queen purred. "We're very proud of that view. I hope you won't mind if I do not go with you but the fact is I haven't been feeling too well lately.

One of these nasty coughs. you know, that just will hang on. I'm afraid I'm getting old."

Her tone was coquettish and I felt called upon to be gallant, but actually she did look repulsively old, old and tired.

Pete and I walked up the hill slowly. It was a steep climb but it was worth it. Like huge foaming waves the mountains furred in from the wide lost depths of sky. As far as the eye could reach the mist laden valleys lay, giving back their secret spirits to the white brooding moon above them. Close and thick the forest land breathed at us, the dark sprawling shadow of the foothills. Pete pointed to a white patch about a mile away on the nearest ridge.

"That's where Long John used to live. He and Pat were engaged.

"What became of him?" I asked absently.

"He died," Pete said. He bent over to pick up a stone and fling it viciously down the hill. "Had a weak heart it seems. It was damn tough on Pat. She's never been the same since. If you'd known her as long as I have you'd see the change. And its getting worse lately."

"When did this happen?" I asked.

"Oh, about ten years ago. I was only a kid. They used to go fishing together a lot. He was one of those blond, sunburned giants that make the rest of the fellows look sick. You never would have known there was anything the matter—to look at him." He pulled out his pipe and lit it, cupping the flame between his hands. As the light fell on his face I could see he was troubled.

"Too bad," I murmured inadequately.

"Yes," Pete said, "too damned bad." "Long John lived over on that hill all alone except for a couple of cats Mrs. Fullerton gave him. One of them was Frisk. The winter he died we had a bad storm here, teh worst that ever fell on these parts. Everybody was snowed in for weeks. When the storm broke Pat was kind of expecting Long John to come on over the hill, but he didn't come. She waited awhile and then she got worried. So she dug out and went over there. It took her a week to make it. When she found him he was lying behind the stove,—frozen."

He took a long drag on his pipe.

"You know—cats eat dead people."

"There's something pretty horrible about that, Pete. I don't believe it," I said.

"Well, that's the story and I think it's right," he answered, obstinately. "They were snowed in and they got hungry I guess. No stupid emotions about a cat, you know."

"The queen," I said at last. "If it's true, why?"

"She hated him of course. Not that I think she ever loved Pat. But she wanted to keep her here. Pat's been very useful to her ever since the old man died and the others stopped coming. Queens don't do their own work you know, not this one anyway. She drove off all the other suitors. But she couldn't drive off Long John. She was delighted when he died, though one can't quite blame that on her of course. Still she was glad. And she keeps the cats."

"How awful for Pat!" I exclaimed.

"I don't know," Pete said slowly. "Nobody knows."

I had my warning then but I didn't recognize it. Pat seemed in such good spirits when we went back that it was hard to think of her as heartbroken. As for the queen, she just seemed dirty to me, perhaps even a little pathetic, with her cheap jewels and her grand airs. Maybe it was the wine. I don't know. Maybe I felt a sort of challenge under their banter when they asked me to spend the summer. When I told them I was looking for a quiet place to stay, they said they had a cabin in the woods I could use if I wasn't too partial to hot water; and what with the wine and the roast duck, and Pat, with her dark eyes and her bright hair and that queer remoteness about her that one wanted to break through somehow,—well, anyway, I accepted.

Before I knew it I was part of their curious, isolated life. I shooed young rabbits out of the cabbage patch and helped pluck duck feathers; I show crows and milked cows. Over and over again I would try to break down Pat's reserve when we were working together. It wasn't any use. Country people don't break down so easily I guess. Besides, there were always the cats around watching us. Now, I know, it seems absurd. But it didn't seem that way then. I felt as if those cats were devils and spies, as if somehow they were guarding Pat for some evil power that was waiting to claim her. Whenever we were alone together one of them would stalk majestically past with an ironical curve to his tail. Their green slit eyes looking at us seemed to hold an intensely personal mockery which sometimes made my flesh crawl. I got so I couldn't sleep well at night, couldn't bear to see Pat feed the animals in that horrid, ritualistic way. I used to make some excuse to leave the room at such

times, with all the cats eyes and the queen's nasty smile following me out into the night. Then I would lie awake in my own cold cabin and listen to the wind snuffling maliciously in the pines, and the queen's hacking, tired cough, and Pat's feet pacing monotonously up and down. up and down across the way, and the animals scampering and caterwauling! I'd better leave this place, I'd think. I'd better leave here quickly.

I wanted to give Pat something before I left, some sort of music to lull the darkness that bound her. It's not always love that binds people together. Sometimes it's hatred. But there wasn't anything to do, no ointment for this wound, least of all words. She needs something warm and gay, I thought, and beautiful against the winter—a spanish shawl, perhaps, to sprawl over her shoulders in the firelight when the winds are at their howling and the cold memories are creeping like cats. But how ridiculous for this woman with her hard hands, with her leather skin and lost eyes. A new shotgun would be more useful and more fitting. I didn't give her the rifle though. I gave her the shawl. I sent home for it. I gave it to her in my own cabin. I didn't want the cats around, nor the queen. I wanted it to mean something only to her, for her.

This shawl now had belonged to my mother. It was very old and fragrant, the deep rich red of dark overblown roses. It was heavy too, and warm with the weight of legend. When Pat opened the box I noticed that her fingers trembled. She was excited and frightened like a child. I had never seen her look like that before.

"This couldn't be for me," she whispered. "Why I'd feel like a fool!"

I took the shawl from the box and placed it around her shoulders, lean, hard shoulders, a little stooped now.

"I want you to have it," I said. "It was my mother's."

"Your mother's?" She looked beautiful then for the moment when her face softened; wistful and strange she looked with the dark, red shawl around her. It changed her to someone very young and eager and only a little lost, not yet beyond redemption, not yet dead.

"It's the kindest thing that ever happened to me," she said. And just then the door rattled and groaned as if an evil, tenacious spirit were after us, and the queen came in. I never saw anyone look quite so horrible. She was coughing and shivering

and her face was a greenish blue, almost phosphorescent. She pointed accusingly at Pat.

"Your mother's sick," she whined. "While you waste your time at playacting with poor white trash. You think I don't know. But I always know. The cats tell me. They've told me before. You are a hussy, miss. Can't you wait till I'm decently buried?"

She cackled with a sick, wretched laughter.

"Pat Fullerton gone woman on me," she cackled. "Your mother was beautiful, child, but you took after your lowdown father. Give me that shawl, child. You're not fit to wear it."

Her old, gnarled hands reached out to pluck the shawl away. Vulture fingers. Like birds, fascinated by a snake, we stared at her. There was something so obscene and at the same time so pitiful about the gesture. And then a sudden convulsion seized her and she put her hands to her mouth. When they fell away they were bright with blood. I remember thinking that it should have been black.

Pat and I nursed Mrs. Fullerton for two long, silent weeks. She didn't say anything any more, just lay and looked at us, coughed and stroked her cats. Pat didn't say anything either. She had ceased to pay any attention to me and whenever I caught her eyes I was frightened by their peculiar expression. The pupils were dilated with the odd, cold glitter of excitement. I have seen people look that way when they were drunk or delirious. Wherever she went the queen's eyes followed her. Sometimes she smiled. When she did this the daughter would smile back at her,—the dark, secret smile of one who has waited a long time and is at last rewarded. I never saw her feed the cats any more, though they were always around—swarming on the floor, crawling over the sofa, curled in chairs, perched on tables, spitting, purring, snarling, mewling, scratching, licking themselves. I hated to see them crawling over the inert mass that was now the queen, purring and licking the black hairs on her chin. I hated to see Pat's expression as she watched them.

The end came at last. I was looking out of the window and watching the dismal downfall of autumn rain when Pat came in from the kitchen with a glass of milk for her mother. I heard her say; "Here's something for you." Then I heard the glass fall with a clatter, and I turned.

Death must have frightened the queen for there was a startled glare in the rolled up eyes. She had tried to sit up to die but had

been caught stiff with her head half falling to the floor. The milk had spilled over the sofa and was dripping downward across her face. The cats were already licking it up, leaping over their mistress and clawing at one another. They acted as though they were half starved.

Pat stood there, still watching, her bent figure framed in the grey light from the window. Her eyes, when she turned to me at last, were cold and proud, and hooded like a hawk's.

"It's over," she said tonelessly.

"I'm sorry, Pat, terribly sorry."

She nodded.

"We'd better go on in to town. I'll have to get hold of an undertaker. I'll have to let people know."

"All right," I assented briskly, glad of some action at last. Then I hesitated. "It might be a long time before we get back out here. What about the cats? We can't leave her alone with them."

Pat stood there a moment, smiling that secret smile. Still smiling she pushed me toward the door. Then she turned and gave one last, comprehensive look at the scene before closing it in behind us.

"Mother always loved cats," she said.

VANITAS

Long have I pondered on the ways
Of loneliness and long aspired
To fill with some redundant phrase
The ache of being undesired.

Oh sad-voiced frogs that croon and call
Down waters swollen with the dark!
Oh haunted winds! Down the leaves fall.
At the cold moon the mad dogs bark.

Where is the answer, where the light,
The one companionship we crave?
What buzzard veers in startled flight?
What white bones listen in the grave?

ELIZABETH BROWN