People came in and out all evening to see the baby and hold it. The room filled with smoke, and Maggie's head throbbed with excitement and fatigue, but Stuart had such a happy, earnest look of proud possession on his face that Maggie couldn't bear to do anything to quench it. Little Anne rapidly outdistanced her mother in recovery. In two months she became a fat highly social baby, with a fuzz of flaxen hair all over her head. She stopped flying into rages and started digesting her food; she developed a peaches and cream complexion and a sunny disposition, and she asked for nothing more of life than that she be kept dry and comfortable and fed huge amounts of food at stated intervals and be carried to where she could watch activity going on around her. She was so heavy that Maggie's arms shook from lifting her and taking care of her. Maggie couldn't seem to get her strength back or catch up with herself with all she had to do: there was the big basket of clothes to be coaxed through the rackety old washer and lugged out and lugged back; there was the daily round of household chores in which Maggie insisted on participating. Worry had a great deal to do with it; Stuart had been laid off at the produce company and had to go back to sitting in his father's office, taking what salary his father could hand out to him. Mr& Clifton would have preferred death and bankruptcy to having his son stay with his wife's people without contributing to his and his family's upkeep, and besides that there were the things that had to be bought for the baby, milk and orange juice and vitamins and soap, just plain soap. Maggie and Stuart pored over figures every night, trying to find how they could squeeze out a few pennies more. In desperation Maggie consulted Eugenia one afternoon: "Do you think you could find me something I could do here at home to make some money, so I could still watch the baby and do the rest of the things"? "It seems to me you have enough to do as it is", Eugenia said. She had been watching Maggie go from the washing machine to the baby to the stove and back again. "I have plenty of odd moments when I could be doing something", Maggie said. "It would make me feel a lot better, but the Woman's Exchange isn't taking baked goods any more and I can't leave the baby with Grandma because she isn't strong enough and the baby's too young to be put in a nursery".

"I should think so", Eugenia said. "For one thing you can stop keeping that child in starched dresses and changed from the skin out nineteen times a day". "She's so beautiful, and I do like to keep her looking nice". Maggie said. She picked up the baby and nuzzled her fat warm little neck. "She'll be just as beautiful in something that doesn't have to be ironed", Eugenia said. "Evadna Mae Evans said she didn't put a thing on her child but a flannel wrapper until it was nine months old".

"Evadna Mae Evans got all her baby clothes from Best's Liliputian Bazaar in New York, and I'm sick and tired of hearing about Evadna Mae Evans". "Well now, Maggie, you don't

have to snap at me", Eugenia said. "I'm just thinking of a way for you to be sensible". "I'm sorry. I do seem to snap at everybody these days, but I would like to think of a way to make a little extra money". "Well, let's see. Let's make a list of your assets". Maggie started laughing, and she laughed so hard she couldn't stop, and she kept on laughing while she lugged the clothes out to the yard to hang them up while the sun was still shining. When she came back Eugenia was sitting at the kitchen table with a pencil and envelope jotting down words and figures.
"I have here that you could run a nursery of your own for working mothers",
Eugenia said. "We could put up cribs on the second floor sleeping porch and turn the front bedroom into a playroom where it's nice and sunny, but of course it would entail quite a bit of running up and down stairs and Chris said you were to be careful about that".

"What else"? "You might set up a dress shop in the living room". "Every woman in the block has tried that".

"What about a tea room, then? You could set up tables in the front room and serve salads and your baked beans and brown bread and Grandma could dress like a gypsy and tell fortunes".
"It's too elaborate. And Grandma isn't strong enough to take on something like that, and to tell you the truth neither am I".

Eugenia sighed. She said, "Well, those are the really interesting things, but if you don't like any of those I can turn over some of my extra typing jobs to you, if you think you can type well enough".

"Oh, I'm sure I could do that", Maggie said. "But it really wouldn't be fair, taking your jobs away from you".

"Don't worry, I can get plenty more", Eugenia said, wondering where in the world she could. Maggie was looking much happier already, clearing a space on the table and chattering about how she could put up a typewriter right there, and be brushing up on her typing so Eugenia wouldn't be ashamed of it. "And then whenever I have a minute I can be working at it, and keep an eye on the baby and the stove at the same time. And I can go back to my contests and be thinking while I'm doing the washing". "What are you going to do with your feet so you don't waste anything"? Maggie laughed. She said, "Oh Eugenia, I wish **h" "What"?

"I wish I had three wishes", Maggie said. "All of them for you". ##

It grew bitterly cold toward the end of November, contributing to the miseries of countless numbers of people. The temperature dropped to twenty below at night and stood at zero during the days. The cold settled like a tangible pall over the Mile

High City, locking it in an icy grip that harshened its outlines and altered its physical appearance; it had a look of grim stark realism, resembling other cities whose habitual climate was cold, instead of the sprawling bumptious open-handed greedy Western city basking in eternal sunshine at the foot of mountains stored with endless riches and resources. The jobless huddled in the streets outside of employment offices, outside newspaper buildings, in parks, in relief lines, outside government agencies. There weren't facilities to take care of them; there never had been a need felt for such facilities. That kind of poverty was regarded as the exclusive property of the East, which created depressions with their stock markets and their congested populations and their greedy centralization of industries, protected by discriminatory freight rates. The East was popularly supposed to have got the country into war and into depression, dragging the west along; and now the East was creating government agencies for which the West doubtless would have to pay. The government offices were being opened but they weren't being opened fast enough and meanwhile the cold penetrated everything. Shivering, people talked and argued; all this government spending would have to be paid for somehow, but on the other hand desperate circumstances called for desperate remedies and something had to be done. Something had to be done; it was the theme song of millions of American people, their personal problems no less urgent than those of the government. Something had to be done. The Abernathys said it to each other a dozen times a day. Something had to be done about the furnace, the fuel bills, the washing machine, the doctor and dentist bills, about making money stretch for food, for the mortgage, for taxes, for shoes, for half soles, for overshoes,
for clothes, for the new leaks in the roof, for gas and light bills; about keeping warm, about keeping well, about meeting the minor emergencies that came up once, twice, fifty times a day. Just dropping the baby's bottle and breaking it became a catastrophe, and Stuart wore out his shoes so fast that he was termed a major disaster. The Abernathy furnace consumed fuel like a giant ravenous maw that had to be appeased by hurling tons of coal into its evil red depths, and no matter how much coal they put in the house remained cold. Cold came in the innumerable cracks that seemed to have sprung up, under doors, around loosened window frames, from the sleeping porches, the attic, from the widened cracks between shingles on the roof. Presently they had to give up running the furnace at full capacity and depend on the old coal range in the kitchen, which had never been removed when the new gas range was installed, and the fireplaces and an electric heater in Grandma's room. It was so cold and so wretched that a sort of desperate gaiety infected all of them, like people stormbound or shipwrecked or caught in some other freak of circumstance so that time stood still and minor anxieties fell away and the only important thing was to cling together and survive. The pipes burst and they all laughed and stood in ice water to their ankles while they swabbed the bathrooms. They lived mainly in the kitchen; they moved Maggie's bed and the baby's basket there, and the rest of them undressed by the stove and ran groaning and shivering to the upper

polar regions and plunged into icy beds. Grandma said it was just like the early mining camp days, and it was the way people ought to live, only she was getting too old to take the pleasure from it that she used to. "You said a mouthful", Eugenia said grimly. Eugenia hated being cold worse than anything, and she was beginning to find the joys of poverty wearing thin. She said to Maggie that it was one thing to meet an emergency and another to wallow in it, and it was beginning to look at if this one was going to last forever. "Plenty of people are poor all their lives". "Plenty of people haven't our brains and talent". "I know you when you start talking about brains and talent", Maggie said. "You're working up to something, and if you don't watch out you'll ruin your whole life one of these days just to prove that the Abernathy family is superior to everything, even a depression". "The only thing that worries me is how I'm going to prove it", Eugenia said. They begged Grandma to let them put a bed in the kitchen for her, but Grandma said she was getting too old to sleep in strange beds and be seen with her teeth out, and that she hoped to die in privacy like a Christian and if the Lord willed it to be of pneumonia than it would have to be that way. She didn't want to be the only one with a stove in her room, especially as her life span was nearly run out anyway, and she insisted that Hope have the heater. Hope wouldn't hear of it, and she took the heater back to Grandma's room, and Grandma took it back to Hope's room, and the two of them dragged it back and forth until Grandma tipped it over and almost set her bedspread on fire. She said that proved she wasn't to be trusted with a fire in her room, and she could be burned to a crisp without anybody knowing it. Eugenia suspected her of deliberately overturning the heater because she was getting tired of dragging it back and forth and still wanted her own way, but Hope said if Grandma wouldn't have the heater nobody would have it, so Grandma had to give in.

"Thrifty of her to use it up. Unusual in a case like this, but"- "You can <joke!> Didn't you read it? <She's married that tenant!>" "I read it, yes. This ought to simplify Tolley's life". Laban had more to say. Tolley had gone to live in California. He'd mentioned it, himself, at church and everybody seemed to have the idea that Tolley had left because Jenny had jilted him for <Roy robards>. "It was plain as the nose on your face that they're laughing about it, Mamma. Zion stayed to get my pin, but it'll be a cold day in June when I go back".

"We will <both> go back, Laban"! Kizzie turned to go inside. "Let me stay and take the pictures you wanted, Mamma. The sun's right"- "Pictures"? She swung around. "<What> pictures"? "In Brace's room! You <told> me to bring my camera. I'm not going back"- "Indeed you <are!> Why should I want pictures of an empty room now? Tolley had no idea of marrying that sneaky little Jenny! This- trip of his had nothing to do with her consorting with tenants, and I am going

to see that everybody at Mt& Pleasant understands that simple fact.
Wait for me, Laban, I'll be dressed in half a second"!

Frank followed her into the bedroom, hooked her dress up the back.

"<Hurry>, Frank! They're not going to laugh at the
Fairbrothers and Labans very long! Tolley's going is <my>
fault. I <drove> him away. You know it and I'll tell <everybody>
exactly how it happened". She was so beautiful, so valiant,
so pitiable. He kissed her. "Make your confession to God, Kizzie
dear, not to the congregation". "I'll decide that when
I get there. I was so cruel to Tolley, so unfair. But I'll
be fair now! He <is> coming back, isn't he, Frank"?
Yes, oh yes. What else was there to say? Returning to the log-house
he found some favorite lines from Jonathan Swift on his lips:

"Under the window in stormy weather I marry this man
and woman together. Let none but Him who rules the thunder

Put this man and woman asunder". Absolution for his lie?
He questioned God's taking time to telegraph the message, but
he felt better about Kizzie, and he took the sealed envelope from its
pigeonhole, wondering why he had preserved it. If he died before she
did, she would never be unable to resist opening it. In any case he
would be thrusting a burden on his remaining sons, making them parties
to a deception peculiarly his own. It was simply <his> necessity
to confess which had made him write and keep this thing. "You've
told God, Frank", he said. "Why lacerate the- congregation"?

Reaching for an old clay pot, relic of pioneer days, he tore
the envelope in pieces, dropping them into it, touching the little
pyre to flame, watching it curl, the red sealing wax melting and bubbling
in the feathery ash. Surely now his beloved son could rest in peace.

"'And let me go, for the night gathers me, and in the
night shall no man gather fruit'".
A beautiful and haunting line,
a subtle genius, Swinburne, difficult not to envy a gifted man, and
perhaps he did **h. But there were great satisfactions, even for
a small man. Beyond his window were the greening trees, new spring,
eternal hope, eternal life. There lay Grand Fair's Quinzaine,
his own young parents' graves, but new life and promise for his sons,
grandsons. He poured his thimble of wine for the toast he'd made
so often. "To absent loved ones". But this last time he drank not
to Brace but "To Tolley"!

#42#

MR& ROBARDS- Jenny
was the only person she knew of in the Mt& Pleasant neighborhood
who called him that- was kind but too easygoing. It didn't bother

him for everybody from the blacksmith to the preacher to say, "Howdy, Miss Jenny", adding a careless "Roy", but it did her.

He could put a stop to it, she told him again and again. Simply call Mr& Whipsnade <Oscar>, and Dr& Dunne <P&G>&, and C'un Major <Frank>. Mr& Robards laughed, said he'd feel a damn fool, plain-out couldn't do that even to please <her>.

"You could try. And if I <ever> hear you say 'Mist Laban' again I'll <scream>. And don't tell me you didn't at church Sunday. I <heard> you"! He really hadn't meant to, he assured her, but it was plain to her that the importance of these small things was lost on Mr& Robards. How strange it was that he could give her this handsome house and carte blanche as to its beautiful furnishings, and fail her in- spiritual ways. Another weakness- far more irritating than his manner of speaking, which he made only token effort to change- was his devotion to that old horse of Tolley's. <Her> horse, rather. But Mr& Robards' now, oh my yes, indeed, yes! He called her "the Mare" much as Mrs& Whipsnade spoke of "the Queen, God bless her". **h He, with fifteen or twenty horses or mares or geldings or what-nots out there in the barn, was reverent only of "the Mare", "the Racin' Mare", the revolting Gunny. For the first few months of their marriage she had tried to be nice about Gunny, going out with him to watch this pearl without price stamp imperiously around in her stall. And what had happened? Gunny invariably tried to bite her. Nerves, Mr& Robards said, just a nip anyway. "Stand back, Miss Jen, she's oneasy of your scarf". Never, "Quit that, you sor'l devil"! Never concern for his wife's nerves, or the danger that the curled lip and big teeth might mark their own dear baby due in January. <She> musn't annoy <Gunny> whose foal was due then too! Listening for hours to his laments that the war and "Mist Fair's" poverty afterwards had robbed the mare of many a racing triumph, and to his predictions of greatness for the procession of foals to come, Jenny could look forward to years of conflict with an <animal> who disliked her intensely and showed it. Gunny symbolized so much that was unpleasant- Tolley, the indifference with which the Fairbrothers and indeed the whole neighborhood now treated her and which she would die rather than acknowledge to her husband, his lack of understanding and sympathy in her present condition, her disgusting swollen stomach. Human birth was no novelty to Mr& Robards. Tillie was a fine midwife and could get here quick, he suggested. Jenny's aversion to having Dr& Dunne, a former admirer, seemed silly to him, but he would humor her, get anybody she wanted, the best never being too good for her. The chances were against his being here to humor her when her time came, she was sure. He would be in the barn, or riding for the veterinarian! Night after night he stayed with Gunny in the dead of winter, rubbing her with quarts of expensive liniment, fussing over her bran mash as the cook did over charlotte russe, tracking manure on the pretty new carpet when he did come to the house. Yet when the dear baby came, he had Tillie over here

in a jiffy, and was as attentive and sweet and worried and happy when it was all over as any husband could have been. Jenny wished now that she had had Dr& Dunne, feeling that somehow he wouldn't have allowed the dear baby to turn into triplets. There was something not <nice> about triplets, though their father seemed pleased, showing no disappointment that they hadn't been the son he wanted, saying, "You don't see triplets trippin' down the pike ever' day, Miss Jen, hon. Rhyme 'em up cute- Arcilla, Flotilla **h"

Edmonia for her mother, she said firmly, Jennifer, for herself, and- "Kezziah, for Miss Kizzie", he suggested. "She was mighty good to you past times, an' this'll fetch her". Now she must be thinking of a boy-name, something special. Just wait till she saw the Mare's foal. Handsomest colt in all Kentucky. Strong too, up on his legs when he was an hour old. What about Royal Robards?

"<Why don't you name him Jesus Christ!>"
She burst into tears. Roy was deeply distressed. He'd had no idea how unhappy his sweet peach had been. Of course she wasn't herself right now, but as her strength came back her spirits didn't seem to rise with it. He had a good idea why not. Those elegant "At Home" cards she sent out, now she could wear her pretty clothes again, and had the house all trimmed up, hadn't brought many callers in two whole months. Doc Dunne and Miss Sis had come. So had Miss Shawnee Rakestraw, full of criticisms about the changes here, giving thanks that her dear old father had gone to his Heavenly Rest last year, saying how much she enjoyed her boarding house in town in inclement weather, was looking forward to Quinzaine Spa this summer.

<There> was an idea. Miss Kizzie had been right snippy ever since they were married, though you'd have thought a namesake would
have brought her round. Oh, she'd come to see them once, left silver teething rings for all of the trips. But when Miss Jen went over right away to return the call, Miss Kiz couldn't have been very cordial, for she'd come back before she hardly had time to get there. More and more, these days, she'd been driving that pretty little mare that looked like her, over to Tillie's and Nick's- his own old square frame box on posts, chickens and cats and pups under the house, everybody friendly inside, making a to-do over the babies dressed like dollies. Though he was glad she got on well with his young folks, she ought to be welcome at the finest house in the land, too.

It made him pretty hot under the collar, after the idea Miss Sis had given him, to be told by Miss Kiz that her holy spa was all reserved for this summer <and next>, if you please, and that much as she regretted it, they would be unable to entertain Mrs& Robards and the children. She hoped they were well. He didn't tell Miss Jen, but she must have got word from the cook or nurse, who of course knew those Quinzaine nigs, and she really took a fit. If he <ever> did such a thing again she'd die of shame. "Have a

party an' leave 'em out, hon", he suggested. "A <swell> party,
send an invite to <ever'body> but them- those folks you met
at the Galt House, the ones I've got to know in this new Jockey
Club affair, the whole dang neighborhood. We'll have oystchers-
couple bar'l oystchers'll fetch in a crowd any time. I'll see
word gets round". "<Don't you dare!>" Miss
Jen was
funny that way, funny that she didn't seem to take to his ideas and
perk up. He was downright worried about her, but there was one more
thing he could try **h. Zion was surprised when Roy's buggy
stopped beside her on the pike one early summer day as she was walking
home from the country school where she was teaching now that Eph Showers
had had a call to preach in some mountain town. Roy smiled-
he <did> have a nice smile- took off his hat most politely,
told her to hop in, and he'd give her a lift to Quinzaine. Her hesitation
was only momentary and she hoped he didn't notice it, as she
settled herself, asked quickly how Miss Jenny and the babies were
getting on. "See for yourself, Miss Zion. It won't take
a minute". He swung in through his own wide gateway. "Them's
the purtiest babes you ever did see, but Miss Jen gets mighty lonesome.
She'll relish the sight of a friendly face. Miss Kiz won't
care your comin', will she"? "Why of course not", Zion
said uncomfortably.

"He must have forgiven me", Henrietta murmured to the room.
The absolution of Doaty's last will and testament was proof enough
of that; Doaty would never have left her house to a godless woman.

She found herself wishing an old wish, that she had told Doaty
she was running away, that she had left something more behind her
than the loving, sorry note and her best garnet pin. Perhaps Doaty
had guessed already and kept her counsel. Henrietta thought, It's
extraordinary how much she always knew about both of us. There
had been more to know about Hetty, inevitably, and most of it unfavorable.
Adelia was the good one, or, if not always good, less frequently
tempted. Their childhood would have been quite circumspect without
Hetty's flair for drama, especially through the long summers. In
winter, in the city, there had been the Maneret School, which taught
excellently with a kind of austere passion for knowledge; there had
been lessons in French from a small Polish nobleman with a really
profound distaste for his pupils; there had been the dancing class-
Miss Craddock, thin and tireless, with her supervising wand and her
everlasting <one>-two-three, <one>-two-three. There had been supper
parties and teas, fetes and little balls, Mama small and pretty
and gay and Papa enormously jocular, enormously possessive, the sun
around
which the Blackwell planets revolved. Mama had died before
the corruption of the family circle, the interruption of Charles.
It was safe to assume that Papa, sighing heavily, had said many times
to his remaining daughter, "Thank God your poor mother was spared
this", and indeed it might be true that it had been easier for Henrietta

to leave, with her hand in Charles' hand, just because
her "poor
mother" was gone already and would never know. Mama was vulnerable;
one had always felt the need to make a safe world around her.

But I would have gone anyway, thought Henrietta. She had always
been able to ignore the moral question because there had been no
choice. Only at this moment- perhaps because it was before dawn and
she was lying in Doaty's bed- she found herself examining how others
might regard her. Perhaps they would argue that morality consisted
just of that ability to see a choice. She turned on her side,
finding the idea oppressive. If Adelia had felt about someone as
Henrietta felt about Charles, would she have run away with him?

Impossible to imagine Adelia feeling so about anyone. No temptation,
no sin. No temptation, no virtue? A curious
thought to end a curious night. The birds were really awake now in a
colloquy of music, and light was beginning to creep across the room,
touching sill and door, table and chair and all of Doaty's flowers
in their artificial blossom and leaf. Before anything else, she
would go to Doaty's grave with flowers from Doaty's forgotten
garden. Everything must wait upon this mission, this sentimental duty
of a pilgrim whose nature avoided graveyards. She closed her eyes, remembering
the small French cemetery, enclosed by stone walls. It had
always seemed to rain there, and even the grass was gray. After
the sad impatient moment, waiting for comfort which could not come,
she slipped out of bed and went to the open window. The garden below
was lacy with dew and enchanting in its small wildness. Leaning
out,
she could see a tangle of rosebush and honeysuckle, one not quite come
to bloom, one just beyond it. On a thrusting spray thick with thorns
and dewdrops and swelling pink buds, like a summer Valentine, a bird
balanced and sang, nondescriptly brown and alive with its own music,
a little engine of song. It was so pretty and artless that
she felt like a child again and would have enjoyed running out barefoot
to play on the wet grass with all the growing things, but Doaty never
permitted bare feet and she was decidedly not a child but <une femme
d'un certain age>. Feeling suddenly neat and subdued, she dressed
quite soberly and went downstairs. Rosa, unbelievably, was
not yet up and about, reassurance that Rosa was human. Feeling protective
toward this sleeping being, Henrietta found a yesterday bun and
milk in a white jug, a breakfast which was somewhat the equivalent of
going barefoot. Outside, the garden, the tame wilderness, yielded
a patchwork bouquet of daisies, sweet william, scented stock and lady's
bedstraw, which she tied with long grasses and took back to show
Rosa, who was now stirring about the kitchen and haranguing Folly.
The poodle came gleefully to Henrietta and begged for the flowers,
supplicating the air with prayerful forepaws. Henrietta held
her bouquet out of reach and said it was for Doaty. "Rummaging in
the dew", said Rosa coldly. "Go change your shoes before you turn
around". She sounded so exactly like Doaty that Henrietta obeyed

her under the clear impression that she could either comply or stay home. Folly danced, eager for whatever lay beyond the door. To a Blackwell, there was only one church. The cemetery slumbered just behind it, and the way lay through the village and close to the sea. For the first time in thirty years, Henrietta walked down the narrow street with its shuttered shops just stirring and its inhabitants eying her with the frankest curiosity. She smiled and bowed, recalling the princess-in-a-carriage feeling she had enjoyed when she was a child. Now, some of the acknowledgments were cautious, but all were interested.

An old man, sitting against the wall of a cottage and waiting for the sun to find him, gave her a more than reflective look as she passed, the sap still plainly rising in his branches. On an impulse, she turned back and said good morning. He cupped his ear and shook his head at her repetition, announcing in a nettled way that he had heard her the first time. He then offered his own estimate of the weather, which was unenthusiastic. "Summer's been slow to come", he said. "It's my dryin' out time". He scowled at her flowers. "I'm taking them to the cemetery", said Henrietta, out of a vague feeling of hospitality. "They'll be takin' me next", he said pleasantly, "but not so soon's they plan. See half of 'em in their graves before I choose my own coffin. It's dryin' myself out that does it". He regarded her with rising hope. "You'd like to hear how I go about it". "It's nice of you", Henrietta said doubtfully. "Y're welcome". He straightened himself, soldierly against the wall, and pulled his sprawled feet together so they stood side by side in their old boots. His stick ceased to be a thing to rest his chin on and became a pointer for emphasizing the finer aspects of his text. "Every month, f'r three days", he said happily, "I take no water into my system, no water whatsoever. It rests the tissues". Henrietta murmured that she could quite see how it would, and he nodded approval of her womanly good sense. "Rests the tissues", he said, "and pacifies the system. My dad did it, and he lived to a great age". He looked up at her sharply. "Don't remember, do you"?

She did suddenly, through the link of memory with his father, old Titus, who must have been in his nineties when Henrietta ran away. Next to the Blackwells, Titus had owned the island most, and she and Adelia had often stood in front of him, silenced by his terrible years- a scanty man with a thin beard and very deep-set blue eyes like a mariner, more aged than possible. He had never spoken once to the awed sisters, but his son had been friendly, a big fellow of fifty or more, a fishing-boat captain and powerful like the sea. It must be that son who sat before her now, shriveled to half his size and half his senses. She said gently, "Of course I remember you".

"Not so well's I remember you", he said. "Y're the young Blackwell woman. Ran away on a black night with a lawful wedded man. I know all about you". "You do seem to", said

Henrietta, impressed. "Can't blame a man for leavin' his wife", he said quite cheerfully. "Left mine many a time, only she never knew it. Man in a boat, there's a lot of places he can put in at and a lot of reasons he can be away for a bit. Any harm in that"?

"Probably", said Henrietta dryly. He gave a short hard laugh and looked at her knowingly. "You'd be the one to say", he observed, and she found herself liking his approval none too well, but she could not defend herself and say that her actions were "different", since all actions had their own laws. Only, this old man's connivance was even less to her taste than Selma Cotter's open censure. Well, she had not come back to Great Island to be understood, praised or condemned. She had come to make her peace with the past, and of that past this ancient of the earth was only a kind of shadow. She started to move away, just as a woman came out of the cottage, a big-boned, drab-haired figure with a clean apron tied over her limp print dress. She smiled vaguely at Henrietta and spoke to the old man. "You've not had your breakfast yet, gran'dad".

"Y'r dam' porridge is no breakfast", he said.
"Milk and sops"! He beat the air with his stick, and it fell from his claws and clattered on the stones. "He's owly today", his grand-daughter said wearily, and bent to pick it up. "He's got this idea about drying out **h" "It ain't an idea"!

"If it ain't an idea", she said, "how comes it you can drink beer but not water"? He looked piously to heaven and said, "Beer don't affect the tissues none", and the ingenious hypocrisy of this defense pleased Henrietta so that she forgave him his stint of malevolence. His grand-daughter sighed. "Come on, do. The children are eating, and Miss Blackwell's on her way somewheres". "To the graveyard. Who ain't"?
"Not me. I've got a day's work to do.- You'll be visiting Miss Doaty, ma'am"? Henrietta nodded. How much they knew about her! The woman (she must have been a tiny baby when Hetty and Delia had stood arm in arm, watching great age grow small) answered the nod with her own. "God rest her soul, she was a sweet one. Come on now". She put a strong hand under the old man's arm and lifted him up, patiently, with the gentle cruelty and necessary tyranny that the young show toward the very old. He mumbled at her but let himself be led off inside the house, shuffling mightily to make it clear how weak and aged he was and how he was buffeted about by those who still had their wicked strength. There was a gabble of voices from indoors, young hungry sounds like cats after fish, and a burst of swearing from the old man. Henrietta looked down at her bouquet, still lively with its color and scent, and set her feet on their journey's way again, leaving the village street and crossing the first field, Folly dancing ahead of her. At the edge of the field, the wild rolling land took over, dotted with fat round bushes like sheep. They were covered with tiny white blossoms, their scant roots

clawing at the stony ground, and wild birds darted in and about and through them so they were nearly alive with the rustle and cry.

The air was full of sounds too but placid ones, a terrestrial humming as much out of the earth as out of the blue sky. She felt mindless, walking, and almost easy until the church spire told her she was near the cemetery, and she caught herself wondering what she would say to Doaty. Both church and graveyard were smaller than she remembered them (how many things had lessened while she was gone away) but the headstones had grown so thick in thirty years that to find one named "Dorothy Tredding" seemed suddenly impossible. She sat down on the nearest, fallen with age and gray with sea-damp, her fingers tracing the indecipherable carved letters padded with green moss. The day's sun was gathering its strength in gold, and she wished she had brought her parasol, if only to shade Doaty's flowers. A small, rock-carved angel watched her from a nearby tomb, the only angel in the cemetery. She remembered, suddenly, a night of savage moonlight and scudding clouds when she and Adelia, having dared each other, had stolen out of their great safe house and come here, hand in hand, hoping and fearing ghosts.

The Momoyama family had come from Miyagi Prefecture, in the northeast of the main Japanese island of Honshu, where there are still traces of the mysterious Ainu strain. The Ainus were a primitive people, already living on the island before the principal ancestors of the Japanese came from Southern Asia. Apparently they were of Caucasian blood. They had white skins and blue eyes; all their men were bearded, and many of their women were beautiful. A pitiful few of them are left now, to subsist mainly on the tourist trade and to sing their ancient tribal chants, which have the same haunting sadness as the laments of the American Indians. Most of them have been assimilated, but sometimes a man in Miyagi or Akita prefectures is much more hairy than the average Japanese, and occasionally a girl will be strikingly lovely, her coloring warmed and improved by a little of the tawny honey-in-the-sun tint of the invaders from the South. Tommy Momoyama was one of these fortunate occasions. She was taller than most Japanese girls, and had the exquisitely willowy form of the Japanese girl who is lucky enough to be tall. Her nose was higher of bridge, her complexion so pale as to be quite susceptible to sunburn, and the fish and vegetable diet of her forebears had given her teeth that were white and regular and strong. Her mouth, soft and full, was something for any man to dream about. She had black eyes, long and intriguingly tilted, and the way she walked was melody. She had been in Japan just one week. It was an alien land, and she hated it intensely; she was already considering putting in rebellious requests for duty at San Diego, Bremerton, the Great Lakes, Pensacola- any place the Navy had a hospital- with a threat to resign her commission if the request were not granted. Anywhere would be better than the land of her ancestors. There was nothing wrong with her job. Tommy had been assigned to the psychopathic ward. There were no depressingly serious cases: the ward doctor sometimes teamed up with

the chaplain to serve as a marriage counselor- sometimes the Navy sent people back to the States to preserve a marriage- but mental health as a rule was very high. At present the doctor's main concern was in seeing to it that Japanese salvage firms were not permitted to operate on the hulks of warships sunk too close inshore, because the work involved setting off nerve-shattering blasts at all hours. Tommy was interested in psychiatry, because there was much an understanding nurse could do to help the patients. But she suffered in her
off-duty hours. Such as now, when she sat at a table in the coffee shop at the Officers' Club, having coffee and a hamburger to sustain her until dinnertime. She had changed into a cocktail dress, and the whole evening should have been before her, but already she was beginning to get a tight feeling at the back of her neck. This was one of the Navy's crossroads- you find them all around the world. Ships from the West Coast rotated on six-month tours of duty with the Seventh Fleet, and Yokosuka was the Seventh Fleet's principal port for maintenance, upkeep and shore liberty. Sooner or later, all the gray Navy ships came in here; if Tommy sat long enough, she would be sure to see all the young officers she had met in San Diego and Long Beach. And she wanted desperately to see someone she had known back there. She felt, rather than saw, the approach of the good-looking young man. He came through from the Fleet Bar, which was stag, with the ice cubes tinkling in a glass he carried. When he saw Tommy sitting alone, the tinkling sound stopped. He was perhaps a trifle tipsy, having been long at sea where drinking is not permitted, and consequently out of practice; he wore a brown tweed sports jacket obviously tailored in Hong Kong, and he was of an age that marked him as a lieutenant. Probably off one of the carriers- an aviator. There was a fifty-fifty chance, perhaps, that he would be unmarried, and an even more slender chance that his approach would be different. Japan did something to a man- and it wasn't just Japan, either, because the same thing applied anywhere overseas. It was as if foreign duty implied and excused license; it intimated that the folks at home would never know about it, and, therefore, why not? Then the young man in the brown sports jacket spoke, and it was no different.

"Harro, girl-san"! he said, turning on what was meant to be charm. "You catchee boy-furiendo? Maybe you likee date with me"?

"I beg your pardon"! Tommy said out of her cold
rage.
"I don't believe I know you, and I can't understand your quaint brand of English- it <was> meant to be English, wasn't it"? The nice-looking young officer fell back on his heels, open-mouthed and blushing. At least, he had the decency to blush, she thought. "Oh- I'm sorry! You see, I thought-
I mean I really had no idea"- "Oh, yes- you had ideas"!
Tommy interrupted furiously. "All wrong ones"! Then she jerked her thumb toward the door in a very American gesture, and dropped into Navy slang. "Take off, fly-boy"! "Uh-

sorry"! he muttered, and took off, obviously feeling like a fool.
The trouble was that there was no lasting satisfaction in this for Tommy. She felt like a fool, too. It hadn't been this way in college, or in nurses' training; it wasn't this way in the hospital at San Diego. Everybody had accepted her for what she was- a very charming girl. Nobody had addressed her in broken English at any of those places, nobody had suggested that she wasn't American. There are Spanish girls who look like Tommy Momoyama, brunettes with a Moorish hint of the Orient in their faces; there are beauties from the Balkan states who are similarly endowed, and- back in the blessed United States- they were regarded simply as pretty women. Now, having been sent halfway around the world on a job she had not asked for, Tommy was being humiliated at every turn. She looked around, self-consciously. Four little Japanese waitresses were murdering the English language at the counter- Yuki Kobayashi happened to be one of them. Everybody but Tommy seemed to think it was charming when they called, "Bifutek-san"! for a steak sandwich, or "Kohi futotsu"! for one cup of coffee. Two other Japanese girls were sitting at the tables, both quite pretty and well groomed. One was with a whitehaired and doting lieutenant commander; the other was with her American husband and their exceptionally appealing children. Seeing these did nothing for Tommy's mood. She told herself rebelliously, and with pride, <I am an American!> And so she was, and would remain. But she was learning that so long as she was in this country, and wore civilian dress in the Club, there would always be transient young men who would approach her with broken English. There had been occasions when some of the more experienced had even addressed her in what might have been perfectly good Japanese. Tommy wouldn't know; after coming to America, her parents had spoken only English. One thing was becoming increasingly sure.
She had been sent to the wrong place for duty. There was more to service in the Navy Nurse Corps than the hours in the ward. One had to have friends, and a congenial life in after-duty hours **h.
Now there was raucous male singing from the Fleet Bar. It was terribly off key, and poorly done, and Tommy could never admit to herself that male companionship was a very natural and important thing, but all at once she felt lonesome and put-upon. She finished her hamburger and drank her coffee and paid her check; she got out of the coffee shop before the incident could be repeated. Eating while angry had given her a slight indigestion. Back in her living quarters at the hospital she took bicarbonate of soda, and sulked. Then, after a while, she went to her mirror. It was all true. She certainly looked Japanese, and perhaps she could not really blame the young men. And, still, they did not have to be so crude in their approach **h.
There was a letter to write to her mother, and she tried to make its tone cheerful. She promised that she would soon take a few day's leave and visit the uncle she had never seen, on the island of Oyajima- which was not very far from Yokusuka. And tomorrow she would take time to shop for the kimono her mother wanted to present to the young wife of a faculty member as a hostess gown. Tommy, of course, had never heard of a kotowaza, or Japanese proverb, which says, "Tanin

yori miuchi", and is literally translated as "Relatives are
better than strangers". Actually, this is only another way
of saying that blood is thicker than water. #/2,#

Doc Doolittle's
scheduled appearance at captain's mast was a very unusual thing,
because the discipline dispensed there is ordinarily for the young
and immature, and a chief is naturally expected to stay off the report.
But the beer hall riot in Subic had been unusual, too, and Walt Perry
was convinced that Doc had started it through some expert tactics
in rabble rousing. Just why anybody should wish to start a riot the
executive officer didn't know. In his opinion, Doc had not grown
up. The lieutenant was not entirely wrong in the belief. There
had never been a good reason for Doc Doolittle to grow up. He had
come into the Navy too young, with the image of the fun-loving Guns
Appleby before him. The war found him much too early, and its perils-
and especially its awful boredom- were best forgotten in horseplay
and elaborate practical jokes, and even now Doc had never found
any stabilizing, sobering influence. He remained young at heart, with
an overdeveloped sense of humor. He wisecracked about the captain's
indoctrination of new men, took great delight in slaughtering cockroaches
with ethyl chloride, and gave no thought for tomorrow. He was doing
thirty years, and the Navy would take care of him. The job security
enjoyed by Doc Doolittle, and nearly all members of the Armed
Forces, is a wonderful thing. Actually, all a man in uniform has to
do is to get by. He may not rise to the heights, but he can get by, and
eventually be retired. Doc had been under restriction to the
ship since the <Bustard> left Subic. This deprived him of liberty
in Hong Kong, but he told Boats McCafferty that Hong Kong was
a book he had read before, and the Navy would always bring him there
again, some day. At Yokosuka he was restricted to the confines of
the Base because Walt Perry, being thoughtful, knew that Doc might
have to draw some medical supplies from the hospital or the Supply
Base. This gave Doc the whole range of the naval establishment, and
suited him quite well. There were two things he wanted to do: inspect
one of the many caves that had been dug into the hills on the Naval
Base, and visit an old shipmate. A telephone line had been
hooked up to connect the ship with the Base exchange. After supper,
Doc called Whitey Gresham, who was now a lieutenant and had a family.

"Well, Doc, you old sonofabitch"! Whitey exclaimed,
with true affection. "Come over and have a drink. We live down by
the Base commissary. Grab a taxi". "I'll be there, but
I'll walk", Doc said. "I've got to run an errand on the
way. See you in about an hour". He threw a smart salute at
the gangway, went up the dock, and turned down the wide street in front
of the Petty Officers' Club.

How, he wondered, does one enjoy one's spare time? He considered
some interesting excursion but he was on the road every day from
dawn to dusk. Then there was exercise, boating and hiking, which was

not only good for you but also made you more virile: the thought of strenuous activity left him exhausted. Perhaps golf, with a fashionable companion- but he'd lost his clubs, hadn't played in years. There was swimming over at the Riverside Hotel, but his skin was so white he looked like the bottom of a frog. Perhaps a packing trip into the Sierras, let his beard grow- but that was too stark. I could, he thought, take a long walk- but where? The telephone rang. "You missed it", Buzz's voice said, "You should have gone over to the Pagan Room with us. Wow. Strippers, but scrumptious, and Toodle Williams and her all-lesbian band".

"Hi, Buzz", Owen said. "I went over to the Willows and dropped two notes". "Tough", Buzz said, "Listen, we're having a stag dinner over at the Pagan Room on Friday. Imagine a stag dinner with Toodle Williams". He laughed and laughed.

Owen wanted to be pleasant because Buzz worked the territory next to his, but he hadn't come to Reno for stag dinners. "Thanks", Owen said, "but Friday is a long way off and anything can happen".

Buzz was a tireless instigator who never let his victims rest. When Owen was finally rid of him, there was a timid rap at the door. "Yes", Owen called out. "Yes"? "I'm Mrs& Gertrude Parker", a soft voice explained, "And I'd like to talk to you for a few minutes, please". Ahah, he thought, a lush divorcee at last. Probably saw me in the lobby. He was disappointed to find a nervous, scrawny woman with a big hat standing at the door. She frowned at his green pajamas with the yellow moons.

"How do you do"? she said, semi-professionally. "Our church is sponsoring a group of very courageous women up in Alaska. We call them lay-sisters and they go among the Eskimos making friends and bringing the light. They're up there in that freezing climate and all of us have to try and help them". "Oh"?

"You see", she said, looking past him into the room, where the highball glasses sparkled dully in the bright light, "you and I can't understand the many hardships they have to undergo". "Why is that"? She apparently wasn't satisfied with his reaction. Smug, Owen thought, smug and sappy. There was a slight nervous twitch in the region of her left eye. It gave her a lewd, winking effect. "Have you ever tried to reason with an Eskimo"? she asked, winking wildly. "They are a very difficult group of people". "I don't know much about them", Owen admitted, "but I suppose they have their own religion and they probably resent outsiders coming in and telling them what to do and what not to do". She smiled in a sickly-tolerant fashion. "You know, that's very interesting. People don't know how much they give away about themselves by remarks like that. The more canvassing I do, the more I note how far most people are from their personal God".

Forebearing, Owen kept his peace. What would happen next? That she was out for a touch was certain, but when did she get to the pitch? Several people passed in the hall and stared as he slowly retreated, trying to close the door a little, and she slowly leaned toward him and raised her voice. "How did you get by the desk"? he asked curiously. "I'm sure the hotel doesn't know you're wandering around the corridors, knocking on strangers' doors and talking down Eskimos". "Oh, I just come once a week. Every day I visit a different hotel. I feel it's my duty. I do this work all on my own, because I understand the difficulties and I want to help these lay-sisters. Do you know these women go all through Alaska, and they don't have the proper facilities? They travel in pairs as much as a hundred-and-fifty miles a day". "Do you have any idea how far I travel every day? I have the whole Pacific Northwest". Owen was aware he was getting overexcited but he couldn't help himself. Mrs& gertrude Parker drew back. "That's hardly a Christian approach", she remonstrated. "You're in the secular world". "I didn't say it was Christian. I don't think you'll find many active Christian salesmen. Not that religion isn't big business; those bibles and prayer books make a lot of money for publishing houses, but they don't get top personnel. Our key salesmen are in appliances and cosmetics".

"God, I take it, plays no part in this", she said waspishly.

"God doesn't have any appliance or cosmetics", he said heatedly before he caught himself. It sounded silly; why go on? More people were passing; he had to find some way to close this impossible conversation. "And whiskey", she said, smiling and blinking at the highball glasses. "Don't forget whiskey; it's such a big seller". "You know", he said, getting a grip on himself, "I think you're going to have to excuse me. I have an appointment". "I can imagine", she said. "Probably down at the bar. But what do you want to do about the lay-sisters? They must be freezing up there now. Can't you help them"?

"Leave a card or something. I'll think it over". "I have no card", she said bitterly. "You haven't been listening to what I've been telling you. I only hope my talking to you has helped you a little, anyway, because you need spiritual bucking-up". She looked crestfallen, as if he had somehow disappointed the whole human race. She stood indecisively for a moment, then walked down the hall; he heard her knocking on another door. It took him about fifteen minutes to calm himself; then he realized he was hungry. He showered, shaved, dressed and went down to the dining room for breakfast. On the way he stopped at the desk to receive his mail. There was a check from his company, and the usual enthusiastic bulletins on new lines they always issued. His lawyer had sent him a statement on his overdue alimony, and there was a letter from the Collector of Internal Revenue asking him to stop in his office and explain last year's exemptions. He ate breakfast in a sullen mood, but

afterwards, when he walked out onto Virginia Street, he felt braced. He looked off to the crest of the Sierras, still white-topped; the glisten of the Truckee River made a wide spangle. He felt suddenly elated, adventurous. With any luck at all he could easily find a flowerpot.

Although it was only three o'clock, he stopped in at the Golden Calf. The tables were all spinning, the dice rattling, the bar crowded. Just to test himself, he played roulette for quarters on his old combination, five and seventeen, and within an hour, he had won, surprisingly, twenty dollars. The way was opening up; when the management brought around champagne, the breakfast settled its whirling around in his stomach. The Golden Calf was dimly lit with shaded neon. There were more women than men in the place, but he couldn't find a flowerpot. They all had the hard look of gamblers who had stopped dreaming, who automatically turned the cards, hardly caring what showed up. The mural around the wall depicted early settlers in covered wagons, who appeared much more animated than the gamblers. The women had a bright shining expectancy as they leaned out from the wall and gazed splendidly into the distance, while the men were stern but hopeful. All, of course, except the Donner party who were bent on starving to death. "I wonder if they did eat each other at the end", Owen mused. He sat down next to a heavily-upholstered blonde, but she was cleaned out in twenty minutes. She sighed a dirty word and left. Owen was surprised to see Mrs& Gertrude Parker playing the one-arm bandits that were cunningly arranged by the entrance. She sat down and played two slots at once, looking grim, as if bested by mechanical devices, and Owen felt sorry for the lay-sisters depending on her support. A dried-up cowboy sat down next to him in the blonde's place. He was a little more authentic than usual because he smelled slightly of the stables. "What you need is a steady martingale", the cowboy announced after watching Owen play. "You can't build on your hit-and-miss five-seventeen".

"What are you playing"? Owen asked. "I'm just logging", the cowboy explained. "I keep all these plays in this little black book, and I watch over a twelve-hour period to find out what numbers are repeating. But roulette's not my game. I'm always trying to find a breaking table in blackjack. Incidentally, I'm pretty famous in these parts: I'm called The Wrangler".

"Nice to know you. Don't you have to spend any time on your ranch"? "Well, of course I do. I'm with the Bar-~H, pushing a horse called Sparky. He's my own horse, and what I collect from him I use on blackjack. This Sparky can rack and single-foot and he's the fastest thing in Washoe County. I figure if I can get any kind of publicity campaign going, I'll land him on ~TV- you know, one of those favorite horses for some Western hero. I once trained a horse for Hoot Gibson, but nothing like Sparky. He's a pinto and he photographs wonderfully". Five came

up while Owen was listening to The Wrangler and he neglected to play, a loss of ten dollars. This proved conclusively that The Wrangler was a jinx, so he walked on down to Hurrays, an even more glorified gambling den than the Golden Calf. When he looked in the back, Mrs& Gertrude Parker was marking keno cards. His adventurous spirit had waned; he studied the pistol exhibition that Hurrays featured as an added attraction. He ogled a long redhead with green eyes, but she was a shill with her money in front of her. He had no great
prejudice against shills; it just seemed such a dry run.
There was no cash around; everyone was flipping silver dollars. The management discreetly withdrew the green stuff into the office and gave the customers chips or checks or premium points. He read a special announcement whereby Hurrays would feature a special floorshow at three a&m& starring Adele (The Body) Brenner and fourteen glamorous schoolgirls. He wondered if he might bag a tourist, but they looked frightened of him. He passed two brides, both wearing orchids, and they made him feel a little sad. Owen found Buzz watching chuck-a-luck. Buzz had on a Hawaiian shirt and was carrying some sun-tan oil and dark glasses. He was shorter and fatter than Owen, who felt good standing next to him. "We're all going over to Lake Tahoe and try our luck at Cal-Neva", Buzz explained, still instigating. "We ran into a guy at the Pagan Room who guarantees we can beat the wheel. He started out as a stickman, then became a pit boss until the Club found him crossroading. He was knocking down checks at faro". "I'm allergic to Tahoe", Owen explained. "Something about the pollen". "Well, okay", Buzz said. "We'll see you around later". Owen went over to the crap table and the dice were hot, but he couldn't pyramid with any consecutive success. "How's your luck, honey"? A short platinum blonde in a bursting sun-suit addressed him. She looked well-fed and prosperous, but he didn't get the impression he was being propositioned the way he'd been hoping. "I haven't had any luck since I was a baby". "Stake me", she said, "and let me at those dice. I'll make them dance the tango. We'll get it in a hurry and get it out". "Let's have a drink and discuss a merger". "If you go broke", she said, smiling up at him, "I'll leave you". "Sounds like real love", Owen said. "It sort of brings a lump to my throat".

"My name's Gisele", the blonde said after she ordered a Scotch. "Named after the ballet. My mother wanted to call me Sylphide, but it sounded too affected".

Spencer said nothing. "Is there any word you would like to offer in your own defense"? Spencer shook his head.

Alexander said, "Answer me properly, Spencer". Spencer was quiet for a moment longer, then he said, "There is nothing I want to say, Captain". "Very well". Alexander walked away. Naval procedure, he thought, had its moments of grim humor.

Philip Spencer had cold-bloodedly planned the murder of his captain, yet it seemed in order to chide him for a lapse of proper address.

During the morning hours, it became clear that the arrest of Spencer was having no sobering effect upon the men of the <Somers>. Those named in the Greek paper were manufacturing reasons to steal aft under pretence of some call of duty, so as to be near Spencer, watching an opportunity to communicate with him. Hostile glances were flashed at both Alexander and Gansevoort. The two met in the Captain's cabin. "What is the next step, Captain"?
"More arrests, I fear". In your opinion, who is this E& Andrews on the 'certain' list"? "Cromwell, of course. He is the oldest and most experienced of the lot. He saw the dangers, not the glories of being identified as a mutineer. Somehow he talked Spencer into letting him use another name". There was a tap at the door and Oliver entered with the word that Heiser wished to see the Captain. "Have him come in". Heiser, breathless and wild-eyed, brought the chilling news that the handspikes, heavers and holystones had been mysteriously removed from their customary places. "And also, sir, two articles which were considered souvenirs now must be regarded in another light entirely. An African knife and battle-ax are at this moment being sharpened by McKinley and Green. McKinley was overheard to say that he would like to get the knife into Spencer's possession and that"-
"Where did you gather all this information, Heiser? Who reported to you the disappearance of handspikes and heavers and who"-

He was interrupted by a crash from the deck and sprang toward the ladder, with Gansevoort and Heiser behind him. A glance revealed that the main topgallant mast had been carried away. The aimless milling about of what had been a well-trained, well-organized crew struck Alexander with horror. He bellowed orders and watched the alert response of some of his men and watched, too, the way a dozen or more turned their heads questioningly toward the shackled figure as though for further instruction. Adrien Deslonde hastened to Alexander's side. "Small violently jerked the weather-royal brace with full intention to carry away the mast. I saw him myself and it was done after consultation with Cromwell. I swear it, sir". And it was clear that Adrien was not mistaken, for both Small and Cromwell took no step toward aiding in the sending up of the new topgallant mast till Philip Spencer had given the signal to obey. Then, with disappointment evident upon their faces, they moved to the work. Alexander guessed that they had planned confusion and turmoil, thinking it the ideal climate in which to begin battle and bloodshed. Their strategy was sound enough and, he reasoned, had been defeated only by Philip Spencer's unwillingness to sanction an idea he had not originated.

When the mast was raised, Alexander gave the order for Small and Cromwell to be placed under arrest, and now three figures in irons sprawled upon the open deck and terror stalked the <Somers>.

Spencer's potential followers were openly sullen and morose, missing muster without excuse, expressing in ominous tones their displeasure at the prisoners being kept in irons, communicating with the three by glance and signal. One of the missing handspikes came out of its hiding place after Midshipman Tillotson had been insolently disobeyed by Seaman Wilson. Tillotson had reported the man to Gansevoort and an hour later, with back turned, had been attacked by Wilson, brandishing the weapon. Wilson, shackled and snarling, was thrown with the other prisoners and was soon joined by Green, McKee and McKinley. Not a man on the brig, loyal or villainous, could be unaffected by the sight of seven men involved in the crime of mutiny. In the tiny cabin, Alexander met with Gansevoort, Heiser and Wales to speak and to listen. Three days had passed since Spencer's arrest and each day had brought new dangers, new fears. Gansevoort said, "It requires an omniscient eye to select those if any on whom we can now rely. To have the Greek paper is not the great help that at first flush it seemed. From actions aboard, it is easy to guess that Spencer's boast of twenty staunch followers was a modest estimate".

"Well", Heiser ventured, "why don't we hold an investigation with questioning and"- "That would be worse than useless", Alexander broke in. "There is not space to hold or force to guard any increased number of prisoners. Besides, suppose we hold a court of inquiry, then what? Then we have informed a large number of our crew that when they reach the United States, they will be punished but that in the meanwhile, they may run loose and are expected to perform their jobs in good order. Mr& Heiser, does this sound like a truly workable plan to you? Do you not think these men might choose the black flag here and now"? Wales said, "Of course they would. They are about to do so at any moment as it is. All that is needed is for one man to feel self-confident enough to take the lead. As soon as that one man is appointed by himself or the others or by a signal from Spencer, we are going to be rushed. We are going to be rushed and murdered". "That is extravagant language, Mr& Wales. We are not going to be rushed and murdered", Alexander said. "We are going to bring the <Somers> into New York harbor safe and sound". "Of course, I agree with the Captain", Gansevoort said thoughtfully, "but the conspiracy is ferocious and desperate. The instinct of discipline has been lost. Anything is possible when anarchy has the upper hand". He paused, then added, "Everything on a ship is a weapon. Implements of wood and iron are available for close and hasty combat no matter where a man stands. And we are positive of so few and suspicious of so many".

"We ourselves must stand sentinel". Alexander said. "Under arms day and night, watch and watch about. Those of us present, the Perry brothers, Deslonde and the other midshipmen now have the responsibility of the <Somers>. A great deal of labor we have as well, for we are too uncertain of where trust may be placed".

And when he was alone again in the cabin, Alexander lowered his head into his arms and wept, for he knew full well what must be done, what in the end would be done. With all his heart he had loved the Navy and now he must act in accordance with the Navy's implacable laws. And when he did, when he gave to his ship that protection necessary to preserve her honor, he knew he would lose forever the Navy to which he had dedicated his soul. Where had he failed? How had he failed? He who had tried so hard, who had yearned so passionately to be a great officer. It came to him as he wept there aboard the <Somers> that it was as foolish to strive for greatness as to seek to storm the gates of heaven. It was given or it was not given. One did one's best and if fortune smiled, there was a reward. One did one's best and if fortune frowned, an eighteen-year-old boy with murder in his heart sailed aboard one's ship. And Alexander sobbed like a girl for the dreams he had had, and he felt no shame. God knew his tears were his to shed if he so desired, for it had not been with an egotist's rage for fame that he had held precious his naval career. Another field had given him fame enough to satisfy any egotist. It was for love that he had served the Navy. To have someday that love returned was what he had lived for. Now the hope was gone. Yes, he would bring the <Somers> safely into New York harbor but at a price. Dear God, at what a price. And after a while, he dried his tears and walked the deck as a captain should with assurance and dignity. Stern-faced, he inspected the prisoners, satisfying himself that they were clean, well fed and comfortable within reason. The prisoners averted their eyes but not before he had glimpsed hatred and anger. Only Cromwell, the giant boatswain, was mild-mannered and respectful.

He said, "Captain, may I speak, please? Captain, I am innocent of any plot against you or the ship". "Are you, Cromwell"? "Yes, sir. Before God I swear I am innocent. I know nothing of any plot, if there is such a thing".

"You are the only man aboard who can be in doubt". "I cannot speak for others, sir, but I am innocent". He leaned closer to Alexander, squinting up at him from the deck. "Surely, Captain, you did not find my name on any suspicious paper or anything".

"No, Cromwell, I did not find your name. You were careful about that". Now Spencer, seeming with effort to shake himself from lethargy, spoke. He said, "Cromwell is telling you the truth. He is innocent". Alexander shifted his gaze to Spencer. The calmness and detachment of his tone suggested unawareness of how implicit was his own guilt in the words he had used to defend Cromwell. Alexander knew Spencer too well to think him nai^ve or thick-skulled. And in a sudden wave of painful clarity, Alexander recognized a kinship with Spencer. Here was another human who understood the stupidity of quarreling with the inevitable. There was good fortune and there was bad and Philip Spencer, in handcuffs and ankle irons, knew it to be a truth. He expected nothing for himself but that which naturally follows those marked for misfortune. The red-haired

captain, towering above the prisoner as a symbol of decency and authority, was shocked to find himself looking with sympathy upon Philip Spencer. This tragic lad had forged his own shackles. But he could not have done so, could not have found the way, had fortune favored him. And because fortune had favored neither the prisoner nor the red-haired captain, they would be each other's undoing. "Spencer, if there is guilt, if you do not deny your own, how is it possible for Cromwell to be innocent? He was your constant companion".

The hazel eyes met Alexander's. "I tell you he is innocent".

"And do you think there is a reason why I should accept your word"? "Yes. I have nothing to gain by defending Cromwell".

"Nothing to lose, either, Spencer". "That's true", Spencer agreed and withdrew himself from the conversation. His eyes went back to contemplation of the sea. "I am innocent, Captain", Cromwell said again. "Before God, Captain, I am innocent". And though it was logical that a man who could plot mass murder would not hesitate to speak an untruth, still it was difficult to understand why Spencer spoke only for Cromwell. The boatswain was as guilty as any. No action of his could be interpreted in his favor and four midshipmen, prior to their knowing the significance of the Greek paper, had seen it in Cromwell's hands while Spencer whispered explanations. "I thought", Midshipman Rogers had told Alexander, "that Spencer was teaching him geometry". It was fantastic to turn from the seven men in shackles to the wardroom, where a class of apprentices awaited him. This was a training ship and the training would continue, but there was an element of frightful absurdity here which Alexander recognized. Some of these apprentices were, in physical strength, already men and doubtless a percentage of them were Spencer's followers.
Rachel steered me along toward a school for young boys beginning to study the Torah. Bits of trash lay in the roadway. The air smelled warmish and foul. A young man appeared out of a side alley and walked toward us with quick strides. He wore a long double-breasted coat of a heavy material, dark trousers, and black boots with buckles. His black hat with its wide brim, high crown, and fur trim rode high. With his head erect, he approached, not glancing at us, and passed by with his clear eyes raised and fixed straight ahead. He had a pinkish-white complexion, a small straight nose, a short black beard, and tightly curled <paot>. I was suddenly conscious of my bare arms. The girls in the market place wore long-sleeved dresses and covered their legs with cloth stockings. I turned and watched him stride down the center of the road. His hands were swinging at his sides, and he passed through the dingy market place with his back straight and, pivoting on his heel, he entered an old stone building. Rachel had seen me watching the young man. She smiled. "When your mother was here he must have been a young boy. Like the ones you will see now".

I swallowed hard and looked down at my feet plodding along beside

Rachel. She led me into a twisting side alley. The dirty, discolored buildings looked boarded up, and their few windows stood high above our heads. Rachel said that schools and synagogues occupied most of the buildings. We entered one where the front door stood ajar and climbed a flight of steep steps to the main floor. An old man with a white beard and dressed in a long shabby coat, baggy trousers, and a black skullcap greeted us. Rachel talked to him. He nodded, clasping and unclasping his hands over his paunch, and flicked glances at me. I thought he would ask us to leave because Rachel and I were bare-armed, but he looked down into his beard and preceded us down the corridor. His toes pointed out toward the walls. He stopped in front of a door, placed a finger on his lips, and, still peering down into his beard, pushed open the door to a classroom. We stepped inside. He left us. Little boys crowded together on long wooden benches, and in the center of the room sat the teacher. His black beard dripped down over the front of his coat. One white hand poised a stick above his desk. He turned his surly, half-closed eyes toward us, stared for a second, then shouted in Yiddish, "One, two, three"! rapping the stick against the desk. The little boys shrilled out a Yiddish translation or interpretation of the Five Books of Moses, which they had previously chanted in Hebrew. They chanted a fixed tune in time to the report of the stick. Each boy opened his small mouth wide and rocked back and forth on the bench in the way his grandfather and great-grandfather
had studied and prayed in the ghettos of Europe. The boys were tiny. They had large bright eyes, the small upturned noses of all babies everywhere, and hair cropped short except for the long ringlets of <paot> framing their little white faces. They bent over yellowed prayerbooks and looked up only to watch the teacher. Since they did not glance curiously at us once, I guessed that there was a penalty for distraction. The guttural language from the ghetto stopped. The teacher plunged the children into a new portion, this time in Hebrew, rapping the stick incessantly. One boy who rocked back and forth over his worn book had bright red hair and freckles. His tightly curled <paot> hung down to his narrow shoulders. In the center of his brilliant curls sat a small black skullcap. His head barely rose above the table. I stared at him for a long time. He did not return my interest. My eyes traveled over the bare walls and up to the one partially open window high above the little figures and back to the boys. Some of them ignored the texts and had apparently memorized the words long ago. They singsonged the portion at the teacher, who accompanied them in an off-key baritone and spurred them on with the stick. The tapping defined the rhythm and kept the boys awake. I could not keep my eyes away from the boy with the red hair. His body pitched back and forth on the bench. His front teeth were missing. I shuddered and backed out of the room. Rachel followed, looked at me, and clucked with her tongue. We walked down the cool hall silently. From behind us came the rapping of the stick and the high-pitched voices of the boys who would grow to devote their lives to rigid study and prayer. I said, "How long do they keep that up"?

"All day", she said. "Except for Shabbat, when they are praying all day". I rubbed my hands together. They had turned numb and prickly in the classroom. The old man in the baggy clothes waited at the foot of the steps. He glanced down into his beard and muttered something in Yiddish. Rachel said, "He asks for money".

She passed by him. I reached into the pocket of my skirt, fingered ten pruta, and dropped the coin. Then I picked it up again and handed it to the old man. He thanked me. I didn't look at him. I grinned at Rachel. "Does this bother you"? I said. She smiled to herself. "Most of our Sabras think it's horrible. When we were fighting, a few of our orthodox people were lying down in the roads so we could not pass. They said that we must not fight but wait for the Messiah". I was amazed. You had to have convictions to lie down in the road in all those clothes and appear as though you might wish to turn yourself out of your own home. You had to be stupid or crazy or immortal. And I wasn't. I was American. You had to know, also, that you were going to fail. All of it might have been heroic, but they had done it in the wrong place. I resented them. Rachel faced me. Her bright eyes were twinkling. She said, "Sometimes I think they are keeping religion for us while we play around. Your mother hated this way of life. She wished to change much for the children here". I said quietly, respectfully, "What did she do here? In this section"?

Rachel clicked her tongue behind her teeth. "Here, nothing. But when she saw the children you have just visited, she wanted to take them away and put them out in the country, in the kibbutzim. She loved the children. She was a strange woman, your mother. When she loved, it was with a passion that drove her along and carried along with her those things she loved. Nothing was too impossible for her to do when she wanted. She stayed here to work for Aliah. For many immigrants, for many children, the first thing they knew of Israel and freedom was your mother. Sometimes it was dangerous for her". Rachel grinned slyly. "But she loved danger. She took it with her wherever she went; she chose it. And I think she sought out danger as much as she sought out helping other people. She was most strange woman. Ready to follow her impulse. It was an impulse when she was here in Me'a She'arim- I was with her- that led her to stay in Israel. Your mother wanted to bring children to Israel so that they could leave their ghettos. Here they did not need to be in ghettos. If she could not take the children out of this section, at least she could take other children out of their countries and put them on the farms. She set out to make sure that no Jewish child anyplace in the world had to live in a place such as this". I said quietly, gaining nerve, ready to ask any question at all, no matter how intimate, ready to be rebuffed, "Then why did she leave Israel? I'd like to know that very much". Rachel clasped her hands together and slowed her pace. The soles of her sandals reported sharply on the cobblestones. She pursed her lips, then clamped them together so tightly that

I thought she was angry with me. But she sighed and her face relaxed.
"Trouble came into her life. She had good friends here, people
who liked her. Who loved her. But she had to go out and hurt herself.
There was a man here in town. He helped her meet people so she could
go out and do the work she wanted. She worked very hard. There was
a refugee who was able to come here because of her. He came with his
son. At first I thought they were relatives of your mother, but it
was not so. This refugee was a middle-aged man, a big, handsome man
with a strut to his walk as I have never before seen. He had the black
numerals on his arm, so he had been branded in a concentration camp.
Yet he walked like a young man. Often he was terribly despondent
and talked to no one. Then he would walk off for a few days alone in
the direction of Europe. All his family was dead, except for his son.
Your mother would always retrieve him when he wandered off, and she
would send him home to his son. He loved the son and was always glad
to be sent back to him. Then his son did something"- Rachel threw
up her hands- "I don't know what, but something, to an official
here- it was during the Mandate- and the son was imprisoned. A
few hours after the son was arrested, your mother was informed. She
ran from a little group of us. We were sitting together, talking. She
went to the father and found he had hanged himself". Rachel paused.
It was silent in the stone alley. Then she continued with energy,
"I myself did not see her until a week after she had run off to find
the father. No one saw her except the man Reuveni". "Yes",
I said.
"I know him". Rachel gave me a direct, bright-eyed
look. She said, "Reuveni wanted your mother to give up her deep
interest in this refugee. He said she would only hurt herself. He complained
to me once that I must talk to her. When I did, she shrugged
her shoulders and said that Reuveni wanted her to marry him. I asked
her if she would, and she said she would not. He had known when
he first helped her to meet the right people and work with them that she
did not intend to marry him. Anyway, I did not see her until two
weeks after the refugee hanged himself. She came to me one day. She
was pale and skinny; she was terribly alone. And she said that after
this man had been dead for a week she had gone to Reuveni and accepted
his proposal. He shouted at her and told her he loved her and couldn't
understand why she had upset herself. But now he was happy she
would let him straighten out her life and take care of her. He would
never let her harm herself again. For one whole week he never let her
stay alone. She let him lead her around. He took her to a doctor,
for she was run down, nervous, did not care where she was. Reuveni took
her with him wherever he went. He did not let her talk to people;
he did not let her choose her own food. She was limp and beaten from
her loss; she did not care.
"And I'll take you with me". The two of them against the world.
That had been how she imagined it. For when he began to talk and
dream all at the same time, making his plans as he went, she had begun
dreaming too. But now the dream was over. The big waking up had happened.

"What did I imagine"? she thought. "Did I see

him about to swing low in a chariot? Or maybe poling up the south
fork of the Forked Deer River braving the wastes dumped in it? Maybe
I saw him on a barge with a gang of Ethiopians poling it".

<And I'll take you with me>. He had taken her all right.
Wednesday nights after youth fellowship. Out of the church and into
his big car, it tooling over the road with him driving and the headlights
sweeping the pike ahead and after he hit college, his expansiveness,
the quaint little pine board tourist courts, cabins really, with a
cute naked light bulb in the ceiling (unfrosted and naked as a streetlight,
like the one on the corner where you used to play when you were
a kid, where you watched the bats swooping in after the bugs, watching
in between your bouts at hopscotch), a room complete with moths pinging
the light and the few casual cockroaches cruising the walls, an insect
Highway Patrol with feelers waving. And the bed that sagged in
a certain place where all the weight had been put too many times before
and the walls fine and thin for overhearing talk in the next room when
Gratt went out for ice, the sound coming through the walls like something
on the other side of the curtain, so you knew they heard <you>
when <they> were quiet and while you lay wondering what they had
heard you listened. And Gratt Shafer would be in Memphis today
for the wedding rehearsal and then tomorrow he would marry just like
everybody knew he would, just like everybody knew all along. Like
Mattie and the mayor up there gripping the microphone and Toonker Burkette
back in his office yanking out teeth, like they all knew he would.
Just like the balloon would go up and you could sit all day and
wish it would spring a leak or blow to hell up and burn and nothing like
that would happen. Or you could hope the parachute wouldn't open
just so you could say you saw it not open, not because you meant any
harm to Starkey
Poe in his suit of red underwear, but mainly because
you were tired of being an old maid- a thing which cannot admit when
it thinks it might be pregnant, but must stand the dizzy feeling all
alone and go on like everything is all right instead of being able to
say to somebody in a normal voice: "I think I'm pregnant".
You could wish that. Or you could wish your daddy would really do it-
kill Gratt Shafer like he said when you all the time, all along,
could feel the nerve draining out of him like air out of a punctured
tire when you are on a muddy road alone and it is raining and at night.
So you sit in the car and listen to the air run out and listen to
the rain and see the mud in front of the headlights, waiting for you,
for your new spectator pumps, waiting for you to squat by yourself out
there in your tight skirt, crying and afraid and trying to get that damned
son-of-a-bitch tire off, because that is being an old maid too,
if you happen to drive a car, it is changing the tire yourself in the
night, and in the mud and the rain, hating to get out in it but afraid
to stay and afraid to try to walk out for help. And every sound that
might be the rain also might be the man who thinks after he has raped
you he has to beat your brains out with a tire tool so you won't tell,
a combination like ham and eggs, <rape her and kill her,> and that
is being an old maid too. It is not having his baby nestled warm

and fat against your breast and it is not having somebody that really gives a damn whether some tramp cracks your skull. And most of all it is not having the only man you could love, whether he drives a bread truck or delivers the mail or checks the berry crates down at the sheds, or owns seventeen oil wells and six diamond mines, for if you <are> anybody what he <is> or <does> makes no difference if he is the <one>. He can even be a mild-voiced little-town guy with big-town ideas and level gray eyes and a heart even Houdini couldn't figure out, how it is unlocked. And he can be on the way to Memphis, your Gratt Shafer can, and you discover you can stay alive and hate him and love him and want him even if it means you want him- <really want him>- dead. Because if you can't then nobody else can either, nobody else can have him. For you don't share him, not even with God. If it is love, you don't. <And I'll take you with me>.
Even if that's all the promise he ever gave or ever will give, the giving of it once was enough and you believed it then and you will always believe it, even when it is finally the only thing in the world you have left to believe, and the whole world is telling you that <one> was a lie. Even when he is on the way to Memphis you will still have the promise resting inside you like a gift, and it is he inside of you. And in a way the promise works out true, for whether he wants you or not, you go with him in your heart. You feel him every mile further away. You feel where he is and what he sees, and at night you feel when he is asleep or with the other woman, the one that never could love him the way you do, the one who got him because she didn't particularly give a damn whether she got him or didn't. And you know you will always wonder all of your life whether it was because you wanted him so bad that you didn't get him, and you can feel nearly sorry enough to cry when you think of that other guy, the chump who begged you to marry him, the one with the plastered hair and the car he couldn't afford and the too-shiny shoes. You think: "Did he feel that way about me"? It comes to you that probably he did feel that way
to let you use him like you did when you couldn't have Gratt Shafer; that he must have since he was there like the radio for you to turn on or snap off when you got tired of him, that other guy. It dawns on you that instead of a lump to fill the seat across the bridge table from you, he was a man, and that because Gratt Shafer was making you miserable, you were passing it down to him, to Gratt Shafer's substitute, that other guy. And you wonder if that is why the little man lost his job and his car and stayed drunk about a year before he straightened out and moved to St& Louis, where he got to be a big unhappy success. You wonder if he looks at his wife now and thinks of you. You wonder about the Christmas card with no name on it, and it comes to you that maybe it would have been better to have made somebody else happy if you couldn't be happy yourself, to give somebody else the one they wanted- to give them you. "Damn the world", she thought. She looked out at the corn field, the great green deep acres of it rolled out like the sea in the field beyond the whitewashed fence bordering the grounds. The mayor envisioned factories there. Homes and factories and schools and a big wide federal highway, instead

of peaceful corn to rest your eyes on while you tried to rest your heart, while you tried not to look at the balloon and the bandstand and the uniforms and the flash of the instruments. The bands were impatient, but they were the only ones. The others, the ones in the stands, were spellbound, for hearing the mayor was for them like listening to a symphony was for sophisticated folks in New York City. It was like being in the concert hall in the afternoon and hearing the piano virtuoso rehearsing. He was good and they knew that what he was doing for them he would do all over the United States some day. So they stayed quiet and hung not on what he said but on how he said it, not listening exactly, but rather, <feeling>. If a man was good, if he was going to be governor, you felt it and you wanted him to go on forever. You were sorry when he finished talking because while he was up there you were someone else and the world was something else too. It was a place full of courage and hope and you were part of it. You laughed and then your chest swelled and you felt you could cry for a little bit, and then a feeling hit you like a chill in your stomach and the goose bumps rippled along your arm. He hit the theme about dying to defend your country, and you were ready to do it right then, without a second thought. While he talked you wouldn't trade being a West Tennessee farmer for being anything else in the whole damned world, no matter if it hadn't, in six weeks, rained enough to wet a rat's ass. She glanced at the man nodding beside her, a man with weather cracks furrowed into his lean cheeks, with powdery pale eyes reflecting all the droughts he had seen, reflecting the sky and the drought which must follow now in August- yes, with eyes predicting the drought and here it was only June, only festival time again and thoughts of Gratt Shafer would not leave her. "I should have stayed at the store", she thought. Back at the Factory-to-You with the other old maids, back there she was the youngest clerk and she was thirty-four, which made her young enough to resent the usual ideal working conditions, like the unventilated toilet with the door you had to hold shut while you sat down. There was no lock because Herman didn't allow a lock. A lock on the toilet would encourage malingering and primping. The toilet hadn't had a sincere scrubbing in years and there were things written on the walls of the little boxed-in place because you couldn't keep the public out- entirely. She could not count the times Herman had rapped on the door, just a couple of bangs that shook the whole damned closet and might, someday, break away the pipe connections from the wall. The two little bangs meant that he was getting impatient to have a crowd of customers waited on and that if he had to he would jerk open the door and drag out, by the opposite door handle which she would be clutching, whichever-the-hell clerk it was who thought she could waste so much store time on the pot.

And the hours were six-thirty in the morning until eleven at night on Saturdays and during sales, and there were no chairs and you couldn't smoke and the cooling was overhead fans and there was no porter or janitor.

Among us, we three handled quite a few small commissions, from

spot drawings for advertising agencies uptown to magazine work and quick lettering jobs. Each of us had his own specialty besides. George did wonderful complicated pen-and-ink drawings like something out of a medieval
miniature: hundreds of delicate details crammed into an eight-by-ten sheet and looking as if they had been done under a jeweler's glass. He also drew precise crisp spots, which he sold to various literary and artistic journals, <The New Yorker,> for instance, or <Esquire>. I did book jackets and covers for paperback reprints: naked girls huddling in corners of dingy furnished rooms while at the doorway, daring the cops to take him, is the guy in shirt sleeves clutching a revolver. The book could be <The Brothers Karamazov,> but it would still have the same jacket illustration. I remember once I did a jacket for Magpie Press; the book was a fine historical novel about Edward /3,, and I did a week of research to get the details just right: the fifteenth-century armor, furnishings, clothes. I even ferreted out the materials from which shields were made- linden wood covered with leather- so I'd get the light reflections accurate. McKenzie, the art editor, took one look at my finished sketch and said, "Nothing doing, Rufus. In the first place, it's static; in the second place, it doesn't look authentic; and in the third place, it would cost a fortune to reproduce in the first place- you've got six colors there including gold". I said, "Mr& McKenzie, it is as authentic as careful research can make it". He said, "That may be, but it isn't authentic the way <readers> think. They know from their researches into television and the movies that knights in the middle ages had beautiful flowing haircuts like Little Lord Fauntleroy, and only the villains had beards. And girls couldn't have dressed like that- it isn't transparent enough".
In the end, I did the same old picture, the naked girl and the guy in the doorway, only I put a Lord Byron shirt on the guy, gave him a sword instead of a pistol, and painted in furniture from the stills of a costume movie. McKenzie was as happy as a clam. "<That's> authenticity", he said. As for Donald, he actually sold paintings. We all painted in our spare time, and we had all started as easel painters with scholarships, but he was the only one of us who made any regular money at it. Not much; he sold perhaps three or four a year, and usually all to Joyce Monmouth or her friends. He had style, a real inner vision of his very own. It was strange stuff- it reminded me of the pictures of a child, but a child who has never played with other kids and has lived all its life with adults. There was the freshness of color, the freedom of perception, the lack of self-consciousness,
but with a twist that made the forms leap from the page and smack you in the eye. We used to kid him by saying he only painted that way because he was so nearsighted. It may have been true for all I know, because his glasses were like the bottoms of milk bottles, but it didn't prevent the paintings from being exciting. He also had, at times, an uncanny absent-minded air like a sleepwalker; he would look right through you while you were talking to him, and if you said, "For Christ's sake, Donald, you've got Prussian blue all

over your shirt", he would smile, and nod, and an hour later the paint would be all over his pants as well. Mrs& Monmouth thought of him as her discovery, and she paid two to three hundred dollars for a painting. It was all gravy, and Donald didn't need much to live on; none of us did. We shared the expenses of the studio, and we all lived within walking distance of it, in cheap lodgings of one kind or another. Attending the life class was my idea- or rather, Askington's idea, but I was ripe for it, and the other two wouldn't have gone if I hadn't talked them into it. I wanted to paint again. I hadn't done a serious picture in almost a year. It wasn't just the pressure of work, although that was the excuse I often used, even to myself. It was the kind of work I was doing, the quality of the ambition it awoke in me, that kept me from painting. I kept saying, "If I could just build up a reputation for myself, make some <real> money, get to be well known as an illustrator- like Peter Askington, for instance- then I could take some time off and paint". Askington was a kind of goal I set myself; I had admired him long before I talked to him. It looked to me as though he had everything an artist could want, joy in his work, standing in the profession, a large and steady income. The night we first met, at one of Mrs& Monmouth's giant parties, he was wearing a brown cashmere jacket with silver buttons and a soft pink Viyella shirt; instead of a necktie he wore a leather bolo drawn through a golden ring in which was set a lump of pale pure jade. This set his tone: richness of texture and color, and another kind of richness as well, for his clothing and decorations would have paid the Brush-off's rent for a year. He was fifteen years older than I- forty-four- but full of spring and sparkle. He didn't look like what I thought of as an old man, and his lively and erudite speech made him seem even younger. He was one of the most prominent magazine illustrators in America; you saw one of his paintings on the cover of one or another of the slick national magazines every month. <Life> had included him in its "Modern American Artists" series and had photographed him at his studio in the East Sixties; the corner of it you could see in the photograph looked as though it ought to have Velasquez in it painting the royalty of Spain. I had a long talk with him. We went into Mrs& Monmouth's library, which had low bookshelves all along the walls, and above them a Modigliani portrait, a Jackson Pollock twelve feet long, and a gorgeous Miro with a yellow background, that looked like an inscription from a Martian tomb. The fireplace had tiles made for Mrs& Monmouth by Picasso himself. Like certain expensive restaurants, just sitting there gave you the illusion of being wealthy yourself.

In the course of our talk, Askington mentioned that he spent part of each week studying. "By yourself"? I asked. "No, I take classes with different people", he said. "I don't think I've reached the point, yet, where I can say I know everything I ought to know about the craft. Besides, it's important to the way a painter thinks that he should move in a certain atmosphere, an atmosphere in which he may absorb the ideas of other masters, as Du^rer went to Italy to meet Bellini and Mantegna". He made

a circle with his thumb and fingers. "Painting isn't this big,
you know. It doesn't embrace only the artist, alone before his easel.
It is as large as all of art, interdependent, varied, multitudinous".
He threw his arms wide, his face shining. "The artist is like
a fragment of a mosaic- no, he is more than that, a virtuoso performer
in some vast philharmonic. One of these days, I'm going to organize
a gigantic exhibition that will span everything that's being
painted these days, from extreme abstract expressionism to extreme photorealism,
and then you'll be able to see at a glance how much artists
have in common with each other. The eye is all, inward or outward.
Ah, what a title for the exhibition: The Eye is All"!

"What do you study"? I asked. I was fascinated; just listening
to him made me feel intelligent. "I'm studying anatomy
with Burns", he replied. "Maybe you know him. He teaches at
the Manhattan School of Art". I nodded. I had studied with Burns
ten years before, during the scholarship year the Manhattan gave me,
along with the five-hundred-dollar prize for my paintings of bums on
Hudson Street. Burns and I had not loved each other. "I'm also
studying enameling with Hajime Iijima", he went on, "and twice
a week I go to a life class taught by Pendleton". "Osric
Pendleton"? I said. "My God, is he still alive? He must
be a million years old. I went to a retrospective of his work when
I was eighteen, and I thought he was a contemporary of Cezanne's".

"Not quite". Askington laughed. "He's about sixty,
now. Still painting, still a kind of modern impressionist, beautiful
canvases of mountains and farms. He even makes the city look like
one of Thoreau's hangouts. I've always admired him, and when I
heard he was taking a few pupils, I went to him and joined his class".

"Yes, it sounds great", I said, "but suppose you
don't think of yourself as an impressionist painter"? "You're
missing the point", he said. "He has the magical eye. And
he is a great man. Contact with him is stimulating. And that's
the trouble with so many artists today. They lack stimulation. They
sit
alone in their rooms and try to paint, and only succeed in isolating
themselves still farther from life. That's one of the reasons art
is becoming a useless occupation. In the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance,
right up to the early nineteenth century, the painter was a giant
in the world. He was an artisan, a man who studied his trade and
developed his craftsmanship the way a goldsmith or a wood carver did.
He filled a real need, showing society what it looked like, turning
it inside out, portraying its wars and its leaders, its ugliness and its
beauties, reflecting its profound religious impulses. He was a propagandist-
they weren't afraid of the word, then- satirist, nature
lover, philosopher, scientist, what you will, a member of every party
and of no party. But look at us today! We hold safe little jobs
illustrating tooth-paste ads or the salacious incidents in trivial novels,
and most of our easel painting is nothing but picking the fluff out

of the navel so it can be contemplated in greater purity. A bunch
of amateur dervishes! What we need is to get back to the group, to
learning and apprenticeship, to the cafe and the school". He
could certainly talk. The upshot of the evening was that I got the
address of Pendleton's studio- or rather, of the studio in which
he gave his classes, for he didn't work there himself- and joined
the life class, which met every Tuesday and Thursday from ten to twelve
in the morning. It was an awkward hour, but I didn't have to
punch any time clock, and it only meant that sometimes I had to stay
a
couple of hours later at the drawing board to finish up a job. After
a short time, both George and Donald joined the class with me so they
wouldn't feel lonely, and we used to hang a sign on the door of the
Brush-off reading OUT TO WORK. It was mostly for the benefit of
the mailman, because hardly anybody else ever visited us. In
a way, Askington was right. "Stimulating" was the word for it.
I don't know that it was always as rewarding as I had expected it
to be. Partly, it was because Pendleton himself wasn't what I anticipated.
I had come prepared to worship at the feet of this classic,
and he turned out to be a rather bitter old man who smelled of dead cigars.

No, that isn't quite fair. Actually, there was a lot
of force in him, which is why I kept on in that class instead of quitting
after a week.
##
SUCH a little thing to start with- the car registration.

"Ida, where is the car license"? she asked. "I can't
find it in the glove compartment". "Via must have it",
I answered readily enough, recalling her last visit. "Via",
she was frowning. "Why should Via have it"? Had
she forgotten she had signed the car away, that whatever they mutually
owned had been divided among the children? I was silent. I
didn't want to stir things up. "I drive my own car by courtesy
of Via"? "I'm sure she'd turn it over to you,
if you'd rather. You know that". She looked as if she were
accusing me of some fraud. "She must have taken the registration
when she went to Walter's. I'll call her". "No,
thank you. I want nothing of Via's". Why should this
suddenly assail her? Walter was giving me checks for my pay, the
household bills. Had she been in such a turmoil that this had slipped
her mind? "What a fool I've been", she said quietly.
"I knew all this, but I paid no attention. I don't even own the
house I'm standing in. I was so sure it was all temporary **h that
we would all embrace, and then the lawyer would tear up all those things
**h "It narrows down down down and finally there is no
way out. If I am not to be Mrs& Salter I am nothing".
I suppose I should have paid attention to that half-murmured remark,
but it seemed one of those extreme statements women under stress indulge
in. I love you, I hate you, I feel like killing you and myself,
and in the same sequence I love you I think you're the most wonderful

the most noble and so on and on, meanwhile eating a good breakfast and dinner and enjoying living. So I went about my business. I made a lemon sponge, a light dessert, roasted a chicken, parboiled some frozen vegetables, so there would be something nice in the icebox for the weekend. "Don't bother, Ida", she said. "I have these appointments in town for Saturday, and I'll probably spend Sunday with Dolly or the Thaxters". At last, I thought, she's recovering her spirits. With this movie-to-be in London, and new faces about her there, she would soon be a more tranquil, a wiser person, all the better for her stay out here. I felt more cheerful, as if I had had a part in bringing her through to a greater tolerance of herself. And I went back to my own cottage to live my own little patch of life. It was foggy that evening, but the path to my house was so well grooved that I could feel my way, accustomed as I was to the dense mists that rise from the sun-warmed palisades of the river and sometimes last for days. In the morning the fog was still thick so that to go to the village I crept along with my headlights full on.

I did notice a twinkle of light from the big house through the woods but as I had left a light on in my own house because of the fog I assumed Mrs& Salter had done the same before she left for town. I did my shopping, had my dentist appointment, and from there I went to the women's lunch at our parish church where we discussed plans for the annual Christmas bazaar, so that dusk was beginning to gather when I drove home in the late afternoon. But the next day- Sunday. Why, when I drove down to church, didn't it speak to me, seeing the lights still on and the day crisp and clear? Prisoners brought to the dock accused of murder or accident say they cannot remember, and reading the accounts of their testimony you cannot believe that the mind can remove, absent itself, unsee. When I came back from church at noon Mrs& Thaxter was turning into the Salter driveway. Even at a car's length I could sense that something was wrong, and so I followed her up to the turnaround in front of the house.

Dolly Engisch was waiting there on the steps and she came running toward us. "She's nowhere, nowhere"! she screamed, and both women ran up to the house, and I followed. The search began, in all the rooms, running upstairs, down, opening closets, talking, exclaiming in rushes and gasps. Everything was as I had left it the night before last- her portfolio and bag for town, her lingerie and dress and shoes laid out **h only her mink coat was missing. And she. Then the telephoning began. I, who until that day before had been Mrs& Salter's friend, her equal, was the servant now. It was Dolly and Mrs& Thaxter who were calling Via, everybody. And when they spoke they spoke to each other and not to me. And after I brought them sandwiches and coffee I had to go back to my place in the kitchen and wait. Sitting in the kitchen I recalled every word Mrs& Salter said that could have been a sign to me. "If I am not to be Mrs& Salter then I am nothing". Why didn't that alarm me then? And when she returned from taking her guests back to New York she had said, "All they talked about

was Harvie **h Harvie this, Harvie that **h When they know the truth will they drop away from me, will I become a nothing"? And then I remembered a few years before after their return from a short trip to Rome I had heard her boast, over and over again, "On the boat people liked me for myself". I had made a habit of calling her at night from my cottage, just to check. The last night I had called, but the line was always busy and it reassured me. I assumed it was one of those hour-long conversations with Dolly or Constance, she comfortable in bed. But it seemed not from what they were saying. Then was it a final desperate plea from her, to whom? **h hanging on and on past any man's patience **h some final stab of conclusion? @ She was found the day after at the bottom of the cliff. I tried to believe that what must have happened was that, restless, disturbed by this telephone call or whatever, she walked out in the night, as she had a habit of doing. Sometimes she took the path that winds up around my cottage to the walk at the edge of the cliff. It's so romantic up there, she used to say, with the broad river gleaming in its moontrack like an enormous dark mirror and all the sounds of the night, so poetic. With all that warm rain and the fog it might have been as simple as a loosened rock, a misstep. But I didn't really think it was as simple as that, nor did anyone else. When a fisherman brought her up in his arms, still, small, as if she were a child asleep, I began to shudder with a terrible excitement, almost triumphant, that I still cannot account for. Was it a hysterical release from the long strain of vigilance of those weeks? that at last the vigilance, the will gives way? Or what was it that, before Via, Sonny, Walter and all, I began almost to dance with shuddering and cry out, "I knew she'd do it! I knew"! Everyone stared at me and drew back. Their eyes turned cold and accusing, even Via's. And they have never changed. At the same time that I thought I understood her at long last and pitied her, underneath this knowing had there burned unquenched by my pity a fire of hate, an enduring envy that burst out in that ghastly outcry? Was that what had given way in me? Even now I am appalled at how little anyone knows of what they really are. It is absurd of course to say that that one exclamation estranged me from the family I considered my very own, but there it hangs, a cooling void that broke our close connection with each other. At the time I was filled with self-pity at this separation, but in the years since I have come to understand that the sight of me was painful to them after that outcry. In my person they would always remember that last long time of me alone with her, so if they told themselves that I could have prevented it, I can understand that by now and love them still, because everyone must justify, have a scapegoat for what is not to be borne. It is not their avoidance that rankles; it is when I meet someone who was a close friend of the family, and therefore of mine, and they nod to me so coolly and walk away, that it hurts. I could tell them, but no one ever asked, why I had cried out so triumphantly at the sight of her body. No, I forget

Mrs& Mathias, who had been away visiting a married daughter when it happened. She haunted me; she persisted in explaining how and why she had advised Mrs& Salter to return to the country. "We all feel guilty", I turned away from her coldly. "It was nobody's fault. She overplayed her hand". "What do you mean"? she frowned. "Why put such a high value on being top dog"? I added. It was coarse, almost insulting, this harsh appraisal, and she has never come to see me since. But suppose she had not taken Mrs& Mathias' advice and lived on like thousands of women in towns, dispossessed of love, hanging on to makeshifts, and altogether and finally arid. If she chose, and in that final decision discarded, what, above all, all of us value, life itself, must she not have risen to her fullest height, and transcending her murky self, felt at last the passion of a great moral decision? If they say I could have stopped her it is because they are ignorant of her last weeks of self-examination, her search into herself and its conclusions.

Yes, I had cried out that I knew she'd do it, but without my fully realizing it at the time, it was a cry of triumph for her, praise at her deliverance from pettiness and greed- and guilt. She was finally at rest in truth, of her own proud free choice. At rest with my darling Ellen, the first Mrs& Salter. ##

MR& SALTER
came home. The funeral service was in the house, the Methodist minister, how clean and glistening his eyeglasses and his neat body standing beside that coffin with that doll inside, a stranger speaking to strangers the old sacred words, and the rain drumming incessantly in accompaniment, seven days of relentless rain that turned the ground to mud so the burial had to be postponed. I waited. Then Via called to say they had decided to cremate her- as they had Ellen, the thought leaped to my mind- and did I want to meet her at the funeral home the next morning. The coffin stood on trestles in a corner of the long low dimly lit funeral parlor, on its dark shining surface the sheaf of white roses I had ordered. I knelt, just for decency I thought at the time, but found myself whispering, "Our Father which Art in Heaven **h" And it was only after that that something unlocked in me and I felt a grief. Via was in the parking lot when I went outside. Together we waited in her car until the hearse moved out and we followed it down into the heavy traffic of New Jersey.

By the time we arrived and entered the building sacred music was already swelling out into the chapel-like auditorium with its discreet symbols of religious faiths. Again I felt impelled to kneel, and reached back and pulled Via down. Something would come into her heart **h if nothing else the sounds of Bach would give her some healing. "I had a rather small place of my own. A nice bachelor apartment in a place called the Lancaster Arms". "Uhhu", she said, hardly listening as she studied her left eyelid. "And then I had another place farther downtown I used as a studio". "Uhhu". "I'm not a man who has many close intimate friends,

Carla", he said, wanting her to know all about him. "Oh, I'd drink with newspaper people. I think I was what you might call a convivial man, and yet it was when I was alone in my studio, doing my work, that I really felt alive. But I think a man needs at least one intimate friend to communicate with". Pausing, he waited for her to turn, to ask a question. She showed no interest at all in the life he had led back home, and it hurt him a little. "Well, what about you, Carla"? "Me"? she asked, turning slowly. "What about me"? "Did you make friends easily"?

"Umm, uhhu". "Somehow I imagine that as you grew up you were alone a lot. How about it"? "I guess so", she said taking a Kleenex from her purse. When she had wiped some of the lipstick from her mouth, she stared solemnly at her image in the mirror. "Are your people still alive"? he asked, trying to touch a part of her life Alberto hadn't discussed; so he could have something of her for himself. "You talk so well, Carla", he went on. "You seem to have read so much, you have a natural gift for words", he added, trying to flatter her vanity. "You must have been good at history at school. Where did you go to school"?

"What is this"? she asked, turning suddenly. "Don't you know all about me by this time? My name's Carla Caneli. This is my town. I sleep with you. You know something more about me every day, don't you? Would you be happier if I made up some stories about my life, told you some lies? Why are you trying to worry me"? "I'm not trying to worry you". "Well, all right then". The cleansing tissues she had been using had been falling on the floor, and he got up and picked up one, then another, hoping she would notice what he was doing. At home he had been a clean orderly man, and now he had to hide his annoyance. Was she just naturally sloppy about everything but her physical appearance? he wondered. Would he have to clean up after her every day, clean the kitchen, the bathroom, and get down on his knees and scrub the kitchen floor, then hang up her dresses, pick up her stockings, make the bed while she lay around? He straightened up, ready to vent his exasperation, then grew afraid. If he dwelt on the indignities he suffered he would lose all respect for her, and without the respect he might lose his view of her, too. "What's the matter"? she asked suddenly. "Nothing. Nothing at all", he said quietly. "Let's go out". "Are those the only shoes you have, Sam"?

"What's the matter with them"? "The heavy thick soles. Look at them". "They're an expensive English shoe for walking around a lot. I like them". "Sam, no one around here wears such heavy soles. Can't you get another pair"? "Maybe I could", he said, surprised that she could turn from herself and notice anything about him. "I'll get an elegant pair of thin-soled Italian shoes tomorrow, Carla".

"And I don't know why you want to go on wearing that outfit",
she said, making a face. "What's the matter with it"?
He had put on the gray jacket and the dark-gray slacks and the
fawn-colored shirt he had worn that first night in Rome when he had
encountered her on the street. "Oh, Sam. You look like a tweedy
Englishman. Can't you wear something else and look a little
more as though you belonged"? "I don't mind at all",
he said, delighted with her attention. Changing his clothes, he put
on his dark-blue flannel suit, and laid away the gray jacket with the
feeling that he might be putting it aside for good. But it was a hopeful
sign, he told himself. She no longer wanted anything about him to
remind her of the circumstances of their meeting that first night in
Parioli. That day they loafed around, just getting the feel
of the city. They looked at the ruins of the old Roman wall on the lower
Via Veneto, then they went to the Farnese Gardens. She had some
amusing scandal about the Farneses in the old days. Then they took
a taxi to Trastevere. "There's a church you should see", she
said. And when they stood by the fountain in the piazza looking at
Santa Maria he had to keep a straight face, not letting on he had been
there with Alberto. He let her tell him all about the church. Then
they had dinner. All evening she was eloquent and pleased with herself.
When they got home at midnight she was tired out. And in the morning
when he woke up at ten the church bells were ringing. He
had never heard so many bells, and as he lay there listening, he thought
of her scolding him for his remarks when he had looked up at the
obelisk and the church at the top of the Spanish Steps. It was a good
thing that she clung to her religion, he thought. She might like to
take him to St& Peter's. "Carla, wake up", he said
shaking her. "It's ten o'clock. Aren't you going out to mass?
You could take me to St& Peter's". "Uhhu", she
muttered. "Come on, you'll be late". "I think
I'll sleep in this morning", she said drowsily, and as she snuggled
against him, he wondered if she ever went to church. Why did he
want her to go to church? he wondered **h Probably because it was
a place where she might get a feeling of certainty and security. It would
be good for her. It was too bad he had no feeling himself for church.
Not his poor mother's fault. She would have been better off
if she had stuck to her Bible. As for himself, he just didn't have
the temperament for it. From the time he had been at college he had
achieved a certain tranquility and composure by accepting the fact that
there were certain things he could never know. Then he thought of those
Old Testament figures on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Just
figures out of a tribal folklore. Could he honestly believe it would
be good for Carla to have those old prophets gripping her imagination
now? Being a woman though, she would take only what she needed
from church. It was too bad he wasn't a Catholic himself. Or a
Protestant, or one of those amusing dogmatic atheists, or a strict orthodox
Communist. What was the matter with him that they all wearied
him? It was the times, he was sure. All the ideologies changing from
day to day, right under his eyes, so how could a man look to any one
of them for an enlargement of his freedom? It was all too wearying.

Look somewhere else. But where? Just the same, he thought, pondering over it, it would be a good thing for a girl like Carla if she got up and went to church. A half hour later he got her up to go out for breakfast so the Ferraros, hearing them hurrying down the stairs, would think they were going to a late mass. It seemed to him that if the Ferraros felt sure of them, could place them, it would help him to feel more sure of himself with Carla. "Since we're having coffee with them this afternoon", he said, "I think I'll ask the daughter if we can pay her to come in every day to clean for us". And he waited for her to say, "Oh, no, I can do it, Sam. There's so little to do". "Why not"? she said. "I'm not good at that kind of thing". "This afternoon let's take an air with them. Let's be fine superior people of great dignity", he said as if he were joking. "If <you> find it necessary, Sam, go ahead", she said, turning on the stair. "I am what I am. I can't help it". Her words remained with him, worrying him for hours. He didn't know how she would behave with other people. When they walked into the Ferraro apartment, the old lady, bowing and smiling, said softly. <"Ciao,"> and put
out her hand. Her little brown face wrinkled up, her brown eyes gleamed, and with her little gestures she said all the courteous things. Agnese, smiling too, said, "'Ello", and then more slowly, "I am happy". And they sat down and began their little coffee party. The Ferraros offered them biscuits with the coffee. Acting only as interpreter Carla, her hands folded on her lap, was utterly impersonal. She would turn to them, then turn to him, then turn again. Watching her, he felt like a spectator at a tennis game, with the ball being bounced back and forth. Signora Ferraro, bobbing her head encouragingly, asked Sam about Canada, having a special interest. Carla translated. The old woman had a nephew from North Italy, a poor boy from a lumber mill who had got tired of the seasonal unemployment, and who had migrated to Canada to work on the railway. For a year the boy had lived in the bush in a boxcar. Did many of Sam's countrymen live in boxcars in the bush? Had Sam ever lived in a boxcar? she wanted to know. Regretfully Sam explained that he had no experience with boxcars. Just the same, the old woman said, she would write to her nephew in his boxcar and tell him she had met a nice man from his adopted country. And Sam thanked her, and hoped he might meet her nephew back home, and asked her if she had any further news of the Pope.

A very great Pope, this one, the old woman explained, her black eyes sparkling. An intellectual. But very mystical too. It was said that he had had a vision. Just as thousands that day in Portugal had seen the sun dancing in the sky, he had seen the same thing later in his own garden, and she turned to Agnese for confirmation. Agnese had been sitting quietly, listening with the serenity of the unaware. Now a little flush came on her pale homely face and enchantment in her eyes. The Holy Father would die soon, she said to Carla, so she could translate for Sam, although he had a brilliant doctor, a man who did not need the assistance of those doctors offered by the great

rulers of the world. Yes, the Pope could die and quickly be made a saint. No, he was indeed a saint now. Nodding approvingly and swelling with importance, the old lady whispered confidentially. There was a certain discontent among the cardinals. The Pope, in the splendor of his great intellect, had neglected them a little. There would be changes made, and Signor Raymond should understand that when the Pope died it was like the end of a regime in Rome. Jobs would be lost and new faces would become prominent. Did Signor Raymond understand? Indeed he did, Sam said solemnly, trying to get Carla's eye. Surely she could see that these women were her Italians, too, he thought. Devout, orthodox and plain like a family she might meet in Brooklyn or Malta or Ireland. But Carla; eyes were on Agnese whose glowing face and softening eyes gave her a look of warmth and happiness. And Carla, watching in wonder, turned to Sam. "It means so much to her. It's like a flame, I guess", she said in a dreamy tone.

But one night Dookiyoon moved in the direction of the women's lodge, where Shades of Night had gone to purify herself. With the blue flesh of night touching him he stood under a gentle hill caressing the flageolet with his lips, making it whisper. He saw her emerge suddenly, coming in her unhesitant fashion, her back stiff, her head erect, facing with contempt the night and whatever she would encounter, as if in her extreme disdain and indifference she would pass by all the outraged looks of those whom she might approach. In her dark, scornful fashion she proceeded to her destination, afraid of nothing, not even the evil spirits which kept her company in her time of bleeding.

Seeing her come, he caught his breath, feeling his heart bounce in him, and turned away, afraid now. Even he, wanting her, afraid of her and not knowing how to press his suit, feared the evil presences in her metabolism more. His breath caught, and, trembling, he closed his eyes and stumbled off. Going, he saw as often before some queer, hideous yellow face over his head, shining and weird like the old images
which had invested him at other times like those that appear sometimes near the eyeballs when they are perhaps pressed by the thumbs.

He cried out to her, his back turned. Then he fled, not waiting to see if she minded him or took notice of his cry. But she heard him go. Yet she did not hesitate and only turned slightly, her neck tall as she looked in his direction, and continued on her way toward the end of the camp. Elsewhere others heard and stopped and waited, the women peering from their lodges then gathering in small, curious clusters. Early Spring came from her bed, from beside her half-drunk husband, Walitzee, and stood at the entrance way to her lodge hearing the mild commotion, the sound of hushed voices. Standing there she saw Shades of Night come through the trees and stop beside the lodge, silent, almost imperious, her body taut, simply standing without speaking or moving while the wife of Walitzee waited, perhaps denying the dread that moved in her. When at last she could suffer

the insult no longer, nor face the girl's scorn, she said in a voice overloud: "I shall call your father! Go back where you can bring no harm, or I will go and get the old man from his bed so he can see your shame"! But the girl said only, "Tell him I am here, that I have come". And it was not Pile of Clouds she meant. But now with real anger at last, something proud and indignant, Early Spring stood like a she wolf before her den and cried, "I will not shriek at you! I will tell you to go, not begging. Telling you"! And unsheathing the knife she used for curing hides she stepped away from the lodge, holding the knife at her side. "You bring only wickedness", she said and it was not to a child any longer but to another woman who had come to skirt her lodge with the cunning hunger of a wild animal. Speaking in a low voice of loathing she went up to the girl, who stood with the same upright, scornful bearing and did not even look at the knife. "Go take <helsq'iyokom,> your evil spirit, to the young boys", the woman said. "They do not have to face battle. I will not let your evil in. I will simply kill you first. Now go"! The other women had come close now, their voices murmuring together until they stood buzzing in an angry knot, their threats mingling, rising, nagging at each other, each trying to make her indignation and anger felt. They picked up sticks and hurled them at the girl. The sticks fell like a shower around her and she felt them sting her flesh and send tiny points of pain along her thighs. They were all shouting at her as if she were the embodiment of the evil she brought. But she did not move, taking the words and the sticks in that old defiance of her extreme youth until suddenly Pile of Clouds came howling among them, swinging a great bullhide whip. "Go back to your lodges"! he shouted. "A pack of dogs makes less noise"! He made the long whip sing and snap around their heads so that they ran screaming, some tripping over themselves in their flight. And Early Spring seized the whip and said: "If you must flog someone, let it be her, your daughter. Drive the demons out of her and teach her to stay away from my husband"! But the old man turned on her, jerking the whip from her hand. "Get into your hovel"! he spat. "Go back to that double-married man of yours who so parades his fine body among the young women. Keep him back, if you must tell me what to do. I will be the one to confront my daughter, not the wife of him who leads her to sin"! She retreated before the naked shame in the old man and the fury beyond it and sank into the darkness of her lodge where Walitzee stirred, mumbling, sitting up in a half stupor to say: "What worrisome thing happens? I thought I dreamed of wolves fighting". But she went to him and pressed herself against his nakedness, smelling the stale odor of the whisky he had stolen from TuHulHulZote. She said, "There is nothing that concerns you here. Lie back and go to sleep. But do not dream. Do not let the wicked spirits enter your brain". He sank back, sighing, and was soon asleep again. Outside, the old man, beyond all the curses of the spirits his daughter bore, went to her and twisted the gnarled talons of his fingers in her hair and turned her and pushed her rudely ahead of him into the trees where the moon sent

out a thousand arms. And, shoving her against a spruce, her back to
him, he retreated with the whip and made it whine and crack in the damp
air, shortening its arc until it narrowed to her flesh and the sound
of it snarled and cracked, settling its own cruel demons on her shoulders
while she stood as unchanged, as dark and motionless as ever, her
eyes open and staring at the pale delineaments of the bark so close
to her face. She said to him, her father, "How was I begotten,
in pain or joy? Is it for me to be forbidden the flesh you made
grow on me? They all know your foolish name"! She stared
at the pale tracings on the tree, hearing her breath refracted from
it, her face close and touching at time the rough edges of the bark.
She felt the lash bite and heard her father say in crazed monosyllables
words which had no meaning, like, "unnnt! **h sssshoo"! The
sounds of an animal in rage and despair. Suddenly the lash
stopped fighting the air and she heard Pile of Clouds say in his high,
quavering voice: "Did you follow me to see my shame?
Move from the line or I will settle the whip on you **h. Move! Do
you hear the anger of the whip's whine"? Turning, the
girl saw Dookiyoon standing between, his narrow shoulders unbent, his
arms hanging long and resigned. He said, "Let me take her blows,
for there are demons in me too". Then, without knowing why,
she found herself running from them, fleeing wildly through the trees,
dodging her own shadows until she came to a little hollow in the rocky
ground with a big stone in the center behind which she knelt and hid,
listening to the madness of her heart and wanting for once to cry.
#/2,#

For a while the young men waited outside the lodge of Tu
Hul Hul Zote, glorying in his harsh language as he talked with himself.
He shouted like a hoarse old mastiff, his hair stiff and bristling.
He ranted and prophesied the doom of his enemies, walking in circles
in and out of his living place, drinking stolen whisky in great,
gasping draughts until finally, incoherent and sick, he fell into his
own oblivion. He amused the young men who had been silent long enough.
But they could taste the appeasement of violence and retribution
through his antics. Now they moved, rubbing their flesh alive again,
disdaining the gloom they saw in the faces around them. They
came out and held their games and races. It was they who held the
future in their hands. They went into the sun together and paraded grandly
in their war clothes, painting their faces with the sacred <attis>
dug far off in the cave of skeletons. They danced the <paxam>
wildly at night, the war dance, and dipped their arrowheads in the venom
of rattlesnakes and rode their horses in swift maneuvers, firing their
few guns in unison at some indeterminate signal. Walitzee
was among them, and Sarpsis, and they wore red blankets which flew like
broad wings in the air of their passing. And a very young one, Swan
Necklace, tried to emulate them and followed timidly. Yellow Wolf
was there, nephew of the young chief by an older brother long dead,
in whom also the disordered chemistries of youth worked. He would spring
bolt upright suddenly after sitting quietly with inaction, because
something had boiled over in his fermenting juices. All the

young men, Alokut among them, challenged them in matched racing. They raced and maneuvered for war, swinging their horses in single file and then abreast like cavalry. At times they would ride frenziedly through the camp, letting the women see their courage, how handsome they were in their regalia. Then again they would stand in circles making other preparations. They combed their hair and streaked it at the part and greased the bangs so that the hair above their foreheads stood rigid like the tails of sage hens making love. Walitzee whitened his leggings with clay, knowing the girl watched from her place in the trees. He saw himself in a superior reflection, and he was as a speeding arrow from the taut bow, hurtling with a mad grace, his maleness shining and scented with meadow rue. He was always aware of the women's eyes which followed him, admiring him. And the suspicious, envenomed eyes of Pile of Clouds. And those of Early Spring, haunted and now full of hurt and envy. He felt so much like laughing; even like shouting and crying out from the hilltops from which he could descend as an eagle in a mad caper from the cliffs. He and Sarpsis planned a great parade with the young men. They would give one final testimony of their challenge to let the people see their arrogance. They would ride with streaming amulets, their colors ripening in the sun, shouting the last bellicosity of a nation in the throes of death.

And so the sun came up again and for a moment its color was the young men's blood, shifting then into the full heat and outcry which ran with their hearts. They mounted their horses and rode off into the hills. #/3,#

The young chief stared at the wall of his lodge, listening. The sound rose on the other side of the hills, vanished and rose again and he could imagine the mad, disheveled hoofs of the Appaloosas, horses the white men once had called the Dogs of Hell. He saw them in fleet images as they came rolling and now burst across the ridge. Standing then with the others, peering into the sun, he saw the bright, multicolored legion, their hair flying like dark banners, only the thunder, the roll of drums, the mad cacophony of the hoofs accompanying them. They leaned into the wind and seemed like one thousand-legged monster hurtling and plunging until suddenly they rose straight in their saddles and in one terrifying voice shouted, ejaculated their grotesque cry of war.

She was moving through a screen of hemlocks, in among the white birch and maples. The sounds from the quarry began to pulse in her ears. She stood, once more listening. She had never been here at this hour. She felt as if some dark, totally unfamiliar shape would clutch at her arm; but she found the path she always used, the stubs of branches she had broken, those she had pushed aside; and she walked easily now, and more slowly, until she could see the dark glisten of water beneath her. If I ever committed suicide, she thought, I would dive straight down from here- and no one would find me for days.

She smiled, and expertly let herself downward, holding this known root or that, her sneakers sliding in the leaves. She jumped out onto the flat expanse of rock and, seating herself, shook her short-cut brown hair and tilted her chin far upward. The reedy music of the frogs had faded, but presently it began again, growing in volume until it was vibrant. Julia felt at peace and drew her legs up and clasped her hands tightly around the bent knees. She had accomplished a miracle. This was <her> place. The hour couldn't change it **h. Only- only- her thoughts were a little strange. They were becoming confused. Perhaps it was because it was so late, and because she had no business to be here now. She was thinking of Paul a few weeks ago, in the Easter holidays, with her at one of those awful Friday Evening Dancing Class parties her mother had made her attend. "Hello, Julie, how are you"? **h And then off he went so casually, to someone else with breasts better developed, more obvious in a lower-cut dress, someone without a mouthful of wire bands and an inability to find words that would hold him. I wish he was with me now, she thought, and that we were both the ages we are and doing what was once only pretense and acute embarrassment. Oh God! I wish I were older or younger, Julia Bentley thought. I wish so much someone <loved> me.

#CHAPTER 7#

George Rawlings remembered seeing the door open sometime during the night- Millie, in a white robe, standing like a ghost at the threshold. She had vanished; he must have slept again. He was staring at the blue china lamp left on beside him. It seemed too much trouble even to reach for the switch; but of course the impossible effort of leaving would have to be made on this Monday morning. This room was like a prison. He would not be indebted to Sam! Below him, as if at the end of some remote tunnel, he heard the humming of a vacuum cleaner. His fingers fumbled across the bandages. They had left both of his eyes uncovered **h. Well, he told himself, let's put the show on the road. He was walking across to the bathroom. He drank a glass of water and gripped the sink with both hands. A fearful pain had come from his head, as if the water were coursing up through the blood vessels and expanding them **h. He recognized his jacket and trousers. The fabric was dark; the stains weren't too apparent; and there were his shoes, thank God, but his shirt was one terrible mess. He shivered, and then tore away the blood-soaked parts and wound the rest around his neck like a scarf. Sam would be amazed to find him gone. Millie would have to understand. She must have put his clothes in the closet. He found a lump rising in his throat because of that one simple act of tidiness. He was on the verge of tears. Alex Poldowski- in a fashion he owed a debt to that effete gentleman. At least Alex had told him he wasn't dying. Perhaps George Rawlings would be better off dead. What time was it? He peered at his wristwatch. Strange, it was still running. A quarter to seven. Too early for a vacuum cleaner, but probably

Sam wanted the whole house in order before he came downstairs. He was kneeling to tie his shoelaces. His fingers felt absurdly thick and clumsy. He rose slowly and looked into the mirror on the inside of the closet door. He barely knew himself. This was some freak, two strands of adhesive tape across his nose, like ugly roots from the mass of gauze, suddenly moist over his cheekbones. The surface, however, was perfectly white. He was drinking another glass of water. It was after seven o'clock. He was supposed to be in court this afternoon, at City Hall. Who would take over? He'd have to think, but the main thing, the imperative necessity, was to leave before Sam Bentley was up and about, and before Millie detained him with sympathy.

He entered the hallway. He was actually walking down the stairs. A plane up in the sky, above the clouds, and this freakish wreck of a man desperately trying to get away. "Father, is that you"? The voice issued from the cavern of the hall below. George did not reply. "Is that you, Father? **h Who's there"?

For a moment he felt like a thief discovered. Then Julia appeared under the arch leading to the dining room. She stood gazing at him. "Uncle George"! He was trying to smile at her. "Gosh! You shouldn't be up, should you"?

"I- I was just leaving here, Julie **h. I'm all set. Just about to call a taxi". She was wearing some sort of gray blazer. She seemed overly tall, her brow knitted in concern. "Well, at least you won't have to do that", she was saying. "I'm about to leave myself. I'll drop you off". "<You're> leaving"? "I'm going back to school", she answered. "Pietro's driving me. I'm just finishing breakfast **h. But have you told Mother you were going"? she asked him. "No **h. I just don't want anyone disturbed, Julie. That's my wish. It's quite a big one", he added. Her face seemed to float in an implausibly bright shaft of sunlight. "Well, won't you come in then, have a cup of coffee- or something? **h Or maybe a drink"? she asked, in a way that seemed oddly sophisticated, considerate, and yet perhaps partly scornful. He tried to see her face more clearly. "No- nothing at all", he said after a moment's hesitation. "I'll just wait for you here". He leaned his head against the wood paneling behind him, but the vivid red images of pain inserted themselves against his eyelids. He raised them. Julia moved past. "I have to say good-by upstairs. I won't be long". "As a great favor, Julie", he said, "please don't mention you've seen me". "Not to anyone"?

"No- please **h. "I'll call your mother as soon as I get home. It'll be so much easier". "All right **h" She was staring at him. "I'm fine, Julie **h. Please, you just go ahead". She had disappeared. He could feel a pulse pounding against the bandages. He imagined Sam's voice: "George, what the hell goes on"? I wouldn't have the strength

to answer, he thought. Maybe I couldn't have called a taxi.

He could hear the footsteps overhead. He saw the suitcase, which Julia was holding. He stood up. "I'll take that, Julie- for you". "Oh no", she said. "I can manage".

She went ahead of him. Outside the Lincoln was parked. He could hardly believe he was getting in. Pietro was gazing at him in an insolent, disdainful fashion; but that didn't matter. We'll drop Mr& Rawlings off in Ardmore", Julia said, and for the merest second George was reminded of her father's tone with servants. To the manner born- odd to have such a thought at a time like this; yet her inflection seemed forced or rehearsed. He could not stop to analyze. He had never felt particularly close to her. Carrie seemed more affectionate, but obviously Julia had respected his request. He took her hand. "I wish I didn't have to go back to school", she said, and then, "I wish you lived in New York. That's in the opposite direction". "I wish I did", he responded. "I wish I wasn't wearing this ridiculous costume, and that we could go to a theater together, or a nice restaurant, forget we knew **h" He stopped speaking. "Forget we ever knew what"?

"Oh, just sort of everything in general". She said nothing until Pietro had slackened their pace. "I know you feel badly, but that sounds like such a queer thing for <you> to say".

"Does it"? he asked. "Yes, perhaps. I'm supposed to joke about things, aren't I? **h But sometimes life can be rather a disappointing business". His voice seemed thick and purposeless. He relinquished her hand. He could see the stone building where he lived. Just a few more steps **h. Abruptly he reached into his pocket. Yes, there was the key. "Are you positive you'll be all right by yourself"? she asked him. For a moment he smiled. "Yes, Julie dear. You've done me the greatest possible service. By myself I'll be fine". "Take care of yourself then". "I will **h. you, also **h. don't work too hard". It was an automatic phrase; as he crossed through the courtyard he regretted it. He should have discovered a more tender farewell. Someone shouted at him, "Well! Will you look at George Rawlings! What happened to you"? "I bumped into a door handle", George said. Someone laughed. George walked steadily ahead into his entry. His bandages seemed on fire. He had shut his door with the brass number screwed to it. In the kitchenette the raw whiskey made him gasp. Just one or two swallows, he told himself, enough to lessen some of the pain. He was telephoning. "No, Millie, I'm home **h. No, really, right as rain **h. Tell Sam not to worry about the car. I'll get it hauled away **h.
No, please- no visit today- I'll be asleep **h. For God's sake, don't worry. That upsets me more than anything **h. Yes,

sure,
I'll see the doctor- this evening, if you insist **h".
There was one more call to make. "Joan, did I wake you"?
he asked. "Yes, I thought you'd probably be up **h. Look,
sweetheart,
some fool was **h. happened to be driving somewhat intoxicated
last night. Unfortunately it turned out to be me, but I wouldn't
quite put it that way to the boss **h. Oh hell no, I'm not in a
hospital.
I won't be in town for a couple of days, though, and there's
that case I was supposed to handle this afternoon. Too bad a jury
isn't involved. I might struggle in for a jury. I'd win hands down.
But I thought maybe Tony Elliott could pinch-hit for me. He'll
understand- you might give him sort of a tactful nudge. He's
got all the facts. I wouldn't want to ask for a postponement- it's
really just a routine thing **h. What? **h No, darling I'd
rather
you didn't come out". A smile pulled at the lower strip of
adhesive tape. "Don't even send flowers. I'll see you Wednesday.
I'll bribe you with a nice"- He was about to say "double
martini" but thought better of it. "I'll take you out to dinner.
Okay? **h"

He had put down the receiver. A strange relationship
between Joan Fulbright and himself. Who knew about it?
She lived alone in the older part of the city, in one of those renovated
houses whose brick facade some early settler had constructed. She
had two tiny rooms on the second floor. She was a clever girl, a most
efficient secretary. She let him come and go as he pleased, or as
it pleased her. In the office you might have thought them only casual
friends; yet
if he said: Make an excuse yourself, come out here today,
she would have been on the next train- and, similarly, if she had
been in need, he would have gone to her.
"They make us conformists look good". "That's a peculiar
way to think". It wasn't just the obnoxious birds that had ruffled
her own feathers, of course; she knew that. It was Jim's "little"
sister Myra, the unreliable, irresponsible, forever flyaway,
Myra. She's a year older than I am, Lucy told herself.

"Come, come", Jim said, jollying Lucy a little. "I love you.
Susan ready"? Lucy listened. Obviously, Susan was not.
Upstairs, busy feet, showering like raindrops, pattered around her
room. Susan would be visiting her grandmother for only a few days, but
even at seven she was a prudent soul; she always packed for a lifetime,
just in case. "Not yet. Every doll in the house must be going
with her". "She'd better step on it. It's a long way
to Websterville". Jim's fine young face was an expressive one,
too; as he looked at her, it registered anxiety. "You know",
he said. "Myra wanted me to thank you for taking Cathy. It'll be
only a couple of weeks before she finds a home for them in Paris-

but even so, she wants you to know that she's awfully grateful".

Lucy did not believe him; Myra appreciated nothing. Jim had put the thanks in his sister's mouth. "Darling"- she said, and the single word mingled love and exasperation in an equal blend. "She should have told me herself. And <will> it be only a couple of weeks? Remember what happened the last time"? Leaving Cathy with them, Myra had gone out to the Coast for a supposedly brief visit; but she had stayed all winter, and Cathy had stayed all winter too- with them. Lucy suspected that Myra would never have come home if Gregg, Myra's husband, hadn't gone out to fetch her. "That was an awfully <long> two weeks". ##

FOR
an otherwise silent moment, Jim's keys jingled nervously in his pocket. "But she promised- This will be different", he said at last. "You've got to admit she was smart to scare up this fine government job over there- she'll get a home for herself and Cathy in no time. You'll see, Myra's settling down". On the defensive, he added, "I wish you'd think what it must be like for her to be without Greg, to be a new widow, a young widow". "It depends on the widow". Lucy had an idea that Myra loved it. And not for one moment did she believe that Myra had settled down. It seemed to Lucy that all their married life, she and Jim had been doing nothing but rescue his sister from the constant crises that were her way of life. Remembering that succession of disasters, she now considered Cathy, an ominous child-cloud on her horizon. It was not that she disliked Cathy. The youngster drew her, troubled her depths; whenever Lucy saw her, she tried, without noise or fuss, to give her the warmth she had never had from Myra. But Cathy was Myra's responsibility, not hers. "I wouldn't even be surprised", she said unhappily, "if Myra tried to leave her with us forever". Myra loved big cities; thousands of miles away- in Paris, of all places- she might forget she had ever been a mother. Lucy knew her too well to find it impossible. "That's a horrible thing to accuse her of"! Jim was so indignant it was obvious that no matter what he said, he too had seen the looming specter of a forever-Cathy. He went to the foot of the stairs and shouted up, fiercely, "Susan! Susan! Get moving"! A startled piping sound returned. "Don't yell at <us>", Lucy said. Was it only a few nights ago that they had been standing together in front of the house looking at the moon-washed river? Their arms around each other, they had been talking of the present and the future; their talk and their feeling had been as deep and warm, as steeped in light, as the air around them. Then, from within the still, sleeping house, the telephone had rung; Myra, with her news, was on the other end of the line. Jim turned back from the stairway and looked at her. His dark brows, which had been lowered in anger, smoothed. "Please", he said. "There isn't a chance of Myra's letting anything like that happen. Let's stay friends". But they weren't just friends, Lucy thought; they were husband and wife,

and Myra had no right muddling and chilling their marriage. The only thing that had ever come between them was that worthless, selfish sister of his. Lucy was sick of it. "Well, at last", she said, because Susan was clattering down the stairs. ##

SUSAN looked like an overwhelmed baby nurse; her arms were straining with a burden of dolls. "I'm ready", she announced. "Do you need that big bundle"? Jim said. His voice had sharp edges, as though he knew very well Lucy and he were not friends at the moment. "All that junk"? Susan stared at him with hurt blue eyes that gushed an instant grief; to her, each of her dolls was a real person with a living heart. "Now, now", Lucy said, approaching Susan with a handkerchief, mopping skillfully. "Your father didn't mean it, Susan". She gave Jim a quick, shape-up look of warning. "He'll take every one of them". Jim groaned, but he lifted Susan's suitcase and said, in a gentler tone, "Sure- the entire thousand. And when you get back from Grandma's, Cathy will be here to play with you. Nice"? "No", Susan said, grappling with her outsized armload of dolls with a Scrooge-like effect. And at this point, Lucy thought, there should be a lecture on little cousins' sharing dolls- but she could sympathize with Susan; there ought to be a limit to sharing, too. That was one more reason she didn't look forward to Cathy's visit, short or long; the last one had been a Lilliputian war. She suspected that Cathy had been competing with Susan for attention that she had never had. "Well", Jim said, out of the silence, "let's get going, dolls and all". When the car, with Susan's hands waving wildly from the rear window, disappeared down the driveway, Lucy stood looking after its pale dust. The day was brilliant around her- flower-scented, crisp with breeze- yet her inner turmoil darkened it. She had let Jim go with a chilly good-by, a chillier kiss. She was sorry, and angry at herself, because never in their life together had she done that. She turned and began to walk toward the house. At the feeding station, the raffish group of cowbirds again bobbed and gobbled over the ground, but now, gorgeous among them, was a beautiful red cardinal, radiant in its feathered vestments. The handsome bird was solitary; its mate must be at home, silently guarding their nest. She had better stay there, Lucy thought; the sly female cowbirds took instant advantage of nests without sentinels.

Well, Lucy? she said to herself, abandoning the cardinals and the cowbirds. She had a day of things to do; among them, she had to prepare the guest room. How long would it be occupied? she wondered, with a baffled feeling of helplessness. As long as the unscrupulous Myra chose? For a moment, her mind returned again to the strange, flying world of birds, and she said to herself. It isn't only birds that dump their children in other people's nests **h.

In the sunshine of late afternoon, Lucy stood looking at the ready guest room. There were new yellow curtains, bright as a child's

life ought to be, a new bedspread, lively with hopping rabbits, and hanging from the ceiling was an airy Mother Goose Mobile, spinning slowly in the breeze. A row of little hangers waited for a child's clothes in the neatly empty closet; since Myra had always put most of Greg's money on her own back, Lucy suspected that no more than a few of that long row would be needed. The closet was faintly fragrant with lavender, and as Lucy shut the door an unhappy memory slipped into her mind, like a lavender ghost: Greg's house, on the day he was buried, and the child, pale, silent, baffled, watching the funeral guests with panicky eyes. Many times since his death that memory had worried and troubled her. Out in the hall, the upstairs phone shrilled, and the small ghost vanished. When she picked up the receiver, her mother's cheerful voice was there. "Websterville Junction calling", she said. "I just thought I'd let you know. Myra dropped Cathy this morning, and Jim picked Cathy up and left Susan a few hours ago. I'd have phoned sooner but I've been busy". "I can imagine"! Susan was an active character; for Mother to be able to call, Susan must be napping now, surrounded by her multitude of dolls. Lucy drew out the chair and sat down; she relaxed a little, and some of the tension went out of her. You could think yourself as grown up as Methuselah, yet the maternal voice still kept its comforting magic. "How was Cathy"? "Subdued. But Myra was the merriest widow I ever saw". On her way to the airport, on her way to Paris- you bet, Lucy said to herself. "I've been fixing up the guest room for Cathy".

There was a momentary pause, and then her mother said, "How long is she supposed to stay"? "Just for a couple of weeks, till Myra finds a place for them". "Well"- This time there was a long silence, while the telephone hummed faintly with a voiceless life. Puzzled, Lucy stared at the flowered wallpaper; her mother was forthright; she was not usually given to mysterious silences. Was she thinking along the same lines Lucy was- that it was quite possible Cathy might be left with her for good? "You mean once Myra gets to Paris"? Once the soft, pretty moth found the bright light she had always wanted? Suddenly, seekingly, Lucy asked, "Mother, do you know something I don't know"?

Again there was that curious pause, and then her mother said, "I guess I do. Just before Myra left- She was saying good-by to Cathy, and she didn't realize I was near". She hesitated, as though hunting over words and ways of putting them. "Cathy was in tears, of course, and I heard Myra say, 'Now be good, and at Christmastime I'll send you a wonderful present from Paris'".

Shocked speechless, Lucy sat there. Then she jumped to her feet, the elastic phone cord uncoiling like a black snake. "<Christmastime!>" Then it was no bogey she had dreamed up; it was only too true. Myra had no intention whatever of sending for Cathy in two weeks. For a moment, anger darkened the hallway about her, and when she found her voice, anger thickened it. "That does it"!

she said. "I'll keep Cathy for two weeks. Then, if Myra does nothing about fetching her, I'll pack her right back to her mother- if I have to take her myself"! Her hand tightened on the receiver. "And <that's> what I'm going to tell Jim". For Lucy, the day's nagging to-and-fro had come to an abrupt end.

As she hung up, she saw through the hall's open window the purple-black flying of the cowbirds' wings, and heard their grotesque singing. Cowbird Myra! She's not going to get away with it. ##

CATHY is tired, Lucy thought, watching them come slowly up the path. The child's thin legs were plodding. She trudged along slowly, both hands clutching a tired teddy bear. She was at the moment just a small, walking package, being delivered to her aunt's and uncle's house. Unlike Susan, she was traveling light; the worn teddy bear, a tiny suitcase that Jim carried, and the clothes she wore, were all she had. Lucy glancing at the miniature case, knew there would not be enough in it for the shortest of stays; they would have to buy things for her. She opened the door.

Unimpressed, the dog plopped on the sand. Quint couldn't blame Maggie for disbelieving. For eleven days they'd done the same thing, leaving the cottage quietly before breakfast, before Esperanza Beach got jammed with tourists and beach balls and show-offy lifeguards. The swirling sand made Quint's limp more pronounced. They walked slowly past the sherbet-colored cottages- eleven lemon, nine mint, seven orange- around the curve to a deserted stand with an "Eats" sign jiggling in the wind. Now they were in friendly territory. Nobody around. Nothing but sand and a ridge of rocks sloping jaggedly to the water's edge. <His> rock was to the right of a ~V-shaped inlet, a big, brown, lumpy rock trailing seaweed whiskers. His rock was special because no one on the beach could see him here. Here he was enclosed and safe. (If a dragon or a sea monster came along, didn't he have a red Swiss hunting knife on his belt- ten blades <and> a corkscrew?) Here was a perfect place to lie down and make believe. He was Canute controlling the waves. He was a knight of the Round Table, "Sir Quintus the Brave", slaying evil spirits and banshees and vampires and witches with warty noses. (One good thing about a suit of armor, his leg wouldn't show.) He was the first astronaut on the moon, chosen because of his small size and intrepid nature. He was six feet one like his father, with big hands and a hairy chest, a man the weak and persecuted would turn to. Fearless. Every night when he wanted a drink of water, didn't he practice being fearless by not turning on the bathroom light? A dark bathroom can be pretty scary, and he'd creep back to bed, proud of himself, thinking: Tomorrow, for sure, I'll go down to the rock and keep my promise to Dad. He hadn't intended to make the promise. It happened two weeks ago, the night before his father left on a business trip to South America. Every piece of the nightmare was clear, in place; and when he woke up, his father was saying, "Stop screaming, Quint. It's all right. Stop shaking". He

could remember the feel of his father's big hands, the thump of his father's heart sending out signals- regular, like radar. "Let's talk about the beach. Son. While I'm gone you get brown and fat as a pig, hear? Look, I can put two fingers between the cords in the back of your neck. Dr& Fortman says swimming would help your leg. He says you're limping more than you need to". "How does he know? Big dumb nut. He never had polio". In the light from the bedside table his father looked so worried that the promise spilled out. "You just wait, Dad. When you get back I'll probly be swimming better than Victoria. Wait and see, Dad".

Victoria was fourteen months younger than Quint, a head taller, and could lick any boy or girl on the beach. He called her "Fatso". She called him "Stuck-up- that's why nobody plays with you, Mister Stuck-up". Or, what was worse, she prayed for him out loud at bedtime: "Please, Lord Gord, please give my brother the strength to go swimming like he promised". "<She's> got a nerve". Quint said now to the clouds. Strength began to zip up and down his chest. He felt strong as a giant. He unlaced his high brown shoes and took off the metal brace on his leg. He wadded his sweat shirt into a ball and stripped down to his swimming trunks.

"Goolick, goooolick", creaked a sea gull. "Aw, shut up", he said. He stood on the rock, a skinny, dignified boy surrounded by the ocean. The wind bored a hole between his shoulder blades, and when he looked at the choppy waves coming and going and crossing each other he could see his head down there, bleeding, wedged between the rocks and the waves. <I can't go in. I'm scared of the nightmare>. ##

Shivering, he put on his clothes. And shivering with shame, he crawled to the narrow end of the rock and spat into the water. "Watch it, big shot", a hoarse voice yelled back. She was holding on to his rock with one hand. She smelled of peppermints. She wore a bathing suit like his mother's, no straps on the shouders. "Why didn't you duck"? he snapped. "This is my rock". "Isn't". "Is".

"Isn't". "Is". She was sore as a boil. "Ever hear of squatter's rights"? "Sure. They started with the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of eighteen"- "Mister Big Britches, aren't you"? "I'm Mark Gordon Peters the Fifth. They call me Quint". "Then why don't you stop squinting"? "I said Quint. That's short for Quintus. Quintus in Latin means"- "I can speak both kinds of Latin, smart aleck". Her cough sounded like cloth ripping.

"You shouldn't smoke so much", he said, unconsciously imitating Victoria's holier-than-thou voice. "I don't smoke". She was horrified. "Do you"? "Hell, yes". Not having said "hell" before, he stumbled a bit before gathering

momentum. "Sometimes eleven, fourteen a day". "If I
was your mama, I'd wop your tail off". "My mother never
wops me. I've got this leg brace". She seemed so unimpressed
that he was obliged to roll up his blue jeans so she could see
his brace. "Dingy-looking", was what she said. "Why don't
you paint it red and white like a barber pole"? "Because
maybe I won't have to wear it always. Dr& Fortman says if
I exercise my leg more, maybe I can use a cane when I'm big".

She spouted a mouthful of water into the air. "A cane's mighty
handy. Someone's walking past, you want to stop him, <zoooop>,
snag him around the neck with the crook in your cane. Or say a waiter
brings you a bowl of soup with a dead fly in it- all you got to
do is <bannnnnng,
stooooomp> your cane on the floor **h. Hey, will
you look at that"? Maggie had shaken himself awake and was
licking the sand off his stubby whiskers and his long plume of a tail.

"That's some dog. What kind"? "Part collie,
part wire-haired terrier". Quint glared. He always did when people
asked. "Holy mackerel, that's the most unique dog <I>
ever saw", she said firmly. "His real name's DiMaggio,
only we call him Maggie because he has to take tranquilizers. He's
braver than he looks. He's been sick lately. Last Tuesday he
went on a ham jag". "A what"? He would have told
her, but Victoria was yodeling. That meant "Mama wants you Quint.
Come home or I'll come find you". "I gotta go.
Even though this is my rock, you can use it sometimes. I come early
in the morning". "So do I. See you around, Mister Squint".
##

That was how they started being friends. They met next
morning and all the mornings thereafter. Same time, early, before
the fog burned off, because she didn't like the sun; it made her
blister. Her name was Sabella, and the strip of seaweed around her neck
was an emerald necklace the King gave her as a token of his undying
love. "You going to marry the King"? "No. He's
got a long beard and picks his teeth with a fork. My hair is what he's
nuts about. Naturally curly hair runs in my family. Personally,
I prefer straight hair like yours, but as they say on the Continent,
'What can one do'"?

"Which continent"?
"Name one, I been there". Japan, she said, smelled <pugh> because
people let dead fish lie on the beaches till the fish got hard as
rocks; then they scraped off the mold and made fish soup. <Pugh>.
Camels in Tripoli had harelips. Near Galway the tinkers drove their
caravans down to the beach and sang and drank and fought all night.
As for dancing- holy mackerel, he ought to see the gypsies in Jerez;
they danced on the sand till your blood got hot and danced with
them. "Really". Quint smothered a yawn. She made better

pictures than any book he'd read, but he didn't say so. Artfully, as the days went by, he found occasion to tell her that his father had won the Navy Cross in the Korean War; that his baby sister could spit up through her nose when she felt like it; that he personally had an ~IQ of 141 and was currently reading the Mushr to Ozon volume of the encyclopedia. "Books are for schnooks". She skipped a piece of water at him and laughed, a funny, hoarse laugh he liked to hear. Nobody ever appreciated his jokes as much as Sabella. ("What did one tonsil say to the other tonsil? Let's get dressed up- the doctor's taking us out tonight". And "What time did the Chinaman go to the dentist? Tooth-hurty".) Encouraged by her giggles he imitated Maggie who was crazy about ham. He described the ham decorated with pineapple and cherries, cooling on the porch. He snuck up on the ham like Maggie, gumming it with soft, stumpy teeth, then panting with thirst, lapping up the water in the lagoon, swelling up like a balloon, staggering home to be sick, while his mother said, "<That> does it. That dog <has> to go".

"Say, you're quite a comic", Sabella said admiringly. "Ever thought about going on the stage"? He hadn't. But it was such a nice thought that he nodded his head. "Either that or a veterinarian". "Better make up your mind, son", Sabella said. "You can't serve cod and salmon". Sometimes they argued. She said sharks have no bones and shrimp swam backward. His encylopedia agreed with Sabella. Next morning he tied a bunch of sea daisies with string and threw them across the ~V-shaped inlet to the rock where she was swimming around. Boy, could she catch! Like Willie Mays in the outfield. "Nobody gave me flowers before. Thank you, Quint". Her face turned pink with pleasure and a smothered cough. "You can always tell a real gentleman- they got a certain <je ne say quok>". Sometimes they didn't talk at all. He daydreamed on the rock while she swam and splashed around. Once when she asked why he never went swimming and he answered, "Don't feel like it", he was tempted to tell her about being scared. But Victoria began yodeling just then and he went home, carrying Sabella in the back of his head, not thinking about her, just knowing she was there, smiling, smelling of peppermints. As for his promise- oh, he had plenty of time, buckets of time. ##

Wednesday morning
it happened. They were eating breakfast. "We beseech thee, Lord Gord, to bless this food"- that was Victoria saying grace while the baby sprayed raisin toast on her plastic bib. Same old breakfast till the phone rang, making his mother's voice shake with excitement.

"Your Daddy's in San Francisco", she told them. "He says he'll be here on the one-o'clock plane. Fifteen days early- isn't that wonderful"? "Yeah, keen". A cave seemed to be opening in Quint's stomach. "Children, we'll have to get organized. The baby can have an early nap. Victoria, I want you to **h" Quint closed the screen door

quietly so Maggie wouldn't
be scared. "Hurry up, we're late", he
said, noticing with a chill how gray the sky was this morning, the fog
like a rope along the horizon, the choppy waves sending off sheets of
blue and Kool-Aid green. The cave in his stomach hurt. He
had to go into the water. He'd tell Sabella about the nightmare. It
had started two years ago when he was in an iron lung. What caused
it, he didn't know. The metal collar gagging his neck? Sweating
so much? The unbearable weight on his chest? All of it together
meant drowning. The first time the nurse took him out of the lung, she
said if he got frightened, she'd put him back for a second.
##

When Bobbie Evans smashed up his car, the Jaguar his wife Linda
had given him for his last birthday, and himself quite thoroughly
with it, driving back from an afternoon's golf at Oakmont, it seemed
to mark the end of a long, miswritten chapter in the social life of
the community. Linda looked remote yet lovely in black, and everyone
held his or her breath. Not that Linda was heartless, not that
she would do anything prematurely or in bad taste any more than John
Cooper would. Hadn't Linda been a perfect wife to Bobbie, who
was the least bit of a disappointment all these years? Wasn't
John Cooper even more attractive at forty-seven than he had been
twenty-five years earlier? And wasn't John's wife, Edythe,
even more appalling, if possible? Didn't John Cooper, after all
this time, deserve something better of life? Wasn't it adult and
realistic to look at it that way? And romantic? Everybody
knew that John Cooper had married Edythe on the rebound. It was
the kind of thing that could ruin a man's life, and it was a tribute
to John's strength of character and very real business ability that
it hadn't ruined his. "Of course, there was nothing you could
do, but you still ought to be ashamed of yourself for letting it happen",
Mousie Chandler said to Linda Stuart. "Poor John"! Linda
accepted the reproach, which was something she did rarely in all
her life and most rarely in that summer of 1936 when she was by all odds
the prettiest and brightest young woman west of the Allegheny Mountains,
and John was surely one of the handsomer and brighter young
men around Pittsburgh. For it had been John and Linda ever
since she had come out two seasons before at the Golf Club to the goggle-eyed
admiration not only of the stag line but even of her fellow
debs. John had claimed her from the stag line, a young man a year out
of Dartmouth with skiing crinkles still around his eyes. You
saw them always together those years. You talked about John-and-Linda
as an entity. John-and-Linda were at Longue Vue last night;
John-and-Linda drove to Conneaut in three and a half hours. Then there
was a spat over something, as there had been lovers' spats before;
only this one didn't heal. You still said "John-and-Linda",
but as if you were speaking of a national catastrophe such
as the depression or Dillinger. It got worse instead of better. First,
it came out after Mr& Cooper's will was settled- he had died
the year before- that John and his mother weren't rich any more.

And then there was Linda's engagement to Bobbie Evans.

There was no connection between the two events, because Bobbie wasn't rich, either, though he was more aggressive than John. He was a bright and handsome young man from New York, who worked for the same steel company as John did. Some people said Linda had just announced the engagement to jolt John into some action, but when John came home from a business trip to Cleveland with Edythe, with Edythe his bride, it could no longer be John-and-Linda even to sentimental wishful thinkers. It wasn't even John and Edythe. It was simply Poor John. There was nothing specifically wrong with Edythe, but there was absolutely nothing right about her either. Mousie Chandler had been to school with her someplace near Baltimore and tried to explain rather than defend her to the gang having lunch at Horne's.

"Well, you shouldn't underestimate Edythe", Mousie said. "I know she gives the impression of being shallow and frivolous and scatterbrained. She is frivolous and scatterbrained, but she really isn't shallow"**h. Bobbie and Linda looked magnificent at their wedding. John was at the church with Edythe. She giggled during the ceremony, and Mousie Chandler, who was one of Linda's bridesmaids, said John glared black as death at her. "As if he were choking", she said. "Poor John"! Edythe settled down to become a social myth and a horrible example. Her hair never seemed to be in place and her skirts were never quite the correct length. She didn't have a bad shape when you caught her at the pool at Longue Vue, but her bathing suits were far from smart. And you didn't see her much at Longue Vue or anywhere, for John had drifted away from the gang. Mousie said it was because he was too proud to stand pity. Others thought he couldn't stand seeing Linda, Mrs& Bobbie Evans, still so beautiful, so much in command of everything.

There were less-dramatic reasons too. John's mother died not long after his marriage, and there was even less Cooper money left. John sold the big old place in Sewickley and bought a smaller house in Fox Chapel. He was not reduced to poverty, but his job at the steel company had become a real job and not a method of passing the day. John was good at his job. It probably wasn't hard for him to keep his nose to the grindstone with nothing but Edythe to come home to. Though that may be unfair since Ben Cooper, John's first son, came along early in 1938, the cutest baby you ever saw and a blessing that he looked all Cooper from fontanel to pink toes, nary a trace of Edythe. But the continuing charm of the other children- Sally in 1940 and Jack in 1944- and all John's success at his work only made Edythe's dizziness and general uselessness more glaring. She never could fit into a crowd which had known, which still knew and admired Linda. When there was bridge at Edythe's house, the cards shuffled like wet graham crackers and the food probably <was> wet graham crackers. She managed a missionary drive for the church once and got the books so confused that old Mr& Webber, the eldest elder, who'd never donated more than five dollars

to anything, had to cough up five hundred dollars to avoid a scandal
in what Edythe called "the bosoms of the church". John did find
the missing checks and money afterward, and the drive was actually
oversubscribed,
which was a real bit of luck for the missionaries. ##

Being an intelligent man, John must have guessed what everyone thought
about Edythe, but he never let on by so much as a brave smile. Poor
John was the kind of stock that keeps a bargain without whimpering
and maybe bends over backward to keep a bad one. He was an attentive
and generous husband, overgenerous, a lot of people felt, because they
knew that money must be a problem to him. But he got ahead in business:
on leave from his job to an important Washington assignment
during the war; after the war back to the heir apparency of the steel
company. The Coopers saw Bobbie and Linda socially, but
no more than was necessary. Bobbie had been successful, too, though he
didn't match John's pace, and after all he didn't need to, with
all the Stuart money. He and Linda settled down to being social
leaders, and Linda managed to look a little more beautiful each year.

And then came the hairpin turn, the smashed Jaguar and Linda,
mourning alone and lovely. Everyone held his or her breath.

"Don't think Linda couldn't have got John back any time,
if she'd tried", Mousie Gordon, who had been Mousie Chandler,
said between bites of a chicken sandwich at a luncheon table at Le
Mont. "Now you know she could've, but she isn't that kind of
girl. But now- well, it would be a blessing, I think. Poor John".

Linda Evans felt more wretched than she had ever dreamed
Bobbie's death could move her to feeling. What she felt was a bone-deep
loss with a sense of waste to it, not so much sorrow for handsome,
ambitious Bobbie, but for the lost years that had been brought into
high relief by his death. She knew what people were thinking;
it was what she had been thinking herself. It was up to her to save
Poor John, dear John, to undo the wrong she had done, but she trembled
at the decision as at the brink of a cold stream. There
was no one who would blame her or John; she could be sure of that.
It might be rough on Edythe at first, but Linda and John between
them could make a settlement handsome enough to soothe her, to send her
back to Cleveland or anywhere. And Linda felt capable of capturing
the affection of the children, anxious even, since she and Bobbie
had had none of their own. It would be good for them to have a mother
they need not be ashamed of. Linda would have to wait, she knew.
But what was a decent six months or so after the more than twenty
years gone by? Years of watching while Poor John struggled without
the help and understanding of the kind of wife a man needed to get
ahead. Of course, he <had> done wonders **h. ##

Alloy steels and
regular steels had different sales departments at Smith + MacIsaacs,

where John and Bobbie both worked. Bobbie had been head of the alloy division, while John was just another good salesman in the regular branch. So when old Mr& Lovejoy, the company president, talked about putting in a single sales manager for both branches after the head of the regular steels had gone with Carnegie-Illinois, it looked like the perfect chance for Bobbie. For Linda knew how to help her husband, not just the Stuart-family contacts but also the little dinners for Reuben Lovejoy. She was almost sick when Bobbie came home with the news that Poor John had won the job. "What did you do"? she asked Bobbie. "You must have done something, something wrong. Lord knows I had everything set for you". Bobbie said something about damned Pittsburghers sticking together, and Linda got angry at him. They had their first real fight, and Bobbie went off to get drunk. Linda dragooned her uncle, Donald Murkland, into a lunch the next day to find out what had happened. He was a director of S& + M& and must have been in on the decision. But jolly old Uncle Donald would tell her no more than that Bobbie had certainly been considered for the job, but there were factors in a large company which outsiders and even some insiders couldn't understand.

He didn't tell her of the long board meeting where Bobbie and John were weighed one against the other. "I'm behind John Cooper", Mr& Lovejoy said finally. "I think we're agreed that he and Evans are equal in ability, so we have to look at the thing in terms of incentive. "Now, I believe Poor John'll work just a little harder. With that wife of his, I think he feels every chance he gets is his big chance. Bobbie, with Linda behind him, will have plenty of other opportunities. And also, the money can't mean as much to Bobbie. "Bobbie will take the job as his just reward and work hard at it; Poor John will take it as a miracle and have every other independent steel company sitting up nights worrying about us". Most of the directors nodded. Uncle Donald Murkland found himself nodding agreement too. After the surprise was over, Linda was almost as pleased as anyone with John's good luck, though she agreed with Bobbie's decision some months later to move to Funk Furnaces. The job at Funk wasn't particularly better, but it got him away from being subordinate to John and assured him steady advancement, since Funk was owned to a large degree by various branches of Linda's family. Poor John's rise continued to be meteoric. When he was made a vice president only a year after the new sales job, a leading business magazine ran his photograph with a brief biography in a series on NATIONAL BUSINESS LEADERS OF THE FUTURE.

She called then to say she had a baby-sitter for that night. "Shirley appreciated the chance to make some money. Such a nice little thing- lives right in the building". "That's swell", I said sweetly. I could get along without that three dollars. In some ways it was worth being out the money- just knowing I was no longer obligated to Nadine! It was past midnight and we were in bed when the phone rang. I stumbled through the hall, wondering who would be calling at this hour. I answered to find Nadine at the other

end. "You scared me half to death", I said shakily. "What's wrong"? "Janice, nobody answers at the apartment"! Her voice came shrill. "I'm absolutely frantic! That stupid girl might have gone off and left Francie"! "Oh, she wouldn't do that", I said. "She's probably fallen asleep and doesn't hear the phone. But if you're worried you can go home and check"-

"I can't leave the party! We're at Ken Thom's apartment, and when one couple leaves early everything falls flat! Old Mr& Thom is already down on Wally, and we simply can't afford to get Ken mad at us"- I was all set for what came next. "Janice, could you possibly go over and make sure everything's all right? I'll call you there in ten minutes"-

"I can't make it in ten minutes"- Wondering, as I said it, why I should make it at all. Why should I go over at midnight to check on Francie, when her parents didn't care enough to leave a party?

"Fifteen minutes, then! Please, Janice. I'll be glad to pay you"- So sure that money could do anything! "All right", I said. I'd do it. Not for the dollar or so Nadine would give me. But because there was the chance that something had gone wrong at the apartment, and if I didn't go over, who would? ##

@ CHRIS WAS sound asleep, and I didn't see any sense in waking him. I dressed in the kitchen, then left a note on the table telling him what had happened. I drove off through the cool darkness to Nadine's apartment and rang the bell, and in a few seconds a young girl opened the door. Her face was flushed from sleep. "It's all right", I said, as she started to look scared. "Mrs& Roberts had called, and couldn't wake you. I just came over to make sure everything was all right". "I'm- hard to wake up", she faltered. She didn't look over thirteen. And Nadine insisted that her sitters be reliable! "I have to get up early for church tomorrow", she went on. "I didn't know it was going to be this late"! The phone started ringing. "That's Mrs& Roberts again", I said. "I'll answer it". I crossed the beautifully furnished living room to the pale yellow phone. I told Nadine everything was fine, and that I'd be getting on home.

"Janice, would you mind staying"? There was a ragged edge to her voice now, as if she'd been crying. "Wally's drunk- I'll get him out of here as soon as I possibly can, but I don't want Shirley to see him like this. You know how gossip of that sort spreads through an apartment building"- Not a word of thanks for what I'd already done. The receiver clicked in my ear. She didn't even give me a chance to refuse. Well, there wasn't any law that said I had to stay! But then I looked at Shirley and thought that I might as well- the child needed her sleep, and Heaven knew what kind of a mess it would be, with Wally coming home drunk.

So I told her Mrs& Roberts would pay her in the morning, and she scooted off to her own apartment. After I looked in at Francie, I went into the living room and waited. I must have dozed off, because I came to with a start at the sound of voices. Nadine's, shrill with anger- Wally's loud and thick- As I went to the door I heard the clock strike two. I opened the door, and Wally stumbled in- fast- as if Nadine had pushed him. I had always thought she was so beautiful. But now she looked ugly. Her skin was stretched so tight that her cheekbones stuck out, and if looks could kill, Wally would have been dead. "Pack your clothes", she hissed. "Pack- and get out"! "You're crazy", Wally said thickly. He lurched and stumbled to the davenport and sank down on it, and was instantly asleep. Nadine strode over to him, and her pointed nails raked across his face. I grabbed her arm and she turned on me and for a scared second I thought that maybe Wally was right, and she <was> crazy. "You stay out of this", she spat at me. "He's ruined us- do you hear me- he's ruined us! He insulted Ken Thom"! Her eyes were wild. "He told Ken to his face that he doesn't have what it takes to get a woman! And the other people there were listening! We're ruined and he's going to get out if I have to throw him down the stairs"- ##

@ "YOU'D
BETTER simmer down", I said nervously. I was plenty scared. In the state she was in, she could actually kill him! "Now you just take it easy, and I'll make you some tea"- "<Tea,>" Nadine screeched. "How can you be so damn stupid? Wally's lost his job! Ken will never forgive him- never! And
we
don't have any money- we don't have a dime! All we own is Francie's bedroom set and the televison-record player and we even owe on them. And we'll be poor and have to live in a grubby little house like yours- and all because of that"- I clamped my hand over her mouth to stop the stream of filth. "Stop that! You'll wake up the whole building. Wally can't go any place at this hour"-

"Well then, I'll get out"- But she looked
uncertain. She was coming to her senses enough to realize that you don't go traipsing off anywhere at two in the morning. "You go to bed", I said curtly. "In the morning you and Wally can talk things out"- She collapsed against me, as if everything inside her snapped. I got her into bed, and sat with her until she had sobbed herself out. It was three o'clock before I figured it was all right to go. I left her, a limp bundle of self-pity, shivering with terror because her bubble had burst around her. Wally was snoring on the davenport. I had done all I could. I had done all I was going to do. Whether or not Wally lost his job was no concern of mine. I drove home, found Chris still asleep. I snuggled up close to him- loving him- thankful for a man like him. Thankful I wasn't Nadine. I kept on being thankful. In the afternoon Nadine and Wally came over with Francie. Wally sat in our big chair, his hands

between his knees, looking ready to cry. "I'd had all this trouble with the old man, that's why I drank so much. I- got fired yesterday for not attending to business"- Old Mr& Thom himself had stopped at the service station for a grease job, Wally confessed, and couldn't get one because there were cars on the pits waiting to be repaired. Seems that the kid Wally had hired had a repair business of his own going on the side. Mr& Thom had gotten Wally on the phone, and fired him. "I thought I'd smooth things over through Ken", Wally said miserably. "But Ken got coy and wouldn't make any promises. And I was plastered and I blew my stack"-

"And told him right to his face he'd never slept with a woman"! I tried to quiet Nadine because the children were there. But she was beyond caring what she said. "Things may smooth over yet", Chris said, his nice lean face grave with honest concern. But I couldn't help thinking that Nadine and Wally were getting just what they deserved. Now maybe they'd realize that life can be tough. ##

@ WHEN A bubble breaks, there's nothing.
Little by little, during the week, Chris and I discovered the crazy unbelievable way Nadine and Wally had lived. They had not only spent every cent- they were in debt up to their necks, owing on everything they owned. On top of everything else they were two months behind on their apartment rent, and the day Wally received written notice that he was fired, they were evicted. Worst of all, Wally had no training for any kind of work. He had fallen into a soft job, and now the job was gone and he was stranded. Chris fretted. "I wish we were in a position to offer a little money to tide them over". I said I wished we were, too. It was easy enough to say it, because of course we couldn't spare a cent. But Chris brightened up like a candle. "I'm glad you feel that way, honey. There <is> one big way we can help them. We can let them move in with us"- Something I had simply never thought of. Something so incredible- I just stared at him. It was incredible-
He gave me an embarrassed, pleading look. "I know we'd be pretty crowded. But it would only be for a couple of weeks- until they get straightened out". Straightened out- They'd had years of making all that money! "I won't do it", I said flatly. "Nadine was always too good to live in a little house like this! Well, now she can sleep in the street for all I care"!

"That isn't like you, Janice", Chris said uncomfortably.
Then I felt uncomfortable, too. I didn't want to be like that, mean and bitter. But, darn it all, why <should> we help a couple of spoiled snobs who had looked down their noses at us? But, in the end, we did. It just seemed as if there was nothing else <to> do. The finance company took all their furniture- and they didn't have a cent to their name. Then Wally got sick. To my way of thinking, he was scared sick. His luck had failed him, and it was easier to crawl off into bed than to get out and fight the world.

Chris made trip after trip in our old car, moving the clothes and dishes and the stock of groceries Nadine had bought on special. At least we'll eat, I thought grimly as I put all the food away.
While I worked, Nadine sat and cried. When she wasn't crying, she was in our bedroom fighting with Wally. "Virus infection nothing", she'd
scream at him. "You're too lazy to go out and look for another job. You're just a no-good bum"! It was a mess, all right. But it couldn't go on forever- A couple of weeks, Chris had said. I figured I could stand practically anything for a couple of weeks. But the two weeks dragged into three, and they were still with us. Nadine's constant nagging had finally gotten Wally out of bed. He set out every morning looking for work, and come home around noon, full of alibis and excuses. Wendell Thom had black-balled him. Nobody would even take his application. "You
can get <something,>" Nadine would snap. "You can get a job working in a grocery store, if nothing else". "The high school
kids have got everything sewed up", he said, a whine in his voice. "Those damn punks- taking work away from men who need it". ## @ "BY FALL they'll be back in school", I'd say,
trying to sound encouraging. But this was only the middle of July **h.

And I couldn't take six more weeks of this. I mentioned it to Chris one stifling hot night, when I had slipped outside for a breath of fresh air.
#@#

I DON'T really believe in intuition. But I swear to you from the moment I opened my eyes, I knew it was going to be a bad day. Part of it was the weather, so foggy it would take me twice as long to get to the hospital. Part of it was being so tired- I'd not only had my usual full day yesterday, but a dinner meeting as well, that kept me up late. But the rest of it, the main part, wasn't based on logic at all. It was just going to be one of those days.

For the thousandth time, I wished I'd chosen some nice, nine-to-five, five-days-a-week profession. And for the thousandth time, I answered myself. I hadn't chosen medicine- <it> had chosen me.

Actually, I shouldn't complain, I told myself in the shaving mirror. I had a lot to be thankful for. A profession that brought me as good an income as mine wasn't to be sneezed at. Maybe I didn't see as much of Gladdy as I'd like, but how much worse it would have been if I'd had to board her out somewhere after Alice went- send my daughter to an orphanage or a boarding-home. At least, we were together and we had Mrs& Hodges, bless her, to look after us- no mother could be fonder of Gladdy than Mrs& Hodges was.
I
was lucky in lots of ways, no doubt about it. Especially in the way Gladdy had turned out. Growing up without a mother from the time she was three- it wasn't a good thing for a child, even knowing

the kind of mother Alice had been. But I mustn't start on Alice. She is a closed book, a picture I keep on my bureau, but never look at. If she'd kept on as she'd been going, the story I'd told Gladdy would probably have been true by now, anyhow **h As usual, Gladdy's bright smile greeted me at the breakfast table. Her first class wasn't until ten, but she always got up to have breakfast with me. It made me feel good and knowing that she'd decided, all on her own, to go to college right here in town made me feel good, too. Oh, I knew that I couldn't give myself all the credit for her decision. I had a feeling that young Pete Michelson, the most promising intern at Fairview, had something to do with it, too. She'd been out with Pete the night before and her gay chatter about their date lightened my mood a little. But once I was alone again, driving
to the hospital, the heaviness returned. If she and Pete were really getting serious, I'd have to do some hard thinking. Should I tell him the truth about Alice? Did he have a right to know the secret I'd kept from Gladdy all these years? The boys were already waiting in the corridor outside my office when I got to Fairview. Two interns and Dick Ishii, the other resident. I'm Chief of Medicine here and this morning would start like all others, with me taking the boys on the rounds. Pete was down on Seven, Dick told me, and he'd meet us there. There wasn't anything of special interest that morning, no one sicker than they should have been. Pete came to meet us when we stepped out of the elevator on Seven- he'd had a case of post-operative shock, but it was all taken care of now. Seven is a women's floor and, as it happened, not very busy right then. When we'd finished our regular rounds, Pete pointed me toward the small ward at the end of the floor. "Got a new one in last night", he said. "I haven't seen her yet, but I hear she's a lulu"! I wasn't surprised. The ward was a small one, four beds, kept reserved for female alcoholics. We didn't get many at Fairview and they were never pretty sights. It was thought wiser to keep them segregated from the patients in the regular charity ward. The moment I walked in, the whole miserable feeling of the day seemed to focus on the woman in the bed. They'd cleaned her up some, of course, and she'd pretty much slept off her drunk. But there was something about her- and I felt my lips forming a name. <Alice **h But this woman's name was Rose Bancroft!>

I looked at the chart for reassurance. Yes, Rose Bancroft, diagnosis: acute alcoholism. She looked about sixty, though I recalled that the chart gave her age as forty-four. An ugly scar disfigured the somewhat familiar puffy face, already marred by the tell-tale network of broken red veins that heavy drinkers carry. Her coarse hair was two-colored- bleached blonde and its real, dirty gray. <Oh, could it be?> No, no **h it was an unfortunate resemblance, that was all it was, and I turned to Dick, forcing myself to put my disquiet out of my mind. In a low voice, Dick filled us in **h #@#

<S>HE'D BEEN picked up downtown, passed out
in the doorway. Although quiet when they brought her in, she'd suddenly
turned violent and had to be knocked out. It was the old story.
We'd keep her a day or two, and the ~AA people would talk to her.
But if she wasn't interested, she'd just go back to the same life
she'd left. Turning toward the patient again, I- I can't
describe what happened to me then, except to say that I felt sick.
I tell you, it took every ounce of control I had to be able to
speak. "Now, Miss- or is it <Mrs>& Bancroft"?
I never
liked going straight into an examination with patients- it relaxes
them, I've always thought, to chat first. This was one time I'd
have gladly broken my own rule, but habit was too strong.
"Hey"! Her voice was flat and dull. But those penetrating eyes-
I had to turn my head away. It was then that I saw what the drawn-back
covers revealed. There were bloodspots on the sheet.
"What's this"? I asked. "Your period"? She
shook
her head. "I been spotting a little now and then", she said quietly,
no emotion in her voice. "Have you spoken to a doctor
about it"? Once again, there was a negative shake. I told
Miss Groggins to move her down the hall where we had an examining
table. "Better do a Papanicolaou", I told Pete. It was only a
few moments before Miss Groggins had her in the proper position for
a vaginal, but I couldn't see anything wrong on gross examination.
Pete stood by with a slide and took the smear, sent it down to the lab
with a request for the test. That done, I told Miss Groggins to
take her patient back to bed and again put her out of my mind.
I was busy the rest of the day. Late in the afternoon, I was up on
Seven again. One of my private patients was being admitted and I went
in to see her settled. On my way to the elevator, I ran into Pete.
"I've got the results on the Bancroft smear test", he said.
"There's something there, all right. Class Three, they said.
Do you want to talk to her, doctor"? "Well"- I didn't-
I didn't ever want to see that woman again. But that was
ridiculous, of course. "All right. We'll do a D& and C& and
get her permission for a hysterectomy. Maybe it's nothing, maybe
it's intraepithelial or <in situ>- can't take any chances".

"If you can keep her here that long", Pete said wryly. "Groggins
tells me she's started badgering already, wants to get out.
Wants to get to her booze, I guess". I grimaced in distaste.
"Well, better see what I can do". We'd been standing
right outside Miss Bancroft's door and as I went to turn the
knob to enter, I was surprised to find that the door was slightly ajar.
But she seemed to be dozing and in any case, we'd been talking in
low tones. Her eyes opened as soon as she heard me, though,
and once again, I felt an inward shiver. "I sure can't complain
about the service in this place", she said. "I just got through seeing
one of you guys. What do <you> want"? There was something
almost insulting in her tone, but I disregarded it. "I've

just been talking to Dr& Michelson", I said. "We'd like
you to have a dilatation and curettage. That's quite minor, nothing
to worry about. But we would like your permission to do- that is,
to go further if it proves necessary". "No". It was flat,
definite. "Suppose you let me explain. Actually, I rather
doubt that we'll have to do this. Even if we do, you'll be out
of here in a week, probably". I was sure that was the difficulty-
she just didn't want to stay here, where she couldn't get
to the liquor. "No". I looked at her in amazement.
I'd had patients who'd refused surgery before, of course, but
never one who didn't show, in one way or another, the reason <why>.
Mostly, it was fear, but this woman's voice didn't tremble and
her hands were still on the coverlet. "Will you tell me why"?
I asked. She smiled, a smile without humor. "You shouldn't
tell your little secrets outside of the patient's door",
she said. "I've got cancer, haven't I"? She went on, disregarding
my protests. "I'm not going to be one of your guinea pigs.
Let your pupils learn on someone else, doctor. Just let me die in
peace". #@#

I <stared> at her, almost speechless. Her little
speech was totally out of character with the sort of person I thought
she was. Even her voice had taken on a more cultivated tone. <This
was someone who'd come down in the world,> I thought. <A long,
long way down>. Again there was something familiar about her, <something>
**h "You haven't got cancer", I said as strongly
as I could. "I don't know what you heard that would make you
think so, but I assure you I don't even know myself, so how can
you be so sure? And even if"- "Don't give me a lot
of talk, <Joe>". I gaped at her. She could have found out
my first name, of course- that wouldn't be difficult. But there
was that something, some echo in the way she spoke **h She was
watching me intently, a funny little half-smile on her lips. "Surprised,
baby? Guess I've changed, haven't I? But you haven't
changed much, Joe". I knew then, knew with a heart-stopping
shock. "Alice"- I stammered through dry lips. "Alice,
for goodness sake"- "Alice", she echoed mockingly. "What's
the matter, Joe, you scared of me? Think I'm going
to make you introduce a drunk as your wife? Well, don't worry. Just
let me outta here"- "But why did you come back"?
I'd found my voice. "Where have you been all these years"?

She shrugged. "Here and there. As for coming back here-
well, I'll tell you the truth, I didn't even know where I was when
I came to. The last thing I remember is a bar in San Diego"-

The way she spoke, her flat acceptance of her alcoholic blackout,
made me shudder. And this was Gladdy's mother! "I
never asked you for any favors, Joe", she went on, "but I'm
asking one now. Let me outta here! You doctors are all alike-
all you want is to cut up people and what's the good? No, I want

out, Joe"! I looked at the pathetic wreck of a woman before me. Let her out, let her out- that would be the solution, wouldn't it? What she'd said was true- in all these years, she'd never asked for anything from me. If I let her go, she'd disappear once more. And Gladdy would be safe!

I was slowly swimming down to the bottom of the sea. She made me welcome. Her dark cool caresses were sweeter than any woman's; the many little tricks she knew made her embrace the ultimate one- the ever more fantastic pressures deeper in her body squeezed not me but the air I breathed into a nitrogen anesthetic.
Yielding-Mediterranean-woman-flesh-of-water,
she soothed me, and drew me deeper into her.

I no longer knew how deep I was, somewhere under 230 feet, getting drunker, happier and more contented by the second. The reasons for this dive seemed foolish now. Only the dive itself had any meaning. The metal-tasting nitrogen made me wonder if I should remove the mouthpiece
and suck in the sweet water. Perhaps if I took off the aqua-lung I could swim better, love my woman better. I chuckled aloud, and the mouthpiece fell out. While a hazy part of my mind concentrated on swimming down, a clear part sorted over recent events, among them my only positive act in a long time. It was when I packed up what duds I had and went to Paris. It was no vacation, just me getting out after a bellyfull. I knew it wouldn't be the same. Wild kicks never are, but I hoped to dig up a better frame of mind.

Once before I had been to Paris, long before I married Valery. That first time was good and it stuck with me. I was twenty-one back then, in the army, and fog put our plane down at Orly instead of Rhine-Main. It was a Saturday evening in April with a mist-like rain, and I was a little high on the good taste of life. I had a pocketful of money, which was unusual when I was in the army, and the plane would be grounded all night. In less than an hour I had gotten a hotel, showered, shaved and was out on the Champs Elysees in a fresh uniform. I felt like a Hun in Rome. All the women were beautiful,
and the men were equal to them; everything was glamorous to my dazzled eyes. There were some sweet machines other than women: an old Bugatti, a lean Farina coachwork on an American chassis, a Swallow, a type 540-~K Mercedes and lots more. There was the Arc de Triomphe and the Tour d'Eiffel- I was no yokel, but I was young, and this was Paris! I had champagne at Maxim's, then went into a cafe called the Jour et Nuit to ask the way to Montmartre. I never got there. I met Claire, which was better. She was eating bread and cheese just as fast as she possibly could, and washing it down with red wine. I stared. I didn't know a human could feed so fast and still be beautiful. She was blonde, and young, and nice and round in a tight white dress. Maybe her ravenous eating wasn't grotesque because she was so positive about it. When she had

drained the last of the bottle and paid her bill, she came directly
to my table and said: "Handsome soldier, I have assuaged
one hunger with food. I feel another of terrible urgency. Is your evening
free"? "Madame", I said with noblesse oblige because
of the "handsome"- "yeah". And so off we went
to her apartment. She was a nymphomaniac, of course, the poor girl. Toward
the break of day I waxed philosophical, and drew analogies about
her way of eating bread and cheese. Now it was nine years later,
and it wasn't spring but winter when I returned. I got
there on a Saturday evening. I made the mistake of going to the Jour
et Nuit. The place was busy but I didn't feel like a Hun. I
sat waiting for Life to come along and sweep me up. I had part of a
bottle of French beer called Panther Pils (so help me), then switched
to Tuborg. After a few hours, Life hadn't showed, and I was crocked.
I went to my hotel and slept. The next morning a little cognac
made me feel better- but what can you do in Paris on Sunday morning?
So I drank more cognac. All that day and Monday I
drank just enough to orbit but not make deep space. I read the <Tropic
of Capricorn> and the <Tropic of Cancer>. Elemental, but sex.
That's what was on my mind. I was turning over the idea of a good
debauchery when I dozed off. I felt better Tuesday evening
when I woke up. My head was clear, my thinking sober and I was reconciled
to this Paris idea as a flop on top of all my others. A good
binge has that kind of therapeutic value. Sometime earlier
the weather had turned cold and it was snowing. I went out into it.
I walked around breathing the cold wine of the air until I found a park,
and I sat down on a snowy bench where the light was dim and came
from the sky. There was dignity and beauty in the little white flakes
falling through the blue night. I had on only a topcoat, but I wasn't
cold. I was just miserable. Pretty soon a woman came along
carrying a folded umbrella as a walking stick. She saw me and sat
down beside me, three feet away. Suddenly I understood why she had
the umbrella. It gave her poise and posture. Without it she would have
been drab and limp. It gave her propriety. It gave her the right
to sit down beside me, back straight, one hand out on the handle. I
couldn't imagine her without it. I knew all about her. She was another
human being and happened to be a hustler. I didn't much care if
she were there or not. After a while she said with sort of an
unuttered laugh, "You have snow in your hair and ears". (I didn't
have on a hat.) Hardly glancing at her, I smiled a bleak
one which said, Thanks, baby, but I'd rather be alone. She
was silent for a while, then said, "Why are you so unhappy"?

"I'm not unhappy", I lied, staring at the snow. She was
trying to make a hole in my armor, and I didn't want it.
"Is it a woman"? she asked gently. She must have seen the ring
on my left hand. "Well- women and unhappiness go together",
I observed profoundly, adding, "You can wager your derriere on
that". "Ah, monsieur, it is not my business to wager it
**h" This took me so funny I had to look at her. I felt my
frozen sad face crumble, and I grinned a silly one I couldn't have

helped. I even snorted a chuckle. She smiled at me, but it was an awfully sad smile. She was even more miserable than me. Her eyes were smiling, too, but so sadly, and there was tiredness and infinite wisdom in them. "Now isn't it better to smile"? she asked.

Because I liked this sad person so much, I said, "Will you have a drink with me"? I could see the ancient cynicism reinforce itself in her eyes, and I wondered how many men she had picked up with this same gambit. Anyway, I pulled a bottle of Remy Martin out of my topcoat, drew the cork, and passed it to her.

I could see she was shocked. "I'm sorry I haven't got a glass", I said. "Non, non", she said, taking the bottle, "not for that be sorry". She tilted up and drank, and then I drank. It's really rotten to drink good cognac like that, but I hadn't cared before. I wasn't going to lug around a glass. There wasn't much light in the blue dark, but I could see her well. No child, this tart, she must have been thirty-five or even forty. I couldn't be sure. Somehow she was attractive. Not good looking, but self-confident and wise so that it made her attractive. I liked her, and all at once I was glad she was there. We finished the bottle- I hadn't had a lot out of it earlier- not speaking much to each other, and we stayed sober. I suppose we were cold, but we didn't feel it. We seemed to be drowsing, sadly, soberly, in the cold, cold air while the snow fell. Then she said, "Allons", and we got up and went to my hotel without another word.

I sensed no stranger in her. We undressed and made love with the comfortable acceptance I had once known with Valery. I decided thirty-five was the best estimate of her age. She had a funny little scar on her stomach, on the left side. I think we were very tired, for we awoke at the same moment, deeply rested, surprised to see the late morning sun on the windows, which were wet where the rime had melted. I felt wonderful, the absolute opposite of last night's melancholy. My head was clear. I was hungry as a wolf, and my body felt lean and vital. "Bon jour", I said brightly, sitting up, which pulled the covers to her hips. She looked good, with her short tousled hair and no make-up. Maybe closer to thirty, I thought. "Bon jour"! she exclaimed, smiling. "J'ai faim"! "Yeah, but breakfast first". With a laugh she beat me to the bathroom. I called downstairs for food and a toothbrush for her. She came out pink from a hot bath, and I gave her my robe. I had brushed my teeth, showered, shaved and dressed by the time a waiter wheeled in breakfast. "The toothbrush monsieur", he said, presenting it. I gave it to the woman. "What is this for"? she asked innocently. "Why, to brush your teeth".

"But I already have! I used yours". "Oh"? I said with round eyes. I wondered if I ought to go use the new one myself. But I smelled the coffee, and thinking, What the hell, live dangerously, I decided I would scald my worries away. The coffee

wasn't very hot though, made in a filter pot, but it was good.
We sent the waiter away and ate a tremendous amount of cold ham, hot
hard-boiled eggs and hot garlic bread. As we ate, we talked. Her name
was Suzanne, and mine Stephen. We sat back comfortably on
the bed with our last cups of coffee. "You are very tactful,
do you know, Stephen", she remarked. "Um"? I grunted,
sipping. "Yes, because you didn't run off to use that
new toothbrush". I raised my eyes to look at her in the mirror.

"I didn't really use yours", she went on. "I carry
one in my purse. I know men never kiss <les putains">. To
my immense relief, she changed the subject in the next sentence:
"Shall we go to the Louvre today"? "All right". I
said with enthusiasm at the idea. "But not immediately". I put
aside my empty cup. She smiled all the way to her wise, sad eyes, and
drained her own. We were not rushed. "What is this
from"? I asked, touching the scar on her stomach. It was like a
long thin line drawn through a pink circle. "A bullet", she
answered. The cynicism was back in her eyes, a bitter wisdom, and I
wondered if forty were not so far wrong after all. She understood sex
anyway, and played at it well. We went to the Louvre for a
few hours, then by Metro to a cabaret in Montmartre. It was
a nice place, not filled with smoke. We had champagne and steamed mussels.
The <sommelier> brought the wine first, a magnum instead of
the bottle I had ordered. He must have thought I was a tourist.

I fixed him with a steely eye and said, "What's this for?
I didn't ask for a Jeroboam of champagne". I thought that
was pretty humorous, but I didn't laugh.

TWO LETTERS HAD ARRIVED FOR MISS THERESA STUBBLEFIELD: SHE
PUT them in her bag. She would not stop to read them in American
Express, as many were doing, sitting on benches or leaning against the
walls, but pushed her way out into the street. This was her first
day in Rome and it was June. An enormous sky of the most delicate
blue arched overhead. In her mind's eye- her imagination responding
fully, almost exhaustingly, to these shores' peculiar powers
of stimulation- she saw the city as from above, telescoped on its
great bare plains that the ruins marked, aqueducts and tombs, here a cypress,
there a pine, and all around the low blue hills. Pictures in
old Latin books returned to her: the Appian Way Today, the Colosseum,
the Arch of Constantine. She would see them, looking just as
they had in the books, and this would make up a part of her delight.
Moreover, nursing various Stubblefields- her aunt, then her mother,
then her father- through their lengthy illnesses (everybody could
tell you the Stubblefields were always sick), Theresa had had a chance
to read quite a lot. England, France, Germany, Switzerland, and
Italy had all been rendered for her time and again, and between the
prescribed hours of pills and tonics, she had conceived a dreamy passion
by lamplight, to see all these places with her own eyes. The very
night after her father's funeral she had thought, though never admitted

to a soul: <Now I can go. There's nothing to stop me now>.
So here it was, here was Italy, anyway, and terribly noisy.
In the street the traffic was really frightening. Cars, taxis, buses,
and motorscooters all went plunging at once down the narrow length
of it or swerving perilously around a fountain. Shoals of tourists went
by her in national groups- English school girls in blue uniforms,
German boys with cameras attached, smartly dressed Americans looking
in shop windows. Glad to be alone, Theresa climbed the splendid outdoor
staircase that opened to her left. The Spanish Steps.
Something special was going on here just now- the annual display of
azalea plants. She had heard about it the night before at her hotel.
It was not yet complete: workmen were unloading the potted plants
from
a truck and placing them in banked rows on the steps above. The azaleas
were as large as shrubs, and their myriad blooms, many still tight
in the bud, ranged in color from purple through fuchsia and rose to
the palest pink, along with many white ones too. Marvelous, thought
Theresa, climbing in her portly, well-bred way, for she was someone
who had learned that if you only move slowly enough you have time to
notice everything. In Rome, all over Europe, she intended to move very
slowly indeed. Halfway up the staircase she stopped and sat
down. Other people were doing it, too, sitting all along the wide banisters
and leaning over the parapets above, watching the azaleas mass,
or just enjoying the sun. Theresa sat with her letters in her lap,
breathing Mediterranean air. The sun warmed her, as it seemed to be
warming everything, perhaps even the underside of stones or the chill
insides of churches. She loosened her tweed jacket and smoked a cigarette.
Content **h excited; how could you be both at once? Strange,
but she was. Presently, she picked up the first of the letters.

A few moments later her hands were trembling and her brow had contracted
with anxiety and dismay. <Of course, one of them would have
to go and do this! Poor Cousin Elec,> she thought, tears rising
to sting in the sun, <but why couldn't he have arranged to live
through the summer? And how on earth did I ever get this letter anyway?>

She had reason indeed to wonder how the letter had
managed to find her. Her Cousin Emma Carraway had written it, in her
loose high old lady's script- ~t's carefully crossed, but
~l's inclined to wobble like an old car on the downward slope. Cousin
Emma had simply put Miss Theresa Stubblefield, Rome, Italy,
on the envelope, had walked up to the post office in Tuxapoka, Alabama,
and mailed it with as much confidence as if it had been a birthday
card to her next-door neighbor. No return address whatsoever. Somebody
had scrawled American Express, Piazza di Spagna?, across the
envelope, and now Theresa had it, all as easily as if she had been
the
President of the Republic or the Pope. Inside were all the things
they thought she ought to know concerning the last illness, death,
and
burial of Cousin Alexander Carraway. Cousin Emma and Cousin

Elec, brother and sister- unmarried, devoted, aging- had lived
next door to the Stubblefields in Tuxapoka from time immemorial until
the Stubblefields had moved to Montgomery fifteen years ago.
Two days before he was taken sick, Cousin Elec was out worrying about
what too much rain might do to his sweetpeas, and Cousin Elec had
always preserved in the top drawer of his secretary a mother-of-pearl
paper
knife which Theresa had coveted as a child and which he had promised
she could have when he died. <I'm supposed to care as much now
as then, as much here as there,> she realized, with a sigh. <This letter
would have got to me if she hadn't even put Rome, Italy, on
it>. She refolded the letter, replaced it in its envelope,
and turned with relief to one from her brother George. But alas
George, when <he> had written, had only just returned from going
to Tuxapoka to Cousin Elec's funeral. He was full of heavy family
reminiscence. All the fine old stock was dying out, look at the world
today. His own children had suffered from the weakening of those
values which he and Theresa had always taken for granted, and as for
his grandchildren (he had one so far, still in diapers), he shuddered
to think that the true meaning of character might never dawn on them
at all. A life of gentility and principle such as Cousin Elec had lived
had to be known at first hand **h. Poor George! The only
boy, the family darling. Together with her mother, both of them tense
with worry lest things should somehow go wrong. Theresa had seen
him through the right college, into the right fraternity, and though
pursued by various girls and various mammas of girls, safely married to
the right sort, however much in the early years of that match his wife,
Anne, had not seemed to understand poor George. Could it just be,
Theresa wondered, that Anne had understood only too well, and that
George all along was extraordinary only in the degree to which he was
dull? As for Cousin Alexander Carraway, the only thing
Theresa could remember at the moment about him (except his paper knife)
was that he had had exceptionally long hands and feet and one night
about one o'clock in the morning the whole Stubblefield family had
been aroused to go next door at Cousin Emma's call- first Papa,
then Mother, then Theresa and George. There they all did their
uttermost to help Cousin Elec get a cramp out of his foot. He had
hobbled downstairs into the parlor, in his agony, and was sitting, wrapped
in his bathrobe, on a footstool. He held his long clenched foot
in both hands, and this and his contorted face- he was trying heroically
not to cry out- made him look like a large skinny old monkey. They
all surrounded him, the family circle, Theresa and George as solemn
as if they were watching the cat have kittens, and Cousin Emma
running back and forth with a kettle of hot water which she poured steaming
into a white enamelled pan. "Can you think of anything to do"?
she kept repeating. "I hate to call the doctor but if this keeps
up I'll just have to! Can you think of anything to do"?
"You might treat it like the hiccups", said Papa. "Drop a cold
key down his back". "I just hope this happens to you someday",
said Cousin Elec, who was not at his best. "Poor Cousin Elec",
George said. He was younger than Theresa: she remembered looking

down and seeing his great round eyes, while at the same time she was dimly aware that her mother and father were not unamused. "Poor Cousin Elec". Now, here they both were, still the same, George full of round-eyed woe, and Cousin Emma in despair. Theresa shifted to a new page. "Of course (George's letter continued), there are practical problems to be considered. Cousin Emma is alone in that big old house and won't hear to parting from it. Robbie and Beryl tried their best to persuade her to come and stay with them, and Anne and I have told her she's more than welcome here, but I think she feels that she might be an imposition, especially as long as our Rosie is still in high school. The other possibility is to make arrangements for her to let out one or two of the rooms to some teacher of good family or one of those solitary old ladies that Tuxapoka is populated with- Miss Edna Whittaker, for example. But there is more in this than meets the eye. A new bathroom would certainly have to be put in. The wallpaper in the back bedroom is literally crumbling off **h". (Theresa skipped a page of details about the house.) "I hope if you have any ideas along these lines you will write me about them. I may settle on some makeshift arrangements for the summer and wait until you return in the fall so we can work out together the best **h". I really shouldn't have smoked a cigarette so early in the day, thought Theresa, it always makes me sick. I'll start sneezing in a minute, sitting on these cold steps. She got up, standing uncertainly for a moment, then moving aside to let go past her, talking, a group of young men. They wore shoes with pointed toes, odd to American eyes, and narrow trousers, and their hair looked unnaturally black and slick. Yet here they were obviously thought to be handsome, and felt themselves to be so. Just then a man approached her with a tray of cheap cameos, Parker fountain pens, rosaries, papal portraits. "No", said Theresa. "No, no"! she said. The man did not wish to leave. He knew how to spread himself against the borders of the space that had to separate them. Carrozza rides in the park, the Colosseum by moonlight, he specialized **h. Theresa turned away to escape, and climbed to a higher landing where the steps divided in two. There she walked to the far left and leaned on a vacant section of banister, while the vendor picked himself another well-dressed American lady, carrying a camera and a handsome alligator bag, ascending the steps alone. Was he ever successful, Theresa wondered. The lady with the alligator bag registered interest, doubt, then indignation; at last, alarm. She cast about as though looking for a policeman: this really shouldn't be allowed! Finally, she scurried away up the steps. Theresa Stubblefield, still holding the family letters in one hand, realized that her whole trip to Europe was viewed in family circles as an interlude between Cousin Elec's death and "doing something" about Cousin Emma. They were even, Anne and George, probably thinking themselves very considerate in not hinting that she really should cut out "one or two countries" and come home in August to get Cousin Emma's house ready before the teachers came to Tuxapoka in September. Of course, it wasn't Anne and George's fault that one family crisis seemed to follow another, and weren't they always emphasizing that they really didn't

know what they would do without Theresa? <The trouble is,> Theresa thought, <that while everything that happens there is supposed to matter supremely, nothing here is supposed even to exist. They would not care if all of Europe were to sink into the ocean tomorrow. It never registered with them that I had time to real all of Balzac, Dickens, and Stendhal while Papa was dying, not to mention everything in the city library after Mother's operation. It would have been exactly the same to them if I had read through all twenty-six volumes of Elsie Dinsmore>. She arranged the letters carefully, one on top of the other. Then, with a motion so suddenly violent that she amazed herself, she tore them in two. "Signora"?

She became aware that two Italian workmen, carrying a large azalea pot, were standing before her and wanted her to move so that they could begin arranging a new row of the display. "Mi diapiace, signora, ma **h insomma **h". "Oh **h put it there"! She indicated a spot a little distance away.
##

I knew it as surely as everybody in Westfield- that Lucille was a husband stealer. You can't keep that kind of information quiet in a town of only 4000-plus. And I've been told that just about every town, no matter what its size, has its Lucille Warren.

Just as it has its Susan Dolan, though nobody'd ever bothered to tell me that. Susan Dolan, that's me. They even talked about Lucille down at the Young Christians' League where I spent a lot of time in Bible classes and helping out with the office work for our foreign mission. I never heard my folks talk about her, though. They were good-living religious people, and I can truthfully say I never heard them spread any gossip about anybody. Even if they ever did say anything about people like Lucille Warren, I know they wouldn't have dreamed of saying it in front of me. My folks and my faith protected me from things like that. And so I was really upset the first time I discovered that my boy friend Johnnie was seeing Mrs& warren.
I asked him about it one night while we were sitting in his truck. I asked him if it was true. He gave me a straight, honest answer. "Look, Sue baby", he'd said. Much as I love you- well, a guy's a guy and Lucille's willing to- to come across. Honest, kitten, that's all it is- I don't even like Lucille much". I guess it was at that moment that I realized what I was up against in the person of Lucille Warren. But it didn't seem fair. My love for Johnnie was young and clean- how could I possibly compete with a woman like that, who didn't hesitate to use her sex. Johnnie was a trucker with a small lumber outfit in a town about twenty miles away, and he was also pretty good at anything in the carpentry line. It was a vivid, sharp February morning that Johnnie first made his appearance in my back yard, bringing some stuff Dad had ordered. I wasn't in the habit of batting my eyes at delivery men, but the moment I saw Johnnie, I knew he was

different. He wasn't only different- he was <it>. He had an easy masculine grace about him, the kind that kids don't have, but that I had sometimes admired in other older men. His smile was quick, and his eyes held some promised secret that made my knees go limp.

The most unbelievable thing about the chance meeting was that <he> seemed interested in <me>, too. I could hardly believe such good luck was mine. And now Lucille Warren had gotten a look at him. I guess she was between affairs or something, but anyway, she had set her sights on Johnnie, <my> Johnnie. I didn't like it one bit. But what could I do? A man had to have his release- at least that's what the boys used to say in high school- and I wasn't providing it for Johnnie. Neither was his wife. She wouldn't have, even if he'd asked her. But he wouldn't ask her- he wasn't the kind of man who would force his wife to submit to him against her will. And he wouldn't leave her either- he'd told me that. He was too honorable to leave his wife penniless and leave those helpless children without their daddy. Johnnie loved me and wanted me. But the only love <I> was giving him was the pure kind. It was weeks before we even kissed for the first time.
##

Against my folks' wishes, we'd been seeing each other for short rides in the truck. The rides were tame enough- mostly we talked. But by the time the first crackling of spring came around, we both knew we were hopelessly in love. Yet even then we did nothing much but talk, and maybe neck a little. "It's so crazy", I told him once. "I always imagined I would probably end up marrying a minister or somebody like that. Somebody with no vices. <You> know". "And you fall for a lumber jockey". "Who drinks far too much".

"And smokes too much". "And", I was ticking off the items on my fingers, "swears too much and goes out with the boys, whoever <they> are, too much, and who <never> goes to church and won't even listen when I try to persuade him to come back to the fold". He examined his nails carefully. "I could walk out the door". "Don't you dare". "And never show my face or my truck around here again". He still wasn't looking at me. "You wouldn't". "Or I could visit Lucille Warren". "You wouldn't. Please! You wouldn't".

He shrugged noncommittally. "I might". And now he <was> seeing her. He'd just admitted it to me. I huddled miserably beside him in the truck. It was all <my> doing- his seeing her. Johnnie and I had been innocent in our love, and that was the way I wanted to keep it. At first, Johnnie hadn't understood- how could he, not being a religious person like me? But then he had said, "All right, kid, if that's how you want it, that's how it'll be". But what had I done, trying to keep us pure? I had driven him into the arms of that scheming woman. I had just

the same as delivered him into the hands of the Devil! So
one week later, I surrendered to him in the little motel on Route
10. My very first time. I was desperate to hold him, to give him whatever
in this world he wanted or needed, and to keep him from the clutches
of Lucille Warren. And, though at the time I blushed
to admit it even to myself, there was in me a growing desire, a sexual
awareness, that Johnnie had set in motion, an awareness that no other
man had ever triggered. I wanted him, with a terrifying fierceness.

Astonishingly enough, it was my own voice I heard there in the
darkness, begging this man to make love to me. "Love me,
Johnnie". "I will, kitten"! Outside, in the
summertime
fields behind the motel, a thousand crickets serenaded us. "Will
you always love me this way"? "Uh huh. Always".

"Mmm". And I snuggled closer to the man l loved.
It was as blissful and fulfilling a night as any bride ever experienced.
I had had no wedding ceremony, no witnesses, no certificate of marriage,
but I had all the joy that goes with them. "Johnnie
**h? "It can't be wrong, can it? Not <really>".

Johnnie rose on one elbow. "Stop worrying. It's never wrong
if love is real". I took great comfort from his words,
and smiled to myself in the darkness. Infinite peace, complete contentment.
Idiot's delight, I later discovered. ##

I felt no conflict
between what I was doing and my strict religious upbringing. I had
always resisted the passes made at me by other kids, and many times
I had thought about my love for Johnnie who, being thirty, brought a
maturity to love that the kids around town could know nothing about.
I had also thought a lot about how God must look on true love, and so
in a way I was keeping my promise to God, my promise to remain pure
until I was married. I <was> practically a bride, after all.

There <would> have been a ceremony if it had been possible.
Of this, I had no doubt. Wouldn't Johnnie do practically anything
in the world to insure my happiness? Of course he would. He'd
not only told me so, he'd proved it. It wasn't Johnnie's fault
that he was hopelessly tied down to that frightful woman who did
her best to make his life unbearable. Just because he was honorable
enough to want to continue supporting his two children, as any decent
man would, that was no reason he should be denied his own small share
of happiness too. And if I could contribute to that, I'd do it. The
cost didn't matter. No price is too high when true love is at stake.

And I had no doubts about how true this love was. I'd
never even petted with a boy, and after I met Johnnie he never touched
me for the longest while, not until I all but threw myself at him.
He was plenty attentive, all right, but he behaved like a gentleman,

and I figured that, emotionally, I was closer to his age than to
my own eighteen and a half. What could a mere twelve years matter?
It wasn't, I was sure, a difference in age that came between people,
but a difference in maturity. And hadn't I rescued him from
Lucille Warren? She'd have gotten him, if I hadn't stopped
her. After all, Lucille Warren <was> a husband-stealer from way
back. But <I'd> been a good girl and now God was blessing
me with the gift of this magnificent man and the wondrous love we
shared. It was only fitting that we seek out whatever joy our union might
bring. <"Love me"?> <"Uh-huh. Love you">.

<"Always and always, Johnnie"?> <"Always">.

<"Mmm">. Convention time in Boston.
A chill wind in the air and the narrow streets packed with snow. From
the entire eastern half of the nation they'd be coming, members
of the Young Christians' League, and I'd been chosen to represent
our chapter. I had mixed emotions about going. I'd been
seeing Johnnie almost a year now, but I still didn't want to leave
him for five whole days. But I had looked forward so much to being
with this church group. I hadn't been doing as much work as I used
to in Westfield and I felt funny about that and wanted to work harder
than ever. I wanted to just throw myself into the good works of this
fine group. So I went to Boston. The first meeting was
held in Faneuil Hall, a great big place where we were able to meet members
from all the other states. My cousin Alma, at whose home I was
staying during the convention, introduced me to a group of young people
from Rhode Island. One of them was a very friendly, lovely fellow
named Ronald, a boy about my age with slick, blond hair and dancing
blue eyes. He looked very different from Johnnie- in fact, he looked
sort of like me. I thought so, and he mentioned it, and Alma said
so too. After the meeting, there was going to be a party at
someone's house. I assumed Alma would get me there, but in the confusion
of the meeting breaking up, we were separated. Outside the hall,
I anxiously looked around for her, then all at once there was a
hand on my elbow. "Hey, there, beautiful twin of mine", Ronald
said. "Need a pumpkin to get to the party"? I couldn't
help laughing with him. "Well, I <should> find Alma"-
I began. "Alma, Schmalma. Come along with me". I went.
##

By the time we arrived, the party was already going strong.
A couple of the girls were laughing rather shrilly and I realized
they were drinking. My folks wouldn't dream of having alcohol in the
house, so my first taste
of it had been- of course- with Johnnie.
I hadn't liked it at first- it was bitter and burning. But when
Johnnie disguised the taste with ginger ale, I enjoyed it. Of course
I enjoyed 'most anything if I did it with Johnnie. Johnnie
**h I suddenly realized he'd been totally out of my thoughts all evening.
But that was only natural, I decided; surely he was still resting

snugly in my heart. "I don't see Alma anywhere",
I said. "She's invisible tonight. C'mon, let's find
out where they're keeping the glasses". I drew back. "I-
I don't think so, Ronald. Not for me". "Aw, come
on". "No- really". He shrugged. "Okay. But
at least come along while <I> get lubricated". The kitchen
was jammed. Strange faces, most of them, and I wasn't even sure
all of them had come from the League meeting.
Under normal circumstances, he had a certain bright-eyed all-American-boy
charm,
with great appeal for young ladies, old ladies, and dogs.
Today, he looked like an Astronaut who had left his vitamin pills on
the bureau and spent six months in space: hollow eyes, hollow cheeks,
hollow stomach. Breakfast, he thought. A shot of orange juice would
make everything seem better. He looked around his little Eden:
bureau, bed, table, chair, two-burner stove. Then he remembered.

"You share a refrigerator", Mrs& Kirby had said, and somehow,
at midnight, after the long drive from New York in pelting rain,
that had sounded reasonable. In the cold light of day, it seemed a lunatic
arrangement. Share bath, maybe- but share refrigerator? She
had explained it- something about summer people's eating out and
not enough space in the units. And where was the thing? He remembered
seeing it last night, when he put away his small store of bachelor-type
eatables. Ah, yes- his half of a refrigerator stood outside,
on the "curving veranda" between Unit Number Three and Unit Number
Four. It was still raining, and Mrs& Kirby's cottages
bloomed through the gray haze like the names they bore, vivid blue
and green and magenta. Charlie downed his orange juice and one of
the long, skinny green pills, his spirits as damp as the day. This
vacation had seemed like a good idea last week, when his doctor had
prescribed it. "Take a full month", the doctor had said. "Lots
of sun, lots of rest. The red pills are a vitamin-and-iron compound.
This is a sleeping capsule. The others will make you a little more
comfortable until you get it licked. You young men get to be my age,
you won't take flu so lightly". Charlie had accepted the
diagnosis without comment. The doctor could call it anything from flu
to beriberi; but Charlie knew what was wrong with him and knew,
too, that there was no pill to cure it. He had loved and lost Vivian
Wayne to somebody else, had watched her marry the somebody else, and
had caught a bear of a cold by kissing the bride good-by forever, which
was really piling it on. He had caught, too, like an ailment, a confirmed
distrust of women. Once burned- scalded, really, because Vivian
had given him every encouragement- forever shy. From now on,
his was going to be a man's world: the North Woods, duck blinds
at dawning, beer and poker and male secretaries. Meanwhile, he
had this miserable cold, and as he leaned against the refrigerator, watching
the rain make sandy puddles at his feet, the doctor's prescription
for lots of sun seemed like a hollow mockery. In these damp circumstances,
he was an odds-on bet to develop pneumonia. He looked
up to see Mrs& Kirby, awesome in a black-and-yellow polka-dotted

slicker, bearing down on him. "Three-day blow"! she bellowed triumphantly. He had noticed before that the natives seemed to regard really filthy weather as a kind of Pyhrric victory over the tourists. "Fine, day after tomorrow", she added. "I hope so", he said. "I've got this cold. Thought I'd bake it out in the sun". "Ah". She studied him briefly. "You've got a peaked look. Better get in out of the wet". Charlie forbore to mention that the wet was somewhat universal, Peony being less than weatherproof. As for its being fine, day after tomorrow, he had the unhappy conviction that it would never be fine again, with Vivian lost to him forever. He could imagine her at this minute, honeymooning in Nassau with what's-his-name, lounging on golden sands, looking forward to a life of unalloyed bliss. All Charlie could look forward to was a yellow pill at noon, a salami sandwich for lunch, and a lonely old age- if he lived that long. He leafed through the light reading provided by Mrs& Kirby for her guests: four separate adventures of the Bobbsey Twins (<At the Seashore, At the Mountains, On the Farm>, and <In Danger>) and several agricultural bulletins
on the treatment of hoof-and-mouth disease in cattle, hideously illustrated. He dozed, only to dream of Vivian, and woke, only to crash into the night table, bruising his other shin. He took a yellow pill, only to choke on it, and went for the salami, only to find something alive in the refrigerator- something pink and fuzzy.
His first thought was that Mrs& Kirby, in her mania for color, had dyed a cat and that cat had somehow managed to open the refrigerator door and climb in; but on further investigation, the thing proved to be a sweater, of the long-hair variety that sheds onto men's jackets- pale, pale pink and, according to the label, size thirty-four. He thought about it for a minute, could find no reasonable explanation for the presence of a sweater in the refrigerator, got the salami, bread, and a Bermuda onion, and put the whole thing out of his mind. ##

Next morning, he found a note in the refrigerator. "Would you mind wrapping your onion"? said this note. "The smell permeates everything"! Everything being the sweater, a lipstick case, and a squirt bottle of Kissin' Kare pink hand lotion. The note paper was pink, too, and the handwriting small and dainty and utterly feminine. Not that he had supposed, considering the evidence, that he was sharing this refrigerator with a member of the Beach Patrol. He scrawled "Sorry" across the bottom of the note and then, against his better judgment, added: "Don't you eat"? He didn't want to encourage anything here; but on the other hand, he didn't want her swiping his salami. "Not onions", came the answer the following day. "Ugh". Must have really smelled up her sweater, he thought, and wondered idly just why she kept the sweater fast-frozen. But then, as he well knew, women are not guided by logic or common sense. Take Vivian. Yes, take Vivian. Somebody had.

Now, if this were Vivian next door to him and if, for some obscure female reason, she kept her clothes in the refrigerator, they would

not be pink. They would be black or white or horse-blanket plaid, chic and splashy, like Vivian herself. Pink, Vivian once had told him, was for baby girls, and grown-up girls who wore pink were subconsciously clinging to their infancy. "Why does this girl keep a sweater in the refrigerator"? he mused aloud. ##

Eh"? It was Mrs& Kirby, making her toilsome way along the veranda, laden with a clattery collection of mops, brushes, and pails. "What's that you say"? "Oh, nothing. Just glad the rain's stopped".

"Oh, yes. Just look at that sky. Be a scorcher by afternoon".

"I hope so. I've got this cold". "So you said". She scrutinized him. "My, you're peaked. You want to watch out that you don't get burned to an ash, first sunny day. I must remember to warn the girl next to you in Larkspur. That pale kind's the worst". That pale kind, Charlie thought. Hardly an inviting description. But then, neither was peaked. He could hear Mrs& Kirby now, warning her pale guest against sunburn. "I spoke to the fellow next door, too", she might say. "He's that peaked kind". Surely there was a better word. Charlie looked in the mirror. Run-down, iron-poor. He looked more closely. Frail, feeble- peaked.

Clearly, two damp days with the Bobbsey Twins had done him no good. The sun, blazing hot as prophesied, was far from kind to Mrs& Kirby's varicolored properties. When Charlie came up from the beach for his four-o'clock pill, the whole establishment (gaudy enough when seen through mist and fog) looked like a floodlit modern painting- great blocks of dizzy color, punctuated at regular intervals by the glaring white of five community refrigerators. This weekend, he thought, he would look around for some more subdued retreat, with Cape roses, maybe, at the door. He could not imagine a flower's being brave enough to grow beside Peony, Larkspur, and the rest. The sweater was gone from the refrigerator, and in its place was a large plastic bag, full of wet pink clothes. No wonder she was so pale, wearing all those cold clothes. He got a red pill and a beer and then, on impulse, transferred the rest of his salami to her side of the refrigerator and scrawled "Be my guest" on the wrapping. It gave him a good feeling. "M-m-m. Thanks", was her answer the next day. The note was propped against his pill bottles and bore a postscript: "You're not at all well, are you"? "I've got this cold", he wrote. Not that it was any of her business. "It's none of my business", said the next note, "but my aunt Elsie used to take lemon juice and honey in hot water for a cold, and she lived to be ninety-six. I mean, she's still living, and she's ninety-six. Why don't you try that"?

"I don't have a lemon". He had to write very small to get it on the bottom of the scrap of paper. By the next

morning, she had turned the paper over. "Gee, neither do I".

Charlie grinned. She didn't <sound> like a pale girl. She sounded a little like a redhead. But then, redheads are often pale.

He stuck his head in Mrs& Kirby's little rental office. "I guess that redhead next to me took your advice. I haven't seen her on the beach". "You won't, if you're looking for a redhead. She's got browny hair". He spent that afternoon on the beach, looking for a pale, browny-haired girl in a pink bathing suit. There were pink bathing suits on blondes, and browny-haired girls in red or black or green bathing suits. There were a sprinkling of daring bikinis and a preponderance of glorified tank suits. Up on a dune, he saw a girl, all by herself, sitting on a camp stool before an easel and absorbed in her painting. He paid little attention to her because she was a redhead and because she was wearing white- one of those bulky, turtle-neck sweaters. On the beach, there were pale girls and not-so-pale girls. And he saw them all as he walked up and down.

At two that morning, he was still walking- up and down Peony, up and down the veranda, up and down the silent, moonlit beach. Finally, in desperation, he opened the refrigerator, filched her hand lotion, and left a note. "I've got this sunburn", said the note, "and I used some of your hand lotion. Hope you don't mind".

"Of course I don't mind", she answered. "You're having a miserable time, aren't you? Use all the lotion you want, and for goodness' sake, stay in out of the sun for a couple of days".

This was a very warm, sympathetic girl, he decided. Sympathy is a fine quality in a woman. Now Vivian, for instance, was not too long on sympathy. She felt, and said, that sympathy only made people feel sorry for themselves; it was a tough world, and you had to be tough to hold your own. He didn't know what was so tough about Vivian's world, slopping around Nassau with what's-his-name. Suppose what's-his-name got a sunburn? Charlie couldn't see Vivian offering any hand lotion. She might peel him, once the worst of the agony was over. ##

Charlie spent the next two days in his pajama bottoms, waiting for the fire in his back to subside, and used generous quantities of the hand lotion. Correspondence passed back and forth. "How's your sunburn now? The only thing, this lotion has glycerin in it, and that whitens the skin, so if you're so anxious to get a tan, you may not want to use it". "I'm not that anxious, but maybe that's why you're so fair".

"That Mrs& Kirby! I'll bet she told you I was puny, too. How's your cold"? "Broiled out. She didn't say you were puny. Are you? What's puny"? "Puny goes with pale and peaked. Do you have anything to read while you're shut

up? There are two things here about Surviving in the Wilderness, and a book called 'Tom Swift and His Speedy Canoe'; but the picture of Tom Swift is pretty sinister. Also the canoe".
There was a crowd in the stands for a change and the sun was hot. The new Riverside pitcher turned out to have an overhand fast ball that took a hop. For a few innings the Anniston team couldn't figure him out. Then, in the fifth, Anniston's kid catcher caught onto a curve and smacked the ball into left center field. @ Eddie Lee, Riverside's redheaded playing manager, ran after the ball but it rolled past him. Phil Rossoff cut over to center from left field to get the relay. Eddie caught up with the ball near the fence and threw it to Phil. @ "Third! Third base"! Eddie shouted. @ Phil spun around and made an accurate throw into Mike Deegan's hands on third base. Mike caught the ball just as the catcher slid into the bag. But the Anniston boy had begun his slide too late. He came into the bag with his body and Mike Deegan brought the ball down full in his face. @
"You bastard"! the Anniston catcher screamed. He jumped to his feet and started to throw punches. Mike Deegan tossed his glove away and began to swing at the catcher. This brought in everybody from both sides, while the spectators stood up and added to the uproar. @ The fighters were separated in a few minutes. The game was resumed. But Mike Deegan was boiling mad now. When the inning was over he cursed the Anniston catcher all the way into the dugout. @ Phil Rossoff, coming in from left field, stopped at the water fountain for a drink. Mike Deegan was standing beside it, facing the field. He was eyeing the Anniston catcher warming up his pitcher before the inning began. @ "Keep your eyes open, sonny"! Mike yelled to the catcher. "You're in for trouble". @ The Anniston catcher did not reply with words. He simply turned to Mike and smiled. This so infuriated Deegan that he spun around and said: "I'll get that little bastard. So help me God, I'll get him".

Phil Rossoff said: "Why don't you leave him alone"?

"Mind your own goddamn business", Mike Deegan said.

Phil shrugged. He stepped into the dugout, wondering why Deegan was always looking for trouble. Maybe the answer was in his eyes. When Deegan smiled his eyes never fit in with his lips. In the last of the sixth inning Mike Deegan got up to bat and hit a fast ball over the left fielder's head. By the time the fielder got his hands on the ball Deegan was rounding third base and heading for home. The left fielder threw and it was a good one. But Mike had no chance of being tagged. The Anniston catcher was straddling home plate. All Deegan had to do was slide, fall away, but instead, he rammed into the catcher. Both fell heavily to the ground. Only Mike got to his feet. He went back to touch home plate, turned and walked to the dugout without looking back. The Anniston players and their manager ran out on the field. They poured water over their catcher's face. He did not move. Then the manager called for a

doctor. The Riverside physician came down to look over the injured ballplayer. Then, quickly, and a little nervously, the doctor ordered a couple of ballplayers to carry the catcher into the dressing room.

Mike Deegan was sitting on the bench, watching. When the ballplayers started to carry the catcher off the field he said: "That ought to teach the sonofabitch". Phil Rossoff, seated next to Deegan, got up and moved to the other end of the bench. The Anniston manager was coming over to the Riverside dugout. He was followed by four of his men. It began to look as if something was going to happen. Mike sat quitely watching the manager come nearer. Eddie Lee moved over to Mike Deegan's side. No one said a word.

The Anniston manager came right up to the dugout in front of Mike. His face was flushed. "Deegan", the manager said, his voice pitched low, quivering. "That was a rotten thing to do".

"For God's sake", Mike said, waving the manager away. "Stop it, will you? Tell your guys not to block the plate".

"You didn't have to ram him". "That's what <you> say". The Anniston manager looked at Eddie Lee. It was a cold and calculated look. He turned and went back across the field to his dugout. He called in the pitcher who had been pitching, and a big, heavy, powerfully built right hander moved out to the mound for Anniston. The game started again and in the eighth inning Mike Deegan came up to bat. Everyone in the ball park seemed to be standing and shouting. The first ball the hefty pitcher threw came in for Mike's head. Deegan fell into the dirt, the ball going over him. He arose slowly and brushed himself off. He got back into the batter's box and on the next pitch dropped into the dirt again.

"Hit the bum"! somebody yelled from the Anniston bench. In the Riverside dugout Frankie Ricco, shortstop, whispered into Phil's ear: "There's gonna be a fight".

"Look at those bastards"! Charlie Haydon, a pitcher, said. "They're looking for trouble". Mike was slow getting into the box this time. When he finally did he had to duck his head quickly away as the pitch came in. "Listen"! he shouted to the pitcher. "One more and I'm coming out there"! "I'll be waiting"! the pitcher yelled back. Mike Deegan pounded the rubber plate with the end of his bat. He stood flat-footed in the box, but not very close to the plate now. The pitcher wound up and the ball came in straight for Mike's head. Deegan dropped, got up, turned and, holding the bat with both hands up against his chest, began to walk slowly out to the mound. The pitcher tossed his glove away and came towards Mike Deegan. They were both walking towards each other, unhurried. Riverside and Anniston players rushed out on the field. In the next moment, it seemed, the infield was crowded with spectators, ballplayers, cops, kids and a dog. There was

much shouting and screaming. Fights sprang up and were quickly squelched. Mike and the Anniston pitcher were pulled away before they even came together. Phil Rossoff and two other Riverside players did not go out on the field when the fighting started. After the game, Phil was taking off his sweatshirt in the dressing room when Mike Deegan came in. "It's a helluva thing", Mike said, looking at Phil, "when a guy's own team-mate won't come out and help him in a fight". Phil sighed and pulled the wet sweatshirt over his head. Frankie Ricco sat down on the bench near Phil. The other players were undressing quietly. Eddie Lee had not come in yet. Mike went over to Phil and stood over him. "Why the hell didn't you come out when you saw them gang up on me"?

"I didn't think it was necessary". "Well! Now that's just fine! You didn't think it was necessary". Mike placed both his hands on his hips. He pushed his jaw forward. "Listen, wise guy, if you think <I'm> gonna do all the fighting for this ball club you're crazy". Mike had a good two inches over Phil and Phil had to look up into Mike's face. "I didn't ask you to fight for the ball club", Phil said slowly. "Nobody else did, either". "You trying to say <I> started the fight"? "I'm not trying to say anything".

Phil turned away and opened his locker, and then he heard Mike Deegan say: "You're yellow, Rossoff"! and Phil banged his locker door shut and spun around. But before anything could happen Frankie Ricco was between them and Eddie Lee had come into the dressing room. "Phil, come into my office", Eddie said.

Phil followed Eddie into the office and shut the door. He sat down before Eddie's desk. "I'm doing you a favor", Eddie said quickly. "You get your unconditional release as of today".

Phil's eyes widened just a trifle. "The best thing for you to do", Eddie said, "is go home. You don't belong in professional baseball". Phil had to clear his throat. "Is this because of what happened out there"? "No", Eddie said. "But it does confirm what I've suspected all along".

Phil stood up. "Listen! This is the second time **h" "Sit down, sit down", Eddie said. "I'm not saying you're yellow. I <am> saying you're not a professional ballplayer".

Eddie Lee leaned forward over the desk. "Now listen to me, Phil. I'm not steering you wrong. You haven't got the heart for baseball". Phil shook his head and Eddie frowned. Suddenly his voice grew hard. "What the hell do you think baseball is? You're not in the big leagues, but if you can't give and take down here what the hell do you think it'll be like up there"?

Phil started to say something but Eddie cut him short.

"Now don't tell me what a good ball player you are. I know you've got talent. But what you haven't got is the heart to back up that talent with. The heart, Phil. You just haven't got the heart for pro-ball, and that's it". Dazed, Phil said: "I don't get it. My batting average **h" Eddie stood up abruptly, then sat down just as abruptly. "What difference does your batting average make? Or your fielding average. Or even the way you run bases. I tell you when it's necessary to hurt in order to win- you won't do it. <That's> what I mean by no heart for the game. Baseball's no cinch. Deegan had no business ramming into that kid out there. He did it because he knows for each guy he puts out of commission that's one less who might take his job away later on. What the hell do you think baseball is? A sport? It's a way of life, goddamit! And you've got to be ready to cut to ribbons anybody who want to take your way of life away from you"! He's wrong! Phil thought. It's only <his> opinion. There were other clubs in this league. He stood up slowly. He was a little pale and shaky. His lips felt glued together. "I think you're wrong, Eddie", he said finally. Eddie nodded. "Okay. You'll get your pay in the morning". Phil turned and left the room, hearing Eddie say: "Someday you'll see I was right".

Phil shut the door behind him. Outside in the dressing room, Frankie Ricco sat on the bench dressed in his street clothes.

"What happened"? Frankie asked. Phil said: "I got my release". "You crazy"? Phil shrugged.

"What for"? Phil sighed. Frankie shook his head. "I don't get it". "I don't know", Phil said. They were silent for a few moments. Then Frankie said: "What are you gonna do"? Phil started to take his clothes off and Frankie sat down on the bench again. Phil took off one shoe and stared at it. "Don't take it like this", Frankie said. "Hell, plenty of guys get let out and come back later. The leagues are full of guys like that". Phil was very quiet.

"What are you gonna do, Phil"? Phil did not answer.

"Why not try another club"? Phil looked up. What the hell right did Eddie have saying a thing like that?

"Springfield's in tomorrow", Frankie said. "Talk to Whitey Jackson". He just didn't know what he was talking about, saying a thing like that. "Will you do it, Phil"?

"Do what"? "Ask Whitey for a job". Phil nodded. "Sure", he said. "Springfield come in tomorrow"?

Frankie nodded. "I'll speak to Whitey".

"Atta boy". "I'll talk to him, all right".

"Don't worry", Frankie said. "You'll get a job there. He needs outfielders bad". "I'm not worried about it", Phil said. "That's the way to talk. What else did Eddie have to say"? "Nothing", Phil said.

Richard's next interest seemed the product of his insularity. His broad reading took him into certain by-ways of religion and the subject of religion began to fascinate him. When he was twelve he took to reading St& Augustine and Aquinas, then Lao-tse, Confucius, Mencius, Suzuki, Hindu tomes by endless Krishnaists and numerous socio-archaeological papers. For his birthday, because Richard had seen them in a store and asked for them, his mother bought him the <Zend-Avesta> and a little image of the Indian god, Acala. And one day, on her own, his mother came home with a present entitled <The Book of the Dead>, which she suspected Richard would enjoy. He was enormously happy with her gift and smiled, then went to his room to read. At dinner one night, when he was fourteen, Richard announced, "There is only one god". "Did you think there were two"? grinned his father. "You don't understand", Richard said gloomily. Through quiet laughter his mother said, "Don't speak to your father like that, Richard". Richard seldom spoke anyhow and he didn't speak to his parents about religion again. His interest in the formal study of religion waned when he was sixteen and he substituted for it an interest in Asian affairs. Although he still didn't speak to anyone, he grew fond of saying, "The future lies in Asia", when the opportunity arose, and when he graduated from high school his parents sent him to New York to give him a foundation, they said, for his life in Asian studies.

Richard was a solitary student in New York and acquired, in his remoteness, a thorough if bookish knowledge of Asian lore, literature, life, politics and history. He was awarded a fellowship to continue his studies in Tokyo and he packed up his clothes, the biwa upon which he had been practicing and his image of Acala, and left to spend a week at home before leaving the country. The week at home was not comfortable. His mother, who had seen little of him for four years, appeared worried about his sailing off by himself for an Orient which, she herself having slight knowledge of it, had to be distrusted. She seemed to work to grow close to her son in the few days he spent at home, talking to him about some of the more pleasant moments of his childhood and then trying to talk to him about those things in which he alone was interested. "Do you still have <The Book of the Dead"?> she asked him and, laughing, she added, "I was nervous about buying a book with a title like that, but I knew you'd like it". "Yes", he lied to shorten the conversation, "I still have it". He was no longer able to relax in the presence of his parents and found it difficult to keep up a conversation

with his mother or father, no matter the subject. As for <The Book of the Dead>, it along with his other books on religion had been incarcerated in a furnace in the basement of the building in which he had lived in New York. He had dusted each of the books carefully and carried them all to the basement and, trembling at having to open the big furnace, given them up to the flames. Then he sped from the dark basement and returned to his room and cried. Richard left America with his clothes, his biwa and his image of Acala and, on the freighter which took him to Japan, he plucked at the biwa, trying to make the sounds he wrought resemble an ancient Japanese tune he had once heard. During his second week at sea he brought the curious melody out of the instrument and suddenly wanted to force the biwa to remain at just that moment in its history when it had given him pleasure. He stole from his cabin late that night and crept out into a gusty North Pacific wind and dropped the biwa into the water. It was so dark that he didn't see it hit the water and the noisy rush of the ocean kept him from hearing it. It was as though the biwa had been eaten up
by the wind. In Tokyo Richard took up a life similar to that which he had lived in New York, except that he had replaced his biwa with a friend. An American student named Charlotte Adams had refused to take notice of his evident aversion to people and had at last succeeded in getting him to talk to her. He had nothing much to say to her but that he said anything seemed to please her and he accompanied her on some of her unusually searching tours of Tokyo. In Charlotte, Richard saw a frankness and a zest for doing things which, after a fashion, he envied. In time, he grew to depend upon her occasional company and she at length was able to encourage him to participate in more social activity. She convinced him that he ought to be a member of some of the small tea-drinking parties she held at her rooms and in the end he complied with her wishes, although it was only rarely that he added anything to the random conversations. At one such gathering Charlotte announced, "I was at Ryusenji today. Have you ever been to Ryusenji"? No one had. "Well, it's at Fudomae and there was a tan young man, quite naked, taking a shower in the pool. I was thoroughly startled". Richard thought it a more promising remark than any made during the last conversation, but Charlotte's manner during the gatherings was more flippant and superficial than when she was alone with him and he was sure her remark would lead to nothing much better than the pointless words which had preceded it. Three of the four persons present, all foreign students in Tokyo, had been playing a game of judging popular Japanese foods by the In and Out system, an equation in which Zen philosophy was used as the modifier. Soba, udon and tea were In because they could be taken noisily. Sushi was Out because it was pretentious. Sashimi was In, Samuel Burns had suggested, because it was too far Out to stay
Out, even if it was a little pretentious. Richard had kept his eyes down throughout the game, the very sound of the chatter nearly painful to his ears. "He wasn't the least bit disturbed by my watching him", said Charlotte. "Did you watch him"? asked

a red-haired girl named Ceecee Witter. "I shouldn't have been
able to do that". "Well I was able to do it", Charlotte
said with no sign of irritation. "For a minute, anyhow. I'm
surprised no one has been there. I've been there a number of times.
Sam, I thought you knew everything about Tokyo. You've never
been to Ryusenji"? "I've heard about it", Samuel
Burns said. "There's a little place there called Lovers Mound
dedicated to Gompachi and Komurasaki". "Yes, a little parkish
place", Charlotte said, and concluded, "Anyhow, it's all
very nice. And the man who brought sweet potatoes into Kanto is buried
there, next to a beautiful seated statue of Fudo. Oh, that's what
I meant to tell you. This is the interesting part, Richard",
she had a bothersome habit of trying to pull him into the talking. "There
was that fellow out there in the bitter cold"- "My
God, it <was> cold today", said Samuel Burns. "Twenty-two
or twenty-three". "And the water would be still colder",
Ceecee seemed to shiver at the thought of it. "And your golden
god", said Samuel Burns, "probably went right home and poured
himself into a boiling bath. It would kill one of us". "But
the point is", Charlotte said, "there he was, freezing, naked
in a little stream of water at Ryusenji, all in worship of Fudo,
the god of fire". Richard's dark eyes came up and seemed for
the tiniest moment to reflect sharp light. It was true; Fudo,
the
god of wisdom, was also thought of as the Japanese version of Acala.
The conversation went on but Richard stopped listening. He found
himself trying to remember something, but he couldn't decide even the
nature of what it was he worked to recall. He had almost given up
when he realized that the dropping of his biwa into the icy jowls of
the black Pacific was the memory for which he had been searching. Perhaps
he sensed some connection between the incident on the freighter
and the ascetic at Ryusenji, he was unable to put it together.
That night, after leaving Charlotte's apartment, Richard walked
about for a time before returning to his room. When he at last did go
to his room, he couldn't sleep and instead paced up and down before
his little image of Acala, thinking first of Charlotte's tale of
the man at Ryusenji, then of his biwa and the invisible Pacific waters.
And the next morning, not sure of why he went, he took the train
to Fudomae and walked to Ryusenji. He was surprised by the sharp
sensation he experienced as he approached the pool which Charlotte
had mentioned. He went through a gate to stand at the edge of the
water and gazed at the two thin falls which dropped from large spigots
high at the back of the pool. On the hillside above was caged what might
have been an incarnation of Fudo, or perhaps a demon. The strange
creature, housed in wire, made him shudder. The sensation he so overwhelmingly
realized was one which told him he had been there before
but he knew he had not, and could not recall any place he had visited
to be likened to the limpid green water or the little fountain-falls
or the green demon imprisoned beyond his reach. He left the pool
and climbed the steep stone stairs to the temple, and the sense of
familiarity with the place would not leave him. Into a little well before

the temple he dropped a hundred-yen coin and then he had an urge
to sound the bell before the temple, to take hold of the rope and crash
it against the circle of bronze; but the spirit he wished to call
out would not, he knew, come in the person of the temple priest. Instead,
he walked around the temple and mounted still another flight of
stairs and stood before the seated Fudo at their head. The black Fudo
seemed to stare rigidly back at him and Richard's eyes were caught
by the Fudo's in fascination, and then Richard was shocked as,
all at once, flames shot out from the sharp features of Fudo's face
and there was a terrible metallic scraping sound, as if the large statue
were about to burst from some pressure within it. Then the flames
were gone, the stillness fell upon the severe black face and Richard
began to tremble violently. Suddenly he emptied his pockets of all his
coins and dropped them into the box before the seated Fudo and hurried
back down both stairways and away from the temple, never looking
back. He walked all the miles back to his room. He seemed to
have picked up a virus that day, because the next morning he had a small
cough and felt a bit hot. He stayed home, reading and refusing to
think about his frightening experience at Ryusenji. But the process
of refusing to think about it was an active reminder in itself and he
couldn't rid himself of a consciousness of it throughout the day. The
cold lingered, making sleep difficult that night, and he remained
in bed still the next morning, now unable to keep from thinking about
the inexplicable sight of burning metal, the wretched sound, the unbearable
feeling of having been to a remote Tokyo temple at some earlier
time in his life. All of the elements of the experience were impossible
and yet the reality of them was heavy upon him and he resolved never
again to visit the temple at Fudomae.

I was thinking of the heat and of water that morning when I was plowing
the stubble field far across the hill from the farm buildings. It
had grown hot early that day, and I hoped that the boy, my brother's
son, would soon come across the broad black area of plowed ground,
carrying the jar of cool water. The boy usually was sent out at about
that time with the water, and he always dragged an old snow-fence lath
or a stick along, to play with. He pretended that the lath was a tractor
and he would drag it through the dirt and make buzzing, tractor
sounds with his lips. I almost ran over the snake before I could
stop the tractor in time. I had turned at the corner of the field
and I had to look back to raise the plow and then to drop it again into
the earth, and I was thinking of the boy and the water anyway, and
when I looked again down the furrow, the snake was there. It lay half
in the furrow and half out, and the front wheels had rolled nearly
up to it when I put in the clutch. The tractor was heavily loaded with
the weight of the plow turning the earth, and the tractor stopped
instantly. The snake slid slowly and with great care from the
new ridge the plow had made, into the furrow and did not go any further.
I had never liked snakes much, I still had that kind of quick panic
that I'd had as a child whenever I saw one, but this snake was
clean and bright and very beautiful. He was multi-colored and graceful
and he lay in the furrow and moved his arched and tapered head only
so slightly. Go out of the furrow, snake, I said, but it did not move

at all. I pulled the throttle of the tractor in and out, hoping to
frighten him with the noise, but the snake only flicked its black, forked
tongue and faced the huge tractor wheel, without fright or concern.

I let the engine idle then, and I got down and went around
the wheel and stood beside it. My movement did frighten the snake and
it raised its head and trailed delicately a couple of feet and stopped
again, and its tongue was working very rapidly. I followed it, looking
at the brilliant colors on its tubular back, the colors clear and
sharp and perfect, in orange and green and brown diamonds the size of
a baby's fist down its back, and the diamonds were set one within the
other and interlaced with glistening jet-black. The colors were astonishing,
clear and bright, and it was as if the body held a fire of
its own, and the colors came through that transparent flesh and skin,
vivid and alive and warm. The eyes were clear and black and the slender
body was arched slightly. His flat and gracefully tapered head lifted
as I looked at him and the black tongue slipped in and out of that
solemn mouth. You beauty, I said, I couldn't kill you. You
are much too beautiful. I had killed snakes before, when I was younger,
but there had been no animal like this one, and I knew it was
unthinkable that an animal such as that should die. I picked him up,
and the length of him arched very carefully and gracefully and only a
little wildly, and I could feel the coolness of that radiant, fire-colored
body, like splendid ice, and I knew that he had eaten only recently
because there were two whole and solid little lumps in the forepart
of him, like fieldmice swallowed whole might make. The body
caressed through my hands like cool satin, and my hands, usually tanned
and dark, were pale beside it, and I asked it where the fire colors
could come from the coolness of that body. I lowered him so he would
not fall and his body slid out onto the cool, newly-plowed earth, from
between my pale hands. The snake worked away very slowly and delicately
and with a gorgeous kind of dignity and beauty, and he carried
his head a little above the rolled clods. The sharp, burning colors of
his body stood brilliant and plain against the black soil, like a target.

I felt good and satisfied, looking at the snake. It shone
in its bright diamond color against the sun-burned stubble and the
crumbled black clods of soil and against the paleness of myself. The
color and beauty of it were strange and wonderful and somehow alien, too,
in that dry and dusty and uncolored field. I got on the tractor
again and I had to watch the plow closely because the field was
drawn across the long hillside and even in that good soil there was a
danger of rocks. I had my back to the corner of the triangular field
that pointed towards the house. The earth was a little heavy and I
had to stop once and clean the plowshares because they were not scouring
properly, and I did not look back towards the place until I had turned
the corner and was plowing across the upper line of the large field,
a long way from where I had stopped because of the snake.
I saw it all at a glance. The boy was there at the lower corner of
the field, and he was in the plowed earth, stamping with ferocity and
a kind of frenzied impatience. Even at that distance, with no sound but

the sound of the tractor, I could tell the fierce mark of brutality
on the boy. I could see the hunched-up shoulders, the savage determination,
the dance of his feet as he ground the snake with his heels,
and the pirouette of his arms as he whipped at it with the stick.

Stop it, I shouted, but the lumbering and mighty tractor roared on,
above anything I could say. I stopped the tractor and I shouted
down to the boy, and I knew he could hear me, for the morning was clear
and still, but he did not even hesitate in that brutal, murdering
dance. It was no use. I felt myself tremble, thinking of the diamond
light of that beauty I had held a few moments before, and I wanted
to run down there and halt, if I could, that frenetic pirouette, catch
the boy in the moment of his savagery, and save a glimmer, a remnant,
of that which I remembered, but I knew it was already too late. I
drove the tractor on, not looking down there; I was afraid to look
for fear the evil might still be going on. My head began to ache, and
the fumes of the tractor began to bother my eyes, and I hated the job
suddenly, and I thought, there are only moments when one sees beautiful
things, and these are soon crushed, or they vanish. I felt the
anger mount within me. The boy waited at the corner, with the
jar of water held up to me in his hands, and the water had grown bubbly
in the heat of the morning. I knew the boy well. He was eleven and
we had done many things together. He was a beautiful boy, really, with
finely-spun blonde hair and a smooth and still effeminate face, and
his eyelashes were long and dark and brushlike, and his eyes were blue.
He waited there and he smiled as the tractor came up, as he would
smile on any other day. He was my nephew, my brother's son, handsome
and warm and newly-scrubbed, with happiness upon his face and his face
resembled my brother's and mine as well. I saw then, too,
the stake driven straight and hard into the plowed soil, through something
there where I had been not long before. I stopped the tractor
and climbed down and the boy came eagerly up to me. "Can I
ride around with you"? he asked, as he often did, and I had as often
let him be on the tractor beside me. I looked closely at his eyes,
and he was already innocent; the killing was already forgotten in
that clear mind of his. "No, you cannot", I said, pushing
aside the water jar he offered to me. I pointed to the splintered, upright
stake. "Did you do that"? I asked. "Yes", he
said, eagerly, beginning a kind of dance of excitement. "I killed
a snake; it was a big one". He tried to take my hand to show
me. "Why did you kill it"? "Snakes are ugly and
bad". "This snake was very beautiful. Didn't you see
how beautiful it was"? "Snakes are ugly", he said again.

"You saw the colors of it, didn't you? Have you ever
seen anything like it around here"? "Snakes are ugly and
bad, and it might have bitten somebody, and they would have died".

"You know there are no poisonous snakes in this area. This
snake could not harm anything". "They eat chickens sometimes",
the boy said. "They are ugly and they eat chickens and I

hate snakes". "You are talking foolishly", I said. "You killed it because you wanted to kill it, for no other reason".

"They're ugly and I hate them", the boy insisted. "Nobody likes snakes". "It was beautiful", I said, half to myself. The boy skipped along beside me, and he was contented with what he had done. The fire of the colors was gone; there was a contorted ugliness now; the colors of its back were dull and gray-looking, torn and smashed in, and dirty from the boy's shoes. The beautifully-tapered head, so delicate and so cool, had been flattened as if in a vise, and the forked tongue splayed out of the twisted, torn mouth. The snake was hideous, and I remembered, even then, the cool, bright fire of it only a little while before, and I thought perhaps the boy had always seen it dead and hideous like that, and had not even stopped to see the beauty of it in its life. I wrenched the stake out, that the boy had driven through it in the thickest part of its body, between the colored diamond crystals. I touched it and the coolness, the ice-feeling, was gone, and even then it moved a little, perhaps a tiny spasm of the dead muscles, and I hoped that it was truly dead, so that I would not have to kill it. And then it moved a little more, and I knew the snake was dying, and I would have to kill it there. The boy stood off a few feet and he had the stake again and he was racing innocently in circles, making the buzzing tractor sound with his lips. I'm sorry, I thought to the snake, for you were beautiful. I took the broken length of it around the tractor and I took one of the wrenches from the tool-kit and I struck its head, not looking at it, to kill it at last, for it could never live.

The boy came around behind me, dragging the stake. "It's a big snake, isn't it"? he said. "I'm going to tell everybody how big a snake I killed". "Don't you see what you have done"? I said. "Don't you see the difference now"?

"It's an ugly, terrible snake", he said. He came up and was going to push at it with his heavy shoes. I could see the happiness in the boy's eyes, the gleeful brutality. "Don't", I said. I could have slapped the boy. He looked up at me, puzzled, and he swayed his head from side to side. I thought, you little brute, you nasty, selfish, little beast, with brutality already developed within that brain and in those eyes. I wanted to slap his face, to wipe forever the insolence and brutal glee from his mouth, and I decided then, very suddenly, what I would do.

Cady didn't come unglued easily, but this had not been a day of glad tidings. Tax worries, production worries, personnel worries, and the letter from Hanford College, his own alma mater, a real snapper.

Hanford realized he had enrolled his son four years ago. Yes, the boy's credentials were in order- scholastic transcript, character references, picture, health record, successful college boards. But due to the many applicants on file, would he co-operate and write

a personal letter giving them his son's motivation, interests and
his qualifications for leadership? Cady Partlow lit his
pipe with no comfort. This was it. This was the letter which would
or would not enroll his son, David, in Hanford. His son who had never
held an office in any organization in the eighteen years of his life.
His son who did not know whether he wanted to be doctor, lawyer, merchant
or chief. He wondered if he had played it wrong. Maybe
he should have kept in touch. Gone back for reunions. But he had been
busy building a business, being a big man in his own town just as
he had been a big man at Hanford, Class of 1935. Besides, Cady Partlow
knew he wasn't the old-grad-type. It wouldn't help
anyway.
Look at Pete Alcorn, who hadn't missed a Hanford ball game
in fifteen years. Pete's son was rejected. Hanford College,
Little
Ivy League, had no room for football players with low grades.

Cady looked at his own son's scholastic record with pride. Good
solid ~B average with a sprinkling of ~A's in math and science.
Imagine his son being that good in science! Mr& Partlow could
still feel a cold sweat on his slightly gray temples as he remembered
what a near thing chemistry had been for him at Hanford. But then,
he hadn't studied very hard. Getting elected president of the student
body took a lot of time and politicking. ##

He put down his
pipe and started to type.
"In response to your letter, I can in good
conscience recommend my son, David, in the field of leadership".

He stopped and looked at the picture of his son, the picture on
his desk which had changed with the years from a laughing baby to a candidate
for Hanford College. He didn't have to be told his son looked
like him. David had the same gray eyes, high cheekbones, dark hair
and a certain rugged ugliness. Height, 6'. Weight, 160. Health,
excellent. He turned back to the typewriter with a little more
confidence. "His interests range from astronomy and geology to electronics,
tennis and swimming. His chief motivation for enrolling at
Hanford is the desire to"- Mr& Partlow banged his fist
on the keyboard, ruining the letter. He paced to the window and looked
at the city he had helped to build. How do you tell a college
president that your son doesn't know what he wants to do? That
you have refused to drive him into the family business or push him
into a profession so you can say at the club, "Of course David has
known since he was twelve he wanted to be an engineer"- or a lawyer,
or an editor? How do you tell a college like Hanford that
your son has a vast potential, that he will find himself? Just give
him time, give him a chance. Cady snapped the Venetian blind
shut and slammed himself down before the typewriter, rolled in a fresh
sheet, and gave his letter the same savage attention he bestowed
on a salesman who needed to have the bucket taken off his thick head.

What a production to make of a letter commending your own son! His eyebrow went up in amusement at his soul-searching panic. He told Hanford his son wanted to go into the field of electronics. He told Hanford his son had participated in numerous high-school activities. He belonged to a social club, a civic group, little theater, swimming team, and had been president of the student forum as well as treasurer of the science club. He finished with a flurry of good wishes to Hanford College and signed the letter. There, that did it. Then he met the grave eyes of his wife, Anne, from the photograph next to David's. He shoved the unsealed letter into his coat pocket.

Better show it to Anne and see if he had omitted anything. After all, his wife had written most of his letters for him in those first lean days of Partlow Products. Anne had a way with words. Half of it was natural, half was Smith College. Yet the whole of Anne was something she had never learned in any college. A woman had it or she didn't. Anne had it. She said what she meant and let it be. She never got on his back. He could take the advice or leave it. He whistled as he locked the office and grinned as he got on the elevator. "You look like you just heard a real gasser, Mr& Partlow". Cady looked at Tom, who had taken him up and down for fifteen years. "I was just thinking how things have changed. When I went to college they begged you to come. Be our guest! It's our pleasure! Now you have to be well rounded, firm in motivation and pre-packed with knowledge"! Tom slid open the door to the lobby. "That's a fact, Mr& Partlow. My John applied to six colleges before he got in". "Going to State"? "No. He's president of the rocket club here, you know. Always messing around with science stuff. Real bright along those lines, you might say. He got a science scholarship to Yale".

"Oh", said Mr& Partlow, "that's fine, Tom. Just fine". As he drove home through the thinning traffic, Cady felt the unease growing. He hadn't told anyone, but he, too, had applied to five colleges for David. They had all turned down his son. Weakness in leadership. So sorry. Limited interests. So sorry. No clear motivation. So sorry. He suddenly realized when he walked into his own pretty darned expensive house that he needed the Martini Anne had waiting for him. But tonight his drink tasted like branch water and even his favorite meal of steak and tossed salad gave no surcease from the growing weight of the letter in his pocket. Nor did looking at Anne ease the tension as it usually did. He liked looking at Anne. Most people did. He liked her blond hair and the sprinkle of freckles across her nose. From those navy-blue eyes she saw things as clearly and honestly as David did. She always could sense the shag end of a woolly day.

"Board meeting tonight, Cady"?

"No, I begged off. Work to do". "Can
I have the car, dad"? "Why not let him take it, Cady?
I know it is midweek, but it's only eight days before commencement.
Let's forget the rules". Cady, deep in thought, neither
heard nor answered. ##

David grinned. Carefully he put down his
steak knife and said loudly, "Mr& Chairman"! Cady
Partlow's head came up like that of the proverbial fire horse. "I'm
sorry, Dave. The car? Of course you can have it".
Dave ate two pieces of pie as he did everything else, slowly, methodically
and with interest. "Hear anything from Hanford yet, dad"?

Cady begged the question. "Don't worry about it, Dave.
Your acceptance will come through". Dave shrugged on his
sports coat and picked up the car keys. "Don't be too sure, dad.
Charles Burke got turned down by Dartmouth and he is a straight-~A
student". Anne said it wasn't surprising because Charles
was antisocial, a lone wolf, and completely one-sided. "I can hardly
say the same about you, Dave"! Dave kissed her lightly.
"Girls, my dear parent, are here to stay! Get my old man to
bed early. He looks a little bit frayed". Anne waited until
the door had slammed and picked up the coffeepot. "Let's go into
the library. You do seem somewhat tattered". Cady trailed
her with the coffee cups and settled into his favorite chair in the comfortable
book-lined room. "I didn't know I looked so dilapidated"!

"Wrong word, darling. Your fur has been rubbed the
wrong way and you show it. Need any help"? "In a way, yes.
Hanford College hasn't decided on Dave's application yet. They
want a letter from me on his motives, interests and leadership. Here's
what I wrote". Cady handed her the letter, drank his
coffee and waited with what he suddenly realized was belligerence.
Already he could feel Anne's questioning eyes. "I know you
wrote this in a hurry,
but, Cady, Dave was only <acting> president
of the student forum for a few days. That was when half the school
was down with flu". "But he <was> president".
"And he wasn't really <elected> treasurer of the science club.
He just took over the week Bill Daley was in the state basketball play-off".

Cady stuck his jaw out. "The fact remains he <was>
treasurer". "And the swimming team. No, Cady, he
made second team. Just missed the
first". "A team is a team", insisted Cady. "Anything
else"? "Yes", she said quietly. "I don't think
you've been quite honest, Cady. It isn't like you. David's interests.
Astronomy. He was mad about stars at the age of nine. Geology,
You and Dave used his rock collection for the bottom of the fishpond

six years ago! Those aren't his interests now". "What do you suggest"? "Just say he likes swimming, tennis, chess and music". "Music! He hasn't been to a symphony concert all season". Anne smiled. "But he plays bass with Chief Crazy Horse and his Five Colts"! "You mean that rock-and-roll combo? Even in that he never solos like Jack on guitar or Rich on sax. He's- he's just there, that's all". "Yes, he's just there. He keeps the beat going. He likes to play bass because he doesn't have to solo. He doesn't like to rise and shine. Don't worry, Cady, he'll be back in the Beethoven fold by next year". Cady appeared slightly mollified. "All right. But I refuse to be brutally honest and mention Chief Crazy Horse and his Five Colts". Anne laughed and Cady felt the tension loosen its grip on the back of his neck. "Maybe I am padding it a bit, Anne", he said. "But you know how hard it is to get a boy into a good college. He has to have leadership as well as grades". Anne folded the worrisome document. "Did you know he is advertising his ham-radio equipment for sale this weekend? He hasn't used it now for several years. Can you really say his motivation for college is electronics"? Cady felt the jolt as though he had stepped off the curb on his heel. "And what would you say he wants to do? Just what"? "It's Dave who is applying to Hanford College. Why don't you ask him"?

For once Cady Partlow wished Anne would yell at him so he could yell back. "I have talked to him, but you know I've never tried to push him into any profession. I won't be guilty of trying to run his life". Anne picked up the towel she was hemming for the hospital guild. "Just because your father tried to make a banker out of you, you've leaned over backward to keep your hands off. But subconsciously you've wanted him to conform to your mold. You want him to be a leader of men, like you". Cady put the well-worn chip back on his shoulder. "Dave <has> qualities of leadership. He just hasn't developed them yet. Give him time".

He never will, Cady. Not the kind of leadership you mean, working with lots of people. All your wishful thinking won't change that.
Remember what you used to say in the Army? You can't run a war with ninety-nine generals and one private"! Cady walked the block to the mailbox, almost ashamed of himself for arguing with Anne.

Martin felt it was incredible that the situation had come to exist at all. And once begun, had grown to such monstrous proportions. The pair of white cotton shorts ruled his life. Lying awake at night, he could see them, laid out on the floor of his mind. When he rose in the morning, the image was still there. He had always been a messy and negligent man. In his bachelor days, his bedroom had been strewn with clothes which his mother, or later the hotel maid, generally saw fit to put in order. No doubt Dolores resented following in their footsteps. But it was fun those first days, kidding

about the trail of garments he left littered across the rug. There was an assertive maleness in his grinning refusal to pick them up. Half slyly he enjoyed seeing her stoop to lift the things. He remembered the first time he saw her, standing across the room at a party. The smooth curve of her neck, very white against hair which curled against it like petals. Her hair was the color of those blooms which in seed catalogues are referred to as "black", but since no flower is actually without color contain always a hint of grape or purple or blue- he wanted to draw the broad patina of hair through his fingers, searching it slowly for a trace of veining which might reveal its true shade beneath the darkness. So he sought her out, and spoke to her, and thought of his hand in her hair. Or against her back, pressed on the column of vertebrae, which held her so magnificently straight and unyielding, until the segments of bone made tiny sharp cracking noises, like the snapped stem of a tulip. But, to put it bluntly, nothing snapped. Yet that had not seriously troubled him, not then. They married. More he could take at leisure. All Martin thought he needed was time: to what better use could time be put?

He saw later that they had made their marriage too quickly. There was too little occasion beforehand for resistance, the brave strong delights of emotional clash and meeting. They had left themselves too much to discover. But, at the start, his new life felt invigorating. Good. It was on the tenth day after the wedding (how could it have been so soon?) that he dropped the shorts on the floor.

"Now, I'm not going to pick up those shorts"!

Martin gave her a teasing pat. "I think you'll get tired of them there". In the morning the shorts were where he had left them. He smiled to himself, and decided not to mention them till Dolores did. It was almost too easy. For he had just remembered: tonight they were having their first guests. The shorts would not be on the floor when he came home that evening. He was wrong. The rest of the bedroom had been groomed to a superhuman neatness, but in the middle of the carpet lay the disheveled shorts. They gave the room a strange note of incongruity, like a mole on a beautiful face.

He saw that Dolores intended to wait until the last minute, thinking he would get nervous. Quietly he determined to foil her. I can be as stubborn as she can, he thought; my nerves are as strong. She'll rush to the bedroom when the doorbell rings. It rang. Ten minutes early. Martin was standing a few feet from the front door. He swung around, eyes toward the bedroom, some fifteen feet away. Dolores stood motionless in the doorway. He could not cross the living room, brush past her, and bend down to retrieve the shorts.

Martin turned his back. He strode to answer the bell.

Bill's hat was deposited in the hall closet. With the most casual and relaxed manner in the world, Dolores led Anthea to the bedroom.

Martin strained his ears. At first he could not be sure.
Then he caught just enough to know that the shorts were still there.
A glissade of giggles slid over their voices. All evening Anthea
favored him with odd, coy looks. Clearly she had been instructed
"not to say a word". For some reason, this ellipsis in the conversation
spread until it swallowed up every other topic. At last there
was a void no one could fill. The Brainards went home early.

Martin realized, later on, that he should have "had it out" with
Dolores that night. As violently as possible. But he was so taken
aback, he could not believe any rage of his would make her give in.
On the contrary, it would only weaken his position if he fumed, while
she stayed calm and adamant. And if he surrendered <after> raving
at her. **h He shivered. Suppose he ran up the white flag altogether?
At once. He considered the sober possibility. In
his head was the echo of those titters with Anthea. There was
something about private feminine whisperings which always made him feel
scabrous and unclean. He remembered his mother gossiping with her
neighborhood women friends,
lowering her voice to a penetrating hoarseness
which might be trusted to carry to the head of the stairs, where he
crouched listening. He could even recall the last time he sat there.
She was talking about him that time, because he had done some bad thing,
something she disliked, but "Afterwards Martin said he was sorry.
He apologized so sweetly, I couldn't keep being annoyed with
him". It wasn't even true that he'd said he was sorry that time;
he had in fact said simply that he wished the thing hadn't happened,
which was as honest as he could put it. But his mother told the
story over and over, till her "Martin said he was sorry" was as
much a part of her as the shape of her thin, pallid ears. The
battle had to be fought. Let the best sex win. But his resolution
hardly seemed to help. If the situation had been bad, it now got
worse. About this time people began "dropping in", considering
that the newly married had been left alone long enough. Angrily Martin
wished they had delayed the wedding and gone on a trip- preferably
one that lasted months- instead of deciding not to postpone the date
until he could get away. Here they were at the mercy of anyone who
chose to come by. These stray people nearly always insisted on Dolores
showing them around the apartment. Of course, the tours of inspection
included the ever-present shorts. It was curious how the
different visitors took this. Some tried to ignore the blot on the bedroom's
countenance. Others asked. Quite a few laughed. To them
all Dolores told a lighthearted and witty tale. "It's a little
contest Martin and I have", she would begin gaily, carrying
the anecdote through a frothy and deceptive course. While he waited
in the living room. Once Martin went along. They entered the
bedroom, and Dolores said nothing. Then one of the guests showed his
merriment. "You were in a hurry, weren't you"? Martin would
have liked to break the man's neck. Dolores smiled; she let the
interpretation stand. Now Martin heard himself give a snort of mock
good nature. With her eyes Dolores dared him for the truth, ready to

begin: <It's a little contest>- Never again did he enter into the ritual of showing the apartment. They kept up a rigid pretense of speaking relations. But Martin seldom felt the impulse to talk about anything. What to talk about? Dolores kept picking up any of his clothes (except the fatal shorts) which he left about, but he had been robbed of pleasure in scattering his possessions. He fell into the habit of putting his clothes in drawers and closets, so his life might impinge as little as possible on hers. The shorts alone remained. In his moments of worst agony, Martin imagined what his friends were saying. The sound of their amazement. <Bizarre:> He could hear the word. <The most bizarre situation. We were up to visit them and> **h He had thought her exactly what he wanted. Six weeks of marriage and I'm using the past tense, he told himself furiously. Pursuing his idea, he saw that it would be impossible to leave her now. Everyone would know why; he would cut a supremely ridiculous figure. He was trapped. Day and night Martin could not drag his mind from the dilemma he had made for himself. His mind scurried frantically, seeking an exit. Alternately he had periods of hostile defeatism in which he determined sullenly, morosely, to live out his life in this fashion. Nothing would change, nothing would ever change. When the solution finally came to him, one night while he was in bed, he was so shaken by its simplicity that he could only wonder why it had not occurred to him before.

In a frenzy of excitement, he considered his plan. Beside his shorts, he would place something of hers. Instantaneously he would have won an immeasurable moral victory, for if she picked up, say, a pair of her panties, she might just as well lift his shorts lying alongside- the expenditure of energy was almost the same. He felt that it would be a particular humiliation to Dolores to pick up her own underwear which he had laid on the floor. Furthermore, he could go on repeating the maneuver endlessly: every time he went in the bedroom, he could drop a slip or a brassiere, or maybe a girdle, next to his shorts. Sooner or later, Dolores would crack. On the other hand, if she didn't remove her own things, it would be difficult to explain to the parade of guests which traversed the apartment.

Martin guessed that Dolores would not be so eager to tell the next installment of her story. The tale, he thought, would become less gay. She had used his rumpled shorts as the very image of his childishness, his lack of control, his general male looseness, while she remained cool, airy, and untouched, the charming teacher who disciplined an unruly body. To have her underclothes linked with his on the floor would draw her visibly into a struggle both bitter and absurd.

Something in the back of his mind was aware that the magnificence of the plan lay in his faith, that the idea would work because he believed in it, since his courage and virility were involved, because it was truly his. The knowledge kept him from analyzing his scheme to death, and took him through the last hours of that night in a peace of exalted fanaticism. The next morning, while Dolores was out of

the room, he went to her bureau drawer, took out a pair of nylon lace pants, and tenderly dropped them next to his shorts. He sat down on the bed. In a surprisingly short time, Dolores appeared. To his delight, her eyes focused at once upon the two garments. Slowly and deliberately she reached down and touched the lace with her fingers, then hesitated for about a second. Ah, he thought, she's going through the chain of reasoning which says she might really just as well pick up my shorts too. He saw that in a moment she had grasped all the implications of a plot which had been weeks in occurring to him. Extending her fingers another inch, she caught up the shorts, and swiftly left the room. She did not look at him, but he noticed that her face was flushed and her eyes unsteady. They breakfasted together, but Martin did not refer to his triumph, and Dolores found a great deal to do in the kitchen, bobbing up and down from the table so that talk was impossible. Well, Martin thought, That'll save. He left for work in high spirits. As he relaxed that day, Martin realized how tense he had been these past weeks. He found that he no longer hated Dolores (he knew how much he had hated her), and he was surprised at a resurgence of an affectionate feeling.

"Good old ~A-~Z", Cap said. "You know, I've got one of your cars at home. as a prominent industrialist, you ought to be interested in his nibs' support group. Isn't his racket down your alley"? <Once it was>, William thought. <But not any more>. A rush of memory swept him back, and he forgot Cap. How did he start on such a ride to brief glory? Simply enough, through the inadvertent agency of his brother-in-law. General Hershey's draft and Doc Eddyman and Cap were responsible for his first eminence, but Fearless Freddy Bryan could take credit, if he cared to (and he did), for the second time. Freddy needed a job, having been detached from a rather dangerous career in real estate and skyscraper financing by Gerry, and it was up to Arthur Willis to provide him with one. Mr& Willis bought Zenith Plastic Products, a skeleton corporation of sorts which had undergone many vicissitudes and whose principal assets were a couple of electronics plants on Long Island engaged in working out government contracts, and installed Freddy in an executive position. Shortly after, Freddy had his usual proliferation of bold ideas. Willis listened patiently, and once in a while William was exposed to them at a family gathering; he generally heard Freddy's suggestions without interest, being absorbed by his own prospering concerns. Probably Mr& Willis was influenced toward deeper involvement by familial loyalty and a concern for his grandchildren. Gerry began to aid Freddy with her father, prodded, no doubt, by Joan's open contempt for Freddy and William's irritating competency. Another factor must have been the eventual disposal of Willis' fortune; she unquestionably assumed that the more he was entwined with Freddy, the more likely he was to reward Freddy richly upon his death. Whatever the reasons, Willis and Bryan started expanding Zenith. They acquired another electronics factory, a specialized ceramics company, an organization that built- very experimentally- high-speed research calculators. Since they were

hunting for national defense contracts, Adam Herberet, a man of surprising resources, entered the combination as a silent partner because of his political connections. Feeling his power, Freddy looked for additional worlds to conquer. Heavy industry, slanted toward inexhaustible government coffers, attracted him. The Allstates Auto Company, a medium-sized firm which manufactured four-wheel-drive vehicles and other off-road equipment, had recently constructed an over-large, modern plant in a burst of misguided optimism. Cursed with a shaky management and dissatisfied stockholders, it was ripe for amalgamation, and Freddy's instinct was to keep growing by stock mergers and small expenditure of cash, and never mind inevitable consequences. With Herberet's blessing, he was convinced that Allstates' Wisconsin folly would be ideal for conversion to airplane sub-assembly, tanks, missiles or ordnance of some kind. At that point William came into the picture. Although not much desiring the account, he had been appointed advertising head of Zenith. Freed of routine by having his own firm and a complaisant partner, his work in New York had given him a broader overall knowledge of business administration and corporate structure; and if he wasn't entirely committed to what he did, he was at least fascinated by the chance of wider opportunities. Mr& Willis, eager to have him allied with the family, wanted advice beyond the confines of his field, and William set out on a serious study of the situation, including trips to Wisconsin and Washington.

In the end, he said: "I'm not enchanted by the proposition, sir. I know a guy named Jack Hamrick, a very bright young engineer who was with Chrysler, and I took him with me to Allstates. It's his expert opinion that the plant isn't well suited to what you have in mind. The conversion will cost a fortune. Besides that, I'm acquainted more or less with the defense hardware situation through my contacts in the Air Force. I think Adam Herberet is guilty of being too hopeful and better informed on defense financing than on the technical side. Missiles have thrown everything up for grabs, and nobody seems to be sure where we go from here. The future of manned aircraft is in doubt, which affects government procurement, and jet transports have revolutionized the airline trade- one jet can take the place of three compound-engine planes. This means the aircraft companies are going to tear into the government market, looking for anything they can get and making the competition tough. Here are a few facts and figures I've assembled. Can't you stay with what you have and wait till the dust settles"? Willis glanced at the bound pages given him and shrugged. "Well", he said, "there is Freddy, you know **h. And Gerry. Freddy is deeply committed to our plans already. He assures me he has people to handle the money raising, and Ham Richert, my lawyer, says the legal aspects of the wedding of Zenith and Allstates are no problem. I don't like to exhibit the deadly dampening effect of an elderly man's caution". "Yes, I appreciate that. I wish you wouldn't tell Freddy I'm lukewarm; I've caused him trouble before, and he's beginning to resent me. If we don't take care, the sisters will be entering the fray on opposite sides, brandishing their cudgels". "Which

is a frightful prospect, Bill". Willis laughed. "One shouldn't mix commercial affairs with patriarchy, but in this case I have no choice **h. Let me think about it. I'm most grateful to you, so grateful I wish you were my principal aide instead of Freddy".

Not to William's surprise, Freddy, Adam and Hamilton Richert prevailed; allied to them was Gerry, devoting much time to swaying her father, and Joan dismissed all thought of the project and William was unwilling to interfere further. Zenith absorbed Allstates, stock transfers were arranged, and Freddy became president of the hyphenated combination. Through Jack Hamrick, William fell into the world of automobile promotion and got several accounts for Shoals and Clay. He forgot about ~A-~Z till, unhappily, he and Hamrick were proved correct. Freddy's backing dropped away from him and Mr& Willis was forced to make up the deficit. Adam, beset by changing defense conditions and the open secret that he was part of the new corporation, couldn't deliver from his end. The Wisconsin plant turned out to be a white elephant. Stock Willis held in abundance fell sharply in value. Confronted by a grim future, Freddy lost his nerve and plumped for a drastic liquidation. Once more Willis summoned William. "You were right", he said- "you and your engineer- and I'm in something of a bind. Freddy's solution doesn't appeal to me. In addition to other defects, I'm a stubborn man and hate to admit to the common garden variety of bad judgment. Will you see if you can help me"? William spent a long week end closeted with Hamrick. His recent experience in motor car advertising, a love for cars of themselves, the existence of ~A-~Z's useless Wisconsin set-up, exposure to exciting conceptions of Hamrick's that nobody would buy, and the coincidental recent failure of a respected but out-dated small-car manufacturer called Ticonderoga Motors had given him an idea of such dimensions he was almost afraid to broach it. Initially, Hamrick's reaction to ~A-~Z going into the passenger car market was discouraging. He thought the financing, the advertising, the production of new models, the founding of a nationwide chain of dealerships was simply too difficult. Then he caught fire. If ~A-~Z could buy Ticonderoga cheaply and use their presses and dies and other equipment, if William could hit precisely the right promotion note, if the money hurdle was not insurmountable **h. They took nearly a month to investigate, marshal statistics, and put their arguments down in black and white. Taking Hamrick with him, William went to Mr& Willis. He was surprised and dubious, but impressed by the engineer and the report. "Your alternative is breathtaking", he said, "and, I'm frank in saying, a bit mad. I wish I was younger and less timid **h. Well, I can't resolve this myself. I'll have to call in the brain trust. Are you willing to run the gantlet? I can't guarantee you a sympathetic audience". "We'll be in there swinging", William said, "but in a way, sir, you've got to decide it yourself. You have the controlling interest and the principal expenditure is yours- and, besides, nobody else is going to have the courage. If they follow anyone, it'll have to be you". He paused. "I should explain:

there's more here for me than advocating my little dream, there's you. You mustn't take a fall, or publicly back away. I hate that. You're- you're Arthur Willis **h. Forgive the hearts and flowers theme". "I rather like the music", Willis replied quietly. "Thank you". At the meeting, attended by Freddy, Richert, Herberet and the ~A-~Z executive staff, with Mr& Willis presiding, William and Hamrick did indeed run the gantlet. From shock and incredulity, most of the listeners went on to open resistance and animosity. "Oh, my God", Ham Richert said, "a little child shall lead them. Move over, General Motors".

"It's absurd, Bill", Freddy said, from a pale face. "You're leading Dad down the garden path". "Your garden,
God damn it"! William said. "I don't enjoy family quarrels", Adam said. "Nor crazy relatives. We're here to transact business. Can't we put an end to this, Arthur"?

"Hear me out, please", William begged. "I'm an advertising hustler, I admit, but I have to get hot once in a larger sphere. Sure, Ticonderoga went broke in the low-priced market bucking the Big Three. Their cars weren't small enough, they didn't have the power, they were old-fashioned. They tried to sell 'em on economy and simple merit. We've arrived at an age for romance and snobbery. We've all been rich and spoiled long enough to hate the machine age. Look what those little European jobs are doing. We'll woo the consumer with a product, not bludgeon him with chromed excess length and weight. Let's make it moonlight and the call of far places and a seduction, at reasonable rates. Ticonderoga folded a few minutes too soon, before the tide changed, still honest and stupid- and the network of dealers the company had is around waiting to be signed up again- waiting for <us>, ready-made. We've got rid of the steam yachts and Georgian houses, and the bloated, too-expensive automobile is next. Why not come down smartly in the world, in a chic fashion, with an Allstates-Zenith"? He swayed them somewhat, but the debate raged on. Financing emerged as the main obstacle. Mr& Willis made it evident that he had contributed his maximum. "Nobody will underwrite it, I'm telling you", Freddy said. "I know what I'm talking about in that department". "There's plenty of risk money", Ham Richert added, "but not for anything this risky". "All right", William said. "We'll try to swing the deal on that basis. If we can't raise the capital, we're through. Nothing has been lost. You're up against it anyhow. Why won't you give me a chance"? A silence fell. Heads instinctively turned in Willis' direction. He smiled at William and slowly rubbed his hands together. "I feel I must answer the question", he said, "since the onus later, if any, should fall on me- I don't relish recriminations spread broadcast outside my family **h. I'm not giving you a chance, Bill, but availing myself of your generous offer of assistance. Good luck to you".

"All the in-laws have got to have their day", Adam said, and glared at William and Freddy in turn. Sweat started out on William's forehead, whether from relief or disquietude he could not tell. Across the table, Hamrick saluted him jubilantly with an encircled thumb and forefinger. Nobody else showed pleasure. ##

Spike-haired,
burly, red-faced, decked with horn-rimmed glasses and an Ivy League suit, Jack Hamrick awaited William at the officers' club. "Hello, boss", he said, and grinned. "I suppose I can never expect to call you 'General' after that Washington episode".

"I'm afraid not".
It was among these that Hinkle identified a photograph of Barco! For it seems that Barco, fancying himself a ladies' man (and why not, after seven marriages?), had listed himself for Mormon Beard roles at the instigation of his fourth murder victim who had said: "With your beard, dear, you ought to be in movies"! Mills secured Barco's photograph from the gentleman in charge, rushed to the Hollywood police station to report the theft, and less than five minutes later, detectives with his picture in hand were on the trail of Cal Barco. On their way, they stopped at every gas station along the main boulevards to question the attendants. Finally, at Ye Olde Gasse Filling Station on Avocado Avenue, they learned that their man, having paused to get oil for his car, had asked about the route to San Diego. They headed in that direction and, at San Juan Capistrano by-the-Sea came upon Barco sitting in the quaint old Spanish Mission Drive-in, eating a hot tamale. At the moment, Barco's back was to the road so he didn't see the detectives close in on his convertible which, in their quest for the stolen lap rug, they proceeded to search. The robe, however, was missing, for by that time Barco had disposed of it at a pawnshop in Glendale. The detectives placed Barco under arrest and, without informing him of the nature of the charge, took him back to Hollywood for questioning.

Thus it was that Barco, apprehended for mere larceny, now began to suspect that one or another of his murders had been uncovered. During the return trip, Barco kept muttering to himself in meaningless phrases, such as: "They're under sand dunes **h They're better off, I tell you **h I saved their souls". The detective, commenting on Barco's behavior, felt that he merely belonged among the myriad citizens of our community who are mentally unhinged- that he was a more or less harmless "nut"! However while in his cell awaiting trial for theft, Barco, in a fit of apprehension, made an attempt to take his own life. The attempt had failed because, when endeavoring to cut his wrists, this murderer of seven women had fainted at the sight of blood. The jail authorities- attaching no particular significance to the episode- offered Barco whisky to revive him; but the old fellow, a lifelong teetotaler, refused it, and no more was thought of the matter. Then it was that District Attorney Welch entered the case. A man of vaulting ambition, with one eye

on the mayorship of Los Angeles, nothing ever escaped him which might possibly lead to personal publicity. It was reported to Welch's office that a thief in the city jail had attempted suicide. Welch wanted to know why. No one knew. Now Welch had a pet theory that everyone is guilty of breaking more laws than he ever gets caught at. The suicide attempt looked to him like an opportunity to put his theory to the test. So he paid a call on Barco in his cell and began their chat by stating bluntly: "Barco, we've got the goods on you! It'll be a lot better if you come clean". At first Barco was evasive and shifty. But with Welch's relentless pursuit of the subject, Barco finally "broke" and started confessing to one murder after another. By the time Barco reached the count of three, the situation seemed to Welch almost too good to be true. But if true, it was the case of which he had dreamed, the case which would throw him into headlines all over America as the hero of a great murder trial. Welch summoned jail officials to Barco's cell. But to Welch's chagrin, the police captain pooh-poohed Welch's credulity in Barco's confession. Barco was clearly a "nut". It required strength, bravado, daring to commit murder. "That worm a murderer? Ridiculous"! Then, for the first time since his arrest, a glint of spirit lit Barco's eyes. His manhood had been attacked. He stiffened and rose to his feet. He'd show them!

"Is that so"? he queried. "Well, for ten years I've been murdering women. I can lead you to every one of the bodies, and there ain't four, nor five, nor six of 'em- there's <seven!>"

The next day the police captain, in derision, organized what he termed "Welch's Wild Goose Chase". For indeed it seemed incredible that anyone could go on committing murder for ten years and not get caught at it, even in Hollywood. The searching party consisted of the police captain, Welch, Barco, policemen with shovels, newspaper reporters, and cameramen. Barco, his state of apprehension gone, never to return, had assumed a matter-of-factness which remained his principal attitude from that time on. He directed the cortege of autos to the sand dunes near Santa Monica. Stopping the cars at a fork in the road, he got out, paced off a certain distance to a spot between two shrub-covered sand hills, and indicated a location.

Orders were given to dig. Nothing was found. Welch was worried. The police captain chortled. The newspaper boys cracked jokes and again Barco's pride was aroused. With greater precision he again paced off a location, this time a little more to the left. With quibs and gibes, the policemen again started digging. Welch was on edge. The captain was remarking that it was a nice day for a picnic when finally one of the shovels struck an object. "There's something here"! said the digger. Joking stopped and everyone gathered around. The digger, thrusting about with his shovel, now raised into view a package crudely wrapped in one of the murderer's Hollywood sport shirts. Although it was a mere fragment of the victim's remains,

it was enough. Welch was wild with delight. His elation grew as Barco's seven disclosures brought to light one reward after another.

Now did Welch truly become the man of the hour, and everything that followed in the procedure of Justice was a new triumph for him. It went to his head, and his ambition increased. It was apparent that Welch was in cahoots with Marshall and would use his power as D&A& to drag every possible sensation into the case. Every new scandal which would provide more "copy" for Marshall's pen would thus mean more publicity for Welch. I knew that both these cynics were waiting with impatience for the dramatic moment when Viola was called to the stand. Once there, the D&A& with devilish cleverness would provide Marshall with headlines: "Viola's Multiple Romances"**h "Viola Lake an Addict"**h "Downfall of Another Film Idol"! It would be fine publicity for the man who was willing to walk to the mayor's throne over the broken reputation of a helpless girl! I studied Welch closely as the trial progressed for any hint which might give me a lead as to how he might be thwarted. It wasn't long before I sensed that there was something deeper than overvaulting ambition back of his desire for Viola's destruction. He was bitter and resentful toward her, <personally> resentful. A dreadful fear entered my consciousness that perhaps he had entertained aspirations toward Viola's favors- or, even more serious perhaps, that he had attained a share of them and had then been superseded by some luckier chap. I did not rest until I had tracked the mystery down. Well, here it is. One day over a year before, there had been a cocktail party in an apartment of a downtown hotel. Viola had been urged to attend, by telephone, and not knowing the host or the character of the party, she had gone. She arrived late and as she entered the party, noted that gentlemen seemed to be in the majority; the air was thick with smoke, empty bottles were in evidence, and several of the guests were somewhat the worse for liquor.

Naturally, Viola had no wish to remain, but she felt she couldn't leave so soon after her arrival, in all politeness to her host. And it so happened that adjacent to a couch on which she had taken refuge was a small table on which she noted a vase of red rosebuds; while projecting from beneath the couch were a pair of feet which, as Fate would have it, belonged to District Attorney Welch.

As Viola sat there, a playful impulse overcame her to remove the shoes and socks from the unidentified feet and, as a prank, insert rosebuds between the toes. A little later the district attorney woke up, emerged from under the couch, looked at his watch, and realized he had an engagement that very hour to address a meeting of the Culture Forum on "The Civic Spirit of the Southland", in the Byzantine room of the hotel where his wife, as president of the forum, was to preside. He made his way to his host's bedroom where he carefully brushed himself off, neatly arranged his hair, and painstakingly selected his hat from the many on the bed. Then, noting neither the absence

of his footwear nor the presence of the rosebuds, he made his way to the Byzantine room and, with his usual dignity, mounted the rostrum. The effect on the intellectuals among his audience may well be imagined.

The incident, aside from reflecting on Welch's political career, had all but wrecked his home life. He never rested until he discovered who the culprit was, and when he did, he vowed vengeance on Viola Lake if ever the chance came his way. <And here it was!> By such innocent actions are human tragedies sometimes set in motion. During these first days of the trial I didn't have as much time to commiserate with Viola as I should have liked. In the first place, it was difficult for us to meet. We couldn't be seen together, for the tongue of Scandal was ever ready to link our names, and the tongue of Scandal finds but one thing to say of the association of a man with a girl, no matter how innocent. I couldn't invite Viola to our house, for Mother snobbishly refused to receive her.

Now the Czarship had not affected my own sense of social values, but Mother had attained a reflected glory through it, which had opened the doors of Los Angeles-Pasadena Society to her. There, Mother was received by the scions of aristocratic lines which are dominated by the Budweisers (of beer derivation), the Chalmers (of underwear origin), and the Heinzes (whose forbears founded a nationally famous trade in pickles). I hated being dragged into the salons of these aristocrats. But Mother insisted, for it is seldom indeed that anyone remotely connected with the cinema is ever received in their exclusive midsts. In fact, it was not until the King of Spain had visited at Pickfair that Mary and Doug were beckoned to cross the sacred barriers which separate Los Angeles and Pasadena from the <hoi-polloi>.

Mother even went so far as to trump up for me matrimonial opportunities with Pasadena debs who had been educated abroad, and with those of the more lenient Los Angeles area where a debutante was a girl who had been to high school. But at long last came a time when I broke away from Mother and her society "chi-chi" in order to spend a cosy evening with Viola and her chaperon at her home.

However, such a hotbed of gossip had grown up during the trial, that every precaution had to be taken to keep my visit from being whispered to the world, Society, and even, alas, to my own mother.
When I arrived at Viola's
I was shown, to my surprise, into the <kitchen>.
Viola greeted me, in checked apron, ladle in hand, and explained it was the cook's night out and that she herself was preparing dinner. I sat and watched proceedings. There was to be roast chicken with dressing, giblet gravy, asparagus, new peas with a sprig of mint, creamed onions, and mashed potatoes- all chosen, prepared, and cooked by Viola herself.