Where their sharp edges seemed restless as sea waves thrusting themselves upward in angry motion, Papa-san sat glacier-like, his smooth solidity, his very immobility defying all the turmoil about him. "Our objective", the colonel had said that day of the briefing, "is Papa-san". There the objective sat, brooding over all. Gouge, burn, blast, insult it as they would, could anyone really take Papa-san?

Between the ponderous hulk and himself, in the valley over which Papa-san reigned, men had hidden high explosives, booby traps, and mines. The raped valley was a pregnant womb awaiting abortion. On the forward slope in front of his own post stretched two rows of barbed wire. At the slope's base coils of concertina stretched out of eye range like a wild tangle of children's hoops, stopped simultaneously, weirdly poised as if awaiting the magic of the child's touch to start them all rolling again. Closer still, regular barricades of barbed wire hung on timber supports. Was it all vain labor? Who would clean up the mess when the war was over? Smiling at his quixotic thoughts, Warren turned back from the opening and lit a cigarette before sitting down. Tonight a group of men, tomorrow night he himself, would go out there somewhere and wait. If he were to go with White, he would be out there two days, not just listening in the dark at some point between here and Papa-san, but moving ever deeper into enemy land- behind Papa-san itself. Was this what he had expected? He hadn't realized that there would be so much time to think, so many lulls. Somehow he had forgotten what he must have been told, that combat was an intermittent activity. Now he knew that the moment illuminated by the vision on the train would have to be approached. It could take place tomorrow night, or it might occur months from now. There was just too much time. Time to become afraid. White's suggestion flattered, but he did not like the identity. He did not spill over with hatred for the enemy. He hadn't even seen him yet **h Pressing his cigarette out in the earth, Warren walked to the slit and scanned the jagged hills. He saw no life, but still stood there for a time peering at the unlovely hills, his gaze continually returning to Papa-san. He had come here in order to test himself. While most of his beliefs were still unsettled, he knew that he did not believe in killing. Yet, he was here. He had come because he could not live out his life feeling that he had been a coward. ##

There were ten men
on the patrol which Sergeant Prevot led out that next night. The beaming ~ROK was carrying a thirty-caliber machine gun; another man lugged the tripod and a box of ammunition. Warren and White each carried, in addition to their own weapons and ammo, a box of ammo for the ~ROK's machine gun. Others carried extra clips for the Browning Automatic Rifle, which was in the hands of a little Mexican named Martinez. Prevot had briefed the two new men that afternoon. "We just sit quiet and wait", Prevot had said. "Be sure the man nearest you is awake. If Joe doesn't show up, we'll all be back here at 0600 hours. Otherwise, we hold a reception. Then we pull out under our mortar and artillery cover, but nobody pulls out until

I say so. Remember what I said about going out to get anybody left behind? That still holds. We bring back all dead and wounded".

At 2130 hours they had passed through the barbed wire at the point of departure. Then began the journey through their own mine fields. Mines. Ours were kinder than theirs, some said. They set bouncing betties to jump and explode at testicle level while we more mercifully had them go off at the head. Mines. Big ones and little. The crude wooden boxes of the enemy, our nicely turned gray metal disks. But theirs defied the detectors. Mines. A foot misplaced, a leg missing. Mines. All sizes: big ones, some wired to set off a whole field, little ones, hand grenade size. Booby traps to fill the head with chunks of metal. Warren tried to shake off the jumble of his fears by looking at the sky. It was dark. Prevot had said that the searchlights would be bounced off the clouds at 2230 hours, "which gives us time to get settled in position". Because they were new men and to be sure that they didn't get lost, Prevot had placed Warren and White in the center of the patrol as it filed out. His eyes now fixed on White's solid figure, Warren could hear behind him the tread of another. He could also hear the stream which he had seen from his position. They were going to follow it for part of their journey. "It's safe", Prevot had said, "and it provides cover for our noise". Soon they were picking their way along the edge of the stream which glowed in the night. On their right rose the embankment covered with brush and trees. If a branch extended out too far, each man held it back for the next, and if they met a low overhang, each warned the other. Thus, stealthily they advanced upstream; then they turned to the right, climbed the embankment, and walked into the valley again. There was no cover here, only grass sighing against pant-legs. And with each sigh, like a whip in the hand of an expert, the grass stripped something from Warren. The gentle whir of each footstep left him more naked than before, until he felt his unprotected flesh tremble, chilled by each new sound. The shapes of the men ahead of him lacked solidity, as if the whip had stripped them of their very flesh. The dark forms moved like mourners on some nocturnal pilgrimage, their dirge unsung for want of vocal chords. The warped, broken trees in the valley assumed wraith-like shapes. Clumps of brush that they passed were so many enchained demons straining in anger to tear and gnaw on his bones. Looming over all, Papa-san leered down at him, threatening a hundred hidden malevolencies. Off in the distance a searchlight flashed on, its beam slashing the sky. The sharp ray was absorbed by a cloud, then reflected to the earth in a softer, diffused radiance. Somewhere over there another patrol had need of light. Warren thought of all the men out that night who, like himself, had left their protective ridge and- fear working at their guts- picked their way into the area beyond. From the east to the west coast of the Korean peninsula was a strip of land in which fear-filled men were at that same moment furtively crawling through the night, sitting in sweaty anticipation of any movement or sound, or shouting amidst confused rifle flashes and muzzle blasts. White's arm went up and Warren raised his own. The patrol was stopping. Prevot

came up "Take that spot over there", he whispered, pointing to
a small clump of blackness. "Give me your machine gun ammo". Warren
handed him the metal box and Prevot quietly disappeared down the
line. Lying in the grass behind the brush clump, Warren looked
about. The others likewise had hidden themselves in the grass and
the brush. Over his shoulder he could see Prevot with the machine gun
crew. Even at this short distance they were only vague shapes, setting
up the machine gun on a small knoll so that it could fire above the
heads of the rest of the patrol. Warren eased his rifle's
safety off and gently, slowly sneaked another clip of ammunition from
one of the cloth bandoleers that marked the upper part of his body with
an ~X. This he placed within quick reach. The walk and his fears
had served to overheat him and his sweaty armpits cooled at the touch
of the night air. Although the armored vest fitted the upper part
of his body snugly, he felt no security. Figures seemed to crouch in
the surrounding dark; in the distance he saw a band of men who seemed
to advance and retreat even as he watched. Certain this menace was
only imaginary, he yet stared in fascinated horror, his hand sticky against
the stock of his weapon. He was aware of insistent inner beatings,
as if prisoners within sought release from his rigid body.
Above, the glowing ivory baton of their searchlight pointed at the clouds,
diluting the valley's dark to a pallid light. Then the figures
which held his attention became a group of shattered trees, standing
like the grotesques of a medieval damnation scene. Even so, he could
not ease the tension of his body; the rough surface of the earth itself
seemed to resist every attempt on his part to relax. Sensing the
unseen presence of the other men in the patrol, he felt mutely united
to these nine near-strangers sharing this pinpoint of being with him.
He sensed something precious in the perilous moment, something akin
to the knowledge gained on his bicycle trip through the French countryside,
a knowledge imprisoned in speechlessness. - In France
he had puzzled the meaning of the great stone monuments men had thrown
up to the sky, and always as he wandered, he felt a stranger to their
exultation. They were poems in a strange language, of which he could
barely touch a meaning- enough to make his being ache with the desire
for the fullness he sensed there. Brittany, that stone-gray mystery
through which he traveled for thirty days, sleeping in the barns of
farmers or alongside roads, had worked some subtle change in him, he
knew, and it was in Brittany that he had met Pierre. Pierre
had no hands; they had been severed at the wrists. With leather cups
fitted in his handlebars, he steered his bicycle. He and Warren had
traveled together for four days. They visited the shipyards at Brest
and Pierre had to sign the register, vouching for the integrity of
the visiting foreigner. He took the pen in his stumps and began to
write. "Wait! Wait"! cried the guard who ran from the
hut to shout to other men standing about outside. They crowded the small
room and peered over one another's shoulders to watch the handless
man write his name in the book. "C'est formidable",
they exclaimed. "Mais, oui. C'est merveilleux".
And then the questions came, eager, interested questions, and many compliments
on his having overcome his infirmity. "Doesn't it

ever bother you", Warren had asked, "to have people always asking you about your hands"? "Oh, the French are a very curious people", Pierre had laughed. "They are also honest seekers after truth. Now the English are painfully silent about my missing hands. They refuse to mention or to notice that they are not there. The Americans, like yourself, take the fact for granted, try to be helpful, but don't ask questions. I'm used to all three, but I think the French have the healthiest attitude". That was the day that Pierre had told Warren about the Abbey of Solesmes. "You are looking tired and there you can rest. It will be good for you. I think, too", he said, his dark eyes mischievous, "that you will find there some clue to the secret of the cathedrals about which you have spoken". Within two weeks Warren was ringing the bell at the abbey gate. The monk who opened the door immediately calmed his worries about his reception: "I speak English", the old man said, "but I do not hear it very well". He smiled and stuck a large finger with white hairs sprouting on it into his ear as though that might help. Smiling at Warren's protestations, the old monk took his grip from him and led him down a corridor to a small parlor. "Will you please wait in here.

MICKIE SAT over his second whisky-on-the-rocks in a little bar next to the funeral parlor on Pennsylvania Avenue. Al's Little Cafe was small, dark, narrow, and filled with the mingled scent of beer, tobacco smoke, and Italian cooking. Hanging over the bar was an oil painting of a nude Al had accepted from a student at the Corcoran Gallery who needed to eat and drink and was broke. The nude was small and black-haired and elfin, and was called "Eloise". This was one place where Moonan could go for a drink in a back booth without anyone noticing him, or at least coming up and hanging around and wanting to know all the low-down. The other patrons were taxi drivers and art students and small shopkeepers. The reporters had not yet discovered that this was his hideaway. His friend Jane was with him. She was wise enough to realize a man could be good company even if he did weigh too much and didn't own the mint. She was the widow of a writer who had died in an airplane crash, and Mickie had found her a job as head of the historical section of the Treasury. This meant sorting out press clippings and the like. Jane sat receptive and interested. Mickie had a pleasant glow as he said, "You see, both of them, I mean the President and Jeff Lawrence, are romantics. A romantic is one who thinks the world is divinely inspired and all he has to do is find the right key, and then divine justice and altruism will appear. It's like focusing a camera; the distant ship isn't there until you get the focus. You know what I'm talking about. I'm sure all girls feel this way about men until they live with them. "But when it comes to war, the Colonel knows what it is and Jeff doesn't. Mr& Christiansen knows that a soldier will get the Distinguished Service Medal for conduct that would land him in prison for life or the electric chair as a civilian. He had a mean, unbroken sheer bastard in his outfit, and someone invented the name Trig for him. That's to say, he was trigger happy. He'd shoot at anything if it was the rear end of a horse or his own sentry.

He was a wiry, inscrutable, silent country boy from the red clay of rural Alabama, and he spoke with the broad drawl that others normally make fun of. But not in front of Trig. I heard of some that tried it back in the States, and he'd knock them clear across the room. There'd been a pretty bad incident back at the Marine base. A New York kid, a refugee from one of the Harlem gangs, made fun of Trig's accent, and drew a knife. Before the fight was over, the Harlem boy had a concussion and Trig was cut up badly. They caught Trig stealing liquor from the officers' mess, and he got a couple of girls in trouble. The fear of punishment just didn't bother him. It wasn't there. It was left out of him at birth. This is why he made such a magnificent soldier. He wasn't troubled with the ordinary, rank-and-file fear that overcomes and paralyzes and sends individual soldiers and whole companies under fire running in panic. It just didn't occur to Trig that anything serious would happen to him. Do you get the picture of the kind of fellow he was"? Jane nodded with a pleasant smile. "All right. There was a sniper's nest in a mountain cave, and it was picking off our men with devilish accuracy. The Colonel ordered that it be wiped out, and I suggested, 'You ask for volunteers, and promise each man on the patrol a quart of whisky, ten dollars and a week-end pass to Davao'. Trig was one of the five volunteers. The patrol snaked around in back of the cave, approached it from above and dropped in suddenly with wild howls. You could hear them from our outpost. There was a lot of shooting. We knew the enemy was subdued, because a flare was fired as the signal. So we hurried over. Two of our men were killed, a third was wounded. Trig and a very black colored boy from Detroit had killed or put out of action ten guerrillas by grenades and hand-to-hand fighting. When we got there, Trig and the Negro were quarreling over possession of a gold crucifix around the neck of a wounded Filipino. The colored boy had it, and Trig lunged at him with a knife and said, 'Give that to me, you black bastard. We don't 'low nigras to walk on the same sidewalk with white men where I come from'. "The Negro got a bad slice on his chest from the knife wound". "What did the Colonel do about the men"? Jane asked in her placid, interested way. Mickie laughed. "He recommended both of them for the ~DSM and the Detroit fellow for the Purple Heart, too, for a combat-inflicted wound. So you see Mr& Christiansen knows what it's all about. But not Jeff Lawrence. When he was in the war, he was in Law or Supplies or something like that, and an old buddy of his told me he would come down on Sundays to the Pentagon and read the citations for medals- just like the one we sent in for Trig- and go away with a real glow. These were heroes nine feet tall to him". ##

Jefferson Lawrence was alone at the small, perfectly appointed table by the window looking out over the river. He had dinner and sat there over his coffee watching the winding pattern of traffic as it crossed the bridge and spread out like a serpent with two heads. Open beside him was <Mrs& Dalloway>. He thought how this dainty, fragile older woman threading her way through the streets

of Westminster on a day in June, enjoying the flowers in the shops,
the greetings from old friends, but never really drawing a deep, passionate
breath, was so like himself. He, and Mrs& Dalloway, too,
had never permitted themselves the luxury of joys that dug into the
bone marrow of the spirit. He had not because he was both poor
and ambitious. Poverty imposes a kind of chastity on the ambitious.
They cannot stop to grasp and embrace and sit in the back seat of cars
along a dark country lane. No, they must look the other way and climb
one more painful step up the ladder. He made the decision with his
eyes open, or so he thought. At any cost, he must leave the dreary Pennsylvania
mining town where his father was a pharmacist. And so he
had, so he had. At State College, he had no time to walk among the
violets on the water's edge. From his room he could look out in springtime
and see the couples hand in hand walking slowly, deliciously,
across the campus, and he could smell the sweet vernal winds. He was
not stone. He was not unmoved. He had to teach himself patiently that
these traps were not for him. He must mentally pull the blinds and
close the window, so that all that existed was in the books before him.
At law school, the same. More of this stamping down of human emotion
as a young lawyer in New York. By the time he was prosperous enough-
his goals were high- he was bald and afraid of women. The only
one who would have him was his cripple, the strange unhappy woman
who became his wife. Perhaps it was right; perhaps it was just. He
had dared to defy nature, to turn his back to the Lorelei, and he was
punished. Like Mrs& Dalloway, with her regrets about Peter Walsh,
he had his moments of melancholy over a youth too well spent. If
he had had a son, he would tell him, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye
may **h This same flower that smiles today tomorrow will be dying".
But then his son could afford it. Lawrence was waiting for Bill
Boxell. The Vice President had called and asked if he could see
the Secretary at his home. He said the matter was urgent. The Secretary
was uneasy about the visit. He did not like Boxell. He suspected
something underhanded and furtive about him. Lawrence could not
put his finger on it precisely, and this worried him. When you disliked
or distrusted a man, you should have a reason. Human nature was
not a piece of meat you could tell was bad by its smell. Lawrence stared
a minute at the lighted ribbon of traffic, hoping that a clue to his
dislike of the Vice President would appear. It did not. Therefore,
he decided he was unfair to the young man and should make an effort
to understand and sympathize with his point of view. A half
hour later the Vice President arrived. He looked very carefully at
every piece of furnishing, as though hoping to store this information
carefully in his mind. He observed the Florentine vase in the hall,
the Renoir painting in the library, as well as the long shelves of well-bound
volumes; the pattern of the Oriental rug, the delicate cut-glass
chandelier. He said to the Secretary, "I understand
you came from a little Pennsylvania town near Wilkes-Barre. How did
you find out about this"? He waved his arm around at the furnishings.

It was not a discourteous question, Lawrence decided.
This young man had so little time to learn he had to be curious;

he had to find out. The Secretary did not tell him at what cost, at what loneliness, he learned these things. He merely said, "Any good decorator these days can make you a tasteful home". The Vice President said, "If you hear of any names that would fix me cheap in return for advertising they decorated the Vice President's home, let me know. I can do business with that kind". Again, Lawrence thought a little sadly, these were the fees of poverty and ambition. Boxell did not have the chance to grow up graciously. He had to acquire everything he was going to get in four years. They had brandy in the library. Boxell looked at Lawrence with a searching glance, the kind that a prosecuting attorney would give a man on trial. What are your weaknesses? Where will you break? How best to destroy your peace? The Vice President said with a slight bluster, "There isn't anyone who loves the President more than I do. Old Chris is my ideal. At the same time, you have to face facts and realize that a man who's been in the Marine Corps all his life doesn't understand much about politics. What does a monk know about sex"? Lawrence listened with the practiced, deceptive calm of the lawyer, but his face was in the shadow. "So, we have to protect the old man for his own good. You see what I mean. Congress is full of politicians, and if you want to get along with them, you have to be politic. This is why I say we just can't go ahead and disarm the Germans and pull down our own defenses. Let me tell you what happened to me today. A fellow came up to me, a Senator, I don't have to tell you his name, and he told me, 'I love the President like a brother, but God damn it, he's crucifying me. I've got a quarter of a million Germans in my state, and those krautheads tune in on Father Werther every night, and if he tells them to go out and piss in the public square, that's what they do. He's telling them now to write letters to their Congressmen opposing the disarmament of Germany'. And another one comes to me and he says, 'Look here, there's a mill in my state employs five thousand people making uniforms for the Navy.
The Bishop looked at him coldly and said "Take it or leave it"!

Literally, there was nothing else to do. He was caught in a machine. But Sojourner was not easily excited or upset and said quite calmly: "Let's go and see what it's like". Annisberg was about seventy-five miles west of Birmingham, near the Georgia border and on the Tallahoosa River, a small and dirty stream. The city was a center of manufacture, especially in textiles, and also because of the beauty of some of its surroundings, a residence for many owners of the great industries in north Alabama. But it had, as was usual in southern cities of this sort, a Black Bottom, a low region near the river where the Negroes lived- servants and laborers huddled together in a region with no sewage save the river, where streets and sidewalks were neglected and where there was much poverty and crime.

Wilson came by train from Birmingham and looked the city over; the rather pleasant white city was on the hill where the chief stores were. Beyond were industries and factories. Then they went down

to Black Bottom. In the midst of this crowded region was the Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church. It was an old and dirty wooden structure, sadly in need of repair. But it was a landmark. It had been there 50 years or more and everybody in town, black and white, knew of it. It had just suffered a calamity, the final crisis in a long series of calamities. For the old preacher who had been there twenty-five years was dead, and the city mourned him. He was a loud-voiced man, once vigorous but for many years now declining in strength and ability. He was stern and overbearing with his flock, but obsequious and conciliatory with the whites, especially the rich who partly supported the church. The Deacon Board, headed by a black man named Carlson, had practically taken over as the pastor grew old, and had its way with the support of the Amen corner. The characteristic thing about this church was its Amen corner and the weekly religious orgy. A knot of old worshippers, chiefly women, listened weekly to a sermon. It began invariably in low tones, almost conversational, and then gradually worked up to high, shrill appeals to God and man. And then the Amen corner took hold, re-enacting a form of group participation in worship that stemmed from years before the Greek chorus, spreading down through the African forest, overseas to the West Indies, and then here in Alabama. With shout and slow dance, with tears and song, with scream and contortion, the corner group was beset by hysteria and shivering, wailing, shouting, possession of something that seemed like an alien and outside force. It spread to most of the audience and was often viewed by visiting whites who snickered behind handkerchief and afterward discussed Negro religion. It sometimes ended in death-like trances with many lying exhausted and panting on chair and floor. To most of those who composed the Amen corner it was a magnificent and beautiful experience, something for which they lived from week to week. It was often re-enacted in less wild form at the Wednesday night prayer meeting. Wilson, on his first Sunday, witnessed this with something like disgust. He had preached a short sermon, trying to talk man-to-man to the audience, to tell them who he was, what he had done in Macon and Birmingham, and what he proposed to do here. He sympathized with them on the loss of their old pastor. But then, at mention of that name, the Amen corner broke loose. He had no chance to say another word. At the very end, when the audience was silent and breathless, a collection was taken and then slowly everyone filed out. The audience did not think much of the new pastor, and what the new pastor thought of the audience he did not dare at the time to say. During the next weeks he looked over the situation. First of all there was the parsonage, an utterly impossible place for civilized people to live in, originally poorly conceived, apparently not repaired for years, with no plumbing or sewage, with rat-holes and rot. It was arranged that he would board in the home of one of the old members of the church, a woman named Catt who, as Wilson afterward found, was briefly referred to as The Cat because of her sharp tongue and fierce initiative. Ann Catt was a lonely, devoted soul, never married, conducting a spotless home and devoted to her church, but a perpetual dissenter and born critic. She soared over the new pastor like an avenging angel lest he stray from the path and not know all

the truth and gossip of which she was chief repository. Then Wilson looked over the church and studied its condition. The salary of the pastor had for years been $500 annually and even this was in arrears. Wilson made up his mind that he must receive at least $2,500, but when he mentioned this to the Deacons they said nothing. The church itself must be repaired. It was dirty and neglected. It really ought to be rebuilt, and he determined to go up and talk to the city banks about this. Meanwhile, the city itself should be talked to. The streets in the colored section were dirty. There was typhoid and malaria. The children had nowhere to go and no place to play, not even sidewalks. The school was small, dark and ill-equipped. The teacher was a pliant fool. There were two liquor saloons not very far from the church, one white, that is conducted for white people with a side entrance for Negroes; the other exclusively Negro. Undoubtedly, there was a good deal of gambling in both. On the other side of the church
was a quiet, well-kept house with shutters and recently painted. Wilson inquired about it. It was called Kent House. The deacon of the church, Carlson, was its janitor. One of the leading members of the Amen corner was cook; there were two or three colored maids employed there. Wilson was told that it was a sort of hotel for white people, which seemed to him rather queer. Why should a white hotel be set down in the center of Black Bottom? But nevertheless it looked respectable. He was glad to have it there. The rest of Black
Bottom was a rabbit warren of homes in every condition of neglect, disrepair and careful upkeep. Dives, carefully repaired huts, and nicely painted and ornamented cottages were jumbled together cheek by jowl with little distinction. The best could not escape from the worst and the worst nestled cosily beside the better. The yards, front and back, were narrow; some were trash dumps, some had flower gardens. Behind were privies, for there was no sewage system. After looking about a bit, Wilson discovered beyond Black Bottom, across the river and far removed from the white city, a considerable tract of land, and it occurred to him that the church and the better Negro homes might gradually be moved to this plot. He talked about it to the Presiding Elder. The Presiding Elder looked him over rather carefully.
He was not sure what kind of a man he had in hand. But there was one thing that he had to stress, and that was that the contribution to the general church expenses, the dollar money, had been seriously falling behind in this church, and that must be looked after immediately. In fact, he intimated clearly that that was the reason that Wilson had been sent here- to make a larger contribution of dollar money.

Wilson stressed the fact that clear as this was, they must have a better church, a more business-like conduct of the church organization, and an effort to get this religious center out of its rut of wild worship into a modern church organization. He emphasized to the Presiding Elder the plan of giving up the old church and moving across the river. The Presiding Elder was sure that that would be impossible. But he told Wilson to "go ahead and try". And Wilson tried.

It did seem impossible. The bank which held the mortgage on the old church declared that the interest was considerably in arrears, and the real estate people said flatly that the land across the river was being held for an eventual development for white working people who were coming in, and that none would be sold to colored folk. When it was proposed to rebuild the church, Wilson found that the terms for a new mortgage were very high. He was sure that he could do better if he went to Atlanta to get the deal financed. But when this proposal was made to his Deacon Board, he met unanimous opposition. The church certainly would not be removed. The very proposition was sacrilege. It had been here fifty years. It was going to stay forever.
It was hardly possible to get any argument on the subject. As for rebuilding, well, that might be looked into, but there was no hurry, no hurry at all. Wilson again went downtown to a different banker, an intelligent young white man who seemed rather sympathetic, but he shook his head. "Reverend", he said, "I think you don't quite understand the situation here. Don't you see the amount of money that has been invested by whites around that church? Tenements, stores, saloons, some gambling, I hope not too much. The colored people are getting employment at Kent House and other places, and they are near their places of employment. When a city has arranged things like this you cannot easily change them. Now, if I were you I would just plan to repair the old church so it would last for five or ten years. By that time, perhaps something better can be done".

Then Wilson asked, "What about this Kent House which you mention? I don't understand why a white hotel should be down here".

The young banker looked at him with a certain surprise, and then he said flatly: "I'm afraid I can't tell you anything in particular about Kent House. You'll have to find out about it on your own. Hope to see you again". And he dismissed the colored pastor. It was next day that Sojourner came and sat beside him and took his hand. She said, "My dear, do you know what Kent House is"? "No", said Wilson, "I don't. I was just asking about it. What is it"? "It's a house of prostitution for white men with white girls as inmates. They hire a good deal of local labor, including two members of our Trustee Board. They buy some supplies from our colored grocers and they are patronized by some of the best white gentlemen in town". Wilson stared at her. "My dear, you must be mistaken". "Talk to Mrs& Catt", she said. And after Wilson had talked to Mrs& Catt and to others, he was absolutely amazed. This, of course, was the sort of thing that used to take place in Southern cities- putting white houses of prostitution with colored girls in colored neighborhoods and carrying them on openly. But it had largely disappeared on account of protest by the whites and through growing resentment on the part of the Negroes as they became more educated and got better wages.

But this situation of Kent House was more subtle. The wages involved were larger and more regular. The inmates were white and

from out of town, avoiding local friction. The backing from the white town was greater and there was little publicity. Good wages, patronage and subscription of various kinds stopped open protest from Negroes. And yet Wilson knew that this place must go or he must go. And for him to leave this job now without accomplishing anything would mean practically the end of his career in the Methodist church, if not in all churches.
Payne dismounted in Madison Place and handed the reins to Herold. There was a fog, which increased the darkness of the night. Two gas lamps were no more than a misleading glow. He might have been anywhere or nowhere. The pretence was that he was delivering a prescription from Dr& Verdi. Secretary of State Seward was a sick man.
The idea had come from Herold, who had once been a chemist's clerk. The sick were always receiving medicines. No one would question such an errand. The bottle was filled up with flour. Before Payne loomed the Old Clubhouse, Seward's home, where Key had once been killed. Now it would have another death. From the outside it was an ordinary enough house of the gentry. He clomped heavily up the stoop and rang the bell. Like the bell at Mass, the doorbell was pitched too high. It was still Good Friday, after all. A nigger boy opened the door. Payne did not notice him. He was thinking chiefly of Cap. If their schedules were to synchronize, there was no point in wasting time. He pushed his way inside. For a moment the hall confused him. This was the largest house he had ever been in, almost the largest building, except for a hotel. He had no idea where Seward's room would be. In the half darkness the banisters gleamed, and the hall seemed enormous. Above him somewhere were the bedrooms. Seward would be up there. He explained his errand, but without bothering much to make it plausible, for he felt something well up in him which was the reason why he had fled the army. He did not really want to kill, but as in the sexual act, there was a moment when the impulse took over and could not be downed, even while you watched yourself giving way to it. He was no longer worried. Everything would be all right. He knew that in this mood he could not be stopped.

Still, the sensation always surprised him. It was a thrill he felt no part in. He could only watch with a sort of gentle dismay while his body did these quick, appalling, and efficient things. He brushed by the idiotic boy and lumbered heavily up the stairs. They were carpeted, but made for pumps and congress gaiters, not the great clodhoppers he wore. The sound of his footsteps was like a muffled drum. At the top of the stairs he ran into somebody standing there angrily in a dressing gown. He stopped and whispered his errand. Young Frederick Seward held out his hand. Panting a little, Payne shook his head. Dr& Verdi had told him to deliver his package in person. Frederick Seward said his father was sleeping, and then went through a pantomime at his father's door, to prove the statement.

"Very well", Payne said. "I will go". He smiled, but now that he knew where the elder Seward was, he did not intend to go. He pulled out his pistol and fired it. It made no sound. It

had misfired. Reversing it, he smashed the butt down on Frederick Seward's head, over and over again. It was the first blow that was always difficult. After that, violence was exultantly easy. He got caught up into it and became a different person. Only afterwards did an act like that become meaningless, so that he would puzzle over it for days, whereas at the time it had seemed quite real.
The nigger boy fled down the stairs, screaming, "Murder".
It was not murder at all. Payne was more methodical than that. He was merely clearing a way to what he had to do. He ran for the sick room, found his pistol was broken, and threw it away. A knife would do. From childhood he had known all about knives. Someone blocked the door from inside. He smashed it in and tumbled into darkness. He saw only dimly moving figures, but when he slashed them they yelled and fled. He went for the bed, jumped on it, and struck where he could, repeatedly. It was like finally getting into one's own nightmares to punish one's dreams. Two men pulled him off. Nobody said anything. Payne hacked at their arms. There was a lady there, in a nightdress. He would not have wanted to hurt a lady. Another man approached, this one fully dressed. When the knife went into his chest, he went down at once. "I'm mad", shouted Payne, as he ran out into the hall. "I'm mad", and only wished he had been. That would have made things so much easier. But he was not mad. He was only dreaming. He clattered down the stairs and out of the door. Somewhere in the fog, the nigger boy was still yelling murder. One always wakes up, even from one's own dreams. The clammy air revived him. Herold, he saw, had fled. Well, one did not expect much of people like Herold. He unhitched his horse, walked it away, mounted, and spurred it on. The nigger boy was close behind him. Then the nigger boy turned back and he was alone. He rode on and on. He had no idea where he was. After some time he came to an open field. An open field was better than a building, that was for sure, so he dismounted, turned off the horse, and plunged through the grass. He felt curiously sleepy, the world seemed far away; he knew he should get to Cap, but he didn't know how. He was sure, for he had done as he was told, hadn't he? Cap would find him and take care of him. So choosing a good tree, he clambered up into it, found a comfortable notch, and curled up in it to sleep, like the tousled bear he was, with his hands across his chest, as though surfeited with honey. Violence always made him tired, but he was not frightened. ##

In Boston, Edwin Booth was winding up a performance of <A New Way to Pay Old Debts>. It was a part so familiar to him that he did not bother to think about it any more. Acting soothed him. On a stage he always knew what to do, and tonight, to judge by the applause, he must be doing it better than usual. As Sir Giles Overreach (how often had he had to play that part, who did not believe a word of it), he raised his arm and declaimed: "Where is my honour now"? That was one of the high spots of the play. The audience, as usual, loved it. He was delighted to see them so happy. If he had any worries, it was only the small ones, about

Mother in New York, and his daughter Edwina and what she might be doing at this hour, with her Aunt Asia, in Philadelphia. Everyone is ambivalent about his profession, if he has practised it long enough, but there were still moments when he loved the stage and all those unseen people out there, who might cheer you or boo you, but that was largely, though not entirely, up to you. They made the world seem friendly somehow, though he knew it was not. #/7,#

Wilkes
was quite right about one thing. Laura Keene had been in the green room. The commotion had brought her into the wings. Since she could not act, one part suited her as well as any other, and so she was the first person to offer Mr& Lincoln a glass of water, holding
it
up to the box, high above her head, to Miss Harris, who had asked for it. She had been one of the first to collect her wits.

It was not so much that the shot had stunned the audience, as that they had been stunned already. Most of them had seen <Our American Cousin> before, and unless Miss Keene was on stage, there was not much to it. The theatre was hot and they were drugged with boredom.

The stage had been empty, except for Harry Hawk, doing his star monologue. The audience was fond of Harry Hawk, he was a dear, in or out of character, but he was not particularly funny. At the end of the monologue the audience would applaud. Meanwhile it looked at the scenery. "Well, I guess I know enough to turn you inside out, you sockdologizing old mantrap"! said Trenchard, otherwise Hawk. There was always a pause here, before the next line. That was when the gun went off. Yet even that explosion did not mean much. Guns were going off all over Washington City these days, because of the celebrations, and the theatre was not soundproof. Then the audience saw a small, dim figure appear at the edge of the Presidential box. "<Sic semper tyrannis>", it said mildly. Booth had delivered his line. Behind him billowed a small pungent cloud of smoke. They strained forward. They had not heard what had been said. They had been sitting too long to be able to stand up easily. The figure leapt from the box, almost lost its balance, the flag draped there tore in the air, the figure landed on its left leg, fell on its hands, and pressed itself up. Harry Hawk still had his arm raised towards the wings. His speech faltered. He did not lower his arm. The figure was so theatrically dressed, that it was
as though
a character from some other play had blundered into this one. The play for Saturday night was to be a benefit performance of <The Octoroon>. This figure looked like the slave dealer from that. But it also looked like a toad, hopping away from the light. There was something maimed and crazy about its motion that disturbed them. Then it disappeared into the wings. Harry Hawk had not shifted position, but he at last lowered his arm. Mrs& Lincoln screamed. There was no mistaking that scream. It was what anyone who had ever

seen her had always expected her to do. Yet this scream had a different note in it. That absence of an urgent self-indulgence dashed them awake like a pail of water. Clara Harris, one of the guests in the box, stood up and demanded water. Her action was involuntary. When something unexpected happened, one always asked for water if one were a woman, brandy if one were a man. Mrs& lincoln screamed again. In the Presidential box someone leaned over the balustrade and yelled: "He has shot the President"! That got everybody up. On the stage, Harry Hawk began to weep. Laura Keene
brushed by him with the glass of water. The crowd began to move. In Washington City everyone lived in a bubble of plots, and one death might attract another. It was not exactly panic they gave way to, but they could not just sit there. The beehive voices, for no one could bear silence, drowned out the sound of Mrs& Lincoln's weeping.

At the rear of the auditorium, upstairs, some men tried to push open the door to the box corridor. It would not give. A Dr& Charles Taft clambered up on the stage and got the actors to hoist him up to the box. In the audience a man named Ferguson lost his head and tried to rescue a little girl from the mob, on the same principle which had led Miss Harris to demand water. Someone opened the corridor door from the inside, and called for a doctor. Somehow Dr& Charles Leale was forced through the mob and squeezed out into the dingy corridor. He went straight to the Presidential box.

As usual, Mrs& Lincoln had lost her head, but nobody blamed her for doing so now. There was a little blood on the hem of her dress, for the assassin had slashed Miss Harris's companion, Major Rathbone, with a knife. Rathbone said he was bleeding to death. By the look of him he wasn't that far gone.
With a sneer, the man spread his legs and, a third time, confronted them.

Once more, Katie reared, and whinnied in fear. For a moment, boy and mount hung in midair. Stevie twisted and, frantically, commanded the mare to leap straight ahead. But the stranger was nimbler still. With a bold arm, he dared once more to obstruct them. Katie reared a third time, then, trembling, descended. The stranger leered. Seizing the bridle, he tugged with all his might and forced Katie to her knees. It was absurd. Stevie could feel himself toppling. He saw the ground coming up- and the stranger's head. With incredible ferocity, he brought his fists together and struck. The blow encountered silky hair and hard bone. The man uttered a weird cry, spun about, and collapsed in the sand. Katie scrambled to her feet, Stevie agilely retaining his seat. Again Katie reared, and now, wickedly, he compelled her to bring her hooves down again and again upon the sprawled figure of the stranger. He could feel his own feet, iron-shod, striking repeatedly until the body was limp. He gloated, and his lips slavered. He heard himself chortling. They rode around and around to trample the figure into the sand. Only the top of the head, with a spot bare and white as a clamshell, remained visible.

Stevie was shouting triumphantly. A train hooted. Instantly, he chilled. They were pursuing him. He was frightened; his fists clutched so tightly that his knuckles hurt. Then Katie stumbled, and again he was falling, falling! "Stevie! Stevie"!

His mother was nudging him, but he was still falling. His head hung over the boards of Katie's stall; before it was sprawled the mangled corpse of the bearded stranger. "Stevie, wake up now! We're nearly there". He had been dreaming. He was safe in his Mama's arms. The train had slowed. Houses winked as the cars rolled beside a little depot. "Po' Chavis"! the trainman
called. He came by and repeated, "Po' Chavis"!

#CHAPTER
6#

<Bong! Bong!> startled him awake. The room vibrated as if a giant hand had rocked it. <Bong!> a dull boom and a throbbing echo. The walls bulged, the floor trembled, the windowpanes rattled. He stared at the far morning, expecting a pendulum to swing across the horizon. <Bong!> He raced to the window and yanked at the sash. <Bong!> the wood was old, the paint alligatored. <Bong!> A fresh breeze saluted him. <Six> o'clock! He put his his head out. There was the slate roof of the church; ivy climbed the red brick walls like a green-scaled monster. The clock which had struck presented an innocent face. In the kitchen Mama was wiping the cupboards. "There's a tower and a steeple on the church a million feet high. And the loudest clock in the whole world"!

"I know, Stephen", she smiled. "They say that our steeple is one hundred and sixty-two feet high. The clock you heard strike- it's really the town clock- was installed last April by Mrs& Shorter, on her birthday". He dressed, and sped outdoors. He crossed Broome Street to Orange Square. The steeple leaned backward, while the church advanced like a headless creature in a long, shapeless coat. The spire seemed to hold up the sky. Port Jervis, basking in the foothills, was the city of God. The Dutch Reformed Church, with two steeples and its own school was on Main Street; the Episcopal Church was one block down Sussex Street; the Catholic Saint Mary's Church, with an even taller steeple and a cross on top, stood on Ball Street. The Catholics had the largest cemetery, near the Neversink River where Main Street ran south; Stevie whistled when he passed these alien grounds. God was everywhere, in the belfry, in the steeple, in the clouds, in the trees, and in the mountains hulking on the horizon. Somewhere, beyond, where shadows lurked, must be the yawning pit of which Papa preached and the dreadful Lake of Fire. So, walking in awe, he became familiar with God, who resided chiefly in Drew Centennial Church with its high steeple and clock. There was no church like Drew Church, no preacher like Papa, who was intimate with Him, and could consign

sinners to hellfire. To know God he must follow in Papa's footsteps. He was fortunate, and proud. The veterans, idling on their benches in the Square, beneath the soldiers' monument, got to their feet when Papa approached: "Morning, Reverend"! His being and His will- Stevie could not divide God from his Papa- illumined every parish face, turned the choir into a band of angels, and the pulpit into the tollgate to Heaven. "We have nine hundred and eleven members in our charge", Mama announced, "and three hundred and eighty Sunday-school scholars". When Papa went out to do God's work, Stevie often accompanied him in the buggy, which was drawn by Violet, the new black mare. Although they journeyed westerly as far as Germantown, beyond the Erie roundhouse and the machine shop, and along the Delaware and Hudson Canal, and northward to Brooklyn, below Point Peter, he could see the church spire wherever he looked back. Sometimes they went south and rolled past the tollhouse- "Afternoon, Reverend"!- and crossed the suspension bridge to Matamoras; that was Pennsylvania. In the Delaware River, three long islands were overgrown with greening trees and underbrush. South of Laurel Grove Cemetery, and below the junction of the Neversink and the Delaware, was the Tri-State Rock, from which Stevie could spy New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as well as New York, simply by spinning around on his heel. On these excursions, Papa instructed him on man's chief end, which was his duty to God and his own salvation. However, a boy's lively eyes might rove. Where Cuddleback Brook purled into the Neversink was a magnificent swimming hole. Papa pointed a scornful finger at the splashing youth: "Idle recreation"! Stevie saw no idols; it troubled him that he couldn't always see what Papa saw. He was torn between the excitement in the sun-inflamed waters and a little engine chugging northward on the Monticello Branch. "Where you been today"? Ludie inquired every evening, pretending that he did not care. "He'll make a preacher out of you"! "No, he won't"! Stevie flared. "Not me"! "Somebody's got to be a preacher in the family. He made a will and last testament before we left Paterson. I heard them! Uncle and Aunt Howe were the witnesses". "Will he die"? "Everybody does". Ludie could be hateful. To speak of Papa dying was a sin. It could never happen as long as God was alert and the Drew steeple stood guard with its peaked lance. Stevie was constantly slipping into the church. He pulled with all his strength at the heavy, brass-bound door, and shuffled along the wainscoted wall. The cold, mysterious presence of God was all around him. At the end of a shaft of light, the pews appeared to be broad stairs in a long dungeon. Far away, standing before a curtained window in the study room, was his father, hands tucked under his coattails, and staring into the dark church. The figure was wreathed in an extraordinary luminescence.

The boy shuddered at the deathly pale countenance with its wrinkles and gray hair. Would Papa really die? The mouth was thin-lipped and wide, the long cleft in the upper lip like a slide. When Papa's

slender fingers removed the spectacles, there were red indentations on the bridge of the strong nose. "It's time you began to think on God, Stephen. Perhaps one day He will choose you as He chose me, long ago. Therefore, give Him your affection and store up His love for you. Open your heart to Him and pray, Stephen, pray! For His mercy and His guidance to spare you from evil and eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire". Stevie had heard these words many times, yet on each occasion they caused him to tremble. For he feared the Lake of Fire. He strove to think of God and His eternal wrath; he must pray to be spared. Papa was disappointed that none of the brothers had heard the Call. Not George, Townley, or Ted, certainly not Ludie. Burt was at Hackettstown and Will at Albany Law School, where they surely could not hear it. Someday God would choose <him>. He would hear the Call and would run to tell Papa. The stern face would relax, the black-clad arms would embrace him, "My son"! Yet how might he know the Call when it came? Probably, as in Scriptures, a still, small voice would whisper. It would summon him once; if he missed it, never again. What if it came when he was playing, or was asleep and dreaming?

He must not fail to hear it. He was Papa's chosen; therefore, nothing but good could happen to him, even in God's wrathful storms. When the skies grew dark and thunder rolled across the valley, he was unafraid. Aggie might fly into a closet, shut the door and bury her head in the clothes; he dared to wait for the lightning. Lightning could strike you blind if you were a sinner! But he was good. He clenched his fists and faced the terror. Thunder crashed; barrels tumbled down the mountainsides, and bounced and bounced till their own fury split them open. Lightning might strike the steeples of the other churches; not of Drew Church. A flash illumined the trees as a crooked bolt twigged in several directions. Violet whinnied from the stable. He ran out into the downpour, sped across the yard and into the buggy room. "Don't be afraid, Violet"! he shouted, and was aghast at the echoes. "Don't you be afraid"! He would save her. If there was a fire or a flood he would save Mama first and Violet next. Drenched and shaking, he stood near the sweet-smelling stall and dared to pat her muzzle. "Don't you be afraid, Violet"! After the storm, the sky cleared blue and cool, and fragrant air swept the hills. When the sun came out, Stevie strode proudly into Orange Square, smiling like a landlord on industrious tenants. The fountain had brimmed over, the cannon were wet, the soldiers' monument glistened. Even before the benches had dried, the Civil War veterans were straggling back to their places. The great spire shone as if the lightning had polished it. He jumped. The pointed shadow had nearly touched him. He trailed Ludie to the baseball game in the lot on Kingston Street near the Dutch Reformed.

"Go on home"! Ludie screeched at him. "Someone'll tell Papa"! No one told on Ludie, not even when he slipped live grasshoppers into the mite-box. Ludie did as he pleased.

Ludie took his slingshot and climbed to the rooftop to shoot
at
crows. Ludie chewed roofer's tar. Ludie had a cigar box full of
marbles and shooters, and a Roman candle from last Fourth of July.
Ludie hopped rides on freight cars, and was chased by Mr& Yankton,
the railroad guard. He came home overheated, ran straight to the ice-chest,
and gulped shivery cold water. Stevie envied him. That
Ludie! He, too, cocked his cap at a jaunty angle, jingled marbles
in his pocket, and swaggered down Main Street. On the Christophers'
lawn, little girls in white pinafores were playing grownups at
a tea party. A Newfoundland sat solemnly beside a doghouse half his
size. Stevie yearned for a dog. He wondered whether God had a dog in
the sky. He meandered down Pike Street, past the First National
Bank with its green window shades. He crossed the tracks to
Delaware House, where ladies in gay dresses and men in straw boaters
and waxed mustaches crowded the verandah. A tall lady, with a ruffled
collar very low on her bosom, turned insolent green eyes upon him. She
was taller than Aggie. She was so beautiful with her rosy mouth
and haughty air that she had to be wicked. Fiddles screeched; a piano
tinkled. "P& J&"- as Ludie called the town- was
crowded with summer people who came to the mountains to escape the
heat in the big cities. They stayed at hotels and boardinghouses, or
at private homes. Rich people went to Delaware House, Opera House,
American House or Fowler House.
<If the crummy bastard could write!> That's how it should be.
<It's those two fucken niggers! Krist, I wish they could write!>
Nigger pussy. He thought of sweet wet nigger pussy. <Oh,
sweet
land of heaven, haint there just nothin like sweet nigger pussy!>
He thought of her, the first one. He had caught her coming out of the
shack. She was a juicy one. <Oh how they bounced!> Fresh, warm,
sweet and juicy, sweet lovin sixteen, she was. <Man how I love
nigger pussy!> The snow came a little faster now, he noted. He thought
of Joe Harris, the nigger who had gone after his sister. He chuckled,
the memory vivid. <Jee- sus, We Fixed him! Yooee, we
fixed him!> The snow again. <If only the fucken weather wasn't
so lousy! Goddamn niggers, Lord. What I have to put up with!
Sonuvabitch, I can't figure out what in hell for they went and put
niggers in my squad for. Only one worth a shit, and that's Brandon.
He ain't so bad> **h His thoughts turned to other things
**h The big shock everybody had when they found ol Slater and those
others done for. <Kaboom for>. He had been pretty scared
himself, wondering what the hell was coming off. But he soon saw which
way the ball was bouncing. Soon came back to his senses. "I soon
came back to my senses", he said, aloud, to the young blizzard, proudly,
drawing himself up, as if making a report to some important superior
**h <I was the first to get my squad on the ball, and anybody
thinkin it was easy is pretty damn dumb. Look at thum. That goddamn
redheader was the worst. He kept sayin, not me, not me, I don't wanta
wind up like em. But I told him, goddammit>. "I told him",
he said aloud **h <They'll get the guys that done it. That'll

put the place back to normal>. Normal, <by God. Maybe it's a good thing it happened. Maybe they'll stop it now, once for all. Clean the place up. They're doin it now. I hear the whole bunch is croakin out in the snow>. They'll get the guys that done it **h There was something troubling him though: as yet <they hadn't> **h Five days **h <Keerist> **h Prickly twinges of annoyance ran through him. His eyes blinked hard, snapping on and squashing some bad things that were
trying to push their way into him. A tune began to whirl inside his head. One of his favorites: "Guitar Boogie". It always came on, faithfully, just like a radio or juke box, whenever he started to worry too much about something, when the bad things tried to push their way into him. The music drove them off, or away, and he was free to walk on air in a very few moments, humming and jiving within, beating the rhythm within. He glowed with anticipation about what would happen to the culprits when they caught them **h <Turn the bastards over to me- to me and my boys- no nigger ever got what would be comin to them>- reactionary bastards **h. He had never heard the word reactionary before his life as a ~POW began. It was a word he was proud of, a word that meant much to him, and he used it with great pleasure, almost as if it were an exclusive possession, and more: he sensed himself to be very highly educated, four cuts above any of the folks back home **h "<Four cuts at least>", he chuckled to himself, "<and I owe it all to them>". The word also
made him feel hate, sincere hate, for those so labeled. He used it very effectively when he wanted to get his squad on the ball. It came up again and again in the discussion sessions **h <Lousy Reactionary bastards been tryin to fuck up the Program for months. Months. Hired, hard lackeys of the Warmongering Capitalists. Not captured, sent here. To fuck up the Program. You guys remember that. Remember that> **h He heard himself haranguing them. He saw himself before them delivering the speech. He laughed, suddenly, feeling a surge of power telling him of his hold over them, seeing himself before them, receiving utmost respect and attention. One day, Ching had told him (smiling, patting him on the back) as they walked to the weekly conference of squad leaders, "Keep it up, your squad is good, one of the best, keep it up, keep up the good work". He would! That was really something, coming from Ching **h "Really something", he said, aloud **h <Dirty Reactionary bastards comin down here in the night and bumpin off ol Slater and those other poor bastards>. "They'll get them by God and let them bring them down here to me, just let them, God I'll slice their balls right off **h" His arm moved swiftly, violently, once, twice. He felt intense satisfaction. He was tingling within. Before him, mutilated, bleeding to death, they lay. It was as if it had been done. "Bastards", he said aloud, spitting on them. He halted, and looked around. Rivers of cold sweat were suddenly unleashed within him. The thought came back, the one nagging at him these past four days. He tried to stifle it. But the words were forming. He knew he couldn't. He braced himself **h <Somebody'll hafta start thinkin> **h He fought it, seeking to kill the last few words, but on they came **h <bout takin>- <his> **h He was

trembling, a strange feeling upon him, fully expecting some catastrophe
to strike him dead on the spot. But it didn't. And he took heart;
the final word came forth **h <place> **h Now he heard it, fully:
"**h <bout takin his place> **h" He listened, waited, nothing
happened. He felt good. His old self. The music arrived, taking
him **h its rhythm stroked him, snaked all through him, the lyrics
lifted him, took him from one magic isle to another, stopping briefly
at each **h <Brandon. He is good. Damn good. But a nigger. Johnson.
Jesus, the guy says he is trying. But he isn't with it, not
at all with it. When I talked to Ching about it, he said, Everyone
can learn, if he is not a Reactionary or lazy. No one is stupid. That's
what he said. He oughta know. It is plain as hell Johnson is
no Reactionary. So you're not tryin, Johnson, you bastard you>
**h He looked over at him, lying there, asleep, and he felt a wave of
revulsion. How he loathed him. Sleepy-eyed, soft-spoken Johnson **h
<Biggest thorn in my side of the whole fucken squad> **h He was
the guy what always goofed at Question Time **h <Why couldn't they
have dumped him off on someone else? Why me? Why didn't the
damn Reactionaries bump him off? Why Slater?> **h Like a particle
drawn to a magnet he returned to that which was pressing so hard
in his mind. The music surged up, but it failed to check it. <Who
is the man to take His place? The guy with most on the Ball>. Most
on the Ball. <Handle men. Thoroughly Wised Up. Knows the score>
**h With a supreme effort, he broke it off. He turned to the
window again. A gnawing and gnashing within him. The snow was tumbling
down furiously now. Huge glob-flakes hitting the ground, piling higher
and higher. He stared at it, amazed, alarmed **h <The whole fucken
sky's cavin in! Keeeerist! Lookit it! Cover the whole
building, bury us all, by nightfall. Jesus! **h Somebody, got to be
somebody **h If I don't put my two cents in soon, somebody else
will **h I know they're waitin only for one thing: for the bastards
what done it to be nailed. Maybe they already got them>. He was
again tingling with pleasure, seeing himself clearly in Slater's shoes.
<Top dog, sleeping and eating right there with the Staff. Ching,
Tien, all of them **h Top dog **h Poor ol Slater **h Jesus, imagine,
the crummy bastards, they'll get em, they'll get what's
comin to em> **h He whirled about suddenly. It was nothing, though
his heart was thumping wildly. Somebody was up. That was all.
"Boy, you're stirrin early", a sleepy voice said. "Yehhh",
said Coughlin, testily, eyeing him up and down. "Lookit
that come down, willya", said the man, scratching himself, yawning.

"Yehhh", said Coughlin, practically spitting on him.

The man moved away. <That's the way. They'll toe
the line. Goddamn it. Keep the chatter to a minimum, short answers,
one word, if possible. Less bull the more you can do with um. That's
Brown's trouble. All he does is to bullshit with his squad,
and they are the stupidest bastards around. Just about to get their asses
kicked into hut Seven. Plenty of room there now. All those dumb
8-Balls croaked. You can do anything with these dumb fucks if you

know how. Anything. They'd cut their mothers' belly open. Give
um the works. See,> he's <already snapping it up, the dumb jerk>
**h Coughlin grinned, feeling supremely on top of things **h He watched
the snow once again. It infuriated him. It made no sense to him
**h He whirled around, suddenly hot all over, finding the man who had
been standing before him a few moments back, nailing him to the spot
on which he now stood, open-mouthed- "You- Listen!-
name William Foster's Four Internal Contradictions in Capitalism.
Quick- Quick- NOW"! The man shrank before
the hot fury, searching frantically for the answer **h Finnegan
woke up. There was a hell of a noise this time of morning. He stared
out the window. <For Christ's sake! The whole fucken sky's
caved in!> He looked for the source of the noise that had awakened
him **h It was that prick Coughlin. What the hell was he up
to now? Why didn't he drop dead? How did they miss him when they
got Slater? <How?> **h Then he was asking himself the usual
early morning questions: <What the Hell am I doin here? Is
this a nut-house? Am I nuts? Is this for real? Am I dreamin?>
**h From somewhere in the hut came Coughlin's voice.

"How long did you study? How long, buddy"? "For
Christ's sake"! a voice pleaded. "Don't Christsake
me, buddy! Just answer. C'mon- <c'mon!>"
**h <I'm no hero. Did I start the damn war? **h Automatically,
Finnegan started going over today's lesson **h Capitalism rots from
the core. Did I start the damn war? Who did? That's a good
one. I thought I knew. Why don't Uncle Sam mind his own fucken
business? I'll bet both together did. I bet. So fuck them both.
Goddamn. Goddammit. Just let me go home to Jersey, back to the
shore, oh, Jesus, the shore. The waves breakin in on you and your girl
at night there on the warm beach in the moonlight even Jesus sweet
Mary. If I hafta do this to stay alive by God I'll do it. I
hated the goddamn army from the first day I got in anyhow. All pricks
like Coughlin run it anyway, one way or another. Fuck them> **h He
rolled over and tried to shut out the noise, now much louder. He snuggled
into the blanket **h ##

Brandon dreamed. <He was sitting
on top of a log which was spinning round and around in the water. A
river, wide as the Missouri, where it ran by his place. The log was
spinning. But he was not>. So what? Why should I be spinning just
because the goddamn log is spinning? (he asked this out loud, but
no one heard it over the other noise in the hut). <Over on the bank,
the west bank, a man stood, calling to him. He couldn't make out
what he was saying. No doubt it had to do with the log. Why should
he be concerned>?

Rousseau is so persuasive that Voltaire is almost convinced that
he should burn his books, too. But while the two men are riding into
the country, where they are going to dinner, they are attacked in
the dark of the forest by a band of thieves, who strip them of everything,

including most of their clothes. "You must be a very learned man", says Voltaire to one of the bandits. "A learned man"? the bandit laughs in his face. But Voltaire perseveres. He goes to the chief himself. "At what university did you study"? he asks. He refuses to believe that the bandit chief never attended a higher institution. "To have become so corrupt", he says, "surely you must have studied many arts and sciences".

The chief, annoyed by these questions, knocks Voltaire down and shouts at him that he not only never went to any school, but never even learned how to read. When finally the two bedraggled men reach their friend's home, Voltaire's fears are once again aroused. For it is such a distinguished place, with such fine works of art and such a big library, that there can be little doubt but that the owner has become depraved by all this culture. To Voltaire's surprise, however, their host gives them fresh clothes to put on, opens his purse to lend them money and sits them down before a good dinner.

Immediately after dinner, however, Rousseau asks for still another favor. Could he have pen and paper, please? He is in a hurry to write another essay against culture. Such was the impromptu that Voltaire gave to howls of laughter at Sans Souci and that was soon circulated in manuscript throughout the literary circles of Europe, to be printed sometime later, but with the name of Timon of Athens, the famous misanthrope, substituted for that of Rousseau. How cruel! But at the same time how understandable. How could the rich, for whom life was made so simple, ever understand the subterfuges, the lies, the frauds, the errors, sins and even crimes to which the poor were driven in their efforts to overcome the great advantages the rich had in the race of life? How, for example, could a Voltaire understand the strange predicament in which a Rousseau would find himself when, soon after the furor of his first <Discourse,> he acquired still another title to fame? This time as a musician. As a composer. Ever since he had first begun to study music and to teach it, Rousseau had dreamed of piercing through to fame as the result of a successful opera. But his facility in this genre was not great. And his efforts to get a performance for his <Gallant Muses> invariably failed. And for good reasons. His operatic music had little merit. But then one day, while on a week's visit to the country home of a retired Swiss jeweler, Rousseau amused the company with a few little melodies he had written, to which he attached no great importance. He was really amazed to discover the other guests so excited about these delicate little songs.

"Put a few such songs together", they urged him. "String them onto some sort of little plot, and you'll have a delightful operetta".

He didn't believe them. "Nonsense", he said. "This is the sort of stuff I write and then throw away"! "Heaven forbid"! cried the ladies, enchanted by his music. "You must make an opera out of this material". And they wouldn't

leave off arguing and pleading until he had promised. Oh,
the irony and the bitterness of it! That after all his years of effort
to become a composer, he should now, now when he was still stoutly
replying to the critics of his <Discourse on the Arts and Sciences,>
be so close to a success in music and have to reject it.
Or at least appear to reject it! But what else could he do?
You couldn't on the one hand decry the arts and at the same time
practice them, could you? Well, yes, perhaps in literature, since
you could argue that you couldn't keep silent about your feelings against
literature and so were involved in spite of yourself. But now music
too? No. That would be too much! And the fault, of
course, was Rameau's. The fault was Rameau's and that of the whole
culture of this Parisian age. For it was Rameau's type of music
that he had been trying to write, and that he couldn't write. These
little songs, however, were sweet nothings from the heart, tender
memories of his childhood, little melodies that anyone could hum and
that would make one want to weep. But no. He couldn't appear
as a composer now. That glory, craved for so long, was now forbidden
to him. Still, just for the ladies, and just for this once, for this
one weekend in the country, he would make a little piece out of his
melodies. The ladies were delighted and Jean Jacques was applauded.
And everyone went to work to learn the parts which he wrote.

But then, after the little operetta had been given its feeble
amateur rendering, everyone insisted that it was too good to be lost
forever, and that the Royal Academy of Music must now have the manuscript
in order to give it the really first-rate performance it merited.

Rousseau was aware that he must seem like a hypocrite, standing
there and arguing that he could not possibly permit a public performance.
The ladies especially couldn't understand what troubled him.
A contradiction? Bah, what was a contradiction in one's life?
Every woman has had the experience of saying no when she meant yes,
and saying yes when she meant no. Rousseau had to admit that
though he couldn't agree to a public performance, he would indeed,
just for his own private satisfaction, dearly love to know how his work
would sound when done by professional musicians and by trained voices.

"I'd simply like to know if it is as good as you kind people
seem to think", he said. Duclos, the historian, pointed
out to Jean Jacques that this was impossible. The musicians of the
Royal Opera would not rehearse a work merely to see how it would sound.
Merely to satisfy the author's curiosity. Rousseau agreed.
But he recalled that Rameau had once had a private performance
of his opera <Armide,> behind closed doors, just for himself alone.

Duclos understood what was bothering Rousseau: that the writer
of the Prosopopoeia of Fabricius should now become known as the
writer of an amusing little operetta. That would certainly be paradoxical.
But Duclos thought he saw a way out. "Let me do the
submitting to the Royal Academy", he suggested. "Your name will

never appear. No one will even suspect that it is your work".

To that Rousseau could agree. But now what crazy twists
and turns of his emotions! Afraid at one and the same time
that his work might be turned down- which would be a blow to his pride
even though no one knew he was the author- and that the work would
be accepted, and then that his violent feelings in the matter would
certainly betray how deeply concerned he was in spite of himself. And
how anxious this lover of obscurity was for applause! And thus torn
between his desire to be known as the composer of a successful opera
and the necessity of remaining true to his proclaimed desire for anonymity,
Rousseau suffered through several painful weeks. All these
emotions were screwed up to new heights when, after acceptance and
the first rehearsals, there ensued such a buzz of excitement among Parisian
music lovers that Duclos had to come running to Rousseau to
inform him that the news had reached the superintendent of the King's
amusements, and that he was now demanding that the work be offered
first at the royal summer palace of Fontainebleau. Imagine the honor
of it! "What was your answer"? Jean Jacques asked,
striving to appear unimpressed. "I refused", Duclos said.
"What else could I do? Monsieur de Cury was incensed, of course.
But I said I would first have to get the author's permission.
And I was certain he would refuse". How infuriating all
this was! Why had not this success come to him before he had plunged
into his <Discourse,> and before he had committed himself to a life
of austerity and denial? Now, when everything was opening up to
him- even the court of Louis /15,!- he had to play a role of
self-effacement. Back and forth Duclos had to go, between M&
de Cury and Jean Jacques and between the Duke d'Aumont and Jean
Jacques again, as his little operetta, <The Village Soothsayer,>
though still unperformed, took on ever more importance. And
of course the news of who the composer was did finally begin to get
around among his closest friends. But they, naturally, kept his secret
well, and the public at large knew only of a great excitement in musical
and court circles. How titillating it was to go among people
who did not know him as the composer, but who talked in the most
glowing terms of the promise of the piece after having heard the first
rehearsals. The furor was such that people who could not possibly have
squirmed their way into the rehearsals were pretending that they were
intimate with the whole affair and that it would be sensational. And
listening to such a conversation one morning while taking a cup of
chocolate in a cafe, Rousseau found himself bathed in perspiration,
trembling lest his authorship become known, and at the same time dreaming
of the startling effect he would make if he should proclaim himself
suddenly as the composer. He felt himself now, as he himself
says in his <Confessions,> at a crucial point of his life. And that
was why, on the day of the performance, when a carriage from the royal
stables called to take him to the palace, he did not bother to shave.
On the contrary, he was pleased that his face showed a neglect of
several days. Seeing him in that condition, and about to enter
the hall where the King, the Queen, the whole royal family and all

the members of the highest aristocracy would be present, Grimm and the Abbe Raynal and others tried to stop him. "You can't go in that way"! they cried. "Why not"? Jean Jacques asked. "Who is going to stop me"? "You haven't dressed for the occasion"! they pointed out to him. "I'm dressed as I always am", Rousseau said. "Neither better nor worse".

"At home, yes", they argued. "But here you are in the palace. There's the King. And Madame de Pompadour".

"If they are here, then surely I have the right to be here", Rousseau said. "And even more right. Since I am the composer"!

"But in such a slovenly condition". "What is slovenly about me"? Rousseau asked. "Is it because of my slovenliness that hair grows on my face? Surely it would grow there whether I washed myself or not. A hundred years ago I would have worn a beard with pride. And those without beards would have stood out as not dressed for the occasion. Now times have changed, and I must pretend that hair doesn't grow on my face. That's the fashion. And fashion is the real king here. Not Louis /15,, since even he obeys. Now, if you don't mind, I should like to hear my own piece performed".

But of course behind his boldness he didn't feel bold at all. He trembled lest his piece should fail. And this in addition to his usual fear of being among people of high society. His fear of making some inane or inappropriate remark. And even deeper than that: his fear lest in this closed hall he should suddenly itch to relieve himself. Could he walk out in the midst of his piece? Here, before the court? Before the King?
It was the first time any of us had laughed since the morning began.
##

The rider from Concord was as good as his word. He came spurring and whooping down the road, his horse kicking up clouds of dust, shouting: "They're a-coming! By God, they're a-coming, they are"! We heard him before he ever showed, and we heard him yelling after he was out of sight. Solomon Chandler hadn't misjudged the strength of his lungs, not at all. I think you could have heard him a mile away, and he was bursting at every seam with importance. I have observed that being up on a horse changes the whole character of a man, and when a very small man is up on a saddle, he'd like as not prefer to eat his meals there. That's understandable, and I appreciate the sentiment. As for this rider, I never saw him before or afterwards and never saw him dismounted, so whether he stood tall or short in his shoes, I can't say; but I do know that he gave the day tone and distinction. The last thing in the world that resembled a war was our line of farmers and storekeepers and mechanics perched on top of a stone wall, and this dashing rider made us feel a good deal sharper and more alert to the situation. We came

down off the wall as if he had toppled all of us, and we crouched behind it. I have heard people talk with contempt about the British regulars, but that only proves that a lot of people talk about things of which they are deplorably ignorant. Whatever we felt about the redcoats, we respected them in terms of their trade, which was killing; and I know that I, myself, was nauseated with apprehension and fear and that my hands were soaking wet where they held my gun. I wanted to wipe my flint, but I didn't dare to, the state my hands were in, just as I didn't dare to do anything about the priming. The gun would fire or not, just as chance willed. I put a lot more trust in my two legs than in the gun, because the most important thing I had learned about war was that you could run away and survive to talk about it.

The gunfire, which was so near that it seemed just a piece up the road now, stopped for long enough to count to twenty; and in that brief
interval, a redcoat officer came tearing down the road, whipping his horse fit to kill. I don't know whether he was after our rider, who had gone by a minute before, or whether he was simply scouting conditions; but when he passed us by, a musket roared, and he reared his horse, swung it around, and began to whip it back in the direction from which he had come. He was a fine and showy rider, but his skill was wasted on us. From above me and somewhere behind me, a rifle cracked. The redcoat officer collapsed like a punctured bolster, and the horse reared and threw him from the saddle, except that one booted foot caught in the stirrup. Half crazed by the weight dragging, the dust, and the heat, the horse leaped our wall, dashing out the rider's brains against it, and leaving him lying there among us- while the horse crashed away through the brush. It was my initiation to war and the insane symphony war plays; for what had happened on the common was only terror and flight; but this grinning, broken head, not ten feet away from me, was the sharp definition of what my reality had become. And now the redcoats were coming, and the gunfire was a part of the dust cloud on the road to the west of us. I must state that the faster things happened, the slower they happened; the passage and rhythm of time changed, and when I remember back to what happened then, each event is a separate and frozen incident. In my recollection, there was a long interval between the death of the officer and the appearance of the first of the retreating redcoats, and in that interval the dust cloud over the road seems to hover indefinitely. Yet it could not have been more than a matter of seconds, and then the front of the British army came into view. It was only hours since I had last seen them, but they had changed and I had changed. In the very front rank, two men were wounded and staggered along, trailing blood behind them. No drummers here, no pipers, and the red coats were covered with a fine film of dust. They marched with bayonets fixed, and as fixed on their faces was anger, fear, and torment. Rank after rank of them came down the road, and the faces were all the same, and they walked in a sea of dust. "Committeemen, hold your fire! Hold your fire"! a voice called, and what made it even more terrible

and unreal was that the redcoat ranks never paused for an instant, only some of them glancing toward the stone wall, from behind which the voice came. The front of their column had already passed us, when another officer came riding down the side of the road, not five paces from where we were. My Cousin Simmons carried a musket, but he had loaded it with bird shot, and as the officer came opposite him, he rose up behind the wall and fired. One moment there was a man in the saddle; the next a headless horror on a horse that bolted through the redcoat ranks, and during the next second or two, we all of us fired into the suddenly disorganized column of soldiers. One moment, the road was filled with disciplined troops, marching four by four with a purpose as implacable as death; the next, a cloud of gun smoke covered a screaming fury of sound, out of which the redcoat soldiers emerged with their bayonets and their cursing fury. In the course of this, they had fired on us; but I have no memory of that. I had squeezed the trigger of my own gun, and to my amazement, it had fired and kicked back into my shoulder with the force of an angry mule; and then I was adding my own voice to the crescendo of sound, hurling more vile language than I ever thought I knew, sobbing and shouting, and aware that if I had passed water before, it was not enough, for my pants were soaking wet. I would have stood there and died there if left to myself, but Cousin Simmons grabbed my arm in his viselike grip and fairly plucked me out of there; and then I came to some sanity and plunged away with such extraordinary speed that I outdistanced Cousin Simmons by far. Everyone else was running. Later we realized that the redcoats had stopped their charge at the wall. Their only hope of survival was to hold to the road and keep marching.
##

We tumbled to a stop in Deacon Gordon's cow hole, a low-lying bit of pasture with a muddy pool of water in its middle. A dozen cows mooed sadly and regarded us as if we were insane, as perhaps we were at that moment, with the crazy excitement of our first encounter, the yelling and shooting still continuing up at the road, and the thirst of some of the men, which was so great that they waded into the muddy water and scooped up handfuls of it. Isaac Pitt, one of the men from Lincoln, had taken a musket ball in his belly; and though he had found the strength to run with us, now he collapsed and lay on the ground, dying, the Reverend holding his head and wiping his hot brow. It may appear that we were cruel and callous, but no one had time to spend sympathizing with poor Isaac- except the Reverend. I know that I myself felt that it was a mortal shame for a man to be torn open by a British musket ball, as Isaac had been, yet I also felt relieved and lucky that it had been him and not myself. I was drunk with excitement and the smell of gunpowder that came floating down from the road, and the fact that I was not afraid now, but only waiting to know what to do next. Meanwhile, I reloaded my gun, as the other men were doing. We were less than a quarter of a mile from the road, and we could trace its shape from the ribbon of powder smoke and dust that hung over it. Wherever you looked, you saw Committeemen running across the meadows, some away from the road, some toward it, some

parallel to it; and about a mile to the west a cluster of at least fifty militia were making their way in our direction. Cousin Joshua and some others felt that we should march toward Lexington and take up new positions ahead of the slow-moving British column, but another group maintained that we should stick to this spot and this section of road. I didn't offer any advice, but I certainly did not want to go back to where the officer lay with his brains dashed out. Someone said that while we were standing here and arguing about it, the British would be gone; but Cousin Simmons said he had watched them marching west early in the morning, and moving at a much brisker pace it had still taken half an hour for their column to pass, what with the narrowness of the road and their baggage and ammunition carts.

While this was being discussed, we saw the militia to the west of us fanning out and breaking into little clusters of two and three men as they approached the road. It was the opinion of some of us that these must be part of the Committeemen who had been in the Battle of the North Bridge, which entitled them to a sort of veteran status, and we felt that if they employed this tactic, it was likely enough the best one. Mattathias Dover said: "It makes sense. If we cluster together, the redcoats can make an advantage out of it, but there's not a blessed thing they can do with two or three of us except chase us, and we can outrun them". That settled it, and we broke into parties of two and three. Cousin Joshua Dover decided
to remain with the Reverend and poor Isaac Pitt until life passed away- and he was hurt so badly he did not seem for long in this world. I went off with Cousin Simmons, who maintained that if he didn't see to me, he didn't know who would. "Good heavens, Adam", he said, "I thought one thing you'd have no trouble learning is when to get out of a place". "I learned that now", I said. ##

We ran east for about half a mile before we turned back to the road, panting from the effort and soaked with sweat. There was a clump of trees that appeared to provide cover right up to the road, and the shouting and gunfire never slackened. Under the trees, there was a dead redcoat, a young boy with a pasty white skin and a face full of pimples, who had taken a rifle ball directly between the eyes. Three men were around him. They had stripped him of his musket and equipment, and now they were pulling his boots and jacket off. Cousin Simmons grabbed one of them by the shoulder and flung him away.

"God's name, what are you to rob the dead with the fight going on"! Cousin Simmons roared. They tried to outface him, but Joseph Simmons was as wide as two average men, and it would have taken braver men than these were to outface him.

That summer the gambling houses were closed, despite the threats of Pierre Ameaux, a gaming-card manufacturer. Dancing was no longer permitted in the streets. The Bordel and other places of prostitution

were emptied. The slit breeches had to go. Drunkenness was no longer tolerated. In defiance, a chinless reprobate, Jake Camaret, marched down the aisle in St& Peter's one Sunday morning, followed by one of the women from the Bordel, whose dress and walk plainly showed the lack of any shame. Plunking themselves down on the front bench, they turned to smirk at those around them. John's first impulse was to denounce their blasphemy. But the thought occurred that God would want this opportunity used to tell them about Him. Calmly he opened the Bible and read of the woman at the well. He finished the worship service as if there had been no brazen attempt to dishonor God and man. The next morning, as the clock struck nine, he appeared at the Council meeting in the Town Hall and insisted that the couple would have to be punished if the Church was to be respected.

"I have told you before, and I tell you again", Monsieur Favre said rudely. "Stick to the preaching of the Gospel"!

John stiffened in anger. "That is the answer the ungodly will always make when the Church points its fingers at their sins. I say to you that the Church will ever decry evil"! John's reply was like a declaration of war. Monsieur Favre sat down in his high-backed stall, lips compressed, eyes glinting. Ablard Corne, a short man with a rotunda of stomach, rose. Every eye was on him as he began to speak. "What Master Calvin says is true. How can we have a good city unless we respect morality"? Abel Poupin, a tall man with sunken cheeks and deep-set eyes, got to his feet. "We all know that Jake Camaret and the woman are brazenly living together. It would be well to show the populace how we deal with adulterers". Philibert Berthelier, the son of the famous patriot, disagreed. "Do not listen to that Frenchman. He is throttling the liberty my father gave his life to win"! John was quietly insistent. "There can be no compromise when souls are in jeopardy". A week later the sentence of the Council was carried out: Jake Camaret and the woman were marched naked through the streets past a mocking populace. Before them stalked the beadle, proclaiming as he went, "Thus the Council deals with those who break its laws- adulterers, thieves, murderers, and lewd persons. Let evildoers contemplate their ways, and let every man beware"! ##

John's thoughts raced painfully into the past as he read the letter he had just received from his sister Mary. Charles had died two weeks before, in early November, without being reconciled to the Church. The canons, in a body, had tried to force him on his deathbed to let them give him the last rites of the Church, but he had died still proclaiming salvation by faith. Burial had taken place at night in the ground at the public crossroads under the gibbet, so that his enemies could not find his body and have it dug up and burned. The Abbot of St& Eloi, Claude de Mommor, had been a good friend, but not even he thought Charles deserved burial in hallowed ground. John closed his eyes and saw once again the little niche in his mother's bedroom, where she had knelt to tell the good Virgin of her needs.

The blue-draped Virgin was still there, but no one knelt before her now. Not even Varnessa; she, too, prayed only to God. For an instant John longed for the sound of the bells of Noyon-la-Sainte, the touch of his mother's hand, the lilt of Charles's voice in the square raftered rooms, his father's bass tones rumbling to the canons, and the sight of the beloved bishop. But he had to follow the light. Unless God expected a man to believe the Holy Scriptures, why had He given them to him? ##

The white-clad trees stood like specters in the February night. Snow buried the streets and covered the slanting rooftops, as John trudged toward St& Peter's. A carriage crunched by, its dim lights filtering through the gloom. The sharp wind slapped at him and his feet felt like ice as the snow penetrated the holes of his shoes, his only ones, now patched with folded parchment. The city had recently given him a small salary, but it was not enough to supply even necessities. As he neared the square, a round figure muffled in a long, black cape whisked by. John recognized Ablard Corne and called out a greeting. How grateful he was to such men! There were several on the Council who tried to live like Christians. Despite their efforts, the problems seemed to grow graver all the time. Quickening his steps, John entered the vast church and climbed the tower steps to the bells. Underneath the big one, in the silent moonlight, lay a dead pigeon, and on the smaller bell, the <Clemence>, two gray and white birds slept huddled together in the cold winter air. John leaned upon the stone balustrade. He brushed back his black hair, shoving it under his pastor's cap to keep it from blowing in his eyes. Below the moon-splashed world rolled away to insurmountable white peaks; above him the deep blue sky glittered with stars. He stood very still, his arms at his sides, staring up at the heavens, then down at the blinking lights below. "How long, my Lord? How long? I have never asked for an easy task, but I am weary of the strife". Sleep was difficult these days. Indigestion plagued him. Severe headaches were frequent. Loneliness tore through him like a physical pain whenever he thought of Peter Robert, Nerien, Nicholas Cop, Martin Bucer, and even the compromising Louis du Tillet. An occasional traveler from Italy brought news of Peter Robert, who was now distributing his Bible among the Waldensian peasants. Letters came regularly from Nerien, Nicholas, and Martin. He had Anthony and William to confide in and consult. But William continued to find a bitter joy in smashing images and tearing down symbols sacred to the Old Church. John found it difficult, but he held him in check. And Anthony was busy most of the time courting this girl and that. His easy good looks made him a favorite with the ladies. Geneva, instead of becoming the City of God, as John had dreamed, had in the two years since he had been there, continued to be a godless place where all manner of vice flourished. Refugees poured in, signing the Confession and rules in order to remain, and then disregarding them. Dice rolled, prostitutes plied their trade, thieves stole, murderers stabbed, and the ungodly blasphemed. Catholics who were truly Christians longed for the simple penance of

days gone by. Libertines recalled the heroism of the past and demanded: "Are we going to allow the Protestant Pope, Master Calvin, to curtail our liberty? **h Why, oh why, doesn't he stick to preaching the Gospel, instead of meddling in civic affairs, politics, economics, and social issues that are no concern of the Church"? And John's reply was always the same: "Anything that affects souls is the concern of the Church! We will have righteousness"!

Tears burned behind his eyes as he prayed and meditated tonight. Unless the confusion cleared, he would not be coming here much longer. Monsieur Favre's threat would become a reality, for he continued to proclaim loudly that the city must rid itself of "that Frenchman".

The slow tapping of a cane on the stone steps coming up to the tower interrupted his reverie. Faint at first, the tapping grew until it sounded loud against the wind. Eli Corault! John thought. What is he doing here at this hour? He started down the steps to meet the near-blind preacher, who had been one of the early Gospelers in Paris. "John? Is that you? I came to warn you of a plot"! John stood above him, his face ashen. What now? Slowly, like a man grown old, he took Eli's hand and led him below to the tower study, guiding him to a chair beside the little hearth where a fire still burned. "Plot"? John asked tiredly. "Monsieur Favre just paid me a visit. I went to your rooms, and Anthony told me you were here. Two Anabaptists, Caroli and Benoit, are to challenge you and William to a debate before the Council. It is to be a trap. You know the law: if you lose the debate after accepting a challenge, you will be banished"!

"What will be the subject"? "You are to be accused of Arianism to confuse the religious who remain loyal". Anger and fear fused in John. Ever since the fourth century a controversy had raged over the person of Christ. Those who refused to believe that He was the eternal Son of God were termed Arianists. Peter Caroli had come to Geneva, saying that he had been a bishop of the Church of Rome and had been persecuted in Paris for his Reformed faith. He asked to be appointed a preacher. But Michael Sept had unmasked him, revealing he had never been a bishop, but was an Anabaptist, afraid to state his faith, because he knew John Calvin had written a book against their belief that the soul slept after death. So John had refused to agree to his appointment as a preacher, and now Caroli sought revenge. John sighed. "If William agrees, we should insist on a public debate", he said at length. "There is more to the conspiracy. Bern demands that the Lord's Supper be administered here as it used to be, with unleavened bread. Furthermore, Bern decrees that we must do as we are ordered by the Council, preach only the word of God and stop meddling in politics"!

"It was always the spirit with Christ; matters such as leavened or unleavened bread are inconsequential. Geneva must remain a sovereign state. We will not yield to the demands of Bern"! The

firelight played over Eli's flowing white locks and rugged features. "Monsieur Favre indicated that if I would co-operate, after you and William are banished, following the debate, I will be given a place of influence". "What was your reply to that"?

"That I would rather be banished with two such Christians than be made the Chief Syndic"! ##

The following morning, as John entered the Place Molard on his way to visit a sick refugee, he had a premonition of danger. Then suddenly a group of men and dogs circled him. He wanted to run, but he knew that if he did, he would be lost. He stood very still, his heart thumping wildly. On the outskirts of the rabble the Camaret brothers and Gaspard Favre shook their fists. "Are you going to comply with the demands of Bern"? the chinless Jake called. "Arianist"! a rowdy with a big blob of a nose roared. "Heretic"! John lifted his hand for silence. "Know this: the ministers will not yield to the demands of Bern". His voice shook a little. Somebody heaved a stone. For an instant John was stunned. When he felt the side of his head, his fingers came away covered with blood. Before he could duck, another stone struck him. And another. "Let him be now"! Pierre Ameaux, the gaming-card manufacturer said, his little pig eyes glaring. "We have taught him a lesson".

The crowd moved back and John started dizzily down the hill. Fists pummeled him as he staggered forward. Then he slipped and went down on his hands and knees in the melting snow. At once a bevy of dogs was snapping and snarling around him. One, more horrible than the rest, lunged, growling deep in his throat, his hair bristling. With great difficulty John clambered to his feet and started to run, sweat pouring down his face.

Standing in the shelter of the tent- a rejected hospital tent on which the rain now dripped, no longer drumming- Adam watched his own hands touch the objects on the improvised counter of boards laid across two beef barrels. There was, of course, no real need to rearrange everything. A quarter inch this way or that for the hardbake, or the toffee, or the barley sugar, or the sardines, or the bitters, or the condensed milk, or the stationery, or the needles- what could it mean? Adam watched his own hands make the caressing, anxious movement that, when rain falls and nobody comes, and ruin draws close like a cat rubbing against the ankles, has been the ritual of stall vendors, forever. He recognized the gesture. He knew its meaning. He had seen a dry, old, yellowing hand reach out, with that painful solicitude, to touch, to rearrange, to shift aimlessly, some object worth a pfennig. Back in Bavaria he had seen that gesture, and at that sight his heart had always died within him. On such occasions he had not had the courage to look at the face above the hand, whatever face it might be. Now the face was his own. He wondered what expression, as he made that gesture, was on his face. He wondered if it wore the old anxiety, or the old, taut stoicism. But there was no

need, he remembered, for his hand to reach out, for his face to show concern or stoicism. It was nothing to him if rain fell and nobody came. Then why was he assuming the role- the gesture and the suffering? What was he expiating? Or was he now taking the role- the gesture and the suffering- because it was the only way to affirm his history and identity in the torpid, befogged loneliness of this land.

This was Virginia. He looked out of the tent at the company street. The rain dripped on the freezing loblolly of the street. Beyond that misty gray of the rain, he saw the stretching hutment, low diminutive log cabins, chinked with mud, with doorways a man would have to crouch to get through, with roofs of tenting laid over boughs or boards from hardtack boxes, or fence rails, with cranky chimneys of sticks and dried mud. The chimney of the hut across from him was surmounted by a beef barrel with ends knocked out. In this heavy air, however, that device did not seem to help. The smoke from that chimney rose as sluggishly as smoke from any other, and hung as sadly in the drizzle, creeping back down along the sopping canvas of the roof.

Over the door was a board with large, inept lettering: HOME SWEET HOME. This was the hut of Simms Purdew, the hero. The men were huddled in those lairs. Adam knew the names of some. He knew the faces of all, hairy or shaven, old or young, fat or thin, suffering or hardened, sad or gay, good or bad. When they stood about his tent, chaffing each other, exchanging their obscenities, cursing command or weather, he had studied their faces. He had had the need to understand what life lurked behind the mask of flesh, behind the oath, the banter, the sadness. Once covertly looking at Simms Purdew, the only man in the world whom he hated, he had seen the heavy, slack, bestubbled jaw open and close to emit the cruel, obscene banter, and had seen the pale-blue eyes go watery with whisky and merriment, and suddenly he was not seeing the face of that vile creature. He was seeing, somehow, the face of a young boy, the boy Simms Purdew must once have been, a boy with sorrel hair, and blue eyes dancing with gaiety, and the boy mouth grinning trustfully among the freckles. In that moment of vision Adam heard the voice within himself saying: <I must not hate him, I must not hate him or I shall die>. His heart suddenly opened to joy. He thought that if once, only once, he could talk with Simms Purdew, something about his own life, and all life, would be clear and simple. If Simms Purdew would turn to him and say: "Adam, you know when I was a boy, it was a funny thing happened. Lemme tell you now"- If only Simms Purdew could do that, whatever the thing he remembered and told. It would be a sign for the untellable, and he, Adam, would understand.

Now, Adam, in the gray light of afternoon, stared across at the hut opposite his tent, and thought of Simms Purdew lying in there in the gloom, snoring on his bunk, with the fumes of whisky choking the air. He saw the sign above the door of the hut: HOME SWEET HOME. He saw the figure of a man in a poncho coming up the company street, with an armful of wood. It was Pullen James, the campmate

of Simms Purdew. He carried the wood, carried the water, did the cooking, cleaning and mending, and occasionally got a kick in the butt for his pains. Adam watched the moisture flow from the poncho. It gave the rubberized fabric a dull gleam, like metal. Pullen James humbly lowered his head, pushed aside the hardtack-box door of the hut, and was gone from sight. Adam stared at the door and remembered that Simms Purdew had been awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry at Antietam. The street was again empty. The drizzle was slacking off now, but the light was grayer. With enormous interest, Adam watched his hands as they touched and shifted the objects on the board directly before him. Into the emptiness of the street, and his spirit, moved a form. The form was swathed in an army blanket, much patched, fastened at the neck with a cord. From under the shapeless huddle of blanket the feet moved in the mud. The feet wore army shoes, in obvious disrepair. The head was wrapped in a turban and on top of the turban rode a great hamper across which a piece of poncho had been flung. The gray face stared straight ahead in the drizzle. Moisture ran down the cheeks, gathered at the tip of the nose, and at the chin. The figure was close enough now for him to see the nose twitching to dislodge the drop clinging there. The figure stopped and one hand was perilously freed from the hamper to scratch the nose. Then the figure moved on. This was one of the Irish women who had built their own huts down near the river. They did washing. Adam recognized this one. He recognized her because she was the one who, in a winter twilight, on the edge of camp, had once stopped him and reached down her hand to touch his fly. "Slice o' mutton, bhoy"? she had queried in her soft guttural. "Slice o' mutton"?

Her name was Mollie. They called her Mollie the Mutton, and laughed. Looking down the street after her, Adam saw that she had again stopped and again removed one hand from the basket. He could not make out, but he knew that again she was scratching her nose. Mollie the Mutton was scratching her nose. The words ran crazily in his head: <Mollie the Mutton is scratching her nose in the rain>.

Then the words fell into a pattern: "<Mollie the Mutton is scratching her nose, Scratching her nose in the rain. Mollie the Mutton is scratching her nose in the rain>".

The pattern would not stop. It came again and again. He felt trapped in that pattern, in the repetition.

Suddenly he thought he might weep. "What's the matter with me"? he demanded out loud. He looked wildly around, at the now empty street, at the mud, at the rain. "Oh, what's the matter with me"? he demanded. ##

When he had stored his stock in the great oak chest, locked the two big hasps and secured the additional chain, tied the fly of the tent, and picked up the cash box, he moved up the darkening street. He would consign the cash box into the hands of

Jed Hawksworth, then stand by while his employer checked the contents and the list of items sold. Then he- Then what? He did not know. His mind closed on that prospect, as though fog had descended to blot out a valley. Far off, in the dusk, he heard voices singing, muffled but strong. In one of the huts a group of men were huddled together, singing. He stopped. He strained to hear. He heard the words: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee! Let the water and the blood From Thy riven side **h" He thought: <I am a Jew from Bavaria>. He was standing there, he thought, in Virginia, in the thickening dusk, in a costly greatcoat that had belonged to another Jew. That other Jew, a young man too, had left that greatcoat behind, in a rich house, and marched away. He had crossed the river which now, beyond the woods yonder, was sliding darkly under the mist. He had plunged into the dark woods beyond. He had died there. What had that man, that other young Jew, felt as he stood in the twilight and heard other men, far away, singing together?. Adam thought of the hutments, regiment after regiment, row after row, the thousands of huts, stretching away into the night. He thought of the men, the nameless thousands, huddling in them. He thought of Simms Purdew snoring on his bunk while Pullen James crouched by the hearth, skirmishing an undershirt for lice, and a wet log sizzled. He thought of Simms Purdew, who once had risen at the edge of a cornfield, a maniacal scream on his lips, and swung a clubbed musket like a flail to beat down the swirl of Rebel bayonets about him. He thought of Simms Purdew rising up, fearless in glory. He felt the sweetness of pity flood through him, veining his very flesh. Those men, lying in the huts, they did not know. They did not know who they were or know their own worth. In the pity for them his loneliness was gone.

Then he thought of Aaron Blaustein standing in his rich house saying: "God is tired of taking the blame. He is going to let History take the blame for a while". He thought of the old man laughing under the glitter of the great chandelier. He thought: <Only in my heart can I make the world hang together>. ##

Adam rose from the crouch necessary to enter the hut. He saw Mose squatting by the hearth, breaking up hardtack into a pan. A pot was boiling on the coals. "Done give Ole Buckra all his money"? Mose asked softly. Adam nodded. "Yeah", Mose murmured, "yeah. And look what he done give us". Adam looked at the pot. "What is it"? he asked. "Chicken", Mose said, and theatrically licked his lips. "Gre't big fat chicken, yeah". He licked his lips again. Then: "Yeah. A chicken with six tits and a tail lak a corkscrew. And hit squealed for slop". Mose giggled. "Fooled you, huh? It is the same ole same, tell me hit's name. It is sowbelly with tits on. It is salt po'k. It is salt po'k and skippers. That po'k, it was so full of skippers it would jump and run and not come when you say, 'Hoo-pig'. Had to put my foot on it to hole it down while I cut it up fer

the lob-scuse". He dumped the pan of crumbled hardtack into
the boiling pot of lobscouse. "Good ole lob-scuse", he mumbled,
and stirred the pot. He stopped stirring and looked over his shoulder.
"Know what Ole Buckra et tonight"? he demanded. "Know what
I had to fix fer Ole Him"? Adam shook his head.

"Chicken", Mose said.
She was a child too much a part of her environment, too eager to grow
and learn and experience. Once, they were at Easthampton for the summer
(again, Fritzie said, a good place, even though they were being
robbed).
One soft evening- that marvelous sea-blessed time when the
sun's departing warmth lingers and a smell of spume and wrack haunts
everything- Amy had picked herself off the floor and begun to walk.
Fritzie was on the couch reading; Laura was sitting in an easy chair
about eight feet away. The infant, in white terry-cloth bathrobe,
her face intense and purposeful, had essayed a few wobbly steps toward
her father. "Y'all wanna walk- walk", he said. Then, gently,
he shoved her behind toward Laura. Amy walked- making it halfway
across the cottage floor. She lost not a second, picking herself up
and continuing her pilgrimage to Laura. Then Laura took her gently
and shoved her off again, toward Fritzie: Amy did not laugh- this
was work, concentration, achievement. In a few minutes she was making
the ten-foot hike unaided; soon she was parading around the house,
flaunting her new skill. Some liar's logic, a wisp of optimism
as fragile as the scent of tropical blossoms that came through the
window (a euphoria perhaps engendered by the pill Fritzie had given
her), consoled her for a moment. Amy <had> to be safe, <had> to
come back to them- if only to reap that share of life's experiences
that were her due, if only to give her parents another chance to do
better by her. Through the swathings of terror, she jabbed deceit's
sharp point- Amy would be reborn, a new child, with new parents,
living under new circumstances. The comfort was short-lived, yet she
found herself returning to the assurance whenever her imagination forced
images on her too awful to contemplate without the prop of illusion.
Gazing at her husband's drugged
body, his chest rising and falling in mindless
rhythms, she saw the grandeur of his fictional world, that lush
garden from which he plucked flowers and herbs. She envied him. She
admired him. In the darkness, she saw him stirring. He seemed
to be muttering, his voice surprisingly clear. "Y'all should
have
let me take that money out", Andrus said. "'Nother minute
I'd have been fine. Y'all
should have let me do it". Laura touched
his hand. "Yes, I know, Fritzie. I should have".

#TUESDAY#

The heat intensified on Tuesday. Southern California gasped
and blinked under an autumn hot spell, drier, more enervating, more

laden with man's contrived impurities than the worst days of the summer past. It could continue this way, hitting 106 and more in the Valley, Joe McFeeley knew, into October. He and Irvin Moll were sipping coffee at the breakfast bar. Both had been up since 7:00- Irv on the early-morning watch, McFeeley unable to sleep during his four-hour relief. The night before, they had telephoned the Andrus maid, Selena Masters, and she had arrived early, bursting her vigorous presence into the silent house with an assurance that amused McFeeley and confounded Moll. The latter, thanking her for the coffee, had winked and muttered, "Sure 'nuff, honey". Selena was the wrong woman for these crudities. With a hard eye, she informed Moll: "Don't <sure 'nuff> me, officer. I'm <honey> only to my husband, understand"? Sergeant Moll understood. The maid was very black and very energetic, trim in a yellow pique uniform. Her speech was barren of southernisms; she was one of Eliot Sparling's neutralized minorities, adopting the rolling ~<R's> and constricted vowels of Los Angeles. Not seeing her dark intelligent face, one would have gauged the voice as that of a Westwood Village matron, ten years out of Iowa. After she had served the detectives coffee and toast (they politely declined eggs, uncomfortable about their tenancy), she settled down with a morning newspaper and began reading the stock market quotations. While she was thus engaged, McFeeley questioned her about her whereabouts the previous day, any recollections she had of people hanging around, of overcurious delivery boys or repairmen, of strange cars cruising the neighborhood. She answered him precisely, missing not a beat in her scrutiny of the financial reports. Selena Masters, Joe realized, was her own woman. She was the only kind of Negro Laura Andrus would want around: independent, unservile, probably charging double what ordinary maids did for housework- and doubly efficient. When the parents emerged from the bedroom a few minutes later, the maid greeted them quietly. "I'm awful sorry about what's happened", Selena said. "Maybe today'll be a good-news day". She charged off to the bedrooms. Moll took his coffee into the nursery. During the night, a phone company technician had deadened the bells and installed red blinkers on the phones. Someone would have to remain in the office continually. McFeeley greeted the parents, then studied his notebook. He wanted to take the mother to headquarters at once and start her on the mug file. "Sleep well"? he asked. Andrus did not answer him. His face was bloated with drugging, redder than normal. The woman had the glassy look of an invalid, as if she had not slept at all. "Oh- we managed", she said. "I'm a little groggy. Did anything happen during the night"? "Few crank calls", McFeeley said. "A couple of tips we're running down- nothing promising. We can expect more of the same. Too bad your number is in the directory".

"Didn't occur to me my child would be kidnaped when I had it listed", Andrus muttered. He settled on the sofa with his coffee, warming his hands on the cup, although the room was heavy with heat.

The three had little to say to each other. The previous night's horror- the absolute failure, overcast with the intrusions of the press, had left them all with a wan sense of uselessness, of play-acting. Sipping their coffee, discussing the weather, the day's shopping, Fritzie's commitments at the network (all of which he would cancel), they avoided the radio, the morning ~TV news show, even the front page of the <Santa Luisa Register>, resting on the kitchen bar. KIDNAPER SPURNS RANSOM; AMY STILL MISSING. Once, Andrus walked by it, hastily scanned the bold black headline and the five-column lead of the article (by Duane Bosch, staff correspondent- age not given), and muttered: "We a buncha national celebrities".

McFeeley told the parents he would escort them to police headquarters in a half hour. Before that, he wanted to talk to the neighbors. He did not want to bring the Andruses to the station house too early- Rheinholdt had summoned a press conference, and he didn't want them subjected to the reporters again. He could think of nothing else to tell them: no assurances, no hopeful hints at great discoveries that day. When the detective left, Andrus phoned his secretary to cancel his work and to advise the network to get a substitute director for his current project. Mrs& Andrus was talking to the
maid, arranging for her to come in every day, instead of the four days she now worked. Outside, only a handful of reporters remained. The bulk of the press corps was covering Rheinholdt's conference. In contrast to the caravan of the previous night, there were only four cars parked across the street. Two men he did not recognize were sipping coffee and munching sweet rolls. He did not see Sparling, or DeGroot, or Ringel, or any of the feverish crew that had so harassed him twelve hours ago. However, the litter remained, augmented by several dozen lunchroom suppers. The street cleaner had not yet been around. One of the reporters called to him: "Anything new, Lieutenant"? And he ignored him, skirting the parked cars and walking up the path to the Skopas house. When McFeeley was halfway to the door, the proprietor emerged- a mountainous, dark man, his head thick with resiny black hair, his eyes like two of the black olives he imported in boatloads. McFeeley identified himself. The master of the house, his nourished face unrevealing, consented to postpone his departure a few minutes to talk to the detective. Inside, as soon as Mr& Skopas had disclosed- in a hoarse whisper- the detective's errand, his family gathered in a huddle, forming a mass of dark flesh on and around a brocaded sofa which stood at one side of a baroque fireplace. Flanked by marble urns and alabaster lamps, they seemed to be posing for a tribal portrait. It was amazing how they had herded together for protection: an enormous matriarch in a quilted silk wrapper, rising from the breakfast table; a gross boy in his teens, shuffling in from the kitchen with a sandwich in his hands; a girl in her twenties, fat and sullen, descending the marble staircase;
then all four gathering on the sofa to face the inquisitor.

They answered him in monosyllables, nods, occasionally muttering
in Greek to one another, awaiting the word from Papa, who restlessly
cracked his knuckles, anxious to stuff himself into his white Cadillac
and burst off to the freeway. No, they hadn't seen anyone around;
no, they didn't know the Andrus family; yes, they had read
about the case; yes, they had let some reporters use their phone,
but they would no longer. They offered no opinions, volunteered nothing,
betrayed no emotions. Studying them, McFeeley could not help make
comparison with the Andrus couple. The Skopas people seemed to him
of that breed of human beings whose insularity frees them from tragedy.
He imagined they were the kind whose tax returns were never examined
(if they were, they were never penalized), whose children had no
unhappy romances, whose names never knew scandal. The equation was
simple:
wealth brought them happiness, and their united front to the world
was their warning that they meant to keep everything they had, let
no one in on the secrets. By comparison, Fritzie and Laura Andrus
were quivering fledglings. They possessed no outer fortifications, no
hard shells of confidence; they had enough difficulty getting from
day to day, let alone having an awful crime thrust upon them. Skopas
expressed no curiosity over the case, offered no expression of sympathy,
made no move to escort McFeeley to the door. All four remained
impacted on the sofa until he had left. He had spoken to Mrs&
Emerson the previous day. There remained a family named Kahler,
owners of a two-story Tudor-style house on the south side of the Andrus
home. Their names had not come up in any discussions with Laura,
and he had no idea what they would be like. McFeeley noted the immaculate
lawn and gardens: each blade of grass cropped, bright and firm;
each shrub glazed with good health. The door was answered
by a slender man in his sixties- straight-backed, somewhat clerical
in manner, wearing rimless glasses. When Joe identified himself, he
nodded, unsmiling, and ushered him into a sedate living room. Mrs&
Kahler joined them. She had a dried-out quality- a gray, lean woman,
not unattractive. Both were dressed rather formally. The man wore
a vest and a tie, the woman had on a dark green dress and three strands
of pearls. "Funny thing", Mr& Kahler said, when they
were seated, "when I heard you ringing, I figured it was that guy
down the block, Hausman". McFeeley looked puzzled. Kahler continued:
"I fixed his dog the other day and I guess he's sore,
so I expected him to come barging in". Mr& Kahler went on to explain
how Hausman's fox terrier had been "making" in his flower
beds. The dog refused to be scared off, so Kahler had purchased some
small firecrackers. He would lay in wait in the garage, and when the
terrier came scratching around, he'd let fly with a cherry bomb. "Scared
the hell out of him", Kahler grinned. "I hit him in the
ass once". Both grinned at the detective. "Finally, all I needed
was to throw a little piece of red wood that looked like a firecracker
and that dumb dog would run ki-yi-ing for his life".
In the dim underwater light they dressed and straightened up the room,
and then they went across the hall to the kitchen. She was intimidated

by the stove. He found the pilot light and turned on one of the burners for her. The gas flamed up two inches high. They found the teakettle and put water on to boil and then searched through the icebox. Several sections of a loaf of dark bread; butter; jam; a tiny cake of ice. In their search for what turned out to be the right breakfast china but the wrong table silver, they opened every cupboard door in the kitchen and pantry. While she was settling the teacart, he went back across the hall to their bedroom, opened one of the suitcases, and took out powdered coffee and sugar. She appeared with the teacart and he opened the windows. "Do you want to call Eugene"?

He didn't, but it was not really a question, and so he left the room, walked down the hall to the front of the apartment, hesitated, and then knocked lightly on the closed door of the study. A sleepy voice answered. "Le petit dejeuner", Harold said, in an accent that did credit to Miss Sloan, his high-school French teacher. At the same time, his voice betrayed uncertainty about their being here, and conveyed an appeal to whatever is reasonable, peace-loving, and dependable in everybody. Since ordinary breakfast-table conversation was impossible, it was at least something that they were able to offer Eugene the sugar bowl with their sugar in it, and the plate of bread and butter, and that Eugene could return the pitcher of hot milk to them handle first. Eugene put a spoonful of powdered coffee into his cup and then filled it with hot water. Stirring, he said: "I am sorry that my work prevents me from doing anything with you today". They assured him that they did not expect or need to be entertained. Harold put a teaspoonful of powdered coffee in his cup and filled it with hot water, and then, stirring, he sat back in his chair. The chair creaked. Every time he moved or said something, the chair creaked again. Eugene was not entirely silent, or openly rude- unless asking Harold to move to another chair and placing himself in the fauteuil that creaked so alarmingly was an act of rudeness. It went right on creaking under his own considerable weight, and all it needed, Harold thought, was for somebody to fling himself back in a fit of laughter and that would be the end of it.
Through the open window they heard sounds below in the street: cartwheels, a tired horse's plodding step, voices. Harold indicated the photograph on the wall and asked what church the stone sculpture was in. Eugene told him and he promptly forgot. They passed the marmalade, the bread, the black-market butter, back and forth. Nothing was said about hotels or train journeys. Eugene offered Harold his car, to use at any time he cared to, and when this offer was not accepted, the armchair creaked. They all three had another cup of coffee.
Eugene was in his pajamas and dressing gown, and on his large feet he wore yellow Turkish slippers that turned up at the toes. "Ex-cuse me", he said in Berlitz English, and got up and left them, to bathe and dress. The first shrill ring of the telephone brought Harold out into the hall. He realized that he had no idea where the telephone was. At that moment the bathroom door flew open and Eugene came out, with his face lathered for shaving, and strode down

the hall, tying the sash of his dressing gown as he went. The telephone was in the study but the ringing came from the hall. Between the telephone and the wall plug there was sixty feet of cord, and when the conversation came to an end, Eugene carried the instrument with him the whole length of the apartment, to his bathroom, where it rang three more times while he was shaving and in the tub. Before he left the apartment he knocked on their door and asked if there was anything he could do for them. Harold shook his head. "Sabine called a few minutes ago", Eugene said. "She wants you and Barbara to have dinner with her tomorrow night". He handed Harold a key to the front door, and cautioned him against leaving it unlocked while they were out of the apartment. When enough time had elapsed so that there was little likelihood of his returning for something he had forgotten, Harold went out into the hall and stood looking into one room after another. In the room next to theirs was a huge cradle, of mahogany, ornately carved and decorated with gold leaf. It was the most important-looking cradle he had ever seen. Then came their bathroom, and then a bedroom that, judging by the photographs on the walls, must belong to ~Mme Cestre. A young woman who looked like Alix, with her two children. Alix and Eugene on their wedding day. Matching photographs in oval frames of ~Mme Bonenfant and an elderly man who must be Alix's grandfather. ~Mme Vienot, considerably younger and very different. The schoolboy. And a gray-haired man whose glance- direct, lifelike, and mildly accusing- was contradicted by the gilt and black frame. It was the kind of frame that is only put around the photograph of a dead person. Professor Cestre, could it be? With the metal shutters closed, the dining room was so dark that it seemed still night in there. One of the drawing-room shutters was partly open and he made out the shapes of chairs and sofas, which seemed to be upholstered in brown or russet velvet. The curtains were of the same material, and there were some big oil paintings- portraits in the style of Lancret and Boucher. Though, taken individually, the big rooms were, or seemed to be, square, the apartment as a whole formed a triangle. The apex, the study where Eugene slept, was light and bright and airy and cheerful. The window looked out on the Place Redoute- it was the only window of the apartment that did. Looking around slowly, he saw a marble fireplace, a desk, a low bookcase of mahogany with criss-crossed brass wire instead of glass panes in the doors. The daybed Eugene had slept in, made up now with its dark-brown velours cover and pillows. The portable record player with a pile of classical records beside it. Beethoven's Fifth was the one on top. Da-da-da-dum **h Music could not be Eugene's passion. Besides, the records were dusty. He tried the doors of the bookcase. Locked. The titles he could read easily through the criss-crossed wires: works on theology, astral physics, history, biology, political science. No poetry. No novels. He moved over to the desk and stood looking at the papers on it but not touching anything. The clock on the mantel piece was scandalized and ticked so loudly that he glanced at it over his shoulder and then quickly left the room. #@#

THE CONCIERGE CALLED OUT to them as they were passing through

the foyer.
Her quarters were on the right as you walked into the building, and her small front room was clogged with heavy furniture- a big, round, oak dining table and chairs, a buffet, with a row of unclaimed letters inserted between the mirror and its frame. The suitcases had come while they were out, and had been put in their room, the concierge said.

He waited until they were inside the elevator and then said: "Now what do we do"? "Call the Vouillemont, I guess". "I guess". Rather than sit around waiting for the suitcases to be delivered, they had gone sight-seeing. They went to the Flea Market, expecting to find the treasures of Europe, and found instead a duplication of that long double row of booths in Tours. Cheap clothing and junk of every sort, as far as the eye could see. They looked, even so. Looked at everything. Barbara bought some cotton aprons, and Harold bought shoestrings. They had lunch at a sidewalk cafe overlooking the intersection of two broad, busy, unpicturesque streets, and coming home they got lost in the Metro; it took them over an hour to get back to the station where they should have changed, in order to take the line that went to the Place Redoute. It was the end of the afternoon when he took the huge key out of his pocket and inserted it into the keyhole. When he opened the door, there stood Eugene, on his way out of the apartment. He was wearing sneakers and shorts and an open-collared shirt, and in his hand he carried a little black bag. He did not explain where he was going, and they did not ask. Instead, they went on down the hall to their room.

"Do you think he could be having an affair"? Barbara asked, as they heard the front door close. "Oh no", Harold said, shocked. "Well, this is France, after all".
"I know, but there must be some other explanation. He's probably spending the evening with friends". "And for that he needs a little bag"? They went shopping in the neighborhood, and bought two loaves of bread with the ration coupons they had been given in Blois, and some cheese, and a dozen eggs, and a bag of oranges from a peddler in the Place Redoute- the first oranges they had seen since they landed. They had Vermouth, sitting in front of a cafe. When they got home Harold was grateful for the stillness in the apartment, and thought how, under different circumstances, they might have stayed on here, in these old-fashioned, high-ceilinged rooms that reminded him of the Irelands' apartment in the East Eighties. They could have been perfectly happy here for ten whole days. He went down the hall to Eugene's bathroom, to turn on the hot-water heater, and on the side of the tub he saw a pair of blue wool swimming trunks. He felt them. They were damp. He reached out and felt the bath towel hanging on the towel rack over the tub. Damp also. He looked around the room and then called out: "Come here, quick"?

"What is it"? Barbara asked, standing in the doorway. "I've solved the mystery of the little bag. There it is **h and there is what was in it. But where do people go swimming in Paris?

That boat in the river, maybe". "What boat"? "There's
a big boat anchored near the Place de la Concorde, with
a swimming pool in it- didn't you notice it? But if he has time
to go swimming, he had time to be with us". She looked at
him in surprise. "I know", he said, reading her mind.

"I don't know what I'm going to do with you". "It's
because we are in France", he said, "and know so few people.
So something like this matters more than it would at home. Also,
he was so nice when he <was> nice". "All because I didn't
feel like dancing". "I don't think it was that, really".

"Then what was it"? "I don't know. I
wish I did. The tweed coat, maybe. The thing about Eugene is that
he's very proud". And the thing about hurt feelings, the
wet bathing suit pointed out, is that the person who has them is not quite
the innocent party he believes himself to be. For instance- what
about all those people Harold Rhodes went toward unhesitatingly,
as if this were the one moment they would ever have together, their one
chance of knowing each other? Fortunately, the embarrassing
questions raised by objects do not need to be answered, or we would
all have to go sleep in the open fields. And in any case, answers may
clarify but they do not change anything.
**h he brought with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about a hundred
pounds' weight. They took Jesus's body, then, and wrapped it
in winding-clothes with the spices; that is how the Jews prepare a
body for burial. Listed as present at the Descent were Mary,
Mary's sister, Mary Magdalene, John, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus.
Search as he might, he could find no place where the Bible
spoke of a moment when Mary could have been alone with Jesus. Mostly
the scene was crowded with mourners, such as the dramatic Dell'Arca
Lamentation in Bologna, where the grief-stricken spectators had
usurped Mary's last poignant moment. In his concept there could
be no one else present. His first desire was to create a
mother and son alone in the universe. When might Mary have had that
moment to hold her child on her lap? Perhaps after the soldiers had
laid him on the ground, while Joseph of Arimathea was at Pontius Pilate's
asking for Christ's body, Nicodemus was gathering his mixture
of myrrh and aloes, and the others had gone home to mourn. Those
who saw his finished Pieta would take the place of the biblical witnesses.
They would feel what Mary was undergoing. There would be no
halos, no angels. These would be two human beings, whom God had chosen.

He felt close to Mary, having spent so long concentrating
on the beginning of her journey. Now she was intensely alive, anguished;
her son was dead. Even though he would later be resurrected,
he was at this moment dead indeed, the expression on his face reflecting
what he had gone through on the cross. In his sculpture therefore
it would not be possible for him to project anything of what Jesus felt
for his mother; only what Mary felt for her son. Jesus' inert
body would be passive, his eyes closed. Mary would have to carry the

human communication. This seemed right to him. It was a relief to shift in his mind to technical problems. Since his Christ was to be life size, how was Mary to hold him on her lap without the relationship seeming ungainly? His Mary would be slender of limb and delicate of proportion, yet she must hold this full-grown man as securely and convincingly as she would a child. There was only one way to accomplish this: by design, by drawing diagrams and sketches in which he probed the remotest corner of his mind for creative ideas to carry his concept. He started by making free sketches to loosen up his thinking so that images would appear on paper. Visually, these approximated what he was feeling within himself. At the same time he started walking the streets, peering at the people passing or shopping at the stalls, storing up fresh impressions of what they looked like, how they moved. In particular he sought the gentle, sweet-faced nuns, with head coverings and veils coming to the middle of their foreheads, remembering their expressions until he reached home and set them down on paper. Discovering that draperies could be designed to serve structural purposes, he began a study of the anatomy of folds. He improvised as he went along, completing a life-size clay figure, then bought yards of an inexpensive material from a draper, wet the lightweight cloth in a basin and covered it over with clay that Argiento brought from the bank of the Tiber, to the consistency of thick mud. No fold could be accidental, each turn of the drapery had to serve organically, to cover the Madonna's slender legs and feet so that they would give substantive support to Christ's body, to intensify her inner turmoil. When the cloth dried and stiffened, he saw what adjustments had to be made. "So that's sculpture", commented Argiento wryly, when he had sluiced down the floor for a week, "making mud pies". Michelangelo grinned. "See, Argiento, if you control the way these folds are bunched, like this, or made to flow, you can enrich the body attitudes. They can have as much tactile appeal as flesh and bone". He went into the Jewish quarter, wanting to draw Hebraic faces so that he could reach a visual understanding of how Christ might have looked. The Jewish section was in Trastevere, near the Tiber at the church of San Francesco a Ripa. The colony had been small until the Spanish Inquisition of 1492 drove many Jews into Rome. Here, for the most part, they were well treated, as a "reminder of the Old Testament heritage of Christianity"; many of their gifted members were prominent in the Vatican as physicians, musicians, bankers. The men did not object to his sketching them while they went about their work, but no one could be persuaded to come to his studio to pose. He was told to ask for Rabbi Melzi at the synagogue on Saturday afternoon. Michelangelo found the rabbi in the room of study, a gentle old man with a white beard and luminous grey eyes, robed in black gabardine with a skullcap on his head. He was reading from the Talmud with a group of men from his congregation. When Michelangelo explained why he had come, Rabbi Melzi replied gravely: "The Bible forbids us to bow down to or to make graven images. That is why our creative people give their time to literature, not to painting or sculpture". "But, Rabbi Melzi, you don't object to others creating works of art"?

"Not at all. Each religion has its own tenets".

"I am carving a Pieta from white Carrara marble. I wish to make Jesus an authentic Jew. I cannot accomplish this if you will not help me". The rabbi said thoughtfully, "I would not want my people to get in trouble with the Church". "I am working for the Cardinal of San Dionigi. I'm sure he would approve".

"What kind of models would you prefer"? "Workmen. In their mid-thirties. Not bulky laborers, but sinewy men. With intelligence. And sensitivity". Rabbi Melzi smiled at him with infinitely old but merry eyes. "Leave me your address. I will send you the best the quarter has to offer". Michelangelo hurried to Sangallo's solitary bachelor room with his sketches, asked the architect to design a stand which would simulate the seated Madonna. Sangallo studied the drawings and improvised a trestle couch. Michelangelo bought some scrap lumber. Together he and Argiento built the stand, covering it with blankets. His first model arrived at dusk. He hesitated for a moment when Michelangelo asked him to disrobe, so Michelangelo gave him a piece of toweling to wrap around his loins, led him to the kitchen to take off his clothes. He then draped him over the rough stand, explained that he was supposed to be recently dead, and was being held on his mother's lap. The model quite plainly thought Michelangelo crazy; only the instructions from his rabbi kept him from bolting. But at the end of the sitting, when Michelangelo showed him the quick, free drawings, with the mother roughed in, holding her son, the model grasped what Michelangelo was after, and promised to speak to his friends **h. He worked for two hours a day with each model sent by the rabbi. Mary presented quite a different problem. Though this sculpture must take place thirty-three years after her moment of decision, he could not conceive of her as a woman in her mid-fifties, old, wrinkled, broken in body and face by labor or worry. His image of the Virgin had always been that of a young woman, even as had his memory of his mother. Jacopo Galli introduced him into several Roman homes. Here he sketched, sitting in their flowing gowns of linen and silk, young girls not yet twenty, some about to be married, some married a year or two. Since the Santo Spirito hospital had taken only men, he had had no experience in the study of female anatomy; but he had sketched the women of Tuscany in their fields and homes. He was able to discern the body lines of the Roman women under their robes. He spent concentrated weeks putting his two figures together: a Mary who would be young and sensitive, yet strong enough to hold her son on her lap; and a Jesus who, though lean, was strong even in death **h a look he remembered well from his experience in the dead room of Santo Spirito. He drew toward the composite design from his meticulously accurate memory, without need to consult his sketches. Soon he was ready to go into a three-dimensional figure in clay. Here he would have free expression because the material could be moved to distort forms. When

he wanted to emphasize, or get greater intensity, he added or subtracted clay. Next he turned to wax because there was a similarity of wax to marble in tactile quality and translucence. He respected each of these approach techniques, and kept them in character: his quill drawings had a scratchiness, suggesting skin texture; the clay he used plastically to suggest soft moving flesh, as in an abdomen, in a reclining torso; the wax he smoothed over to give the body surface an elastic pull. Yet he never allowed these models to become fixed in his mind; they remained rough starting points. When carving he was charged with spontaneous energy; too careful or detailed studies in clay and wax would have glued him down to a mere enlarging of his model.

The true surge had to be inside the marble itself. Drawing and models were his thinking. Carving was action.

#10.#

The arrangement with Argiento was working well, except that sometimes Michelangelo could not figure who was master and who apprentice. Argiento had been trained so rigorously by the Jesuits that Michelangelo was unable to change his habits: up before dawn to scrub the floors, whether they were dirty or not; water boiling on the fire for washing laundry every day, the pots scoured with river sand after each meal.

"Argiento, this is senseless", he complained, not liking to work on the wet floors, particularly in cold weather. "You're too clean. Scrub the studio once a week. That's enough". "No", said Argiento stolidly. "Every day. Before dawn. I was taught".

"And God help anyone who tries to unteach you"! grumbled Michelangelo; yet he knew that he had nothing to grumble about, for Argiento made few demands on him. The boy was becoming acquainted with the <contadini> families that brought produce into Rome. On Sundays he would walk miles into the <campagna> to visit with them, and in particular to see their horses. The one thing he missed from his farm in the Po Valley was the animals; frequently he would take his leave of Michelangelo by announcing: "Today I go see the horses". It took a piece of bad luck to show Michelangelo that the boy was devoted to him. He was crouched over his anvil in the courtyard getting his chisels into trim, when a splinter of steel flew into his eye and imbedded itself in his pupil. He stumbled into the house, eyes burning like fire. Argiento made him lie down on the bed, brought a pan of hot water, dipped some clean white linen cloth and applied it to extract the splinter. Though the pain was considerable Michelangelo was not too concerned. He assumed he could blink the splinter out. But it would not come. Argiento never left his side, keeping the water boiled, applying hot compresses throughout the night. By the second day Michelangelo began to worry; and by the second night he was in a state of panic: he could see nothing out of the afflicted eye. At dawn Argiento went to Jacopo Galli.

Galli arrived with his family surgeon, Maestro Lippi. The surgeon carried a cage of live pigeons. He told Argiento to take a bird out of the cage, cut a large vein under its wing, let the blood gush into Michelangelo's injured eye. The surgeon came back at dusk, cut the vein of a second pigeon, again washed out the eye.

Beth was very still and her breath came in small jerking gasps. The thin legs twitched convulsively once, then Kate felt the little body stiffening in her arms and heard one strangled sound. The scant flesh grew cool beneath her frantic hands. The child was gone.

When Juanita awoke, Kate was still rocking the dead child, still crooning in disbelief, "No, no, oh, <no!>" They put Kate to bed and wired Jonathan and sent for the young Presbyterian minister. He sat beside Kate's bed with the others throughout the morning, talking, talking of God's will, while Kate lay staring angrily at him. When he told her God had called the child to Him, she rejected his words rebelliously. Few of the neighbors came, but Mrs& Tussle came, called by tragedy. "It always comes in threes", she sighed heavily. "Trouble never comes but in threes".

They held the funeral the next morning from the crossroads church and buried the little box in the quiet family plot. Kate moved through all the preparations and services in a state of bewilderment. She would not accept the death of such a little child. "God called her to Him", the minister had said. God would not <do> that, Kate thought stubbornly. Jonathan's letter came, as she knew it would, and he had accepted their child's death as another judgment from God against both Kate and himself. In blind panic of grief she accepted Jonathan's dictum, and believed in her desperation that she had been cursed by God. She held Jonathan's letter, his words burning like a brand, and knew suddenly that the bonds between them were severed. She had nothing left but her duty to his land and his son. Joel came and sat mutely with her, sharing her pain and anguish, averting his eyes from the ice packs on her bosom. Juanita and Mrs& Tussle kept Kate in bed a week until her milk dried. When she returned to life in the big house she felt shriveled of all emotion save dedication to duty. She disciplined herself daily to do what must be done. She had even steeled herself to keep Juanita upstairs in the nurse's room off the empty nursery, although the girl tried to insist on moving back to the quarters to spare Kate remembrance of the baby's death. Juanita drooped about the place, wearing a haunted, brooding look, which Kate attributed to the baby's death, until the day a letter came for her addressed to "Miss Juanita Fitzroy", bearing a Grafton postmark. Seeing the slanting hand, Kate knew uneasily that it was from the Yankee colonel. The Federal forces had taken Parkersburg and Grafton from the Rebels and were moving to take all the mountains. Kate tried to contain her curiosity and foreboding at what the letter portended, at what involvement existed for Juanita. Uncle Randolph and Joel had replanted the bottom lands with difficulty, for more of the slaves, including Annie,

had sneaked off when the soldiers broke camp. Joel worked like a field hand in the afternoons after school. He had been at lessons in the schoolhouse since they returned from Harpers Ferry. Kate felt she had deserted the boy in her own loss. She loved him and missed his company.

Uncle Randolph had been riding out every evening on some secret business of his own. What it was Kate could not fathom. He claimed to be visiting the waterfront saloon at the crossroads to play cards and drink with his cronies, but Kate had not smelled brandy on him since Mrs& Lattimer's funeral. Joel knew what he was about, however. "You're gonna get caught", she heard Joel say to Uncle Randolph by the pump one morning. "Not this old fox", chuckled Uncle Randolph. "Everybody knows I'm just a harmless, deaf old man who takes to drink. I aim to keep a little whisky still back in the ridge for my pleasure". "Whisky still, my foot", said Joel. "You're back there riding with the guerrillas, the Moccasin Rangers". "Hush", said Uncle Randolph, smiling, "or I'll give you another black eye". He patted the eye Joel had had blackened in a fight over being Rebel at the crossroads some days back. Kate had no idea what they were talking of, although she had seen the blue lights and strange fires burning and winking on the ridges at night, had heard horsemen on the River Road and hill trails through the nights till dawn. Stranger, Uncle Randolph began riding home nights with a jug strapped to his saddle, drunkenly singing "Old Dan Tucker" at the top of his voice.
Hearing his voice ring raucously up from the road, Kate would await him anxiously and watch perplexed as he walked into the house, cold sober. What he was about became clear to her with the circulation of another broadside proclamation by General McClellan, threatening reprisals against Rebel guerrillas. She was taken up in worry for the reckless old man. Kate drew more and more on her affection for Joel through the hot days of summer work. She had taken him out of the schoolhouse and closed the school for the summer, after she saw Miss Snow crack Joel across the face with a ruler for letting a snake loose in the schoolroom. Kate had walked past the school on her morning chores and had seen the whole incident, had seen Joel's burning humiliation before Miss Snow's cold, bespectacled wrath. He had the hardest pains of growing before him now, as he approached twelve. These would be his hardest years, she knew, and he missed his father desperately. She tried to find some way to draw him out, to help him. Whenever she found time, she went blackberry picking with him, and they would come home together, mouths purple, arms and faces scratched, tired enough to forget grief for another day. He tended the new
colts Beau had sired. He helped Kate and Juanita enlarge the flower garden in the side yard, where they sometimes sat in the still evenings watching the last fat bees working against the summer's purple dusk.

No one went much to the crossroads now except Uncle Randolph. They stayed in their own world on the bluff, waiting for letters and the peddler, bringing

the news. Jonathan wrote grimly of the destruction
of Harpers Ferry before they abandoned it; of their first
engagement at Falling Waters after Old Jack's First Brigade
had destroyed all the rolling stock of the ~B+O Railroad. The men
were restive, he wrote, ready to take the battle to the enemy as Jackson
wished. The peddler came bawling his wares and told them
of the convention in Wheeling, Which had formed a new state government
by declaring the government at Richmond in the east illegal because
they were traitors. Dangling his gaudy trinkets before them, he told
of the Rebel losses in the mountains, at Cheat and Rich mountains
both, and the Federal march on Beverly. "Cleaned all them
Rebs out'n the hills, they did! They won't never git over inter
loyal western Virginia, them traitors! The Federals is making
everybody take the oath of loyalty around these parts too", he crowed.

After he had gone, Kate asked Uncle Randolph proudly, "Would
you take their oath"? And the old man had given a
sly and wicked laugh and said, "Hell, yes! I think I've taken
it about fifty times already"! winking at Joel's look of shock.

Her mother wrote Kate of her grief at the death of Kate's
baby and at Jonathan's decision to go with the South "And, dear
Kate", she wrote, "poor Dr& Breckenridge's son Robert
is now organizing a militia company to go South, to his good father's
sorrow. Maj& Anderson of Fort Sumter is home and recruiting volunteers
for the U&S& Army. In spite of the fact that the state
legislature voted us neutral, John Hunt Morgan is openly flying
the Confederate flag over his woolen factory"! Rumor of a
big battle spread like a grassfire up the valley. Accounts were garbled
at the telegraph office when they sent old George down to Parkersburg
for the news. "All dey know down dere is it were at Manassas
Junction and it were a <big> fight", the old man told them.

In the next few days they had cause to rejoice. It had been
a big battle, and the Confederate forces had won. Jonathan and Ben
were not on the lists of the dead or on that of the missing. Kate and
Mrs& Tussle waited for letters anxiously. Joel went to the crest
of a hill behind the house and lit an enormous victory bonfire to celebrate.
When Kate hurried in alarm to tell him to put it out, she
saw other dots of flames among the western Virginia hills from the few
scattered fires of the faithful. They all prayed now that the North
would realize that peace must come, for Virginia had defended her land
victoriously. The week after Manassas the sound of horses
in the yard brought Kate up in shock from an afternoon's rest when
she saw the Federal soldiers from her upstairs window. They had already
lost most of their corn, she thought. Were they to be insulted again
because of the South's great victory? She remembered McClellan's
last proclamation as she hurried fearfully down the stairs.

At the landing she saw Juanita, her face flushed pink with excitement,
run down the hall from the kitchen to the front door. Juanita

stopped just inside the open door, her hand to her mouth. As Kate came swiftly down the stairs to the hall she saw Colonel Marsh framed in the doorway, his face set in the same vulnerable look Juanita wore. Kate greeted him gravely, uneasy with misgivings at his visit.

"What brings you here again, Colonel Marsh"? she asked, taking him and Juanita into the parlor where the shutters were closed against the afternoon sun. "I stopped to say goodbye, Mrs& Lattimer, and to tell you how sorry I was to hear about your baby. I wish our doctor could have saved her". "It was a terrible loss to me", said Kate quietly, feeling the pain twist again at the mention, knowing now that Juanita must have written to him at Grafton. "Where will you go now that you're leaving Parkersburg"? she asked him, seeing Juanita's eyes grow bleak. "As you know, General McClellan has been occupying Beverly. He has notified me that he has orders to go to Washington to take over the Army of the Potomac. I am to go to Washington to serve with him".

"When are you to leave"? Kate asked, watching them both now anxiously. Their eyes betrayed too much of their emotions, she thought sadly. "Tomorrow. Would you permit Juanita to walk about the grounds with me for a short spell, Mrs& Lattimer"?

"Stay here in the parlor where it's cool", she said, trying to be calm. It would be better for Joel and Uncle Randolph and Mrs& Tussle not to see them. Kate went back and reminded the kitchen women of the supper preparations. Then she took iced lemonade to Marsh's young aide where he sat in the cool of the big trees around the flower garden. When Marsh called to his aide and the pair rode off down the River Road where the gentians burned blue, Juanita was shaken and trying not to cry. She sought Kate out upstairs, her lips trembling. "He wants me to go with him tomorrow", she told Kate. "What do you want to do"? Kate asked, uneasy at the gravity of the girl's dilemma. "I could go with him. He knows me as your niece, which, of course, I am. But I am a slave! You <own> me. It's your decision", said Juanita, holding her face very still, trying to contain the bitterness of her voice as she enunciated her words too distinctly. "No, the decision is yours. I have held your papers of manumission since I married Mr& Lattimer".

The red glow from the cove had died out of the sky. The two in the bed knew each other as old people know the partners with whom they have shared the same bed for many years, and they needed to say no more. The things left unsaid they both felt deeply, and with a sigh they fell back on the well-stuffed pillows. Anita put out the remaining candles with a long snuffer, and in the smell of scented candlewick, the comforting awareness of each other's bodies, the retained pattern of dancers and guests remembered, their minds grew numb and then empty of images. They slept- Mynheer with a marvelously high-pitched snoring, the damn seahorse ivory teeth watching him from a bedside table.

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In the ballroom below, the dark had given way to moonlight coming in through the bank of French windows. It was a delayed moon, but now the sky had cleared of scudding black and the stars sugared the silver-gray sky. Martha Schuyler, old, slow, careful of foot, came down the great staircase, dressed in her best lace-drawn black silk, her jeweled shoe buckles held forward. "Well, I'm here at last", she said, addressing the old portraits on the walls. "I don't hear the music. I am getting deaf, I must admit it".

She came to the ballroom and stood on the two carpeted steps that led down to it. "Where is everyone? I say, where is everyone? Peter, you lummox, you've forgot to order the musicians". She stood there, a large old woman, smiling at the things she would say to him in the morning, this big foolish baby of a son. There were times now, like this, when she lost control of the time count and moved freely back and forth into three generations. Was it a birthday ball? When Peter had reached his majority at eighteen? Or was it her own first ball as mistress of this big house, a Van Rensselaer bride from way upstate near Albany, from Rensselaerwyck. And this handsome booby, staring and sweating, was he her bridegroom? Martha picked up the hem of her gown and with eyes closed she slowly began to dance a stately minuet around the ballroom. ##

David Cortlandt was tired beyond almost the limits of his flesh. He had ridden hard from Boston, and he was not used to horseback. Now, driving the horse and sulky borrowed from Mynheer Schuyler, he felt as if every bone was topped by burning oil and that every muscle was ready to dissolve into jelly and leave his big body helpless and unable to move.

The road leading south along the river was shaded with old trees, and in the moonlight the silvery landscape was like a setting for trolls and wood gods rather than the Hudson River Valley of his boyhood memories. He slapped the reins on the back of the powerful gray horse and held on as the sulky's wheels hit a pothole and came out with a jolt and went on. He would cross to Manhattan, to Harlem Heights, before morning. There a certain farmhouse was a station for the Sons of Liberty. He would send on by trusted messenger the dispatches with their electrifying news. And he would sleep, sleep, and never think of roads and horses' sore haunches, of colonial wars. Strange how everything here fitted back into his life, even if he had been away so long. Mynheer, Sir Francis, the valley society, the very smell of the river on his right purling along to the bay past fish weirs and rocks, and ahead the sleepy ribbon of moon-drenched road. A mist was walking on the water, white as cotton, but with a blending and merging grace. Ahead there was a stirring of sudden movement at a crossroads. David reached for the pair of pistols in the saddlebags at his feet. He pulled out one of them and cocked it. A strange wood creature came floating up from a patch of berry bushes. It was

a grotesque hen, five or six feet tall. It had the features of a man bewhiskered by clumps of loose feathers. It ran, this apocalyptic beast, on two thin legs, and its wings- were they feathered arms?- flapped as it ran. Its groin was bloody. Black strips of skin hung from it. The horse shied at the dreadful thing and flared its nostrils. David took a firm hand with it. The creature in feathers looked around and David saw the mad eyes, glazed with an insane fear. The ungainly bird thing ran away, and to David its croaking sounded like the crowing of a tormented rooster. Then it was gone. He drove on, wary and shaken. The Sons were out tonight.

#CHAPTER 10#

New
York lay bleaching in the summer sun, and the morning fish hawk, flying in the heated air, saw below him the long triangular wedge of Manhattan Island. It was thickly settled by fifteen thousand citizens and laid out into pig-infested streets, mostly around the Battery, going bravely north to Wall Street, but giving up and becoming fields and farms in the region of Harlem Heights. From there it looked across at Westchester County and the Hudson River where the manor houses, estates, and big farms of the original (non-Indian) landowners began. On the east side of the island of Manhattan the indifferent hawk knew the East River that connected New York Bay with Long Island Sound. On the western tip of Long Island protruded Brooklyn Heights. It commanded a view over Manhattan and the harbor. A fringe of housing and gardens bearded the top of the heights, and behind it were sandy roads leading past farms and hayfields. Husbandry was bounded by snake-rail fences, and there were grazing cattle. On the shores north and south, the fishers and mooncursers- smugglers- lived along the churning Great South Bay and the narrow barrier of sand, Fire Island. The morning hawk, hungry for any eatable, killable, digestible item, kept his eyes on the ring of anchored ships that lay off the shores in the bay, sheltered by the Jersey inlets. They often threw tidbits overboard. The larger ships were near Paulus Hook, already being called, by a few, Jersey City. These were the ships of His Majesty's Navy, herding the hulks of the East Indies merchants and the yachts and ketches of the loyalists. The news of battle on Breed's Hill had already seeped through, and New York itself was now left in the hands of the local Provincial Congress. The fish hawk, his wings not moving, circled and glided lower. The gilt sterns of the men-of-war becoming clearer to him, the sides of the wooden sea walls alternately painted yellow and black, the bronze cannon at the ports. The captain's gig of H&M&S& <Mercury> was being rowed to H&M&S& <Neptune>. ##

On shore
"the freed slaves to despotism"- the town dwellers- watched the ships and waited. The <chevaux de frise>, those sharp stakes and barriers around the fort at the Battery, pointed to a conflict between the town and sea power rolling in glassy swells as the tide came

in. Across the bay the Palisades were heavy in green timber; their
rock paths led down to the Hudson. Below in the open bay facing Manhattan
was Staten Island, gritty with clam shells and mud flats behind
which nested farms, cattle barns, and berry thickets. Along Wappinger
Creek in Dutchess County, past the white church at Fishkill,
past Verplanck's Point on the east bank of the Hudson, to the white
salt-crusted roads of the Long Island Rockaways there was a watching
and an activity of preparing for something explosive to happen.
Today, tomorrow, six months, even perhaps a year **h The fish
hawk flew on and was lost from sight. The British ships rolled at
anchor, sent out picket boats and waited for orders from London. Waited
for more ships, more lobster-backed infantry, and asked <what>
was to be done with a war of rebellion? ##

David Cortlandt, having
slept away a day and a night, came awake in a plank farmhouse on
the Harlem River near Spuyten Duyvil. He looked out through windowpanes
turned a faint violet by sun and weather, looked out at King's
Bridge toward Westchester. The road seemed animated with a few more
wagons than usual; a carriage raising up the choking June dust,
and beyond, in a meadow, a local militia company drilling with muskets,
Kentuck' rifles, every kind of horse pistol, old sword, or cutlass.

The wraith-like events of the last few days flooded David's
mind and he rubbed his unshaved chin and felt again the ache in his
kidneys caused by his saddle odyssey from Boston. Pensive, introspective,
he ached. He had sent the dispatches downtown to the proper
people and had slept. Now there was more to do. Orders not written down
had to be transmitted to the local provincial government. He scratched
his mosquito-plagued neck. From the saddlebags, hung on
a Hitchcock chair, David took out a good English razor, a present from
John Hunter. He found tepid water in a pitcher and a last bit of
soap, and he lathered his face and stood stropping the razor on his
broad leather belt, its buckle held firm by a knob of the bedpost **h.
He hoped he was free of self-deception. Here he was, suddenly
caught up in the delirium of a war, in the spite and calumny of Whigs
and Tories. There would be great need soon for his skill as surgeon,
but somehow he had not planned to use his knowledge merely for war.
David Cortlandt had certain psychic intuitions that this rebellion
was not wholly what it appeared on the surface. He knew that many were
using it for their own ends. But it did not matter. He stropped the
razor slowly; what mattered was that a new concept of Americans was
being born. That some men did not want it he could understand. The
moral aridity of merchants made them loyal usually to their ledgers.
Yet some, like Morris Manderscheid, would bankrupt themselves for
the new ideas. Unique circumstances would test us all, he decided. Injury
and ingratitude would occur. No doubt John Hancock would do well
now; war was a smugglers' heaven. And what of that poor tarred
and feathered wretch he had seen on the road driving down from Schuyler's?
Things like that would increase rather than be done away
with. One had to believe in final events or one was stranded in the abyss

of nothing. He saw with John Hunter now that the perfectability of man was a dream. Life was a short play of tenebrous shadows. David began to shave with great sweeping strokes. Time plays an essential part in our mortality, and suddenly for no reason he could imagine (or admit) the image of Peg laughing filled his mind- so desirable, so lusty, so full of nuances of pleasure and joy. He drove sensual patterns off, carefully shaving his long upper lip. It is harder, he muttered, to meditate on man (or woman) than on God. David finished shaving, washed his face clean of lather, and combed and retied his hair. He was proud that he had never worn a wig. More and more of the colonials were wearing their own hair and not using powder. He felt cheerful again, refreshed; presentable in his wide-cut brown suit, the well-made riding boots. It is so easy to falsify sentiment **h. In the meadow below, militia officers shouted at their men and on King's Bridge two boys sat fishing. The future would happen; he did not have to hurry it by thinking too much. A man could be tossed outside the dimension of time by a stray bullet these days. He began to pack the saddlebags. <And all this too shall pass away:> it came to him out of some dim corner of memory from a church service when he was a boy- yes, in a white church with a thin spur steeple in the patriarchal Hudson Valley, where a feeling of plenitude was normal in those English-Dutch manors with their well-fed squires. Burly leathered men and wrinkled women in drab black rags carried on in a primitive way, almost unchanged from feudal times. Peasants puzzled Andrei. He wondered how they could go on in poverty, superstition, ignorance, with a complete lack of desire to make either their land or their lives flourish. Andrei remembered a Bathyran meeting long ago. Tolek Alterman had returned from the colonies in Palestine and, before the national leadership, exalted the miracles of drying up swamps and irrigating the desert. A fund-raising drive to buy tractors and machinery was launched. Andrei remembered that his own reaction had been one of indifference. Had he found the meaning too late? It aggravated him. The land of the Lublin Uplands was rich, but no one seemed to care. In the unfertile land in Palestine humans broke their backs pushing will power to the brink. He had sat beside Alexander Brandel at the rostrum of a congress of Zionists. All of them were there in this loosely knit association of diversified ideologies, and each berated the other and beat his breast for his own approaches. When Alexander Brandel rose to speak, the hall became silent. "I do not care if your beliefs take you along a path of religion or a path of labor or a path of activism. We are here because all our paths travel a blind course through a thick forest, seeking human dignity. Beyond the forest all our paths merge into a single great highway which ends in the barren, eroded hills of Judea. This is our singular goal. How we travel through the forest is for each man's conscience. Where we end our journey is always the same. We all seek the same thing through different ways- an end to this long night of two thousand years of darkness and unspeakable abuses which will continue to plague us until the Star of David flies over Zion". This was how Alexander Brandel expressed pure Zionism. It had sounded good to Andrei, but he did not believe it. In his

heart he had no desire to go to Palestine. He loathed the idea of drying up swamps or the chills of malaria or of leaving his natural birthright.

Before he went into battle Andrei had told Alex, "I only want to be a Pole. Warsaw is my city, not Tel Aviv".

And now Andrei sat on a train on the way to Lublin and wondered if he was not being punished for his lack of belief. Warsaw! He saw the smug eyes of the Home Army chief, Roman, and all the Romans and the faces of the peasants who held only hatred for him. They had let this black hole of death in Warsaw's heart exist without a cry of protest. Once there had been big glittering rooms where Ulanys bowed and kissed the ladies' hands as they flirted from behind their fans. Warsaw! Warsaw! "Miss Rak. I am a Jew". Day by day, week by week, month by month, the betrayal gnawed at Andrei's heart. He ground his teeth together. I hate Warsaw, he said to himself. I hate Poland and all the goddamned mothers' sons of them. All of Poland is a coffin. The terrible vision of the ghetto streets flooded his mind. What matters now? What is beyond this fog? Only Palestine, and I will never live to see Palestine because I did not believe. By late afternoon the train inched into the marshaling yards in the railhead at Lublin, which was filled with lines of cars poised to pour the tools of war to the Russian front. At a siding, another train which was a familiar sight these days. Deportees. Jews. Andrei's skilled eye sized them up. They were not Poles. He guessed by their appearance that they were Rumanians. He walked toward the center of the city to keep his rendezvous with Styka. Of all the places in Poland, Andrei hated Lublin the most. The Bathyrans were all gone. Few of the native Jews who had lived in Lublin were still in the ghetto.

From the moment of the occupation Lublin became a focal point. He and Ana watched it carefully. Lublin generally was the forerunner of what would happen elsewhere. Early in 1939, Odilo Globocnik, the Gauleiter of Vienna, established ~SS headquarters for all of Poland. The Bathyrans ran a check on Globocnik and had only to conclude that he was in a tug of war with Hans Frank and the civilian administrators. Globocnik built the Death's-Head Corps. Lublin was the seed of action for the "final solution" of the Jewish problem. As the messages from Himmler, Heydrich, and Eichmann came in through Alfred Funk, Lublin's fountainhead spouted.

A bevy of interlacing lagers, work camps, concentration camps erupted in the area. Sixty thousand Jewish prisoners of war disappeared into Lublin's web. Plans went in and out of Lublin, indicating German confusion. A tale of a massive reservation in the Uplands to hold several million Jews **h A tale of a plan to ship all Jews to the island of Madagascar **h Stories of the depravity of the guards at Globocnik's camps struck a chord of terror at the mere mention of their names. Lipowa 7, Sobibor, Chelmno, Poltawa, Belzec, Krzywy-Rog,

Budzyn, Krasnik. Ice baths, electric shocks, lashings, wild dogs, testicle crushers. The Death's-Head Corps took in Ukrainian and Baltic Auxiliaries, and the <Einsatzkommandos> waded knee-deep in blood and turned into drunken, dope-ridden maniacs. Lublin was their heart. In the spring of 1942 Operation Reinhard began in Lublin. The ghetto, a miniature of Warsaw's, was emptied into the camp in the Majdan-Tartarski suburb called Majdanek. As the camp emptied, it was refilled by a draining of the camps and towns around Lublin, then by deportees from outside Poland. In and in and in they poured through the gates of Majdanek, but they never left, and Majdanek was not growing any larger. What was happening in Majdanek? Was Operation Reinhard the same pattern for the daily trains now leaving the Umschlagplatz in Warsaw? Was there another Majdanek in the Warsaw area, as they suspected? Andrei stopped at Litowski Place and looked around quickly at the boundary of civil buildings. His watch told him he was still early. Down the boulevard he could see a portion of the ghetto wall. He found an empty bench, opened a newspaper, and stretched his legs before him. Krakow Boulevard was filled with black Nazi uniforms and the dirty brownish ones of their Auxiliaries. "Captain Androfski"!

Andrei glanced up over the top of the paper and looked into the mustached, homely face of Sergeant Styka. Styka sat beside him and pumped his hand excitedly. "I have been waiting across the street at the post office since dawn. I thought you might get in on a morning train". "It's good to see you again, Styka".

Styka studied his captain. He almost broke into tears. To him, Andrei Androfski had always been the living symbol of a Polish officer. His captain was thin and haggard and his beautiful boots were worn and shabby. "Remember to call me Jan", Andrei said.

Styka nodded and sniffed and blew his nose vociferously. "When that woman found me and told me that you needed me I was never so happy since before the war". "I'm lucky that you were still living in Lublin". Styka grumbled about fate. "For a time I thought of trying to reach the Free Polish Forces, but one thing led to another. I got a girl in trouble and we had to get married. Not a bad girl. So we have three children and responsibilities. I work at the granary. Nothing like the old days in the army, but I get by. Who complains? Many times I tried to reach you, but I never knew how. I came to Warsaw twice, but there was that damned ghetto wall **h" "I understand". Styka blew his nose again. "Were you able to make the arrangements"? Andrei asked. "There is a man named Grabski who is the foreman in charge of the bricklayers at Majdanek. I did exactly as instructed. I told him you are on orders from the Home Army to get inside Majdanek so you can make a report to the government in exile in London".

"His answer"? "Ten thousand zlotys".

"Can he be trusted"? "He is aware he will not live
for twenty-four hours if he betrays you". "Good man, Styka".

"Captain **h Jan **h must you go inside Majdanek?
The stories **h Everyone really knows what is happening there".

"Not everyone, Styka". "What good will it really
do"? "I don't know. Perhaps **h perhaps **h there
is a shred of conscience left in the human race. Perhaps if they know
the story there will be a massive cry of indignation". "Do
you really believe that, Jan"? "I have to believe it".

Styka shook his head slowly. "I am only a simple soldier.
I cannot think things out too well. Until I was transferred into
the Seventh Ulanys I was like every other Pole in my feeling about
Jews. I hated you when I first came in. But **h my captain might
have been a Jew, but he wasn't a Jew. What I mean is, he was a
Pole and the greatest soldier in the Ulanys. Hell, sir. The men of
our company had a dozen fights defending your name. You never knew about
it, but by God, we taught them respect for Captain Androfski".

Andrei smiled. "Since the war I have seen the way
the Germans have behaved and I think, Holy Mother, we have behaved
like this for hundreds of years. Why"? "How can you
tell an insane man to reason or a blind man to see"? "But
we are neither blind nor insane. The men of your company would not
allow your name dishonored. Why do we let the Germans do this"?

"I have sat many hours with this, Styka. All I ever wanted
was to be a free man in my own country. I've lost faith, Styka.
I used to love this country and believe that someday we'd win our
battle for equality. But now I think I hate it very much".
"And do you really think that the world outside Poland will care
any more than we do"? The question frightened Andrei.

"Please don't go inside Majdanek". "I'm still
a soldier in a very small way, Styka". It was an answer that
Styka understood. Grabski's shanty was beyond the bridge
over the River Bystrzyca near the rail center. Grabski sat in a sweat-saturated
undershirt, cursing the excessive heat which clamped an uneasy
stillness before sundown. He was a square brick of a man with a
moon-round face and sunken Polish features. Flies swarmed around the
bowl of lentils in which he mopped thick black bread. Half of it dripped
down his chin. He washed it down with beer and produced a deep-seated
belch. "Well"? Andrei demanded. Grabski
looked at the pair of them. He grunted a sort of "yes" answer. "My
cousin works at the Labor Bureau. He can make you work papers.
It will take a few days. I will get you inside the guard camp as a
member of my crew. I don't know if I can get you into the inner camp.
Maybe yes, maybe no, but you can observe everything from the roof

of a barrack we are building". Grabski slurped his way to the bottom of the soup bowl. "Can't understand why the hell anyone wants to go inside that son-of-a-bitch place". "Orders from the Home Army". "Why? Nothing there but Jews".

Andrei shrugged. "We get strange orders". "Well- what about the money"? Andrei peeled off five one-thousand-zloty notes. Grabski had never seen so much money. His broad flat fingers, petrified into massive sausages by years of bricklaying, snatched the bills clumsily. "This ain't enough". "You get the rest when I'm safely out of Majdanek". "I ain't taking no goddamned chances for no Jew business". Andrei and Styka were silent.

She was getting real dramatic. I'd have been more impressed if I hadn't remembered that she'd played Hedda Gabler in her highschool dramatics course. I didn't want her back on that broken record. "Nothing's free in the whole goddam world", was all I could think of to say. When I'd delivered myself of that gem there was nothing to do but order up another drink. "I am", she said. I'd forgotten all about Thelma and the Kentucky Derby and how it was Thelma's fifty dollars I was spending. It was just me and Eileen getting drunk together like we used to in the old days, and me staring at her across the table crazy to get my hands on her partly because I wanted to wring her neck because she was so ornery but mostly because she was so wonderful to touch. Drunk or sober she was the most attractive woman in the world for me. I was crazy about her all over again. It was the call of the wild all right.

That evening turned out to be hell like all the others. We moved down Broadway from ginmill to ginmill. It was the same old routine. Eileen got to dancing, just a little tiny dancing step to a hummed tune that you could hardly notice, and trying to pick up strange men, but each time I was ready to say to hell with it and walk out she'd pull herself together and talk so understandingly in that sweet husky voice about the good times and the happiness we'd had together and there I was back on the hook. I did have the decency to call up Thelma and tell her I'd met old friends and would be home late. "I could scratch her eyes out", Eileen cried and stamped her foot when I came back from the phone booth. "You know I don't like my men to have other women. I hate it. I hate it".

She got so drunk I had to take her home. It was a walk up on Hudson Street. She just about made me carry her upstairs and then she clung to me and wouldn't let me go. There was a man's jacket on the chair and a straw hat on the table. The place smelt of some kind of hair lotion these pimplike characters use. "What about Ballestre"? I had to shake her to make her listen. "Precious. What about him"? Suddenly she was very mysterious and dramatic. "Precious and I allow each other absolute freedom. We are above being jealous. He's used to me bringing home strange men. I'll

just tell him you're my husband. He can't object to that".

"Well I object. If he pokes his nose in here I'll slug him". "That really would be funny". She began to laugh. She was still laughing when I grabbed her and started rolling her on the bed. After all I'm made of flesh and blood. I'm not a plaster saint. Waking up was horrible. Never in my life have I felt so remorseful about anything I've done as I did about spending that night with my own wife. We both had hangovers. Eileen declared she couldn't lift her head from the pillow. She lay under the covers making jabbing motions with her forefinger telling me where to look for the coffeepot. I was stumbling in my undershirt trying to find my way around her damn kitchenette when I smelt that sickish sweet hairtonic smell. There was somebody else in the apartment.

I stiffened. Honest I could feel the hair stand up on the back of my neck like a dog's that is going to get into a fight. I turned around with the percolator in my hand. My eyes were so bleary I could barely see him but there he was, a little smooth olivefaced guy in a new spring overcoat and a taffycolored fedora. Brown eyes, eyebrow mustache. Oval face without an expression in the world.

We didn't have time to speak before Eileen's voice was screeching at us from the bed. "Joseph Maria Ballestre meet Francis Xavier Bowman. Exboyfriend meet exhusband". She gave the nastiest laugh I ever heard. "And don't either of you forget that I'm not any man's property. If you want to fight, go down on the sidewalk". She was enjoying the situation. Imagine that. Eileen was a psychologist all right. Instead of wanting to sock the poor bastard I found myself having a fellowfeeling for him. Maybe he felt the same way. I never felt such a lowdown hound in my life. First thing I knew he was in the kitchenette cooking up the breakfast and I was handing Eileen her coffeecup and she was lying there handsome as a queen among her courtiers. I couldn't face Thelma after that night. I didn't even have the nerve to call her on the telephone. I wrote her that I'd met up with Eileen and that old bonds had proved too strong and asked her to send my clothes down by express. Of course I had to give her Eileen's address, but she never came near us. All she did was write me a pleasant little note about how it was beautiful while it lasted but that now life had parted our ways and it was goodbye forever. She never said a word about the fifty dollars. She added a postscript begging me to be careful about drinking. I must know that that was my greatest weakness underlined three times.

Afterwards I learned that Eileen had called Thelma on the telephone and made a big scene about Thelma trying to take her husband away. That finished me with Thelma. Trust Eileen to squeeze all the drama out of a situation. And there I was shacked up with Eileen in that filthy fourth floor attic on Hudson Street. I use the phrase advisedly because there was something positively indecent about our relationship. I felt it and it ate on me all the time, but I

didn't know how right I was till later. What I did know was
that Precious was always around. He slept in the hall bedroom at the
head of the stairs. "Who do you think pays the rent? You wouldn't
have me throw the poor boy out on the street", Eileen said when
I needled her about it. I said sure that was what I wanted her
to do but she paid no attention. Eileen had a wonderful way of not listening
to things she didn't want to hear. Still I didn't think
she was twotiming me with Precious right then. To be on the safe side
I never let Eileen get out of my sight day or night. Precious
had me worried. I couldn't make out what his racket was. I'd
thought him a pimp or procurer but he didn't seem to be. He was smooth
and civil spoken but it seemed to me there was something tough under
his selfeffacing manner. Still he let Eileen treat him like a valet.
Whenever the place was cleaned or a meal served it was Precious
who did the work. I never could find out what his business was.
He always seemed to have money in his pocket. The phone had been
disconnected but telegrams came for him and notes by special messenger.
Now and then he would disappear for several days. "Connections"
was all he would say with that smooth hurt smile when I put leading
questions. "Oh he's just an international spy", Eileen would
shout with her screechy laugh. Poor devil he can't have been
too happy either. He got no relief from drink because, though sometimes
Precious would buy himself a drink if he went out with us in the
evening, he'd leave it on the table untouched. When I was in
liquor I rode him pretty hard I guess. Occasionally if I pushed
him too far he'd give me a look out of narrowed eyes and the hard cruel
bony skull would show through that smooth face of his. "Some day",
I told Eileen, "that guy will kill us both". She just wouldn't
listen. Getting drunk every night was the only way I
could handle the situation. Eileen seemed to feel the same way. We still
had that much in common. The trouble was drinking cost money. The
way Eileen and I were hitting it up, we needed ten or fifteen dollars
an evening. Eileen must have wheedled a little out of Precious.
I raised some kale by hocking the good clothes I had left over from
my respectable uptown life, but when that was gone I didn't have a
cent. I don't know what we would have done if Pat O'Dwyer hadn't
come to town. Pat O'Dwyer looked like a heavier Jim.
He had the same bullet head of curly reddish hair but he didn't have
Jim's pokerfaced humor or his brains or his charm. He was a big
thick beefy violent man. Now Pat may have been a lecher and a plugugly,
but he was a good churchgoing Catholic and he loved his little
sister. Those O'Dwyers had that Irish clannishness that made them
stick
together in spite of politics and everything. Pat took Eileen
and me out to dinner at a swell steak house and told us with tears
in his eyes how happy he was we had come together again. "Whom God
hath joined" etcetera. The O'Dwyers were real religious people
except for Kate. Now it would be up to me to keep the little girl
out of mischief. Pat had been worried as hell ever since she'd lost
her job on that fashion magazine. It had gone big with the Hollywood
girls when he told them his sister was an editor of <Art and Apparel>.

How about me trying to help her get her job back? All evening Eileen had been as demure as a little girl getting ready for her first communion. It just about blew us both out of the water when Eileen suddenly came out with what she came out with. "But brother I can't take a job right now", she said with her eyes on her ice cream, "I'm going to have a baby, Francis Xavier's baby, my own husband's baby". My first thought was how had it happened so soon, but I counted back on my fingers and sure enough we'd been living together six weeks. Pat meanwhile was bubbling over with sentiment. Greatest thing that ever happened. Now Eileen really would have to settle down to love honor and obey, and she'd have to quit drinking. He'd come East for the christening, by God he would. When we separated that evening Pat pushed a hundred dollar bill into Eileen's hand to help towards a layette. Before he left town Pat saw to it that I was fixed up with a job. Pat had contacts all over the labor movement. A friend of Pat's named Frank Sposato had just muscled into the Portwatchers' Union. The portwatchers were retired longshoremen and small time seafarers off towboats and barges who acted as watchmen on the wharves. Most of them were elderly men. It was responsible and sometimes dangerous work because the thieving is awful in the port of New York. They weren't as well paid as they should have been. One reason the portwatchers let Sposato take them over was to get the protection of his musclemen.

Sposato needed a front, some labor stiff with a clean record to act as business agent of the Redhook local. There I was a retired wobbly and structural iron worker who'd never gouged a cent off a fellow worker in my thirty years in the movement. For once radicalism was a recommendation. Sposato couldn't wait to get me hired. With my gray hair and my weatherbeaten countenance I certainly looked the honest working stiff. The things a man will do for a woman. There was one fact which Rector could not overlook, one truth which he could not deny. As long as there were two human beings working together on the same project, there would be competition and you could no more escape it than you could expect to escape the grave. No matter how devoted a man was, no matter how fully he gave his life to the Lord, he could never extinguish that one spark of pride that gave him definition as an individual. All of the jobs in the mission might be equal in the eyes of the Lord, but they were certainly not equal in the eyes of the Lord's servants. It was only natural that Fletcher would strive for a position in which he could make the decisions.

Even Rector himself was prey to this spirit of competition and he knew it, not for a more exalted office in the hierarchy of the church- his ambitions for the bishopry had died very early in his career- but for the one clear victory he had talked about to the colonel. He was not sure how much of this desire was due to his devotion to the church and how much was his own ego, demanding to be satisfied, for the two were intertwined and could not be separated. He wanted desperately to see Kayabashi defeated, the Communists in the village rooted out, the mission standing triumphant, for in the triumph of the Lord he

himself would be triumphant, too. But perhaps this was a part of the eternal plan, that man's ambition when linked with God would be a driving, indefatigable force for good in the world. He sighed.
How foolish it was to try to fathom the truth in an area where only faith would suffice. He would have to work without questioning the motives which made him work and content himself with the thought that the eventual victory, however it was brought about, would be sweet indeed.

His first move was to send Hino to the village to spend a few days. His arm had been giving him some trouble and Rector was not enough of a medical expert to determine whether it had healed improperly or whether Hino was simply rebelling against the tedious work in the print shop, using the stiffness in his arm as an excuse. In any event Rector sent him to the local hospital to have it checked, telling him to keep his ears open while he was in the village to see if he could find out what Kayabashi was planning. Hino was elated at the prospect. He was allowed to spend his nights at an inn near the hospital and he was given some extra money to go to the <pachinko> parlor- an excellent place to make contact with the enemy. He left with all the joyous spirit of a child going on a holiday, nodding attentively as Rector gave him his final instructions. He was to get involved in no
arguments; he was to try to make no converts; he was simply to listen and report back what he heard. It was a ridiculous situation and Rector knew it, for Hino, frankly partisan, openly gregarious, would make a poor espionage agent. If he wanted to know anything, he would end up asking about it point-blank, but in this guileless manner he would probably receive more truthful answers than if he tried to get them by indirection. In all of his experience in the mission field Rector had never seen a convert quite like Hino. From the moment that Hino had first walked into the mission to ask for a job, any job- his qualifications neatly written on a piece of paper in a precise hand- he had been ready to become a Christian. He had already been studying the Bible; he knew the fundamentals, and after studying with Fletcher for a time he approached Rector, announced that he wanted to be baptized and that was that. Rector had never been able to find out much about Hino's past. Hino talked very little about himself except for the infrequent times when he used a personal illustration in connection with another subject. Putting the pieces of this mosaic together, Rector had the vague outlines of a biography. Hino was the fourth son of an elderly farmer who lived on the coast, in Chiba, and divided his life between the land and the sea, supplementing the marginal livelihood on his small rented farm with seasonal employment on a fishing boat. Without exception Hino's brothers turned to either one or both of their father's occupations, but Hino showed a talent for neither and instead spent most of his time on the beach where he repaired nets and proved immensely popular as a storyteller. He had gone into the Japanese navy, had been trained as an officer, had participated in one or two battles- he never went into detail regarding his military experience- and at the age of twenty-five, quite as a bolt out of the blue, he had walked into the mission as if

he belonged here and had become a Christian. Rector was often curious; often tempted to ask questions but he never did. If and when Hino decided to tell him about his experiences, he would do so unasked.

Rector had no doubt that Hino would come back from the village bursting with information, ready to impart it with his customary gusto, liberally embellished with his active imagnation. When the telephone rang on the day after Hino went down to the village, Rector had a hunch it would be Hino with some morsel of information too important to wait until his return, for there were few telephones in the village and the phone in Rector's office rarely rang unless it was important. He was surprised to find Kayabashi's secretary on the other end of the line. He was even more startled when he heard what Kayabashi wanted. The <oyabun> was entertaining a group of dignitaries, the secretary said, businessmen from Tokyo for the most part, and Kayabashi wished to show them the mission. They had never seen one before and had expressed a curiosity about it. "Oh"? Rector said. "I guess it will be all right. When would the <oyabun> like to bring his guests up here"? "This afternoon", the secretary said. "At three o'clock if it will be of convenience to you at that time". "All right", Rector said. "I will be expecting them". He was about to hang up the phone, but a note of hesitancy in the secretary's voice left the conversation open. He had something more to say. "I beg to inquire if the back is now safe for travelers", he said. Rector laughed despite himself. "Unless the <oyabun> has been working on it", he said, then checked himself and added: "You can tell Kayabashi-<san> that the back road is in very good condition and will be quite safe for his party to use". "<Arigato gosaimasu>". The secretary sighed with relief and then the telephone clicked in Rector's hand. Rector had no idea why Kayabashi wanted to visit the mission. For the <oyabun> to make such a trip was either a sign of great weakness or an indication of equally great confidence, and from all the available information it was probably the latter. Kayabashi must feel fairly certain of his victory in order to make a visit like this, a trip which could be so easily misinterpreted by the people in the village.

At the same time, it was unlikely that any businessmen would spend a day in a Christian mission out of mere curiosity. No, Kayabashi was bringing his associates here for a specific purpose and Rector would not be able to fathom it until they arrived. When he had given the call a few moments thought, he went into the kitchen to ask Mrs& Yamata to prepare tea and <sushi> for the visitors, using the formal English china and the silver tea service which had been donated to the mission, then he went outside to inspect the grounds. Fujimoto had a pile of cuttings near one side of the lawn. Rector asked him to move it for the time being; he wanted the mission compound to be effortlessly spotless. A good initial impression would be important now. He went into the print shop, where Fletcher had just finished cleaning the press. "How many pamphlets do we have in stock"? Rector said. "I should say about a hundred thousand",

Fletcher said. "Why"? "I would like to enact a little tableau this afternoon", Rector said, He explained about the visit and the effect he wished to create, the picture of a very busy mission. He did not wish to deceive Kayabashi exactly, just to display the mission activities in a graphic and impressive manner. Fletcher nodded as he listened to the instructions and said he would arrange the things Rector requested. Rector's next stop was at the schoolroom, where Mavis was monitoring a test. He beckoned to her from the door and she slipped quietly outside. He told her of the visitors and then of his plans. "How many children do you have present today"? he said. She looked back toward the schoolroom. "Fifteen", she said. "No, only fourteen. The little Ito girl had to go home. She has a pretty bad cold". "I would like them to appear very busy today, not busy exactly, but joyous, exuberant, full of life. I want to create the impression of a compound full of children. Do you think you can manage it"? Mavis smiled. "I'll try". As Rector was walking back toward the residential hall, Johnson came out of the basement and bounded up to him. The altercation in the coffee house had done little to dampen his spirits, but he was still a little wary around Rector for they had not yet discussed the incident. "I think I've fixed the pump so we won't have to worry about it for a long time", he said. "I've adjusted the gauge so that the pump cuts out before the water gets too low". "Fine", Rector said. He looked out over the expanse of the compound. It was going to take a lot of activity to fill it. "Have you ever operated a transit"? he said.

"No, sir", Johnson said. "You are about to become a first-class surveyor", Rector said. "When Konishi gets back with the jeep, I want you to round up two or three Japanese boys. Konishi can help you. You'll find an old transit in the basement. The glass is out of it, but that won't matter. It looks pretty efficient and that's the important thing". He went on to explain what he had in mind. Johnson nodded. He said he could do it. Rector was warming to his over-all strategy by the time he got back to the residential hall. It was rather a childish game, all in all, but everybody seemed to be getting into the spirit of the thing and he could not remember when he had enjoyed planning anything quite so much. He was not sure what effect it would have, but that was really beside the point when you got right down to it. He was not going to lose the mission by default, and whatever reason Kayabashi had for bringing his little sight-seeing group to the mission, he was going to be in for a surprise.

He found Elizabeth in the parlor and asked her to make sure everything was in order in the residential hall, and then to take charge of the office while the party was here. When everything had been done, Rector went back to his desk to occupy himself with his monthly report until three o'clock. At two thirty he sent Fujimoto to the top of the wall at the northeast corner of the mission to keep an eye on the ridge road and give a signal when he first glimpsed the approach of Kayabashi's party. Then Rector, attired in his best

blue serge suit, sat in a chair out on the lawn, in the shade of a tree, smoking a cigarette and waiting. The air was cooler here, and the lacy pattern of the trees threw a dappled shadow on the grass, an effect which he found pleasant.

She concluded by asking him to name another hour should this one be inconvenient. The fish took the bait. He replied that he could not imagine what importance there might be in thus meeting with a stranger, but- joy of joys, he would be at home at the hour mentioned.

But when she called he had thought better of the matter and decided not to involve himself in a new entanglement. She was told by the manservant who opened the door that his lordship was engaged on work from which he had left strict orders he was not to be disturbed. Claire was bitterly disappointed but determined not to let the rebuff daunt her purpose. She wrote again and now, abandoning for the moment the theme of love, she asked for help in the matter of her career. She could act and she could write. His lordship was concerned in the management of Drury Lane but, if there were no opportunities there, would he read and criticize her novel? At last he consented to meet her, and following that brief interview Claire wrote him a yet more remarkable proposal: Have you any objection to the following plan? On Thursday evening we may go out of town together by some stage or mail about the distance of ten or twelve miles. There we shall be free and unknown; we can return the following morning **h She concluded by asking for a brief interview- "to settle with you <where>"- and she threw in a tribute to his "gentle manners" and "the wild originality of your countenance".

She opened his reply with trembling fingers **h he agreed! And he would see her that evening. Victory at last! At their meeting he told her not to bother about "where"- he would attend to that. There was one of the new forte-pianos in the room and, as Claire
rose to go, he asked her to sing him one song before she left. She sang him Scott's charming ballad "Rosabelle", which was the vogue of the moment. She had never sung better. "Your voice is delightful", he approved with a warm smile. "Tomorrow will be a new experience- I have never before made love to a nightingale **h. There have been cooing doves, chattering magpies, thieving jackdaws, a proud peacock, a silly goose, and a harpy eagle- whom I was silly enough to mate with and who is now busy tearing at my vitals".

And so they went, he choosing of all places an inn near Medmenham Abbey, scene a generation ago of the obscene orgies of the Hellfire Club. He regaled Claire with an account of the mock mass performed by the cassocked bloods, which he had had at firsthand from old Bud Dodington, one of the leaders of the so-called "Order". Each wore the monkish scourge at his waist but this, it seems, was not employed for self-flagellation **h. Naked girls danced in the chancel of the Abbey, the youngest and seemingly the most innocent being chosen

to read a sermon filled with veiled depravities. The jaded amorist conjured up pictures of the blasphemous rites with relish. Alas, all that belonged to the age of "Devil Dashwood" and "Wicked Wilkes", abbot and beadsman of the Order! The casual seduction of a seventeen-year-old bluestocking seemed tame by comparison.

They passed close by the turn to Bishopsgate. A scant half mile away Shelley and Mary were doubtless sitting on their diminutive terrace, the air about them scented with stock, and listening to the nightingale who had nested in the big lime tree at the foot of the garden. Charming and peaceful- but what were charm and peace compared to high adventure? Alone with the fabulous Byron! How many women had longed for the privilege that was hers. How was she to behave, Claire wondered. To be passive, to be girlishly shy was palpably absurd. She was the pursuer as clearly as was Venus in Shakespeare's poem. And while her Adonis did not suffer from inexperience, satiety might well be an equal handicap. No, she would not pretend modesty, but neither must she be crudely bold. Mystery- that was the thing. In the bedroom she would insist on darkness. With his club foot he might well be grateful. At the inn, which was situated close to a broad weir, Byron was greeted by the landlord with obsequious deference and addressed as "milord". The place was evidently a familiar haunt and Claire wondered what other illicit loves had been celebrated in the comfortable rooms to which they were shown. The fire in the sitting room was lighted. "What about the bedroom"? Byron inquired. "Seems to me last time I was here the grate bellowed out smoke as it might have been preparing us for hell".

"We found some owls had built a nest in the chimney, milord, but I promise you you'll never have trouble of that sort again".

So, not only had he been here before, but it seemed he might well come again. Claire felt suddenly small and cheap, heroine of a trivial episode in the voluminous history of Don Juan. A cold supper was ordered and a bottle of port. When Napoleon's ship had borne him to Elba, French wines had started to cross the Channel, the first shipments in a dozen war-ridden years, but the supplies had not yet reached rural hostelries where the sweet wines of the Spanish peninsula still ruled. As they waited for supper they sat by the fire, glasses in hand, while Byron philosophized as much for his own entertainment as hers. "Sex is overpriced", he said. "The great Greek tragedies are concerned with man against Fate, not man against man for the prize of a woman's body. So don't see yourself as a heroine or fancy this little adventure is an event of major importance". "The gods seemed to think sex pretty important", she rebutted. "Mars and Venus, Bacchus and Ariadne, Jupiter and Io, Byron and the nymph of the owl's nest. That would be Minerva, I suppose. Wasn't the owl her symbol"? Byron laughed. "So you know something of the classics, do you"?

"Tell me about Minerva, how she behaved, what she did to please

you". "I'll tell you nothing. I don't ask you who 'tis
you're being unfaithful to, husband or lover. Frankly, I don't
care". For a moment she thought of answering with the truth
but she knew there were men who shied away from virginity, who demanded
some
degree of education in body as well as mind. "Very well",
she said, "I'll not catechize you. What matter the others so long
as I have my place in history". She was striking the right
note. No man ever had a better opinion of himself and indeed, with
one so favored, flattery could hardly seem overdone. Brains and beauty,
high position in both the social and intellectual worlds, athlete,
fabled lover- if ever the world was any man's oyster it was his.

The light supper over, Claire went to him and, slipping an arm
about his shoulder, sat on his knee. He drew her close and, hand on
cheek, turned her face to his. Her lips, moist and parted, spoke his
name. "Byron"! His hand went to her shoulder and
pushed aside the knotted scarf that surmounted the striped poplin gown;
then, to better purpose, he took hold of the knot and with dextrous
fingers, untied it. The bodice beneath was buttoned and, withdrawing
his lips from hers, he set her upright on his knee and started to
undo it, unhurriedly as if she were a child. But, kindled by
his kiss, his caressing hand, her desire was aflame. She sprang up and
went swiftly to the bedroom. Lord Byron poured himself another glass
of wine and held it up to the candle flame admiring the rich color.
He drank slowly with due appreciation. It was an excellent vintage.

He rose and went to the bedroom. Pausing in the doorway he said:
"The form of the human female, unlike her mind and her spirit,
is the most challenging loveliness in all nature". ##

When Claire
returned to Bishopsgate she longed to tell them she had become
Byron's mistress. By odd coincidence, on the evening of her return
Shelley chose to read <Parisina>, which was the latest of the titled
poet's successes. As he declaimed the sonorous measures, it was
as much as Claire could do to restrain herself from bursting out with
her dramatic tidings. "Although it is not the best of which
he is capable", said Shelley as he closed the book, "it is still
poetry of a high order". "If he would only leave the East",
said Mary. "I am tired of sultans and scimitars".
"The hero of his next poem is Napoleon Bonaparte", said Claire,
with slightly overdone carelessness. "How do you know that"?
demanded Mary. "I was told it on good authority",
Claire answered darkly. "I mustn't tell, I mustn't tell",
she repeated to herself. "I promised him I wouldn't".

#CHAPTER
9#

WINTER CAME, and with it Mary's baby- a boy as she

had wished. William, he was called, in honor of the man who was at once Shelley's pensioner and his most bitter detractor. With a pardonable irony Shelley wrote to the father who had publicly disowned his daughter: "Fanny and Mrs& Godwin will probably be glad to hear that Mary has safely recovered from a very favorable confinement, and that her child is well". At the same time another child- this one of Shelley's brain- was given to the world: <Alastor>, a poem of pervading beauty in which the reader may gaze into the still depths of a fine mind's musings. <Alastor> was published only to be savagely attacked, contemptuously ignored. Shelley sent a copy to Southey, a former friend, and another to Godwin. Neither acknowledged the gift. Only Mary's praise sustained him in his disappointment. She understood completely. Not a thought nor a cadence was missed in her summary of appreciation. "You have made the labor worth while", he said to her, smiling. "And in the future, since I write for a public of one, I can save the poor publishers from wasting their money". "A public of one", Mary echoed reprovingly. "how can you say such a thing? There will be thousands who will thrill to the loveliness of <Alastor>. There are some even now. What about that dear, clever Mr& Thynne? I am sure he is in raptures". "Poor Mr& Thynne, he always has to be trotted out for my encouragement". "There are other Mr& Thynnes. Not everyone is bewitched by Byron's caliphs and harem beauties". Mary's supercritical attitude toward Byron had nothing to do with his moral disrepute. She was resentful of his easy success as compared with Shelley's failure. The same month that <Alastor> was published, Murray sold twenty thousand copies of <The Siege of Corinth>, a slovenly bit of Byronism that even Shelley's generosity rebelled at. ##

The lordly poet was at low-water mark. The careless writing was in keeping with his mood of savage discontent. On all sides doors were being slammed in his face. The previous scandals, gaily diverting as they were, had only served to increase his popularity. Now, under the impact of his wife's disclosures, he was brought suddenly to the realization that there was a limit to tolerance, however brilliant, however far-famed the offender might be. He tried defiance and openly flaunted his devotion to his half sister, but he soon saw, as did she, that this course if persisted in would involve them in a common ruin. For the moment there was no woman in his life, and it was this vacuum that had given Claire her opportunity. But the liaison successfully started in the last days of autumn was now languishing. Byron, since the separation from his wife had been living in a smallish house in Piccadilly Terrace. He refused to bring Claire to it even as an occasional visitor, claiming that his every move was watched by spies of the Milbankes.

Beckworth handed the pass to the colonel. He had thought that the suggestion of taking it himself would tip the colonel in the direction of serving his own order, but the slip of paper was folded and absently

thrust into the colonel's belt. Despite his yearning, the colonel would not go down to see the men come through the lines. He would remain in the tent, waiting impatiently, occupied by some trivial task. -Beckworth. -Sir? -Fetch me the copies of everything ~B and ~C companies have requisitioned in the last six months. -The last <six> months, sir? -You heard me. There's a lot of waste going on here. It's got to stop. I want to take a look. This is no damned holiday, Beckworth. Get busy. -Yes, sir. Beckworth left the tent. Below he could see the bright torches lighting the riverbank. He glanced back. The colonel crouched tensely on one of the folding chairs, methodically tearing at his thumbnail. #@ 9 @#

THE BOMBPROOF was a low-ceilinged structure of heavy timbers covered with earth. It stood some fifty paces from the edge of the bank. From the outside, it seemed no more than a low drumlin, a lump on the dark earth. A crude ladder ran down to a wooden floor. Two slits enabled observers to watch across the river. The place smelled strongly of rank, fertile earth, rotting wood and urine. The plank floor was slimed beneath Watson's boots. At least the Union officer had been decent enough to provide a candle. There was no place to sit, but Watson walked slowly from the ladder to the window slits and back, stooping slightly to avoid striking his head on the heavy beams. In the corner was the soldier with the white flag. He stood stiffly erect, clutching the staff, his body half hidden by the limp cloth. Watson hardly looked at him. The man had come floundering aboard the flat-bottomed barge at the last instant, brandishing the flag of truce. Someone had hauled him over the side, and he had remained silent while they crossed. An officer with a squad of men had been waiting on the bank. The men in the boats had started yelling happily at first sight of the officer, two of them calling him Billy. When the boat had touched, the weaker ones and the two wounded men had been lifted out and carried away by the soldiers. Watson had presented his pouch and been led to the bombproof. The officer had told him that both lists must be checked. Watson had given his name and asked for a safe-conduct pass. The officer, surprised, said he would have to see. Watson had nodded absently and muttered that he would check the lists himself later. He had peered through the darkness at the rampart. The men he would take back across the river stood there, but he turned away from them. He wanted no part of the emotions of the exchange, no memory of the joy and gratitude that other men felt. He had hoped to be alone in the bombproof, but the soldier had followed him. Though Watson carefully ignored the man, he could not deny his presence. Perhaps it would be better to speak to him, since silence could not exorcise his form. Watson glanced briefly at him, seeing only a body rigidly erect behind the languid banner.

-We won't be too long. If my pass is approved, I may be a half hour. The soldier answered in a curious, muffled voice, his lips barely moving. Watson turned away and did not see the man's

knees buckle and his body sag. -Yes, sir. He
had acknowledged the man. It was easier to think now, Watson decided.
The stiff figure in the corner no longer blocked his thoughts. He
paced slowly, stooping, staring at the damp, slippery floor. He tried
to order the words of the three Union officers, seeking to create some
coherent portrait of the dead boy. But he groped blindly. His lack
of success steadily eroded his interest. He stopped pacing, leaned
against the dank, timbered wall and let his mind drift. A feeling of
futility, an enervation of mind greater than any fatigue he had ever known,
seeped through him. What in the name of God was he doing, crouched
in a timbered pit on the wrong bank of the river? Why had he crossed
the dark water, to bring back a group of reclaimed soldiers or
to skulk in a foul-smelling hole? He grew annoyed and at the
same time surprised at that emotion. He was conscious of a growing sense
of absurdity. Hillman had written it all out, hadn't he? Wasn't
the report official enough? What did he hope to accomplish here?
Hillman had ordered him not to leave the far bank. Prompted by
a guilty urge, he had disobeyed the order of a man he respected. For
what? To tell John something he would find out for himself.

The figure in the corner belched loudly, a deep, liquid eruption. Watson
snorted and then laughed aloud. Exactly! The soldier's
voice was muffled again, stricken with chagrin. He clutched the
staff,
and his dark eyes blinked apologetically. -'Scuse me,
sir. -Let's get out of here. Watson ran up the ladder
and stood for a second sucking in the cool air that smelled of mud
and river weeds. To his left, the two skiffs dented their sharp bows
into the soft bank. The flat-bottomed boat swung slowly to the pull
of the current. A soldier held the end of a frayed rope. Three
Union guards appeared, carrying their rifles at ready. Watson stared
at them
curiously. They were stocky men, well fed and clean-shaven, with
neat uniforms and sturdy boots. Behind them shambled a long column of
weak, tattered men. The thin gray figures raised a hoarse, cawing cry
like the call of a bird flock. They moved toward the skiffs with shocking
eagerness, elbowing and shoving. Four men were knocked down, but
did not attempt to rise. They crept down the muddy slope toward the
waiting boats. The Union soldiers grounded arms and settled into healthy,
indifferent postures to watch the feeble boarding of the skiffs.
The crawling men tried to rise and fell again. No one moved to them.
Watson watched two of them flounder into the shallow water and listened
to their voices beg shrilly. In a confused, soaked and stumbling
shift of bodies and lifting arms, the two men were dragged into the
same skiff. The third crawling man forced himself erect. He swayed
like a drunkard, his arms milling in slow circles. He paced forward unsteadily,
leaning too far back, his head tilted oddly. His steps were
short and stiff, and, with his head thrown back, his progress was a
supercilious strut. He appeared to be peering haughtily down his nose
at the crowded and unclean vessel that would carry him to freedom. He
stalked into the water and fell heavily over the side of the flat-bottomed

barge, his weight nearly swamping the craft. Watson looked for the fourth man. He had reached the three passive guards; he crept in an incertain manner, patting the ground before him. The guards did not look at him. The figure on the earth halted, seemingly bewildered. He sank back on his thin haunches like a weary hound. Then he began to crawl again. Watson watched the creeping figure. He felt a spectator interest. Would the man make it or not? If only there was a clock for him to crawl against. If he failed to reach the riverbank in five minutes, say, then the skiffs would pull away and leave him groping in the mud. Say three minutes to make it sporting. Still the guards did not move, but stood inert, aloof from the slow-scrambling man. The figure halted, and Watson gasped. The man began to creep in the wrong direction, deceived by a slight rise in the ground! He turned slowly and began to crawl back up the bank toward the rampart. Watson raced for him, his boots slamming the soft earth. The guards came to life with astonishing menace. They spun and flung their rifles up. Watson gesticulated wildly. One man dropped to his knee for better aim. -Let me help him, for the love of God!

The guards lowered their rifles and their rifles and peered at Watson with sullen, puzzled faces. Watson pounded to the crawling man and stopped, panting heavily. He reached down and closed his fingers on the man's upper arm. Beneath his clutch, a flat strip of muscle surged on the bone. Watson bent awkwardly and lifted the man to his feet. Watson stared into a cadaverous face. Two clotted balls the color of mucus rolled between fiery lids. Light sticks of fingers, the tips gummy with dark earth, patted at Watson's throat. The man's voice was a sweet, patient whisper. -Henry said that he'd take my arm and get me right there. But you ain't Henry. -No.

-It don't matter. Is it far? How far could it be, Watson thought bleakly, how far can a blind man crawl? Another body length or all the rest of his nighted life? -Not far. -You talk deep. Not like us fellas. It raises the voice, bein in camp. You Secesh? -Yes. Come on, now. Can you walk? -Why, course I can. I can walk real good.

Watson stumbled down the bank. The man leaned his frail body against Watson's shoulder. He was no heavier than a child. Watson paused for breath. The man wheezed weakly, his fetid breath beating softly against Watson's neck. His sweet whisper came after great effort.

-Oh, Christ **h. I wish you was Henry **h. He promised to take me. -Hush. We're almost there. Watson supported the man to the edge of the bank and passed the frail figure over the bow of the nearest skiff. The man swayed on a thwart, turning his ruined eyes from side to side. Watson turned away, sickened for the first time in many months. He heard the patient voice calling.

-Henry? Where are you, Henry? -Make him lie down! Watson snatched a deep breath. He had not meant to shout.

He stood with his back to the skiff. The men mewed and scratched,
begging to be taken away. Watson spoke bewilderedly to the dark night
flecked with pine-knot torches. -<Goddamn you! What
do you do to them?> Intelligence jabbed at him accusingly.
He was angry, sickened. He had not felt that during the afternoon.
No, nor later. All his emotions had been inward, self-conscious. In
war, on a night like this, it was only the outward emotions that mattered,
what could be flung out into the darkness to damage others. Yes.
That was it. He was sure of it. John's type of man allowed
this sort of thing to happen. What a fool he had been to think of
his brother! So Charles was dead. What did it matter? His name
had been crossed off a list. Already his cool body lay in the ground.
What words had any meaning? What had he thought of, to go to John,
grovel and beg understanding? To confess with a canvas chair as
a <prie-dieu>, gouging at his heart until a rough and stupid hand bade
him rise and go? Men were slaughtered every day, tumbled into eternity
like so many torn parcels flung down a portable chute. What made
him think John had a right to witness his brother's humiliation?
What right had John to any special consideration? Was John better,
more deserving? To hell with John. Let him chafe with impatience
to see Charles, rip open the note with trembling hands and read
the formal report in Hillman's beautiful, schoolmaster's hand. John
would curse. He believed that brave boys didn't cry. Watson
spat on the ground. He was grimly satisfied. He had stupidly thought
himself compelled to ease his brother's pain. Now he knew perfectly
that he had but longed to increase his own suffering.

I WOULD not want to be one of those writers who begin each
morning
by exclaiming, "O Gogol, O Chekhov, O Thackeray and Dickens,
what would you have made of a bomb shelter ornamented with four
plaster-of-Paris ducks,
a birdbath, and three composition gnomes with
long beards and red mobcaps"? As I say, I wouldn't want to
begin a day like this, but I often wonder what the dead would have done.
But the shelter is as much a part of my landscape as the beech and
horse-chestnut trees that grow on the ridge. I can see it from this
window where I write. It was built by the Pasterns, and stands on
the acre of ground that adjoins our property. It bulks under a veil of
thin, new grass, like some embarrassing fact of physicalness, and I
think Mrs& Pastern set out the statuary to soften its meaning. It
would have been like her. She was a pale woman. Sitting on her terrace,
sitting in her parlor, sitting anywhere, she ground an axe of self-esteem.
Offer her a cup of tea and she would say, "Why, these cups
look just like a set I gave to the Salvation Army last year".
Show her the new swimming pool and she would say, slapping her ankle,
"I suppose this must be where you breed your gigantic mosquitoes".
Hand her a chair and she would say, "Why, it's a nice imitation
of those Queen Anne chairs I inherited from Grandmother Delancy".
These trumps were more touching than they were anything else,
and seemed to imply that the nights were long, her children ungrateful,

and her marriage bewilderingly threadbare. Twenty years ago, she would have been known as a golf widow, and the sum of her manner was perhaps one of bereavement. She usually wore weeds, and a stranger watching her board a train might have guessed that Mr& Pastern was dead, but Mr& Pastern was far from dead. He was marching up and down the locker room of the Grassy Brae Golf Club shouting, "Bomb Cuba! Bomb Berlin! Let's throw a little nuclear hardware at them and show them who's boss". He was brigadier of the club's locker-room light infantry, and at one time or another declared war on Russia, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and China. It all began on an autumn afternoon- and who, after all these centuries, can describe the fineness of an autumn day? One might pretend never to have seen one before, or, to more purpose, that there would never be another like it. The clear and searching sweep of sun on the lawns was like a climax of the year's lights. Leaves were burning somewhere and the smoke smelled, for all its ammoniac acidity, of beginnings. The boundless blue air was stretched over the zenith like the skin of a drum. Leaving her house one late afternoon, Mrs& Pastern stopped to admire the October light. It was the day to canvass for infectious hepatitis. Mrs& Pastern had been given sixteen names, a bundle of literature, and a printed book of receipts. It was her work to go among her neighbors and collect their checks. Her house stood on a rise of ground, and before she got into her car she looked at the houses below. Charity as she knew it was complex and reciprocal, and almost every roof she saw signified charity. Mrs& Balcolm worked for the brain. Mrs& Ten Eyke did mental health. Mrs& Trenchard worked for the blind. Mrs& Horowitz was in charge of diseases of the nose and throat. Mrs& Trempler was tuberculosis, Mrs& Surcliffe was Mothers' March of Dimes, Mrs& Craven was cancer, and Mrs& Gilkson did the kidney. Mrs& Hewlitt led the birthcontrol league, Mrs&
Ryerson was arthritis, and way in the distance could be seen the slate roof of Ethel Littleton's house, a roof that signified gout.

Mrs& Pastern undertook the work of going from house to house with the thoughtless resignation of an honest and traditional laborer. It was her destiny; it was her life. Her mother had done it before her, and even her old grandmother, who had collected money for smallpox and unwed mothers. Mrs& Pastern had telephoned most of her neighbors in advance, and most of them were ready for her. She experienced none of the suspense of some poor stranger selling encyclopedias. Here and there she stayed to visit and drink a glass of sherry. The contributions were ahead of what she had got the previous year, and while the money, of course, was not hers, it excited her to stuff her kit with big checks. She stopped at the Surcliffes' after dusk, and had a Scotch-and-soda. She stayed too late, and when she left, it was dark and time to go home and cook supper for her husband. "I got a hundred and sixty dollars for the hepatitis fund", she said excitedly when he walked in. "I did everybody on my list but the Blevins and the Flannagans. I want to get my kit in tomorrow morning- would you mind doing them while I cook the dinner"? "But I

don't know the Flannagans", Charlie Pastern said. "Nobody does, but they gave me ten last year". He was tired, he had his business worries, and the sight of his wife arranging pork chops in the broiler only seemed like an extension of a boring day. He was happy enough to take the convertible and race up the hill to the Blevins', thinking that they might give him a drink. But the Blevins were away; their maid gave him an envelope with a check in it and shut the door. Turning in at the Flannagans' driveway, he tried to remember if he had ever met them. The name encouraged him, because he always felt that he could <handle> the Irish. There was a glass pane in the front door, and through this he could see into a hallway where a plump woman with red hair was arranging flowers. "Infectious hepatitis", he shouted heartily. She took a good look at herself in the mirror before she turned and, walking with very small steps, started toward the door. "Oh, please come in", she said. The girlish voice was nearly a whisper. She was not a girl, he could see. Her hair was dyed, and her bloom was fading, and she must have been crowding forty, but she seemed to be one of those women who cling to the manners and graces of a pretty child of eight. "Your wife just called", she said, separating one word from another, exactly like a child. "And I am not sure that I have any cash- any <money>, that is- but if you will wait just a minute I will write you out a check if I can find my checkbook. Won't you step into the living room, where it's cozier"? A fire had just been lighted, he saw, and things had been set out for drinks, and, like any stray, his response to these comforts was instantaneous. Where was <Mr>& Flannagan, he wondered. Travelling home on a late train? Changing his clothes upstairs? Taking a shower? At the end of the room there was a desk heaped with papers, and she began to riffle these, making sighs and and noises of girlish exasperation. "I am terribly sorry to keep you waiting", she said, "but won't you make yourself a little drink while you wait? Everything's on the table".

"What train does Mr& Flannagan come out on"?

"Mr& Flannagan is away", she said. Her voice dropped. "Mr& Flannagan has been away for six weeks **h". "I'll have a drink, then, if you'll have one with me". "If you will promise to make it weak". "Sit down", he said, "and enjoy your drink and look for your checkbook later. The only way to find things is to relax". All in all, they had six drinks. She described herself and her circumstances unhesitatingly. Mr& Flannagan manufactured plastic tongue depressors. He travelled all over the world. She didn't like to travel. Planes made her feel faint, and in Tokyo, where she had gone that summer, she had been given raw fish for breakfast and so she had come straight home. She and her husband had formerly lived in New York, where she had many friends, but Mr& Flannagan thought the country would be safer in case of war. She would rather live in danger than die of loneliness and boredom. She had no children; she had made no friends. "I've seen you, though, before", she said with enormous coyness, patting his

knee. "I've seen you walking your dogs on Sunday and driving by in the convertible **h". The thought of this lonely woman sitting at her window touched him, although he was even more touched by her plumpness. Sheer plumpness, he knew, is not a vital part of the body and has no procreative functions. It serves merely as an excess cushion for the rest of the carcass. And knowing its humble place in the scale of things, why did he, at this time of life, seem almost ready to sell his soul for plumpness? The remarks she made about the sufferings of a lonely woman seemed so broad at first that he didn't know what to make of them, but after the sixth drink he put his arm around her and suggested that they go upstairs and look for her checkbook there. "I've never done this before", she said later, when he was arranging himself to leave. Her voice shook with feeling, and he thought it lovely. He didn't doubt her truthfulness, although he had heard the words a hundred times. "I've never done this before", they always said, shaking their dresses down over their white shoulders. "I've never done this before", they always said, waiting for the elevator in the hotel corridor. "I've never done this before", they always said, pouring another whiskey. "I've never done this before", they always said, putting on their stockings. On ships at sea, on railroad trains, in summer hotels with mountain views, they always said, "I've never done this before". ##

"Where have you been"? Mrs& Pastern asked sadly, when he came in. "It's after eleven". "I had a drink with the Flannagans".

"She told me he was in Germany". "He came home unexpectedly". Charlie ate some supper in the kitchen and went into the ~TV room to hear the news. "Bomb them"! he shouted. "Throw a little nuclear hardware at them! Show them who's boss"! But in bed he had trouble sleeping. He thought first of his son and daughter, away at college. He loved them. It was the only meaning of the word that he had ever known. Then he played nine imaginary holes of golf, choosing his handicap, his irons, his stance, his opponents, and his weather in detail, but the green of the links seemed faded in the light of his business worries. His money was tied up in a Nassau hotel, an Ohio pottery works, and a detergent for window-washing, and luck had been running against him. His worries harried him up out of bed, and he lighted a cigarette and went to the window. In the starlight he could see the trees stripped of their leaves. During the summer he had tried to repair some of his losses at the track, and the bare trees reminded him that his pari-mutuel tickets would still be lying, like leaves, in the gutters near Belmont and Saratoga. Maple and ash, beech and elm, one hundred to win on Three in the fourth, fifty to win on Six in the third, one hundred to win on Two in the eighth. Children walking home from school would scuff through what seemed to be his foliage. Then, getting back into bed, he thought unashamedly of Mrs& Flannagan, planning where they would next meet and what they would do. There are, he thought, so few true means of forgetfulness in this life that why should he shun the

medicine even when the medicine seemed, as it did, a little crude? It was not as though she noted clearly that her nephews had not been to see her for ten years, not since their last journey eastward to witness their Uncle Izaak being lowered into the rocky soil; that aside from due notification of certain major events in their lives (two marriages, two births, one divorce), Christmas and Easter cards of the traditional sort had been the only thin link she had with them through the widowed years. Her thoughts were not discrete. But there was a look about her mouth as though she were tasting lemons. She grasped the chair arms and brought her thin body upright, like a bird alert for flight. She turned and walked stiffly into the parlor to the dainty-legged escritoire, warped and cracked now from fifty years in an atmosphere of sea spray. There she extracted two limp vellum sheets and wrote off the letters, one to Abel, one to Mark. Once her trembling hand, with the pen grasped tight in it, was pressed against the paper the words came sharply, smoothly, as authoritatively as they would dropping from her own lips. And the stiffly regal look of them, she saw grimly, lacked the quaver of age which, thwarting the efforts of her amazing will, ran through her spoken words like a thin ragged string. "Please come down as soon as you conveniently can", the upright letters stalked from the broad-nibbed pen, "I have an important matter to discuss with you". To Abel: "I am afraid there is not much to amuse small children here. I should be obliged if you could make other arrangements for your daughters. You may stay as long as you wish, of course, but if arranging for the care of the girls must take time into account, I think a day or two should be enough to finish our business in". To Mark: "Please give my regards to Myra". She signed the letters quickly, stamped them, and placed them on the hall table for Raphael to mail in town. Then she went back to the wicker chair and resolutely adjusted her eyes to the glare on the water. "My nephews will be coming down", she said that evening as Angelina brought her dinner into the dining room, the whole meal on a vast linen-covered tray. She looked at the girl speculatively from eyes which had paled with the years; from the early evening lights of them which had first startled Izaak to look at
her in an uncousinly way, they had faded to a near-absence of color which had, possibly from her constant looking at the water, something of the light of the sea in them. Angelina placed the tray on the table and with a flick of dark wrist drew off the cloth. She smiled, and the teeth gleamed in her beautifully modeled olive face. "That will be so nice for you, Mrs& Packard", she said. Her voice was ripe and full and her teeth flashed again in Sicilian brilliance before the warm curved lips met and her mouth settled in repose. "Um", said the old lady, and brought her eyes down to the tray. "You remember them, I suppose"? She glinted suspiciously at the dish before her: "Blowfish. I hope Raphael bought them whole".

Angelina stepped back, her eyes roaming the tray for omissions. Then she looked at the old woman again, her eyes calm. "Yes", she said, "I remember that they came here every summer.

I used to play with the older one sometimes, when he'd let me. Abel"?
The name fell with lazy affectionate remembrance from her lips.
For an instant the old aunt felt something indefinable flash through
her smile. She would have said triumph. Then Angelina turned and
with an easy grace walked toward the kitchen. Jessica Packard
lifted her head and followed the retreating figure, her eyes resting
nearly closed on the unself-conscious rise and fall of the rounded hips.
For a moment she held her face to the empty doorway; then she snorted
and groped for her fork. There's no greater catastrophe
in the universe, she reflected dourly, impaling tender green beans
on the silver fork, than the dwindling away of a family. Procreation,
expansion, proliferation- these are the laws of living things, with
the penalty for not obeying them the ultimate in punishments: oblivion.
When the fate of the individual is visited on the group, then (the
warm sweet butter dripped from her raised trembling fork and she pushed
her head forward belligerently), ah, then the true bitterness of
existence could be tasted. And indeed the young garden beans were brackish
in her mouth. She was the last living of the older generation.
What had once been a widespread family- at one time, she knew,
there were enough Packards to populate an entire county- had now
narrowed down to the two boys, Abel and Mark. She swung her eyes up
to the blue of the window, her jaws gently mashing the bitter beans.
What hope lay in the nephews, she asked the intensifying light out there,
with one married to a barren woman and the other divorced, having
sired two girl children, with none to bear on the Packard name?

She ate. It seemed to her, as it seemed each night, that the gloom
drew itself in and became densest at the table's empty chairs,
giving her the frequent illusion that she dined with shadows. Here, too,
she talked low, quirking her head at one or another of the places,
most often at Izaak's armchair which faced her across the long table.
Or it might have been the absent nephews she addressed, consciously
playing with the notion that this was one of the summers of their early
years. She thought again of her children, those two who had
died young, before the later science which might have saved them could
attach even a label to their separate malignancies. The girl, her
first, she barely remembered. It could have been anyone's infant, for
it had not survived the bassinet. But the boy **h the boy had been
alive yesterday. Each successive movement in his growing was recorded
on the unreeling film inside her. He ran on his plump sticks of
legs,
freezing now and again into the sudden startled attitudes which the
camera had caught and held on the paling photographs, all carefully placed
and glued and labeled, resting in the fat plush album in the bottom
drawer of the escritoire. In the cruel clearness of her memory the
boy remained unchanged, quick with the delight of laughter, and the pain
with which she recalled that short destroyed childhood was still unendurable
to her. It was one with the desolate rocks and the alien water
on those days when she hated the sea. ##

The brothers drove

down together in Mark's small red sports car, Mark at the wheel. They rarely spoke. Abel sat and regarded the farm country which, spreading out from both sides of the road, rolled greenly up to where the silent white houses and long barns and silos nested into the tilled fields. He saw the land with a stranger's eyes, all the old familiarness gone. And it presented itself to him as it would to any stranger, impervious, complete in itself. There was stability there, too- a color which his life had had once. That is what childhood is, he told himself. Solid, settled **h lost. In the stiff neutral lines of the telephone poles he saw the no-nonsense pen strokes of Aunt Jessica's letter. What bad grace, what incredible selfishness he and Mark had shown. The boyhood summers preceding their uncle's funeral might never have been. They had closed over, absolutely, with the sealing of old Izaak's grave. The small car flew on relentlessly. The old woman, stubbornly reigning in the house above the crashing waters took on an ominous reality. Abel moved and adjusted his long legs.

"I suppose it has to do with the property", Mark had said over the telephone when they had discussed their receipt of the letters. Not until the words had been spoken did Abel suddenly see the old house and the insistent sea, and feel his contrition blotted out in one shameful moment of covetousness. He and Mark were the last of the family, and there lay the Cape Ann property which had seemed to have no end, stretching from horizon to horizon, in those golden days of summer.

Now Abel turned his head to look at his brother. Mark held the wheel loosely, but his fingers curved around it in a purposeful way and the deliberate set of his body spoke plainly of the figure he'd make in the years to come. His sandy hair was already beginning to thin and recede at the sides, and Abel looked quickly away. Mark easily looked years older than himself, settled, his world comfortably categorized. The vacation traffic was becoming heavier as they approached the sea. "She didn't mention bringing Myra", Mark said, maneuvering the car into the next lane. "She's probably getting old- crotchety, I mean- and we figured uh-uh, better not. They've never met, you know. But Myra wouldn't budge without an express invitation. I feel kind of bad about it". He gave Abel a quick glance and moved closer to the wheel, hugging it to him, and Abel caught this briefest of allusions to guilt. "I imagine the old girl hasn't missed us much", Mark added, his eyes on the road. Abel ignored the half-expressed bid for confirmation. He smiled. It was barely possible that his brother was right. He could tell they were approaching the sea. The air took on a special strength now that they'd left the fecund warmth of the farmland behind. There was the smell of the coast, like a primeval memory, composed of equal parts salt water, clams, seaweed and northern air. He turned from the flying trees to look ahead and saw with an inward boy's eye again the great fieldstone house which, built on one of the many acres of ancestral land bordering the west harbor, had been Izaak's bride-gift to his cousin-wife as the last century ended. Mark's thoughts must have been keeping silent pace beside his own, climbing

the same crags in dirty white sneakers, clambering out on top of the headland and coming upon the sudden glinting water at the same instant. "Remember the <Starbird?>" Mark asked, and Abel lifted his eyes from the double lines in the middle of the road, the twin white ribbons which the car swallowed rapidly as it ascended the crest of the hill and came down. "The <Starbird,>" Abel said. There was the day Uncle Izaak had, in an unexpected grandiose gesture, handed over the pretty sloop to Abel for keeps, on condition that he never fail to let his brother accompany him whenever the younger boy wished. The two of them had developed into a remarkable sailing team **h all of this happening in a time of their lives when their youth and their brotherhood knitted them together as no other time or circumstance could. They seemed then to have had a single mind and body, a mutuality which had been accepted with the fact of their youth, casually. He saw the <Starbird> as she lay, her slender mast up and gently turning, its point describing constant languid circles against a cumulus sky. Both of them had known the feeling of the small life in her waiting, ready, for the two of them to run up her sails. The <Starbird> had been long at the bottom of the bay. They came unexpectedly upon the sea. Meeting it without preparation as they did, robbed of anticipation, a common disappointment seized them. They were climbing the hill in the night when the headlights abruptly probed solid blackness, became two parallel luminous tubes which broadened out into a faint mist of light and ended. Mark stopped the car and switched off the lights and they sat looking at the water, which, there being no moon out, at first could be distinguished from the sky only by an absence of stars.

His eyes were old and they never saw well, but heated with whisky they'd glare at my noise, growing red and raising up his rage. I decided I hated the Pedersen kid too, dying in our kitchen while I was away where I couldn't watch, dying just to entertain Hans and making me go up snapping steps and down a drafty hall, Pa lumped under the covers at the end like dung covered with snow, snoring and whistling. Oh he'd not care about the Pedersen kid. He'd not care about getting waked so he could give up some of his whisky to a slit of a kid and maybe lose one of his hiding places in the bargain. That would make him mad enough if he was sober. I didn't hurry though it was cold and the Pedersen kid was in the kitchen. He was all shoveled up like I thought he'd be. I pushed at his shoulder, calling his

name. I think his name stopped the snoring but he didn't move except to roll a little when I shoved him. The covers slid down his skinny neck so I saw his head, fuzzed like a dandelion gone to seed, but his face was turned to the wall- there was the pale shadow of his nose on the plaster- and I thought, Well you don't look much like a pig-drunk bully now. I couldn't be sure he was still asleep. He was a cagey sonofabitch. I shook him a little harder and made some noise. "Pap-pap-pap-hey", I said. I was leaning too far over.

I knew better. He always slept close to the wall so you had to lean to reach him. Oh he was smart. It put you off. I knew better but I was thinking of the Pedersen kid mother-naked in all that dough.

When his arm came up I ducked away but it caught me on the side of the neck, watering my eyes, and I backed off to cough. Pa was on his side, looking at me, his eyes winking, the hand that had hit me a fist in the pillow. "Get the hell out of here". I didn't say anything, trying to get my throat clear, but I watched him. He was like a mean horse to come at from the rear. It was better, though, he'd hit me. He was bitter when he missed. "Get the hell out of here". "Big Hans sent me. He told me to wake you". "A fat hell on Big Hans. Get out of here".

"He found the Pedersen kid by the crib". "Get the hell out". Pa pulled at the covers. He was tasting his mouth.

"The kid's froze good. Hans is rubbing him with snow. He's got him in the kitchen". "Pedersen"? "No, Pa. It's the Pedersen kid. The kid". "Nothing to steal from the crib". "Not stealing, Pa. He was just lying there. Hans found him froze. That's where he was when Hans found him". Pa laughed. "I ain't hid nothing in the crib". "You don't understand, Pa. The Pedersen kid. The kid"- "I god damn well understand". Pa had his head up, glaring, his teeth gnawing at the place where he'd grown a mustache once. "I god damn well understand. You know I don't want to see Pedersen. That cock. Why should I? What did he come for, hey? God dammit, get. And don't come back. Find out something. You're a fool. Both you and Hans. Pedersen. That cock. Don't come back. Out. Out". He was shouting and breathing hard and closing his fist on the pillow. He had long black hairs on his wrist. They curled around the cuff of his nightshirt.

"Big Hans made me come. Big Hans said"- "A fat hell on Big Hans. He's an even bigger fool than you are. Fat, hey? I taught him, dammit, and I'll teach you. Out. You want me to drop my pot"? He was about to get up so I got out, slamming the door. He was beginning to see he was too mad to sleep. Then he threw things. Once he went after Hans and dumped his pot over the banister. Pa'd been shit-sick in that pot. Hans got an axe. He didn't even bother to wipe himself off and he chopped part of Pa's door down before he stopped. He might not have gone that far if Pa hadn't been locked in laughing fit to shake the house. That pot put Pa in an awful good humor whenever he thought of it. I always felt the memory was present in both of them, stirring in their chests like a laugh or a growl, as eager as an animal to be out. I heard Pa cursing all the way downstairs. Hans had laid steaming towels over the kid's chest and stomach. He was rubbing snow on the kid's legs and feet. Water from the snow and water from the towels had run off the kid to the table where the dough was, and the dough was turning pasty, sticking to the kid's back and behind. "Ain't he going to wake up"? "What about your pa"?

"He was awake when I left". "What'd he say?

Did you get the whisky"? "He said a fat hell on Big Hans". "Don't be smart. Did you ask him about the whisky"?

"Yeah". "Well"? "He said a fat hell on Big Hans". "Don't be smart. What's he going to do"? "Go back to sleep most likely".

"You'd best get that whisky". "You go. Take the axe. Pa's scared to hell of axes". "Listen to me, Jorge, I've had enough to your sassing. This kid's froze bad. If I don't get some whisky down him he might die. You want the kid to die? Do you? Well, get your pa and get that whisky". "Pa don't care about the kid". "Jorge". "Well he don't. He don't care at all, and I don't care to get my head busted neither. He don't care, and I don't care to have his shit flung on me. He don't care about anybody. All he cares about is his whisky and that dry crack in his face. Get pig-drunk- that's what he wants. He don't care about nothing else at all. Nothing. Not Pedersen's kid neither. That cock. Not the kid neither".

"I'll get the spirits", Ma said. I'd wound Big Hans up tight. I was ready to jump but when Ma said she'd get the whisky it surprised him like it surprised me, and he ran down. Ma never went near the old man when he was sleeping it off. Not any more. Not for years. The first thing every morning when she washed her face she could see the scar on her chin where he'd cut her with a boot cleat, and maybe she saw him heaving it again, the dirty sock popping out as it flew. It should have been nearly as easy for her to remember that as it was for Big Hans to remember going after the axe while he was still spattered with Pa's yellow sick insides. "No you won't", Big Hans said. "Yes, Hans, if they're needed", Ma said. Hans shook his head but neither of us tried to stop her. If we had, then one of us would have had to go instead. Hans rubbed the kid with more snow **h rubbed **h rubbed. "I'll get more snow", I said. I took the pail and shovel and went out on the porch. I don't know where Ma went. I thought she'd gone upstairs and expected to hear she had. She had surprised Hans like she had surprised me when she said she'd go, and then she surprised him again when she came back so quick like she must have, because when I came in with the snow she was there with a bottle with three white feathers on its label and Hans was holding it angrily by the throat.

Oh, he was being queer and careful, pawing about in the drawer and holding the bottle like a snake at the length of his arm. He was awful angry because he'd thought Ma was going to do something big, something heroic even, especially for her **h I know him **h I know him **h we felt the same sometimes **h while Ma wasn't thinking about that at all, not anything like that. There was no way of getting

even. It wasn't like getting cheated at the fair. They were always trying so you got to expect it. Now Hans had given Ma something of his- we both had when we thought she was going straight to Pa- something valuable; but since she didn't know we'd given it to her, there was no easy way of getting it back. Hans cut the foil off finally and unscrewed the cap. He was put out too because there was only one way of understanding what she'd done. Ma had found one of Pa's hiding places. She'd found one and she hadn't said a word while Big Hans and I had hunted and hunted as we always did all winter, every winter since the spring that Hans had come and I had looked in the privy and found the first one. Pa had a knack for hiding. He knew we were looking and he enjoyed it. But now Ma. She'd found it by luck most likely but she hadn't said anything and we didn't know how long ago it'd been or how many other ones she'd found, saying nothing. Pa was sure to find out. Sometimes he didn't seem to because he hid them so well he couldn't find them himself or because he looked and didn't find anything and figured he hadn't hid one after all or had drunk it up. But he'd find out about this one because we were using it. A fool could see what was going on. If he found out Ma found it- that'd be bad. He took pride in his hiding. It was all the pride he had. I guess fooling Hans and me took doing. But he didn't figure Ma for much. He didn't figure her at all, and if he found out
**h a woman **h it'd be bad. Hans poured some in a tumbler. "You going to put more towels on him"?

"No". "Why not? That's what he needs, something warm to his skin, don't he"? "Not where he's froze good. Heat's bad for frostbite. That's why I only put towels on his chest and belly. He's got to thaw slow. You ought to know that". Colors on the towels had run. Ma poked her toe in the kid's clothes. "What are we going to do with these"? Big Hans began pouring whisky in the kid's mouth but his mouth filled without any getting down his throat and in a second it was dripping from his chin. "Here, help me prop him up. I got hold his mouth open". I didn't want to touch him and I hoped Ma would do it but she kept looking at the kid's clothes piled on the floor and the pool of water by them and didn't make any move to. "Come on, Jorge". "All right".

"Lift, don't shove **h lift". "O&K&, I'm lifting". I took him by the shoulders. His head flopped back. His mouth fell open. The skin on his neck was tight. He was cold all right. "Hold his head up. He'll choke".

"His mouth is open". "His throat's shut. He'll choke". "He'll choke anyway". "Hold his head up". "I can't". "Don't hold him like that. Put your arms around him". "Well Jesus". He was cold all right. I put my arm carefully around him. Hans had his fingers in the kid's mouth. "Now he'll choke for sure".

"Shut up. Just hold him like I told you". He
was cold all right, and wet. I had my arm behind his back.
He was in his mid-fifties at this time, long past the establishment of
his name and the wish to be lionized yet once again, and it was almost
a decade since he had sworn off lecturing. There was never a doubt
any more how his structures would be received; it was always the same
unqualified success now. He could no longer build anything, whether
a private residence in his Pennsylvania county or a church in Brazil,
without it being obvious that he had done it, and while here and there
he was taken to task for again developing the same airy technique,
they were such fanciful and sometimes even playful buildings that the
public felt assured by its sense of recognition after a time, a quality
of authentic uniqueness about them, which, once established by an
artist as his private vision, is no longer disputable as to its other
values. Stowey Rummel was internationally famous, a crafter of a genuine
Americana in foreign eyes, an original designer whose inventive
childishness with steel and concrete was made even more believably sincere
by his personality. He had lived for almost thirty years in this
same stone farmhouse with the same wife, a remarkably childish thing
in itself; he rose at half-past six every morning, made himself some
French coffee, had his corn flakes and more coffee, smoked four cigarettes
while reading last Sunday's <Herald Tribune> and yesterday's
Pittsburgh <Gazette>, then put on his high-topped farmer's
shoes and walked under a vine bower to his workshop. This was an enormously
long building whose walls were made of rocks, some of them brought
home from every continent during his six years as an oil geologist.
The debris of his other careers was piled everywhere; a pile of
wire cages for mice from his time as a geneticist and a microscope lying
on its side on the window sill, vertical steel columns wired for support
to the open ceiling beams with spidery steel cantilevers jutting
out into the air, masonry constructions on the floor from the time he
was inventing his disastrous fireplace whose smoke would pass through
a whole house, visible all the way up through wire gratings on each
floor. His files, desk, drafting board and a high stool formed the only
clean island in the chaos. Everywhere else his ideas lay or hung in
visible form: his models, drawings, ten-foot canvases in monochromes
from his painting days, and underfoot a windfall of broken-backed books
that looked as though their insides had been ransacked by a maniac.
Bicycle gear-sets he had once used as the basis of the design for
the Camden Cycly Company plant hung on a rope in one corner, and over
his desk, next to several old and dusty hats, was a clean pair of roller
skates which he occasionally used up and down in front of his house.
He worked standing, with his left hand in his pocket as though he
were merely stopping for a moment, sketching with the surprised stare
of one who was watching another person's hand. Sometimes he would
grunt softly to some invisible onlooker beside him, sometimes he would
look stern and moralistic as his pencil did what he disapproved. It
all seemed- if one could have peeked in at him through one of his windows-
as though this broken-nosed man with the muscular arms and wrestler's
neck was merely the caretaker trying his hand at the boss's

work. This air of disengagement carried over to his apparent attitude toward his things, and people often mistook it for boredom in him or a surrender to repetitious routine. But he was not bored at all;
he had found his style quite early in his career and he thought it quite wonderful that the world admired it, and he could not imagine why he should alter it. There are, after all, fortunate souls who hear everything, but only know how to listen to what is good for them, and Stowey was, as things go, a fortunate man. He left his home the day after New Year's wearing a mackinaw and sheepskin mittens and without a hat. He would wear this same costume in Florida, despite his wife Cleota's reminders over the past five days that he must take some cool clothes with him. But he was too busy to hear what she was saying. So they parted when she was in an impatient humor. When he was bent over behind the wheel of the station wagon, feeling in his trouser cuffs for the ignition key which he had dropped a moment before, she came out of the house with an enormous Rumanian shawl over her head, which she had bought in that country during one of their trips abroad, and handed him a clean handkerchief through the window. Finding the key under his shoe, he started the engine, and while it warmed up he turned to her standing there in the dripping fog, and said, "Defrost the refrigerator". He saw the surprise in her face, and laughed as though it were the funniest expression he had ever seen. He kept on laughing until she started laughing with him. He had a deep voice which was full of good food she had cooked, and good humor; an explosive laugh which always carried everything before it. He would settle himself into his seat to laugh. Whenever he laughed it was all he was doing. And she was made to fall in love with him again there in the rutted dirt driveway standing in the cold fog, mad as she was at his going away when he really didn't have to, mad at their both having got older in a life that seemed to have taken no more than a week to go by. She was forty-nine at this time, a lanky woman of breeding with an austere, narrow face which had the distinction of a steeple or some architecture that had been designed long ago for a stubborn sort of prayer. Her eyebrows were definite and heavy and formed two lines moving upward toward a high forehead and a great head of brown hair that fell to her shoulders. There was an air of blindness in her gray eyes, the startled-horse look that ultimately comes to some women who are born at the end of an ancestral line long since divorced from money-making and which, besides, has kept its estate intact. She was personally sloppy, and when she had colds would blow her nose in the same handkerchief all day and keep it, soaking wet, dangling from her waist, and when she gardened she would eat dinner with dirt on her calves. But just when she seemed to have sunk into some depravity of peasanthood she would disappear and come down bathed, brushed, and taking breaths of air, and even with her broken nails her hands would come to rest on a table or a leaf with a thoughtless delicacy, a grace of history, so to speak, and for an instant one saw how ferociously proud she was and adamant on certain questions of personal value. She even spoke differently when she was clean, and she was clean now for his departure and her voice clear and rather sharp. "Now drive carefully,

for God's sake"! she called, trying to attain a half humorous resentment at his departure. But he did not notice, and was already backing the car down to the road, saying "Toot-toot"! to the stump of a tree as he passed it, the same stump which had impaled the car of many a guest in the past thirty years and which he refused to have removed. She stood clutching her shawl around her shoulders until he had swung the car onto the road. Then, when he had it pointed down the hill, he stopped to gaze at her through the window. She had begun to turn back toward the house, but his look caught her and she stood still, waiting there for what his expression indicated would be a serious word of farewell. He looked at her out of himself, she thought, as he did only for an instant at a time, the look which always surprised her even now when his uncombable hair was yellowing a little and his breath came hard through his nicotine-choked lungs, the look of the gaunt youth she had suddenly found herself staring at in the Tate Gallery on a Thursday once. Now she kept herself protectively ready to laugh again and sure enough he pointed at her with his index finger and said "Toot"! once more and roared off into the fog, his foot evidently surprising him with the suddenness with which it pressed the accelerator, just as his hand did when he worked. She walked back to the house and entered, feeling herself returning, sensing some kind of opportunity in the empty building. There is a death in all partings, she knew, and promptly put it out of her mind. She enjoyed great parties when she would sit up talking and dancing and drinking all night, but it always seemed to her that being alone, especially alone in her house, was the realest part of life. Now she could let out the three parakeets without fear they would be stepped on or that Stowey would let them out one of the doors; she could dust the plants, then break off suddenly and pick up an old novel and read from the middle on; improvise cha-chas on the harp; and finally, the best part of all, simply sit at the plank table in the kitchen with a bottle of wine and the newspapers, reading the ads as well as the news, registering nothing on her mind but letting her soul suspend itself above all wishing and desire. She did this now, comfortably aware of the mist running down the windows, of the silence outside, of the dark afternoon it was getting to be. She fell asleep leaning on her hand, hearing the house creaking as though it were a living a private life of its own these two hundred years, hearing the birds rustling in their cages and the occasional whirring of wings as one of them landed on the table and walked across the newspaper to perch in the crook of her arm. Every few minutes she would awaken for a moment to review things: Stowey, yes, was on his way south, and the two boys were away in school, and nothing was burning on the stove, and Lucretia was coming for dinner and bringing three guests of hers. Then she fell asleep again as soddenly as a person with fever, and when she awoke it was dark outside and the clarity was back in her eyes. She stood up, smoothing her hair down, straightening her clothes, feeling a thankfulness for the enveloping darkness outside, and, above everything else, for the absence of the need to answer, to respond, to be aware even of Stowey coming in

or going out, and yet, now that she was beginning to cook, she glimpsed a future without him, a future alone like this, and the pain made her head writhe, and in a moment she found it hard to wait for Lucretia to come with her guests. She went into the living room and turned on three lamps, then back into the kitchen where she turned on the ceiling light and the switch that lit the floods on the barn, illuminating the driveway. She knew she was feeling afraid and inwardly laughed at herself. They were both so young, after all, so unready for any final parting. How could it have been thirty years already, she wondered? But yes, nineteen plus thirty was forty-nine, and she was forty-nine and she had been married at nineteen. She stood still over the leg of lamb, rubbing herbs into it, quite suddenly conscious of a nausea in her stomach and a feeling of wrath, a sensation of violence that started her shivering.

But they all said, "No, your time will come. Enjoy being a bride while you can". There was no room for company in the tiny Weaning House (where the Albright boys always took their brides, till they could get a house and a farm of their own). So when the Big House filled up and ran over, the sisters-in-law found beds for everyone in their own homes. And there was still not anything that Linda Kay could do. So Linda Kay gave up asking, and accepted her reprieve. Without saying so, she was really grateful; for to attend the dying was something she had never experienced, and certainly had not imagined when she thought of the duties she would have as Bobby Joe's wife. She had made curtains for all the windows of her little house, and she had kept it spotless and neat, shabby as it was, and cooked good meals for Bobby Joe. She had done all the things she had promised herself she would do, but she had not thought of this. People died, she would have said, in hospitals, or in cars on the highway at night. Bobby Joe was gone all day now, not coming in for dinner and sometimes not for supper. When they first married he had been working in the fields all day, and she would get in the car and drive to wherever he was working, to take him a fresh hot meal. Now there was no work in the fields, nor would there be till it rained, and she did not know where he went. Not that she complained, or had any cause to. Four or five of the cousins from East Texas were about his age, so naturally they ran around together. There was no reason for her to ask what they did. Thus a new pattern of days began to develop, for Granny Albright did not die. She lay still on the bed, her head hardly denting the pillow; sometimes she opened her eyes and looked around, and sometimes she took a little milk or soup. They stopped expecting her to die the next minute, but only in the next day or two. Those who had driven hundreds of miles for the burial would not go home, for she might die any time; but they might as well unpack their suitcases, for she might linger on. So the pattern was established. When Linda Kay had put up her breakfast dishes and mopped her linoleum rugs, she would go to the Big House. There was not anything she could do there, but that was where everyone was, or would be. Bobby Joe and the boys would come by, say "How's Granny"? and sit on the porch a while. The older men would be there

at noon, and maybe rest for a time before they took their guns off to the creek or drove down the road towards town. The women and children stayed at the Albrights'. The women, keeping their voices low as they worked around the house or sat in the living room, sounded like chickens shut up in a coop for the night. The children had to play away from the house (in the barn loft or the pasture behind the barn), to maintain a proper quietness. Off and on, all day, someone would be wiping at the powdery gray dust that settled over everything. The evaporative cooler had been moved to Granny's room, and her door was kept shut; so that the rest of the house stayed open, though there was a question as to whether it was hotter or cooler that way. The dust clogged their throats, and the heat parched them, so that the women were always making ice water. They had cleaned up an old ice box and begun to buy fifty-pound blocks of ice in town, as the electric refrigerator came nowhere near providing enough ice for the crowds who ate and drank there. One afternoon, as the women sat clucking softly, a new carload of people pulled up at the gate. It was a Cadillac, black grayed with the dust of the road, its windows closed tight so you knew that the people who climbed out of it would be cool and unwrinkled. They were an old fat couple (as Linda Kay described them to herself), a thick middle-aged man, and a girl about ten or twelve. There was much embracing, much exclaiming. "Cousin Ada! Cousin John"! "Cousin Lura"! "Cousin Howard"! "And how is she"? "About the same, John, about the same". All the women got up and offered their chairs, and when they were all seated again, the guests made their inquiries and their explanations. "We were on our vacation in Canada", Howard explained, in a muffled voice that must have been used to booming, "and the news didn't catch up with us till we were nearly home. We came on as soon as we could". There was the suggestion of ice water, and- in spite of the protest "We're not really thirsty"- Linda Kay, to escape the stuffy air and the smothering soft voices, hurried to the kitchen. She filled a big pitcher and set it, with glasses, on a tray. Carrying it to the living room, she imagined the picture she made: tall and roundly slim, a bit sophisticated in her yellow sheath, with a graceful swingy walk that she had learned as a twirler with the school band. Almost immediately she was ashamed of herself for feeling vain, at such a time, in such a place, and she tossed back her long yellow hair, smiling shyly as she entered the room. Howard (the thick middle-aged man) was looking at her. She felt the look and looked back because she could not help it, seeing that he was neither as old nor as thick as she had at first believed. "And who is this"? he asked, when she passed him a glass. "Oh that's Linda Kay", Mama Albright said fondly. "She married our baby boy, Bobby Joe, this summer".

"Let's see", Cousin Ada said. "He's a right smart younger than the rest"? "Oh yes", Mama laughed. "He's ten years younger than Ernest. We didn't expect him to come along; thought for the longest he was a tumor". This joke

was not funny to Linda Kay, and she blushed, as she always did; then, hearing the muffled boom of Howard's laughter, blushed redder.

"Who is Howard, anyway"? she asked Bobby Joe that night. "He makes me uncomfortable". "Oh he's a second cousin or something. He got in the oil business out at Odessa and lucked into some money". "How old is he"? "Gosh, I don't know. Thirty-five, I guess. He's been married and got this half-grown kid. If he bothers you, don't pay him any mind. He's just a big windbag". Bobby Joe was thinking about something else. "Say, did you know they're fixing to have a two-day antelope season on the Double ~X"? He was talking about antelope again when they woke up. "Listen, I never had a chance to kill an antelope. There never was a season before, but now they want to thin 'em out on account of the drouth". "Did he ever visit here when he was a kid"? Linda Kay asked. "Who"?

"Howard". "Hell, I don't know. When he was a kid I wasn't around". Bobby Joe took a gun from behind the door, and with a quick "Bye now" was gone for the day.

Almost immediately Howard and his daughter Debora drove up in the Cadillac. "We're going after ice", Howard said, "and thought maybe you'd go along and keep us company". There was really no reason to refuse, and Linda Kay had never ridden in a Cadillac. Driving along the caliche-topped road to town, Howard talked. Finally he said, "Tell me about yourself", and Linda Kay told him, because she thought herself that she had had an interesting life. She was such a well-rounded teenager, having been a twirler, Future Farmers sweetheart, and secretary of Future Homemakers. In her sophomore year she had started going steady with Bobby Joe, who was a football player, Future Homemakers sweetheart, and president of Future Farmers. It was easy to see that they were made for each other, and they knew what they wanted. Bobby Joe would be a senior this year, and he planned to graduate. But there was no need for Linda Kay to go on, since all she wanted in life was to make a home for Bobby Joe and (blushing) raise his children. Howard sighed. "You lucky kids", he said. "I'd give anything if I could have found a girl like you". Then he told Linda Kay about himself. Of course he couldn't say much, really, because of Debora, but Linda Kay could imagine what kind of woman his wife had been and what a raw deal he had got. It made her feel different about Howard.

She was going to tell Bobby Joe about how mistaken she had been, but he brought one of the cousins home for supper, and all they did was talk about antelope. Bobby Joe was trying to get Linda Kay to say she would cook one if he brought it home. "Cook a whole antelope"? she exclaimed. "Why, I couldn't even cook a piece of antelope steak; I never even saw any". "Oh, you could. I want to roast the whole thing, and have it for the boys".

Linda Kay told him he couldn't do anything like that with his Grandma dying, and he said well they had to eat, didn't they, they weren't all dying. Linda Kay felt like going off to the bedroom to cry; but they were going up to the Big House after supper, and she had to put on a clean dress and fix her hair a little.

Every night they all went to Mama and Papa Albright's, and sat on the open front porch, where they could get the breeze. It was full-of-the-moon (or a little past), and nearly light as day. They all sat around and drank ice water, and the men smoked, and everybody had a good time. Once in a while they said what a shame it was, with Granny dying, but they all agreed she wouldn't have wanted it any other way. That night the older men got to talking about going possum-hunting on a moonlight night. Bobby Joe and two or three of the other boys declared they had never been possum-hunting, and Uncle Bill Farnworth (from Mama Albright's side of the family) said he would just get up from there and take them, right then. After they had left, some of the people moved around, to find more comfortable places to sit. There were not many chairs, so that some preferred to sit on the edge of the porch, resting their feet on the ground, and others liked to sit where they could lean back against the wall. Howard, who had been sitting against the wall, said he needed more fresh air, and took the spot on the edge of the porch where Bobby Joe had been sitting. "You'll be a darn sight more comfortable there, Howard", Ernest said, laughing, and they all laughed. Linda Kay felt that she was not exactly more comfortable. Bobby Joe had been sitting close to her, touching her actually, and holding her hand from time to time, but it seemed at once that Howard sat much closer. Perhaps it was just that he had so much more flesh, so that more of it seemed to come in contact with hers; but she had never been so aware of anyone's flesh before. Still she was not sorry he sat by her, but in fact was flattered. He had become the center of the company, such stories he had to tell. He had sold oil stock to Bob Hope and Bing Crosby in person; he had helped fight an oil-well fire that raged six days and nights.

"But tell me, doctor, where do you plan to conduct the hatching"? Alex asked. "That will have to be in the hotel", the doctor retorted, confirming Alex's anticipations. "What I want you to do is to go to the market with me early tomorrow morning and help smuggle the hen back into the hotel". The doctor paid the bill and they repaired to the hotel, room number nine, to initiate Alex further into these undertakings. The doctor opened the smallest of his cases, an unimposing straw bag, and exposed the contents for Alex's inspection. Inside, carefully packed in straw, were six eggs, but the eye of a poultry psychologist was required to detect what scientifically valuable specimentalia lay inside; to Alex they were merely six not unusual hens' eggs. There was little enough time to contemplate them, however; in an instant the doctor was stalking

across the room with an antique ledger in his hands, thoroughly eared and big as a table top. He placed it on Alex's lap.
"This is my hen ledger", he informed him in an absorbed way. "It's been going since 1908 when I was a junior in college. That first entry there is the Vermont Flumenophobe, the earliest and one of the most successful of my eighty-three varieties- great big scapulars and hardly any primaries at all. Couldn't take them near a river, though, or they'd squawk like a turkey cock the day before Thanksgiving".

The ledger was full of most precise information: date of laying, length of incubation period, number of chicks reaching the first week, second week, fifth week, weight of hen, size of rooster's wattles and so on, all scrawled out in a hand that looked more Chinese than English, the most jagged and sprawling Alex had ever seen. Below these particulars was a series of alpha-beta-gammas connected by arrows and crosses which denoted the lineage of the breed. Alex's instruction was rapid, for the doctor had to go off to the Rue Ecole de Medecine to hear more speeches with only time for one sip of wine to sustain him through them all. But after the doctor's return that night Alex could see, from the high window in his own room, the now familiar figure crouched on a truly impressive heap of towels, apparently giving its egg-hatching powers one final chance before it was replaced in its office by a sure-enough hen. A knocking at Alex's door roused him at six o'clock the following morning. It was the doctor, dressed and ready for the expedition to the market, and Alex was obliged to prepare himself in haste. The doctor stood about, waiting for Alex to dress, with a show of impatience, and soon they were moving, as quietly as could be, through the still-dark hallways, past the bedroom of the <patronne>, and so into the street. The market was not far and, once there, the doctor's sense of immediacy left him and he fell into a state of harmony with the birds around him. He stroked the hens and they responded with delighted clucks, he gobbled with the turkeys and they at once were all attention, he quacked with the ducks, and cackled with a pair of exceedingly flattered geese. The dawn progressed and it seemed that the doctor would never be done with his ministrations when quite abruptly something broke his revery. It was a fine broody hen, white, with a maternal eye and a striking abundance of feathers in the under region of the abdomen. The doctor, with the air of a man whose professional interests have found scope, drew Alex's attention to those excellences which might otherwise have escaped him: the fine color in comb and wattles, the length and quality of neck and saddle hackles, the firm, wide spread of the toes, and a rare justness in the formation of the ear lappets. All search was ended; he had found his fowl. The purchase was effected and they made their way towards the hotel again, the hen, with whom some sort of communication had been set up, nestling in the doctor's arms.

The clocks struck seven-thirty as they approached the hotel entrance; and hopes that the chambermaid and <patronne> would still be abed began to rise in Alex's well exercised breast. The doctor was wearing a long New England greatcoat, hardly necessary in the

June weather but a garment which proved well adapted to the sequestration of hens. Alex entered first and was followed by the doctor who, for all his care, manifested a perceptible bulge on his left side where the hen was cradled. They advanced in a line across the entrance hall to the stairway and up, with gingerly steps, towards the first landing. It was then that they heard the tread of one descending and, in some perturbation glancing up, saw the <patronne> coming towards them as they gained the landing. "Bonjour, messieurs, vous etes matinals", she greeted them pleasantly. Alex explained that they had been out for a stroll before breakfast while the doctor edged around behind him, attempting to hide the protuberance at his left side behind Alex's arm and back. "Vous voulez vos petits dejeuners tout de suite alors"? their hostess enquired. Alex told her that there was no hurry for their breakfasts, trying at the same time to effect a speedy separation of the persons before and behind him. The doctor, he noticed, was attempting a transverse movement towards the stairs, but before the movement could be completed a distinct and audible cluck ruffled the air in the hollow of the stair-well. Eyes swerved in the <patronne's> head, Alex coughed loudly, and the doctor, with a sforzando of chicken noises floating behind him, took to the stairs in long-shanked leaps. "Comment"? ejaculated the surprised woman, looking at Alex for an explanation but he, parting from her without ceremony, only offered a few words about the doctor's provincial American speech and a state of nerves brought on by the demands of his work. With that he hurried up the stairs, followed by her suspicious gaze. When Alex entered his room, the doctor was already preparing a nest in the straw case, six eggs ready for the hen's attentions. There was no reference to the incident on the stairs, his powers being absorbed by this more immediate business. The hen appeared to have no doubts as to her duties and was quick to settle down to the performance of them. One part of her audience was totally engaged, the connoisseur witnessing a peculiarly fine performance of some ancient classic, the other part, the guest of the connoisseur, attentive as one who must take an intelligent interest in that which he does not fully understand. The spectacle progressed towards a denouement which was obviously still remote; the audience attended. Time elapsed but the doctor was obviously unconscious of its passage until an unwelcome knock on the door interrupted the processes of nature. Startled, he jumped up to pull hen and case out of view, and Alex went to the door. He opened it a crack and in doing so made as much shuffling, coughing, and scraping noise as possible in order to drown emanations from the hen who had begun to protest. It was Giselle, the <fille de chambre>, come to clean the room, and while she stood before him with ears pricked up and regard all curiosity, explaining her errand, Alex could see from the corner of his eye the doctor doing all he could to calm the displeased bird. Giselle was reluctant but Alex succeeded in persuading her to come back in five minutes and the door was shut again. "Who was that, young feller"? the doctor instantly asked. "That was the <fille de chambre>, the one you thought

couldn't get the eggs out. She looked mighty interested, though. Anyhow she's coming back in five minutes to do the room".

The doctor's mind was working at a great speed; he rose to put his greatcoat on and addressed Alex in a muted voice. "Have you got our keys handy"? "Right in my pocket".

"All right. Now you go outside and beckon me when it's safe". The hall was empty and Alex beckoned; they climbed the stairs which creaked, very loudly to their sensitive ears, and reached the next floor. A guest was locking his room; they passed behind him and got to Alex's room unnoticed. The doctor sat down rather wearily, caressing the hen and remarking that the city was not the place for a poultry-loving man, but no sooner was the remark out than a knock at this door obliged him to cover the hen with his greatcoat once more. At the door Alex managed to persuade the increasingly astonished <fille de chambre> to return in ten minutes. It was evident that a second transfer had to be effected, and that it had to take place between the time the <fille> finished the doctor's room and the time she began Alex's. They waited three minutes and then crept out on tip-toe; the halls were empty and they passed down the stairs to number nine and listened at the door. A bustle of sheets being smoothed and pillows being arranged indicated the <fille de chambre's> presence inside; they listened and suddenly a step towards the door announced another important fact. The doctor shot down to the lavatory and turned the doorknob, but to no effect: the lavatory was occupied. Although a look of alarm passed over his face, he did not arrest his movements but disappeared into the shower room just as the chambermaid emerged from number nine. Alex suppressed those expressions of relief which offered to prevail in his face and escape from his throat; unwarranted they were in any case for, as he stood facing the <fille de chambre>, his ears were assailed by new sounds from the interior of the shower room. The events of the last quarter of an hour, mysterious to any bird accustomed only to the predictable life of coop and barnyard, had overcome the doctor's hen and she gave out a series of cackly wails, perhaps mourning her nest, but briefly enjoyed. The doctor's wits had not left him, however, for all his sixty-eight years, and the wails were almost immediately lost in the sound of water rushing out from the showerhead. Alex nodded to the maid as though nothing unusual were taking place and entered the doctor's room. Shortly, the doctor himself entered, his hair somewhat wet from the shower, but evidently satisfied with the outcome of their adventures. Without comment he opened the closet and from its shelves constructed a highboard around the egg case which he had placed on the floor inside. Next, the hen was nested and all seemed well. The two men sat for some time, savoring the pleasure of escape from peril and the relief such escape brings, before they got up and left the hotel, the doctor to go to the conference house and Alex to go to the main post office. Alex returned to the hotel, rather weary and with no new prospects of a role, in the late afternoon, but found the doctor in an ebullient mood. At the time Alex arrived he was engaged in some sort of intimate communication

with the hen, who had settled herself on the nest most peacefully after the occurrences of the morning. "Chickens have short memories", the doctor remarked, "that's why they are better company than most people I know", and he went on to break some important news to Alex. "Well", he began, "It seems like some people in Paris want to hear more from me than those fellers over at the conference house do. They've got a big vulture from Tanganika at the zoo here, with a wife for him, too, very rare birds, both of them, the only Vulturidae of their species outside Africa. Seems like she's willing, but the male just flops around all day like the bashful boy who took Jeannie May behind the barn and then didn't know what to do, and the people at the zoo haven't got any vulture chicks to show for their trouble.

Going downstairs with the tray, Winston wished he could have given in to Miss Ada, but he knew better than to do what she said when she had that little-girl look. There were times it wasn't right to make a person happy, like the times she came in the kitchen and asked for a peanut butter sandwich. "You know we don't keep peanut butter in this house", he always told her. "Why, Winston", she'd cry, "I just now saw you eating it out of the jar"! But he knew how important it was for her to keep her figure. ##

In the kitchen, Leona, his little young wife, was reading the morning paper. Her legs hung down long and thin as she sat on the high stool.

"Here", Winston said gently, "what's these dishes doing not washed"? The enormous plates which had held Mr& Jack's four fried eggs and five strips of bacon were still stacked in the sink.

"Leave me alone", Leona said. "Can't you see I'm busy"? She looked at him impudently over the corner of the paper.

"This is moving day", Winston reminded her, "and I bet you left things every which way upstairs, your clothes all over the floor and the bed not made. Leona"! His eye had fastened on her leg; bending, he touched her knee. "If I catch you one more time down here without stockings"- She twitched her leg away. "Fuss, fuss, old man". She had an alley cat's manners. Winston stacked Miss Ada's thin pink dishes in the sink. Then he spread out the last list on the counter. "To Be Left Behind" was printed at the top in Miss Ada; fine hand. Winston took out a pencil, admired the point, and wrote slowly and heavily, "Clothes Stand". Sighing, Leona dropped the paper and stood up. "I guess I better get ready to go". Winston watched her fumbling to untie her apron. "Here". Carefully, he undid the bow. "How come your bows is always cockeyed"? She turned and put her arms around his neck. "I don't want to leave here, Winston".

"Now listen to that". He drew back, embarrassed and pleased. "I thought you was sick to death of this big house. Said you wore yourself out, cleaning all these empty rooms". "At least there is room here", she said. "What room is there going to be in an apartment for any child"? "I told you what Miss Ada's doctor said". "I don't mean Miss Ada! What you think I care about that? I mean our children". She sounded as though they already existed. In spite of the hundred things he had on his mind, Winston went and put his arm around her waist. "We've got plenty of time to think about that. All the time in the world. We've only been married four years, January".

"Four years"! she wailed. "That's a long time, waiting".

"How many times have I told you"- he began, and was almost glad when she cut him off- "Too many times"!- and flounced to the sink, where she began noisily to wash her hands.

Too many times was the truth of it, Winston thought. He hardly believed his reason himself any more. Although it had seemed a good reason, to begin with: no couple could afford to have children.

"How you going to work with a child hanging on you"? he asked Leona. "You want to keep this job, don't you"? He doubted whether she heard him, over the running water. He sat for a while with his hands on his knees, watching the bend of her back as she gathered up her things- a comb, a bottle of aspirin- to take upstairs and pack. She made him sad some days, and he was never sure why; it was something to do with her back, the thinness of it, and the quick, jerky way she bent. She was too young, that was all; too young and thin and straight. "Winston"! It was Mr& Jack, bellowing out in the hall. Winston hurried through the swinging door. "I've been bursting my lungs for you", Mr& Jack complained. He was standing in front of the mirror, tightening his tie. He had on his gray tweed overcoat and his city hat, and his brief case lay on the bench. "I don't know what you think you've been doing about my clothes", he said. "This coat looks like a rag heap".

There were a few blades of lint on the shoulder. Winston took the clothesbrush out of the closet and went to work. He gave Mr& Jack a real going-over; he brushed his shoulders and his back and his collar with long, firm strokes. "Hey"! Mr& Jack cried when the brush tipped his hat down over his eyes. Winston apologized and quickly set the hat right. Then he stood back to look at Mr& Jack, who was pulling on his pigskin gloves. Winston enjoyed seeing him start out; he wore his clothes with style. When he was going to town, nothing was good enough- he had cursed at Winston once for leaving a fleck of polish on his shoelace. At home, he wouldn't even wash his hands for supper, and he wandered around the yard in a pair of sweaty old corduroys. The velvet smoking jackets, pearl-gray, wine, and blue, which Miss Ada had bought him hung brushed and

unworn in the closet. "Good-by, Winston", Mr& Jack said, giving a final set to his hat. "Look out for those movers"! Winston watched him hurry down the drive to his car; a handsome, fine-looking man it made him proud to see. ##

After Mr& Jack drove away, Winston went on looking out the window. He noticed a speck of dirt on the sill and swiped at it with his finger. Then he looked at his finger, at the wrinkled, heavy knuckle and the thick nail he used like a knife to pry up, slit, and open. For the first time, he let himself be sad about the move. That house was ten years off his life. Each brass handle and hinge shone for his reward, and he knew how to get at the dust in the china flowers and how to take down the long glass drops which hung from the chandelier. He knew the house like a blind man, through his fingers, and he did not like to think of all the time and rags and polishes he had spent on keeping it up. Ten years ago, he had come to the house to be interviewed. The tulips and the big pink peonies had been blooming along the drive, and he had walked up from the bus almost singing. Miss Ada had been out back, in a straw hat, planting flowers. She had talked to him right there, with the hot sun in his face, which made him sweat and feel ashamed. Winston had been surprised at her for that. Still, he had liked the way she had looked, in a fresh, neat cotton dress- citron yellow, if he remembered. She had had a dignity about her, even barefoot and almost too tan. Since then, the flowers she had planted had spread all over the hill. Already the jonquils were blooming in a flock by the front gate, and the periwinkles were coming on, blue by the porch steps. In a week the hyacinths would spike out. And the dogwood in early May, for Miss Ada's alfresco party; and after that the Japanese cherries. Now the yard looked wet and bald, the trees bare under their buds, but in a while Miss Ada's flowers would bloom like a marching parade. She had dug a hole for each bulb, each tree wore a tag with her writing on it; where would she go for her gardening now? Somehow Winston didn't think she'd take to window boxes. Sighing, he hurried to the living room. He had a thousand things to see to. Still, he couldn't help thinking, we're all getting old, getting small; the snail is pulling in her horns. In the living room, Miss Ada was standing by the window with a sheaf of lists in her hand. She was looking out at the garden. "Winston", she said, "get the basket for the breakables". Winston had the big straw basket ready in the hall. He brought it in and put it down beside her. Miss Ada was looking fine; she had on her Easter suit, blue, with lavender binding. Halfway across the house, he could have smelled her morning perfume. It hung in all her day clothes, sweet and strong; sometimes when he was pressing, Winston raised her dresses to his face. Frowning, Miss Ada studied the list. "Well, let's see. The china lemon tree. The alabaster cockatoo". Winston followed her around the room, collecting the small frail objects (Christmas, birthday, and anniversary) and wrapping them in tissue paper. Neither of them trusted the movers. When they

came to Mr& Jack's photograph, twenty by twelve inches in a curly silver frame, Miss Ada said, "By rights I ought to leave that, seeing he won't take my clotheshorse". She smiled at Winston, and he saw the hateful hard glitter in her eyes. He picked up the photograph and began to wrap it. "At least you could leave it for the movers", Miss Ada said. "What possessed you to tell me a clotheshorse would be a good idea"? Winston folded the tissue paper carefully. "He's used it every day; every morning, I lay out his clothes on it". "Well, that's over now. And it was his main present! Leave that fool picture out", she added sharply. Winston laid it in the basket. "Mr& Jack sets store by that". "Really, Winston. It was meant to be <my> present". But she went on down the list. Winston was relieved; those presents had been on his mind. He had only agreed with Miss Ada about getting the valet, but he had actually suggested the photograph to Mr& Jack. "You know what she likes, Winston", he had said wearily, one evening in November when Winston was pulling off his overshoes. "Tell me what to get her for Christmas".

"She's been talking about a picture", Winston had told him. "Picture! You mean picture of me"? But Winston had persuaded him. On Christmas night, they had had a disagreement about it. Winston had heard because he was setting up the liquor tray in the next room. Through the door, he had seen Mr& Jack walking around, waiting for Miss Ada. Finally she had come down; Winston had heard her shaking out the skirt of her new pink silk hostess gown. "How do you like it"? she had asked.

Mr& Jack had said, "You look about fifteen years old".

"Is that a compliment"? "I don't know". He had stood at a little distance, studying her, as though he would walk around next and look at the back of her head. "Lovie, you make me feel naked". Miss Ada had giggled, and she went sweeping and rustling to the couch and sank down. "You look like that picture I have at the office", Mr& Jack had started. "Not a line, not a wrinkle. I look like an old man, compared", and he had picked up his photograph with the red Christmas bow still on it. "Look, an old man. Will you wear pink when you're sixty"? "Darling, I love that photograph. I'm going to put it on my dresser".

"I guess it's children make a woman old. A man gets old anyhow". After a minute he went on, "People must think the curse is on me, seeing you fresh as an apple and me old and gray".

"I'll give you a medical certificate, framed, if you like", Miss Ada had said. "No. All I want is a picture- with a few lines. Make the man put them in if he has to". After that they had sat for five minutes without saying a word. Then Miss Ada had stood up, rustling and rustling, and gone upstairs. Was it love? I had no doubt that it was. During the rest of the summer

my scholarly mania for making plaster casts and spatter prints of
Catskill flowers and leaves was all but surpassed by the constantly
renewed impressions of Jessica that my mind served up to me for contemplation
and delight. ##

Nothing in all the preceding years had
had the power to bring me closer to a knowledge of profound sorrow than
the breakup of camp, the packing away of my camp uniforms, the severing
of ties with the six or ten people I had grown most to love in the
world. In final separation from them, in the railroad terminal across
the river from New York, I would nearly cry. My parents' welcoming
arms would seem woeful, inadequate, unwanted. But that year was
different, for just as the city, in the form of my street clothes, had
intruded upon my mountain nights, so an essential part of the summer
gave promise of continuing into the fall: Jessica and I, about to
be separated not by a mere footbridge or messhall kitchen but by the
immense obstacle of residing in cruelly distant boroughs, had agreed
to correspond. These letters became the center of my existence.
I lived to see an envelope of hers in the morning mail and to lock
myself in my room in the afternoon to reread her letter for the tenth
time and finally prepare an answer. My memory has catalogued for easy
reference and withdrawal the image of her pink, scented stationery and
the unsloped, almost printed configurations of her neat, studious handwriting
with which she invited me to recall our summer, so many sentences
beginning with "Remember when **h"; and others concerning
camp friends who resided in her suburban neighborhood, and news of her
commencing again her piano lessons, her private school, a visit to
Boston to see her grandparents and an uncle who was a surgeon returned
on furlough, wounded, from the war in Europe. In my letters
I took on a personality that differed from the self I knew in real
life. Then epistolatory me was a foreign correspondent dispatching exciting
cables and communiques, full of dash and wit and glamor, quoting
from the books I read, imitating the grand styles of the authors recommended
by a teacher in whose special, after-school class I was enrolled.
The letters took their source from a stream of my imagination
in which I was transformed into a young man not unlike my bunkmate Eliot
Sands- he of the porch steps anecdotes- who smoked cigarettes,
performed the tango, wore fifty dollar suits, and sneaked off into
the dark with girls to do unimaginable things with them. Like Eliot,
in my fantasies, I had a proud bearing and, with a skill that was vaguely
continental, I would lead Jessica through an evening of dancing
and handsome descriptions of my newest exploits, would guide her gently
to the night's climax which, in my dreams, was always represented
by our almost suffocating one another to death with deep, moist kisses
burning with love. The night after reading her letter about her surgeon
uncle- it must have been late in September- I had a vision
of myself returned in ragged uniform from The Front, nearly dying,
my head bandaged and blooded, and Jessica bending over me, the power
of her love bringing me back to life. For many nights afterward, the
idea of her having been so close to me in that imagined bed would return
and fill me with obscure and painful desires, would cause me to lie

awake in shame, tossing with irresolution, longing to fall into a deep sleep. The weeks went by, and the longer our separation grew, the more unbounded and almost unbearable my fantasies became. They caused my love for Jessica to become warmer and at the same time more hopeless, as if my adolescent self knew that only torment would ever bring me the courage to ask to see her again. As it turned out, Jessica took matters into her own hands. Having received permission to give a camp reunion-Halloween party, she asked that I come and be her date. I went and, mum and nervous, all but made a fool of myself. Again among those jubilantly reunited bunkmates, I was shy with Jessie and acted as I had during those early Saturday mornings when we all seemed to be playing for effect, to be detached and unconcerned with the girls who were properly our dates but about whom, later, in the privacy of our bunks, we would think in terms of the most elaborate romance. I remember standing in a corner, watching Jessica act the hostess, serving soft drinks to her guests. She was wearing her dark hair in two, thick braids to attain an "American Girl" effect she thought was appropriate to Halloween. It made her look sweet and schoolgirlish, I was excited to be with her, but I did not know how to express it. Yet a moment did come that night when the adventurous letter writer and fantasist seemed to stride off my flashy pages, out of my mind, and plant himself in reality. It was late, we were playing kissing games, and Jessica and I were called on to kiss in front of the others. We blushed and were flustered, and it turned out to be the fleetest brush of lips upon cheek. The kiss outraged our friends but it was done and meanwhile had released in me all the remote, exciting premonitions of lust, all the mysterious sensations that I had imagined a truly consummated kiss would convey to me. It was at that party that, finally overcoming my timidity, inspired by tales only half-understood and overheard among older boys, I asked Jessie to spend New Year's Eve with me. Lovingly, she accepted, and so great was my emotion that all I could think of saying was, "You're amazing, you know"? Later, we agreed to think of how we wished to spend that night. We would write to one another and make a definite plan. She was terribly pleased. Among my school and neighborhood friends, during the next months, I bragged and swaggered and pompously described my impending date. But though I boasted and gave off a dapper front, I was beneath it all frightened. It would be the first time I had ever been completely alone with a girl I loved. I had no idea of what subjects one discussed when alone with a girl, or how one behaved: Should I hold her hand while walking or only when crossing the street? Should I bring along a corsage or send one to her? Was it preferable to meet her at home or in the city? Should I accompany her to the door of her home, or should I ask to be invited in? In or out, should I kiss her goodnight? All this was unknown to me, and yet I had dared to ask her out for the most important night of the year! When in one letter Jessica informed me that her father did not like the idea of her going out alone on New Year's Eve, I knew for a moment an immense relief; but the letter went on: she had cried, she had implored, she had been miserable

at his refusal, and finally he had relented- and now how happy she was, how expectant! Her optimism gave me heart. I forced confidence into myself. I made inquiries, I read a book of etiquette. In December I wrote her with authority that we would meet on the steps of the Hotel Astor, a rendezvous spot that I had learned was the most sophisticated. We would attend a film and, later on, I stated, we might go to the Mayflower Coffee Shop or Child's or Toffenetti's for waffles. I set the hour of our meeting for seven.
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At five o'clock that night it was already dark, and behind my closed door I was dressing as carefully as a groom. I wore a new double-breasted brown worsted suit with a faint herringbone design and wide lapels like a devil's ears. My camp-made leather wallet, bulky with twisted, raised stitches around the edges, I stuffed with money I had been saving. Hatless, in an overcoat of rough blue wool, I was given a proud farewell by my mother and father, and I set out into the strangely still streets of Brooklyn. I felt superior to the neighborhood friends I was leaving behind, felt older than my years, and was full of compliments for myself as I headed into the subway that was carrying its packs of passengers out of that dull borough and into the unstable, tantalizing excitement of Manhattan. Times Square, when I ascended to it with my fellow subway travellers (all dressed as if for a huge wedding in a family of which we were all distant members), was nearly impassable, the sidewalks swarming with celebrants, with bundled up sailors and soldiers already hugging their girls and their rationed bottles of whiskey. Heavy-coated, severe-looking policemen sat astride noble horses along the curbside to prevent the revellers from spilling out in front of the crawling traffic. The night was cold but the crowd kept one warm. The giant electric signs and marquees were lit up for the first time since blackout regulations had been instituted, and the atmosphere was alive with the feeling that victory was just around the corner. Cardboard noisemakers, substitutes for the unavailable tin models, were being hawked and bought at makeshift stands every few yards along Broadway, and one's ears were continually serenaded by the horns' rasps and bleats. An old gentlemen next to me held a Boy Scout bugle to his lips and blasted away at every fourth step and during the interim shouted out, "~V for Victory"! His neighbors cheered him on. There was a great sense of camaraderie. How did one join them? Where were they all walking to? Was I supposed to buy a funny hat and a rattle for Jessica?

It was a quarter of seven when the crowd washed me up among the other gallants who had established the Astor steps as the beach-head from which to launch their night of merrymaking. I looked over their faces and felt a twinge: they all looked so much more knowing than I. I looked away. I looked for Jessica to materialize out of the clogging, curdling crowd and, as the time passed and I waited, a fiend came to life beside me and whispered in my ear: How was I planning to greet Jessica? Where exactly would we go after the movie? Suppose the lines in front of the movie houses were too long and we

couldn't get in? Suppose I hadn't brought along enough money?
I felt for my wallet. Its thick, substantial outline calmed me.

But when I saw that it was already ten past seven, I began to
wonder if something had gone wrong. Suppose her father had changed his
mind and had refused to let her leave? Suppose at this very moment
her father was calling my house in an effort to cancel the plans?
I grew uneasy. All about me there was a hectic interplay of meetings
taking place, like abrupt, jerky scenes in old silent movies, joyous
greetings and beginnings, huggings and kissings, enthusiastic forays
into the festive night. Whole platoons were taking up new positions on
the steps, arriving and departing, while I stayed glued, like a signpost,
to one spot. At 7:25 two hotel doormen came thumping
down the steps, carrying a saw-horse to be set up as a barricade in front
of the haberdashery store window next to the entranceway, and as I
watched them in their gaudy red coats that nearly scraped the ground,
their golden, fringed epaulets and spic, red-visored caps, I suddenly
saw just over their shoulders Jessica gracefully making her way through
the crowd. My heart almost stopped beating.

There were thirty-eight patients on the bus the morning I left
for Hanover, most of them disturbed and hallucinating. An interne,
a nurse and two attendants were in charge of us. I felt lonely
and depressed as I stared out the bus window at Chicago's grim,
dirty West Side. It seemed incredible, as I listened to the monotonous
drone of voices and smelled the fetid odors coming from the patients,
that technically I was a ward of the state of Illinois, going to
a hospital for the mentally ill. I suddenly thought of Mary
Jane Brennan, the way her pretty eyes could flash with anger, her quiet
competence, the gentleness and sweetness that lay just beneath the
surface of her defenses. We had become good friends during my
stay at Cook County Hospital. I had told her enough about myself
to offset somewhat the damaging stories that had appeared in local newspapers
after my little adventure in Marshall Field + Co&. She
knew that I lived at a good address on the Gold Coast, that I had
once been a medical student and was thinking of returning to the university
to finish my medical studies. She knew also that I was unmarried
and without a single known relative. She wasn't quite sure that
I felt enough remorse about my drinking, or that I would not return
to it once I was out and on my own again. This had worried her.

"I read those newspaper stories about you", she had said. "You
must have loved that girl very much, but you couldn't have meant
it when you said that you wanted to kill her". "Why do you
say that"? I asked. "I was full of booze and, well, a drunk
is apt to do anything he says he'll do". Nonsense! I grew
up in an Irish neighborhood on Chicago's West Side. Don't
tell me about drunks. You're not the kind to go violent. Were you
in love with that girl"? "Would it make any difference to
you if I were, Mary Jane"? She met my eyes, suddenly
angry. "I wouldn't have gone into nursing if I didn't care about

people. I'm interested in every patient I've helped take care of. When I think of people like you, well, I"- "You what, Mary Jane"? "You are young, intelligent, have a whole lifetime before you to make something worth while of yourself, but you mess it up with whiskey, indifference, self-destructive attitudes. I don't blame that girl for breaking her engagement with you. Was she pretty"? "Oh, yes", I said, feeling annoyed, "she was very pretty. You don't believe that I'm going back to medical school and finish, do you"? "Why should I? I've worked this ward for three months now. We keep getting the same ones back again and again. They all mean well, have great promises to make when they are about to go home, but drinking is their sickness. You've not seemed like them, but maybe you are. You've treated your stay here like a big joke. It's not a joke to be sent to a place like this or to Hanover. I wanted to go to college, to"-

"Why didn't you"? I asked. "Chicago has some of the best"-

Her eyes flashed angrily. "That's what I mean about you, Anderson", she said. "You don't seem to know much about reality. I'll tell you why I didn't go to college; I'm the oldest of six children. My father's a policeman and makes less than seven thousand dollars a year. There was no money for tuition, for clothes, for all the things you apparently take for granted. Nurses' training here doesn't cost anything. They even pay me six dollars a month. I think it's a good deal. I'm going to become a good nurse, and I've got two baby brothers that are going to have college if I have to work at my profession until I'm an old maid to give it to them". "Do you have a boy friend"? I asked.

"That's none of your business", she said, then changed the subject. "What about your father and mother, don't you think of them when you're in a place like this"? "My father and mother died when I was two years old", I said. "My aunt raised me. Aunt Mary died when I was doing my military service. I have no one but myself to worry about". Something in my voice must have touched her deeply because her anger passed quickly, and she turned away to keep me from seeing her face. "I'm sorry", she said. "I don't know what I'd do without my family. We've always been so close". "Tell me more about them".

Her eyes became bright as she talked about her father and mother, aunts and uncles, cousins. Listening, I felt cheated and lonely as only an orphan can. When she had finished I said: "Your dad sounds like a good father and a good policeman. I'll bet he wouldn't be pleased if a rumdum like me were to ask his daughter for a date- I mean, after I'm out of the hospital, a month or so from now".

"My father is a sergeant of detectives and has been attached

to Homicide for five years. He's a pretty good judge of character, Anderson. I don't think he'd mind too much if he were sure you'd decided not to be a rumdum in the future". "What about you? How would you feel about it if I were to ask you for a date when I get through at Hanover"? "If I thought you were serious about going back to school, that you'd learned something from your experiences here and at Hanover- well, I might consider such an offer. What about your **h that girl you were going to kill"?

It suddenly seemed very important to me that Mary Jane Brennan should know the truth about me- that I was not the confused, sick, irresponsible person she believed me to be. "There are things about me that I can't tell you now, Mary Jane", I said, "but if you'll go out to dinner with me when I get out of Hanover, I'd like to tell you the whole story. I can say this: I'm dead serious about going back to school. As for that other girl, let's just say that I never want to see her again. You will get to come home on long weekends from Hanover, won't you"? "Yes, I'll get one overnight a month". "We'll go up to the Edgewater Beach Hotel for dinner", I said. "Do you like to dance? They always have a good orchestra". "I like to dance", she said, then turned and walked away. There hadn't been anything really personal in her interest in me. I knew that. It was just that she felt deeply about every patient on the ward and wanted to believe that they might benefit from their treatment there.

Now, riding this hospital bus, feeling isolated and utterly alone, I knew that she was genuine and unique, quite unlike any girl I had known before. It seemed the most important thing in my life at this moment that she should know the real truth about me. It was a fantastic story. Only two people in the state of Illinois knew that I was entering Hanover State Hospital under an assumed name, or why. It was unlikely that any girl as sharp as Mary Jane Brennan would believe it without proof. But I had the proof, all documented in a legal agreement which I would show her the moment I was free to do so. As the bus turned into the main highway and headed toward Hanover I settled back in my seat and closed my eyes, thinking over the events of the past two weeks, trying to put the pieces in order. I wondered suddenly as I listened to the disconnected jabberings coming from the patient behind me, if I had not perhaps imagined it all. Perhaps this was reality and Dale Nelson, the actor, was delusion; a figment of Carl Anderson's imagination.

#FOUR#

I had come to Chicago from New York early in September with a dramatic production called <Ask Tony>. It was a bad play, real grade-A turkey, which only a prevalence of angels with grandiose dreams of capital gain and tax money to burn could have put into rehearsal. No one, not even the producer, had any real hope of getting it back to Broadway.

But because it was a suspense gangster story of the Capone era, many of us felt that it might catch on for a run in Chicago, continue as a road company, and eventually become a movie. Such optimism was completely unjustified. The critics literally screamed their indignation. <Ask Tony> was doomed from the moment Kupcinet leveled on it in his <Sun-Times> column. We opened on Friday and closed the following Monday. Out of the entire cast I alone received good notices for my portrayal of a psychopathic killer. This let me in for a lot of kidding from the rest of the company, two members of which were native Chicagoans. We were paid off Tuesday morning and given tickets back to New York. I felt lonely and depressed as I packed my bags at the Croydon Hotel. It seemed to me that my life was destined to be one brilliant failure after another. I had been among the top third in my class at N&Y&U&, had wanted desperately to go to medical school, but I'd run out of money and energy at the same time. Then later I had quit my safe, secure five-a-week spot on a network soap opera to take a part in this play. It seemed to me that I was not only unlucky but quite stupid as well. I knew that I'd soon be back working as an orderly at the hospital or as a counterman at Union News or Schraffts while waiting for another acting job to open. It suddenly occurred to me that I did not particularly like acting, that I was at some sort of crossroads and would have to decide soon what I was going to do with my life. I closed the last bag and stood all three at the door for the bellboy to pick up, then went to the bathroom for a drink of water. The telephone rang. When I answered it a voice too dignified and British to be real said, "Is this Mr& Dale Nelson, the actor"?
"All right", I said. "Why don't you bastards lay off for a while"? "I beg your pardon, sir"? "All right. This is Dale Nelson **h the actor". "Good. I'm calling you, Mr& Nelson, at the request of Mr& Phillip Wycoff. Could you possibly have lunch with him today? His car could pick you up at your hotel at twelve". I smiled. "You'll send the Rolls-Royce, of course"? "Yes, of course, Mr& Nelson". I started to say something else appropriate, but the man had hung up. I finally went downstairs to the bar off the main lobby where most of the cast were drowning their sorrows over the untimely passing of <Ask Tony>. They all bowed low as I approached them. "All right, you bastards", I said, "the great actor is about to buy a drink". I laid a tenspot on the bar and motioned to the bartender to serve a round. He had just returned my change when the doorman came in off the street to page me. I walked over to him. "You Mr& Nelson"? he asked.

"That's right". "Mr& Wycoff's car is waiting for you at the east entrance". I followed him out through the lobby to the street. An ancient Rolls-Royce, as shiningly impressive as the day it came off the ship, was parked at the curb. The elderly chauffeur, immaculate in a dark uniform, stood stiffly at attention holding open the door of the town car.