

I sit down alone at the appointed table and take up my pen to give all whom it may concern an exact account of what may happen. Call me nervous, call me fey, if you will; at least this little pen, this mottled black and silver Aquarius, with its nib specially tempered to my order in Amsterdam, is greedy. It has not had much work since it flew so nimbly for the dead old man. As I watch the sea, Casy Ferris passes with down-dropped eyes. Of course, to-day is the day. Her father reminds me of a valetudinarian walrus. But she has, I suppose, to have somebody. St. Lazarus-in-the-Chine is full, no doubt, already. I think she is rash ; but it is none of my business. Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying, my heart remembers how. Strange that he comes into my head so much to-day. I hope it's over some flotsam fish that the birds are making whau-pee. But all the nice gulls love a sailor. Ugh.

I plunged for the last time. The few remaining figures and letters swam as they came up to me. Then I took them in. There were no more. I glanced about me. I felt I was getting my money's worth. London is like that ; it accepts the wanderer home with a sort of warm indifference. The woman's beauty was, I surmised, profound ; her creamy dress, contrasting with her vivid colouring, showed to me, though more as white against a gay brick sepulchre than snow against roses. Yes it was a dreadful beauty, as far as I could see, and I recalled the stark phrases : Which swept an hundred thousand souls away ; yet I alive. But he was not ; the writer had strangely died to-day. And again they continued this wretched course three or four days : but they were every one of them carried into the great pit before it was quite filled up. Where was Henry? Ah, he was standing by her, close enough to touch the small buoyant face that topped her pillared neck most like a bell-flower on its bed. Would he appreciate?

At my meeting with Clement yesterday, he had been quite specific : less than twenty thousand yards as average---seventeen thousand six hundred to be exact---full ration of the assassin's wonderful substance, a little act of justice at the end of less than a week, and then the glorious stuff galore for ever. I felt excellent as I took my second pill. At least I was on my way, for I had come upon the major half of a publishing firm ; they had always been very good to me, what with Austin Freeman, Oppenheim and Mary Roberts Rinehart. O my mother was loath to have her go away, all the week she thought of her, she watched for her many a month. And then there was a forgotten line. But the red squaw never came nor was heard of there again. I thought it a pity that Hodder was not there : what a sweet name for a village! My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes. No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair. I have no chair.

And I really think I would have preferred the Maestro Jimson's title, now that this piled abomination is actually before me. But the queen can do no wrong. The rain that came heavily is drying off lightly. There, jauntily tripping from the edge of one puddle to another is crisp Sir Roland Mowthorn, shuddering old thing, intent to buy the day's buttonhole from gin-faced Annie behind the church. I remember clearly, perhaps because I ought to have my wits about me for another purpose, how Sir Roland's father, Sir Weedon, once saw Henry taking the part of Lesurques and mixed him up with Le Cirque d'Hiver. Instead of really explaining, she points me gaily to a little boy about, she says, to tumble into the sea. Perhaps he has already tumbled in. In the snowy cumulus above the orange there seems to be now a hole. She tells me to mash all with a spoon. If she had said a mashie. But she is so beautiful. Can I suspect her?

I hated my eye for being caught by what didn't concern me : the powerful grip of the new young man. But it was parading a couple of letters for all to see. Thomas Hardy had been, and my doctor uncle in the war had been just the reverse. And I would have to cut out the stops, I realised futilely, for something vaguely Buddhistic. He went on about Browning. I always used Bisto myself, and anyway Henry, the angel, was plying his intended fifth with Emperor's Peg---equal parts of vitriol and applejack in his case---at the top of the ruined lighthouse. I incontinently powdered my nose. He told me that, as far as I could gather, a certain good-looking Evelyn Hope was dead. What Hopes? I meant, did one know the family? It was really the way he took it for granted that I would rather hear him talking about Cerebos and Cerebos and Cerebos or something than attend to poor Henry that irritated me beyond endurance.

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I considered that venerable whose winter Achilles thought to take from the lips of Cressida. Why not? I set fire to one end of him, gloatingly, and my nerves benefited. Electric Febrifuge may be ; but bad for life's fitful fever. Its active ingredient had finally let me down. I was nothing if not generous. I started my fellow garden enthusiast on the foxgloves. He would appreciate that if he knew. Yes, I was doing my best for the dear girl. I wished I could make up (she would appreciate this) my mind about her. If we did decide---and that weighed with a girl---she would not have to change the initials on her parti-panties. I thought of the old spare-room in this very house, where Mrs. Gay used to lie upon her visits. When I was ill, I was put there, with the only dangling bell-wire in all the place, descending behind my head. I used of course to have nightmares of the Speckled Band, and awfully scream down the house.

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I had gone to sleep the night before after rereading Typhoon. It had always struck me as a remarkable work. Now was the hour when Charles Victor Hugo Renard-Beinsky had risen untimely for the sake of the investigating judge. But the very phrase struck chill like the slap of the Firth of Forth above the heart, wading out over the coal dust in the morning. I had investigated ; but who would believe an investigator who had not stirred from Baker Street? I was a judge, but with no sombre little cap, and no machinery to make my judgements effective. I felt I needed something. Would I be comforted by a Jew's lime and the concomitant odour? I tried, and felt relieved. Someone had advised me, a few days before, to read Conrad in search of his Youth, or in Search of a Father, was it? But I had always found Conrad unreadable, as far from English as the Poles, and did not mean to try again.

Could I be developing a green-eyed streak? I investigated the body before me with the aid of a powerful glass. At least I always thought of it as powerful, because I never could quite understand how it worked. I knew I ought to have the body as long as possible. At last I was satisfied. I measured the distance carefully with my eye : a good forty inches, I made it. I gathered from his talk that Guido looked his last to-day on the sausage place---furtively I knew how excellent---and that Kilmarnock and Belmerino completely lost their heads. But whether or not this was cause and effect I couldn't make out. I wished for the hundredth time I had a better brain. Later she was wearing the same bow---I loathed bows myself---and that time he found them and trimmed the left end. Then he turned what he was holding a bit ; so that it pushed its way right through. Then he twiddled the black knobby thing, and Mr. Hall burst in upon us. The knobby thing was black and red.

The sound of the bell, as of a boding gnat, just came to me. The finger causing it was, I knew, the index of a most skilful hand, one I had commanded, one that would pluck me from embarrassment, and yet one I vaguely distrusted. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of responsibility.... One had to be in the key for such things. I felt I should enjoy it as I got used to it. The bell again, and then a far sensation of feet. I was glad the man had come ; time was not unlimited. I remembered that, when I was returning after a fortnight's absence during which my assistant Charles Day had deputised for me in my lectures on mineralogy at Peebles University, a tactless hand had left on the blackboard : "Let us work while it is yet Day ; for the Knight cometh when no man can work."

Then came Hyacinth's day. He laughed when he remembered that, as we were walking round the garden, and said it was too late for Jasmine's day at any rate. I liked to hear him laugh, and thought it was absurd for him to be called after what the man Boots didn't understand. The latter's way of expressing himself seemed to me childish ; why should we, of all people, use singular for plural and plural for singular? They went back two days and formulated their bet, till I could have howled. If he got the third point, she'd owe him a box of a hundred Egyptian cigarettes---Gourdoulis, and if she won, he'd give her three pairs of Etam dawn mist, ten inches. They looked so bright about it all. She drooped long seed pearl things right over the soup. Ear-drops, as my mother had called them, I never could abide ; probably because I belonged to the other side of the family. My mistress wore them ; was it for that that I had begun to tire of her already?

If Henry had been there he could have told me what to do. His great voice, tuned and broken at the capstan bar, would have breezily put me right. Tears came to my eyes. I was, I supposed, an emotional old fool. So I came back and waited in Orchard, it ran through my head, where he cast up blinded that night, which were my true friend Ravager, which were always good to me since we was almost pups, and never minded of my short legs. Very emotional. But there was no need for me to weep just at the end of the second dog, nor would I. Henry had taught me a little of his trade, and this, curiously enough, was what had struck. After all the Grundy Sapphic of yesterday had described a more universal taking off in Ireland. I did not quite agree with de Quincey that murders in Ireland did not count. But perhaps it was an optimistic memory which told me that such things used not to happen when the queer old Dean was alive.

I rubbed my eyes and massaged my temples with pronated finger-tips. Then I fumbled two aspirin tablets into my mouth : Noel Coward's King Charles's Head. I had a very bad head. My vis-à-vis hadn't a bad head, now I came to consider it, bowed over the documents. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case. I became a trifle abstracted. What, I wondered, would he have said about an abstracted will? He might answer to the same name as the man who sang : "Ah, are you digging on my grave?" But a softer fellow I had rarely seen. On velvet, yes, on velvet I would have trusted him ; but not on cinders, by no means on cinders. Yet the keen eyes bent like small topaz searchlights over the writing. I would get, I felt, what I wanted from this man. But then I suddenly remembered the words of the poet :

*The golden one is gone from the banquets,  
She, beloved of Atimetus,*

*Rintrah, where has thou hid thy bride?  
Weeps she in desert shades?  
Alas! my Rintrah, bring the lovely jealous  
Ocalythron.*

Then against a possible invasion of my privacy, I touched my white cheeks until they blushed. My luck was not in. He was a typically farm-labourer, with what thy'd call in Bloomsbury a Newdigate fringe. Just like that sort of a poet, I supposed they'd mean. He anchored himself heavily, consciously waving an empty pipe. Henry was now stooping over the other body, whistling between its teeth. What would I have done, I wondered? Really this sort of thing was native to me in a way. I wished there were water without going for it. I remembered, of course, that there was a conduit dating from 1597 standing here in the market place. But that was of little use to me. On the whole, I thought I would have as much nerve as my dear hero. But one never knew.

My ears were becoming attuned, and for the first time I heard clearly what the woman was saying : "Are you going to leave everything to me?" she asked, and I could have sworn her companion started. Then seeing, or thinking he saw, his mistake, he answered : "You must do just as you think fit, May." After all it was none of my business. Some fragments of dejected flesh still lay among the rests of the spilled wine. At my sign, Henry stooped and made all clean again. And there was no immediate call for me to listen further, for there came a pause during which both seemed busy with their thoughts. And I too thought. The voice was like and yet not like that of Janetta Sheringham. How we had laughed that day in the hay field when John sat on the buttered rolls, and we devised games out of straws, and we thought the cricket a war-horse, barded and chaufroned too, real fairy, with wings all right.

Now, I considered, in my dear Lyons it would be coming of age hours, and I wondered if they would ever do that over here. I fancied what self-consciousness and preciosity there would be, for instance, if the B.B.C. ever took it up. A strange institution ; but the nursed fuse was always interesting. Yes, if sitting at the familiar table with Bart chewing at my moccasins, I could have broadcast it all, I would have left the mighty heart of England to deal with it. On that very day, I recalled, another terrible thing happened. John Hewit and Sarah Drew, just engaged to be married, were working together in a field of barley when they were both struck by lightning. Alexander, the only noteworthy Pope of my native land, was demonstrably affected. And my namesake wrote a letter, in which he said that Sarah's left eye was injured, and there appeared a black spot on her breast. Her lover was all over black ; but not the least sign of life was found in either.

One's eyebrows were one's own, I always thought. Though I did remember a case---Aunt Mary's, to be precise---when it was not so. She had met him after the explosion, of course ; and when it became a question of dinner and the Highgate Empire, actually with performing quaggas, she put herself in the hands of the man who made up for, if anything could make up for, the Russian ballet. And they dropped, naturally, like two fuzzy caterpillars into the clear soup at supper. The old days. The Highgate Empire, where Wilkie Bard, as Lauder did not say, sang o' his love and fondly sae did I o' mine. At last the two little horrors ceased in their shrill claim and counter-claim for sweaty quasi-transparencies of colour, and goggled at me while I put black to mine. Bill always called them two dark flapper moons. Should I make an effort and go back to Henry? He was ready to love. That at least was obvious.



I am conveniently situated, with the Moon on the one hand and the Dawn on the other. Conveniently situated for some things, that is. Here's young Sawnie, for instance, parking his Fordor with a perfectly grey face. I'm sorry. He is fumbling with the lock arrangement. I've never tried the stuff myself ; bad for the hand. He's visiting the Moon for the first time to-day and just the first. I almost wish I had tried the Lapsang. I remember I once received seven pounds of Lapsang from Grace. Or the Moning, very choice, delicate flavour. Why go to pubs? There would be no Moning at the bar. Yes, there's Kate Somerset, looking actually proud. And that must be he. Poor child. Ah, here she is. She slips like a blonde lily into the chair opposite. My heart turns over a little in my breast and then re-settles. She is very beautiful. Why should I think her beauty somewhat sinister? Because, perhaps, marriage is in the air?

I discussed certain passages with the man, and he was too guardedly ignorant in his contributions to our discussion. The chapter on the fall of the rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side. But would I have called him to me had it not been for money? Many a truth had been spoken, I reflected, as an epigram. Like something very far away in a great disused house, that may to the aching ear seem to be lifting a flag in some disused second cellar, my suspicion made an escaping movement, a movement of birth in a blank and distant subterrene of my mind. As I looked at him I realised that no single dish would satisfy the man. He would be, even to start with, for a course of soup, and then another of dishes, as my namesake said, and another of birds. I have never met any really wicked person before. I feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like every one else.

Yesterday he got in another of his own kind, who agreed she'd done it all herself. He twiddled the polished knob and Mr. Hall came into the room again. I heard him muttering that it was appropriate the Human Comedy couldn't possibly have gone on beyond to-day. I, rather surprisingly, liked music. Surprisingly, that is, to anyone who did not know that my people came from the same place as the McCrimmons, that famous race of hereditary music makers. I was rather astonished to hear him saying something about someone who was by virtue first, then choice, a queen. Tell me, if she were not design'd th' eclipse and glory of her kind. So I pulled his sleeve. He pulled my ears, and said it was Wotton, which I didn't think it was, and that she had only just come to Falkland. I made a low noise and at once knew I had done the wrong thing. Usually he just said William Sydney Porter, which I offended ; but then he said something much worse.

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The best I had done seemed to me blank and suspicious, my great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meagre? Next day I would have to pay for all I had had of solace, and for all I would have later. It would, I thought, have seemed impossible to link Will's friend Ben with Will's wife, and yet they went off together, or at least on that same day : the bricklayer out of Annandale and the inheritor of the second-best bed : strange bedfellows. Underneath this stone, he had said, doth lie as much Beauty as could die ; but of course he hadn't been talking about her. Nor had either had anything to do with my waking, my strong tea, and my first pill. That all happened by the Mole, and there was the oldest brass in England, saying : SIRE : IOHAN : DAUBERNOUN : CHIVALER : GIST : ICY : DEV : DE : SA : ALME : EYT : MERCY. Good enough. We have circled and circled till we have arrived home again, we two.

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To reckon with Henry! That was never easy. Just beyond the laurels, I turned sharply and there he was, bending over the body of his latest victim. There was blood all about. I called to him sharply and he seemed dazed. Afterwards I brought in my rough old friend Calabar Bean to help me---this on the very day when I had proved digitalis purpurea, though I did not know if the profession prescribe it usually as such, a signal wash out. But why should this aspect have come into my head? Far, far from here the Adriatic breaks in a warm bay among the green Illyrian hills. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Read Mark Twain and inwardly digest. But I had to keep my wits about me. He pottered about with me and succeeded at last in making friends with Henry. Already he felt that I was leading him to the fountain Ponce de Leon sought, where he who drinks is deathless. And he was not so far wrong.

He always talked to me about murder, when we were alone together. And that day he told me it was the birthday of a good one in prison. John and Cornelius, the Dort people ; I can't say I understood very much. But I liked his name, and showed him so, for he had always been very clement to me, even about that cat Jasmine. By the bye, Tusitala and Flora had both come over to our place. Of course you might say that was nothing to make a song about. But others had not agreed. And just as I was feeling how much I loved him, he put on funny clothes and went away. I lowered myself and made love to Flora. It was quite late when he came back with her. He had always told me that I was absurdly sensitive. It might be so. Explain it how you will, when I first set eyes on her I felt no vibration, no hint at all, of my latter end. I was banished and slept miserably with Flora.

I hate seeing things like this in the paper. Bill to Solve the Traffic Problem. Bill to improve the Secondary Schools. I am never asked. I am not qualified. It is all so sudden. I find it hard to reconcile my guest with the Duchess of that name, though I know how popular everything to do with the Wimpole Street singer is just now, except perhaps her singing. Toll slowly, a match box rhythm. Bryant and, of course, May. Rub gently, she is here, under the snow. Poor Oscar. Nor will the ends drop off. Nor can her eyes go out. Pure Francis Thompson. He sold matches. But I feel I am letting the dear girl down. There's a contrast : Fidelia Faustina Flora Blackwood, sister of Ebenezer Blackwood, which of course it is. She marches by on muscular pink hocks. The thought of that evening in the Left Luggage Office parches me, makes my heart beat differently. I must say I envy Alexander having his first, and perhaps his second, in there. I think wistfully of the poet's lines:

*But rum alone's the tippie,  
and the heart's delight*

*Of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan.*

Next day I saw that my suspicions of Caroline had been well-founded. This was an infernal nuisance ; a Chinese confrère of mine might even have called it a hellebore. It was annoying to share the house with someone who reacted to wild jasmine much as he reacted to roses. He throve on my roses. To that extent I was satisfied with him. Puffing at Gianacis and blowing at myself for a fool, I tried to consider my competence, or lack of it. I had always thought that to carry the name of fourteen popes and two anti-popes meant nothing to me either way. To share it with Giulio de Medici might sound more sinister to the uninstructed. At least the quality of mercy was little exerted, much less strained, in me. Roses automatically reminded me of my aunt Cynthia who had, before there was any constraint between them, asked the poor old Ahkoond of Swat to share a dream next with her heart among these decorative but vestigial flowers.

After I might just as easily have been a literary bloke, like Jeremy Taylor or Eugene Sue. I told myself that all art was one. There might be superficial differences in their work, but they had, in the words of the old song, gone the same way home. When was it? Why, to-day, if I mistook not. I felt I must take a grip of my failing, in so far, that was, as it distorted the time factor. But in that case I knew I was right. To think of time---of all that retrospection, to think of to-day, and the ages continued henceforward. Have you guessed you yourself would not continue? Have you dreaded these earth beetles? But it occurred to me that to think of time with my delight would have got him guessing. I woke to the consciousness that I had done very little in my life. Not Dolittle but Didlittle. What was a did little? Didling, perhaps, or didlet. It was at the former that I woke to consciousness that morning.

The girl had left Henry by this time, thank God. She was an obvious whey-face. She didn't seem capable for a moment of understanding those first two killings of his. He was being a dear. He had sent the rector's aunt away, as he explained to the girl, like a bee with a sore bonnet. A foreign touch. Killing time, yes. I was doing that. It was funny how idly the mind worked ; or seeming idly. Perhaps there was something in heredity after all. I pondered to its direction. An accent was a terrible thing, I thought. Killing time wouldn't be so good. I realised that I was impressionable, that I liked a good murder. But Hodge, once settled, wasn't in the least like a singer. He had a wen, and scratched his left whisker. I supposed it would be different to suddenly develop a wen for someone. Different and messier. He asked me about Ben Wade, hitherto merely mutely unemployed, and of course I said the right thing.

I had seen, day after day, every sunlit or night obscured detail of the funny old house I had visited so many years ago. Through it, handsome, cadaverous and so quiet, had walked Death himself, tapping unnoticed at the very walls of the mansions of life ; trying here, failing there, lightly fingering for the sign of a breach. A tiny opening. Apparently the person who slept in the lock-up at that county town on the Severn, or perhaps woke, would hear this time. I had found that I could face my usual mixture of Peaberry Mysore and Blue Mountain. I had made certain havoc of two on toast, their silver skins laced with their golden blood. To think of the tiny Clem mixed up, nay, a prime mover, in such affairs. Useful, courteous little chip of a bat. He had hushed my brat for me when he was only six, one morning on which I had wanted to go out for a walk.

I found myself by that one of the windows which overlooked the stone broach spire---a rarity in Kent---of Pluckley church, and the light would strike my book from over my right shoulder. I drew a volume from my pocket ; blind-tooled on the green in a double circle was a single star above what was perhaps a sea. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person, and I wondered if such a reason for marriage would ever have occurred to me. I had never married, and scarcely felt like beginning now. It was the tenth edition, of 1917. No, Sir ; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself. Not a woman had entered as yet. I was in for a ticklish business, and I knew it. Forging ahead, I supposed they would call it, since the woman was not yet dead. You might not hear of her again.

It had always been my habit to rise with the lark, if there was one going up at about nine. A confirmed botulist, I first arranged with Flora that there should be seven of the long stout shapes rosily bursting from the exquisite, taut but not too elastic brown at breakfast. I trusted they would not taste of Flora and the country-green. Then with whetted appetite, and after an unsatisfactory visit to the spareroom, I went for a quick stroll among my flowers. If the West African ordeal beans had proved a disappointment, at least the broad ones were giving satisfaction. On that day---and indeed I was well inspired---I discarded my useless physostigma. I led the old mineralogist up the garden, if I may be permitted the expression, and introduced him to my lobelia and to my pretty lords and ladies. I wanted to see how the combination would suit him. I felt I ought to be drawing towards a close ; but one never knew.

I see that old dandy has purchased Cape Jasmine. Your gardenia is difficult at a distance to determine. It may be florida flore-pleno, double white. Why should I care? I am a very sick fellow. Gardenias! And there are also Gardener's Garters, *Phalaris arundinacea variegata*. I am not at all well. He is clutched unwillingly into greeting old Mrs. Cave, our local Dame Quickly. They mince at one another. Yes, by James! James? Lo, how these fair immaculate women walk behind their jocund maker ; and we see slighted De Mauves, and that far different she, Gressie, the trivial Sphinx. We commiserate pass into the night from the loud banquet. Sorry. She urges me to the American mess. I wolf three-quarters, thinking of Quebec. Then I try her out, saying, with an airy lift of the spoon, this savours not of death, this hath a relish of eternity. Excellent, my dear Watson. But the leopard's eyes do not bat a blink. Can she be guilty?

The others did not seem similarly impressed. Phrases of this and that came to half my ear, duet by rill and cornerake. Rill vaunted the pleasure of speeding, and cornerake gave warnings like an over-driven oak about to fall. I remembered how I had listened for the same sound on that awful night in Paris, when I did not know what I know now. And again, in this very place for another reason, Henry would remember. To lose even two like these two, swallowed by the night, was apt to break a balance in one, to suggest that it was time to square accounts. Caseus, ah! And nothing lean or hungry here at all. A friend in the nick of time. I would have no more. My hand dropped to my hip pocket. I had to reckon with Henry. Yet could I? This nomenclature business had often bothered me. Sometimes I felt sudden enough, as if my head would burst sometimes but tritulative. Was I a bomb, or only slow and godly and exceeding small?

I was a little consoled for the weeping weather by the fact that Gainsborough had gone out to-day. And, now I came to think of it, Henry had also gone to-day ; poor Henry, who had stayed uncomfortably after his meeting with Clément yesterday. Henceforth I ask not good fortune, I myself am good fortune, I changed. Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing, done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms. But that would be scanned. Or rather it wouldn't. It didn't seem to fit. I had woken that morning pleasantly near the sea, at yesterday's capricious place of appointment with the man who gave me my instructions and all I wanted beside. Did Wodehouse know it, I wondered. Of its Earl he had said that he stood gazing out over his domain, drooping like a wet sock, as was his habit when he had nothing to prop his spine against. All I wanted beside, I had thought. Hadn't Chesterton said something about it's being hemp at both ends? My job might prove him right.



He was picking round among all she had left behind and found a box with his name on it. Also it said, for he read it, I always pay my debts. Unwrapped, it seemed to be a hundred box of Gourdoulis. I had never seen him so moved. He started reading a letter from a woman, dead the same day. I had yours but yesterday, it said, though dated the third of February, in which you suppose me to be dead and buried. I have already let you know I am still alive, he went on, but to say truth, I look upon my present circumstances to be exactly the same with those of departed spirits. I don't think he ever said any more. Happily I was behind the armchair. He just opened the box. I had never seen him so moved. There were little bits of stuff like black pineapple on the carpet. I knew he could never be his old collected self again, and that my gray hairs would go down in sorrow to the grave.

It was a petty employ for one of my reputation ; you would not hear, I felt, much more of it. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy. I have spoken of ironic comment. There was, I thought, little chance of that. I wondered if he had ever been an innocent child feeding among the pantries. But that was no fit time for such musings. He took foolish occasion to tell me who he was ; as if I did not know. Bills should always be met squarely. I turned to the man, and his gaze soon fell before mine. He had always spoken as if his throat were full of jelly. Now with a leer, he emitted sounds through this quag which shaped themselves into hints at some perpetual reward for valuable services rendered. But even then I had not made up my mind. It was, I said to myself, a bad workman who could not play one tool against another.

For this time being, Henry was drawing towards a close. I was not sorry. The police were after him in no uncertain manner, and it seemed impossible for him to ultimately escape them. While the flying squad had surrounded the house, the locals were thronging the underground passage, and Wellington Crisp, with his assistant and his bulldog, was pouring through the concealed panel in the bathroom. Instead of adding one more to his crimson list, he preferred to trust himself to a limping blimp : almost, it seemed, a certain suicide. But he might return. One never knew. At least my end was reached, and in some comfort. Murders were funny things. If he who so tragically killed his King, ever reached here at all, which is historically more than doubtful (alas, poor Richard! Alas, poor Thomas!) it was certainly not in such ease or such good time as I. I collected myself and mine, and went out to sniff the new air.

Strange that old Calabar, as I called him, should fail me ; yet on the morning after I had introduced him to the person most concerned, I felt certain that I could not rely on him. I felt certain that I could not rely on him. I would give him another day, and then. . . . It was distinctly awkward in a way. At eleven in the forenoon little Mavis Kitchener came with a gift of eggs, a clutch of eggs, I might say, looking at her determined little fists. Distinctly awkward : for, knowing they were bound to be bad, I spent an hour I could ill afford in finding her an equivalent in wormy raspberries. How could I marry her in the circumstances? Your good uncle, whom you count the father of your fortune, longed for this alliance. I remembered, as I wandered among the abortive Bengal attempts of the rhododendrons, that she whose bidding I then did would always make up. Henry was always made up too. He had buried the corpse ; only the eyes showed.

Death's clumsy fingered, that was the really frightful thing : I had seen them, beneath a debonair smile, fumbling so long about their business. I realised that I would have to do something. This time, of course, the male incarcerated at the place of Hotspur's death could not hear. I looked across the table to the great brimming bowl of yellow jasmine ; young Alexander had sent him up the night before with an invitation to a private view of the Paulo Post Avorticists. Then I glanced at the rococo mirror on my left. Well, my parents had seen to it, soon after birth, that I should be one ; but I had never, save during that week in Malta when I met Ronald Firbank and was a trifle jaundiced, been the other. It was terrible to sit there with only the table in front of me, and to know that murder had been committed. He would---I had sensed that---be intrinsicated and concealed, chamber within chamber ; if I durst open the bores, who would believe me?

I was feeling better already, and was glad that a memory, true though dim, had led me to the place. Video meliora proboque ; but I could not, for all my covert glances, see the modelling of the fossettes of the elbows of the woman sitting so near me. Were they, I wondered, like Sonia Gordon's, triangular dimples with shadow in them? Poor Sonia Gordon. I pondered on that tragic fortnight at Southend : the pier with its electrical railway, and my cousin's rash act, and Sonia's lapse. Her temperament was against her. Still you couldn't have an omelette without breaking eggs. And mine was excellent. "You would get off with a whole skin, would you?" I cried softly, as I stabbed once. And even as I did so, I thought of skinny old Marat in his slipper bath, the nightcap about his forehead, the dim light of the candle, the shadow at the door, the stealthy tread of Charlotte Brontë with the undulled blade. There was something wrong.

She said it didn't matter what they had done, because she was still an M.D., and she'd got another one. That was he. She showed us some delicate undercoats, all raw liver colour, very lovely, and proved it. But she had, too, a passion for getting new things, and I was sorry for his sake. After all, in all my life with him, I had only had one coat, and that an inherited one. True, it was long and graceful, and fitted beautifully, which was more than could be said for some of hers. Combe, I had always thought, was where one pottered after rabbits. But there was a George too, because he said so. He called him a Free Knowledgist, though it didn't seem to me he gave much away. He said this was his last day. I didn't care. But I heard them say they were two all for that year ; she said one of his was vicarious and I could not understand what the vicar had to do with it. They made a bet.

What chemistry! That the winds are really not infectious. Now that I was approaching journey's end, I began to ask myself disconcerting questions. It would be terrible if she turned out to be Flecker's one. And some to Flecker turn to pray, and I toward thy bed. But I had probably got it wrong. Yet it was all right. Her spelling was different and it was long ago. Yes, but supposing she came of the family of Jack's visitor, with Thornhill, who promised the opera? I could never be sure of that. I took a pill. But it was worth it. Yes, it was worth it. The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the garden. He certainly could put that sort of thing over, the dear old bean. Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark green leaves. Thames Ditton's sister, as Eric Parker calls her---and one remembered the Irishman's malapropism in the same tale---had soon passed. Long she was ; but I did not linger to pay court to her.

And then with horrid clearness I had seen a woman---not actually, if I could trust myself, there ; but aiming, directing, inspiring : slim, tawny, petulant, self-willed : wanton, but too calculated to be more than mistress of herself ; the kind that had made England terribly at sea. I looked back on my own youth ; I had been about a bit, as they say ; sometimes, to catch a whale, I had cast a sprat over the windmill. But it was not till my marriage with Henry that old Charles Goodfellow dared to hint that I was going gay. Poor lonely little Bat. But it was still the first dog, I couldn't help realising that, after my husband's training. Just as I could not help realising that, had I a mind to go there, I could now get moled and isled on the Selfridget side, though by no means in Bond Street. When I said means, I meant of course lawful ones. Then I remembered Henry's favourite quotation :

*But McCullough'e wanted cabins with marble  
and maple and all  
And Brussels an' Utrecht velvet, and bath and a  
Social Hall*

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## NOTES

*Just broken to twine round they harp-strings, as if  
no wild beat  
Were now raging to torture the desert! Then I,  
as was meet...*

I assure you I had not seen her enter but suddenly I was electrically aware that she was sitting near me. What could come next? I had let Henry guide me. She was very tall ; sometimes, I think, tallness is an excellent thing in women. Julianne? Yes, she looked as if her name would be of the sort. And I surmised dark eyes under golden lashes. I hardly liked to disturb the surface for the first time. Her voice purred in my quick ears ; I thought of a jaguar on a lean bough, and envied Henry. The surface was clear brown, and I discerned white figures within ; stars, and a little heart, mirabile dictu, were moving inside. She lit a cigarette and poured down cocktail after cocktail ; sometimes she made little dabbings with a butterfly of white lace to her mouth.

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## NOTES

This is good. She accepts Lover's Delight from me. She has spoken very little ; but she urges me to make trial of a Banana Split. Is there some esoteric meaning behind the titles? Now Ecky passes over to the Dawn. Alexander's my name. They ca'd me Ecky when I was a boy. Eh, Ecky! Ye're a awfu' old man. Emotional stuff. Anyway Ecky has disappeared in the Dawn. I almost wish I took it. The hard stuff, I mean ; but it would ruin my hand. Where would my income be if Aquarius were to turn Gemini? She tells me a lot, each word huskily lisping over that round petulant vermilion lower lip, of a doctor friend of hers. I have only known her a few minutes ; but I hate to think she would change---her voice hits a pocket, just like a plane, when she talks of him---an honest station between King's Cross and Edinburgh for---what is it?---being's drone pipe, whose nostril turns to blight the strivelled stars and thicks the lusty breathing of the sun.

I sometimes wish, and I wished then, that I had the gift of telling, or at least of following, a story vividly. Hodge, in the luxury of his first St. Bruno, kept on exacerbating the corner of my eye by fingering his sebaceous arrangement. And this made it difficult to adequately appreciate Henry's problem. Smells meant a lot to me ; I was back in a twinkling at the old fonda in Vera Cruz, and almost saw the young fruit merchant laying down his guitar and wiping the blood off the strings with a kenspeckle handkerchief. But I must, I felt, at all costs get back to Henry. The position was this : the second wife's brother had begun to suspect. He had found a half-burned marriage certificate in the incinerator ; that was charred lines on Henry. What would he do? We couldn't stop at this point, surely, I thought. But I was wrong.

It was when that half Pole, half Frenchman, and usually up the first half, that self-styled drunken mongrel and lazy waster, got normally out of bed. I remembered that when Hélène told him of her attachment he gave up brandy. And took to absinthe. It was one of the times that he had an absinthe. They said that it made the heart grow fonder. What had I actually seen? I had seen Henry---surely I had heard him called so---bending innocently over an innocent corpse of his own making. And I had also seen the doctor leading the old man up the garden, not once or twice, but many times. The girl was no longer there. I stayed myself with devilled Epicam and Royans aux Achard, levered into me with Peter Barleys and washed down and out, foul thought, with Villacabras. But one was so helpless alone in a great building of many flats : I was glad I had not given up stealing at the doors.

In one way, of course, I was glad they were married. I had always been rather a stickler for purity in family life. That scandalous rumour of a Maltese landing on our island and seducing an ancestress of mine---or was it an ancestor?---from the path of duty, I never had and never would believe. If I had had a real education, instead of just listening to him, I could have told---it was bad that day---how I detested being called Hal. It was she that did it. But he was pleased in a way, and said to her, out of a book, the original ground of the transaction appears to have been sentimental : “He was my friend,” says the murderous doctor ; “he was dear to me.” Some Tom, not the one I killed in the matter of Jasmine, had done that, I gathered. He was enthusiastic and provided a chop for me, and said it was good he had visited England to-day for the first time.

Babs now moves across the vision, crowned with two straight downfalls, as it were, of copper upon her head. The uncurling flow is to right and left, as if a river, reflecting a thunder sunset, had split in terror into twin cataracts. And here, thank heaven, come the first, much needed rain of the week. A greyness and a spray to begin with, and suddenly a birth of little silver frogs all along the road. We were sitting in the verandah in the dead, hot, close air, gasping and praying that the black-blue clouds would let down and bring the cool. I always think of that, even in England. But, looking across at the figure opposite me, I realise that it is actually she and not Babs that has got me. Got me, that is a terrible conjunction of two little words ; Henry does not like it at all. But as a proof that what I say is true, she is strong enough to wean me from my thoughts of Orange Pekoe to a Special Orange Supreme.

I had always thought that Tate essentially meant sugar. This I liked almost next to anything, though mostly not at once, but under the gas fire and pulled out when there was nobody else. But he said to her, as in the game a lot of them played there once, another had begun to-day, and had wormed his way into the Book of Common Prayer. But I didn't think he would taste so good ; I preferred the sugar one. I thought they were together too much. I became convinced that I must be a sad dog ; I tried to remember all the times when one of the other sex had preoccupied me, and we had been oblivious of all else. I tried to forgive. He called her *Crataegus Oxyacantha* over the cocktails ; that was his big joke. I knew it by the way he laughed, and I too rolled about. But I liked the real way to call her best. I met Ecky that evening, he was very happy ; but just about all in. When I greeted him he nearly fell on my nose.



I always feel a bit dazed on these occasions, and was so then. But it was pleasant to collect oneself, and count one's burdens---above and beneath, and to one's hand as it were. I did so. Yet I felt dazed. As I have said, I always did. I was developing a bit of a yen for Henry, though this was my first introduction to him. I am a simple soul, and I must confess that I was rather thrilled. It seemed that here was a man of no ordinary fascination, with a chin cleft like the toe-cap of a satyr's boot, and a little group of show hairs behind each ear. Also he was doomed to destroy, for family reasons, and to keep on destroying. And I was still alone ; I could hardly expect otherwise in the circumstances. I echoed the words of the poet :

*Bring Palamabron, horned priest, skipping upon  
the mountains,  
And silent Elynittria, the silver-bowed queen,*

*The swallow, the bright Homonoëa.*

I wondered if I should succeed in hurting the girl. But think of her no more. The will was there all right. And the wonderful hands at the opposite side of the table were at work with a caseful of strange pens. I sat quite still ; neither in life nor letters will I consent to jump about. I begin at the beginning, even if you think it prosy of me to say so, and go straight through to the end. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a handbag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that reminds one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. The man had certainly got into his stride at last. The fellow seemed absorbed. It is a marvellous gift, I always think. He could undoubtedly have written, if he'd had a mind, like a Chesterton or a Camoëns.

As I was not staying, but only passing through, I raised my hat to the eleven that played All England for a thousand guineas, and beat them twenty-nine times in ten years. I paid respect also to a couple of exceptionally large yetts. After all, I was doing another man's work for him. As I progressed, I began to remember what my favourite author had called him. He had called him lovely and soothing, and delicate. He had called him cool-enfolding and a dark mother. From me to thee, he had said, glad serenades, dances for thee I propose saluting thee. Also vast and well-veil'd. But somehow I had my doubts. I sat on the grass, and counted a distinct ninety between each beat of my heart. I would have to go slow. Each beat, I saw, puffed out of my breast like purple smoke from an exhaust. I dance with the dancers and drink with the drinkers. The echoes ring with our indecent calls, I pick out some low person for my dearest friend.

The cardinal was acquitted to-day of all complicity in the affair of the Queen's diamond necklace. How quickly the quicksands of crime got hold of the mind's feet. At that moment it seemed incredible that I had ever been an innocent child, gambolling among the daisies, and thinking, if I thought of it at all, that the grave would be as little as my bed. The door opened and shut. From what I already knew of the man who entered, I should have supposed cleaner limbs and an air more sinister. I explained my object, and told him to sit down and make himself comfortable with the papers. Coffee and sandwiches of Westphalian ham pleased him too obviously. Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Yes, I felt, at my first sight of him, that the words before my eyes would form some sort of commentary, ironic perhaps, page after page, till the end of my interview, and even after.

So far the mind had been ambling, if I may dare the expression ; moving forward ungainly, as if by one hemisphere at a time. But now I keenly wondered how we should agree, myself and this well-fed swine that had just been introduced to me. He was obviously in drink, and none the worse for that : the better indeed for my purpose. The old fellow's face seemed vaguely familiar, though I am not good at faces. Suddenly I remembered that white bear which jutted from his chin like an undercurving wave. It should have been recognisable a mile off, from weekly reminders in the more ecstatic newspapers, as that of Sir Paul Trinder, whose furor loquendi had cause him for twenty years to adhere loudly to every ebbing cause in town. He was also, if I mistook not, some sort of chartered lecturer at obscure seats, one might almost call them stools, of learning. Such a man, it might be argued, was no one's enemy but his own ; but, oh, what a bitter enmity that could be.

I was feeling about as good as man could feel that day. Everything horticultural, in the awful and literal sense of the word, was lovely. Green blood, as I considered before breakfast, I delighted to conserve. I received a letter from Miss Doncaster over the crumbs of toast and the last clear smear of marmalade, telling me that the old man would be coming to-day, on her advice to take mine. I admit that she had stirred me strangely. I lit a Nestor and considered her letter once more. To pestle a poisoned poison behind his crimson lights. That was a nice thing to ask of a comparative stranger. It would have to be scanned. Poor old man ; but everyone must bump up against his Waterloo, and to-day was the day of the meeting at La Belle Alliance. It was not appropriate.

The picture of the Old Mill at Bramley, with its medlar tree overhanging the water, its octagonal brick dovecot, and its sweet water grape vine, had not detained me the day before. I had groped for my first cigarette of the day, eyes hardly open, a few miles on. So easily were things forgotten! I found it difficult to realise that to-day had once been an English holiday, like that other fifth, and for much the same reason. James had got off, the Earl and his brother Alexander had emphatically not. But the whole thing was not clear to me, and I doubted if it was to anyone. The two smells, of the medlar and the vine, had been the two notes of a chord, venetian red and peridot, that bit one ear gently and the other hard---or did I mean loud and tenuous?---a monotone save for this variation : once it had been hard, gentle, hard, hard, gentle, gentle, gentle hard. It had been a pretty smell.

It was just when the girl from the Asolo silk mills contended that morning was. There was something, I reflected, about the fashion, beastly, in the awful and literal sense of the word, as of equals, in which youth treated the young day. Heaven knew I would have been in bed, had not my head been surcharged with too perilous a stuff for sleep. I spent those six hours in an agony of recapitulation. Even as a tiny toddler, at old Mrs. Larkin's school, when I was technically a mixed infant, I had shown signs of possessing these uncanny powers. In fact Mrs. Larkin might have called me Clare, so both voyant and audient was I. For a long time I sat and mused, looking into vacancy across the table. Gradually a realisation came to me that I would revisualise more connectedly on an assuaged stomach. I hoped for breakfast soon, nor was I to be disappointed. There was that silly girl of mine bursting into pang in the sausage, just like Pippa, as she always did.

It seemed from what I heard that Felton's meat had been delivered at Brookesley for the first time that day. I wondered if it was good and plentiful. Not that I really liked to think about meat, though we were alone again. I thought it crude of him to talk about no noise here, but the toning of a tear, or a sigh of such as bring cowslips for her covering, until I realised that he was thinking that Ben's friend had been, in point of time, like Felton's meat. Over the Westphalian ham, which I contrived to share, he read bits of paper about Hilary and the Amazon, and Stella Polaris and Voltaire, and the City of Nagpur, and Vandyck, and other lovely people. I wondered if he wasn't thinking of going on a holiday. It seemed a pity to me ; so unnecessary, just then. I knew nothing at all about boats. Some of my people had known the old Armadale Castle well enough, doubtless ; but that wasn't the boat that went to South Africa.

Considering it was my name month, I wasn't having too much luck. Henry, though a bit on the spectacular side---to fly the viscera of his third, of the old family lawyer, at his small flagstaff, a little argued the exhibitionist---was sane enough. And this stranger, to judge by the over-vague conversation he began to force on me---different in this from the agriculturist, who had been utterly silent save for the burning question, and the brats who had only uttered mutually---was distinctly nuts. Nuts in May, how Freudian. Be not a Freud ; thy help is near. But was it? Henry was in desperate case, and this other was short-sighted enough not to realise that I should care. The former was stooping over the cooling remains of his fourth---the rash intruding charlady---when there came a horribly official knock at the little blue door. (Was it Inspector Barraclough, or only some stolid-witted local?) But little the latter cared. He went on talking about Browning.

What was it I held in my fingers? Looked at in one way it could just be a kea. I would give the bird a phoenix chance. I lit a match, and the consequences soothed me. Who was afraid of the big bad wolf? No one, it seemed. His silly bane had now definitely failed. I put, at *petit déjeuner*, the cast-iron old object on Gelsemium semper-virens. By the by, I had a visit on that day from a detective-sergeant about a poor fellow who had died strangely. My slight experience of detective-sergeants is that they have a manner ; but no plural. If you use a word of more than two syllables to them they think you are laughing at them. They are, to that extent, acute. Still it was awkward with Trinder about. It pleased me, however, I must confess, to think that I was in a position, though the opportunity was unlikely, to entertain divine Xenocrate with an account of it all.

I had sufficient knowledge to realise that I had succeeded. I ordered Charles to spare no expense in confecting that Sundae known as Lover's Delight for my companion. I believed in letting a man have a bit in. A couple of hours later the parson in the pulpit had, with his collaborator, done the trick. I looked down on what I had accomplished. Death closes all : but something ere the end, some work of noble note, may yet be done. That figurehead beard would plough the pseudo-scientific seas no more, at least. There had been other murders, of course, to-day, and with greater consequence. Francis Ferinand's, for instance. But never one that had left a man more dead. I gave the huddle farewell, and forbade Henry, my peerless investigator, to pursue the matter further. I climbed down from the short flight of folding steps upon which I had secured my inevitable heliographic record of success. No more by thee my steps shall be for ever and for ever.

I had always been proud of my namesake, the Great Lexicographer, as we, not unnaturally, called him in the family. But I wondered if part of my life would not rather horribly reverse his. After all he had been *born* at Colney Hatch. But no, for the goal of my pilgrimage might easily make it Broadmoor ; I rather hated that : portmanteau of Dartmoor and Broad arrows, with a little insanity thrown in. No, locked in, locked in! William the Schoolman---how like an old war song!---was of that place, and, in spite of Rysbrach's statues of the first Lord King, it was charming. Le couchant dardait ses rayons suprêmes et le vent berçait les nénuphars blêmes ; les grands nénuphars entre les roseaux tristement luisaient sur les calmes eaux. Doctor Invincibilis, dear old Bill, he was no mean psychologist ; he had a razor. There I saw a hen and two sheep. It was a pity about Dickens' insane jealousy of chickens, and one could really almost weep at his morbid mistrust of sheep.

What should such a man need with such a companion, I asked myself. And then I thought of Jim's uncle, Darius Brockley, and of the flimsy excuse the Vicar's niece had given when she returned. Yes, I began to understand. And I was not sorry to dissociate the last of the gold from the silver, and wait upon events. I stretched out my hand and touched a dime shape on the chair beside me ; a sleek cat that horribly exulted at the touch of my fingers. We were told that the human heart was deceitful and desperately wicked ; what then should be said of the human mind? Why, I meant, should I have remembered the tale of the Major-General in Trafalgar Square on Guy Fawkes night, and how the dead man had told it me, just an hour before...they came to take him away? And then how about myself? Admittedly I was a warrior, but even I, surely, could be a warrior without being a bounder.

I cannot help, even with this supreme distraction, thinking of my Babbie's---dare I say my Babbie's---hair as I last saw it, tiger-coloured, and all like the little springs of a fairy's sofa. O toison, moutonnant jusque sur l'encolure! O boucles! O parfum charge de nonchaloir! Extase! If you take my meaning. She, at least, shows herself delightfully interested in Henry. I have always hated that these writers should be anonymous. What a tribe of them there has been, to be sure! But I have called them all by their names. Is it a foolish ecstasy to thrill when I see her long warm fingers taking off Henry's cap and putting it on again, and trying him out on the table? My dear guest accepts a Rainbow. I clamour for it, and it comes. She explains, and her throat dimples, that she will take it because Lent is over. She never, she adds, will have a second Sundae in Lent. I must be besotted, for I think this amusing.

Needless to say I didn't know that that was the last day. Afterwards I found it terrible to look back, and realise that I hadn't made the most of it, or rather of all the little things that went to compose it, and the thousands that had gone before. I heard him read two things about a man and say that he had put in his appearance to-day. The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, one was, in his gullet should have a hook. And the other called him a demure hypocrite or a blockhead. He must first torture his postman, the bait, and make him carry the letters of Bellerophon. But that was too big for me. My people had always owned allegiance to the McLeod of that ilk, among others. But until he told me about it to-day, I never knew that the Great Lexicographer had tasted Lotus with him. There was that in me which needed the exercise of fealty. To give all---as I had given all to him---was very bone of my bone.



I started to read Hardy's exquisite production, and every muscle of my brain was enthralled until I came to the end. Just such another must have been the Monk Arnulphus when he uncorked his ink. His palette gleamed with a burnished green as bright as a dragon-fly's skin : his gold-leaf shone like the robe of a queen. There could be no slightest doubt. I would now be able to reap the harvest. And Ruth would have little gleaning. I thought of her mother and laughed aloud. All women biome like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his. I could not help echoing Jack's question : is that clever? The Monk Arnulphus, with a dash of Jim the Penman. How, I wondered, did I strike him? I knew I should like to. His was obviously a slow methodical brain, used to pigeon-holing by type. In that case, I thought I knew the type : learned in a macabre way, even distinguished.

It was neither the sheerest hell nor uttermost heaven thus to affront the dead ; it was rather, surely, joy's crown of sorrow, or sorrow's crown of joy. Could it be thought morbid of me, I wondered, to sentimentalise a little as I sat and faced the old school colours frozen there before me? Green and white and rose, grit, wisdom and reliability, the find old Head, as we called him, had quipped it. And now it was such an ephemeral combination. "I don't call that very terrible," she was saying, and I wished I could see whether she were smiling or not as she said it. Such remarks were irritant as well as stimulant. What didn't she call terrible? What indeed, with her Renaissance pose, did she, would she, call terrible? But I might lose all if I speculated. I attacked the viridescence in front of me, and fed my brain on cleaner things. I remembered the place of my initiation into so much that was glowing and splendid ; I remembered the clanging fives courts, and the solemn old Hall, hung round with

the darker works of Beardsley and Felicien Rops, and ringing with the gloat curses of the Head, as we called him, lubriciously gasping in the grip of ether. I took the first blink of the light at the place of the Whympers. Mrs. Allingham painted the fishshop, I remembered, and the author of the Land of Mist played cricket for it till he went up the hill. I too had been struck from the float for ever held in solution, I too had received identity by my body, that I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I should be of my body. That was a pretty important day, for old Chris left Palos on it ; and you all know by this time the result of that. But upon my soul I wasn't sure how to celebrate, though celebration was one of my specialties. Ought I to allow myself another ration of my herb of grace, and sheerly rejoice, or should I merely weep? Helen and crooning? Poe and Prohibition? Canvas-backed clams and the prejudicial Menkin? The balance was too hard to strike. In the end I carried on as usual.

Out cascaded the darling young. It was no tragedy ; that was, no tragedy comparable with the fire here in the Latham Chapel in 1906. Yet, I supposed, to wantonly look back like that buttered no parsnips. Just like reverting to old tunes after they were damned and dead : how often had I not caught myself whistling Alexander's Ragtime Wedding Feast in my frugal bath. I felt that Henry was about all I could hope to cope with, or with whom, if you like, I could hope to cope. I was the more fed up, therefore, with the incursion of an untidy fellow, a myopic-looking creature, who clumsily stepped on my foot and touched a chord of memory at the same time. Surely this has eavesdropped at my last crucial meeting with the old man. It mattered little enough, of course. But that sort of thing was like a mosquito about the ears, making Kreisler on his little fiddle. It distracted.

I came out of my waking dream with temples moist and tongue most damnably dry. I had to believe myself, for I had never previously deceived myself. Yes, I came to myself, if you must know, when yon same star, that's westward from the pole, had made his course to illumine that part of heaven where now it burns. A time, I thought, not only utterly depressing in itself, but also, when one is alone, as Dutch as dillwater. What, I asked myself, ought I to do? The answer was plain enough. When I was ten I had messily collected eggs. When I was twelve I had collected bus tickets and, if I had known where to look for them, would doubtless have collected whole ickets also. The answer was plain enough. I must---oh, final and most difficult hobby!---collect myself. It was ghastly. I had seen every minute of it. I had seen a poor old man done slowly to death before my eyes.

It flashed through my mind that the place between Eros and the Queen's Hall had horribly changed since Orpen painted it in 1912, also that even if I took the warnings of the Ming and got there instantaneously, my modest Munich would have to bracket, at my expense, with islands more correctly known as Efate. BNut after all I was not going. Rather I intended to finish what I had begun. The girl would find it in the morning, franked, and all ready to go upon its way. I had told all I knew, and felt very tired. Would he ignore what I had said, leaving me to do my worst? And if so, what worst could I do? Or would he come to me and cringe for silence, relying on our old association, when he had babbled at me knee, the arthritic one, that surely the cabbage butterflies were fragments of a poem God had written and, as being too good for us, torn up? Or would he simply try to do me in?

But next day that religious fellow's head drapery, if I might thus unscientifically express myself, showed signs, it seemed to me, after that initial success, of failing. I would give it till midnight. Do not misunderstand me. Why should I not play the Spartan mother with emotion, be the Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind? I thought of May. Over them came old odour of red May. Lovely, indeed, but not appropriate. I felt that I was letting May down. As for the other, I had, of course, no intention of letting up. Henry, before our tea of anchovy toast and various hot dishes (I was never a stinter) riotously displayed himself all over me. He hit me once full in the eye, and I remembered, I could not help remembering, Elsie's difficulty when the young coastguard had tried to prove to her his direct descent from Herebald the Drake. "I will," she quoted, "express my duty in his eye."

Of course I was sorry to say good-bye to old Medehamstede ; but it was pleasant to sit down and to really find myself alone at last. Those emotional times were trying to us all. I felt that my lips were paler than I liked ; but a touch of Pasquier's claret soon put me right. Dear old Pasquier, I had come across him in Paris, at that little place in the Rue de la Harpe, a street in which, I have been told, there was a touch of orderly room even in the disorderly houses. I opened a magazine and looked hastily through the last paragraphs of the short stories. I was all for love ; but fading out on an embrace never appealed to me. The embrace in my short stories---and my life was all short stories, I had come to think---occurred in the first few words. And afterwards the plot. The complete novel length looked better. It was called *Savage Conqueror*, and I liked that.

All the artist in me flared up. After all, my given name was world-famous as the inherited one of a bold, subtle and delightful painter. I was, perhaps, unreasonably proud of that ; took a sort of proprietary interest in "The Mumpers." Why not? It would have been absurd to concern myself with Hamlet's one, a thing of dreams only, or to have let my spirit flutter around Runymede. But that was far away, and instead was a quiet country town, gabled and venerable, unmodernised and unambitious, with a river, a Tudor ruin, a park of deer, heather commons and, on the E. V. Lucas a non Lucendo principle, immense woods. O the orator's joys! O trieste, trieste etait mon ame, to inflate the chest, to roll the thunder of the voice out from the ribs and throat a cause, a cause d'une femme. I rather relished my sandwich. But food and drink were so bad for the stuff. I remembered the place of my initiation behind the old Port at Marseille, the furtive plush, the little airless secret rooms hung round with

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NOTES

photographs of young and laughing athletes, lads who had profited and gone on, and ringing with those words of the Head, as we called him, that one by one the touch of life has turned to truth. But again I was distracted. "Will anyone know about them?" that husky miracle of a voice was asking, and I thought, not for the first time, that it would have caresses for all, a golden impartiality. To love her would be a liberal, no, a communist education. The red rose and the white only remained, and these were melting and blurring before my eyes ; my wretched eyes that could not tell me the truth, for instance, about that Goya reproduction. A hanging man? A countess? "There is no danger of that," the old man said, "I bought them secretly in Leningrad from a little humpbacked fellow, a double-faced Quasimodo of the Ogpu." This was difficult enough to reconcile with his Manchester speech on sane mediocrity. "From the secret police?" The words rang like tense half-crowns dropped upon marble. "Goodness gracious!" "But it so seldom is," came the wise old reply.

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I saw to it that I should be for a moment alone among the marigolds. Thinking kindly of those two other flowers, which I felt almost certain now would win me the girl I felt I could love, I exulted. Dear old Gerard, he said it was called *Calendula* as it is to be seen to flower in the calends of almost everie month. I turned the strong searchlights of my eyes upon the orange tinted documents. But I could not read them. My eyes, or something, were not good enough. And yet I was not among those who attempt, *ek parergou*, to confound *ephphatha* with *epea pteroenta*. You would have noticed my oriental preference when I smoke, and would not have been surprised that my Indian tobacco, after a scant four-and-twenty hours, was doing excellent work. It seemed almost certain that the blight would be destroyed : the blight on the May, or on the delight that is as wide-eyed as a marigold.

Looking over at the sly sideways smile which seemed to fill all the foreground opposite me, I could not help recalling old Lord Pentarry and his minion. "Tools must be tooled in the *de Quincey* sense," he had said, as he stood wiping the billhook on his smalls, over the welter that had once been so incomparable a lieutenant. I felt I could not do less. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green : I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruits. The scottish nobleman had also spoken of a green stick fracture. Green was the name of the victim. Those little golden escapes, those logical thoughts, came on me like stars upon some gloomy grove, as Henry said. And then arrived the blinding realisation that if I did not do the thing myself---and I am not that type---I would be merely robbing a whirlwind to reap a scorpion. I would have to think it over.

Compact, they call it ; but when I used it, I was feeling anything but so. Don't think me squeamish ; it was my first. The last little contact with the bony ankles, so warm and so soon, if Nature's great force were to do its work, to be so cold, had touched me, I confess it. Though I was alone again, it took me a few minutes to visualise Henry's predicament with the detached calm which it deserved. That old aunt of his third wife had turned up again. Strangely enough a jellyfish had plugged the solution of her motor boat's continuity. And there she was back again, alert, suspicious, very much alive. I couldn't help being sorry for Henry. And I couldn't help being sorry for Perceval. Murders were funny things. That day's killing of Perceval, and in so public a place, seemed to me unwarrantable. But I had never been strong on politics. For the other, my own, though it was understandable, there was perhaps no utter warrant.

Then there disappeared the last rose flivers of the Prussian beast. He had died to stay this mimic artistry, and had not had an inkling of it. The lips were wiped clean. He handed me the new instrument, and stood half in furtive assurance and half, I thought, in fear. I felt I could afford to be suave. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. But this memorial of, as I thought, a soon to be dead woman's silly wishes, now cleverly guided a little, by a stranger if falser hand, was even more so. We that did nothing study but the way to love each other, with which thoughts the day rose with delight to us and with them set, must, as Henry said, learn the hateful art, how to forget. Yes, I would have to learn that.

It was that day my friend Sandy told me he was sure he wouldn't sleep all night. There was, of course, a difference between us. I couldn't get all worked up like that. You see, next day he would be allowed to fetch back Lagopus Scoticus, whom I knew well, and he hadn't been allowed to do that for such a long time. I was fond of Sandy and rejoiced with him. But I felt, I couldn't help feeling, that there was something wrong, something disjoined about my very front. I made love to Flora again in the back parts ; the result was satisfactory enough. I was feeling quite at my best, but I took Bob Martin in completely. After all he liked me to, and he was always right. But I had come to the conclusion that I loathed her ; she kept colouring up. I understood why he had once said to me about something being as flush as May. Also she wore her hair in a cluster of little sly curls, a thing which in our family emphatically was not done.

Hospitality, when I came to consider it, was indeed a funny thing. I wanted to do my best for this hopeful newcomer. My cellar, my library, my curious collection of bottled worms ; all should be at his disposition. He was pathetically eager. And at the same time, of course, I wanted to do my best for May. I shoed him nearly everything, and he commended all he saw. "You do infinite honour to my little home, Sir Paul," I said. An old fellow who would be young again! He had only come before lunch ; but there was not time like the present. If it be not now, I somewhat foolishly said to Henry, who gave a slack ear to me, yet it will be. I am not incautious. Determining first to exhibit aconitum, I asked him to take a preliminary glass of sherry. Fleming's tincture might, and indeed has been, mistaken for this. He drank my health. He tasted love with half his mind, nor ever drank the inviolate spring where nighest heaven.



The victim, for that I must now reluctantly call him, blocked all the sweet air from the window. He put out his hand and asked if death were so unlike sleep caught this way. Sed he. Death's to fear from flame or steel, I sickeningly gathered, or poison doubtless ; but from water---feel. Go find the bottom! He was asking for it. Was he to be disappointed? Oh, yeah. A babbled o' green fields (sorry, even in retrospect the habit is catching) which he could not have seen at all well. I pulled up his socks for him, and heaved outward with all my strength. The window was no more dark. The fool, with any luck, was dead. What had he said as he finally left me? It sounded like Quails and Arty and Fakes. Fakes, Quails and Arty. Band, Speckled. No, I could make nothing of that. But, thank goodness, I was no detective.

I forgot why I was sitting and staring at the table. I felt battered. What could the batter be? Ah, I remembered. I had looked upon carnal, bloody and unnatural acts. And then, gazing at the steaming Lapsang before me, I became lost in reverie. Bartholomew pawed my ankles even, but I am not superstitious, to ladder danger, desiring sweet biscuits. They were so bad for him. He was the third dog I had had in London. I was afraid, I realised, that I did not notice him enough. It was the first dog I noticed, and at the very beginning. You might have thought it strange for me to say these things, but you never knew Henry. Whether as a human mistake or one o' the brand o' Cain, as the Poet Laureate says---and he served in both capacities---he knew his job. I felt as if great asses of mice were pressing down on my head, with all the cold weight of my certainty.

A flower-seller, fed ruddily, it seemed, on hope, broke in and would have made a round of all of us. But she hurried away perforce without gaining her point, leaving me with an inexpensive memory of countryside flowers. Our own and other countries : ironic daffodils, irises of the stream, young pert bluebells, the foreign hedge-rose and carnation. No gaudy melon flower, indeed. Oh, to be in England ; how unquotable he had become. For I was, was I not? I must learn Spanish one of these days, only for that slow sweet name's sake. I paused to pass my tongue over the dew distilled by the red rose, the sole survivor, and made a sign which brought Henry cat-like to me over the floor. Here the old man dropped some metallic object and his companion retrieved it with daughterly swiftness. The hoarse newsboys with their shouting of the late night final, as of accomplished mal de mer, disturbed me a little. Would there be any news? She enquired faintly what he meant by that stuff about good news from Ghent.

I wish she would tell me more. I wish she would give me some hint as to why the deceased wished us to know each other. Sitting here, stung by those wild gold waspish eyes, I wonder terribly. I wonder dreadfully. I do think it is a pity. Auroral imbibitious have set Alistair on young uncertain feet once more, and he's handsomely taken the Dagenham bus en route for the converted oast-house where his mother lives. I hope it won't backslide. Barbara passes from right to left, dear child. Her one-piece is yellow jasmine, and she spurns the concrete and especially the abstract with those bronze legs of hers. The tawny curls of her are springes to catch woodcocks, and more than woodcocks. She waves a towel capriciously, take it or leave it, at me. What would I do now, if the other leaned across and said what the blind sailor said? But wiseacres contend that it was Kismet. Off went his arm to-day. Yes, what would I feel like? She is delightful.

I was true to time. I had, it occurred to me, been something of an automaton. But wasn't I thrusting my head, when bent on such a business in this street, into the twin mouths of two lions, of Mycroft's brother and of the pale but multitudinous Blake? Often as a schoolboy they had guyed my name to a whiskified objectionable one. Whiskified objectionable was Kipling. And I blubbed with my face in the mackintoshes. But I thanked heaven that their childish jibe was true. I was still going strong. The murderer that is to be hung next day, how does he sleep? I only knew that all the weary business was ended. I looked across the table and saw that she was asleep. A nice old thing. I put Henry's keenness a few inches below the withered salt-cellar. I drove Henry home, and left him. A dog barked and mourned from the next room, but I could have all the stuff I wanted for ever.

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Next day I let Caroline Jasmine---what a name!---do her very damndest for my guest. But I was doubtful of her influence all the while. What a man! Henry, I supposed, was about his business and concern, such as it was. What is removed drops horribly in a pail. Why should that stick in my head? Just because a tool I have used, and shall use again, turned, as it were, under my hand last week and said it? And what more had he said? Has anyone supposed it lucky to be born? I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it. That should be, I thought, a consolation for my patient. Surely such a confirmed old tub-thumper would not have had the wit to think out the Mithradates inoculation for himself, and put it into practice? Perish the thought, and the fellow. Also my ravishing correspondent would have told me. I found myself thinking with a strange weakness of the poet's lines :

*But we have all bent low and low and kissed the  
quiet feet*

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NOTES

*Of the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.*

My guest has, I think, a Byzantine beauty, as of a golden snake. Is she, or is she not, a little pale about the Gills? Sanders comes into view again, seemingly improved by his lunar visit. He props himself and gazes out to the northwest over the water of the little bay, drinking it all in. I follow his gaze and see, as Henry saw when he was at home in Woodstock, twisted trees in front of the thick-windowed little house, and a foreground of exquisitely coloured vegetation with somewhat the consistency of fur stoles : a breast of the hills under a long cloud. I have given her nothing at all. She has let me see the original of the dead man's letter. It is funny, it is rather fearful, to feel a wet skeleton hand putting hers into mine. Why, I wonder? Not that it can really be skeleton yet ; it must be---worse : a loathsome mass of detestable putrescence.

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I always liked to listen to him. It was St. Wigbert's day, I was told, and Augustus, I remembered, was a chubby lad. I was getting quite clever in that way. He said his stepson had been misunderstood for a long time, and had gone out to-day. He said his third son had been crude. I did not entirely understand ; but I had a lot of good Tate. She said to him. He said to her. The consequence was rather dreadful, but out of doors. I had got a little sick, too, of the way they went on ; like that Tom and Flora's Jasmine. Perhaps that was really it. They were having their first quarrel, about the new distemper. She was all for Dark French Grey and he for Egg Shell Green. Yet I knew they'd get over that. I had. But each, too, began to say things about how few the other had done so late in the year. I don't know why, but I felt that mice were dancing on my little slab.

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The ancient had then sat down among the heather to a great dish of brown and swimming collops. Personally, as far as my stomach went, I could not love the deer so much, loved I not on a moor, with concomitant Spey Royal to drown the taste. Nor was that likely to happen in this case. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable. Circumstances, I thought, as I looked over at the man, alter cases. I would give the rogue a chance. "Have you a good memory?" I asked. "Intermittent but long," he answered. That signed his death warrant. Well, signatures were his business. The gold was being cleared out of the light ; the remaining silver was, how shall I say?, unsatisfactory. I also had flaunted the panache---it lay at that moment beneath my lips---to the public without ever having been satisfied with it.

While my mind had been thus far away, a grotesque looking old gentleman had fluttered like a bat to the seat between us, and now deposited, with the bitter sang-froid of the unworldly, a dilapidated deer-stalker of pinkish tweed upon the glacial parquet. I thought I knew the type : learned in a macabre way, even distinguished ; one who was rich enough to remain unspotted by convention, and who yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force, gold of course, for the undoing of a materialistic world. Gathering a fungus in the other golden ruin before me, I considered within myself what such an obvious hermit could be doing among the brilliant lights of this notoriously soigné place. A dog was patently sorrowing in the distance. The two had their heads close together. The poor brute's howling bothered me, and I was glad when it ceased. You will, Oscar, you will. Whistler's jibe I had always taken personally. Was all my endeavour to be in the future? Would I never do anything in the present? It all seemed so fatuous.

In my youth I had been worried that I bore the same name as Newbolt's admiral and Shakespeare's sergeant, and it had irked me when, in my student days, I had been known as the Smiler with the Knife. Afterwards I found it better in practice to capitalise my third letter. The Blue Rocket was still going down next day ; in fact, I knew too much to let it go up. It even seemed to be succeeding. The snowy-banded, dilettante, delicate-handed? At least I was the last. I would not say at last I was the least. I tried to interest him in my little Black Museum, and indeed elicited a frisson with the preserved eyeball of the well-known and respected Cadaver Charlie. The eye in which, just before its fellow was shot out by the Chicago sleuth, he had asked that suave detective if he, the detective, could see any green. It looked, though, as if Henry had been playing about with this exhibit. I would have to take steps.

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My earlier days had been so different. There hadn't been the comfort, the sense of indulgence, or of adventure, that there was now. I bit into the last of the oysters and someone carried away the shells. It had been, as I say, so different. Cascading down the bombazine of my great aunt's knee, what futility! When all her desire had been to give me a lap. What frustration of her, and incidentally of myself, when to be nursed by her and to submit to her stories had meant access to that secret caddis-hoard of Devona or of minty humbugs. I wondered what Henry would think of next. I had plenty of time, my watch said. My eyes had groped foolishly at the barren moon of the near-by clock, and then fallen away. My watch must be my mentor. I felt perhaps sillily ready for some sort of cardiac revelation, or revaluation at least.

*Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved!*

*God's child with his dew*

*On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still  
living and blue*

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NOTES

*And pipes for closets all over, and cutting the frames  
too light,  
But McCullough he died in the sixties, and---well,  
I'm dying to-night. . . .*

Had not the author of Wails of a Tayside Inn said of them that they were the living poems and that all the rest were dead? Had not the winger of Wimpole Street said that they were binding up their hearts away from breaking with a cerement of the grave? Anyway their hour had come and was now over ; just but emphatically over, and I could not be sorry. I knew, after arguing it out from one side of my aching head to another---those little Bunny and Perry, Pro and Con, had been at it hammer and tongs on the centre court between the two lobes of my brain---that if I had no tangible proof against the erstwhile cleanser of my old headgear, I had merely a thistledown of semi-conviction against the other. That his thought process, when I tapped its wire, had been calling her a Cambridge week, helped me, surely, not at all.

Naturally I looked up. And I tell you I found it awe-inspiring enough to actually see my own name through the window, printed there in great letters for the gaze of all and sundry. With a blush I concentrated again on Henry, and asked myself if his recent activities did or did not constitute the darbs. With a final flirt at the fringe, the other tapped and scattered the saintly ashes. Agriculture was to take back her own, it seemed, and I rejoiced to have my last night of the bent broad back. I couldn't think why I became suddenly aware of Yeats ; and then it came to me : we find heartedness among men that ride upon horses. It was here, of course, they commemorated Colonel Anthony every year. Good luck to him. Really I didn't like the children. A little he and she bounced in, half settling on my side like sparrows, and devirginating a bag of gum prunes as they bounced. How could I concentrate? And Henry was waiting for me.

I knew, of course, that if I got there in five minutes I would have double the time for my by no means suburban hops at the Café Royal, without insulting it and myself with John Montagu's arrangement for an uninterrupted session at the gaming table. I felt so much at one with Holy Mr. Herbert. Or Mr. Haddock did he call himself? But he was right about these hours, and if that was not holiness, what was? Meed kissing laces, surely he had convulsed us with. For the moment it didn't matter. Because I had decided what to do. Leda and Hebe, I gave my swan a drink, and then drew a sheet of notepaper towards me. I took up my pen, after having laid it down again and again, and, seeing that the ink was sufficient, plunged in. In clear terse phrase, utterly neglecting my contact with his infancy, I told him all, hour by hour, day by day, from the inception to the culmination of the horrid act.

Now I think I will try a cup of what they insolently call Golden Tips, a find young Tippy Tea. And then they say specifically No Tips. It is very disheartening. While I am waiting for it, and for the possible her, I study the only literature before me. What is a Loganberry Kiss? Is it at all like the Plover's Lunch, that hurts and is desired? It is strange to think that Catharine is even at this moment turning a Somerset in front of the altar. The whole business reminds me of the time we lay outside Jifjaffa, and the Padre said to me : "I would rather have written that poem than take castor oil in the morning." I had been reading him my Ode on the Intimations of Immorality in Early Childhood. Well, well. How vividly, whenever I adventure on stew now, I remember the stew we had that night. How it all comes back. The whole circumstances of this meeting are so mysterious. It gars me grue, if I may be permitted the expression.



To have slept and to wake right up surrounded by an atmosphere in which Bunny and Perry went at it hammer and tongs, seemed almost sacrilege. That was the day when I was going to do a thing I had never done before. I looked at Henry, and felt a little sick. I took two pills. I had too soon---perhaps I did not want to go even so quickly as my ordered slowness---exchanged a tennis venue for a rowing one. I was not in Dorset ; but I murmured to myself that Ellen Brine of Allenburn would never mmore return. The connection was obvious. What a day, I thought, for the despatch of Paris and Leonidas. Cambridge or Thermopylae? But Paris? I had never at school looked upon him as in any sort a healer. I had, infact, never heard of John Ayrton then. *Oeuvre ton ame et ton oreille au son de ma mandoline : pour toi j'ai fait, pour toi, cette chanson cruelle et caline.* But I wasn't thinking of John Ayrton.

He stood and looked down at me ; but I was not to be hurried. The money changed hands slowly ; for I wished to be able to describe him. He seems to have had a great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. But there were doctors and doctors, I would have to think seriously of that. And then he went. He went. Simple faith or Norman bluff? But that Douglas was, perhaps, less tender and more true. My heart dilated as soon as the sedulous ape had got out from me. Gone, in a relative sense alas! not positively, finally gone. That was a consummation devoutly to be wished, but yet to be compassed. Whom should I trust with that? I thought of May. May be. May be not. Sunset was already reddish-purple above the Quarry hills, like a bruise on the breast of the evening.

And she wore a mauve love-knot on her breast, and the ends were unequal. He said he'd put that right, but he couldn't find the silly old jossers, as Jasmine might so easily have called them. I was old enough to remember her ; she wasn't the one I'd killed. He had read out about some most excellent potent brilliant eyes, swift-darting as the stars, steadfast as the sun ; grey, we said, of the azure-grey colour ; large enough, not of glaring size ; the habitual expression of them vigilance and penetrating sense, rapidity resting on depth. When she asked him why he had chosen those and whose they were, he answered : Father Fred's, and because it was closing day in Potsdam. I had had a dry shampoo that morning, a thing I adored, especially on the old chest. Rather a waste of time, though, as it turned out. Of course I ought to have been more careful of such a trifle. Suddenly I felt that I had put my foot in it. Still I had three more left.

I dimly guess why the old dead so wanted this. I had worked for him, Henry had worked for him. If I could get up, as, believe me, I cannot, I would have a thing to say to her. She lolls over at me gloating, her mouth blood-tinted on the puma freckle of her beauty. Why should I think of Henry at this particular juncture? I have it. Scotland Yard, of course. And little 'twill matter to one. A sorry thing to be last noticed : the buttonhole has escaped from the buttonholer. He, the reckless old cock, slips down past Woolworth's and she continues full-sail toward the Kursal, as flush---oh, you wicked woman---as May. The girl is smiling at me. That's not so good. Here I shake off the bur o' the world, man's congregation shun. O beastly woman. You know not how ill's all here, about my heart ; but I know. Henry, I feel it, is for the first and last time getting out of hand. Good-bye, Henry. He drops awa. . . .

## A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

*The Torquemada Puzzle Book* was published by Gollancz in 1934 and written by Edward Powys Mathers (1892-1939).

The author's *nom de plume* was Torquemada, a name linked to the Spanish Inquisition, for Edward Powys Mathers (known to his friends as Bill) believed that puzzles should be mind-bendingly difficult but equally rewarding when the solution was found. He introduced the cryptic crossword to England in 1924 through the pages of the *Observer* newspaper.

The British love a puzzle and grow very attached to crossword compilers, always looking forward to the next week's puzzle, and Torquemada had many loyal supporters. John Dickson Carr (author of *The Hollow Man*, voted the finest locked-room' murder mystery of all time) was a friend. He believed that "there has never lived a man with such a wide knowledge of sensational fiction. Torquemada of the *Observer* read everything that was being written and was already familiar with everything that had been written. And he never forgot any of it.'

Powys Mathers was acknowledged as a brilliant translator and was responsible for an edition of *The Thousand Nights and One Night*, more commonly known as *The Arabian Nights*. The beautiful poem 'Black Marigolds' (a favourite of the UK's former Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy) was another of his contributions. He was also a critic specialising in reviewing crime fiction.

In 1934 he published a selection of his puzzles under the title *The Torquemada Puzzle Book*. As well as some gloriously difficult crosswords, the book contained spooner-istics, verbal games, telacrostics, triple cricket acrostics and anagrams - enough to keep a family occupied for weeks.

The final 100 pages of the book contain the novel-cum-puzzle *Cain's Jawbone*.

# CAIN'S JAWBONE

‘A unique hybrid of word puzzle  
and whodunnit’ *Literary Review*

Six murders. One hundred pages. Millions of possible  
combinations... but only one is correct.  
Can you solve Torquemada's murder mystery?

In 1934, the Observer's cryptic crossword compiler,  
Edward Powys Mathers (aka Torquemada), released a novel that was  
simultaneously a murder mystery and the most fiendishly difficult literary  
puzzle ever written.

The pages have been printed in an entirely haphazard order,  
but it is possible - through logic and intelligent reading -  
to sort them into the only correct order, revealing six  
murder victims and their respective murderers.

Only three puzzlers have ever solved the mystery of *Cain's Jawbone*:  
do you have what it takes to join their ranks?

*Please note: this puzzle is extremely difficult and not for the faint-hearted.*



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Cover illustration by Tom Gauld