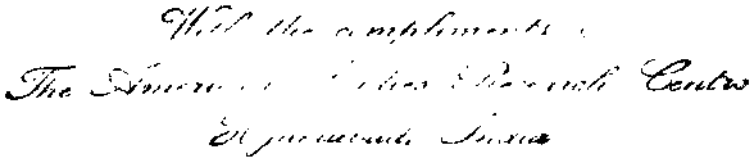
THE GUESTS OF SUMMER



By HILDE ABEL

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The *Quests of Summer*

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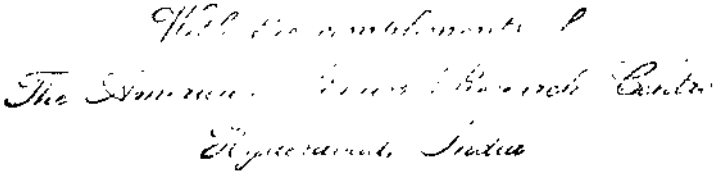
HILDE ABEL



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To my mother

DOROTHY ABEL

THE GUESTS OF SUMMER

Chapter One

THERE was no day some part of which it did not rain. The guests might be sitting after supper in the pergola behind the boardinghouse, and all at once, without a cloud crossing the evening sun, without the sky losing its evening color, the great drops would come pelting in at them.

They might choose to flee, over grass that was already drowning, along a path paved with seashells that once again glistened with wet. Their feet, their backs, their shoulders and their arms would be drenched, and they would have only one wish, to find themselves in their rooms, changing to dry clothes. But when they had flung open the back door of the house and were hurrying across the kitchen floor, they might pause to apologize to Miss Schmidt and her hired girls for the muddy footprints and, pausing, catch a glimpse of the kitchen windows. Down the windows water poured, and one or another, looking out, might for an instant feel trapped, as in a ship whose portholes are washed by the drowning seas.

Or they might choose instead to remain in the little summer pavilion, to leap up when the first drops struck and huddle together in the center, away from the open walls. And all the frivolity of summer which they rather despised, their knitting or fancy needlework or books for easy skimming,

became practical, warming bosoms or shoulders or even men's throats exposed by open collars. Julie, forced once to huddle with them—her mother grasped the girl so tightly to keep her from escaping into the weather that hours later her wrist was still red—Julie glimpsed that woman (who was not really much younger than her own mother) moving unhurried through the rain, her face uplifted to it. With her a young man went; their wet arms were linked, and now and then the wet mouths kissed.

Actually the guests had no choice. The fear they experienced in the summer house was less than the fear of flight across unsheltered lawn, and the result to flesh long rheumatic and ill-used. No, there was nothing to do but wait it out. Waiting, they might again imagine themselves trapped on a ship at sea. The pergola seemed actually to founder, the floor to heave like a deck, carrying them back in recollection to the first ship and the embarkation from the home place. Julie's mother might murmur, "I am *dizzy I* Everything is going round!" And another, staring ahead into the grayness, might respond, "Yes, I feel it in my very stomach, like on a ship that is unsafe." And still another, looking farther into the desolate mist, toward the origin, the continent which, at this hour in the new country, lay in night and sleep, "One could almost imagine how far behind the land is, how far ..."

Julie, caught with them in what they seemed nearly to regard as a shipwreck, could comprehend neither the literal nor the larger allusion of their words, to which she simply stopped listening. Even the charm, the orchestral effect of their voices, was lost to her, so accustomed was she to their individual uses of the language which she alone could call native. For each voice, accent, cadence among the guests was an expression, not of the region in which the speaker now lived, but rather

of the years, the time of life at which he had shipped on that first voyage. Julie's uncle, Dr. Jennison, might observe at last, "Europe itself is like a ship that is rotted through—and the insane captain, Hitler, will drive it onto the rocks!" His voice, through using his adopted language, nevertheless brought to the orchestra the enlightened and cultivated strains of a student of a Russian university just before the turn of the century, when from that university he had boldly set sail for the new world—a voyage of constant illness.

"Ship! Shmip!" little Mrs. Fiddleman would lilt in the hoyden accents that, a young girl, she had brought as almost sole baggage out of the ghetto of Warsaw. "I should only get back dry to the house!" And then another, changing the theme of the music as completely as she now changed its color—for she had been carried on shipboard in her mother's arms—would remark with purest tones, "How strange it is that no cure has been discovered for the common cold!"

But? were they caught on the lawn in front of the house where there was no refuge, no pavilion, flight was the only recourse.

The rocking chairs would be set out in a circle as though a gesture of family—the form without end or beginning—were evoked from their sense of loss. For when, a young generation, they had boarded the rotting overcrowded ships, they had accomplished the end of family in the old continent: the beginnings were lost in myth. Now on this new soil only the beginnings were known; the end—and this summer of all summers—remained obscure.

The chairs might rock gently, the occupants now and again lifting their eyes to search the sky of summer. "I tell you," one might sigh at last, "I tell you if these daily wettings keep up, "one could as well go home."

At this Julie's mother would challenge, "And ruin Miss Schmidt's summer? ... How is any of it her fault?"

"I should think," someone replied once, "that Miss Schmidt's summer might well be ruined in any case."

"Now what nonsense is that?" Julie's mother demanded rudely. "What are you talking about?"

These rude demands were put less to the other person than to herself, as though she questioned her own uneasiness. And the antagonist, whose nerves too were worn as this summer unfolded, would answer with a question as shrill. "How do you think Miss Schmidt must feel to read in the newspapers of what is going on in her country these days? Especially when she is so proud and so many of her friends are of our kind?"

Then in one instant the sky would darken, the clouds would spread, and as the guests ran toward the front door the hired girl^ would already be bursting from it to overturn the rockers, to snatch up the cushions before they should be drenched. The girls were paid and therefore must submit to every trick played by a malicious nature, whereas those who paid could seek out safety. After such a happening the guests could not enjoy their lunch, and during the afternoon nap uneasy dreams would stalk, not exorcised by bicarbonate or purgatives....

It was into this restlessness that Julie had come when the summer was half over. She had come, unwillingly, to join her mother and her uncle, not wanting to go away from the city home where one old servant had looked after her with a careless affection and left her quite alone. Once when Julie had returned from a solitary walk—it had been on her first day in the country—rain had begun to fall as she turned into the private driveway. Where gardeners once had pruned, a

shaggy magnificence now spread; Julie heard the sound of rain, but no rain fell through the roof of green, and as she strolled she sang to herself, tuneless as a child.

The driveway swept into open lawn. She saw the empty rockers—one still swayed—and death, her father's, was still too present in her mind for her to come upon this emptiness unmoved. When she had left, the chairs had had occupants, laughing and chattering in the last evening sun; now nothing was left, no one.

Then she saw that her mother was left. On her arm she supported Julie's uncle, who shuffled, slow, tired; their backs were turned to the girl as they moved away. Her tuneless song stopped, as though she saw the two advance, not toward the shelter of the house, but toward a shadowy region where she could not follow. Then slowly, as she watched the aging man who had the place beside her mother that should have been her father's, anger replaced the earlier sadness, and she stepped back into the grove of pines, not wanting them to find her, should they turn for one last look around. But the shadow of the pines was chill; green that never died in winter seemed to have no life in summer. She shivered, and at the same moment her mother stopped, giving the old man over to the dangerous weather. Her mother turned her head, searching.

The girl watched the two figures, and the sense that they were not aware of her presence lent them an unreal quality, as though, like dreams, they had been conjured up by herself. Her uncle's voice sounded hollow and remote. "What is the matter with you, Mollie? I will catch my death. . . ."

And her mother, already returning to him from the lawn, the grove and the fierce sky: "Julie out there alone somewhere. As though to her nothing could happen ..."

Julie heard the words rise, dreamlike. Then from somewhere came the harsh scream of a crow, and she could no longer remember what her mother's words had been. The voice seemed to blend with the bird's in protest or entreaty.

The two figures moved side by side up the steps, and in the dusk their outlines began to fade. The girl saw them drift away, as her father did when she called after him in dreams. The door of the house closed.

Instantly when she was alone, neither watching nor being watched, her mood lifted. She stepped out from the pines, from the chill perpetual green, and now she felt only impatience with the old who fled the summer and its misty fragrance. She threw back her head, she opened her mouth, greedy to swallow the world, and a few drops of rain fell on her tongue. They were rough, and became sweet and warm when she swallowed them. Then she glanced down at herself and saw her *own* flesh shimmer out of the thin drenched dress. She saw her own breasts rise and fall, breathing. And it seemed to her that she alone in the entire world would never die.

But as the summer had continued, the guests no longer took precaution against whatever the inhospitable days held in store. They had their walks, lingered on the lawn or in the pergola, or went, even, as far as the village to shop for post cards, conducting themselves as though this punishment of rain were always present or never present, though perhaps this was only the acceptance of despair. They had no inkling of why they were being punished—beyond the minute circumstance that they were human beings. In this summer before war, the weather took on the meaning of a persecution, relentless, blind, malignant. Storm was gathering on the farther continent; its signals reached them here.

But when they lingered in the hours that were fine—and all the hours, the days, were fine except for these brief onslaughts—their thoughts were not confined by the bright sky above them, or by the mountains that rose against that sky like a wall.

Miss Schmidt, pursuing some task or other, might pause for a moment and, introducing with her harsh Prussian voice a dissonance into the charming orchestra of voices, might declare, "I tell you, I have never known such a summer as this one. … I tell you, the whole world is *fyiput!"* Then, unerring as a bee, she would continue with her task, having deposited, unaware and by her mere brief presence, a little sting. For was it not k*aput,* upside down, that Miss Schmidt should be too busy all the day to pause more than an instant while her dozen guests idled through hour after empty hour? Only when vacation was over and duties resumed again could they be absolved from this guilt.

But that the world was ka*put* they recognized most vividly when one among that family of rocking chairs would read aloud news from the city—the mercury mounting, the pavements melting, and not one drop of water promised from the burning sky. Julie, lounging in their midst and only half attentive, could sometimes observe a troubled expression cross her mother's face. Mollie Dreyfuss felt that her friends and relatives, when they received her letters in the city, would exclaim, "What has she to complain about! Oh, if it would only rain, rain, rain on us! Cool us! Refresh us!" Mrs. Dreyfuss perceived the dilemma posed by life—and by human beings. For she realized that such could merely be the wishes of those who were free from persecution by water and longed for it only after the sun's unending idiotic pursuit. No, life was senseless—and so were human beings, for, whatever the face it turned to them, they remained unsatisfied. "Life' **her**

mother would observe, "is a fine thing for God to have thought up. But His thoughts did not carry Him far enough—to fit human beings to it."

This was a point of view with which Julie had no sympathy; it was all enthralling—rain, sun and every shade between. Yet for her uncle's viewpoint Julie had, if possible, even less sympathy. Since he was quite deaf, he might, unknowing, burst into a spirited conversation without being aware at all that he had ended it. His considerations were given to neither his relatives nor his friends, but only to those with whom he had no acquaintance whatever, the mass of underprivileged who kept in motion the machinery of the city, whether in rain, in heat or even in snow. "Do you not realize," he would ask in his cold enlightened voice, "how fortunate we are to be here in this summer while a world suffers? And, being so fortunate, we continue to bewail, bewail, complain!" He felt how faint would appear the shadow cast across his pleasure to those who never saw a leaf or a bit of green, save for what blossomed sickly in their windows, across which fire escapes stretched like the bars of a prison. He had no peace from his good fortune; he forgot that it had all been attained by his own struggle. The struggle had left its stigmata—rheumatism and a tired heart, all that he feared to submit to this capricious summer. No, the unknown comrades, too, had damaged bodies—but no good fortune.

Julie, lying on the grass, would try to enjoy whatever the moment presented, whether the quivering of sunlight on a leaf or a bird's solitary flight. But with her uncle's words she would feel imprisoned, like those tenement inmates of whom he spoke. Would he never permit one pure moment, unpunished by miseries which were not his doing, or hers?

When she looked away from him to the Adirondack landscape, she was repelled by its very vastness, which appeared at

once fierce and austere. There would rise on her actual sight the landscapes that had hung on the walls of her father's office, where he had received the sick, the suffering. When he had died, her uncle had taken over the office and had removed those glowing paintings that to the sick, no less than to herself, must have opened up a vista into the splendor of the world, and its promise. In their place her uncle had hung likenesses of men who had wanted to change the world. The eyes stared like the hollow eyes of statues into a distance where people could have been no longer visible. .. . Now on the Adirondack harshness were superimposed those pictured landscapes, remembered from her father's walls, in which rain never fell, nor did the weather change, but rather from each object emanated a golden light that bathed the atmosphere. Lying at her uncle's feet, she was scarcely aware when the clouds began to gather in this sky, the day to darken. But when he pulled at her to retreat into the house the present mountains, jagged and somber, thrust through those glowing representations of the world in which her father had found pleasure and which she could now only remember.

Yet actually, in this August landscape, two elements of time met and mingled, though in a process opposite to her imposing of memory on the present. Here the oncoming season already made itself felt; harvest mingled with the dust of summer.

For summer was ending in dust. The roads were rutted, the plowed fields dry and caked. The rain struck with such brutal force that it glanced off, and the sun, coming out again immediately afterward, burned off the moisture and baked the topsoil to an ever harder and more infertile crust. Nevertheless autumn was coming; what remained uncertain this malign uneasy year was the crop it would bring forth.

Chapter Two

THOUGH the evening storm had passed some time before, the guests were still uneasy. Or perhaps they could not quite feel at home in the common room where they met each night. Conceived in the previous century as a summery bower, the room became—in the present era of small, bright building—somber, enormous and forbidding. Only the passage of time had made this change on the original intent.

Mollie Dreyfuss shifted from one plump soft seat to another. "I am comfortable only in a hard straight-backed chair," she complained. But when she dropped onto the unyielding horsehair sofa she immediately rose again, scratching herself. Actually she was bothered less by the regal aspect of the furniture (and certainly not at all by horsehair) than by the name of the previous occupants, which was well known to her—a name of American brigandage and ruthlessness. "Well, and why shouldn't we be here now?" she asked, glancing from the walls that were the plum color of royalty to the ceiling that flung gilded roses above her head. But her glance constantly turned from all this magnificence, which was slowly fading from the walls and flaking from the ceiling, to the shadows which the vastness of the room drew. She wondered if the first inhabitants might not con-

tinue a restless life until they had rid themselves of the — the upstarts who had taken over. Then, sighing, she caught herself up: history these days gave one quite crazy notions. And she tried to answer her own doubts. "Ah, I love this country, I tell you! To think that ordinary people can live in a house that belonged to such swells!"

Julie, changing her wet clothes in the bedroom, heard the agitated little noises of the room below. Then a voice began to sing, and the flurry was lost; it was the voice, she recognized, of a singer long dead. When her father had listened to records of this singer, the markinigs.of ill health or weariness left his face, which appeared curiously young. She had resented this unfamiliarity. Now she found unpleasant to hear song continue from one-wfop.who desad. she remembered her uncle and her mother moving away from her in the dusk, the door closing on them. This voice, ,too, told of a door that closed; the door of a tomb locked the singer in death with his beloved, and at;last the woman's voice joined his in duet. "Ah, God, you girls' nowadays," Julie's mother often said to her, "what do you know of love? Any man who comes along . . ."

Julie stepped out of her clothes and moved to the open window. The wind fluttered about her nakedness; she shivered, but found it not unpleasant. No, she did not know what love was — and not in the way her mother meant, either. Then, from somewhere outside, wind brought the sound of laughter. Across the lawn two shadows ran; one was caught by the other; they embraced. Their laughter was the sound of love, and more than the song that added death like a punishment. In another moment the two had vanished; she was left disturbed, and with an odd loneliness. She slammed the win-

dow down and threw on clothes hastily. When she sat, later, combing her hair, the mirror returned a face she did not quite know. At some time when she had not realized, she had become lovely; no trace remained of unlovely childhood. The sense of loneliness left her. She was quite certain that now her happiness would begin, though the grubby years behind her, seventeen, might have been endured not quite for this unfolding moment but for what still lay a little beyond grasp. The real hand reached out to caress the lifelike flesh, radiant with a day's sun or with a new awareness of self, but the reflection—or the mirror—was cold. She took her hand away.

As she went down a little later to join her mother the voice of the singer grew louder; a Neapolitan folk song filled the room below with dead gaiety. She remained midway on the stairs, looking down, and she did not want to enter that room.

"Julie!"her mother called. "Julie! Did you get wet?" But the girl held her place as though the stairway were a present from which she would not let her mother beckon her.

The room was somehow familiar, and she did not know why. Merely she remembered a room in the house that had been sold after her father's death. The walls, the woodwork, had been dark, so dark; outside on the street it must always have been raining. Even there in the family room, among her father's things, her uncle had trailed his meaning. The monumental books her uncle had translated—he could not handle the more direct and powerful impulse to create, himself—darkened the shelves in their marbled bindings. The face he admired glowered from the mantelpiece. And still Tolstoy remained in her mind like the image of God—terrible, avenging——

"Julie!"

At this moment, interrupting her mother's summons, a

samovar was brought into the room, and a tray of cakes.

The guests, cheeping and fluttering, gathered like birds to whom a handful of corn is thrown. And the room was returned to the use for which it had been intended—pleasure. Of this Julie was not aware. She saw, merely, acted out below, a reflection of a thousand evenings at home, and she understood now, no more than she had in childhood, why tea, or the samovar, should bring them to such eager happy life. She knew only that in her parents' house, as in those of their friends, this brass form shone from the sideboard. It was the only keepsake that most of them had brought out of the home country.

Her'uncle, Dr. Jennison, lifted his head from his book. A greedy smile bloomed on his face, and he seemed a sort of rearranged centaur, his head given over to the wild and natural impulse, his body in its dark suit confined by all the stiffness of cities and .civilized custom. Mr. Tomorrow, whose silly nickname everyone took for granted, was cavorting before her uncle, who, quite deaf, did not bother to read the grinning lips. And now the others were dragging their chairs in a circle around Dr. Jennison as though his august presence were that of a father. The evening form of family was complete.

Mrs. Dreyfuss held a cup of tea on her lap, not drinking. Her eyes constantly searched the circle; she wore a black dress that made apparent the fact that she would not find the one for whom she looked___When Julie had been a child crouching by the stairhead, her own cold country of exile, she had watched the company below eating and drinking what was forbidden to her, and speaking a language she could not understand. And then it had been for her father alone that she had searched, as her mother did now.

But nothing was the same as in those days. Julie went downstairs bearing herself as though her seventeen years were a crown.

Her mother scolded, "Did you get wet? Did you—?" and Julie felt the crown dislodged and cocked over one eye.

"No," she lied. "I didn't get wet." She thought of the two embracing in the rain, and again she was aware of the tenor's voice, singing of love.

"Then why did you change your dress after dinner? For whom?"

Tomorrow's japing voice answered, "For me, Mollie. For me."

Julie lifted outraged eyes, as if to tell Tomorrow that this was not that faraway room; he could no longer bait her. But when her glance lifted, she was conscious only that he, too, realized that she was not a child any longer, and the expression on his face only reduced her to a childish dismay. "All right. All right—what if I did get wet?" she stammered.

"You little fool," her mother said, "you could catch a cold."

"But not in a summer rain! And, besides, it was so beautiful!"

"Beautiful?" Her protest had reached beyond her uncle's silence, and he raised his head. "Who speaks of beauty?"

"I," Julie said, and she smiled, remembering the image in her mirror.

On her uncle's face an answering smile pushed up the smooth round cheeks, narrowed the small eyes, and even the clipped little beard quavered amiably. His hand patted his book. "Here is all the beauty I require."

"Oh, no!" For he was reading once again *The Origin of Species.* But as he continued to smile at her—burned by the summer's sun and smiling, he was jolly as a peasant—she

remembered only his love for her when she had been a child.

"Yes," he repeated, "here is the beauty I require." His brown stubby hand caressed the pages, words, which he had once translated into his first language. "The record of progress which even the emergence of an anthropoid like the *Fiihrer* cannot disprove." His smile trembled, and she thought, Oh, but now I know! This might be the last time for him to read the book he loves. Thus, briefly, they remained, the old man's face upturned, and the girl, thin and tall, sending down her love and her recollection of his love. It was the last exchange between them that summer; she could not know till afterward just what had been the moment of farewell.

For, as harshly as once before, he now destroyed a bond between them. "Why do you paint your mouth that unbelievable bleeding color?" His eyes dropped again to man's progress.

As she turned away her reflection shimmered across the bulging samovar, and it was as hideous as she had felt herself to be in childhood. Why had her uncle loved her then, before a new grace had changed her body? She wanted only to kick over the samovar, to stamp out that image of herself and stamp out the pleasure he found in this token of his own early life. But those same seventeen years that he despised would not let her.

Tomorrow's laughter rose, too loud; the dead voice from the phonograph continued unending. And now Julie's mother withdrew from the circle of family; she set down her untasted cup and withdrew. Again Tomorrow's nervous laughter rose. Only Dr. Jennison never cast an uncertain glance behind him or drummed with restless finger tips on his chair. He was unassailable by sound, by the echoes of an existence that had long ago ceased here.

As she started from the room Julie was summoned by her mother, on whom, perhaps, as on her daughter, the room continued to exercise its spell, forcing her to inhabit feelings from which she might have hoped herself freed by time.

"All those strange little things," her mother said at last, and, following her glance, Julie saw that she must mean the many little ornaments framed on the wall. "Whoever collected them is gone, and to her they must have meant so much.... All that one loves comes with time to mean nothing." Then her mother's eyes lingered on an empty space of wall, and she murmured, "That was the color of the dress she wore on holidays." Julie could only conclude that her mother spoke of someone she had loved, until the next sentence, when her eyes, turning to the samovar, reversed this impression. "She was a handsome woman and selfish as a cat!" Again her restless attention was caught by a lace fan framed in velvet on the wall, and she murmured, "Parasites . . . parasites . . . that is all they were. I have no use for what is only beautiful, not useful, too."

Not until the end of summer was Julie able to sort out all these allusions which turned back, far back, to be stopped at last by the images of two women in the native land. One, her mother's mother, the other seen once, glimpsed only once as she descended from her carriage: *"Zhid*—don't you know these streets are forbidden to your race!"

This confidence, not yet divulged to Julie, nevertheless operated on Mollie Dreyfuss. She looked contemptuously at the samovar, the reminder of a world that she had left because it would not receive her in its streets. "In a wonderful country like this where you can simply turn the gas on under a kettle, what is the sense of a thing like that? Burning charcoal under it... waiting... like the stone age ..." For a long time she

was silent; then she murmured, "A handsome woman and selfish as a cat. Sometimes, Julie, I am afraid you are exactly like her." Julie did not know yet that this alluded to her grandmother. But like that *Zhid* which, though heard only once, her mother never forgot, Julie also never forgot these words. She was about to demand, "Who? Who are you afraid I am like?" when her mother continued, "I brought nothing from the other side, not even that big stupid teapot they all took along. Even your uncle brought one from your grandmother. It sits on my sideboard, but I only used it to please your father. He had a fondness for it." She paused. "How your uncle can drink all that tea! It would simply give me heartburn." There was indeed a hint of pain in her voice. But she had not even tasted the steaming liquid; perhaps her heart had been burned by coldness, no less effective than heat.

It was only in this room that her talk became disconnected, as though she were already an old woman from whom little sparks of recollection were kindled as her eye struck like a flint on the unknown tracings of personality all about. Thus, returning to the fan, but seeming now to talk of still a different person, of one from the immediate present, she said, "That parasite with her young man! Well, you will see her around too! I forbid you to talk to her!"

There came again into Julie's mind the two embracing in the rain. They were not here because they knew one could not bring into this room laughter or any happiness. But when she became importunate about the forbidden parasite of whom her mother was reminded by a lace fan—the unknown must be cool and tiny as a flower—her mother merely repeated through tight lips, "You will see her around too soon." Then she rose, grasping Julie by the arm. "Well, what can I do? I am thirsty enough to drink from their stupid pot."

Around the samovar was a bustling little to-do. The hired girl had brought another basket of buns, and water for the last cup of the evening.

"Do you know how I got my name?" Tomorrow, exhilarated by these replenishments, was shouting at the hired girl. "Shall I tell you?"

The girl did not answer. She stared at Julie; then, with a sly little movement, she averted her glance. But Julie felt herself still measured from under the furtive lids. Their hair was worn similarly, flowing loose about the shoulders, and their lips and nails were painted "the unbelievable bleeding color"; in this they could meet, and in their age, which was similar.

"Well, that is what my name means. *Morgen,* 'Tomorrow' in German."

"German ?" the girl said at last, turning again with that sly movement from Julie to Tomorrow. *"German?"*

Tomorrow flushed, and even Julie wondered, Does she mean: aren't you the kind the Germans hate ?

His face still flushed, Tomorrow went on, "Ha! You see, I always lived for tomorrow and not for today. What a mistake, to live for Tomorrow! Ha! In the meantime, it's a pun too. Who can live for himself these days?"

"Well..." the girl murmured uncertainly. She started out of the room, but at the door she turned to look back once more at Julie, and at the dress so much finer in color and texture than any of hers. Then she sidled from the room, and Julie felt that the other had instantly disliked her—an impression furthered when her mother remarked, without rancor but rather as though she offered a philosophical reflection, "How unfair life is! There that poor girl must work so hard, and you . . ."

"Why do you talk to the help like that?" Mrs. Tomorrow demanded of her husband. "She thinks you are crazy!"

"I am crazy," Tomorrow said, but his foot began to tap the floor nervously.

Now, slowly, as the evening faded, pleasure faded from the ritual of tea and cake, in which, perhaps, they tasted the body and the blood of their childhood. Some of the guests put down their tea unfinished, while others distractedly gulped cup after cup. "How crazy do you have to be—talking to the help like that?" Mrs. Tomorrow went on. "Maybe her mother worked for the family who used to live here. And now your crazy talk——"

"Oh, for God's sake!" Tomorrow shouted. He rose and switched on the radio. The two voices, one blandly speaking Europe's impasse and the other still singing Europe's music, met in a senseless wrangle. Someone came in and turned off the song, and only the continent's predicament was heard in the room.

"All right, all right, 'for God's sake,' " Mrs. Tomorrow said, "and you talk to them like that!"

"The whole world is k*aput!"* Miss Schmidt said. It was she who had turned off the phonograph. "I just came in to wish all a good night."

Julie had disliked her the moment they had met—here was the sort of woman whom her uncle approved. Miss Schmidt's face was unpainted, and she wore a suit as plain and severe as her face. Indeed, so colorless was her appearance that her eyes, a dark brown, came to seem like two ornaments.

"Good night, all." Miss Schmidt's dark eyes lingered on Julie, as though she sensed what the girl's thoughts might be. "Ach, k*aput! Kaput!"* she repeated as she left the room.

The news voice began to relate the happenings in Miss

Schmidt's country, and little Mrs. Fiddleman leaped up to turn down the radio. She suffered for Miss Schmidt, who might hear and be shamed by the crimes committed by her country—committed against those like her own guests.

Tomorrow returned to his seat and poured himself a cup of tea, which was now only lukewarm. The voice of the radio was so low that they could not hear what the day's crime had been, but there was time enough to find out. For that there was always time.

At last Tomorrow finished his cup. He cleared his throat and said portentously, "In only one country can our kind live without fear!"

And Dr. Jennison raised his large head from his Darwin. There was more than contempt in his face. No, his silence was not unassailable.

"I am not ashamed to pronounce its name!" Tomorrow shouted at Julie's uncle. "The Soviet Union!"

And in a cold voice Dr. Jennison remarked, "Yes, you are shameless."

They glared at each other like two sons of one mother who had a single wish—to murder each other. Julie's uncle turned his face down to his book again, but his hands, holding it, trembled, and the movement flittered across the samovar beside him. "They murdered Breshkovskaya, that great woman who was my friend."

She was dead, the pure in heart, the Anarchist, put to death by Tomorrow's Soviet. And the others, too, were dead; Dr. Jennison's species—the incorruptible—would not survive.

It was Mrs. Dreyfuss who at last broke the silence. "What is the use of such talk? Now there is only one country that murders. Murders us…"

There emerged now the thoughts that the day had con-

cealed, and the guests, sighing, weary, were unable to go upstairs, to seek their beds, to give themselves to sleep and to the nightmare. "Murders us," Julie's mother repeated. *"Us"*

Involuntarily Julie shuddered. The blue-eyed golden-haired country was a specter freed by helpless sleep, and sometimes in dreams a face would rise like a golden terrible sun, and somewhere a knife glittered like sunlight.

The door from the porch sprang open, and into the room, where no meaning of pleasure remained, flowed the aroma of trees and of the night.

A man and woman stood on the threshold; they seemed to be borne on that summer odor from the Eden outside. The woman stood a little behind the man; she did not close the door.

All during the summer it was the circumstance that she never closed the door behind her, no matter how rude, how brazen her action might appear, that so curiously moved Julie. Whether, through the open door, gusts of storm chilled the guests, or they found themselves dazed by the noonday heat, the woman seemed bent on taunting them with a glimpse of the world's varying aspects which they found so troubling.

But at this moment Julie was aware only that there rushed from her to meet the woman an instant recognition; she could not place it, yet already an entire baseless knowledge was reaching from her to encompass the other—she felt she knew all about her.

The woman wore a dress like the daytime color of the trees. She was not beautiful—or perhaps she was at the same time both beautiful and not—and this, like the tantalizing sense of recognition, aroused in Julie a conflict that clothed the unknown in excitement. How could that face have called

up comparison to a lace fan? It was neither small nor cool nor dainty. The ripe mouth, like the naked arms and legs which gleamed with a sheen of perspiration, would invite a man's most ardent caresses.

Why was everyone silent? Julie's mother had risen and was pulling the bell rope for the hired girl to come to clear; she, too, knew that the evening was over. This intruder had put an end to it, exactly as the storm had earlier scattered the family from the lawn.

It was only when another woman came forward from a corner that Julie grew aware of the man again. He had faded like a shadow cast by the green magnificent presence. Now the loneliness of the approaching figure emphasized the way in which the two stood together in the doorway. Julie saw him caress the naked arm of the woman, who smiled with a secret pleasure. Their appearance at that instant suggested some deepest intimacy which had not actually ceased but would, when they left, again be taken up in its fullest consummation. If they had been cast from the fragrant Eden outside, they were neither ashamed nor shivering in this gloom.*When the woman at last spoke, her voice was rich, as Julie had expected, and filled her with delight. "Has the good Miss S. trundled off to sleep, Elsie?"

The very phrase *the good Miss S.* caused Julie's delight to mount, designating as it did the justified contempt of a woman whose breasts swelled her dress for one who was flat as a board, and doubtless lay this very moment in flannel pajamas on a hard and lonely cot.

"But of course!" Elsie's voice, straining, after a similar blithe scorn, was merely shrill. "What do you think, Nora? It's almost ten o'clock!",

Nora laughed, and Julie recognized the sweet warm sound that had seemed to her earlier the very sound of love.

"The roof of our cottage is leaking," Nora said. Her head swept the room. "It's leaking exactly onto our bed."

The words *our bed*, spoken in that mocking tone, brought precisely the effect she had intended. There was a fluttering, a shiver, a wordless consternation. Even Julie, as she at last took the man in (for with those words he had ceased entirely to be a shadow) and noticed how much younger he was than the woman—even Julie felt revulsion. Then it vanished, leaving only a small residue of mistrust for a woman who married a man so much younger than herself that he might be taken, almost, for her son.

The woman turned her green back on them, her arm embraced him as she drew him across the threshold and outside.

And the night continued to flow into the room, to drench them with its insolent fragrance. Suddenly Julie's mother leaped up and slammed the door. The sound called the young woman, Elsie, from her raptness; she had been looking out into the night. "Nora is the finest woman I know!" she cried. "What do you mean, slamming the door like that?"

Mollie Dreyfuss, taken aback, could find no words, and her helplessness hurt Julie as though already she saw her mother old, dependent, feeble. She found herself taking her mother's outrage, which, like Elsie, she detested, as her own burden. She found herself answering for her mother in a voice that trembled. "But my uncle—you see, my uncle is in a draft."

But when she lay in bed, still trying to hunt down the sense of recognition which the woman had aroused, she felt that her hand, like her mother's that had slammed the door, should be struck off. Into the shadowed room happiness had come, and she had taken her place with those who pushed it out.

Chapter Three

HE came down on her where she slept on the float. He came down bold as the swan, the prow of his canoe cleaving the lake like a beak, and the sound of his advent preceded him', reached into the fabric of Julie's dream, reached and became the meaning and the fabric before he himself was known. "Hi!" she heard. "Hi!" And from depths in which she was sinking, drowning, she struggled upward to a face with blue burning eyes and yellow hair.

"Oh!" she cried. "Oh!" Like a terrible sun, the face blotted out the sky. Then the dream's evaluation of the dream receded, leaving only the engaging features of a boy of twenty or so, who reached out an arm on which the hairs sparkled in the light, and moored himself, his delicate canoe, to the float.

"Did I scare you?" He grinned.

Did he ? She found herself sitting up and clasping her arms across her breasts to conceal what, even in the swimming suit, was the one unmistakable tribute to womanhood. It was otherwise a body, her mother often said, exactly like a boy's. She could glimpse her mother on the shore, wearing a dark dress with long sleeves. Exactly like a boy's, and at the age of'seventeen, her mother often said, with a scorn puzzling from one who insisted that women should be as like men as

possible. Whatever they can do, we can do—work in factories, become doctors. . . . Her mother, like her uncle, had become a doctor, although she had not practiced for years.

"Did I scare you?" he asked again.

"Oh, no!" She protested all the more vehemently as she became aware that the lake had evoked the tall young man, the blond young man, the entirely American young man of the kind whom her mother had confided she would like to see Julie marry.

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

She smiled, yet she continued silent—shy because her mother's choice was so obviously the kind who owned the earth (Julie's "earth" was a strip of campus in a Midwestern town) and she was certain that he would carry his assurance into larger life as easily as the ball he must now carry to the goal line on the football field.

"You were so fast asleep," he said. "I couldn't resist .. ."

"Meanie!" She realized with distress that she was simpering.

"I know a girl looks like you. I thought.. ."

But on her strip of campus she did know many boys who looked like him, dwellers in the houses of fraternity—and liberty and equality? Still, it made no difference what fraternity doors had opened to her; she could picture herself only as confined within a sort of corral firmly constructed of the "numerus clausus." From inside this fence of the "restricted number," she had watched the magnificent steers ranging the open fields.

She was so much more at home with boys who, like her, appeared gypsylike, among natives as milky gold as their own corn—with boys who were "odd" in one small way or another. They would have pronounced this young giant, as

she did now, to be surely dumb. Yet, despite a hundred other little sneers at athletic and amatory triumphs, Julie had always suspected in herself a hankering after the blond, the easy and complaisant.

"I'm glad I didn't scare you," he said at last. The young hero had brought off his mission; he had wakened the sleeping beauty. Now he did not quite know what to do with his victory. But Julie was not attuned to uncertainty from such as he; she did not hear it.

"I don't scare very easily, you know." Immediately after she had spoken she wondered whether her words did not hint much more than she had intended, and she felt that the smile she forced was twisting her lips into a sort of leer. Her glance left his admiring eyes—was he admiring the boldness of her insinuation ?—and returned to his arm grasping the float. The golden hairs glinting in the sun were as attractive as an ornament, as some delicate embroidery, she found herself thinking with a frantic desire to laugh.

"You don't scare/'he said. "Good! Good!"

And instantly she wondered just when and in what circumstance of nature, moonlight, sunset, on water or in the woods he would kiss her. Because her own words allowed her no escape, any more than did the conviction that she was worthless, except as she yielded. Yet often she had discovered that young men despised her for partaking in their own ardor—and thus forced her to despise herself.

Oh, go away, she wanted to tell him. Please go away! And she would have liked to cover her nakedness. But she could only cover her timidity with a brazen coquetry that drew them toward an ultimate collision.

Her attention was diverted by a movement on the water. A rowboat came on, bearing the woman she had seen last night. Again she wore green and, scantily attired for swim-

ming, gave the impression that her breads, her loins were draped in leaves;she seemed indeed like the inhabitant cast from Eden. Âs the boat drew nearer, Julie saw that the young husband (but what had her mother called him? Just, the young man. Why?) lounged on the floor, his head between her feet; rcciining, be seemed again merely the shadow she cast, and-lulie found it stiange that the woman rowed, the man made no exertion. Nora was singing. Julie did not ruugtiize the language, but a strain of indolence, of milancholy, beset her like the breeze that h;ul suddenly risen from the, water, and led her thoughts along to summer's end, the turning from heat to coolness, from gold it) brown. The {"Woman's song did not stop even when she came abreast of 'the float and recognized, perhaps, that the girl had beui among the silent and bitter audience of last night. Finding that Julie's face reflected none of the hostility of her elders but rather that a smile was hesitantly forming, ami taking pleasure, perhaps, in tribute from the young, the woman flicked her oar. "Hi' she called, before taking up again her mournful end-of-summcr melody. The young husband raided Ins head; hi regarded Julie briefly, and without gruling sank back again, his cheek pressed against one golden naked foot. Julie almost exclaimed at his rebuff. Still too while in the sun. And young, too young . . .

But astonishingly she found the words coming that Klsie hat! shouted at her mother: "Slit's one of—one of the finest women . . ."

"She's sex," Julie's companion said, looking after the boat. "Lucky guy, the boy friend!'

"Oh!" She heard her exclamation very shrill. Was that why, last night, no one had spoken? "That parasite with her young man!"

"She's got. .." His hands described a curve in the air, but

even as Julie realized the emptiness of his words and gesture^ empty as the air, to describe the green presence, she turned to' him with the grim determination to make him forget that body which no one could have said was like a boy's. But, turning to him, she saw that lie still looked after rhe boat, which was now far beyond them and setting its course to cross the lake. His face was sullen, as though he were offended by the sight of a man not much older, actually, than himself, so prodigally indulged and pampered. Julie had no artifice by which to snare his attention. She thought vengefully, When I'm her age, she'll be old, old! She could tell from Nora's superb confidence that she would never submit, except as submission was her own desire—and here lay the absolute triumph. Did he despise? No, he pressed his cheek on the naked foot. Let me grow up, Julie prayed. Let me grow up soon!

But slowly, before the sloth of summer, her bitterness sub-" sidnl.

The sun had risen to the center of the sky and drew the world beneath into the silence of noon. Noon burned out shadows, no bird crossed the cloudless landscape, and the mountains were tranquil, not stained by movement and the reflection of clouds. The lake, Loo, lay quiet and heavy, reflecting nothing. It was a moment of balance be-fore the sun began to move again down the western sky, bearing the world into afternoon and the restless growth of shadows.

He said, as though this moment of balance forced him to evaluate himself and he knew no other way than, childlike, to speak his identity: "I'm Roger Evans. I'm a councilor at the boy's camp over there."

Somewhere a whistle blew, and then they heard the echo. The world began to move again, and noon was over; the sun began to turn downward, shadows to grow.

"I guess it's dull as hell," Roger Evans said, "but I kind of , like it."

"Like what?"

"Baseball. Hikes up the mountains. It's kind of a kid summer. What am I doing with a kid summer, me?"

She asked politely, "Why, arc you graduating and going into a job this fall?"

"HI graduate into the Army!" he said. "I guess that's all the damn graduating I'II do!"

"Oh, no," she said, taken aback. "Oh, no—please!" as though it were somehow her fault that he would never graduate—except into the Army—as though he were doing something for her that she did not want from him at all.

"Oh, yes," he said. "It's coming, this year or next." And his face appeared forlorn, as if one of those little hoys whom he looked after had been told he might never go back home from the camp and the summer—never. Then the fleeting expression lifted. "I'll be a hero, baby, maybe," Roger Evans said in a completely diilcrent tone, coarse and strident. "And you haven't even invited me up on the float with *you"*

Her lips parted again in the smile that was so painful to them. She felt his anger with her, though its cause remained secret, and she knew no other way to deal with it. "Must you always be asked?" The smile promised so much more than he had, as yet, required. "Must you?"

"Well, I can't," he said, still in that coarse voice. "I haven't any rope to tie up the canoe."

"Oh!" She had no time to dissemble before his treachery. And all at once the August landscape repelled her; the sky glared with a yellow heat, and the pines that never died seemed yellowish, too, ragged and dying. Briefly the intimation of fear reached her—his fear of this summer world which might at any moment shatter its silence—and then, as swiftly,

was gone. She wondered merely, Why do they dislike girls? What do they have against us?

"But that—" he said, shattering her own silence—"that would have nothing to do with your coming in the canoe with me. If I'd known I was going to find you here, I'd have brought two ropes. You bet!"

He grinned, but she found the blue glance arrogant. He had already risen to help her in, certain of her reply. She looked to the shore, and she willed, she besought her mother to forbid compliance to him. Like a child, she must have it taken out of her own hands.

It seemed that even across the distance their eyes met, and Julie realized that her mother would not interfere with what, to her distant vision, must appear a triumph for her daughter. It was perplexing to Julie that the severe figure, whose long sleeves covered really lovely arms, should cast her daughter forth for young men's admiration. Julie wore on her infrequent visits to the fraternal houses, one of which Roger Evans surely inhabited, dresses that her mother painstakingly sewed. They were always stained by large hot hands when the evening was over; and, hanging them away in her closet, Julie felt as if she had despoiled some bright innocent hope of her mother's. The blond and shining giants found a special pleasure in grabbing at girls of her coloring and—to them—mysterious race, but the odd dark boys with whom she felt at ease boasted how lascivious the milky-gold girls were. As she thought contemptuously of those tarnished dresses, she realized that the color which her mother loved most to sew on was the same green worn by Nora. Did her mother want to clothe her in wickedness? She turned back to Roger Evans hopelessly; her mother would not call her, she would not. He was settling himself in the canoe again, and she said, "If

you didn't expect to meet anyone, why did you come by the float?"

"It's my day off, and sometimes the girls——"

"The girls who work for Miss Schmidt?" she interrupted.

"Yes," he said.

She thought, then, of all her mother had told her this morning about the hired country girls. They knew, so her mother said, no time of bloom, but already in childhood took on themselves the aging youth of their mothers, helping to care for younger children, wash clothes, cook. Julie had concluded from her mother's bitter tone that she was once again pointing out that Julie, living on the fat of the land, deserved so much less from life than those who must wrest it all themselves. And then, astoundingly, her mother had gone on to observe that one could not blame these girls if they went wrong. Their dreary lives . . .

Did they forget dreariness, drifting with Roger Evans in the frail, the dangerous canoe? Julie could only admire recklessness, even when it took the unappealing form of the girl who had disliked her last night—and then she was dismayed that Roger Evans could meet with such coarse and gritty flesh. Because from such a girl, she knew, he would ask more than from herself.

It would not have occurred to her that he too might be upset—afterward. She pictured herself drifting with him in the canoe to a shore where water lapped, and the shade of trees. She saw the face that would bend over her, the bright eyes and hair, the bad face of dreams. Oh, go away, go away! But her glance was compelled by his naked, splendid shoulders, by his narrow loins clothed in trunks that did not conceal the bulge, the power. She averted her eyes, and she said quickly, "I don't work for Miss Schmidt." Quickly to let him know

that she would not—oh, but she wanted to know!—would not go all the way that led to the close enormous face blotting out the treetops and the sky.

"That's not too hard to tell," he said lightly, and she grinned back at him, relieved. Again his face appeared to her merely engaging, although it retained the triumphant aspect, all that presented itself to her as a matter of coloring—blue-eyed, yellow-haired.

"How can you tell I don't work for the good Miss S.?" Using Nora's words, she felt herself glow with a similar lawlessness.

"Well," he said, "can't you always tell from a girl's hands whether she's a member of the leisured class or not?"

She heard an echo of such comments as had been made by the odd gypsy boys on the campus. Did he imply a similar censure? The leisured class . . . She regarded Roger Evans, who must surely play football and might possibly have read Veblen, with mistrust: his contradictions affronted her. For she made her way through the world as through a sort of morality play, where each character must be unchanging in costume and feature, instantly to be recognized. What should she feel if her mother, who always wore the garments of vengeance, suddenly appeared in the Virgin's blue tenderness? Or if her father, whose immaculate well-tailored suit might, for all of her, have been the angel's robe, had appeared with one tiny smudge on all that shining white? No, in that direction danger lay; one could be lost in a tangle of motives and impulses.

"What does a girl like you do up at the boardinghouse?" he asked. "There's no one under fifty!"

"But I love to be by myself!" she exclaimed.

And she knew that she had simply stated the truth. Alone

and unwatched, she could begin to live; she was her only friend; she let herself enjoy the world, and her spirit expanded. Now, with the intruder, everything became perilous. He waked the recollection of her past failures—she forgot that actually he had waked her out of a bad dream—and would end by bringing a present defeat.

"I love to be alone," she said, but now a stilted tone had come into her voice and she was as helpless as before her earlier coquetry. For more binding, even, than to recognize the fellow players in the morality was to recognize herself, and to skirt the sense that she might be, in any one moment, as raffish as the green woman and yet as severe and earnest as her own mother. If she accepted that, she would be torn apart! "I often read poetry when I'm alone," the smug voice said. And the apprehensive ear listened for rebuff: Well, go ahead and read then. So long!

And yet again she had merely spoken the truth. The sense for poetry, or for a larger life, rose like a sky, endless, against which her rigid little drama was pitched. But she would rather have died than admit, I believe that someday I will write poetry—a statement unadorned and grave enough to be believed. It was possible that her enemy would not have hooted.

"I often read poetry when I'm alone."

He said, "I know ..." He said, " *'A* Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou…'"

"Oh, that!" She laughed derisively. "That!" she mocked. And there she had a weapon, scorn, to strike down the enemy of her deepest purpose; he asked no more from her than to kiss, caress.

On his arms the golden hairs sprouted now without excitement; she had struck the power from his narrow loins—and

from her own fear. And at this moment of her anger with him, his face seemed to flare with that beastly, that dangerous comeliness.

But in an instant he destroyed her. "Oh, cut it out," he said. "Come for a ride around the lake."

She still hesitated, trying to rescue the conviction that he could destroy her scorn but never her purpose, and he coaxed her. "Come on, you don't have to be afraid to get in. You know who I am. Roger Evans. Uncle Rog." He grinned, "Maybe I ought to be afraid. Who are you?"

It was, perhaps, the one thing she could not have told him. The identity toward which she groped was not yet known; it merely had a name—Julie.

"I'm Julie," she said at last and then slowly realized, or admitted, that "Julie" did not entirely sum the matter up. There was something further, though it might be imposed on her like the campus corral; she remembered the big fresh-colored boy who dwelled in the house of fraternity—"No kidding! I thought you were a *real* Roosian!" And so she gave to this boy the entirety. "Julie *Dreyjuss"* she said.

He said, "Well, hop in, Julie." And as he held out his hand, strong, warm, a little damp, her fingers were cold. She was swept by gratitude for Roger Evans' unconcern with corrals, names or *real* anythings—oh, how much easier it was to say "Evans" than "Dreyfuss"—and now her gratitude humiliated her. She sat down in his canoe almost sullenly and looked back at the float, resting on sun and water, and now empty of her.

"Where to?" he said.

The water was still and hard as a mirror, but as he pushed off it opened in submission to the prow. Ripples slid away

on either side and vanished in the black unmoving distance of the lake.

"Where to?"

"Across the lake!" she cried.

There came into her mind no other destination than that toward which she had seen the woman Nora bend her course. Now as the powerful young arms veered the canoe in the direction she had indicated, Julie turned for a last glance at the shore and her mother, from whom he was at her own insistence bearing her as far as possible. What if one of those sudden August storms came up and they two were alone, lost, seized? Ah, who's afraid, she reassured herself desperately, and she turned back to him from the now rapidly diminishing shore and the figure of her mother that became, with each stroke of his paddle, more doll-like and lost to her.

Chapter Four

JULIE lay in bed, awake, but she would not open her eyes. She heard her mother's moan that rose to a terrible yawn and seemed to express both the suffering of her migraine and the desire to end it in sleep. Rather, her mother would waken the entire house as she had already wakened Julie, and the girl felt a sort of admiring anger for this callous disregard of everyone. She heard her mother get up, moaning, from the bed; it shuddered as the yawn began with the sounds of dressing.

Julie tried to close herself away in thoughts of the blond boy who had appeared on the lake. The lake had proved all too vast for them. What she had taken for the opposite shore turned out to be the edge of an island, one of many past which the canoe took them. But it would be too hard to land, they told each other; the trees grew down to the very edge of the water. Perhaps some other time, if they found a beach or a pier … It was as though they agreed to postpone isolation on a little mound of land entirely surrounded by water. But Nora, clothed in green like the island itself, must have stepped out, and with her young lover made her way to the secret woods Julie had barely glimpsed.

Julie shivered, and now the sound of her mother's pain crept like a fog over the islands and obscured them. There

was no time of her life when she could not remember this lament, recurring at monthly and sometimes weekly intervals. It provided a background to the movements in their house, much as music might accompany the words and gestures in a theater. Her mother's bedroom, from which the sound had issued, became the origin of pain. A dark cold room, where the great bed in which mother and father slept seemed to take over the entire space, and where Julie could now recollect only one decoration, the photograph of her mother's father that had hung over the bed. He had a long white beard; on his head he wore a black skull cap; and it was strange to see her mother's features peering out from these trappings. Julie, when she was older, wondered whether her grandfather might not have looked down with satisfaction on her mother's tossing body, had he known how she flouted him. She never spoke one word about him, kept in this country no religion, and mocked with a peculiar savagery those who did. . . . What would that boy with yellow hair have thought of her little grandfather? Rog had brought her back at last, not to the shore, but to the raft, and by her own request. She had felt that if he returned her where he had found her, neither had any claim on the other. Should he not seek her out again, he could remain a presence evoked by summer and the lake.

But now, alone in the warmth of the bed, he had become all too concrete, and it was she who sought him out. But as she tried to imagine the smell of the warm salty sweat in his armpits, his neck, all his secret and delightful crevices, she heard her mother again and was prevented from her pursuit of him___When, in childhood, she had tiptoed past her mother's room, the bed had seemed to swell and tumble like a rising sea, and her mother's cry had soared like a bird's, lost and

lonely. She had heard it without sympathy, for downstairs in his office her father, never well and always weary, was receiving his patients, and without one smallest complaint.

"Julie!" her mother called between moans. "If I can get up . . ." She would not ask a hired girl to bring a pot of coffee to the room. That would be an overindulgence. "Julie, you will be late for breakfast!"

Still the daughter refused to give any sign of waking. Behind her closed eyes she knew every detail of the body which her mother was now covering. She would lace her corset over the stomach which Julie had once inhabited and on which she had left her mark, a slight soft swelling. Then she would pull a modest cotton shirt over breasts still like a girl's, and the awareness that her mouth once had closed on them filled Julie with revulsion.

When her mother at last shook Julie, a moan, a yawn tore itself in a sort of parturition from her. Julie opened her eyes. They accused her mother's, that were so deeply sad with a malady the girl felt to be imaginary (for no doctor had been able to find a cause within her sturdy frame). Julie had once, with a trifling ailment, accompanied her mother and her father to some eminent specialist, whose offices were hung with priceless draperies, rugs and paintings, and who might have been no more skilled than her father, but had been born with the advantages that birth itself, the accidental fate, confers: wealth, connections, the luxury of time for study. Her own father had had no clinical years, but had begun to practice the morning after graduation. And the specialist had left her father sitting in the waiting room like any ordinary patient and had not, as Julie expected, immediately invited him within as a colleague and an equal. Her father, whose practice lay among the poor, seemed to accept this with a humility

that enraged Julie. So, too, he accepted the secretaries, nurses, priceless rugs and draperies, as though they were indeed the due of this gentleman before whom, when he at last appeared, mother and father both seemed to rise and cry: "Help us! Help us! This pain is unendurable!" That sensation of shame into which her mother had plunged them all, by exposing her husband before the overweening specialist as having been impotent to help her, was called back. Now, just as Julie could not comprehend her mother's pain, the mother was unable to read her daughter's expression, a raging humiliation.

She merely repeated, "Julie, it is time to get up. You will be late for breakfast."

"I'll get up," Julie said, "when you go down. There isn't room for two to dress here." She could no more bring herself to dress before her mother than she could have endured to see her mother's nakedness.

She turned to the window near her bed. Her mother went out, and she felt peaceful in the silence. Then, in that bright landscape outside, she became aware of a stain. A black corner of the lake tipped on her window ledge like a bowl. She tried to reach again the smell, the touch of the blond boy; a great bird rose from the lake, and she could imagine only her mother's cry.

When she came down to the dining room it seemed that a similar stain spoiled the table where her mother and her uncle ate. Or rather, as she noticed now, did not eat. There sat, in Julie's place, a youngish man in a black suit.

Julie sat down, but none of them looked at her; perhaps they had not even heard the scraping of her chair. The stranger spoke a language Julie could merely recognize, but his words, whatever they were, had turned her mother's suffering to the silence of stone. Her uncle did not appear to be

suffering. On his face was a stupefied expression such as she had seen once on a man rising from the street after a car had struck him down.

But, when Julie had somewhat accustomed herself to the gloom brought by this stranger, she found a new complaint. He had taken the place which two days here had led her to claim as hers, and with it he had taken her view of the sunlit world and of the woman who made this sight possible because she would not close the door.

In its stead he offered Julie a blank wall under which she might imagine Tomorrow and his wife imprisoned. They shoveled into themselves all the good fruit of the earth—eggs, oranges, butter, cream—but their faces remained dry and gray; they would continue only to grow old, older, never young. And against the wall she saw the two elderly sisters, eating, quarreling, nothing else left to them. Her eyes fled to Elsie, who had shouted at her mother the other night. The little girl who sat beside Elsie, and whose face was as haggard, stared at Julie over the rim of her milk glass, and the chalky disgusting taste of childhood rose to Julie's throat.

She instantly disliked the stranger who forced on her a sad and aged world—even the child seemed to be of the past, recalling to Julie her own childhood that she had not enjoyed. And the young man's language—which in itself had meaning, yet to which Julie lacked any key—aroused the same baffled anger of childhood when she had spied from the stairhead, looking down at her mother and her father and their guests, watching, listening. But now an element of shame mingled with her resentment at a language she did not understand. She could imagine the hired girls, when they returned to the kitchen with empty trays, bursting into flights of gibberish, gesticulating with their hands and shrieking,

whooping with laughter. Why was he here, bringing back the Yiddish that her mother no longer spoke ?

He must have come by the night train out of the city—and before that, from where ? The train arrived so early that often no taxis met it, and she could picture the odd foreign figure walking up through the morning, past fields that were still cool and orchards from which the mist was lifting, and stooping somewhere to pick the daisy that sat so foppishly in his lapel. And, as he straightened himself again, how odd he must have appeared to any farmer passing, black and sinister on all the sunny distance! She looked at his suit more closely and saw that it had thin red and white stripes, as if to disclaim the somber effect. And it was curiously dandified, with narrow shoulders, wide lapels and tight cuffs. From those* cuffs emerged hands that could never have handled a canoe with mastery. Constantly gesticulating, they were small and white, without freckles or any enchanting sparkle of hair.

She turned her back on them all. She moved completely around in her chair, and there by the open door sat the woman from whom she had been parted. Nora's cup was lifted to her lips, her eyes were on the young man opposite her. He smiled, she drank, and the morning ritual of coffee became an affirmation of rituals the night before.

But at last Julie's mother must have said in her first language, "This is my daughter." For a chair scraped. She turned back and saw that the young man had risen. His white fingers went to the vase on the table, and she could only think, But you already have a flower in your buttonhole. He snatched out the yellow rose from the vase and, smiling, laid it before her place. She flushed, certain that he was mocking her with this flamboyant little ceremony. And, besides, his face was instantly disturbing to her. An elegant

face, not handsome, but then not unhandsome either—dark, thin, with a nose that turned up slightly at the tip, flaring the nostrils, and a gay pointed chin. Indeed, he resembled no one so much as the jaunty little Irishman who had once been mayor of her city, and it was that which threw her into confusion, after the language he had been speaking, exactly as she was confused by his foppish air in contrast to the severity with which he had spoken earlier. Again she pictured him moving through the morning; she glanced down beneath the table, and, yes, his little pointed shoes were covered with dust!

"What do you think of this country?"

Mrs. Dreyfuss spoke in English, to include her daughter at last, or to end communication with a foreign world which had silenced her pain (as though she realized the hopelessness of protest against that world). "How do you like it?"

The abrupt transition from the former language seemed to affect the stranger with a discomfort similar to Julie's when he had usurped her place. He looked beyond her to the view that was now his, the open door, the glimpse into distance and a sunlit world. When he answered, the Oxford manner of speech overlay his native rhythm. Here, among them all, it sounded exactly right; a new note, charming and artificial* was brought into the orchestra of voices. "It seems not real . . . not quite real . . ."

From the vicinity of the door came the sound of chairs being pushed back. Julie's mother said, "What do you mean, not real? If you would try to climb those mountains . . ."

Julie turned, but the mountains were blocked out. The woman stood in the open doorway; the man's hand was on her naked arm. They did not speak, but proceeded together into the summer morning. For a first time Julie's attention was called away from Nora. Uneasily she watched to see

what the stranger made of the woman who had so deeply agitated them all. Surely he would never again turn that disturbing smile on herself. But the uneasiness rose not so much from a mistrust of him as of herself. Why did she care what this peculiar man did, thought, felt?

No change came over his face. His eyes merely flicked the woman and returned to the table.

"Ah," he said to Julie's mother, "landscape . . . mountains . . . They are the same over the world—beautiful, real. No, it is this country America that seems not real. Is it any longer real that people live an ordinary happy life?"

The animation had left his face. It was weary with all that he had related to her mother and her uncle, or perhaps with the night on the train and the long morning walk.

He caught Julie's glance, and his eyes lingered on her, as, incredibly, they had not on the woman. No boy had ever looked at her like that, and now his weariness seemed to be of a thousand dissipations—the girls, midnight parties, gin, that had beset the jaunty little mayor whom he so curiously resembled. But as she continued to look into his eyes she found only two blue-tinted images of herself; she was contained within him and, unbidden, a further image rose in her own mind. Her cheeks burned. She had not, as with Rog, as with a dozen others, wondered: When is *he* going to kiss *me?* No, quite the opposite. As his insolent glance still held her, he was touched with majesty, this man who was no longer quite young, who spoke a language which the hired girls would mock, who wore clothes no boy she knew would be caught dead in, summer or any time.

Then that quality faded, his shoulders drooped, and as he turned away to her mother he seemed only weary, frail and weary. "Perhaps," he said, "it is I who am not real."

"Perhaps," Mrs. Dreyfuss said. For a moment her voice

threatened to rise to a moan. "Must only suffering be real?"

She denied her own theology which resembled that of the Puritans who had settled this valley. Suffering was man's daily coin, pleasure the unearned increment—and therefore undeserved.

Nevertheless her mother's voice had not been sharp; rather it mingled humility with a coaxing tone. If her mother did not attack, this foreigner must have some eminence. The qualifications of those who drew this respect were so varied that there appeared to be no common thread of meaning. Julie had heard her mother speak in this reverential way to every college professor, no matter how dull-witted. Did they not all have behind them the certainty of degrees? To "swells" like those who had built this house; to gray-haired ladies one sat next to on trains, who commented on the landscape outside the window in a manner—and accent—that revealed their secure inheritance of this country; and, last, she spoke reverentially to those whom she considered truly kindhearted. "I am not at all kindhearted," Mollie Dreyfuss would say, performing some generous act, "I only try to do what is right." One common thread ran through her reactions to this variety of persons—her own lack of sureness.

"What is reality?" Dr. Jennison asked.

With this abrupt question the uncle, who was usually preeminent, entered the conversation. For the first time Julie's mother had taken over from him.

He still seemed like the man Julie had seen struck down on the street. He struggled to rise from his daze, from that which he had not seen and yet had leveled him. "All that you have told us," he said to the young man, "I have read about. But you have seen it yourself ... the shaved heads ... the whips ... the ashes of the victims sent back in urns.... I suppose, I grant, it must be true. And yet..."

It was as though the stranger had forced Dr. Jennison, and his sister also, to change their view, to look on a different world. Now, as they spoke the adopted, the second mother tongue that made available to all a view into that terrible world, they glanced uneasily about at the hired girls coming and going with cups or silver. What could they, native and insular, make of this?

"You cannot go back!" Dr. Jennison said. "How can anyone who is free of it be asked to go back?"

The stranger answered the older man with one word. It had an explosive sound, as though something in him had snapped: "Quotas!"

"And in my day one did not even need a passport to enter America. Can you imagine? One could go freely from one country to another without passports, questions. … I have lived to see the turnabout of all we Anarchists lived for. Man less free than ever. The noose of government tightens till he is strangled."

The troubled face asked a pardon from the younger man. He might be looking, so many years later, on his young self, but rejected now, turned back across the frontier of the ocean—and to what?

And Mrs. Dreyfuss, too, asked forgiveness because she wanted no traffic with the world she had escaped. "Quotas! Passports!" she said. "How much more fortunate we were! We came. No one asked questions. We came unlike those who cross the ocean today—not because we had to, but because we wanted to, and that also was more fortunate. And when we first caught a glimpse of this land and of the Statue ..."

The oratorical flight deserted her, and in her drawn face appeared the pain expressed earlier by her earsplitting yawns and moans. "But I never did see the Statue of Liberty at

all!" she exclaimed. "How could I see? I cried! I cried! All the time crossing the ocean I lay on my berth, and I was blind with crying."

In all Julie's seventeen years her mother had not revealed so much of herself as she did now to a man she had never seen before. "Why did you cry?" Julie asked roughly, as though she must harden herself against the picture of her mother weak and frightened. "Why?"

And, before this stranger, her mother took Julie into her confidence as she never had before. "You little fool, I was a child, and I knew I would never see my father again. I loved him."

"Yes, that is how it is. And when I said good-by to my father I was no longer a child." A new voice, with the harshness of the German accent, backed up Julie's mother.

Miss Schmidt had joined them. She was looking at her new guest with an expression that could not be read beyond its concentration.

But Dr. Jennison, trying to escape from all this emotion that had been set loose, said to the younger man, "Perhaps in this country we who gave ourselves to the ideal of freedom may yet find some hope. A little. Here, for instance, we are enjoying a house that belonged to one old woman with its hundreds of acres and a lake that was private. And she would not even have let our kind stick our noses in at the back door. Progress! .. . We must believe in progress! We must hope! We must work!"

With a charm that in a lesser personality would have passed only for inconsistency of mood, Mrs. Dreyfuss said, "Certainly this estate that belonged to one old woman is for all of us. For all of us who can afford to pay." She smiled disarmingly at Miss Schmidt. "You will forgive me, but I

must always speak my mind." Dr. Jennison's remarks, "Progress … hope," were robbed of any importance. There was no doubt that, this morning at least, his sister superseded him.

And again the German voice backed up Julie's mother. "I don't suppose anyone can deny that."

"You refuse to understand what I say, Mollie," Dr. Jennison said bitterly.

The hired girls cleared the tables slowly and without purpose, lifting the salt from here to there and from there to here as they listened.

"Tell me," Miss Schmidt said, and her hands folded themselves as though to beg something from her guest. It was a gesture that, as August advanced, would grow into the habit, more eloquent, of wringing her hands. "Tell me, what is the talk on the other side about the possibility of war? They have already been through one. My God, I myself have lived through one war, and——"

At the other end of the room, the door to Miss Schmidt's private quarters was opened slightly and in the crack appeared a face like that of a child, pale and frightened, but with gray curls tumbling about it.

Miss Schmidt's attention was caught. She turned on the gray-haired child the expression of distress awakened by her memories of war. But the face in the crack was watching the stranger, not the German woman.

"Well, Adeline, then, for heaven's sake come in!" Miss Schmidt's face was as agitated as her voice. The door slammed again; Adeline vanished. Miss Schmidt gave an apologetic little giggle, but her voice was still shrill. "Adeline is so shy! She has the true artist's soul!" Again her hands folded before the stranger. "How can people who have lived already

through one war—?" But on her own face there was still a sort of war. "I knew Adeline long ago, before all happened. Long ago in Heidelberg. We were students together."

"Ah, Heidelberg/' he said. "I, too, knew Heidelberg." He smiled, and again he seemed insolent, murmuring, *"Ich habe mein Herz in Heidelberg verloren"* And then, abruptly, he plunged into his own language, choosing out of some perversity to answer Miss Schmidt's former questions in the jargon, the distorted echo of German, that seemed now to jeer at the master language.

But Mrs. Dreyfuss suddenly cut off his flow: "No! No! There cannot be war again! All the young men!" She, who had no son, could not endure that one young life be given up.

From his table against the wall Tomorrow shouted, "Are you crazy, Mollie ? What except war can save us now?" The hired girls continued with their aimless movements, and Julie thought, But we, all the girls, we will be left alone, we will be left. And again her mother said, "All the young men!"

The stranger waited for her to become quiet. When he spoke again his eyes rested on Julie, indicating her, pointing her out, but there was no insolence in his glance. He seemed worn, beaten down by what he was saying, and Julie felt that she should understand each word and each syllable, so eloquent was his voice. As it increased in passion, it made him seem constantly smaller, more frail. Then he turned from Julie to her mother, his lips twisted, and he spat out something venomous, as though to offset his frailty.

"No!" Mrs. Dreyfuss cried. "Rather I would kill my daughter first—and then myself!"

To kill, ih extremity—was that the love urged on Mollie Dreyfuss by this vindictive European ? He had snatched from

her the sons—all the young men—whom she had never borne and the daughter who sat at her side; he had reduced her to a woman without issue. But to Julie nothing was clear except that this man gave her a place, too, in whatever danger the future held. Unlike her mother, he found the sorrows of women as meaningful as those of their husbands, fathers, brothers.

Miss Schmidt lifted the vase of flowers from the table. It fell from her fingers, and as she bent to pick up the fragments she murmured, "But Adeline can fix anything ... anything . . ." Carrying the fragments, she went toward her door that had so briefly opened.

The four were left alone, the little family and the stranger. All the other guests had gone, and only two of the hired girls stood against the wall, waiting for them to leave. Julie thought, He is frightening. Why has he come among us, trailing the darkness of his country? Then, from the corner of her eye, she noticed the two girls turn toward the wall, averting their faces. She saw the sly, the puffy face lean, laugh, and whisper to the other. There was a moment before Julie related meaning to sound, and then she could no longer be sure of what she had heard. Yet in that brief time she was joined to the visitor from the terrible country, she was joined by the whispered word, the one foul syllable which she still could not be sure she had heard correctly.

Chapter ***Five***

AS Julie went through the woods it was not their darkness of which she was aware, but, rather, the burning leaf or moss where, here and there, sun penetrated. This was a direct turnabout of the values in the room she had just left, where the light walls had been overcast by the stranger's dark clothes and speech, and by that one brief word of which she still remained maddeningly unsure.

She had immediately risen and left her mother, her uncle and their visitor sunk in silence and unaware both of her sudden departure and the reason for it. Not telling, she took the burden on herself and knew her mother would have tried to lighten it by saying, "Remember what she is, a farm girl, ignorant and without advantages."

As she left the room, Julie had come up against Miss Schmidt, who carried a new vase, unshattered. The unadorned face seemed to be painted now with the color of dismay; the stranger's words had acted on Miss Schmidt as mercilessly as the hired girl's syllable on Julie.

"What is that girl's name?" Julie had demanded.

In all the obscurity it was important for one thing to be certain, if only a name.

But the German woman seemed to return a question as intense, as though in Julie's answering glance she might read

something of herself. She said at last, "How fortunate you are that you could not understand what he said." And then, "What girl?"

"The girl who waited on us this morning. What is her name?"

"Genevieve"

From across the room, Julie's eyes drew the farm girl's. Was this the reality of the bad face of dreams, dumpy, pasty and so ordinary one could not fix it in one's mind? Julie wanted to walk across the small distance and revenge herself. But the palms of her hands were wet, her stomach quivered with the first hint of nausea. A farm girl, ignorant and without advantages... It seemed to Julie that this generosity, like her own inclination to mistrust her ears, concealed an abject fear. But of what? Of the pale plump face that might be tagged now with a name for that fear, Genevieve! No, she was not afraid of Genevieve. Of what? She thought she saw a smile playing about the girl's lips, and she turned on her heel and went out. Julie knew the other's name; the other had for her merely one all-inclusive name, and it was that difference between them—and her acceptance of it—which she feared.

Yet, strangely, the sound that accompanied Julie through the woods like an unending echo was her mother's insulting exclamation, as though Genevieve's word had receded now to be swallowed up in the earlier anger. "You little fool, I knew I would never see my father again!"

Far off a train screamed, and Julie was brought to a halt as though she were pierced by the very instant of parting and distance. Again she remembered her mother's outcries this morning, and as she did, the scream of the train rose again, fainter, farther. Then there was only silence, and on it was

carried the memory of tears, her mother's tears, falling silent and unceasing on the workaday tasks, on patients received, on Julie's hair being brushed. Why does a child not ask? Long afterward Julie asked, lifting her mouth from her glass of milk—and the white ring around her mouth was like the white-lipped expression of fear at a mother's tears. "That was the day the letter came: my father was dead, your grandfather." Those words, the earlier tears, had been her mother's service for the grandfather. But how could he die? He had never lived ... Only a photograph of someone not known ... He had been taken down from parlor walls, hung in the bedroom, there to sink into night and dreams. But nowhere hung a likeness of the grandmother. She was not even an image, not even dead, nothing. .. .

That little grandfather—had he been real, had the sweet round bearded cheeks, the sweet round black eyes been real—would have given all the love the parents seemed to withhold. The ocean between banished love to the distance of a dream where everything was possible and where she could forget that her mother had never said, Your grandfather wants to know what you look like, what you say. Perhaps Julie had been as unreal to him and he had met with her in longing.

Did not Genevieve sense that as a child Julie had never sat on a thin shrunken lap and listened to family tales told: Your great-grandfather when he was a drummer boy at Gettysburg . . . Had never been caressed with thin white fingers. Could honor no other grave in this country but her father's too recent one. Did not Genevieve sense this and whisper the word that was a part of rootlessness? But Julie's anger was turned against her mother. Her mother had deprived her of an inheritance by bringing nothing of the past to life, by ending it.

The path through the woods led to the lake, which on a morning like this, Julie felt sure, would be clear and still, reflecting the world exactly as it was, without obscurity or enigma. For as she continued Julie's certainty regarding the harshness of her mother's exclamation began to waver. Here in the woods the words seemed like the brilliant sparks of light; beyond them stretched a mysterious meaning. Her mother's voice might not have expressed dislike, but simply impatience. She had a right, after all, to expect that her daughter, already older than the child who had crossed an ocean alone, should understand why that child had cried. Although it was true that her mother constantly mentioned her happiness—she who never seemed happy—in being a member of this new country. This certainly hinted a dissatisfaction with her early life on the old continent, and it was, moreover, impossible for Julie to think that within her hard unassailable mother had lived a frightened child.

Ahead she saw light like a doorway where the path opened to the lake. She felt an impulse to remain within the woods, to leave the path and explore the reach of forest, now shadowy and guessed-at. She heard again the tone of her mother's voice, and it seemed to carry something more than dislike or impatience, but she could not have said exactly what.

She hesitated, looking into the heaviness of the forest. She knew, really, how to mark a trail for her return, but at last, without confidence, she turned her back on all she might have explored, herself imposing the mystery, and plunged through the doorway of light.

The Adirondack lake was black and still; it gave back nothing of the day.

Then she heard the voice that, even here in the open, made the air vibrate with its richness. The green of the woman's dress was cool on a day that blazed like a yellow diamond.

The man who was in love with Nora was also dressed in cool light colors. His hand brushed her hair, her arm, her back naked in the sun dress; his touch rustled from flesh to flesh. And the two figures returned the August landscape, already yellow and dusty, to the first richness of summer.

There rose in Julie's mind, like an afterimage, the stranger as he must have appeared, black and formal, on the August morning. For him summer did not exist, nor all its sports and pleasures, ease, sloth, love. Picturing his passage through the landscape, she felt almost a grief of love, a need to protect, cherish him, even instruct him in new ways. It was almost as though, unlike her mother—I knew I would never see my father again—Julie had captured an early and never-known glimpse of her father. For, against the background of this new country, he must have made an appearance similar to the stranger's. Father, mother, uncle, she could see them all set down on the dock, three black little figures, outlandish and laughable against the sparkling water of the New York bay.

Even as she fancied this, she heard actual laughter rise. But her resentment was checked, there was such ribald splendor in the sound.

Elsie and her child were walking toward the lovers. The man put his arm around Nora as if to take her away where he might continue to be alone with her, but, laughing—the wonderful sound Julie had heard—she freed herself and opened her arms to the child, who ran to her.

The child clung to Nora, holding her hand, pulling at her, demanding her flesh, as had the man who loved her. Elsie was a lonely figure. The little girl appeared to be the child of the two who once again stood with their arms about each other.

Again and again laughter rose, from the two in love, from Elsie and the child. Julie, pretending to study the horizon or the sky, was drawn to their vicinity, and as Nora's words became intelligible she was aware of a vulgarity in the woman's voice, whether of accent or of the voice itself. "Those two boys of mine, they'll think they haven't got a mother any more. Their papa's off in town making millions, so I guess I'll drive over to see them." She swung the child's hand in hers, and the child laughed with her shrilly, as though she were too taut with all this attention from the woman.

"And what am I supposed to do," the young man asked, "while you're off gallivanting with your sons? All right." He laughed, shrilly as the child whom Nora continued to ruffle and caress. "I'll take care of Elsie while you're gone."

"Well, come along then. Til tell the servants you're the boys' long-lost uncle just back from finding oil in Texas." Julie could find no reason for the woman's laughter.

"You know I won't ever go to your husband's house," he said.

"Come on, Paul, it's only gallivanting when it's with someone else's son." But it was Elsie alone who laughed as in a toast which no one would join. They continued to stand in silence and Nora drew her hand out of the child's.

At last Nora said lightly, "Look, I did my best to keep the boys from Paul. And then one day Mike—I could have murdered him—marches home from school and right into my cocktail party for Paul. All I could think to say was, 'Well, well, my long-lost nephew home from Texas.' Damn, I'd been thirty until that seventeen-year-old hulk came marching in."

And there they were, all hooting again, even the man she had deceived about her age. Was that also part of summer—

laughter that need have no meaning? Oh, it all sounded ribald enough, but now there was no splendor. Julie felt an odd pang for Nora's son, who, no more than she, could have understood all this raucous nonsense.

As Julie continued to stare resentfully, Nora lifted her head and stared back. Then her hand rose in an imperious summons.

They all stopped talking and turned to look at Julie, and she felt each step clumsy and stumbling as it brought her into the close presence of the woman Nora.

Elsie said, "Meet Dr. Jennison's niece," and Julie flushed with vexation. Her uncle's eminence seemed always to deny her father and to make Julie her uncle's direct descendant, who must carry further his severe identity. And all that she longed to spring from, to claim hers by the right of birth, was facing her, silken, painted, resplendent. The woman did not speak a word—again the familiarity of her face troubled Julie—but put out her hand and gently tilted up the girl's face and looked into it.

For the instant in which they remained thus looking into each other—the woman was taller and bent a little over her—Nora became entirely unknown. The beauty that distance had always lent her by reason of her coloring and the proportions of her features receded, and her face became strong, almost brutally strong, as a man's might have been, and the pores of her skin large and bold.

Then she took her hand away, she released Julie, and what she had read in her face the girl could not imagine.

The woman put her arm around the young man and pressed him against her for a moment; then pensively she dropped her arm again and walked away, and it was like a caress when one is saying farewell. But he followed, and

they proceeded, one behind the other, to a cottage on the shore. Briefly the woman turned and looked back at Julie, and now with distance she was again beautiful.

"But what did she mean?" Julie demanded. "What did she want?"

"Nora is never like anyone else!"

Elsie's fervent tone drew the girl's attention away from the two figures. The mouth which had expressed that fervor was drawn now into a bitter line, and the face turned toward the cottage, which the two were now entering, wore an expression as bitter.

Julie almost exclaimed in dismay. Behind the brilliance of the morning, shadows lurked, words not heard or understood, meanings ungrasped, laughter not happy. It was as though, above a stage, darkness were being massed to fall later on the scene and disclose the real intent.

She asked at last, "Why do they all hate Nora?" Actually she knew, and it was only for that reason that she asked. To be affirmed in something would give an illusion of certainty to this uncertain day.

"Why wouldn't those old hags hate her?"

Julie was taken aback, for her mother, of course, must be included. She herself had often felt such resentment; from a stranger it rather unsettled her.

The child's face was sulky with her boredom. She squirmed and picked at her mother, who brought her unhappy expression back from distance to her small bitter replica. "My God! She just simply won't leave me alone. She won't go off and play by herself for one minute!" But as she spoke her fingers closed more tightly about the bony little wrist.

"It must be lonely for her," Julie said, and her own words aroused the echo of an old distress. But it was for herself,

not the child. She wondered why she disliked this particular one so much. "Yes, lonely . . ."

The child was gouging the earth with her heel, digging and grinding. She had found a flesh which accepted the emotion that flowed over from her.

"It's always lonely for her," the mother said. "Even if there are other children she won't play with them. Will you, Miss Lonely, Miss Perverse?"

The little girl lifted her face, which wore an expression of pleasure so malevolent that Julie was taken aback and murmured, "Oh, don't! Don't!" But she herself had been such a child, or so her mother said; she had tormented and saddened her mother.

"Don't what?" the child asked, but Julie could not really say. "Don't make a hole in the ground?" the little girl continued. "But this isn't a garden here."

Julie thought how glad she was to be a child no longer, and that she certainly had no intention of ever being a mother. She continued to stare with dislike at this mean and lonely little creature, yet she wanted to tear the mother's fingers from the frail wrist they imprisoned.

"What harm has Nora ever done them?" Julie returned to the one certainty, and there rose, as answer to her own question, the picture of the stranger who did not know what summer was for.

"I'll tell you what harm. She does what she wants. The rest of us—we might think we can't do this to our children, just go off with another man. So we stick it out, no matter how unhappy. But not Nora! Nora goes off! Nora leaves!"

Her shrillness gave the impression that she could not endure the woman whom she constantly acclaimed—could endure her even less than "the old hags" who merely turned aside when Nora came into the room.

"You little fool . .." There returned to Julie her mother's impatient words. Like this woman's, they seemed to point in a direction exactly opposite to their literal sense.

Over the child's cheeks a smile of sudden complete sweetness bloomed. "My name is Elsie," she said.

"Elsie!"

Again Julie was baffled—or enraged—by words, names, words that were the names for things they did not mean, and by those who gave the false designations. Why did a woman name after herself a child she did not cherish?

The small Elsie still pulled to be free of the mother who had perpetuated her grievance of herself. Suddenly, without any word, the mother turned and began to drag the child away down the shore.

Perhaps the dislike which the child aroused in Julie was an emotion more profound than pity—a sense of identity with her. "Good-by, Elsie," she called, and the two similar faces turned. As the mother continued to drag the little Elsie, they appeared like two linked by handcuffs, but when the child turned back once, again wearing that malevolent expression, it was not possible to say which was the keeper and which the prisoner.

They vanished into the woods. As Julie still stood looking after them, the darkness of the woods came forward; a stain spread over the day. There where the trees opened stood her mother—and her father, slight, dark. She felt her throat hot, strangled, and she could not call out. . . . Afterward she remained looking across the small distance that, for the instant when she had thought another returned to her, had seemed endless and never to be recrossed.

As the mother and the stranger from the woods, and the daughter from the shore, took the first steps toward each other a cloud went across the sun, a few drops of rain began to

fall. From the sky there crept slowly downward the shadows that gave meaning to the scene. There reached her at last the passion, not of her mother's words, but of the voice itself. Yes, Julie might someday answer that anguish, that self-doubt. Yes, I will cry for you, I will cry on that day when I know I will never see you again, yes, yes, that must be love.

Chapter Six

THERE was a bottle of wine on the table at dinner. The aroma of the still uncorked liquid drew the passing diners like bees to Julie's table. "Now what do you think of that—swell we are!" . . . "Extravagant we are!" .. . "And swell we are!" … "Drink in good health!" And a prudent voice added, "And good health after, too!"

Someone jostled the table, and a tiny wave shimmered within the bottle, the color lifted to thin white gold.

It was Mr. Tomorrow who had jostled the table. "Well, what have we here? What is this?" His voice denounced them with a prophet's gloom.

No one at the table answered him.

He repeated, "What have we here? What is this?"

At last there was an answer—Mrs. Dreyfuss' laugh, shrill and defiant.

Julie saw the color enriched now by Tomorrow's thunder, and by her mother's nervous response. The color cast a glow on the evening room.

"What is there to celebrate, may I ask?" The swarm, the passing guests, scattered. Tomorrow, the great black bumblebee, moved heavy legs away from honey. "May I ask what, in these days, you find to celebrate?"

Darkness rose to Mrs. Dreyfuss' face in the same way that the drunken flush will rise, from within.

But it was the stranger's face that was flushed as his irritated glance followed Tomorrow. He called to Genevieve, "A corkscrew, please." But the kitchen yielded none. What guest had ever made such a request before? A corkscrew! Again the air buzzed and hummed. And when Genevieve at last appeared, triumphant, it was from the door of Miss Schmidt's own quarters. Ah, well, Miss Schmidt was a Christian, Christians drank, but might not the guests have wondered why, when they had given up the sacraments of their fathers, they had given up the pleasure of the sacramental wine, too?

The young man locked the bottle between his dark knees. Genevieve bent over him, so close that her breath stirred his hair, and her face was illumined by her own pleasure in having been able to bring him what he needed. Julie found it impossible to believe that the hired girl could have whispered that word about him. As she remembered there returned the nervous feeling that was daring her to challenge and bait Genevieve. She felt again the faintly sick sensation, again the palms of her hands grew wet. And she knew that she must, in the end, demand from Genevieve exactly what word—she must sting or die. But ask the bee: does it love to sting, or is it goaded?

There was a little explosion as the cork popped, and he brought his napkin down on the gush of bubbles. All the faces relaxed except that of Julie's uncle, who could not hear the sound of tension breaking. He could only see. He saw that pleasure, a poison and a boundless danger were made available. But the other faces—now Julie's, too—reflected gold and all its fanfare.

"Unlike Tomorrow," the young man said, pouring the corked wine into his glass, "I have something to celebrate. I celebrate that I must go back there!"

"Paris!" As Julie looked at the label of the bottle, across which the foreign words pranced, gilded and accented, she forgot her contest with Genevieve. "Oh, Paris, Paris!"

But mention of that city turned Genevieve sullen, as though she realized her reckoning could not quite reach to include it. She could not be certain of what quality it consisted to make Julie sing its name; she was certain only that she would never see Paris.

"Poland," he said. "I must go back to Poland."

"Oh!"

"That much at least they have in common, young lady, that they both begin with *P*. So does police." His smile, which revealed a front tooth rakishly chipped, was bestowed, not on Julie, but on the puffy face of the girl who served him and who now smiled back, utterly beguiled. "Paris—Poland—police. Or, rather, Paris—police—Poland."

"Ah," Julie said, "I don't know what you mean."

"There waits, young lady, the choice of a French refugee camp or my happy native land." He reached for her mother's glass.

"No!" With her thin cry of renunciation, Mrs. Dreyfuss' hand rose to ward off his gift.

There was a splash, and wine, that only a moment before had flickered and sparkled, was a sodden blot on the tablecloth.

Puzzled, he withdrew his offering, and Julie's cheeks burned with shame for her mother. Police waited for him in Paris, and everyone turned from him and from the lovely sunny gift that he had brought across an ocean.

When she looked at the bottle again, the color seemed to her like that of winter sun that neither warmed nor looked warm. Often in childhood she had been imprisoned on the winter street, shivering, locked out by her mother from the

house whose warm gloom might pass as a kind of love. "My mother . .. my mother . . ." The anger with which Julie's voice trembled was taken up by the parent. "What is it about your mother?"

Genevieve still lingered as though she hoped that he might invite her to partake, for she had known only the coarse daily liquids, pop or beer or cider. Her face was all eagerness, all expectation, as she appeared to speculate what might be the taste of all the shimmering lights and bubbles that to Julie seemed now only bottled bleakness.

"My mother—" Julie said quietly, aware again of the hired girl's presence—"it's just that my mother can't bear to enjoy herself. She's happy only when she's not happy." Nevertheless, as Julie continued, her voice grew strident. Her mother's self-denial, spare, hard, Puritan, had always sent her into a fury of rebellion, perhaps because already the seed had been sown in her. She had to struggle to enjoy what she liked and to like what she enjoyed. "My father," she continued, "gave my mother a beautiful old topaz necklace, and do you think she ever wears it!" Now her anger opened out further because of the gift which her mother would not wear and yet would not let her daughter wear either.

Mrs. Dreyfuss thrust her wrist at the stranger. "He gave me this watch!" she exclaimed. "Do I not wear it?" She seemed to be thrusting the watch, whose crystal shimmered like the tear that had fallen on her wrist—and indeed to be thrusting the tear itself—at the young man as though asking him to find her not all grim, all hard, asking him to believe that she had loved her husband, even if the necklace he had given was too beautiful for her to wear.

Genevieve accepted at last the knowledge that she would not be invited. But when she had crossed the room she turned,

and her greedy expression was a sort of homage. She was descended from Puritans as stern as Julie's mother, but the two descendants, Genevieve and Julie, staring at each other over only a few yards, could never have recognized their similar inheritance. Nor could they recognize the similar impulse of rebellion expressed in hair flowing loose to the shoulders, in lips and nails painted red.

"But I love wine! Truly, I love wine!"

Mrs. Dreyfuss seemed to be pleading with the young man or trying, even, to placate him. But Julie reflected that her mother wore the watch because, no matter what its fault of beauty, it was primarily useful. The uncle's large face lifted, frowning, as Mollie Dreyfuss continued, "Yes! Yes! The flavor, the taste—that is what I love!"

And still the young man did not try to urge the wine on her again. Its color seemed to Julie muddied now, as though depths had been dredged up and disturbed.

The distressed sympathy on the stranger's face confused Julie, exactly as she was confused by her mother's words and the tears that still stood in her eyes. Tears suited self-denial, but not a declaration of love for wine, and all that it connoted.

He poured a glass for Julie, and her hand swooped so instantly that mother and uncle had no words. They remained staring wrathfully. Julie's throat, her chest were warm. This was not bleakness; this was the sun of summer.

"Mollie!" Dr. Jennison seemed outraged, not by Julie, but by her mother. "Look at your daughter!"

But Mrs. Dreyfuss looked at her brother, and with the same accusation that gathered on his face. They were one in a way of no other flesh, mingling the same blood, mingling features that each reflected the other. Perhaps from childhood his sister had too often heard that older voice, and obeyed. She had

followed him to this country, she had even taken for her own, for a time, the name he had contrived, Jennison, Jenny's son—she was Jenny's daughter and unloved. She had even prefixed Doctor before Jenny's-son, following him to college, a degree, and the practice of medicine. In the end she had left her brother nothing of his own.

Now she held out her glass to the young man. "Please!" But her brows were drawn, as were her lips, in an expression of unhappiness that contrasted oddly with her constant greedy sips. And Julie was aware of a buzzing in the room: "Dr. Jennison—*you* are drinking!"

Dr. Jennison! Beneath the beguilement of wine Julie felt a sharp little sting as though she and her mother were taken from her father, or as though his meaning were expunged. But of course all these people had first known her mother in the days before she had been married. "Dr. Jennison, Dr. Jennison." They still called her that, it made a great confusion. It was not the name Julie wanted for her mother, and her mother did not want it either, for each time she heard the name that was her brother's—she was the wife, the widow of Dr. Dreyfuss—she frowned. Yet, frowning, she seemed to resemble her brother the more closely.

"But at least we should have a toast," Julie said, trying to transform this into an occasion such as ordinary people enjoyed.

"But what is there to toast?" her mother asked. "What?" And she seemed thoughtful and sad, casting about in her mind for something to celebrate. Her eyes lingered on Julie as though she were considering her daughter, but then she rejected that impulse for a larger one. "To peace!" she said at last.

Julie's hand lifted amiably to follow her mother, but the

young man said, "That is a toast I am afraid I cannot join."

"To summer!" Julie said, beginning to feel warm and silly and happy. But the two other faces, pale and troubled, did not defer to her or to her youth. "To summer!" Clinking her glass against their visitor's, she forgot that he did not know what summer was for—the aimless laughter that floated from her lips.

He put his untasted glass on the table and then with a sort of calm desperation he urged Julie's mother: "Why do you drink to peace?"

Everyone in the room was staring with anger at Mrs. Dreyfuss. Or was she a little tipsy? Tomorrow spoke for them. "Peace will be our death! Is that what you want?"

But she did not answer. She continued to look into her brother's baleful face, as though she fed on her defiant con> munion with him. Then she said at last, "I remember so well the last war. I remember the Minute Men making speeches in the theaters. Between the acts of a foolish play making speeches about patriotism, money, war bonds. All the time there were the dead, the dead. … I used to shiver. I used to get up and run out of the theater, shivering." She had half risen in her chair, as though to run from fears her own words reawakened.

"Where I come from we cannot run," the young man said.

She sank back again. "How can I enjoy life when others die for me and I do not want them to die for me? War accomplishes nothing."

"Can you imagine having no place to run to? Then you remain! Then you fight!"

". . . accomplishes nothing, ever, only misery and death. And a new war."

She and the young man stared at each other without under-

standing. The ocean which she had crossed seemed to have shrunk to a dimension as small as this table, across which menace, like this menacing stranger, could reach out and grasp her.

At last he said, "It may be you are right and we will die for nothing. At least it will not be the absolute nothing of suicide." He remained sternly tranquil, and she who did not know, and never had known, tranquillity continued to murmur, "Peace . .. peace .. ."

Dr. Jennison closed his eyes, as though to shut out from every sense the conflict which was now resolved into a harmony of hopelessness. But Julie was borne by wine, by warmth, on some dreamy winding river of herself. The faces faded into the twilight of the walls; in the window the unchanging pines shifted and changed with the oncoming shadows. The little Elsie tipped a white glass to her mouth. It spilled. The small hands flew up weak as butterflies against the instantly avenging blow, and Julie heard the man's murmur: "Peace. They ask peace. And the mother wars upon the child," and heard her own mother's answering murmur, "That devil!" But which Elsie did she mean ?

Dr. Jennison opened his eyes, pushed back his chair, and rose. "Enjoy your pleasures."

Mrs. Dreyfuss lifted her glass and emptied it with one swallow. Her brother glanced at her contemptuously, and then he turned his back on her and his niece. Perhaps it seemed to him that they submitted to the wild animal impulse which swept this present world before it.

Over Mrs. Dreyfuss' cheeks a flush crept; her eyes were brilliant. The stranger offered to refill her glass. She refused, but without resolution. Now that the other, the first Dr. Jennison was gone, an angular assertiveness left her. She leaned back in her chair, she smiled, and at last, even, she

accepted another glass and sipped slowly. "I am sorry," she said. "What right have I, safe in this country—?"

The young man shrugged his shoulders. "It doesn't matter," he said. He appeared neither relaxed nor unrelaxed, the wine left him exactly as he was.

Past them Mr. Tomorrow lumbered, his newspaper with its black headlines spread like a placard to state his grievances. His angry buzz reached them from the door. "And the world burns!"

"Our Tomorrow," Mollie Dreyfuss lilted, "goes to pick out of the air today's news—and will return with all of yesterday's false predictions."

Her face remained unshadowed by any fear of the airborne rumors that would, at this moment, be pouring into Tomorrow's ear from the small shabby radio beside which he spent his evenings. Sipping, she kept up a constant happy flutter. "Ah, it is really a wonderful flavor! I could drink a bottle of champagne with dinner every day! Ah, wonderful, really!"

"Oh, if you only would!" Julie cried.

"My daughter," Mrs. Dreyfuss said amiably, "does not realize that one can't do things simply because one enjoys doing——"

The visitor laughed suddenly. The tips of his hair, his eyes, his nails, the very buttons on his suit seemed to Julie to glitter with derisive sparks.

Mrs. Dreyfuss was disconcerted. "Does that sound so funny?" she asked. "To keep away from something only because one would enjoy it?" And suddenly she was laughing, too. "Yes, yes, it does sound funny." And into her happy sounds she drew the young man until his laughter was no longer sharp.

"Well, my daughter—" her mother's hand caressed Julie's

hair—"my daughter has had an easier time than I, and maybe … Who knows, maybe she will be able to enjoy whatever comes along."

Julie might once have longed for such an unaccustomed caress from her mother, but now, drinking, it was only of the man that she wanted to partake. She moved away from her mother's touch, yet remained conscious of it as if it could prevent her from that partaking.

"Even Tomorrow said," her mother's voice continued proudly, "'You have a charming daughter.' Said! He positively exclaimed! And I asked him, 'Why do you insult me by being so surprised?'"

The man's eyes were assessing Julie in a new manner, as though actually the mother did not prevent but offered the daughter for his consideration. His nostrils flared insolently, the rakish crooked tooth was revealed as he smiled at Julie, and he was a traveler, mot from some terrible region, but one that was sunny, southern, the country of this wine.

But it was he who first drew away from this communion, and by a device which Julie felt to be both insolent and teasing. He called to their attention that naturally the daughter was lovely, for observe at this moment the parent. He seemed resolved to put aside his irreconcilable difference with Mrs. Dreyfuss.

And Julie, turning, saw her mother's face completely unfamiliar. It was as though his admiring words had rubbed away a tarnish from what had always been there—color and modeling, a noble and stately intent—or had taken a veil from Julie's eyes.

A young and delicate flush stained Mrs. Dreyfuss' cheeks. "My father—" she remembered—"my father once a year would be happy. Once a year he would take a drink." She smiled; this solitary evening of her happiness blended with

her father's, and there was no barrier of distance. "We have, we Jews, so few happy holidays. On the holiday of Purim he would take a drink, and another. He would laugh, and he would get very lively, you know—a little tipsy, I am afraid."

The young man nodded. The wine had not changed him in any way; perhaps he had drunk too often and too much.

"How I loved him on that night! I always loved him, and I was his favorite, but especially on that night I could not keep to myself my love for him, climbing on his lap, kissing him. ... I think sometimes, why did he not take advantage oftener of this peculiar happiness—his life was such a hard one. Why? I said to him once, 'I love you because you have such little eyes,' and they all laughed." Her mouth was soft with pleasure; she, who herself never took advantage of the peculiar happiness, was returned to the first love she had known and its moment of lightheartedness. "But somehow I meant it; I do not even know in what way I meant it. 1 love you because you have such little eyes.' " And the mother again began to laugh, shrilly as a child might, enraptured and overstimulated.

For a moment Julie captured her little grandfather, and he was not black, but glowing with the laughter he had poured into himself, in a room where everyone was laughing.

In the room where she was now, someone lighted a lamp; the walls, the faces swayed gently and mingled with the twilight, with the dream of a place she had never known.

And then a black shape fell over them. Light had summoned shadow.

"This is no holiday! What is there to celebrate?" Was it the grandfather, black again, black, black, summoned up to accuse them? "Chamberlain has demanded . . . And Hitler has demanded . . ." Julie saw Tomorrow's words fall across

her mother's face and extinguish in it all that she had cherished.

"War?" Mrs. Dreyfuss cried.

"Not yet, but——"

"It will come," the young man said.

Mp. Dreyfuss reached out and pushed away the bottle which she had emptied while the world rotted under misery. "No, it cannot come!" The bottle rolled from her and crashed on the floor. "If I had a son . . ."

"Am I not someone's son?" the young man asked.

He was invested with the terrible sanctity of the Jew who had proclaimed himself the son, who had sacrificed himself and brought suffering on all Jews who followed.

Julie's mother rose and turned her back on him. The wine he had given her became the blood of each man who would die in war.

Picking up the broken glass, Julie cut herself. The small pain goaded her—and the wine, the wine, bitterness with her mother—and when Genevieve came with pan and brush Julie vented herself: "What was the word you used about him this morning?"

If Genevieve had indeed used such a word, it had long left her recollection. The angry mistrust with which she looked at Julie was merely a deepening of her habitual expression.

"I heard you this morning." Julie's hands did not grow wet, she felt no quiver of nausea. She merely waited for the emotions with which Genevieve's answer would fill her: outrage, and then grief.

There was no answer except that, as Genevieve looked after the figure that had beguiled her and was now vanishing throgh the doorway, the anger brought to her face by Julie's accusation had not quite faded.

Chapter Seven

As Julie went through the woods to meet the newcomer, she felt a vague unease. Friedrich was his name, as she had discovered by the simple expedient of at last asking him, for her uncle would have continued without introducing his visitor. Dr. Jennison deliberately avoided the little amenities that made life less troublesome, whether formal introductions or formal marriage ties (so long as two remained bound for a lifetime). He preferred, even, to endure the inimical glances in an elevator rather than remove his hat. For if women desired equality with men—a privilege he was quick to grant them—then they could not ask also to be pampered like harem inmates.

Thus Julie had asked once during a lull in dinner, "But what is your name? My uncle——"

The stranger leaped to his feet and seemed to soar into the air, which supported his movements as though he were a dancer. Had he really left the ground? There followed, like an *entrechat,* the little sound of heels clicking. He bowed, and on Julie's hand fell the soft warm imprint of his mouth. "Groscz! At your service!" Dr. Jennison's lips gaped, and across the room the woman in green burst into applause at this performance.

Later, when dinner was over and Julie was halfway across

the room, still flustered by this ballet of the hated German officer which could only have been meant to mock her, a hand grasped her arm, a voice hissed in her ear, "Friedrich *Engels* Groscz. And have you ever heard of *him?"*

"Why not Karl Marx Groscz?" she asked annoyed. "Wasn't he the more important one?"

"Ah, him too you have heard of? An extraordinary American girl! I will tell you why not. In our quarter of the city such a Marxian beard was not at all unknown. But, ah! the aristocratic, the trimmed pointed goy wisps of Engels! How could my father, a poor Jewish worker, resist that!"

And still later, as she returned to the house from the last color of sunset, there was a rustle in the rhododendrons, quick heels trampled the underbrush, and a voice lilted, "But who am I really? The Wandering Jew? The Flying Dutchman?"

Persecuted, she fled, but not before she had glimpsed a face reflecting the green leaves that framed it, or perhaps the greenish dusk, and he seemed for long afterward a creature of the hours between day and night, cloven-hoofed, of the woods which she left unexplored....

Now she went to meet him, and the closeness of the woods, on this day without sun, oppressed her. She thought of turning around and going back to the house.

He had spoken this morning of the city where her mother and her uncle had been born; he had, even, photographs of it. "I do not want to see them' Mrs. Dreyfuss had said. But Julie did. He had offered to show them to her this afternoon, and when Julie had objected that she was to meet Rog on the lake at that time Friedrich had said not to fear, he would meet her a little earlier and send her off to the young Lohengrin completely intact. Angry, she could find no answer. He came from the same city as did her mother and her uncle,

and it puzzled her that he was in no way like them. He did not hang darkness on himself, unchanging; like the Adirondack day he had a hundred moods.

She came to the end of the path and saw him outlined upon the lake, slight, frail, as on that earlier occasion when for an instant she had had the illusion that her father had returned. Now the impression was not of one who returned, but of one who waited peacefully, and she did not want to go on and meet him for the first time alone and by his special invitation. But at that moment her eye was caught by the glistening shape that lay across her path. It uncoiled and slithered into the leaves, and she had no choice but to run to him out of the woods that were no longer safe.

"What is the matter?" he said.

"A snake!" And she could not tell him that, clearing the place where it had lain, she had felt as though she crossed some evil or danger.

"A young lady who undertakes to come and meet me," he said, "should not be frightened by a pretty little snake/'

"Oh, look," she said, "you're not so wicked."

"I warn you—very! From Warsaw to Vienna there are young ladies weeping and wringing their hands." He paused and added slowly, "But perhaps to you for a gentleman to come from those parts makes him not dangerous? Not stylish?"

She did not answer, because that was exactly how she felt. Then he smiled and, like tiny snakes, lines appeared about his eyes.

"So," he said, "that is how young ladies in America come to a rendezvous? In a bathing suit? That instantly nothing is a mystery?"

"I told you," she sai'd. "I'm going canoeing afterward."

"Oh, yes, with Lohengrin ... If it were I who steered that canoe, certainly you must swim home." His glance swept her body, almost naked in the bathing suit.

He seemed to her silly with that special leering silliness of foreigners. Their remarks pointed down a road whose direction she always skirted, for it could only end with a meeting between a man and a woman.

"I came to see the photographs," she rebuked him.

"Of course! Of course! But why this sudden and spectacular interest?"

"I——" She stopped abruptly. How often the dream returned of the place she did not know and had never seen. In the dream there was a great empty square from which broken columns rose; the square was the color of a gray twilight, and a gray figure searched, lost and solitary—herself.

"Why?" he repeated, and he held up a small thin book, but did not give it to her.

"I don't really know why," she said gravely.

"I am sorry," he said. "Why shouldn't one have curiosity to see what is beyond the reach ?"

Kindness did not become him—or perhaps, no longer expecting it from him, she was confused. When he put the book into her hands she was unable to open it. Or was it the title printed in gray letters across the cover that prevented her? ***Das*** *Ghetto.* She shivered. She had not really ever speculated that her mother and her uncle must have come from a ghetto.

She said at last, "My father was born in Moscow."

He made no comment.

She repeated, "He was born in Moscow"—as though she could accept the fact that her mother, uncle, Friedrich, had been walled in a city within a city, but tried to find an escape

for her father. Perhaps in a different city he had been free to come and go, take a train, sit by a shore, a lake like this in a land one could think was one's own. Not locked up. Not a prisoner.

Again she shivered. Her father was imprisoned within the ghetto of death, and he could never be rescued—nor she, nor anyone.

"Sit down," Friedrich said, and they leaned against a rock that was rough against the naked flesh of her shoulders.

"Does this upset you?" he asked. "Did you not know from which quarter of the city your people came?"

"I never thought," she said. "No one ever spoke about it."

"Your father was Russian?"

"Yes."

"The rich did not live in a ghetto in Moscow. Only the poor."

"He was not rich." And then to herself she amended her earlier statement. "A Russian Jew." And that was how she always thought of her father afterward.

She opened the book then and leafed rapidly through. The pages all ran together in a gray streak. She could see nothing; it was as though she felt herself bound by a prohibition not to spy on this early life, forbidden because it had never been mentioned.

When in a few minutes she had finished, she slammed the covers together and closed her eyes as though perhaps a meaning might have been left on her inward sight. But there rose only the same gray smear, the color of dreams—and with the same vague sense of menace. At last she opened her eyes and opened the book again to the first page.

Out of the gray blur a shape formed—not a broken column, but a building that leaned Crazily back to earth, and on its

steps a bundle of rags had been flung. She turned the page—rather it seemed as though a dream changed—and she was confronted again by the rags, enlarged. As she stared they began to fall into some human shape. Between die swathings of the head and shoulders two brilliant pin points glittered—eyes.

"It is a synagogue, where she sits/' the foreign voice murmured. "The oldest. . . abandoned . . ."

And now behind the figure she could make out the locked door. It was as though she had begun to track down the import of the dream. She saw the far ancestral figure from which she had issued, she saw the locked door that prevented re-entrance to the tabernacle. Here was the beginning—and its end. But she had no way to realize this except by wondering, What if that were my grandmother, could my grandmother have been like that? Oh, no!

She turned the pages, and it was as though she had proceeded beyond the dark broken square of her dreams, had at last found the way to the streets that lay beyond and their inhabitants, and the vague menace was built into the narrow doors and windows that shrank back from the unseen wall; it was reflected from unfamiliar faces with unfamiliar ornament. An earlock dangled along a man's sunken cheek; the varnished dead hair of a wig slipped from a woman's head and revealed a shaved skull; a pale boy-child was borne down by a shawl striped like the skin of a zebra, his fists clenched on his shawl in prayer. And over everything darkness fell as if the wall rose too high and light could not penetrate.

This is real, she told herself, it is a real place, it exists. And she was afraid, she was revolted, even. These were the ancestors; this was the origin.

She closed the book. For a long time they remained silent.

Then at last he said, "You may keep it if you like. Your uncle did not want it."

Her mother would not look at it; her uncle did not want it. And she too might never look at it again, but keep it like a letter from an unknown place which carried her name on it and the return address of the sender. A bitter gift of identity.

The glare of the sunless day pressed on her eyelids, which she had closed again.

"But when I was a child," she murmured, "how I used to love to go downtown to the part of New York where my uncle lived. Where the Jews lived, the poor Jews—but my uncle was not poor."

"The Jews," he murmured in answer. "It is never 'we Jews.' Never!"

But she did not hear him....

When her mother told her they were going to visit her uncle she would have shrieked with joy, except that shrieking—or joy—was not expected from her. Above the streets they rode, elevated perilously to a life never glimpsed or guessed at from the daylit level of the pavement. Pallid ledge-blooming faces, corridors opening vistas of unending night, beds tousled with those who slept by day, and, once, a glimpse of terror speeding by—he lay on top killing, she lay beneath and was killed. . .. Then down the steep, the dangerous fall of stairs from the elevated railway, and all that had been revealed was as insubstantial as the watery sheen of windows in which an unreal existence had been glimpsed. For, as they reached the pavement again, the street leaped at her with one fierce splendid yell of life. Peddlers screamed the brightness of their fruit, children stole it, mothers bit into apples or sucked oranges and opened their blouses, pushing the

sucking mouths of infants to breasts ripe and naked as fruit. "Hurry! Hurry!" Her mother pulled her out of the screaming square. "Hurry! Hurry!" Her mother shuddered, running past narrow houses whose halls opened on endless darkness, and never stopped hurrying, running until they reached the uncle's house, rang the bell, were received into chill silent depths where her mother sank into a chair, her breath gradually slowing as though she felt herself safe at last. And the uncle's wife, now dead, sat Julie in a straight chair, and offered a biscuit and a glass of water carefully not too cold. But she could neither eat nor drink, staring at the gray cold faces that hung on the wall while outside the world yelled and tumbled, and she could never understand how this house peopled by the gray faces of the dead should come to be the end of the trip. . . .

"My uncle was an Anarchist, but he didn't live in one of the tenements—oh, no! And why he lived down there altogether, I don't know. He was well off enough not to."

"It may be the habit of ghetto is hard to break," Friedrich said.

"His house was so big and so cold, there was never enough heat, and the ceilings were so high, and I was so small. Once it was a mansion, a long time ago."

"And someday," Friedrich said, "you will go back and look at that house. And it will look very small. And you will cry a few foolish tears. What do you know about your uncle anyway?"

"I was afraid of him," she said, "even when he liked me."

"Have you ever asked, even—please—have you ever once asked why I find myself in this magnificent countryside like a fish out of water?"

"But it was to visit my uncle." As she spoke she realized that, yes, she had heard her mother telling Tomorrow why Friedrich was here.

"Visit! You really believe one has the privilege to go making pleasure trips in this August of Europe's."

All about her the fields were ripening; in Europe the harvest might come too early. An empty road drove across the mountain; in Europe the roads might soon not be empty, but rise over mountains to some unknown and dusty end. Her father had told her a long time ago that there could never be another war; the world would go under. What if nothing ever told her, or promised, was true?

"Yes, my mother said you brought over the books from the Wilno Institute."

"Books from the Wilno Institute! I have evacuated refugees, one-of-a-kind and indispensable. If the German hordes come down on us, the library is saved, the priceless manuscripts, the books. And your uncle, among others, contributed to all that magnificent culture."

"Books," she said. "What of the people?"

"All right, then," he shouted. "People bleed! So we bleed! We are not one-of-a-kind and we are not unexpendable."

"My uncle—" now her voice contained the same fury as his—"my uncle would let every human being die before he would let one book——"

"Mon Dieu!" he shouted, and beyond her distress she was aware of this affectation of language. *"Mon Dieu,* here he sits now, this man, this mind who called colleague some of the personages of his time, surrounded by *petits* boarding-house *bourgeois* and unknown by his family."

"That isn't true! My mother told me—" her indignation

brought her to realize, recognize, or admit how much she knew—"my mother told me about these people. About my uncle."

Like the mollusk, her shell had closed when the irritating grain had entered, the first small disclosure of background which she feared to know. Yet within the shell the grain had grown. She remembered now in her uncle's house the room where she was never welcomed, and here she had glimpsed his back as he sat hunched over his desk, writing. He could not endure the smells, sounds, sights of the world outside his walls; merely he tried for its salvation. And she knew, too, that in extolling her uncle Friedrich was less than just to those who surrounded him in this summer, exactly as in summers of their youth they had been with him in the hot airless city before they—or he—could have dreamed that there would be bestowed on them the pleasures of a summer boarding-house. It was those early days, her mother had told her, of work in sweatshops or study in lonely little rooms that at last had made themselves known in this one's swollen heart, or that one's scarred lungs. The fragments of recollection arranged themselves into a checkerboard, red and black: the blood of struggle, the darkness that they had brought with them out of the walled city. ... And once again she saw her mother pulling her through the streets to her uncle's house and saw herself, perverse and spiteful, hang back, goad her mother into crying out, "Hurry! Hurry!" Goad her into wailing, as the shadow of a sunless street fell across her face, "I promised anything, anything, my youth, my health, anything, only to get out of that darkness, the smells, the long dark halls of the tenements when one goes up to the rooms and one does not know who might be waiting on the stairs. And then the rooms, the little black boxes—you feel you

would die or are already buried. Hurry, you devil, hurry, hurry!"

Her mother had spoken to her as though she were another adult, and Julie had retained those words as she might have retained a few words of a foreign language learned in childhood. The darkness of the ghetto settled over those distant streets where her mother's second origins began, and where she had tormented out of her mother some small disclosure to illumine her vast ignorance.

"Yes," she said, turning to Friedrich, "I know ..." But as she looked at him he was completely baffling, not like the shadows in the book he had shown her and not like her mother and her uncle. She would have liked to ask him why he was so different, but at that moment she heard the sound of raucous laughter. A little band approached them—Nora, with her young man trailing just behind her, and, still farther behind, Elsie dragging her child. Julie realized then that the sound was not of laughter. The small Elsie was crying, and there seemed to Julie something malignant in that pulling back from her mother.

It was Nora who reached them first, and Julie was not prepared for her words.

"Hello, Handsome!" Nora said to Friedrich.

He rose and bowed extravagantly, seeming to take away with mockery any homage he bestowed.

"Don't tell me you've nothing better to do with a girl than read."

Nora wore on her head a green kerchief that was knotted beneath her chin. An overskirt fell loosely from her waist, and, though it may have been fashionable, gave an impression of being an apron. The banality of her words seemed an expression of her entire appearance today. Yet Julie could

only admire the assurance implied in Nora's slovenly appearance, no less than in her commonplace greeting. It was all part of the excitement struck off from the woman. The lake glittered in her green eyes; heat threw a sheen on her naked legs.

She glanced down and read the title of the book, *"Ghetto,"* and when she looked at Friedrich again it was with some new expression, almost hostile.

He bent and lifted the book and offered it to her.

She said, "Why should I look at a bunch of dirty bearded old Jews?"

He did not answer, but opened to the first page, and she stood, bent over and quite still, staring at the ancestral figure, so ancient that it no longer appeared female. It was Friedrich who at last turned the page. Slowly he turned the pages for her, and there was no sound except the slipping by of paper.

When he had finished the woman put out her hand, on which a great diamond glittered, and turned back to the ancient figure—mother, mother's mother, unending.

As Julie continued to stare at Nora, with the same fascination that the woman was bringing to the book, there seemed to be something at once strange and familiar about Nora's appearance today—and different from any other day—but she could not put her finger on it.

Friedrich snapped the book together. The woman lifted her head. "So," he asked, "such things you have never seen before? Really?"

Again Julie was not prepared for the woman's speech.

"Beast!"

The little procession moved off, though not before Nora's young man had taken a threatening step toward Friedrich and been pulled back by her almost contemptuously.

"Why did she say that?" Julie asked.

"She was dressed—did you notice how she was dressed?" he asked gaily. "In a shawl and apron. Silk, but a shawl and apron. She wears the uniform of ghetto."

"Yes." Nora was rich, she lived on an expensive avenue, she had servants, and she was dressed in a crazy silken travesty of those who were poor, ugly, had no lovers, must cut off their hair and wear a wig when they married. … It was Friedrich who had pointed out to her the strangeness and familiarity of Nora's appearance.

He gaVe Julie the book, which was warm where his hands had held it. "I think," he said, "you are the only one who is able to have this." His glance lifted and hers followed. The four in the distance seemed very small. Here, outside, where the woman could leave no door open, she was swallowed by the immensity of August and its heat.

"That young man!" he said. "That bull with his three cows!"

She felt resentful as when he had pre-empted her place at the table and forced on her a new vision. "But still she's sort of wonderful, isn't she, in a—" she could only find Nora's word—"in a beastly way?"

"The bull thinks so. The poor bull chained to his cow."

Suddenly Julie began to laugh.

"Shall I tell you something that will certainly shock you?" he asked. "I have known a hundred like her, this *jemme jatale,* second class. But you," he said, "you are still new like this very same land about us, still unlived."

He smiled, and all the little lines appeared again about his eyes. And now they did not seem like snakes, but like a net woven by time and pleasure to trap her. Her unease returned, and she saw him now in a new aspect, dangerous and

inviting. He had disclosed to her that she already knew so much, so very much that she had not realized. Now with a little movement both shy and brazen she came nearer to him, her eyes brilliant, her mouth smiling, as if she asked him to answer further, to make clear all those other things she had been afraid to know entirely.

A lean predatory shape cut the water off the shore.

"There is Lohengrin," he said.

She waited for him to continue, to say, "Stay with me! Tell him something, some excuse, anything . . ."

But he said nothing; it was merely that his smile faded as she turned and went off to the boy who waited, as unlived as she.

When she settled at last in the canoe and looked back Friedrich was gone and there was no sign of his ever having been there. Instantly all her restlessness, her unease, swung like the needle of a compass in the direction where he had been. He had removed himself from her; she loved him. It was simultaneous.

Chapter Eight

"WHY didn't you bring the sun back with you?" Rog asked.

Behind him a gull sailed slowly down to the water, and its wings were dazzling. Or perhaps they seemed so white because the day had darkened.

"I said, why didn't you bring the sun back with you?" Rog repeated.

"Yes," she said, "it was sunny this morning." When she had gone to meet Friedrich clouds had come up. "The weather in the mountains . . ."

She wished that she could end this meaningless exchange, but now it seemed completely meaningless that they were together. He had neither roused nor could satisfy the restlessness that she had brought into his little boat. And the gift which her hands clasped, trying to hide it from him, he could never have understood, neither in itself, nor for what reason she cherished it.

"We should have gone canoeing this morning," he said, "while it was still sunny."

The gull rose again from the water and lighted magnificently on a rock. It was foolish, and yet she could not lose the sense that it was she who had brought darkness to a day that had begun so well.

"All right," he said, "I'm not as brilliant as some guys, but you could at least pretend I was here."

Against the gray sky his coloring appeared as dazzling as had the wings of the gull.

"Oh, Rog!" she protested.

"'Oh, Rog!'" he mimicked. It was not like him to be quarrelsome.

"What's the matter with you today, Rog?"

"Maybe I ought to improve my mind, like some guys." His glance fell on the book, and her hands tightened protectively around it. "I'm the athletic type. Didn't you know?"

Perhaps it was the self-mockery. Across his childish handsome face a resemblance to Friedrich wavered and then was gone.

"What are you reading?" he asked. An apprehensive expression gathered on her face. "Is it a naughty book?"

"Oh, no!" For the first time she was unconcerned whether naughtiness shed a luster on her. She felt only the need to protect this gift, and could not tell him what it was, lest he dirty it for her with his contempt. She did not question why she must accept a valuation placed by this yellow-haired blue-eyed boy, or why she did not trust him. "It's pictures of a city in Europe," she said at last.

"What city?" he asked. "Berlin?"

"What do you mean?" Her voice was shrill.

"Say, what's the matter with you today? It's just there doesn't seem to be any other city in Europe now. All the yapping comes out of Berlin—peace or war."

The mountain landscape, without sun, was too black, too strong. She shifted the book from hand to hand in an effort to hide it, as though it had the power to throw its blight of darkness upward on these skies. Weather . . . the weather changed.... It could be no fault of hers.

"Rog!" she cried.

"What is it?" He answered with a similar shrillness.

"The gull!"

The bird had risen, dripping, from the water, and in its beak an iridescent form flapped and arched, still obeying the movements of a watery world in an element where it could not live, and where the gull was master.

"So what?" Rog said. "I fish, too."

The bird still rose, and now they glittered together with a splendid beauty, the victim and the murderer.

"I hunt too," Rog said. And then he added, "I hunt deer."

And of course she answered exactly what he wanted. "Not deer!"

When she looked at him again his comeliness seemed full of danger; the bright tufts of his hair, his bright eyes glittered and shimmered. She could not lose the picture of the bird rising from the water with its watery prey; neither could endure in the other's element; everywhere were enemies.

"What do you know about hunting?" he asked. "What do you know about when the buck comes into the sights, that one minute? What do you know about how it feels?"

She knew only that these were feelings into which she could not enter. She hated the picture he evoked, as from his tone he seemed to hate her. She could imagine only the buck's great brown eyes, innocent, and then staring at its last knowledge of the world, treachery and fear.

He picked up the paddle and sighted along it. "Have to get in practice. Open season soon." He still aimed at her in play—or in the playful gesture of what was violent within him. "Yup," he repeated, "open season soon in Europe."

She put the book on the floor behind her where he could not see the gray letters across the cover: *Ghetto.* "What are you talking about?" she asked, determined not to understand.

He lowered the paddle to the water again. "Don't girls ever read the paper, baby ?"

Light danced over the water; on the shore an aspen quivered. All her restlessness had entered into the landscape.

"I guess I don't read the papers," she said slowly.

This was not exactly true. She knew nothing of the daily events in her own country, or any other—except one. Each day she searched out in the paper, she read over and over, the meagerest dispatch from that country. She could have told the exact date when the streets had been forbidden to her race, or when the sewing of the yellow star on the sleeve had been decreed; the acid with which naked hands scrubbed pavements had eaten into the flesh of her memory. She sought out and stored these wounds as though in safety she were driven to live the helplessness of others—as though, free, she confined herself behind a wall of humiliation and hatred.

Their canoe had drifted beside a little island on which the woods rose from the very shore. She remembered that he had said once that perhaps they might have a picnic on an island, the two-of them, and then he had not mentioned it again. Now as he averted his eyes—as did she—from the green cool oasis on which they could be alone together, desperately alone, she was certain that he must remember, too. She waited tensely. Then his paddle took them past the island, quickly past. "What do you want to do this afternoon?" he asked. "What do you want to *do?"*

"I don't know," she said. "What would you like to-?"

"I don't know," he said.

She felt at the same time both dull and restless. The afternoon would never end. Far overhead she saw the glint of wings and thought, Can a gull rise so high? But then she noticed how swift and rigid was the passage of the wings across the sky.

"A plane," she said listlessly.

He looked up. "I'd rather join the air force," he said. "A helmet's too heavy."

"Oh, no, Rog! I could never do that!" It was not possible to imagine a helmet shadowing the face above the sweat shirt to which was sewed the letter of his college.

"Girls!" he said with contempt—almost, it seemed to her, with dislike. "Girls don't have to do that!" Then he smiled with his old amiability. "I guess we men can take care of our girls."

But she was more than a member of the race of girls. She was a member of a race promised to extermination.

"I didn't ask you to take care of me."

She remembered her mother drinking to peace with Friedrich's wine: "How can I enjoy life when others die for me and I do not want them to die for me?" And she remembered Tomorrow's answer: "Peace will be our death." He had spoken for those who sewed the yellow star on their sleeves, scrubbed streets with acid, were walled up inside a city. She wanted, suddenly, to throw her book into the water, to drown its darkness, with which it seemed to her this boy, with his bright, his splendid color, could have no connection unless by being on the other, the enemy side.

His face appeared to her to have become stern and unbending. And then the thoughts that were never far absent from her mind these days were summoned again by the stern and boyish face that seemed to accuse her. She did not want anyone to die for her, no more than did her mother. And a thousand times in the past her mother had made the recrimination: "You, you, who are given everything—you can't even strive, study, try to make something of yourself. And your father is killing himself working for you!" And he had died.

"Let me have a paddle," she said coldly. She wanted noth-

ing from Rog, certainly not sacrifice, and not even his small expenditure of strength in stroking the canoe. "We might as well turn back."

"All right' he said as coldly, and he turned his back on her in the position demanded when two paddle together.

The lake swept by, and its islands, secret and unexplored by them. They had gone farther than she had thought, and after a time, expending herself in movement, she became tranquil. He suited his strokes to her less vigorous ones, and gradually they created a harmony. Now in the mountains she saw, not darkness, but the coming of autumn; one tree flamed, and the long grass bent with a purple sheen. After a while she heard Rog humming the song of that year, and she wished that she could fall in love with him.

"Who was that guy with you when I came by?" he asked, and instantly a presence was with them, fragile, pale, too old, and she knew she could not fall in love with Rog.

"Who is he?" he persisted when she did not answer.

She could describe him only with "He's from Europe." And she knew she was withholding what was most important to her—and, by that same token, to Rog? "He's a Polish Jew," she said.

She had said it, and the word lay between them: *Jew.* She felt, as earlier in the afternoon, a queasy excitement, but it now had nothing to do with love. She waited for what Rog would say and, fearing him, was contemptuous of herself.

"Oh, I knew he was from Europe all right. The way he talks."

"You—you talked to him? When did you talk to him?" she babbled, lightheaded with relief.

"Couple of us dropped by that little joint in the village for a beer, and there he was, jawing away with the waitress and

asking what is the wine of the country. 'Applejack/ I told him."

She recollected then that the other night Friedrich had been absent, and when she had at last gone up to sleep, long restless dreams had come. Had they been the precursor of love?

"Is she pretty, the waitress?"

"He was funny as hell," Rog said. "Maybe it was the wine of the country made him so funny. He took off Chamberlain, mustache, umbrella and accent." Rog seemed to her deliberately malicious in avoiding her question. His malice continued into his next sentence. "He was making time with that gal all right. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if he put his shoes under her bed that night."

"Friedrich?" she cried. *"Friedrich?"*

And now Rog turned round. "Sa-ay!" he murmured. "Sa-ay!"

Instantly she dropped her eyes as though they reflected the abomination he had spoken. But behind her closed lids the reflection that rose was not of Friedrich, but of her own father, opening the door of his office to a young girl of the people, unkempt and grimy. She said in a dreary voice, "That's just your idea. Friedrich is too fine for ... And anyway—" she was able at last to lift her tearless eyes to him—"what's it to me?"

"I wish," Rog said, "that guy would go back where he came from."

Now it came, a remark such as she had long awaited, yet she had to admit that he did not mean it in the way she had expected. Nevertheless, out of a habit of mind she demanded, "Just what is that supposed to mean ?"

He did not answer, and they continued to drift in silence.

The landscape was shadowed with all she could not understand—love that was not love, love that was the betrayal of love.

"I mean ..." Rog said suddenly. "Hell, you know what I mean."

They heard the roaring first, and when they looked up the flight across the sky was wonderful and monstrous. But where the gull had probed with a living body into the living wind, the planes were dead in their mechanical purpose and decision. Now the squadron was overhead, and the noise was crushing, yet so swift that at its peak it had already passed.

"Damn that guy!" Rog's voice was small and shrill now after the storm. "Everywhere you go you see him. In the woods. In the village joint. Rowing on the lake." He stopped as abruptly as he had begun and smiled glumly. "Sorry. Guess the heat's got me."

She knew too well what he really meant. Everywhere Rog saw the black presence on the summer. She was aware again of the book that she had put behind her. The shadowy figures seemed, like Friedrich, to enter into her native landscape, to plead, "Save us!" But what had Rog to do with them, with saving them? And now she, too, wanted to plead, "Save me!" from blood that would be sacrificed. *Your father is falling himself wording for you* ... She was certain at that moment that Rog would die in war. Oh, it could not happen that she would live so long and for him there was only a little time more. In her ears there sounded again the roar of the planes that were out of sight now, perhaps already over another state. She heard it like the very roar of her own anger against death and betrayal. They betrayed you because they died for you and you had not wanted them to—love that

was not love. They betrayed you because they went away and left you all alone, accused.

"Rog!" she cried. "You've never shown me one of these islands!"

And as he instantly dipped his paddle into the water he called back to her with the same fury, "All right! Let's go!"

But when they lay within the woods a stench of corruption rose from the cool green earth, and she could only say, "I can't, Rog! I can't," though her entire being longed to enter into his fierceness. "I can't!" Behind her eyelids hung a pale satanic face—father? stranger?—the face of betrayal that she could not betray.

Again they were in open day, and the sky was white and blazing. Between them now was a new silence of mutual failure and humiliation. She could not see his face, but she could picture it as when it had last turned from her, pale and set, and there was no rhythm in their stroking. Her movements were short and frantic, and he expended all his strength to bring her the more swiftly to shore, to rid himself of her and of his humiliation.

Then he swept them out of the sterile heat into a little bay of green light where trees grew downward from the shore into a watery world. She heard bright thin laughter, and the reflections growing down into the water were shattered by children, by little boys who threaded their way like fish.

A child rose from the water. "Hi, Rog!" Drops trickled over the wet slippery body, and the small hands captured the prow of the canoe. Her eyes were drawn to the markings of maleness on his body, undeveloped and not yet dangerous.

"Duck, Kenny!"

A red flush crept up Rog's neck. The kids from his camp, he muttered. How had he happened to—? Must have been thinking of something else, or of nothing . , .

His flush was reflected on the face of the child, who clothed his now recollected nakedness with the green water, and two little boys swam up, their cheeks bulging, and squirted two bright small streams on him.

For another instant their canoe remained, sheltered from a sky that threatened, islands that seduced. And then Rog's paddle was taking them away, fast, fast, they who were too old to swim together naked and laughing, unless . .. They fled. There was no single moment of summer where they could dally between the cove of childhood and the islands where happiness no longer could be innocent.

The canoe was grounded on the shore. Rog lifted his paddle from the vicious thrust that he surely knew would bruise the delicate underside of the canoe. As she swung one foot over to the sand she spoke her farewell to his muttered "Well, I guess we won't be seeing each other any more." For she said simultaneously, "Well, I guess you won't want to see me again." And they would have left it at that, except that she forgot her book. As she stepped out, entirely clear now of the canoe and of him, he handed the book to her, and it fell into the shallow water. She had, quickly, to try to salvage it, to open it to the sun to dry, and as she rapidly turned the pages so that they would not stick he was held, staring over her shoulder in fascination at the narrow shrinking world. He would be entangled in its darkness as a fly with glittering wings might be entangled in the dreariness of a web.

Chapter Nine

"WHEN it's so hot," Mrs. Dreyf uss said, "we can't remember that we ever shivered, and when we're shivering can we believe that we ever perspired? One endures by complaining."

Her dark dress rose modestly to her throat, its sleeves fell as modestly to her wrists. Mollie Dreyfuss revealed of herself only that which had been stained by weather and its inclemency, her face and her roughened hands. She would admit ruefully that there was no special virtue in hiding the whiteness of her shoulders and arms, and still more ruefully would ask what she could do about this. It was her nature—to hide all her good points.

"Hot . . . cold . . . cold ... hot.. ." little Mrs. Fiddleman sang. "That reminds me of the rabbi who ..."

They were always reminded these days. A vagrant humor had sprung up, like a little breeze before a storm. They had lived in such walled cities as Julie had merely seen pictured, and more intensely than the girl they felt the darkness of the ghettos spreading over these skies. With self-mockery they tried to cast out fear.

"Look!" Mrs. Dreyfuss exclaimed. "If that reminds you, then there is no connection, and the poor rabbi will find himself sitting on the throne of the Pope in Rome."

Her voice had an affectionate derision, addressed partly to herself, for her earlier remark had expressed some part of her attitude toward life. She sat now, patiently stretching between her hands a skein of red wool which the small Elsie, whose mother had gone off somewhere for the evening, was winding into a ball. Perversely, Mrs. Dreyfuss gave all her charm and tenderness to a child who was not of her blood.

"I should say 'poor rabbi!'" Mrs. Fiddleman continued. "You don't remember, Mollie? It was easier to be Pope in Rome, with God and all the angels to look after, than it was to be rabbi in those days. Well, after the usual honors . . . When the crops failed," she explained amiably to Julie, "the muzhiks would take a drink and break a few Jewish heads or a few hundred; they believed they saw a connection." None of them hid from Julie any longer behind a wall of language, as they had done in her childhood, and she felt a kinship unshadowed by the sorrows of the ghetto. "At last, after many such honors, the rabbi went to Synagogue and prayed, 'Almighty God, for so long we have been the chosen people. Now please choose someone else!' "

Only Tomorrow did not laugh. "I have heard that before."

"So who hasn't? Are any of our stories new—unfortunately?"

"I told you there would be no connection," Mrs. Dreyfuss said.

"What's the matter with you, Mollie?" little Mrs. Fiddleman said. "It's exactly how you said. Hot... cold . . . cold ... hot... If you're not chosen for a while, you forget how easy it is to do without the honors. And then, when you are honored again, can you believe what it was like to be a little while not chosen? By the way—" she turned to Friedrich—

"I myself have a rabbi, a relative, in Warsaw, Cohen by name. Might you know him?" She sighed (in this summer one felt accused by those lost souls), yet from her the sigh emerged with a sprightly sound. "Hot. . . cold .. . Are we not honored by Germany now?"

Mrs. Dreyfuss' face lifted from little Elsie, and on it the tenderness lingered as she pointed out the presence of Miss Schmidt, who sat apart, listening. But with the words "Are we not honored by Germany now?" Julie had noticed Miss Schmidt clasp her hands almost as though she wrung them.

No longer did Miss Schmidt withdraw at evening to her artistic companion, who might wait with a little poem or water color. Friedrich's presence had drawn the German woman into the circle for brief periods that gradually lengthened until she was spending the entire evening with her guests. As he spoke, her expression, already remote, took on an almost inanimate quality, as though she tried to separate herself from what he said. Yet when the evening ended, so had her dispassion, although this was shown only in the wringing of her hands. Or was she, rather, making the gesture of washing and purifying them? Julie did not understand how Miss Schmidt could listen while Friedrich reported the happenings in her country. It was she, indeed, who asked; her guests would have by-passed these revelations. Friedrich's cool matter-of-fact voice made his reports more horrible, made them the daily life. "And then, I was told, the S.S. put out their cigarettes on his flesh," or "and when she opened the gift it was a little urn containing the ashes of her son." As he spoke Julie's pang was less for the unknown than for the known, the visible victim—Miss Schmidt, who must listen. The German woman had a habit, even, of asking Friedrich to repeat some particularly revolting detail; she

would listen, eyes downcast, her body completely still except for that convulsive movement of her hands.

This was a gesture Julie associated with the poorer Jews in the downtown neighborhood where her uncle had once lived. Sometimes on the street she had seen a coffin carried to the waiting hearse, and as it was lifted in the hands of the family would twist in that convulsive wringing gesture and then would break apart again to beat the breast, while the voices rose in blood-chilling wails. But the German woman never carried her gesture to what seemed to Julie its ultimate conclusion. In the same calm dry tone as Friedrich she would return the next evening to the ghastly detail; as she questioned him she seemed to cringe under an awaited blow, and, strangely, one that she had herself invited. Friedrich appeared to Julie to find these recitations distasteful, and ofen, like his listener, cast down his wonderful bright eyes. It was not odd of Miss Schmidt, Julie's mother replied once to the girl's query, to want, to demand, to *have* to hear these stories. Quite the contrary. It affirmed Miss Schmidt's largeness of soul that she tortured herself with the nightmare that had swept the real Germany which all right-minded people still loved.

She was in no way "right-minded," then, Julie could only conclude; there was no end to her hatred of "the real" or now unreal Germany, and she found it upsetting that her mother could speak of "right-mindedness" and "the real Germany" almost as though she would have liked to belong, like Miss Schmidt, to those who were privileged to detest their own, their equals.... Surely the guilt, her mother said—and there Julie could only agree—was not Miss Schmidt's: see how she wrung her hands in anguish of spirit.

As Friedrich talked the guests sent glances that were affectionate yet gloating toward Miss Schmidt's bowed head. Here

in their midst was one of the enemy, but an enemy whose claws were cut, whose fangs were drawn, by virtue of her sense of justice and decency.

But gradually the flavor of their evenings changed, for the mind can be hospitable to horror only so long, until—of itself incomprehensible—horror becomes merely dull. Something of the first immigrant quality returned to the guests, or even of the quality before they had become immigrants. It might have been Friedrich's presence that drew them back into old ways of speech and thought. His continuing life in the old world transformed their harsh rootlessness into a new element, through which something of their past became visible to Julie. The samovar was no longer placed beside Dr. Jennison, but by his request sat on a round table in the center of their circle. "That is how it sat when I was a child at my father's table," he said. "Let us have it back like that." And Julie realized that her mother and uncle, unlike herself, had never been banished in childhood from all the ceremony of family. Their father had received them into his presence, had spoken to them the evening prayers, which they had never, later, repeated to Julie. Their father had welcomed them to his table, poured them tea from such a vessel as this, which seemed now to throw a golden light of legend on all the faces. Julie wondered sometimes whether the book that Friedrich had given her held an entire truth. Photographs are gray, but the objects of reality which they represent have color, a thousand tints; there must have been more than sorrow in the ghetto.

Tomorrow observed that, when Friedrich sat speaking of this or that, he was reminded of the days long ago when some wandering scholar or peddler would pass through the thatched village of his childhood and spend the night giving

news of the great cities of their world: Warsaw, Lodz, Odessa. A bomb planted in the Czar's birthday cake, but by a cook so inept that the dough was like iron, the bomb firmly captive, and assassination become mere upset stomach; or, going beyond their world, the tale of a Jew in Paris, an army captain for whom the great goy Zola spoke. "Spoke?" Tomorrow corrected himself. "No, shouted, yelled! For our God is very old and sometimes, I am afraid, a little deaf."

Julie had no frame of reference, yet what Tomorrow fancied concerning Friedrich, the wandering scholar, the peddler, moved her and seemed to have the ring of truth because of this new legendary light with which the evenings were enriched. Though it semed that Friedrich might only have been peddling wares of bitterness, like medicines among which sparkled a few sugar-coated pills.

Thus it was that Friedrich now answered Mrs. Fiddleman concerning his acquaintance with her relative, the rabbi, with only oblique reference to the muzhiks whose ruined crops had, by their own logic, impelled them to break Jewish heads.

"Yes," Friedrich sighed, "I know your relatives. In fact, are we not all getting a little sick of this closed corporation of acquaintance? Especially your relatives in happier places of the globe where the acquaintanceship with us of Warsaw or Berlin begins to assume the friendly aspect of a millstone around the neck."

"What happier places of the globe? I have no one in happier places. I had a commissar in Russia—a cousin's a cousin—but, as I read in the paper, he is a head shorter now, if you consider that such a pleasure...."

"In Russia, yes," Mrs. Dreyfuss murmured. "There it could be only a pleasure."

"Happy!" Tomorrow shouted. "Who talks of happy in the Soviet? Can you make an omelet without breaking eggs? Can you make a revolution—?"

"Tomorrow," Mrs. Dreyfuss confided to Friedrich, "has become a terrible Communist now that he has safely a fortune from dental supplies." Then with a merry bitterness she called to Tomorrow, "And tell me, every time you drop a box of eggs on the floor it's an omelet?"

"The walls are shaking!" And Tomorrow's fist rose at Dr. Jennison, who sat with his eyes closed, half dozing.

"Ah," Mrs. Dreyfuss said, "I remember that speech from thirty years ago." She spoke fondly. Thirty years ago Tomorrow had been as handsome as the young man she had seen the other day with Julie. " *'Bruder Arbeiter!* Do you not hear the walls of capitalism shaking?' And still the walls stand."

"And so in Russia they stand?" Tomorrow asked.

"Oh, in Russia! But I tell you if there would begin to show one little crack on one kitchen wall of one apartment house that Mr. Abraham Tomorrow owns in New York . . . Poor Tomorrow," Mrs. Dreyfuss said to Friedrich. "I could even feel sorry for him if he wasn't getting a more terrible Communist, the richer he gets. Now he discovers, age sixty, that he didn't want the dental supplies, he didn't want the apartment houses, and he doesn't know what he wants. To be an artist; last year it was a poet. Well, all I wanted was security. Not to have to ask anyone for anything. So I have it. Is it happiness? Did I ever enjoy being a doctor? Did I enjoy looking past the bad teeth into red throats? -And now my daughter wants to be a poet. Well, at least she knows it sooner than Tomorrow, and the apartment houses or the

mortgages, they have been earned before her time. We have earned the right for our children to be artistic and tell us what material-minded bourgeois we are."

And Julie flushed, partly with shame that her mother had mentioned this private dedication before Friedrich, and partly with anger at her mother's ever-present hint that Julie was incapable of accomplishing what her mother had accomplished. Her poetic resolve sounded foolish and, indeed, impossible, stated in that mocking tone.

But Tomorrow rose to champion Julie. "Philistine!" he exclaimed to Mrs. Dreyfuss. And he continued to sputter, "An omelet … a revolution . . ." to derisive laughter until he, too, had to admit that he had been routed by the Philistines.

"Apartment houses," Mrs. Dreyfuss said. "Mortgages for the old age. There is another side to all this real-estate business." She laughed with an acrid gaiety. "Has it ever struck you, in a world where all is business, money, how humiliating it is to belong to a race that is constantly bringing down real-estate values! We take one look at a room in a fine hotel—and nobody will ever live there again, the windows are boarded up! We ask the price of a summer cottage at the beach—and in five minutes you can buy a palace there for nothing!"

"Yes," her brother said, for in these evenings when they turned their backs on the present he seemed to permit himself to hear again. "The value of Egypt fell. Let the Chambers of Commerce remember."

"Egypt!" Tomorrow said. "That was a long time ago. As I told you now we can yell, now we can scream. Our God has lost his hearing a bit after five thousand years."

But Julie could not follow them into their resignation, however ironic. Her mother's words had wakened a memory that

had not lost its power to disturb. "Don't you remember?" she accused her mother. "Don't you remember that summer at the bay when there was the epidemic in New York?"

"I remember," Mrs. Dreyfuss said. "In Tarragansett, too, there was an epidemic."

"The same identical one?" Friedrich asked. "The same old disease?"

"Our landlady was an old New England Yankee. 'Mrs. Dreyfuss/ she said, 'you must not leave my house, no matter who has asked you to. The principles on which this country——' 'Miss Perkins,' I said, 'when your founding fathers came to this shore it was a wilderness, worth nothing. Now you are asking one little family to ruin hundreds of thousands of dollars of your forefathers' real estate. No, let us not have such a catastrophe upon our conscience!' But our landlady, ah, she was a nice little old Yankee!"

But there had been no gaiety in her mother's face when Julie had gone to her directly from the little boy next door, had told her mother that the little boy had asked where they came from, and that she had answered, "From New York," and then had slowly added, "From the epidemic." Even now she could recall her feeling that she smeared her mother, father, cousins—all—with contamination, and the sense of that guilt had sent her scurrying to her mother to confess. And in the moment of confession she had seen her betrayal mirrored in her mother's face. Three days later they were out of that house and in a new one, so far away that, no doubt, the contagion had not yet been heard of. There Julie had already learned, not to lie, but to withhold what was not asked. *From the epidemic.*

"But for a long time," Julie said, "I thought it was my fault. When I told that little boy next door——"

"Fault?" her mother asked. "The fault was theirs. You can only claim coincidence. The letter had come that morning—ha! I told you—from the real-estate board. Anyway the little boy still came and took you riding on his donkey the three days while I packed. Maybe he found this dark-haired contagion attractive. I never noticed till then/' she added thoughtfully, "what a sad Semitic profile a donkey has, the little beast of burden."

"I don't remember," Julie said, "ever speaking to that boy again." Nor could she remember when or how she had learned that it was not because they were infectious that they had been asked to leave, but all that summer the words had run together in her head, Jewishinfectious. And now there drifted across her mind the memory of a bleak shore and water, of pines.. . the memory of bleakness. .. .

"Come," Friedrich said. "You mean you really do not remember the last days with that flaxen-haired child ?"

She sat now, after learning of his escapade with the village waitress, as far from him as possible—which, in a circle, meant directly opposite. Now, when he spoke to her, her eyes rose to his face as though what he had committed must be branded on him like the mark of Cain.

"What are you talking about?" she said angrily. "How would you know the color of his hair?"

"I know," Friedrich said.

The other day when Rog had stood with her, she had turned the pages of her book and seen with his eyes her kinsmen of the ghetto, outlandish, dirty, miserable. He had put out a hand to hold a page: "God, she's beautiful!" Julie was so taken by surprise that she could not at first make out the girl's face, peering from the gloom of a shop. She was too familiar with this Oriental cast of feature to find it beautiful.

But as she continued to look she saw that Rog was right; the pictured face was lovely. She was so bemused that when the storm at last came up it took her by the same surprise.

"See you!" Rog called, pushing off his canoe. She had already begun to run. Each took one part of the danger of the storm—he fled to the water, she to the woods: the two elements most likely to draw lightning, of which she had a terror. Running, she thought how strange it was that Rog had said, "See you," after looking at her book, and no longer, "We won't be seeing each other again." Somehow it had ended his anger.

As she ran along the path through the woods a voice called, "Your friend who leaves you to run the storm alone, the pretty flaxen-haired gentleman . . ."

The green beside the path was parted by small white hands with the movement of a swimmer, and Friedrich stood with her.

She stopped in the very midst of the storm, outraged that she had been watched by one who came and went unseen, who stole out alone in the night. "And *your* friend!" she cried. "Your friend the waitress!"

He stared. Then understanding came into his face, and he threw back his head; the great drops pelted on his wild and laughing face, and that was her only answer—she could make of it what she would. "The German Lohengrin," he said at last, "came down on the maiden with his swan, and the American Lohengrin flees in his canoe!"

"Aren't there storms in your country?" she said angrily. "How could one stay on the shore in this lightning?"

As she spoke her fear quickened and she began to run, pulling him along. His suit was shiny now, wet through, and the drops struck cold and hard on her body, almost naked in

the swimming suit. Yet as she ran it seemed to her that they should have stayed it out together, Rog and she. She felt with shame that each had failed the other in some way that Friedrich now made important. But Friedrich too had failed her. Oh, no, what claim had she—?

There was a flash in which she saw his face livid beside her and then heard a tearing sound, endlessly prolonged in its pain. Across their path a tree lay. He put his arm around her, but she could not stop trembling. "We might … we might have been .. ."

His face was mysterious, lighted now only by the green illumination of the woods. His arm guided her over the slender trunk, a birch, lying low now, slain, a black gash in its lovely flesh. "Come, little one, it is really not so frightening."

At those words, spoken in a gentle, an almost seductive voice, she tore herself away from his arm and ran though the lightning converged now entirely on their vicinity. And when she was upstairs in her room and had flung herself drenched onto the bed, she still trembled, and her flesh still burned where it had met with his——Had the birch felt this pain? *Come, little one, it is really not so frightening.* There opened a meaning larger than winds, lightning, storm—a meaning and a fear from which she could not run. From his very clothing had seemed to rise the odor of another woman's body, and of the rites into which they had entered together. And Julie lay alone on her bed and tried to imagine how it would be to become, in one moment, a woman.

Now when Friedrich repeated in that same seductive voice, "And you really have not remembered him, the little flaxen-haired Lohengrin?" his earlier words reverberated like a

thread of sound by which she might, if she dared, find her way back to him. Then his voice hardened. "And tell me/' he sneered, "did the conqueror with the donkey grow up into the conqueror with the canoe ?"

The word "conqueror" made him, by contrast, appear smaller, frailer. He, to whom clung the odor of stale sleepless nights, of wine, of flesh, was defeated by one vanished blond child.

And now all in the circle perceived that for some reason not known to them Friedrich had stepped out of his aloof and detached role and had descended to a quite human pettiness.

"Flaxen hair! Lohengrin!" Little Mrs. Fiddleman rejoiced that he was no more immune than she. "That reminds me." Into the butcher shop had marched a woman, fat, blond, thick. Had not a Fiddleman the right to freely order pork chops in this free land? Yet this Wagnerian-bosomed creature had dared to insinuate to the butcher that pork chops before Mrs. Fiddleman, who should stick to her kosher diet, were pearls before . . . Not until late that night, when there was no one to give it to, had Mrs. Fiddleman thought of an answer: "Madam, you yourself could be served up on the *Fiihrers* table with an apple in your mouth, and no one would know the difference."

And then, like their ancestors of old who had sat by the waters of Babylon and wept for their lost Zion, they sat by the waters of humiliation and swore not to forget. Let their right hands forget their cunning, let their tongues cleave to the roofs of their mouths if they set not humiliation above their chiefest joy. Tomorrow told how he had been turned away from a hotel after reserving by mail. Morgen, the name was good, like the Great One's, but when he arrived the nose was even bigger than the Great One's. But as he left the hotel

he had called back to the clerk, "You know why Jesus was born in a stable? Because bastards like you wouldn't give him a reservation." And Mrs. Dreyfuss was reminded of the woman who sat next to her on the train and confided that what was so repulsive about the chosen people was that they all walked with their toes flung out. "Would you want your daughter to marry one, and your grandchildren to waddle like ducks?" And again Tomorrow was reminded of the time he lived next door in a New York apartment to a man who never answered his good morning, and Tomorrow had at last told his neighbor, "Anyway my apartment is more desirable than yours. Do I live next door to a Jew?"

And now, with the wildness of their laughter, they had fallen into their first language. Even Dr. Jennison laughed with them, though no blow had ever penetrated to him through his Praetorian guard of admirers, which included non-Jews of a type who no longer had any non-Jewish friends. Again Mrs. Fiddleman told a story, Tomorrow, Mrs. Dreyfuss, and each time Mrs. Dreyfuss translated into Julie's language.

Her mother pronounced no language perfectly—the old, unused, rusted; the new she had never mastered. But these stories, at any rate, had a savage quality, as though, returning to the first tongue, the guests returned to the first cruelties they had known. After a while they stopped translating for Julie; she never laughed. But each time their laughter rose and fell she could be certain that they had scored another bitter point against themselves. They were no longer familiar to her, but had become jolly in a frightening way; they rollicked with a private craziness. Yet this mood brought them to life in a way they had never before revealed. She saw them now as they might have been at any time among themselves,

unwatched by natives—their children. It seemed to Julie that they alone had identity, and that she was without substance or color, sane and unqualified by any past except her own small American one.

But Julie was not the only outcast. The child, little Elsie, had slid down from Mrs. Dreyfuss' lap. She pulled at Mrs. Dreyfuss' skirt, but Julie's mother, laughing, talking, did not feel the small tug, and the child knew that once again she had been abandoned by the one to whom she had entrusted love. She went to a chair across the room and curled up, struggling not to sleep.

Miss Schmidt was the other outcast. Between her and the language of her guests there rose no barrier to understanding; when a new story was begun her lips, like theirs, stretched in expectancy; her cheeks lifted in the muscles' welcome to laughter. Yet when the story ended it was not the same; her laughter was never prolonged; it rose brief, abrupt, shrill, like a protest. Indeed, each time the point was scored against the teller she winced as though it were she who had been punished, and only after that did her voice lift in its brief, shrill protest.

Miss Schmidt rose now from her chair to refill empty teacups. Gray and stiff, she moved through the exhilarated speech and gestures.

The hired girls no longer served the guests in the evening. Julie had overheard Miss Schmidt telling her mother that perhaps the girls had too long a day. Was it not easier, after all, to overwork oneself than to have to ask others to do this? Julie had been struck by the similarity of this attitude to that of her mother. She was struck, too, by Miss Schmidt's change from her former matter-of-fact acceptance of service. She did not connect this change with the furtive guilty expression

which crossed Miss Schmidt's face as she listened to Friedrich's reports of her country. Nor did Julie connect it with the expression, as unhappy, that overtook Miss Schmidt when her companion now and then joined the circle. She assumed, merely, that this change was one more result of her mother's overwhelming personality. . . . Once the companion had come like a little ghost into the room, so silently that no one was aware of her presence until she had sat down on the edge of Miss Schmidt's chair—and Miss Schmidt had started, anger clear on her face. In fact, so angry was she that she did not make room on her chair, and her friend was left almost sitting on the air. At last, perhaps to mollify that anger, she reached for Miss Schmidt's hand and pressed it. The German woman tore her hand away and, lifting that glance of furtive guilt, sent it traveling around the circle to seek out who had noticed—and had met Julie's fascinated stare!

Now as Miss Schmidt bent for Mrs. Dreyfuss' teacup, her glance again met Julie's in a mutual dislike; outside the sound of laughter that filled the room, the two outcasts made no common cause. It was the German woman who was the first to drop her eyes.

The laughter ceased, and further laughter rose only fitfully, until at last they sat in silence like people drowsy and stupefied after a feast. For a while the hunger of self-hatred had been satisfied.

Only Friedrich had found no repose. His head was turned away from them to the window; in the glass nothing was visible except the reflection of his profile shimmering on blackest night. His small fingers drummed the arm of his chair, his polished nails glittered.

Then from Mrs. Fiddleman rose a wail like that of a child distressed when the parent is remote and grieving for an un-

known cause. "Tell me, tell me, those relatives you mentioned in Warsaw ..."

His fingers ceased drumming.

"Mine—my relatives——" Mrs. Fiddleman continued to Friedrich. His life continued in the land where she had left her childhood, and Friedrich took on the stature of a father, though his years made him young enough to be a son. "My relatives—Cohens—came from the East; they were always rabbis."

"Mine, too," Friedrich said at last, "traveled always from the East, and in their itinerary followed flood, famine, the slaughter of the first-born."

"Ach," Mrs. Fiddleman said, "I am only trying to find out . . ." Thoughtfully she ran a finger over her short upturned nose. "Where did it come from, this nose of mine? From a Cossack perhaps? All I am trying to find out is if you and I… I have a feeling you and I are related."

Dreamily Friedrich thrust his profile against the light. "And of what does this cast of nose remind you?"

Against the bright firelight his nose turned up with a charming curve. Julie could think only of the dandified little Irish mayor who could certainly not have spoken the language, its intonations and gestures, into which they had lapsed for a little time. Friedrich seemed to her to be both familiar and in no way known, and she did not know exactly which aspect it was that she loved.

"Why—of my own nose yours reminds me!" Mrs. Fiddleman screeched with delight. "From the same Cossack!" She quivered with pleasure now that Friedrich had returned from his private brooding and become accessible again. "I told you that you and I——"

"Turning up or down makes no difference. A great and

learned gauleiter has classified this nose, dear lady. It is Egyptian, Assyrian, Semitic. In Egypt already you and I shared a Cohen. A rabbi? Maybe. For one night at least our common ancestor Cohen became a baker and in the desert concocted a dry hard biscuit with his own water and salt, with tears."

"Ah, for God's sake!" Mrs. Dreyfuss cried. "You mean we have traveled all around the world, and we have made a study of genealogy, and the only result is to find out that Mrs. Fiddleman and I are related! I could tell her that three hours ago. So long as one remains with water and salt in concentration camp, are we not all related?"

"Ah!" From Miss Schmidt came a little gasp. They had forgotten her, and as they now all turned to her with concern and affection she was accepted in kinship with them. Her shoulders were bowed, and her face was stricken with history. Julie remained the only outcast. Little Elsie slept, and in sleep, smiling, had found some larger world.

As Julie at last, yawning, made her way up the stairs to her bedroom there was a whirl of light footsteps behind her that ceased for a moment and then came together in a sharp little click of heels. In her ear a voice hissed, "Cousin!" and a slight form waltzed past her and vanished into the shadows of the hallway.

Chapter Ten

JULIE woke the next day with a headache, an occurrence as rare with her as it was frequent with her mother. At breakfast the others, too, seemed heavy-eyed and dull, as though the overindulgence in self-derision had not sat well on them during the night.

In the afternoon Julie went to the lake. Far off she saw a canoe. Rog? She did not wave. The sense of being cast out, with which the previous night had left her, made her want to be alone, to find in this summer one moment for her own. She watched the canoe disappear and thought what a nice boy Rog was really—he did not concern himself with any of the silly things, the God you spoke to, or how or why. And what a handsome boy, too. Why could she not love him? It was not Rog, as she would otherwise have supposed, who had chased after a waitress in a village bar. No, it was Friedrich, with his university degrees, his grave unsummery appearance; it seemed to her sometimes that he must resemble the first inhabitants of this estate, who had lived the formal life of the previous century. What on earth did they talk about, Friedrich and the village girl? Perhaps they did not talk at all. Seen through the grayness of headache, everything was dismal, and yet a conception she had always refused to face became clear. No one was consistent, no one was clothed in an unchanging garment; even Friedrich was two, divided. **He**

found a satisfaction in long serious hours with her uncle, and he found other satisfactions elsewhere. And what of herself? Friedrich, anyone, saw a painted face, a dress chosen to draw the onlooker's attention only more constantly to what the dress covered. And yet she knew, but could not have said, that under all these trappings lay something quite different. She felt at times like a child, ugly and twisted with tears, who held back, pulled away, and did not want to be grown. At other times there was only a pure sexless presence, a novice who had no other quest than to discover what lay at the heart of things. She could not have put this into words; she was aware only of being torn.

She began to wander along the shore of the lake, aimlessly looking, examining, searching, and in that way time passed without her marking it, as it does for a child. And she found pleasure in all the small things that please a child—the tiny sucking noise that her feet made in the sand, the breeze that tickled her hair and the scent of apples from some near-by orchard. This recalled to her that it must now be evening, for only in the coolness did all the scents of the countryside become apparent. Evening, and she discovered that her hands were filled with childish treasure: white perfect pebbles, the tiny curls of shells, wet flowers, bits of driftwood carved by the tide, even now rising. Her headache had vanished, but even as she remarked that wonderful absence of pain she remembered Friedrich, and all her perplexities and pain rushed in to fill the emptiness. She threw herself on the ground.

A tear fell on a blade of grass, and within the tiny sphere an ant was sealed and instantly still; the legs, the antennae ceased movement as though a sky had crashed. Her weeping ceased as instantly. With a twig she impaled the crystal, her tear, whose atoms clung with such tenacity that it remained

round, whole. But at last she dislodged the ant. It remained motionless on the blade of grass from which it had been toiling homeward with some infinite burden. She pressed the ant—and the spear of grass—down with her fingernail, and on the earth her nail cut the ant in two. She watched to see, exactly as when she had been a child, whether the halves would crawl away from each other, two identities, separate and equal—and therefore each must perish? For a moment the two halves struggled, the opposite pair of legs moved, and the ant seemed actually to have become two; each equal identity began to move away in an opposite direction. Then in the brown earth she lost one and she poked the other, that seemed complete now, a whole, with her twig; the legs twitched and then were quiet.

She rolled over on her back, assuaged, content, and watched the night take over the sky. She thought of the guests in the house casting a last look in their mirrors, going down the stairs to dinner, eating, and then going into the big room and lighting a fire on the hearth; like a child in forbidden night Julie felt neither hunger nor cold. From the tops of the mountains a last dark color reached toward the center, the very height of the sky, and was lost in that intense and windy blue. The pale first star appeared and brightened as the moon rose. For her the private spectacle was acted out: night came, the stage was the world.

She must have fallen asleep, for she opened her eyes with a start to see the darkness penetrated by a flashlight, to hear a man's voice—Tomorrow's?—call: "Julid Julie!" And she did not answer, but pressed herself closer against the earth, her mouth laughing silently into the grass, her shoulders shaking with a child's mischievous delight, until the light had/passed and the voice came from so far that she could

barely hear it: "Julid Julie!" At last it was so far and faint that her name was only a part of the night; the crickets, the birds, all the unseen creatures of the dark seemed to chant: "Julie! Julie!" and the entire night-world rocked with her, with the search and the celebration of her. The stars spelled her name across the sky. "Julie! Julie!" she spelled out as she looked up at the glittering dust a billion light years away.

At last she rose and followed her way home along the edge of the lake, which was bright with moonlight. The world was illumined and unknown and without fear. Even in the woods, where the strange white light penetrated, she was received and accepted. All was unknown, unfamiliar and beautiful.

But as she came up to the house there was a rustling in the grass. A snake? She was afraid, and she stopped. She had stopped before a lighted window. The window was closed and beyond the thick glass two figures faced each other. Their lips moved, but no sound came to Julie.

Miss Schmidt wore a gray dressing gown that hung loose and full as a judge's robe; her hair fell in a snaky braid down her back. The woman facing her, Adeline, wore a thin night-gown which revealed her body in an aging and revolting seductiveness. Soundless the two moved upon each other. The face above the gray robe was twisted with anger. The aging face, rising above the filmily revealed aging body, wept; the long white hands held a sheaf of papers which they appeared to be offering, or defending.

Perhaps the two whispered. Through the thick glass Julie could hear nothing. It was as though she had entered her uncle's world, where movement existed without sound, and, watching and waiting for the sound that never followed, she felt a tension, strange and very sad.

Each movement became very slow and deliberate, and there was no clue to meaning. The gray judge's figure came upon the other; the hands slowly emerged from the long sleeves, snatched the papers, tore them. The papers fluttered up and then down again, silent as snow. The woman in the gown bent, weeping, for them. A hand struck her cheek. The two straightened, staring at each other with horror. Then the gray arm lifted again; it did not strike, but with a blind, a clumsy tenderness groped for the punished cheek and caressed it. Again the two figures separated and stood staring at each other hopelessly. There had been no sound of slapping.

When Julie came around the front of the house someone stumbled against her, and even before she heard the voice Julie knew this was her mother. Perhaps she knew it because a hand came forward as if to strike her and with the thought of punishment came always the thought of her mother. "I thought you were gone," her mother cried, "with Friedrich!" And she began to cry. But Julie, still enveloped in that earlier silence, could not speak. She turned away and went into the house, and as she went up the stairs she heard her mother behind her call into the big room. "She has come back! That little idiot was out walking!" The noise seemed deafening to Julie.

But when she had undressed and gone to bed the door opened, and in the light from the hall she saw her mother holding a cup in her hands.

"Ah, my God!" her mother said as she sat down on the edge of the bed. "Why does one have children?" She no longer wept. "How can a girl of your age not understand I would be frantic when hour after hour passed ? Here, I heated this for you in the kitchen. You don't deserve it."

"But why do you always think the worst?" Julie asked.

"Gone with Friedrich! I can take care of myself, even with him!"

"And how will you take care of yourself/' her mother said, "if a canoe overturns and you cannot swim to shore? Ah, I will be happy when you have your own children."

It was only then that Julie understood what her mother meant by "gone." No other fear had come into her mother's mind than that one worst thing, and now this seemed to Julie a proof of her mother's love. She wanted to say that she was sorry, but words would not come. So in the dark her mother continued to feed her as though she were a child. In the dark, lest either be revealed too fully to the other. And it was out of scolding and bitterness that Julie took to herself the knowledge of her mother's love.

But after her mother had gone to sleep Julie remained awake a long time, hearing over and over the words, "I thought you were gone—with Friedrich!" Then he was still somewhere in the night, and not alone. She would have liked to waken her mother and ask her why Friedrich was as he was, or she herself, or her mother—whose anger was love. She saw again the ant moving away from itself, two, divided. ... Julie's face, from which had long faded any childish pleasure in the evening, now set in hard austere lines, the face of the novice who was dedicated. Would the time come when she would understand what lay at the heart of things?

She fell asleep at last, and the hours that she had spent returned. They returned, not with the acting out of all that she did not understand, but with a sensation of pain, as though she were stretched apart. She was wakened once by a cry that rose from deep in her own being: "Friedrich!" Or perhaps in restless sleep she had heard his footsteps as he came back from one of his lives and went on to his solitary room.

Chapter Eleven

THEN slowly the feeling began to turn against Friedrich. Perhaps a seed of mistrust had been sown on the night of the jokes, which seemed in retrospect to be the last good time. And not completely good. The guests had honored Friedrich by speaking his language—but in his language they had wounded themselves, and they could not quite forgive him this.

Now when he came down in the evening the circle no longer opened for him: he pushed his way into it, made a breach, and sat outcast and lonely beside Dr. Jennison, who did not seem to notice what went on around him. The evenings faded; no golden light warmed the faces; the samovar was banished to a corner sideboard, where it sat, dingy and tarnished, in the shadows. And the conversation deliberately dwelt on memories and experiences which the guests had shared in this country, as if they tried to pretend that Friedrich was not present. But he had an opinion on everything under the sun; he was not to be silenced. Suave, malicious, he continued to bask in the sun of Dr. Jennison's unperceptive benevolence and to take part in his own exclusion. Friedrich had become a minority.

The hired girls, who might otherwise have been charmed like the village waitress, followed the guests' example. When

Friedrich came down to breakfast, fresh, bright of eye, no matter how late he had gone to sleep the night before, Genevieve and the other girls greeted his *"Goot* morning" with smirks and titters that no one tried to check except Julie, who glowered at them.

She wondered sometimes whether Genevieve listened to the voice of the priest, broadcast each Sunday from his shrine. Returning once from the village, Julie had heard his words from the open window of a house. The voice was nasal, common, and yet it compelled with some dreadful ceremonious quality. ". . . those who defile Christ, play Judas, the warmongers, the profiteers, the Jews . . ." The voice celebrated a new liturgy and a new mass. As she had stood listening a head thrust through the open window and a man's rough voice laughed, "Come on inside and listen, babe." She ran and did not stop until the mean little village street ended in this house.

The street ended in this house, and Julie did not know whether the hired girls trailed after them here the priestly voice and rough laughter, or whether they merely picked up the loose ends of aversion dropped by the guests. She envied her uncle, who could not hear the ugly sounds in the world that seemed constantly to grow louder. When she said to him—shouted, rather—"I passed a house in the village, and they were listening to Father Coughlin," he merely smiled vaguely. Had he really not heard her shout, or was that vague smile trying to say, "Well, then, that is not so bad. One house in a whole village."

And certainly all that went on around Dr. Jennison now must have appeared "not so bad"—or, indeed, exactly as usual. He could sit serenely at table, for he did not hear the sound that accompanied gesture: the sound of dishes plunked

down outrageously before Friedrich, or of toes impatiently tapping the floor as Genevieve waited to remove those dishes. Nor could Dr. Jennison discern how the conversation of the guests—sometimes straggling, sometimes overstimulated—was struck to silence when Friedrich's slight dark-clad figure appeared in the doorway. This mark of silence was no longer reserved for Nora, the green immoralist. Perhaps only after the night of the jokes had they actually realized what Friedrich himself had pointed out, that the acquaintanceship with those of Wilno or Berlin was a millstone around the neck of citizens of happier places. On the night of the jokes Mrs. Dreyf uss had said, "So long as one is in concentration camp we are all related." Perhaps they felt the obverse: so long as they were somehow related they were all in concentration camp—— And Friedrich marched debonairly through silence and sat down at the table where Dr. Jennison waited with his sister and his niece. Whatever dislike was felt for Friedrich, that table was a little island in the sea of restlessness.

Yet the guests' attitude toward Dr. Jennison was composed of two dissimilar strains. Although he must be accorded some of the aversion they felt toward Friedrich—for he had accepted this younger man as a son—their attachment, their veneration could only increase as, with each passing day, the summer's tragic tidings increased. Their glances would often turn to Dr. Jennison from their reading of the day's crises. They sensed that exactly as he must soon part from Friedrich, so there approached their own parting from this august and aging parent. He, too, soon would die, while at this very moment in Europe there died without honor in the concentration camps those as old, as venerated—those who, like him, had once spoken for them in the world. But for the grace of God—well, God, these days, was graceless.

And this, too, Dr. Jennison did not seem to notice. His leonine head—the hair only now had begun to turn gray; on the smooth rounded flesh there still appeared no wrinkles—turned an austere composure on the storm that raged about him. This, Julie believed, was because all human feeling had been left out of him; he was merely an arrogant intellect and therefore, in times such as these, to be envied. Yet as he sat at table and icily rebuked Genevieve if his coffee varied one degree from the temperature he required, or turned that same bleak sarcasm on Julie if she spilled a drop of gravy, she had a curious reaction. She felt comforted and reassured.

She wondered one day, after hearing Tomorrow read aloud the happenings in a concentration camp, whether her uncle, were he one of those unfortunates, would not continue to be impervious and exact, to demand his just rights. She had questioned Tomorrow, uncomfortably aware that she was asking enlightenment from one in the enemy camp—the one, indeed, who seemed to lead the opposition against Friedrich. "How little you know of life!" Tomorrow exclaimed, and as he went on speaking she lost all sense of enemy here. His face filled with suffering, as though he actually saw the figure conjured by his words: one more broken old man, unshaven, filthy, derelict, mumbling in dreams, in demented sleep, fragments from his song of songs of man's progress, *The Origin of Species.* But, even as Tomorrow spoke, there rose before Julie the known image of her uncle, immaculate, spare, remote. Her mind could not grasp the figure of her uncle in defeat.

She even had to admit slowly that her uncle was not incapable of feeling. Her awakened interest in him brought back so much that she had refused to know, and she recalled now what her mother had told her. This deafness had come upon him when his wife had died, as if he withdrew from a

world that had become meaningless for him. It had been a really great love.

The fact that her uncle no longer had any interest in living strengthened Julie's belief that he would present to horror a front indomitable and not to be degraded. But she did not completely grasp the meaning of his behavior until her mother's exclamation one night as she turned out the light for bed. "Mark! Mark!... You'd think that when any minute there can be a war and in one flash cities can be ruined and thousands of young men killed—you'd think he'd have more on his mind than whether his coffee is too hot or too cold!" And Julie, angered because she felt her mother wailed too much, sighed too often, assaulted them all constantly with her moods—Julie snapped back, "Maybe he's just trying to keep us comfortable." And she was angered, too, because her mother constantly mourned the death of men, as though in these days of concentration camps no women died, or as though the death of women were unimportant, as though they were secondary citizens of the world, even in suffering.

"What are you talking about?" her mother rejoined no less angrily. "How does this complaining about everything unimportant keep us comfortable?"

Out of anger, unexpectedly an answer rose to Julie's tongue. But she would not give it to her mother, who perversely refused to understand. He made them comfortable simply by not changing. In the face of every turmoil—even Friedrich had grown more savagely ironic—he remained constant. And, when her mother at last turned out the light, Julie took this sense of constancy into sleep with her; she fell off in one instant, while her mother turned and twisted.

But indeed the only hint of what her uncle actually felt at this time came from Friedrich. "I am Socialist. He is An-

archist. At one time he would not even talk to me." Friedrich shrugged. "Now he is old, and we are both in the same boat."

"What boat?"

"Despair. Or is that too dramatic a word? Your uncle is old and without children. He looks for some survival. And now the eastern European culture, to which he gave all his thought, all his interest in life, is threatened. If it does not survive—nor the people—he has no survival."

Julie felt only that her uncle repudiated her as his descendant, and left himself to some anonymous shapeless mass. She had no place in him. But he did not seem to her like a man who despaired—not until later.

And because Friedrich shared with her uncle in this need for survival (Anarchist, Socialist—they were both Jews) Julie began to conceive of them as of the same flesh. Yet, feeling for Friedrich in the way she did, it troubled her to think of him as if he were her uncle's son, and therefore her close blood relation___But at those times when he spoke of returning to Europe, she felt that she would lose cousin, uncle, lover, father. She tried to banish this thought; its implications were too disturbing.

It may be that the others also began to feel too close a relationship to Friedrich. For an event took place which made them all feel like children abandoned by a powerful parent, cast adrift in the world without any protection. They came to feel that they were no more secure than Friedrich, the European. Yet this brought them no closer to him, for, feeling now that they were caught up with, that at any time they, too, could become victims, it was no longer possible to have pity for him. Pity was the luxury of the fortunate. Rather—like those victims of the concentration camps, who,

these days, were never absent from their thoughts—what the guests suffered, each suffered for himself alone—both despair and the desire to survive.

One morning when Julie came downstairs Friedrich was not at the table. Breakfast was over, the hired girls cleared, Genevieve slapped the food down before her, and the room was strange. Everyone had finished eating, but no one moved outward from the confines of the room, no one proceeded toward any further activity. A circle of silent people sat around Dr. Jennison. He appeared to be sleeping, his head sunk on his chest, his eyes closed. What did they hope to find in him? He gave them nothing; his eyes closed as though in a refusal to live.

Julie asked suddenly, "Where is Friedrich? Is he ill?"

Her voice carried through the silent room. Each face turned to her, but no one spoke. It was as though the effort would have been too great.

Gone! she thought in the same words that her mother had used to her.

Then a strange voice spoke, harsh, croaking, said, "Now it will happen, what never before succeeded." It was her uncle's voice. He still did not raise his head, open his eyes; it was as though the dead spoke. "Not one Jew will be left alive in Europe."

Miss Schmidt's lips opened in a little cry. She had been punished by Dr. Jennison as she herself the other night had punished.

Again there was silence; no one could rise, move, proceed further into the activities of the day. Time passed. It was Mrs. Dreyfuss who at last released them. Staring out at the gray steamy day, she murmured, "And Friedrich rushed to the village without even a raincoat!"

Her words brought Tomorrow's face in a full turn to her.

His face was no longer empty. Misery filled it, and as he strode out of the room his voice threw back without pity, "He will need more than that to protect him now!"

"What's happened?" Julie cried. "What's the matter?"

In one voice her mother and Miss Schmidt answered, "Russia has signed a pact of peace with Germany." And their accents, deriving from those two countries, mingled strangely.

The day continued its strangeness.

Julie sat against the far wall of the room where Tomorrow had posed her because he said he wanted shadow all around her, and the young face looking out. "Now in the whole world there is only darkness. I want the light from the window to fall on the young face." She looked in the direction of the window as he indicated. But was it possible that light could fall on her? The color of the world outside was that of oncoming night or storm, though night was still far and there was no rumbling of thunder, no promise of release, only a fine constant rain. " 'All over Europe the lights are going out one by one,'" he quoted as he set up a chair, clipped his paper to the drawing board, sharpened his pencil. He sat down, his eyes studying Julie with the artist's squint. "How can she know, a young girl, how I feel? More than half of my life is gone. And everything has failed."

It was afternoon. Hours had passed since her mother had told her that Friedrich had rushed out into the rain without a coat, a hat—rushed to the village to get the newspapers that the plane would bring up out of the city, as though this news could not be real to him until he saw it printed in black words. "If only it weren't he who went!" someone exclaimed. But only Friedrich, alas, did not fear the rain. And even Miss Schmidt had gone on to say apologetically that, yes, today of all days perhaps some other emissary might have been pref-

erable between her house and the village—someone less foreign-appearing, perhaps. And then she had laughed shrilly: what difference did it make who went? Friedrich was not German or Russian; the villagers had no interest in world-*politiJ{;* war had not been declared. Oh, no, how foolish she had become; this was a day of nerves, of nerves.

"No interest in world politics?" Tomorrow had boomed. And he told them how one day last week a lout, an Italian, a road worker, Fascist no doubt, had yelled after him, "Hey, Hitler ask all the Jewish doctors to come back to Germany! Ha! Ha!"

"Well," Mrs. Dreyfuss asked uncertainly, "what are you proving? Perhaps he thought you would laugh with him. Is it not ridiculous?"

"He was laughing at me," Tomorrow screamed. *"At* me."

But as she listened Julie, with a pang of disloyalty, had also felt uncomfortable, picturing that black suit, that foreign unsummery suit, hurrying into the American drugstore, the American barber shop, seeking to buy up news, the hideous news of his Europe. What if someone yelled after him, "So now you people want us to stick up for you like the Reds promised they would?"

Now Julie sat facing the window as Tomorrow had posed her. It was hours since Friedrich had left, and she thought bitterly, Let the whole world go to hell—he still has to chase that girl in the village.

"On your face the expression changes every moment," Tomorrow murmured angrily. "And what do I want with this shadow and light? Am I a Rembrandt? He left his own; he went to live in the ghetto, to live and paint. Why? What a strange thing to do! Rembrandt, the goy, the genius, loved us. Why? Must one ask why one is loved? Is it not enough

to have to ask why one is hated? Why must we cursed people have to question when we are loved? Well, now there is no one who cares about us."

She had not wanted to sit for Tomorrow, he was one of the enemy camp. But this morning there had been no enemies. When he had asked Julie to sit for a drawing, it had been her mother who answered, and in a curiously tender voice. "Yes, if you can catch it just as she is now—seventeen, yes." And thus Julie found herself carefully arranged in a chair, like a bouquet of flowers in a vase, being stared at and studied, and it had nothing to do with all that went on today. But everything was strange today. It was almost as if someone had died; there was the same restless waiting; the hours went by without change, and time seemed endless.

It made her think of the day on which her father had died. One did peculiar things on a day of death. She remembered how she had gone to the telephone and called the girl who had been the constant companion of her childhood, and who lived now in a distant city. "This is Julie. My father is dead." There had been a long silence, as though the other instantly accepted, over the years they had not seen each other, the reason that Julie turned to her now—as though the other were thinking over how it must be to go fatherless, without protection or support, in a world where one would have to grow up, contend against other people, bear one's own children, face death oneself at last. "It is awful," the girl's voice had said far away at the end of the wire. And Julie had hung up and gone to join the mourners.

From another room came the music of the phonograph. Julie saw her mother beside the window, staring out. In her mother's eyes tears would be welling, because, whenever she heard that duet of Ai'da and Radames locked in the tomb be-

neath the earth, her mother cried. The music came into the room from far away, from so far, rooms or years.. .. Love—that had been love, her mother said.

And then suddenly her mother spoke. "I remember," she said, "I remember it was on just such a day as this, dark, dark, raining, that I left my home and said good-by to my father."

A sigh trembled through the room. Outside the trees bent and rustled against the window, and the two sighs, within and without, were one.

"I wonder sometimes how I could have done it. I knew I would never see him again, and he knew, too."

"Or," Miss Schmidt at last replied in a harsh voice, "how our fathers could have let us go!" Again a common sigh met with the sighing of the leaves against the window.

"But they did it for our good," Mrs. Dreyfuss murmured. "Only for our own good." Yet her voice seemed to rise in a question, as though she asked how a father could have abandoned his children to the unknown country that, because it was unknown, had been a place of terror, and in which, as it turned out, so many had gone under.

And once again the duet began; the voices returned from death to the final moments of life together and were accompanied by Tomorrow's snarl. "There is only one hell, one concentration camp: 'Too late!' I had a choice once how to spend my life. There is talent here. Now it is too late." Abruptly the song was cut off in the middle, before death was reached again. And then Tomorrow's voice ceased, too, and there was no sound in the room except for his pencil whispering over the paper, too late, too late. The figures in the room were still, as though in the final attitude where the spell of sleep had snared them.

Mrs. Dreyfuss stared through the window at a world that

rejected her. Outside rain fell; she was afraid of rain, and the world kept her at bay. At the other end of the great window Nora was caught in identical attitude, looking out. This was the first time that she had remained in the house with the other guests, on this dismal day when they felt themselves betrayed. The young man sat on the arm of Nora's chair, and he made no attempt to touch her; his hands dangled at his sides. Mrs. Dreyfuss was alone, and the woman who had a lover appeared no less alone. In a corner Dr. Jennison gave himself up to the meaninglessness of life; an open book lay on his lap, and he dozed. And Julie, forced to look out on them, felt herself drugged by lethargy, by despair and age. She struggled, but she could not save herself; her eyes were closing.

There was a trumpet burst of sound. Friedrich charged through the doorway. The spell was broken.

Mrs. Dreyfuss turned from the rejecting day, the young man put his hand on Nora's arm, Dr. Jennison's head jerked back and a dream broke from his face.

"Yes," Friedrich said, "it is true. The Soviet has signed a pact with Germany."

His coat was torn at the shoulder, his hair was disheveled, and there was a long scratch down his cheek.

"But what has happened?" Miss Schmidt asked. "Yes, what has happened to you?" She was holding a service bell. Her hand trembled, and the bell tinkled sharply.

Friedrich shrugged. "A little difference of opinion." His arms were filled with newspapers and, oddly, with flowers.

"A difference of opinion?"

Genevieve came into the room, summoned by Miss Schmidt's bell

Friedrich unwrapped a bouquet from a newspaper and tossed it to Julie. "Catch!" She put her face into it; the great blooms were wet.

Miss Schmidt said to Friedrich, "I would not think I had any right to ask you what has happened. But now . . . but today . . ." Again her hand trembled, and the bell tinkled faintly.

Tomorrow snatched a newspaper from Friedrich and spread it out on the table. They all stood staring down at the unclear photograph, composed of the tiny wavy lines that had sent it across the air. But the intention was clear; the underling of the leader who had promised to save them embraced the underling of the leader who had promised to murder them.

And then Nora lifted her head with a vicious jerk. "A difference of opinion? What do you mean—a fight over politics?"

"Madame, you are too astute!" Friedrich said.

They waited for her answer, but it was Genevieve who spoke. "What did you want?" she asked Miss Schmidt.

It was a moment before the German woman said, *"Ma'am,* Genevieve," and her reprimand sounded only halfhearted.

"Maam, what did you want?"

Miss Schmidt looked about helplessly as if trying to recollect what she had wanted, not aware that her hand had rung the bell. "Well, tea, then. Yes, tea. I think we could all use—"

"Well, I'm brighter than you are," Nora said to Friedrich.

"Please," Miss Schmidt murmured. And when Genevieve was gone she said, "Let not the help talk of how the guests quarrel. And now more than ever we must be as one."

"I have more sense than to fight about politics these days," Nora continued to Friedrich.

The guests looked from the woman in green to the slight dark figure, and they were uncomfortable that this woman whom they disdained had become their spokesman. There

was a movement as if they wavered and might turn their backs on Nora.

Julie stared at Friedrich over the great heads of the flowers. They smelled of rain and of the growth from which they had so recently been severed. She waited apprehensively for what he would say. Perhaps he could make everything right again.

"Have you all gone crazy?" Friedrich asked. He had lumped them with Nora, and they were now, as Miss Schmidt had said, "as one."

"How can one fight about politics these days?" For the first time someone took up Nora's words, her opinion.

And another: "We must be so careful these days, we Jews, not to make anger against us. And now more than ever."

"Yes, we must be careful. We are alone in the world now."

But Dr. Jennison rose from his chair, turned Friedrich's face to the light, and studied the small wound. "Na," he said, "a drop of peroxide . . ."

Miss Schmidt and her guests remained in a stricken silence, watching the two go away from them—the old man whom they revered and the dark foreign figure *who* seemed to have brought calamity to their very threshold. First Friedrich would be made the victim, then they. Julie, still standing with the flowers pressed against her cheek, saw Tomorrow's lips move. She could have sworn that she read on them the same words that Rog (but from so different an impulse!) had spoken: "Go back where you came from!"

When she went upstairs later and rapped on Friedrich's door similar words were again spoken to her by him.

He stood at the window, looking out at the evening rain. His coat hung on the back of the chair, and as he turned to her he seemed very jaunty in shirt sleeves, informal and in-

timate. The scratch down his cheek lent a devil-may-care expression.

She asked him for his coat—her mother would mend the tear—and as he pulled it from the back of the chair he said, "I shall be going back very soon now. Very soon."

All she could think to say in the face of that loss was, "Why—why did you bring me flowers?"

He turned back to the window. "Why not?" he asked.

When she stood again outside the closed door, carrying his coat in her arms, a love for this heavy unsummery garment filled her. She embraced the empty arms and kissed them——

Chapter Twelve

RAIN fell ceaselessly now; the weather's caprice had become a persecution. And one afternoon Julie's mother cried to her, "Rain or no rain, I must get out of this house! Come with me!"

This was a day that had been without pleasure, but since the afternoon when Friedrich had returned with his coat torn, his cheek scratched, all the days had been without pleasure, without summer and its lazy sweep of heat.

It was Miss Schmidt, strangely, who seemed most disturbed by Friedrich's misadventure and by the other event that had taken place on the same day—the brutal embrace between her country and its enemy. Why should Miss Schmidt feel herself so affected? the guests would ask each other. For her nothing had changed—how was she betrayed or abandoned?

Once Julie heard Miss Schmidt shout at Dr. Jennison, "I cannot understand this pact. I cannot unless——"

"Unless?" Tomorrow interrupted. "What 'unless?' The Soviet alone knows what the Soviet does!" He had rallied from the blow and appeared, as he never had before, almost sprightly and gay. The shock, and his recovery from it, seemed a springboard that hurled him forward into a new vitality.

But Miss Schmidt paid Tomorrow no attention. She went

on shouting at Dr. Jennison. "... unless so many things one hears about the new *Reich* are not true. I find it hard to believe that such bestiality can be true of—of people like the ones I knew. Ordinary people like—like myself," she ended, fingering her necktie.

Certainly since the day of the pact Miss Schmidt seemed to have changed. Not only was she obsessed with this inquiry into her country's guilt, but her very person had altered and she seemed to flaunt ostentatiously a difference from the other women, her guests. The front of her shirt was adorned by a man's tie, and her hair was pulled back so tightly that in full face her outlines were like those of a man.

Dr. Jennison thoughtfully considered her words and her distress, for he admired her as a solid individual, sensible in appearance and erasing that uncomfortable little variance between men and women which Nora flung in their faces like a green flag. Miss Schmidt's necktie and Nora's glistening silk were indeed like flags of two different nations of women.

At last he answered, "No, I am afraid that what one hears about the Third *Reich* is true." And Miss Schmidt, still fingering her tie and pulling its knot ever tighter, answered, "I suppose it is." But her eyes refused to meet his, as though she had a last reservation with which she feared to confront him.

"We were stunned," Dr. Jennison murmured, "but what despair must they feel—the Communists in the concentration camps? Such despair is impossible to imagine!"

He had rallied, too, but, unlike Tomorrow, brought a constantly sterner, an almost protective indifference to this life that had no meaning for him, and whose events now, one after the other, seemed more consistently to bear out that conviction of meaninglessness. "No, their despair is not to

be imagined by us." And because her uncle seemed to Julie to have gone beyond despair to a calm revulsion from the human spectacle, she again felt his power that would transcend the degradation of the camps and separate him from the other inhabitants. But this power, she thought bitterly, he refused to pass on to her. He did Hot look to her for survival of himself, but only to the culture of a people who seemed now destined not to survive.

As Julie sat at the luncheon table that rainy day she saw that the red line across Friedrich's cheek was slowly fading. It seemed to her merely to enhance his singular attraction; he was as rakish as a pirate with an eye patch.

No one had questioned Friedrich further about his misadventure in the village: it would have been too painful at this moment of history to have heard, if only at second hand, the insult, the word that must surely have accompanied the attack on him, the sickening word for their race. If they heard it now, they would hear it like children who cannot say to a brute, "I will call my father"—for the strong good father was dead. Yes, everyone shrank from Friedrich. Only Miss Schmidt came up to the table now and then to exchange a few words with him. As she approached this time, a burst of laughter from Friedrich, a little strained, greeted her. Her face reddened, and her hands rose to her tie and began tightening it like a garrote. "It is amusing, I presume. We happen both to be wearing the identical tie."

Friedrich stared. "What? What? I was telling this young lady a story by Sholem Aleichem."

"Oh." Miss Schmidt reddened again at her mistake. But constantly, these days, she made such mistakes. Constantly, she flushed or paled or heard the word no one had whispered

or the snicker no one had uttered. "Perhaps you have heard of him, our great Yiddishist?" Friedrich asked. But even as she began to answer she noticed Genevieve hovering, and she lowered her eyes and her voice and swiftly moved away, her sentence unfinished.

It was only then that Julie noticed that the entire room spoke in whispers, heads downcast, and, as soon as one of the hired girls approached a table, those who waited for food fell into silence. Of what, Julie wondered, were they afraid? Genevieve's face became sulky and suspicious as she approached the table bringing coffee—and Mrs. Dreyfuss' conversation ceased. A little police state had come into being; the spies were watched, and the watched became spies.

It was exactly at the moment when the coffee was set down—and Julie noticed Genevieve's offended expression—that the door from the porch burst open. Nora stood on the threshold, and a little shudder at her audacity swept the room. Her arms were flung out to embrace the tall boys standing on either side of her. The three of them glowed on the gray day, their cheeks pink from the damp, their hair curling, and there could be no mistake that these were Nora's sons; in them the unknown father remained unknown. Then the other details struck the guests: Nora's dress, her jewels, her hair—as elaborate as though she entertained, not sons, but lovers. And then, behind them all, her third boy, her lover, appeared.

She remained on the threshold, staring out over the room as though only through insolence could she present her children. And the guests, dropping their eyes before that glowing insolence, wondered how they could have let her become their spokesman the other day. As though she read their thoughts in the averting of their heads from her, the dropping of their

eyes, Nora sent her glance across the room until it had picked out Friedrich. Then she smiled mockingly over all the bowed heads as if to send him a message: "You have made things bad. I will make them worse!"

Genevieve slammed the porch door, through which a draft came, and with that vicious sound Nora and her coterie walked to their table, slowly and with grace. The two boys were taller than she, and had a charming diffidence—as though they, at least, were aware of this difficult moment. The perfume which Nora had poured on herself for her sons settled in the room, and after a while it became disagreeable.

Mrs. Dreyfuss said, "And to think that shameless thing has two such fine sons!"

Julie heard this only as a reproach to hefself. She was less than Nora's sons because what she was—female—her mother neither cherished nor valued. And Julie, too, could not take her eyes from that table beside the window, from the woman who had decked herself out for her sons and from the two young men who were utterly beguiled by this beautiful woman, their mother. They were so charmingly brought up that they appeared neither strident nor ill at ease in the presence of the man who sat at the head of the table and was not their father. Indeed it was he, not too much older than they, who sat silent, morose, not eating.

Nora's voice, which she never tried to modulate, came rich and coarse. "I just wanted you two to see what an exciting summer I'm having!" And then: "Next summer I'm absolutely going to Paris—if only this fuss over Poland turns out all right."

"Splendid!" Friedrich shouted. "So long it turns out all right, I spend my vacation next summer in a concentration camp!"

In the sudden terrible silence he strode out of the room, and

the faces of the guests turned away from the table where the woman still sat, and from that other table which Friedrich had abandoned. For her words and Friedrich's were opposite sides of the same coin, defiance of what they both feared. The hired girls alone looked curiously from one table to the other, and Genevieve's giggle as Friedrich went from the room was shattering.

Later, as Mrs. Dreyfuss was leaving the dining room, she paused a moment beside Miss Schmidt. "You should ask that shameless thing to leave!"

And Miss Schmidt answered with a question. "But who does not hope for peace?" And then she added, "Because of the young man, her Paul, you mean? No, I cannot ask her to leave because of that. It would not be broad-minded. In my Germany we were broad-minded about such things."

Julie lay on her bed after lunch. It was the time of month that left her listless and moody, and, though the damp smell of the house and its silence oppressed her, she could not rally her energies and go outside. The book that she had brought upstairs swam before her aching eyes.

It was her mother's pain that rescued her.

"What a headache I have!" Mrs. Dreyfuss exclaimed, bursting into the room. "Rain or no rain, I must get out of this house!"

She went to the closet and pulled out two raincoats. Then she turned a wry smile on Julie. "Tell me, do I look like the rest of them—as though it were an oversight I wasn't buried last week? Three days indoors!"

She flung a raincoat at Julie, berated her laziness. "You could have found something to do—buttons to sew on, something."

Her mother's familiar behavior was a cause for comfort,

not anger, on such a day as this. Her mother did not change, any more than did her uncle with his continuous small complaints in the face of the world's really large and valid complaint.

But when Julie met her mother downstairs in the hall, she no longer appeared familiar. Mrs. Dreyfuss wore her own raincoat, but on her hands were Miss Schmidt's leather driving gauntlets, on her feet Miss Schmidt's boots. The crowning touch of unfamiliarity, however, was Miss Schmidt's rain hat, a sou'wester, under which her mother's face appeared fierce and hawklike. The German woman's clothes recalled to Julie the scene she had glimpsed through the window, and it seemed to her that her mother had dressed herself, not only in the other's clothes, but in her special aspect, brutality. She was both affronted and fascinated by this figure.

They went down the driveway. Mrs. Dreyfuss followed the side of the road where the pines could shelter her, and her somber clothes were at one with them. When the driveway opened out Julie saw a great elm. Spreading its branches to the weather, to the juice and moisture of summer, it was so different from the sad and aged pines. Its brilliant color, like that of Nora's dress, reminded her of the woman standing with her arms outspread, embracing her sons. Like Nora the tree was all bedecked and ornamented; silver drops glittered from its leaves, and the topmost branches shimmered with mist. Looking at it, Julie felt all her old admiration for Nora rise. Whatever she was—and she had been beastly to Friedrich—she seemed the very opposite of all that was perpetual and without joy.

Mrs. Dreyfuss, a little ahead, had come to a stop, undecided which direction to take, whether toward the town or the open country. In her masterful figure, uncertainty was odd.

She said at last in a voice as hesitant as her attitude, "Isn't the road to town more sheltered perhaps?" Turning around, she really looked at Julie for the first time since they had started. "For God's sake!" she cried. "You haven't better sense than to come out in the rain without a hat!" Then it seemed to Julie that her mother's voice was tinged with disgust: "And at your time of the month!"

"It's more a mist than rain," Julie answered. "And what has my time of month to do with anything?" The words themselves, connoting a doom, regular and inescapable, infuriated her. "Who calls it 'your time of the month' anyway? It's the curse," she ended, almost shouting. "That's what we all call it. The curse! The curse!"

They stared at each other without speaking, and Julie wondered if her mother remembered that first time when, half a child, she had come to her mother and asked, "What has happened to me? What is this blood?" As she spoke, and before her mother answered, it had seemed to Julie that on the older face a look of horror had gathered, of disgust.

Now it was her mother who asked a question: "What makes you so difficult?" She did not wait for an answer, but turned on her heel and plowed ahead. Julie followed. At last her mother stopped and waited for her. "Maybe we should go back. Doesn't it look like a storm coming?" Perhaps Julie was more accustomed to her mother's wearing of Miss Schmidt's hat. The shadow cast by the great brim seemed to soften her face now and make it sad.

"It can't possibly storm now," Julie said. "Why do you hate the rain so?"

Her mother began to walk again. At last she answered, "Do you know how many of those I loved died from rain?"

"From *rain?"*

"What would you know about it, you who have always lived on the fat of the land!"

Julie heard again that endless anger with her; the voice was the voice of her mother, but the hands were the talon hands of another who had struck in punishment.

But she could match this anger with her own. "Would you like it better if I had lived in tenements and starved? Is that why you came to this country?"

"Why is it that in the whole world only my own daughter never understands me? Yes, then, rain! Rain! Outside and in! Your father died from rain—from the weather—from the bitter terrible weather. He worked at the things boys worked at in those days—or now. What do you know about it? Boys who had no one to give them anything except themselves—selling newspapers, shining shoes, carrying messages. Outside, exposed—and what happened? You know what happened—his heart. When he was a little boy—rheumatic fever and a rheumatic heart."

But that she had not known about him; he had never told her about his boyhood, but had, rather, made his past his own and kept everything of himself from his daughter.

"With a heart like his, climbing stairs, going out to see patients at night, always working, overworking. For his patients, and for us, too . . ."

And now Julie was glad to be without a hat in the rain, and at a moment when she felt unwell. If she went out into the rain again and again, unprotected, perhaps she might develop a similar condition of illness and expiate the guilt of his death and his overworked heart.

"And why did Anna die, my first friend and my dearest, as young as you, as good-looking? Had she no rights? Why did she die coughing? Rain, yes, rain. Inside the black tene-

ments, damp, dripping with damp, she died." Now in the dark garments her mother seemed like death tramping the roads, and Julie hated and feared her mother. "We all got somewhere, yes—those of us who survived the getting somewhere—and we are all marked in one way or another: the bad heart, the stomach that cannot digest, the pain of rheumatism." She stopped; she made an effort to modify her tone. But she could not end the bitterness against her daughter and an entire generation to whom everything had been given, and who had wrested nothing and suffered nothing. "No," she said. "It is not your fault. I would not want you to know. But you, could you have done what we did? Could you have raised yourself up out of such terrible darkness as that of our early years?"

Not for the first time did Julie hear such a reproach from her mother. She could remember no time without it—as though upon this bedrock of suspicion and contempt her mother's attitude toward her had been built, and included all other things: the worthlessness of being a girl, and then, later, of being a poet. Her mother disowned her, said, You are not worthy of our struggle, generation of weaklings! And Julie was left adrift, lost, unmoored to a life in this country that her parents had earned for themselves but not for her. Her mother contaminated her with self-doubt; she could find no confidence in herself, who would so easily be crushed by the world, and now she found no way to protect herself against pain except to inflict it.

"Raised yourselves up to what? Doctors? Lawyers? Raised yourself up to earn a good living? Money! Is that anything to be so proud of?"

"I am proud," her mother said, "not of what we became, but of how we became it. What happens to anyone except

to grow old, old, sick, tired? No, very few of us were Emma Goldmans or Jacob Epsteins or anything at all like that. As you say, we are only doctors and lawyers now, in a summer boardinghouse."

And then her bitterness with the generation who took so lightly what had been wrested for it swept her away, and there broke the torrent of herself which she had always dammed up before her daughter, who had not lived it and could not have lived it. The mother must make quite clear, not what she had become, but the heroic way of becoming.

Again she told how she had cried, cried, cried crossing the ocean and had gone directly from the ship to foul damp rooms, directly from the sea to darkness. It was as though she were still bewildered that somehow, somewhere, there had not been a moment's respite.

"Your uncle met me at the ship, and the next morning at seven o'clock I was sitting already behind a sewing machine in a sweatshop. Your uncle did not believe in wasting time." Your uncle, your uncle, over and over—never "my brother"—as though she wanted to throw the entire burden of relationship on her daughter, whom she had declared to be so weak. "How strange to come to a new country in that way! Since then I have read much; I have read of people's travels, how they would come to a new city, say Paris, and the joy with which they would go about, staying up all night, going about the boulevards, drinking, happy! Oh, well, your uncle had nothing then, either. He could not support me, even for a day. And how should he know how a child of fourteen felt? He himself had had no childhood. How should he have understood? But, see, from the first day I supported myself, from the first day I took nothing from anyone except myself.

"Ah, that first sweatshop!" Amazingly, from that dark face a chuckle burst, merrily bitter. "At seven in the evening the foreman—oh, he was a big radical like Tomorrow—he would say, 'See, they're looking at the clock already!' Then he would make us a speech. *'Bruder Arbeiter,* are you sewing these collars on these shirts for the boss? No, you are sewing them on for yourselves. Piecework—that means for yourselves.' Fourteen hours a day we were privileged to work for ourselves. Don't you think he became a millionaire making that same speech? He has his own factories now, and with each million he becomes still more radical, though he is unhappy that these days his brother workers have the privilege to only work eight hours a day for themselves. *'Bruder Arbeiter, Bruder Arbeiter . . '"*

Again there bubbled that wicked enjoyment of the human spectacle.

She grew pale; she lost weight sewing collars on shirts, and "your uncle" sent her on a vacation. Again Julie's mother laughed with that bitter heartiness. A vacation in Brooklyn! A vacation as a mother's helper! "You try such a vacation sometime." But no shirts! No shirts! And the mother and the father were so young, so nice, so happy. Anarchists, of course—they were not married with any legal mumbo jumbo. "But what we meant by free love was not what you people mean. What we meant was two who needed no ceremony to keep them together for their whole lives. Free! They were free to always remain together because they loved!"

So off she went, Julie's mother continued, on her vacation. When the trolley went up on the Brooklyn Bridge and she looked down and saw the water below, gray as the ocean, she began to cry. But at least she could see both shores at the same time—she could look back and see the towers, so little

already, on the Manhattan that she was leaving, and she could look ahead and see the Brooklyn to which she was going. It was not like the ocean, where there was only the grayness all the time, forever, forever, and nothing to see of what you had left behind you and nothing to see of what you were going forward to. She always hated the ocean; she liked lakes, small lakes, where you could take in everything at once. . . . When she stepped into that first sweatshop, the noise of the sewing machines was like the noise of the ship's engines, and the floor seemed to shake and sway, and she cried, she cried, she was sick.,.. Once again she was sick, later, much later when she was in college, her first dissection, and under her knife the brain lay open. In the skull the brain lay gray and wavy as the sea. Oh, she was sick! It wasn't him she minded, the cadaver; his troubles—ah, and they must have been troubles, or how did he end up there on a table under her knife—no, all his troubles were over. It was the sea she hated. "And what is it all about anyway? I am getting old, and the two people in Brooklyn who were once so young, so happy, they are old now or dead. Or—what is worse—one is dead, and the other still lives——"

But how could she stay there in Brooklyn, the green and lovely Brooklyn? Yes, it really was like a vacation; the people loved her, the children loved her—she was only a child herself—and for a little while she had a family again, they loved her.

They loved her, they loved her, she repeated, the insistence of one who did not believe there was love for her anywhere.

"So back from Brooklyn I came, back across the bridge again, and the water. For me there were no more vacations and no more love until I met your father. I had to go to college like your uncle, and study like him, and raise myself

up. Ah, God! I was strong then! How else could one stand it? Shirts all day and study all night, and Sunday meant there was a whole day for study. Imagine a little greenhorn learning French, the elegant language, all by herself! So, I don't remember one word any more, not even the word for love, nothing. Love—do you think I did not dream of love? I suppose you think I was always old. But there was no time, no time for young men, no time to make myself attractive for young men. I had to raise myself up.... I suppose you people would not consider it poetry:

> Stitch, stitch, stitch,
> Till the brain begins to swim,
> Work, work, work,
> Till the eyes are heavy and dim,
> Seam and gusset and band,
> Band and gusset and seam,
> Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
> And fall asleep in a dream. . . .

Well, that poem is true! Ah, but at college—" again that bitter little chuckle broke from her mother's lips—"my life changed completely. Now all day I studied, and all night I sewed shirts on a rented machine. What did they say about me in the college yearbook? 'Sincere.' Well, what could they say? What did we know of each other? We never spoke, the Americans and Mollie Jennison, the greenhorn who had two dresses all the years of college and a rented sewing machine. Oh, I didn't care. I only knew that the bad times would be over and life could begin. And after I finished college it did—my good times began. They were good times, I tell you! Never again did I live in one of those dark terrible tenements. I had friends, hundreds of friends. I made

money, the lady doctor, so much money. I never bothered to count it. I just left it in a box on my desk, a box without a lid. So many of my friends then were still struggling. 'Your rent?' I'd say. 'It's in the box.' And I laughed. How I used to laugh in those days—laugh, laugh, laugh!"

She stopped, and the silence was like a final cessation.

It brought to Julie's mind the city of silence inhabited by her father. Across the same bridge it lay, and in the same region where her mother had once found "vacation," a family and a green land. In her father's city the monuments rose like little towers, very small, as the Manhattan towers must have appeared in distance to Mollie Jennison, looking back at the receding island shore. When they had left her father there, how open the streets still had been! Grassy squares, little parks not yet built up, had lain open to the sun. Now the streets closed in, crowded, overcrowded like a slum, as the greedy earth took the tenancy of a generation. And there in that earth, Julie felt, everything stopped; the centuries in Europe, the voyage over the ocean, the brief new life. Her mother's scorn—"You could never have done it… never!"—disinherited her. The magnificence of that struggle was a treasure buried with the dead. They had cut her off.

Julie turned away, and the house before which she and her mother had come to a stop blurred, swayed, and sank into the earth. When her tears dried she noticed idly that the farmhouse had indeed long sunk into the earth; its color remained the color of tears, gray.

The sagging door opened, and a woman came out. She carried a pail; the weight dragged her to one side, and in the rain she wore only a dress of some thin flowered material.

When she saw them she set the pail down. "Evening, Miss Schmidt," she called and lumbered toward them across the junk-cluttered yard.

Before Mrs. Dreyfuss could deny this imposed identity, which dismayed Julie as though it affirmed that her mother had taken on a stranger's quality, the woman continued amiably, "How's the high jinks up in the big place?" Her flowered dress seemed vaguely familiar to Julie.

"High jinks?" Mrs. Dreyfuss asked. And then she said, "I am not Miss Schmidt."

"Of course not, Mrs. Dreyfuss." The farm woman leaned upon the fence. Somewhere in the house a child wailed. "Across the yard all I could make out was that's the kind of hat she always wears in the rain."

"What high jinks?" Mrs. Dreyfuss asked. "What do you mean?"

"Why——" She broke off to scream at the wails that continued from the house. "Shut up, Jamie! Shut up, you hear!" When she turned back again her voice still held the shrill residue of her screaming. "Why, I didn't mean anything. Just guests always complaining about the weather and the food and all."

Mrs. Dreyfuss dug into the road with the heel of Miss Schmidt's heavy boot. Then she raised her eyes and said flatly, "We don't complain."

Now the woman's voice was shrill and without any residue of screaming. "My Genevieve works there."

"I know," Mrs. Dreyfuss said.

"Why," Julie exclaimed, "she waits on our table!"

"Yes," the woman said. "She told me about you. She tells me all about the different dresses you wear."

Mrs. Dreyfuss said hastily, as though to disclaim her daughter's abundance before a woman who must wear a rag, however splendid once, "She hasn't so many clothes. And anyway I make them all myself. It costs so little that way."

And Julie, too, hearing her mother's uncertain tone, felt

that she had no right to all those lovely dresses. She stared sullenly at the farmhouse that was sinking into the earth. This slattern, whose hair straggled across her cheek, who wore a dress splitting at the seams, lived in a house that must have been inherited by generation after generation for more than two hundred years—and her own mother had gone from a ship directly to a sweatshop! What a small hold she and her mother had on this land.

"Well, now," the farm woman said, "isn't that nice." Her small eyes, so like Genevieve's, narrowed in her puffy lids. "It's too bad some of us haven't time to sew, what with tending the house and the garden and kids and tending the stock, too, what's left of it . . ."

Behind the house a red barn rose, and when Julie thought of her childhood it was not only the cold dim house in the city which she remembered, but this, too. A red barn, a warm and fragrant place where she could lie for long hours bedded on hay, not thinking, not existing except in warmth and solace.

From inside the farmhouse came a sharp sound that recalled to her Genevieve's slamming of the door—and her laugh.

The sound extended itself, and she could imagine Genevieve and her mother laughing at her, shrieking with laughter. "What's our barns and our summers to do with such as you? You from the city, dark, foreign, outlandish, with your childhood summers on a rented farm." Now, at this very moment as they stood here, similar words were being said to those who had lived on German soil for more than two hundred years. Then why could they not be said to her, who had no more hold on this country than her mother's forty years—and even that paltry space of time her mother withheld from her. Now, sullenly, bitterly, she gave up to Genevieve and

Genevieve's mother the right to take this land from her, and all that it meant in memory and love. She yielded up to them her very childhood.

"I'll have a few more dresses for you when I leave," Mrs. Dreyfuss was saying. "Like last summer … if you want them."

She made this offer stiffly, without her usual pleasure in sharing which robbed charity of any sting.

And the other replied in a tone as cold, "I guess I'll want your dresses all right. Why wouldn't I want them?"

Now Julie at last recognized the dress which the farm woman wore. It was Julie's mother's dress, and it had been the color her father had loved best, the pale color of leaves when they opened. And on that delicate ground had been scattered the blossoms of spring. All the time that her mother had cut and sewed and fitted Julie had coveted, and she was certain that if only her father could have seen her in it he would have exclaimed, "She is spring itself!" But her mother had made no offer to Julie; she had finished the dress and hung it away in her closet, saying, "It is too bright, too bright!" Yet when they had each gone away the previous summer—Julie for a last time to a world of girls, a camp, her mother to Miss Schmidt's—the dress, rustling with tissue paper, had been packed in Mrs. Dreyfuss' trunk. Now it was blotched, stretched, and torn by the farm woman's ampler body, so that only one tiny sprig still bloomed in freshness and in youth on her breast. Julie was angered by the woman's contempt for what she and her mother had found beautiful, making a daily rag out of what should have been kept for Sundays. She was angered even more by the perversity that had led her mother to give a stranger what her daughter had longed for. What was the result of this perverseness? Only

that no one had had any pleasure—neither her mother, nor the farm woman, nor Julie herself.

The bulging overused breasts and stomach recalled Julie again to the discomfort within her own body. The meaning of the monthly bloodletting was too apparent in the body before her; this blood must be sacrificed to the birth of children, and Julie felt a repugnance.

"Let's go back!" she cried. "It's going to come down hard!"

". . . and what peculiar-looking man?" her mother was asking.

"We don't see many hereabouts like him."

The two women were held, talking, by dislike for each other—exactly as at some earlier time they might have been by mutual pleasure, the one in giving, the other in receiving.

"The last time I saw someone like him was when *she* died in the big house, in Miss Schmidt's house that's now, and a few people come down from the city for the funeral. A little Frenchie he was, some kind of something—markee or something funny they called him."

Mrs. Dreyfuss might have left it at that. It seemed for a moment, indeed, that she would. Then as she turned away she called back, nervous and stammering, "Peculiar—Mr. Groscz or a marquis peculiar? Because they're foreigners? Maybe in their countries—maybe we would look peculiar."

And the other, turning away also, to her chores, said angrily, "Well, so maybe we would. For heaven's sake!"

Julie turned once to look back. The woman stood staring after them, a strong and bulky figure in the dusk. Exactly as the borrowed rain clothes lent her mother a stranger's quality, this woman who wore her mother's dress seemed to take on dimension from Julie's mother. The large, the indomitable quality, with which Julie's mother had met a new world, this

woman now presented to the dreariness of the rain, of the yard and of the sunken house behind her, all that constantly encroached on her strength, and with which she could never finish coping.

Running to catch up with her mother, Julie called out, "But why did you give *her* the dress?"

Mrs. Dreyfuss answered, "I don't know. I don't know," and again Julie had a sense that she, a rightful heir, had been disinherited.

Suddenly Mrs. Dreyfuss burst out, "That girl! That Genevieve! That talebearer!"

"But what did she tell ? Only that she waited on our table and that I had a lot of dresses."

"Do you know *how* she spoke about your dresses? Do you know if she did not say, 'That girl has so much more than she needs, and I so much less!' "

Sometimes when her mother sewed for Julie the cloth snagged on her work-roughened fingers, and perhaps at those times she thought, I had only the same two dresses through all the college years. And Julie felt, as she had so often during this month, that her mother joined Genevieve in resentment of her, and that she begrudged Julie all that she had struggled to make possible for her.

"And besides," Mrs. Dreyfuss continued, "if there is talk about so little a thing as your dresses, then there is talk about other things. I know!"

"But everybody always talks."

"I don't. I don't expect other people to, decent people."

"Anyway, what is there to talk about?" Julie said.

"She asks what is there to talk about!" Her mother's glance implored the mountains and the sky, which had become very dark. "There's that woman to talk about, isn't there—that

brazen thing with her lover and her two sons! She pretends she doesn't recognize me, and I will not give her the satisfaction of going up to her and telling her, 'You know me.' But she knows me all right. When I still lived downtown on the east side she was one of my first patients, a young immigrant girl, handsome and bold as she is now. She was one of those who lived in the dark terrible houses. Well, and if a rich man married that selfish thing and took her up out of that dirt, up, up, doesn't she owe him anything—or everything?"

"But her sons! See how her sons love her!" Julie's voice rose spitefully.

"Then they are crazy, too, and they and their craziness make no difference. Love, love! Can it be that the less one loves, the more one is loved? No! I tell you, one must give for what one gets. One cannot do wrong and feel right!"

She, whose husband had deserted her in death, who had no loving sons, but a daughter who flouted her, spoke in a voice that was almost frightening in its bitterness toward that other woman. And Julie was a little frightened, but she persisted, "It's no one's business how Nora lives. She's not hurting anybody."

"Are you as selfish as she? One cannot live only for oneself. Did your father ever think of himself? Is that why he never spared himself, why he went out on calls at night in the rain, in snow? He killed himself for his patients and for you and for me. He killed himself working for us."

It seemed to Julie that once again her mother called her a murderer, and now the thought of her father's death did not grieve but angered her. He had died for her, and she had not wanted him to, but the burden of his death was put on her. And this guilt separated her from her father as much as she was separated by her weakness, her flabby will. *You*

could never have done what- we did! Never! ... It seemed to her that the dead denied to her his very meaning, and nothing was hers by right—neither the magnificence of his accomplishment nor, by the same token, this country in which his accomplishment had been secured.

Now the darkness fell swiftly. "One must give for what one gets!" the fierce whisper came. "One cannot do wrong and feel right!" It was not her mother who walked with her, but the German woman; not the German woman, but vengeance, punishment. She could not run, escape; her body bled. Her body was punished, although she had never asked that the terrible sacrifice be made for her.

Then, ahead, she saw a small platoon advancing toward them. It came nearer, and she saw that it was a group of little boys and that behind them Rog marched and kept them in order. In the dusk their round rain hats appeared like the helmets of soldiers. As she came abreast of Rog, she cried out his name as if she felt that he alone, young as herself, a man, could rescue her from the presence beside her. But he nodded curtly and then turned his head aside, and she had no choice except to continue with the one to whom she was bound by vengeance and punishment. . . . Whenever she thought of Rog later, even after that sunny autumn day when they said good-by, she remembered him as she had seen him on this evening, a commander shepherding his little platoon through a no man's land of rain and desolation.

"And now," the voice beside her continued, "you know what tales that Genevieve is bringing back! Not your clothes, your too many dresses, but that woman and her lover. And today the two sons, the two sons like a rag before a bull! Wasn't Friedrich insulted in the village? Because of himself? What harm has he done? No, because of her, that brazen

thing who is too old for such idiocy." The voice sank to an uneasy whisper. "They lump us all together—her, Friedrich, you. Now you can expect the insult next, or I, or your uncle. 'Is that how they live?' they'll ask. 'Is that the immoral way those dark foreign people, those Jews from the city live?'" The voice trembled. "You know how much they love us anyway, they look for any excuse. I tell you, they will not stand for——"

And then in one moment the storm had broken.

The rain fell in a sheet. There was no thunder and no lightning, only the weight of water that battered them, that bruised their shoulders and their faces. It was as though a sea closed over them.

The leather hand clutched Julie's wrist, and her mother began to pull her along. The girl, unable because of discomfort to run, slowed her. But her mother would not abandon Julie and gave up to exhortation the breath she should have hoarded for her own effort. "You must hurry! You will catch cold! Oh, why did I let you come with me!"

Her mother continued to pull her, and only gradually did Julie become aware that inside the glove her mother's fingers were trembling. And as her mother's hand grasped Julie's wrist the girl, in some odd reversal, felt that it was she who could hear and count the pulse of her mother's panic. And all at once the boots, the hat, the talon gloves appeared to her as merely a masquerade, a costume and a masquerade. The figure beside her was neither brutal nor vengeful, but to be pitied or even, in some way the means of which she could not yet muster, protected.

In her room, Julie sat before the mirror. No trace of pity remained on her face. Her wet hair fell in snaky coils. Water had lashed her cheeks, her eyes; she had felt water rising like a sea in her nostrils. But in the end it had been

exhilarating—only rain, summer rain. Her mother was afraid of rain; her father had not been afraid, but he had died. Her eyes met the eyes in the mirror, and she saw that all that the rain had done to her was to make her beautiful. She shook her head; the snakes tumbled about her brilliant eyes and cheeks. Spite became her. Her nostrils, distended, made her appear older, harder, but those very qualities had a challenging attractiveness. Again she smiled, and it was a smile not youthful, not pure in either youth or pleasure. Still looking into her own eyes, she opened the drawer of the bureau and felt for the soft silk. She tied the scarf over her head, concealing the snakes. The brilliant green set off her eyes; they glittered spitefully, and there was no doubt that she was beautiful.

When she went down to the living room there was a glum silence in which the rain could be heard unabated. Dulled by the walls of the house, by shelter, it nevertheless remained the sound of fury.

She jostled against Genevieve. "We saw your mother this afternoon." Julie spoke sharply, as if to warn with her own mother's prescience, "Take back no tales!"

"So what!" Her challenge was flung back at her.

Nora lay stretched out on the sofa. It was not usual for her to remain with the other guests. Perhaps in this furious weather her cottage gave no shelter. Her sons were absent, they must have returned to their father's summer, in his big house. But here in their stead were the two Elsies, as solicitous and devoted as the sons had been. Perhaps Nora did not care to relinquish the larger front she had presented to the world. On her head Nora wore a green scarf. Julie saw her nudge the big Elsie. Then, slowly tilting back her head, Nora smiled at Julie with a curious expression the girl could not fathom.

Julie turned and went across the room to where her mother sat with Friedrich and Dr. Jenmson.

"How fine you look!" Friedrich said. "And did you dream away this gray day?"

Her mother had been speaking with Julie's uncle. Now she turned, her lips parted in a not unpleasant expression, perhaps to answer Friedrich: We walked, we walked, and the ddVvnpour caught us; or perhaps to ask her daughter: How do you feel after the wetting? But when her glance fell on Julie, her lips twisted.

"Take that rag off from your head!"

Spite lent the girl a special beauty; her eyes were hard and gemlike as the eyes of a snake.

"Take that thing off your head!" her mother commanded again.

Her uncle looked from one to the other and then, not understanding, closed his eyes, all his attention turned in upon himself; perhaps he too was listening to the whisper of blood, his own, slower, ever slower.

"You are the image of that woman anyway," her mother said, "and now when you are dressed like her——"

Julie's face lifted in a passionate question—and triumph—to her mother, but she could not speak; she could not answer.

"Did you not realize?" Friedrich asked. "And I do not know if I like it either."

She was the only one who had not known. In her mother she had seen Miss Schmidt, and in the farm woman her mother and only by reason of the clothes they had put on. Did one never know oneself? Could one look into a mirror and not know oneself? Her own face, as she had seen it reflected in the mirror, rose to confront her. There had been something not nice, almost frightening. She felt that same exprftsion slowly settle again on her features.

"Take that rag off!" her mother repeated helplessly. "I cannot bear to see my daughter such a woman as that one!"

Now Julie turned her back on them and stared into Nora's face.

She saw all her own flaws returned to her, the nose stubbornly a trifle too short, the mouth too full, and even, about the jaw, a hint of the same cruelty.

The smile that slowly bloomed on Nora's face invited her to follow where the mirror-mother beat out a path in the wilderness of the world, a path, ragged, deviating. *One must give for what one gets. One cannot do wrong and feel right!* ... No! No! She who had given Julie life—and not her own semblance—was proved wrong. There sat triumphant the one who could get everything and give nothing, who could feel right and do all that was wrong. In this moment Julie disinherited her mother; for a second time the cord that had fed her was cut; an inarticulate cry came from her lips as she took in, for a second time, the breath of independent life.

A$ Julie continued to lose herself in the face that was her own, she recalled the moment when the woman had first revealed this relationship. She recalled the moment at the lake when Nora's hand had grasped her and had tilted back her head and Nora had looked into her with that strange expression. . . . But now the lake itself was rising to drown that memory, its waters black and cold as conscience. She drew back from the menace of that cold tide, the puritanic conscience that insisted this woman's life was lived badly. Was that her inheritance, after all, a darkness of conscience that was not to be escaped?

But now from across the room a fragrance reached her, and she seemed to breathe in the very odor of that female triumph. She was assured that no use of her body was shameful; her

very blood was not squandered or sacrificed; rather, it was the mark of her womanhood. But, even as Julie continued to look into that other, similar face, its expression was changing. The woman's brow rose mockingly; her lips curved almost in a sneer. She did not welcome, but, rather, claimed the girl who had clothed herself in green tribute like a small country that accepts the flag and the domination of the imperial mother.

Briefly Julie was taken aback by the face that she could only have said had become nasty. Then it was she who smiled. Her lips curled in the new spite, her hand slowly rose and, as the similar face darkened with anger, Julie tore off the green headcovering.

Again she was intoxicated with the stirrings of freedom. It was as though a mirror had been shattered and she need no longer stand and watch a reflection, but could step clear, able to do, act, perform for herself.

She returned again to her mother, her uncle and Friedrich. Her moth^ glance briefly flicked the scarf that lay now on Julie's lap, but she said nothing. Her face was sorrowful; she seemed to realize that what had moved her daughter was some private motive that excluded her, the mother.

Julie returned again to those who were with her, and the first thing she heard was Friedrich's troubled voice directed at her mother: "But for heaven's sake, it was purely a personal matter," and as his fingers rose to the scratch that was fading on his cheek he added, "A misunderstanding with a member of the opposite sex. What made them think it was a racial insult I received? A matter of race and politics?"

But it was too late for the guests of Miss Schmidt to change their appearance; they had clothed themselves, for all to see, in garments borrowed from their fears.

Chapter Thirteen

JULIE'S boat drifted along the bank. The lake, Champlain, to which Miss Schmidt and her guests made an excursion before the summer ended, was so wide here that Julie could not see the opposite shore.

Disorder had vanished with the rain, and now the earth was serene. Julie drifted, her face turned to the horizon, and—unlike her mother, who must see both shores at once—took pleasure in the vista, searching and endless as that of a sea. The future had at least a measure of certainty; she had glimpsed herself in a grown woman's face.

She turned to look back at the shore and thcM^whom she had left; the thin sweet sound of the music they nad brought with them came to her. On the shore the little picnic grove grew in sun and shade. Did the shadows exist as a mounting for the dazzling shafts of light where sun penetrated, or did the fragmentary brilliance call attention to darkness, the constant cloak ? The figures seated around the long picnic table were cloaked in the shadow of the woods, yet here and there sun drove the lost shoulder of a dress into its pristine white, or gilded dark hair, or picked out of all the others one upturned face. Across the small space of water she saw hej" people as across time itself, the unbridgeable distance that gives the value and the meaning. Saw them, as the little waves carried her boat toward their shore, with a sense of

farewell, as though the dim woods behind them already were memory; and, far off, heard the sound of harvest, the cutting down of wheat to be reduced to the juiceless substance that alone could be stored against a future need. Already, as if in memory, she saw her uncle sitting as once his father must have, at the head of the table, in dark clothes and wearing a hat, not such a skull cap as she remembered from her grandfather's picture, but a farmer's straw hat. As she watched, he wearily pushed it back and let it drop to the earth, as though even this now were too heavy a burden—he would call the shadows to clothe his head—and sun gilded his dark hair! Beside him sat her mother, and it was her shadowed shoulder that sun drove into a glittering light. She had diamonds at last, her mother, who had never wanted those bits of glass other women covet. What did she want? Her arm embraced a little girl, the small Elsie, and her face was on a level with that of the child who stood beside her. The two faces showed an equal tenderness. It was Friedrich whose uplifted face was pickechw*ib>m all the others by light that fell on it, and he seemed to be looking at her uncle as once her uncle might have looked at his own father in farewell. Light turned the uplifted face harsh, white and strained; this son must begin the exodus to an old cruel land; this father remained on the promised soil. And down both sides of the long table were strung out all the others, in shadow, like obscure links of a necklace that served merely to mount the jewels, her mother, her uncle, Friedrich____None of them was aware of the girl who watched; they might already have removed themselves to a region where it would no longer be possible to see them except as she did this moment, in unchanging, static photograph. Oh, stay! Stay! she wanted to call. Do not move! Do

not change! Until the time exposure is completed, let not one shadow waver, one hand stir!

She turned away and put in the few strokes to shore, choosing of herself to return, and not summoned by any of them. She knew already that she would stand among them now without belonging, unlike the child Elsie, who, small as Julie once had been, was drawn by the mother's arm against her tender face. Elsie was still one of them, a captive. Julie returned, removed by time and by her own resolve. And as she advanced on them the cry was repeated within her: "Good-by . . . good-by . . ." as though with each advancing stroke of her oar, she cast another longing lingering look behind; as though already she lived the far moment ahead when grief could come without pain, could come merely as the sweet regret of time and its long distance.

Her boat ground against their shore, and she stepped out, carrying within herself the serenity of the horizon, of sun and sunlit water. But as she moved toward them, tall and young, she came into their group like a figure aPHffnposed on already exposed film, the figure through which is visible the darkness of those in the dwindling background.

Chapter Fourteen

THOSE who were posed against this background found in its darkness a meaning different from Julie's. But not until later did her uncle speak the word that expressed this meaning: atonement!

Under the shadow of the trees he appeared unchanged, grave and severe and giving the impression that he regarded this excursion as a lower-class barbarism. It was uncomfortable: dusty food, a bench without a back, hordes of coarse strangers. It was illogical: did not Miss Schmidt's lake at home offprffh exactly similar view?

His eyes wandered constantly—he had never been a restless man—over the scene whose unfamiliarity made him dislike it, and over the crowd, farmers and little townspeople whom he did not like either, though the myth stubbornly continued to live in him, the myth of his brotherhood even with such people as these whose noise and vulgar ways closed him in.

Still standing beside the table—and seeming to herself to tower—Julie met her uncle's restless glance that was trying to take in everything at once. His eyes remained on her for a long moment while his lips moved. But the message, if there was one, she could not make out; now she was the one who had become deaf. It seemed to her that his eyes, before

they turned away once more to seek out the sun, the horizon, Friedrich, the distance again, brightened and became shiny. But that tears could appear in her uncle's eyes when he looked at her—or why—she was not capable of grasping.

She heard the sounds of harvest, the clacking of tractors, or now and then the human sound as a man called to his horses; all about she saw the farmers, who seemed to her rowdy in a pleasant way, those who had a day of celebration after the harvest or those who claimed a small respite before gathering the first crop. The landscape was a royal color, gold and purple; there drifted to Julie the fragrance of honey or some other warm soft aroma. It was a day of absolute bloom, and she could not know that her uncle was about to make the last atonement, the final penance. Nor had she any premonition even when, without prelude, he began to talk of his past, his far far past, as though he closed a circle, returning at the end to the origins—and their meaning.

"When I was a little boy," Dr. Jennison said abruptly, "maybe ten years old, my father went on businesifto a distant city, and when he came back he brought a toy for me. A great sailboat. Who knows why—any more than I know why this pops into my mind all of a sudden? There was no place in our ghetto for a boy to sail a boat, as my father very well knew."

The heads of Miss Schmidt and her guests fluttered self-consciously. Yet the natives who surrounded them had perhaps never heard the word "ghetto," nor knew what that one word encompassed.

In all this flutter only Friedrich remained still. The sun struck his upturned face, as white and harsh as winter sun; it erased all the lines and marks known to Julie, except for the scar, now fading, that ran down his cheek.

"I could never reason out why my father, a bearded religious Jew . .."

Again the uneasy glances and Friedrich's deathlike stillness——Julie could not possibly imagine what he was thinking. It was as though a wall closed around him, locking him away from them all in his own lonely region, his own ghetto. He had continued to speak of returning to Warsaw. How would his return, Julie wondered bitterly, help those who had no slightest chance of escape? He had the chance—why would he not grasp at it?

"... why my father brought such a toy to me, a child who did not know how to play, but had already been dedicated by him, and by myself, to study and the dead scholarship of the *Talmud!'* Resentment choked him, and he could not go on. Then, cold and haughty, his voice took up the thread of recollection again. "Was it a sort of atonement to bring a child something that was denied him by the very circumstances under which his father had brought him to life?"

Mrs. Dreyfuss embraced little Elsie, the child who was not of her body; she bent and rubbed her full cheek against the thin pale face, and all the time her eyes were on her own daughter. "Atonement!" She repeated her brother's word.

The word tolled like a bell in Julie's mind. On the harvest, on the moment of ripeness, a message was carried to Julie that she could not quite grasp, a warning.

"How sad autumn is!" Mrs. Dreyfuss said. She shivered. "Already I am waiting for the spring. That first wonderful green in May—and as soon as it comes it is already gone!"

Dr. Jennison turned to his sister, and he seemed to understand what she said: after autumn is only winter, cold, barren, the end.... But Julie did not understand. She loved the spring, yet she loved autumn more, the glittering season that

followed summer's dust, when in color and splendor the world seemed to begin anew. Once more the tolling sounded, and she still could not grasp what it tried to warn, to waken.

"Yes," Dr. Jennison said, "I remember that when my mother saw that toy, that boat my father had brought me, she burst into tears."

"She did not," his sister said. "She never cried."

"Often!"

"Never!"

Julie watched her mother's lips caress little Elsie's hair.

"Sometimes I used to hear her," Dr. Jennison said, "crying the whole night through. I don't know how she could remain so beautiful, and her life was so hard." He was silent, and then he added, "Just think, now I am old enough to be her father—when she died she was so young."

"She was beautiful," his sister said, "but she never cried." Tears filled her own eyes as she continued to stare at him, and they were completely brother and sister, each reflecting the other's defiance.

"Well, then," Mrs. Dreyfuss murmured, "she never cried for me. What did she care if her daughter left her! A girl! A girl was less than nothing!" She lifted little Elsie gently from her lap. "Go," she said. "Pick for me the blue flowers, and I'll show you how to make a wreath for your hair."

The child ran down to the water's edge, and Mrs. Dreyfuss' glance now brought to her own daughter the tenderness with which she had spoken to the small Elsie, whether the tenderness lingered from her words to the child or whether in her grown daughter she tried to discover the little one that must still exist somewhere.

"I always hated the water," Dr. Jennison said. "When my wife and I went for our vacations—" his voice accused his

sister—"we would always go inland, deep inland to dry hot country where nowhere around I could see a lake. Now I wonder——" He stopped, taken by surprise. "Now all of a sudden I wonder," he said. "Perhaps it was not the fear of dampness, of rheumatism, but still the first rage when my father gave me a toy for which there was no use." Surprise had given way to disgust. Had it taken him so long to discover a motive which reason should long ago have pointed out? He would continue to insist that the emotions gave no clue to behavior. "Now since my wife died I find myself spending my summers at a lake. I hate it!"

His sister looked around defiantly at the others. "Yes, it was I," she said, "who wanted to come here for the summers. And since my brother would never go away by himself . . ." Then she dropped her eyes as though to hide a deeper defiance; this old man, after all, had been a sort of father to her in his stern unloving way. How young her mother looked, Julie thought. All at once, how young she looked!

"And it was you," Dr. Jennison continued pettishly to his sister, "who insisted on this excursion today." He turned to Miss Schmidt. "I meant no criticism of your excellent hospitality, Miss Schmidt," he said with his own stiff courtesy, "in that your lake disturbs me. Simply I did not know why."

"Yes," his sister exclaimed, "it was I who insisted on coming here." And then she repeated what she had said that morning, and with the same triumph: "Sun! Sun at last! We must show Friedrich more of this wonderful country of ours!"

It had been an unusual desire, for Mrs. Dreyfuss disliked travel, excursion, the smallest jogging from her customary routine. But she could not have known that the end approached for her brother; he seemed no different except that

all his movements were a little more impatient, his voice testier than usual.

Afterward she hung on to Julie, weeping, "Could it have been—? Do you think it could possibly have been the outing, the exertion?" Julie, proud and yet distressed that her overwhelming mother now turned to her, answered, "No, no. There wasn't any exertion—only the few steps from the car to the table. And then he sat quietly all the rest of the time." But she was not entirely certain, merely reassuring her mother because of what had happened before the afternoon was over. Yet that, too, no one could have foretold; it was not her mother's fault.

But at this moment beneath the trees Mrs. Dreyfuss had her little triumph. After a lifetime—when he was old, weary, sick—she could bend her unbending brother to her will. Jenny's-son, whom their mother had loved.

Later, into her mother's endless tears, Julie said with the callous honesty of the young, "I had no idea you loved him so much!" For an instant those words arrested the tears. "Love?" her mother asked. "Love? We were of the same flesh and blood, we had the early years together. Now there is no one who remembers except me." And then Julie grieved, too—for her mother, and for all the memories that she must, from now on, carry unshared; it was too great a burden of loneliness.

It was Miss Schmidt who had seconded Mrs. Dreyfuss in the morning. "Well, then," Miss Schmidt had cried, "what about a picnic?" And her pale cheeks had flushed. "Let us show Friedrich the great lake, Champlain!"

Her cheeks had still held that flush when, a little later, she had driven the station wagon up before the porch.

An unknown woman had sat beside Miss Schmidt in the

front seat. As Julie had come around the front of the car she had seen that this was Miss Schmidt's companion, her dress brightly flowered and cut very low, her face powdered and painted. All these youthful accouterments had served only to make her appear the more bedraggled and faded.

"My friend," Miss Schmidt had explained in a harsh nervous voice, "has not seen the glories of our countryside either!" She fingered her necktie, and then when all her guests had seated themselves, she asked, "Adeline, are you quite comfortable? *Adeline?"*

"Yes, yes," the painted mouth had whispered.

"There is nothing else you desire to take along—a pillow, eau de cologne?"

More than the gaily striped tie with which she had continued to fidget and the severe hat to which now and then her nervous fingers had risen, the German woman had seemed to be flaunting her solicitude for her friend, who only had continued to whisper with miserable shyness, "No, no, nothing." But one last trip Miss Schmidt had insisted on making into the house. "Our phonograph, Adeline. It will make things even nicer!"

Now the portable machine rested on the picnic table, and from it came the voice which Julie's mother always said was golden, glorious, golden. But so close to Julie it sounded indeed dead; she could hear the mechanism of the phonograph scratch on the song.

"These old records," Miss Schmidt said. "They do not play well on the newer phonographs."

"I only hear him," Mrs. Dreyfuss said, "as he sounded so many years ago when I was young."

This memento of the past and of youth long gone by softened her, and she said to her brother, "We could have made you comfortable at home. Why didn't you only say so? We

could have made you comfortable, with your books and——"

He interrupted her like a cranky child. "You know I don't like to be alone!"

Still standing above them, Julie could take in the entire picnic ground, and it seemed to her that all the other tables were unlike theirs. The harvesters listened to a different music: the far-off contest of games brought into this very air, or the wrangle between a voice that challenged and another that answered, but with the answer added a harsh laughter, the wisecrack, the pay-off. And the farmers brought their own laughter as harsh, they choked, sputtered; foam splashed down their beer bottles as they tilted up the necks into their mouths. On their tables the blood of the berry pies ran, blood dripped from chunks of meat which, with screams and laughter, they roasted in the great open fireplaces. The women partook of all this raucous pleasure; their hair began to fall, dresses slipped from red shoulders, and their children, as the afternoon wore on, cried, fought, or fell asleep, their heads on the tables.

"Julie," her mother said. "Sit down! Be one of us!"

She sat down, and the voice of the dead tenor flowed about her. It was exactly as when, swimming, she went from sun-warmed water into an icy current.

"There was another singer," Tomorrow said, "much greater. He was just finishing up when I was starting out—Jean de Reszke." He repeated, laughing as though it were a joke, "Finishing up when I was starting out."

"No one," Mrs. Dreyfuss said, "was as great as Caruso. I don't care what you say. When he sang in *A'ida,* I tell you, all my heart was in *my* throat too. And I would cry, cry, cry. They all used to make fun of me, but I tell you I could not help it. When they are locked in the tomb together to die..."

And all at once their table appeared like any other as they bent over, shouting to one another, gesticulating, arguing the merits of one singer or another. Those of whom they spoke were dead or no longer sang; all that remained of them was on these records, harsh and scratchy. Tomorrow proclaimed himself only for Wagner, and Mrs. Dreyfuss reminded him that he had liked *A'ida* well enough in the old days—she could remember him standing up in his seat and screaming *Bravo!* What was he doing now, trying to catch on to the hem of the intelligentsia? *A'ida, Butterfly, Trovatore*—that was music one could listen to; melodious, passionate, it brought the tears to one's eyes.

"And I suppose," Tomorrow interrupted, *"Tristan and Isolde,* that is not passion there where Isolde is dying?"

"Oh, my God, three quarters of an hour she is dying—you wish you were dead, too!" No, it was not Mrs. Dreyfuss' kind of music.

Whether or not it was Miss Schmidt's kind of music no one knew. The German woman's entire attention was given to her Adeline, who sat unresponsive, head bent and meek hands folded on the table. And now Julie could not believe what her own eyes had seen: that this drab shy woman had the capacity to arouse another to violence. Constantly, Miss Schmidt would jump up from her place at table and run to her friend with a flower or leaf that had already turned. "But this color, Adeline!" she would cry, holding the bright leaf up against the sun. "The design of the veins!" A great pile lay beneath the meek hands, but, collected, all color was lost, and the leaves were only a dry heap of rubbish. Each time that she received tribute a flush rose on Adeline's rouged cheeks, but she gave no other sign; she never spoke, and seemed to become more inaccessible as the German woman's

ardor increased. But her guests did not notice Miss Schmidt's extravagance. They would simply have considered it foolish for an old maid to live by herself when she could find companionship and a less lonely life with another spinster.

Julie ate a sandwich, drank warm soda from the bottle like the harvesters, and wondered how she might draw Friedrich out of his harsh white absorption. Watching him, she remembered the rumors which, that morning, had been caught up out of the air. In London sandbags were piled up; the French were snatching the glass windows out of their cathedrals. No one knew—cities might crumble under one blow from the skies. They will lie in one grave, her uncle had said, the victims and the murderers, those who spread the gas and those who wear the gas masks.

But Friedrich had not been there when Dr. Jennison said that. No, now in Friedrich's presence everyone tried to keep away from such topics. It was he, after all, who must return to Europe, and, guiltily, they could not bear to ponder what he might return to; their dislike had become mere relief at his imminent departure. When he left they would no longer be forced to look on this prospective victim of Europe and be reminded too vividly, at every turn, that they, too, could become victims. Now at the last they felt every sympathy for him, yet they longed only to have him already banished from their sight. His image might return in uneasy dreams, but out of a dream one can awaken.

"Julie! Julie!" She became aware that her mother had been calling to her. "Pick up the papers! We can't have the table looking like this!"

"Are we going already?" She had not found one moment in which to be alone with Friedrich, and soon he would be beyond reach, and probably for always.

"Not yet, but see how dirty the table looks—terrible."

Little Elsie brought a handful of flowers, dripping from the water, and Mrs. Dreyfuss took them from her, patiently explaining, "This is how we braid a wreath, see? ... over, and then under. Go on, Julie, go on, we cannot have the table looking like this."

But all the other tables were littered with bottles, papers, rubbish.

"It is true," Tomorrow growled. "We have not the same luxury of these noble farmers." And he began to help Julie gather up the rubbish. "We have not their luxury to be pigs and at the same time to look over here and say, 'Those dirty——'"

Friedrich swung his head around, and his scar was purplish like the tint that harvest was bringing to the land. But on his cheek it became the color of punishment. "For God's sake, why would they say anything to you?"

Tomorrow, his hands filled with rumpled napkins, orange skins, wheeled slowly till he faced Friedrich, and then, his hands filled with refuse, he charged Friedrich gravely like a judge. "Weren't you insulted in the village? What was your crime except to be a Jew?" It was the first time that this had been directly mentioned to Friedrich, except by Mrs. Dreyfuss, and from Tomorrow it sounded strangely like an accusation: Why did you not keep out of trouble?

In the instant silence their table became an island, surrounded.

"It was a personal matter—a foolish little nonsense." Friedrich's voice was dull as he repeated words which Julie, the other day, had heard him speak to her mother with a spirited irritation. Even if it had been what Tomorrow believed, she knew that in the Europe to which Friedrich returned it was no

matter of an insulting word, but of secret police, barbed wire, whips.

The faces around the table looked back at Friedrich gravely, not quite taking in his words. It was all too late now to reorient themselves to the fact that their fears might have been imaginary. And perhaps his "little nonsense" was already a village matter, blown up by village gossip into God knew what. Julie noticed Miss Schmidt beside Friedrich, ludicrously clutching a flower to her gray tailored bosom, her face gray, too. "Genevieve," Miss Schmidt murmured abruptly as though the hired girl were an embodiment of fear—secret police, reconnaissance between the village and the boardinghouse. She had caught a glimpse of Genevieve at a far-off table with her family and her friends.

And suddenly Mrs. Dreyfuss exclaimed, "Heine said it is no disgrace to be a Jew, but it is no convenience either!"[5]

Miss Schmidt's friend, who sat at the other end of the table, lifted her head and stared at Mrs. Dreyfuss. "Heine!" she said at last contemptuously. It was the first time she had spoken. "Heine!"

"What is it about Heine?" Miss Schmidt demanded.

The heat of the day had blotched Adeline's carefully painted face. Heat lay in patches on her rouged cheeks, and around the pallor of her mouth only a rim of red remained. "The turncoat! The sycophant!"

"What could he do in Germany of that day?" The flower Miss Schmidt held simply melted under the violence of her fingers.

"Of that day?" Still Adeline refused to answer Miss Schmidt directly, but went on addressing Mrs. Dreyfuss in the tormented voice of the shy who must go on. " 'Of that day?' How has it changed, Germany, since then? He could

have refused, the coward, the weakling. He could have refused to become a Christian, to grovel——"

"What difference does it make ? He belongs to the Fatherland. Our greatest lyric poet!"

And the other, still with the desperate courage of the meek, cried, looking up and down the table at everyone but Miss Schmidt, "Fatherland! She can still call it that! Her Fatherland!"

They were like two antagonists who, performing in a public arena, are conscious only of each other.

"Tell her!" Miss Schmidt appealed fiercely to Friedrich. "Tell her! You have been in the Fatherland later than she. They are not all beasts, my countrymen!"

"Who does not know that ?" Friedrich spoke in a mechanical voice as though he tried to perform an obligation to the real Germany, to Miss Schmidt, or to those of her countrymen who shared her horror of the new *Reich.* "Who does not know that in the concentration camps are Germans rotting side by side with the others?" But his voice was spiritless, and his eyes were focused on an endless distance, as if he tried to penetrate beyond the barbed wires of that desolate region—and discover himself?

"I tell you they are all beasts!" Adeline cried. "They have always been beasts and barbarians!"

Julie thought of the scene she had witnessed between the two women. Now it was the frail shy woman who was trying to punish Miss Schmidt, and Julie wondered if Adeline would have dared to strike in that room, at night, alone.

Miss Schmidt repeated Friedrich's words, " 'In the concentration camps are Germans rotting side by side with the others.'" At last she lifted her eyes to her friend. "Barbarians? *Das Volf(der Dichter und Denser!* The country

of Bach and Goethe, of the greatest literature and music and philosophy?" But she had, curiously, the same uneasy expression as that with which Mrs. Dreyfuss earlier had defied her brother.

And now from the other end of the table the blotched unhappy face turned to Miss Schmidt and answered her alone. "Well, then, perhaps a race cannot be tormented for more than two thousand years if there is no reason. Perhaps *they* are the beasts, the Jews." Once again her manner was meek; it had changed as completely as had the direction of her remarks. "Heine betrayed. And, long before, there had been Judas. The self-striving, the self-advancement that stops at nothing. And when I remember the profiteers in Germany after the war—Jews, coarse, vulgar . . . Gorging themselves with food, diamonds burning on their fingers while the people starved. Yes, yes, perhaps the world has always been right. Perhaps it is a race that is disgusting."

The white faces stared back at her, and there was no one who had the power to speak or denounce her. She continued, "I am a Jew, a German Jew, rescued by Gertrudis Schmidt, who sent me the affidavit." She spoke this like a confession, her head bent again and her hands folded meekly. Then she unclasped her hands and lifted her head and said in a voice calm after confession, "Perhaps Heine should have said that it is no disgrace to be a human being, but it is no convenience either."

She brushed Miss Schmidt's gift of leaves to the ground and rose and turned her back on them.

Together Miss Schmidt and her guests watched the fastidious figure pick its way among the tables and at last vanish in the woods. The German woman's continued presence seemed to remove her allegiance from her friend and offer it to them;

with corresponding delicacy—or loyalty—they remained silent concerning Adeline's unspeakable behavior. Or perhaps it was that very behavior which silenced them. They might strive to think that she was peculiar, eccentric, crazy. But she—one of their own who had suffered—had given brutal expression to what had lain as a vague question far back in their minds during these years of persecution. Vague, unacknowledged, the question was always there: could a race have been persecuted for more than two thousand years and have been guilty of nothing ? Judas, Shylock, the profiteers ... "But what have we done?" Mrs. Dreyfuss murmured. "What have we ever *done?"* The self-striving, the self-advancement that stops at nothing—was such a meaning to be read in her life, struggling beyond her own strength, striving beyond her own endurance, and now enjoying some fruit of that labor while more than half the world lay in misery?

There came into Julie's mind the pictures that Friedrich had shown her of the ghetto, and then over the worn tragic faces rose Nora's hand, on which a great diamond glittered. No, No! She struggled against the poison with which the gray drab woman had tried to infect them. There were no diamonds here; on this picnic table glittered only the spots of sun.

And then Tomorrow, self-appointed apostle of Karl Marx, forgetting his master at this moment, snarled, "The German Jews are as bad as the Germans!"

"Ah, for God's sake!" Friedrich shouted, and Julie felt him pulling her up by the wrist while Miss Schmidt almost hysterically laughed, "I protest! What do you mean as bad as the *Germans?* We are *all* bad! *All all all* bad!"

Half running to keep up with Friedrich, Julie saw that the scar on his cheek was as livid as though it had been newly

made. When she looked down, there was a mark like a scar around her wrist where he grasped her. She let him drag her along, neither willing nor unwilling, but acquiescent like a child. And she wondered what, in the woods, Friedrich's anger would demand of her.

Then they were in the woods, proceeding deeper and deeper; she could no longer hear the voices from the picnic ground, and he still dragged her along. There came to her mind the story of the child Isaac, driven by his father Abraham to the altar among the trees. Sacrifice. God had demanded sacrifice. Why?

Suddenly Friedrich stopped. He turned and pulled her to him without tenderness and pressed his anger on her mouth.

Then, as abruptly, he released her. He turned his back on her.

She stood alone and awkward, and at last she stammered, "And you didn't—you didn't even say you like me."

"Like?" he shouted. "I hate!" Far off she heard the echo of his hatred.

And foolishly she began to cry.

"My God! You are like a German girl yourself. First, do you love me? Then they weep." Again she heard the angry echo.

Moments passed, and when he spoke again his voice was changed. "Little idiot, if what one hated were as soft and warm as this, how easy to hate—and pleasant!"

His arm reached back and drew her up to him. She stood beside him coldly, looking at a green and springy vine that embraced the tree beneath which they stood.

"Become a woman," he said. "Let us two forget unhappy things."

Her mouth still felt the ugly force of his, and it was not

possible in one moment to grow into a woman, although deeply she could realize that he had vented a bitterness—not of her—and was able now to be tender.

She said, still unyielding, "What do you hate?"

And his voice as icy as hers, answered, "Everything."

She turned at last and walked slowly back in the direction of the grove. She would not glance behind, but she thought she heard him following. And when the path opened into the picnic ground he stepped forward, and they went on side by side. She was grateful that he would not betray their failure to the others, but rather let them still appear as one.

And it was side by side that they came to the table where Miss Schmidt had pointed out Genevieve.

Julie saw Genevieve sitting beside the farm woman, her mother, and she always felt afterward that her angry thoughts had called forth Genevieve's actions, or Genevieve's angry actions her thoughts, for they were simultaneous. She thought the slattern faces of Genevieve and her mother were like mirrors to each other; the mother could see what she had been, the daughter what she would become; they spoke their language with the same accent, enjoyed the same pleasures. Genevieve would marry a man like her mother's and live in a similar house. Only Julie, immigrant's daughter, shared nothing with her mother—no common way of life, nothing. And even before the thought was completed she saw Genevieve's angry actions begin, and could not move, could not even warn Friedrich, paralyzed by trouble preparing.

She saw Genevieve's elbow nudge the young man who sat on her other side, she saw Genevieve's lips against his ear, whispering, and then those lips slowly smiled. She saw the man's leg crawl from under the table, and in the moment when the blue-jeaned leg tripped Friedrich and he fell, in the

moment when trouble was accomplished, the paralysis lifted from Julie. She reached for Friedrich too late, her fingers brushed his sleeve, she saw him sprawl and heard the thump of his body and then the rise of raucous laughter.

Friedrich was on his feet again. There was the same rip in his jacket that Julie's mother had once mended. Voices cackled; men pushed back the tables to make a small shaded arena. In the middle of the arena Friedrich threw off his jacket. He was skillful, agile, brave—and too small, too small. Julie caught a glimpse of Genevieve leaping onto a table, beer-red face screaming battle, and then the word—the word that above all others was sickening. The face of Genevieve's mother, the older face, bobbed and swayed below Genevieve's like a reflection in water. Julie heard her own voice above the laughter, cheers, applause, heard her own words shrill and senseless, "But not at Champlain's lake! *Champlum's!"* and did not understand until later what she had tried to protest: This water, this shore—a foreigner discovered it for you, a Frenchman, a foreigner. And only later realized, too, that the foreigner had discovered this land for other foreigners; the natives had always known it, the Indians.

Far off, Julie saw her mother's face appear as in a dream, beyond any hope of touch or meeting, and then the face vanished again, and now she heard one of the onlookers turn and mutter, "That Jackson, he's drunk, drunk as a coot, damn fool." But the man made no attempt to stop that which was, after all, part of many a haying or a harvest—the quick grudge, the challenge. Why not? Fun's fun, a fair fight's fun. Friedrich went down again with a bleeding nose—game little rooster!—and then at last some of them grabbed Jackson and pinned his arms back. When Julie bent to help Friedrich up he pushed her away, almost snarling, and rose by him-

self. But he let one of the men hand him his jacket and help him on with it, and then in his torn dusty jacket he walked away by himself, staggering a little, his head thrown back to stop the flow of blood.

Miss Schmidt appeared suddenly to face Genevieve, to accuse and dismiss her from service before the girl's friends and neighbors, and to have flung back at her by Genevieve words like those of Tomorrow's, but inverted: "You Krauts, you're as bad as the Jews. What are you kicking them out of Germany for?"

Dr. Jennison waited alone at the picnic table. He had risen from his seat and leaned forward, supporting himself by gripping the table with his hands, and he looked like a man who is about to make a speech. His small clipped beard appeared very dark against his pallor. He made his speech. He said, "How does one endure this?"

Someone helped him back into his seat. Friedrich went down to the water and bathed his face. It seemed to Julie that the water near, the shore took on a reddish tint. When Friedrich returned the bleeding had stopped, but he was very pale. He said as he sat down, "I must take lessons in boxing."

And, "Oh, your coat! Your coat!" Mrs. Dreyfuss cried, running up and putting her hands on his shoulder as though the entire pain were gathered in that torn cloth. It was like a wound that had opened again, that would never heal. He remained rigid under her touch, and her hands dropped from him. He sat with his arms folded across his chest, whatever he was feeling contained within himself.

All around them they could hear the scuffling of chairs and tables as the harvesters settled themselves again—already a few were leaving, the pleasure over, the climax of the day reached. From the corner of her eye Julie saw the drunken

coot Jackson being pushed back into his chair as he fought his fight again. Genevieve tried to snuggle against him.

At Julie's table no one spoke. Miss Schmidt had vanished into the woods to look for her friend, and there was nothing to do but wait until she returned and was ready to drive them away. They waited and felt themselves closed in by the glances of the farmers as by the barbed wire of a camp, and their faces were like the faces ot those who have been endlessly imprisoned. For Friedrich's punished body bound them unalterably to him—and to every other victim. It was hard to believe that their chains were not visible to the enemy, nor the scars where iron cut into their wrists and ankles.

The moments passed, and still Miss Schmidt did not return. Suddenly Julie reached for the phonograph and turned it on, and now to her, too, the voice sounded glorious, not to be ended by death and bearing on it overtones of bliss or beauty her mother had known long ago.

Mrs. Dreyfuss said suddenly, *I tell you, it is all that woman's fault—that Nora and her behavior."

"Must there be a fault?" Friedrich laughed wretchedly. "Well, then, by the Day of Atonement I shall have reached the enlightened country of Poland. Shall I pray forgiveness for you all?"

The Day of Atonement. The sound of the words was somber as a tolling bell, and at last the message reached Julie. She looked through some back window of memory, as once she had looked through the back window of her house and seen the old Jews in the synagogue beating their breasts and wailing their sin and their guilt to God. She remembered how she had derided and imitated them while her mother watched—and her mother's silence had been a consent and a provocation to a child. Afterward, through the ordinary

days, Julie had slunk past her grandfather's picture, her eyes averted. She knew nothing of him except that he had been just such an aged and bearded man as those she mocked; he, too, once each year on Yom Kippur had shivered, wailed, cried out to God his repentance.

"You will be in Poland by Yom Kippur?" Mrs. Dreyfuss asked Friedrich, and she shivered.

"How* early the Day of Atonement comes this year. Almost as if .. ."

"Yes, so early. As if..."

"As if what?" Friedrich cried. "As if what?"

And Dr. Jennison answered for him, "As if God hurried to give the world a chance to answer for its sins. Is it we who must atone?"

It was he who first had used the word that had overcast the day. Atonement. Yet the sky had not changed. It remained serene and rich. No, the meaning of this season under whose sky they sat had split in two. For some this was the time of harvest, of the taking in of the wheat, the grape, of all the earth's gifts. For others it was the time for the accusation of self, of guilt and remorse beaten with fists on the breast.

Far of? the German woman stepped out of the woods, followed by the slight fastidious figure, and at the same time little Elsie came from the shore, wearing her wreath of flowers. "Oh, it is nice!" Mrs. Dreyfuss said. "It is pretty!"

Under the crown of flowers little Elsie's face seemed more pinched and meager. Julie wondered what the child had seen, known, understood, sitting alone on the shore, not following the other children to the excitement, the shouts and laughter. Then beneath the pale cheeks Julie saw the muscles working.

Miss Schmidt stepped up to the table. "But in the woods,"

she announced briskly, "there came to Adeline the idea for a poem."

"A poet!" Tomorrow said. "Like Heine!" Everyone was turning away from the figure that was at the same time drab and girlish. When, inadvertently, Mrs. Dreyfuss' arm brushed her, Julie saw her mother rub her arm as if to clean away a contamination.

"Yes," Miss Schmidt said, "these artistic temperaments, you never know what they do next." She was apologizing for, or trying to explain, her friend's offensive behavior. The other woman's lips moved as if she wanted to speak for herself, but she bent her head again and remained silent. Yet Julie noticed that Adeline's eyes were red, as if she had been crying, and she wondered if Miss Schmidt's hand had punished her friend again in the cool dim forest.

The station wagon waited, new and shiny among the dusty cars of the harvesters. When they were inside, when the doors were locked, it was as though they were contained within an island, their own.

There was no conversation. They drove fast, fast, away from the Lake of Champlain, but they did not feel safe. On every side their little island was washed by the beautiful, the serene and hostile landscape.

Julie sat beside Friedrich. He carried no visible mark of punishment beyond his earlier fading scar. She felt compelled to make some sign, to acknowledge her remorse for withholding tenderness from him, and her womanhood. She reached out and pressed his hand and instantly felt the pressure returned. A heady feeling swept her, and she lifted his hand and touched it with her lips; she made public her sin—and his forgiveness.

When the station wagon drew up before the house, evening

had come. The sun was sinking, a ball of fire and anger which atonement alone might placate. As he stood watching the sunset Dr. Jennison said, "I am glad at last to understand why I hate the water. I am glad there is one thing at last that I understand."

Chapter Fifteen

WHEN Julie walked later to Nora's cottage a last color was in the sky, a last anger—but now the anger was her own. She did not know why she was obeying Nora's summons*

It had come when they returned from the picnic.

"I am glad there is one thing at last that I understand....'* As Dr. Jennison finished speaking the sun had gone behind the mountains, and in the sky the afterglow was left.

Little Elsie's mother had risen from the porch steps where she had been waiting, and had come down the stairs, not to her child, but directly to Julie. As she spoke to Julie her pale spiteful glance lingered on Mrs. Dreyfuss. "Nora's having a party tonight. She wants you to come."

Julie's mother answered, "My daughter will not, she——"

But the girl interrupted, "Yes! Yes! Tell Nora yes!"

She had not known then why she said yes; nor had she known later, all during the time that she quarreled with her mother, that she nagged and stormed. She could imagine Nora standing with the harvesters—in their very midst; she could hear Nora's laughter rise coarsely with theirs each time that Friedrich was knocked back to the ground.

Now as she walked along the lake to the cottage the last flicker in the sky went out, night was complete, and confusion

followed in the wake of her anger with herself. Why was she going where she did not want to go?

When Elsie had come down the steps, Julie had noticed Friedrich at the door of the station wagon, and as Elsie spoke her invitation, his hand had frozen in the act of opening the door, as though he waited for Julie's answer. As she turned away from that hand, which only a few moments before she had lifted to her mouth in a promise that she had made public, her glance was arrested by the tear in his suit. The open surfaces, parting like a mouth, seemed to ask her to press her lips on its own. Her mother answered Elsie, "My daughter will not," his hand opened the door, and his face, which had been averted, turned to Julie, smiling. Triumphantly he accepted the dangerous promise she had made him. Then—"Yes! Yes! Tell Nora yes!"

But when the cottage door swept open, Julie knew that the danger was here too; like an animal, she caught its scent on the winds of pleasure. Standing on the threshold, she smelled the musky female odor of the trees meeting with the warm odor of flesh inside the room, saw the dancing legs of dancing girls in rumpled slacks or naked in shorts, heard laughter strident as glass shattering. And she knew that this night there was no escape; the danger was here, too, with some brazen and compelling difference.

Nora, the green witch, caught her and pulled her across the threshold; someone slammed the door on night's large darkness, and she was inside the place that she had so often wondered about and tried to picture—the place of illicit love. But now she could make out nothing. The few lamps seemed to cast shadows, not illumination, and all the swarming figures cast out the solitude in which alone love could flower.

Nora's sun-darkened flesh faded into the dimness, and there were left only the sparkling bits of glass that Julie's mother had never wanted, and the gown that had come from the city of Paris that Nora would visit next summer if everything went well and everyone like Friedrich spent his vacation in a concentration camp. But why had Nora made herself so strange arid alien to the rough cottage where she had spent a summer? It was the young people, the uncouth tenants of an evening, who were at home here.

"Where's Paul?" Elsie's pale spiteful face drifted through the gloom.

"Paul's in hell!" And all the tiny twinkling lights of her necklace could not illumine Nora's face.

Paul was in hell far off across the room. He was alone on a love seat meant for two.

"Her mother said 'No,'" Elsie sang. "Her mother said 'No.'"

"But she'll say 'Yes,' won't you, kiddie? Sometime you'll have to say 'yes.'"

Julie was caught between the two grinning faces like a small victim ground down between two oppressors. She had run away from Friedrich; she had not meant to join their alliance of spite against her mother. As she left the big house she had caught a glimpse of the living room from the hallway. The room was empty, swept, cleared, tidied for the morning. The chairs faced each other, rigid and empty, the rugs were precise and untrodden, the books, the newspapers, the fancy needlework had been removed, and there was no trace of the guests and of their life here this summer. For a moment she felt as if she would cry. But they were there, she saw them in a far corner of the room, and they were huddled around the small radio like people who have aban-

doned ship and cling to a raft. She caught a glimpse of her mother's desperate face, of her uncle, his hand cupping his enormous ear, and of Friedrich, unfastidious, biting a fingernail as he listened. From the small box of the radio, a voice told that in all Europe's silence tonight only one sound could be heard, the passage of a plane that carried a note eastward across England's narrow channel. The only sound and the last hope, and beneath the earth lay in darkness, waiting....

And now, in her cluttered and disordered room, Nora popped up the lid of a box and a voice came shrieking out that stung Julie as though the phonograph, like Pandora's box, had let loose a noxious swarm. "I'm Flip the Hip, a solid sender, a very good friend of Missus Bender." And then all the voices in the room flung back their challenge, "Bender Shmender A Bee Gezindt!"

Through the noise, through the dimness, a head moved like that of a swimmer moving through water, and came to rest beside Julie. She did not at first recognize Rog because she would never have expected to find him here, or perhaps because he was not handsome now—his eyes, his mouth, his cheeks all round with silliness. "Bender Shmender A Bee Gezindt!" The glass he was holding tipped, and on Julie's dress there was a stain. She watched it widen with a distress so deep she could not name it. Her mother had cut this dress for her one windy spring afternoon. … Did her mother still sit and listen, as though she were a superstitious savage and in the black box were a magic that snatched out of the air a forecast for the future? Or had she already gone upstairs to bed, sleepless, and grieving for a daughter who had gone over to the brazen enemy?

Rog rubbed at Julie's dress with his handkerchief, but she pushed his hand away—and remembered Friedrich's hand

and the long glance between them in which she had asked—and he had not given—a release from her promise. Perhaps she had not escaped the danger at all, perhaps she had only put a little time between it and herself.

"Did you find Nora on the lake, too?" Remembering Friedrich, she heard her voice become shrill, nervous.

"Lake, shmake," Nora said. "We met on the lake. He brought his pals." And a pal of Rog's danced up and put his arms around Nora, around all the twinkling little lights and the costly dress and the flesh that showed no mark where sunburn stopped.

"I brought my girl," Rog said.

Julie might have been his girl, and she stared with surprise at the one who was, as though she had half expected, as in a mirror, to be given back a reflection of herself. Rog's girl wore white sailor pants that were very tight and a white sailor hat tipped over her straw hair. Julie continued to stare at her with bitterness, simply because the sailor girl was sa unlike herself. Even Friedrich had once gone to a girl like that, and what could you say about her except that she was a girl ? Female, flesh, a girl. But she made Julie feel harsh and dry, unlovable, unworthy of love——Again the music seemed frightening, and the laughter, and the smell of the warm night that was the smell of trees or girls, or both, mingling in some-terrible goading purpose. She became aware again of the stain that had been .put on her dress, and again the same distress rose, too intense, as though it were she who were somehow soiled.

Rog put his hand on his sailor's tight pants. "When do I get in the Navy, baby?" They both giggled.

But Julie could not summon the smallest smile or ease.. While she had lingered in the hallway of the big house she:

had seen her mother suddenly reach out and switch off the voice from the radio. The emptiness had been frightening, as though on their own sky Europe's silence had come down. Then she heard Friedrich's snarl: "Mrs. Dreyfuss, it is *they* who must evacuate their children from them. *They!* You have only to listen!" He reached out and "... agonized scenes of parting at the Paris railroad stations" sprang into the room, and then Friedrich's apology, as jangling: "I am sorry to lose my temper, but is this the last night of peace?"

But here in this room that Julie had always imagined would have the heavy, almost bodily, silence of two who are intimate, they sent their song spinning out to themselves again as soon as it ended. It was the song of that season, "Bender Shmender A Bee Ge——" and it seemed to her that only the song to which that huddled group in the big house listened was appropriate to the season and the climate of the last night of peace.

Rog drifted with his sailor across the room. He pulled her down onto the couch, and she lay on him, laughing and tumbled.

Julie was left to stand alone amidst the cries, the music, the bottles popping, and she had the sense, dreamlike, of having been in this place before, a region of uneasiness, alien. Then a warm breath sprayed her ear, and that, too, was like a dream. "Ha! They don't know what they're singing! Jewish!" Nora's laughter buzzed in her ear, and Julie waited to be stung. "A Bee Gezindt! Good health, that means. Ha! They don't know!"

And then at last Julie found herself able to smile, as she accepted the delicious tidbit which Nora offered to her alone. Of course! Of course! 'Bender Shmender, A Bee——' Her people's rhythmic way of derision—cancer, shmancer, so long

you're healthy. There bubbled up her own derision for all these outlanders making merry in the language of a people they did not like. But still she moved up a little closer to her ally; she had to feel high and mighty with Nora, or wouldn't she simply feel uncomfortable among all these raffish strangers? And it was then that she recognized the familiarity of this scene. Nora had trapped the merrymakers from the afternoon; she had opened her door, and they had swarmed in from the pleasure grove, drawn by a music they did not know.

The night made clear all of their secrets that the day had withheld. Now at night she could mingle, could hear the private words they had exchanged around their own tables, out of earshot. She could bring back a report to Friedrich. "A Bee Gezindt!" the enemy said to each other. "A Bee Ge~ zindt!" Now that their foolish little secret was laid open to her, they appeared merely pathetic, until she recalled that they had not wished Friedrich good health.

She tried to allay her uneasiness by confiding it to this woman who had her own face, older, a mother face. "When I left the house Friedrich was saying this might be the last night of peace." And the mother face looked back, the mother lips said, "Peace . . . shmeace … A Bee Gezindt!"

The disgust Julie felt must instantly have risen to her face, because the hand on which cut stones winked and glittered half rose as if to slap her, then grasped her arm. "Why are you looking at me like that?"

But Julie continued to look, and the costly stones, the silk that fell away from the soft flesh perversely called up the recollection of Nora tearing a book out of Friedrich's grasp and staring down at an old woman, dressed not unlike herself in shawl and apron, the uniform of the ghetto.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

As Julie lifted Nora's hand from her, she felt the jewels cold against her palm and did not know what her answer would be until the words were spoken. "Why are you so different from my mother?"

"What do you mean by that?"

She answered at last, slowly, "I don't know exactly."

"Yes," the woman said. "You know."

"Yes," Julie said, "I guess I do." Yes, she did; she thought this woman was trash beside her own mother, and the woman knew it, too. And it was strange, for had not Julie always wanted her mother to be like this, perfumed, jeweled, painted, bedizened? And she had wanted to hear such music in her mother's house, and not that duet in a foreign language of two who found love stronger than death, and she had wanted her mother to open the door of her house to just such carousers as these, and not to the quiet figures who sat around a table set with a bowl of fruit and a steaming samovar. She could see them now, far off and small, like figures on a stage, acting out the words and gestures of a foreign language. And she felt her devotion leaving this woman and stepping back into that scene and taking its place there in it. The scene, the figures were somber, and that was more seemly than all this pinprick glitter of baubles and silken highlights, for the place of birth, of her mother's and Nora's—and Friedrich's—was somber, was terrible, and any moment might become a place of death. She moved back, once and for all, to stand with her mother and her uncle, and with Friedrich, the ambassador from that unknown country, who alone made it real and present to her.

"Why wouldn't I be different from your mother? My God, I'm American!"

Because she drank whisky, danced with boys who might have been her sons, sang the song of the season, "A Bee Ge——" Julie laughed.

"What the hell are you laughing at? You're not like your mother, either! You're American!"

"American," Julie murmured, her recollection still lingering in the quiet decorous home that had mingled its peculiar gifts with treasure found in the new soil. Miraculously, as though it were this moment beneath her thumb, she felt the gentle brush of moss, a bit her father had brought her from Walden Pond. It still lay in the dish at home, dried out because she had forgotten to water it, and yet it remained intact, to be seen and touched. It would never seem dead, the last gift her father had given her.

She stood, lost, remembering her father, who, like Friedrich, might have seemed alien, a shadow on the summer, and yet who seemed to her less alien than this woman. He had made one small pond the endless vista of his landscape. . . . Julie was aware again of that vindictive grasp on her arm, and, still seeing what was not there, felt herself pulled across the room. And when the grasp released her she wondered, still half lost, for what purpose the woman had evoked this watery surface on the wall, as once her father had evoked a little pond.

But Nora did not immediately disclose her purpose. She merely said, "There—in the mirror."

Lifting her glance, Julie saw the two faces side by side. They were not quite like.

The woman's face, disordered, unhappy, presented the girl with a *fait accompli,* a life that had been lived, but did not disclose to her the means by which she herself might be brought to a similar ruin.

The ripe mouth smiled vindictively. "I wanted just once to see us side by side like the others do. . . . Before and after … Or we could have ourselves photographed." Her hand rose to Julie's hair and pulled it back, as though she were trying to reduce the girl's face to a skull.

Staring unsmiling, Julie murmured, "Yes, before and after," and felt that she knew what the woman meant. And it seemed to her that the other should not have smiled either, for the woman's face made it plain that she had lived through every bad thing—through all that still remained for Julie to know, and that she could only await with fear.

The woman dropped her hand from Julie's hair, which fell, disheveled, about her shoulders again, and the impression of the skull, the ultimate bone beneath, receded.

"I can't even remember the time I was a virgin," Nora said.

Then only Julie's reflection was in the mirror, and she did not know whom she hated more, the woman or herself. She turned her back on her white silly virgin face and her thin silly virgin body, pure and undefiled in a dress that was soiled.

She put her hands over the stain on her dress to hide it—it was a stain, not of impurity, but of purity—and she tried to shrink into a corner and lose herself. But all the little rays that wheeled from Nora's diamonds searched her out and pointed to her shame, and the rich silk flashed over the room and lighted up every corner as the woman moved slowly in the embrace of dancing, slowly and wantonly as in the most mysterious embrace, the real one, the last one, body with body.

Across the smoky fumes and shadows of the rooms Julie saw Paul still in hell, still alone, feeding and replenishing himself from a glass that was never empty. But when she sat

down beside Nora's lover she knew she could not make him an instrument of her anger. Her body, not yet used and not mysterious, was mocked and belittled by the other, still slowly moving, dancing, embracing, and she could only blurt out, "Do I really look like her? Do I?"

He did not even lift his eyes from the floor. "That bitch!" he said.

Behind his shoulder she saw Elsie's face rising like a white malignant moon, saw the white hands cover his eyes and heard again the terrible word for one he loved. "Bitch!" He tore the hands away from his eyes, and then he faltered miserably, "Oh, it's you . . ."

"Yes, me." She stood, quite drunk, over him, and a little smile, inviting and malicious, played over her lips.

"You," he said, slowly rising and facing her. "All right." On his lips was the same strange joyless smile as on Elsie's. Julie thought, even she knows, even *she,* pale and not pretty. ... Then they were gone and Julie was alone. Someone had turned out every lamp but one, and the edges of the room seemed endless, as the woods had this afternoon. Someone had opened the door again, and the aroma of night came into the smoke and the fumes. Someone had turned down the music, the words were lost, and now the music had a danger that forbade listening. Someone cracked ice dangerously with a pick. Someone kissed.

And then over her the blond face was bending, unfamiliar now, tarnished and not handsome. When Rog sat down and put his arm around her she did not push him away, because he, too, knew, and that made her less than he and contemptible; in all this pleasure grove she was the only one who had not been received into the mysterious rites. Yet, when he offered her his glass, her mother's prohibition rose, and she pushed the glass away. He pushed it back at her

again. "Say 'yes/ Julie. Sometime you ought to say 'yes.'"

Oh, but she wanted to say yes. Yes! Yes! Yes, Rog! Yes! And she wanted to put her mother out of mind, and her father with his pond, his morning woods. In the early morning, her father had said, Walden Pond looks exactly as it must have when that great man still was there—and then a car stops, and the awful music comes crashing out from the radio! My God, such music at Walden! And now, lying in Rog's arms, she seemed to hear Friedrich calling, My God, I wait for you—and you stay there with that woman and her drivel!

She felt Rog's glass against the rim of her teeth, she opened her eyes and caught a glimpse of Nora drinking, and again she felt corroded by the woman's contempt. She thought vengefully, I can do whatever she can. She opened her mouth, she drank, she emptied the glass, she disobeyed her mother, and some mooring was loosed, some anchor. She did not like the taste, but the feeling afterward was wonderful, and much too wonderful; looseness bore her on its tide, and she was a little frightened.

The warmth of Rog's cheek pressed against her, and then that of his mouth. His breath was bitter with what he had drunk to make himself gay, and that very bitterness goaded her ardor as though he were offering her her own fear to taste—to swallow and end, once and for all.... You may not without love, her mother said; that is the sin, without love....

She opened her eyes, called back by her mother to the other one, to Friedrich, whom she loved. Rog must have sensed her resistance, because his eyes opened, too, and they were so close that each could see his own reflection vaguely in the other's eyes. Then simultaneously they drew apart—or perhaps each pushed the other away—in dislike.

Yet they continued in a sort of apathy to sit side by side, looking out at the scene of pleasure. On the floor, white sailor legs moved slowly like legs under water and then were lost in other, darker legs. The shimmering silk passed them by and on its bosom cradled the head of a small dark lad, and the two voices mingled with the dreamy softness of a more intimate meeting, "Bender . . . Shmender . . . Bender . . . Shmender . . ." Julie saw the jeweled hand crawl down the thigh of the little dark boy. And now, contrary to her earlier sense of stepping back into a distant, a foreign scene, she felt Friedrich, the stranger from a world and a past she did not know, move forward, tug at her. "I have to go," she said. "I have to go home."

"Jesus Christ!" Rog said. "Look at them! And any minute the whole thing's going to blow up!"

She was prevented from going by her astonishment. It was he, and not the woman of her own race, who had become her ally; he, to whom she had always denied—from the narrow prejudice of her minority—the ability to feel, perceive, suffer. She said, confident now that he would understand the allusion of her words, as vague as his, "This is the last night of August."

But perhaps he did not understand, or, even, did not listen, because they had pushed each other away. "They make me sick!" he said.

"The last night of August," she repeated, and maybe everything would still be all right, because August was the dangerous month, the month when armies began to march, and it was almost over.

"You make me sick!" he said. "And my father makes me sick! Everyone makes me sick!"

She did not move away from him, because she felt his re-

proach of her justified. The restlessness he had awakened in her she was impelled to bring to another, alien, too old.

"Everyone makes me sick," he said. "Why didn't anyone do anything? Why did they just let everything happen? My father was in the other war. Why did he let everything happen again?"

They turned to each other, and she saw her cloudy reflection in his eyes. Briefly they were drawn to each other by a distress as powerful as that which, before, had parted them. She found a strange solace in their common distress.

"Hell!" he said. Again she caught the bitter flavor of his breath as, for the first time, he appeared to her to be a victim no less than herself. She had not asked to be born what she was, and Rog had not asked to be born at a time that might want of him only that he die. "Hell! Hell! Hell!" he said. He seized her as fiercely as, before, he had embraced her, and she found a gratification in being hurt by this loveless seizure, as though her pain might mitigate his.

Suddenly he was spent; he released her. His head fell against her shoulder, and in a moment he was asleep.

In sleep he was handsome again, pale and no longer dangerous. One hand rose against her breast, and for an instant his mouth twitched like that of a child about to cry. Then, still childlike, his hand fell back on his cheek, open, upturned. Whatever moved or troubled him could not break through his bonds of sleep, and at that moment of his helplessness she almost loved him.

"Ah..." She heard a long low sigh, and when she looked up she saw Nora standing over them, alone now. Her little dark boy was dancing with a girl as young as himself, and it was his hand that caressed the girl's thigh, as little and delicate as his own.

"And what can be more touching," Nora whispered, "than young love?"

Had the woman appeared again to mock and humiliate her? Yet there was an expression on Nora's face as she looked at Julie cradling that handsome sleeping head on her shoulder that made Julie believe Nora had lied: she had not forgotten the moment that had changed her from an untouched girl.

"Yes, I'm young!" Julie said vengefully. "I'm young! I don't have to drink to have a good time!"

In the gloom the woman's face appeared flat as a snake's, and the narrowed eyes glittered. Julie waited for the uncoiling, fascinated and a little frightened.

But when Nora's answer came it astounded her. "And are you," she asked very quietly, "having a good time? Are you?"

It was not possible to lie to that simplicity. "Are *you?"* she countered.

The woman turned sharply on her heel and walked away, and neither had answered the question of the other.

When Julie saw her again Nora was at the open window, bending forward and drinking now only of the night and its aroma. Solitary, her back to the room, she regained the first dignity with which Julie had invested her. Of what was she thinking—of Paul-in-hell, or of that far world from which she and Julie's mother had come? Or did she ask only why she did not have a good time? The gleam of her dress and her jewels was lost in the largeness of night toward which she leaned, and she seemed in the end to be not very different from Julie's mother—alone, unhappy, a shadowed figure.

Then, behind her, Julie heard a stealthy little noise. It might have been that she heard it over all the whispers, sighs,

endearments only because for a long time an inner apprehension had been waiting for it—and for its stealth. The woman heard it, too, and perhaps for the same reason. They both turned their heads, Nora first and then Julie. In the doorway that was now open to the other room Paul stood with Elsie. His shoulders were rigid, his arms hung stiffly at his sides as though he wanted to keep his body from any touch or contact with the one beside it.

Nora began to walk across the room.

"Rog! Wake up! Wake up!" Julie whispered, but she was forced to continue looking behind her.

Paul still stood beside Elsie, yet he tried to keep himself intact, solitary. On Elsie's face a nasty little smile bloomed and then as quickly went, and Julie thought: it was she who said Nora was the most wonderful woman in …

"Rog! Rog! Wake up!"

Now Nora was face to face with the two in the open doorway of the bedroom. There was only silence.

"Rog! Oh, Rog!"

A young man appeared. "He's passed out," he said, and he too seemed apprehensive and uneasy as he tried to put Rog's arm around his own neck and lift him so that they could get out in a hurry.

The frightening silence continued until Nora broke it when Paul blindly reached out and tried to touch her. "My God, with that flat-chested bitch!" She pushed the other woman and set her to staggering drunkenly across the room and outside. At that moment someone turned up the phonograph, and the words came rocking into the room: "Bender Shmender A Bee——"

Now Paul had lifted his head to answer. Julie could not catch his words, nor the words Nora was saying to him, but

over the music, over the crazy verses she could catch the bitter sound of their voices. She knew that bitterness well: she had heard it too often; she had used it too much. Trying to wound the other, one was hurt oneself.

The merrymakers were rising, they were swarming from the room like shadows; whatever sound of leave-taking they made was lost in the screaming music. Julie saw the sailor pants, unsteady and misty against the night, and Rog, dragged between two comrades like a soldier who has been wounded, and then the pleasure grove was abandoned to its two first inhabitants.

Julie lingered outside the cottage; she could not have said what held her. Suddenly the phonograph stopped, and the wrangling voices. She heard the sound of glass shattering, and in the cottage the last lamp went out. There was only silence and darkness. Then she heard one wild shuddering moan and could not tell whether it was of pain or pleasure, nor from whom it had come, the man or the woman. And again silence, complete.

And now that cry that had been almost agonized seemed to sound again and again, to invade the woods, to possess her, and in the entire evening it was all that was real, terrible and moving. She quickened her steps, she hurried. Over the lake the sky seemed to have lightened, and she thought that in Europe dawn had come, in Europe August was over, and briefly she saw that entire dark continent prone, like a woman under a sky of danger.... And she hurried, hurried to him whom the evening had pointed out—to the man, the stranger, the traveler from the unknown violated world.

Chapter Sixteen

LEAV1NG the house again this night, now to go outside where Friedrich waited, Julie snatched from the bed table her mother's most cherished possession.

The clasp of the watch was old-fashioned and resisted her, and she knew that if she lost this her mother would not forgive her; there would be something cold and antagonistic between them that could never be changed. But despite this danger, and the danger that her mother might at any moment awaken—despite the panic that seemed to run, scrabble, claw inside her like a little animal clawing at a cage—she forced herself to stand in rigid calm while her cold strong fingers fastened the watch around her wrist. All during the rest of the night she remained two, divided. It was her panicked spirit that remembered and experienced; her body was the spirit's ruthless prison that opened, not to let panic escape, but to permit the man's, Friedrich's, entrance to the deepest dream.

As she stood beside her mother's bed she felt the two parts of the clasp become one, felt the orifice receive the tiny prong, and knew that from this instant she was committed; something began that she could no longer stop. She dropped her hands, and the chain, so fine as to be almost invisible even by day, dragged on her wrist like a handcuff; this was the first love-present that her father had given her mother.

When Julie had returned from the party, no one had been waiting—neither in the garden nor anywhere about the house.

She felt miserable in this dress that had been pawed, that had been dirtied with Wine and yet had kept her body beneath untouched; the dress clung to her flesh like a clammy sheath. She still seemed to hear that almost inhuman howl of anguish or joy, or both, and she felt herself shamed and diminished by all those who were contaminated, impure, and whose bodies seemed to her complete in a way that hers, inviolate and to herself alone, was not. Her hands rose to the neck of her dress, as though to rip it off, and then remained there, clenched and cold. He for whom she waited did not appear, yet she continued to linger in the night, alone.

The house was dark; only a faint light burned from the hall. Inside the house they lay in sleep as Nora did now in love. She could imagine the great loose body on the bed, the legs sprawled, the arms embracing, seizing, the head tossing from side to side, moaning. And then—she could not swerve the terrible direction of her thoughts—she saw her father lying in his narrow box, in the terrible seemliness of death, his arms arranged at his sides, his legs straight and rigid, his head frozen and still. She shuddered with what she saw, but she was unable to go inside, to give herself up to the posture assumed in sleep or love or death. And again her thoughts were driven in the direction whose terror she did not want to follow. After her father had been left to his own cold sleep she had been obsessed with the obscene ritual of death, the marriage with eternity, and the first night. The first night when everyone has gone away and they are left there lying in the earth alone . . .

But now she could not endure to be alone with her obses-

sion, and she took it into the house with her and into the room where her mother lay and, with it, stood looking down on the sleeper.

The night lamp called only her mother's face out of the vast darkness. Golden, calm, rounded, it resembled that of a native of some warm southern island. The mouth smiled. Perhaps in dreams her mother was not yet a widow. Looking down at that sleeping face, its smile seemed evil and mocking, like the one turned on her by Nora in the mirror, and she almost hated her mother who could dream, smiling, of all that her daughter did not yet know. It was herself who was bereft—the widow, unmarried, of a man who had not waited for her.

The long French window was open. She stepped to the little balcony outside, and after a while she could make out the mountains, a little deeper than the sky. Sky, mountains, seemed equally inaccessible, a far region that her longing would never reach.

Then she heard the whisper: "Juta? come down!"

She stepped back into the room, and it was then that she took the watch from the table beside her mother's bed.

Her feet made no sound on the pallid flowers of the carpet; in the faint light she cast no shadow. She seemed to move through her own dream, an existence compelled beyond volition, and she felt the need to make some impression on the substance of the world—to stamp her foot, to rap her knuckles on the banister—and in the same moment pushed the impulse away. Fear of waking was greater than fear of the dream, of waking to actions through whose meaning she glided without conscious will. She stopped once and lifted the watch to her ear and heard the tiny sound as the minute hand moved over the present, already hurling it back into the sum of the past.

Chapter Eighteen

AND now the summer was ending in sorrow and bitterness. The guests were leaving. One day, coming down pale and listless from her room, Julie had even found Rog waiting for her outside on the lawn to say good-by; he was off for the Canadian border and a foreign army: would she write to him sometime?

She could only nod, yes, her eyes slowly filling with tears. Rog, towering splendid and golden above all her dark sad silent people whose chairs, even in these last days, formed the unbroken circle of family, Rog, too, had been caught up by the hatred that ruled the world. Was it hatred for the enemy, or for his own fear that rushed him to meet what would have waited a little longer for him? At first she felt angry that he had taken up with her companions, fear and suffering, and thus had put a further guilt on her. Then she was only distressed for him and apprehensive. Her very lack of love for him freed her deepest concern, and with everyone watching, disapproving, she made the sign of that concern to the youth who in feature so resembled the enemy. She put her arms around him and kissed him on the mouth. "Have luck, Rog! Oh, have luck!" Later her guilt returned; fate might accept this sign as a malediction on him—it had been too fervent, and, coming from one of her accursed race . ..

After she had said good-by to Rog she had gone upstairs to her room again. *To you nothing will happen....* If something had happened, might not Friedrich have loved her, given his protection, which seemed now to pass with him as love? Her body had made abundantly clear that it would not punish her. Yet punishment had come; there was no escape. Sometimes, wandering through the corridors of the house, she would come face to face with him, but his eyes did not seem to see her or his ears to hear the sound of her passing. One word was all she need say to him to change things, one word, but she did not know the one right word to say; she was sure only that it must be there for her to discover.

She spent most of her time these last days alone in her room, deliberately making herself a prisoner from the world that was captured by the tree whose nearness made it larger than all of life. Sometimes the tree made her think of Friedrich, whose nearness distorted her own existence. Only death was real, and not life—only the distant invisible world which her father had left, and to which Friedrich returned her by his return. At such times she had no love, but only the despairing sense of persecution as though he were a presence of fear and foreboding who had come out of the unknown world of her father to haunt her. When she met him, cold and silent in the corridors of the house, her father looked out at her from Friedrich's eyes and did not forgive her, would never forgive.

Lying on her bed hour after hour, turning from the window to the ceiling on which she could build her own empty landscapes, erect her own lonely regions, dread immobilized her. But she did not know its source, whether in guilt, the confession she could not make to her mother, or in her own

fear of abandonment. The living figure had become a ghost, a haunter. Oh, she was punished! This was the punishment which her father visited on her.

But the summer did not end until there was a last flare-up of punishment for all of them.

As she lay on the bed in her room after saying good-by to Rog her mother came in and, without speaking, without asking her, "What is it? What is the matter with you?" lay down on the other bed. If it had been possible for her to feel, Julie would have felt gratitude, even love, for her mother. She closed her eyes, as if this were a way of concealment from her mother and from her own need to confess and find relief. But, closing her eyes, she could see behind every wall and into each room of the house. She could see each guest, during these hours of afternoon, lying like her mother, alone and in the cerements of sleep. And, unsleeping, she felt that she was the only living one, exactly as whenever she met the pallid silent presence of Friedrich.

But perhaps even she fell asleep for a few moments of the heavy afternoon, because her eyes suddenly started open as though she had been very far. She could recall nothing of her dream; only a residue of terror remained. She turned her head to the window, and on the bright landscape there was a smudge that had been in the dream, too. The smudge grew heavier, and then she realized that it was rising from Miss Schmidt's barn—a fine red structure such as had housed her childhood's happiest hours. A flame leaped up above the roof, and for a moment she could not move, seeing come to the afternoon sky that same color of punishment that the sunset had left when they had returned from the excursion. Again out of the pleasure grove a dull heavy meaning reached her: punishment, atonement!

She did not even stop to wake her mother, but ran to find Friedrich, who, in the very moment of danger, no longer appeared to her as a pale fearful presence. He had given himself up to the very largest danger, and he loomed now, a gigantic figure, again sanctified by his dedication.

She banged on his door with both fists, and when he threw it open he seemed, small, nevertheless to tower over her with a prophet's gloom. It was not possible to believe that she had ever had anything to do with him.

"I wanted you to come to me again, Julie, but, ah, not angry—not upset...." Now it was not a prophet's face, but a man's, disturbed and haunted by worldly things.

"No," she said. "I'm not angry. No." And she returned with him to daily life, and its terrible harassments.

"But you are so upset——"

"Yes," she said, and then, "I thought you would know better than anyone what to do. The barn is on fire, and I thought you——"

He was already out of his room and running down the stairs with her. "Tell Miss Schmidt!" he cried. "Get Miss Schmidt! What if the wind should rise!"

He ran out into the afternoon, and she, running down the long corridor to the room that she had seen only from the outside, from outside the window looking in, pictured the sunset color of anger staining the early sky. She ran so fast and hard that the door at the end of the corridor gave under her impact, and distantly she was surprised, as though in Miss Schmidt's room were something shameful and secret on which a door should be locked. But she was in the room and, before she could gather her breath, noticed the great tumbled bed and, hanging over it, the picture of a fierce mustached face—father? Kaiser? Only then did she see the

two women frozen by her entrance in some ludicrous and terrible embrace. Then she realized that it was not embrace, but struggle. With one hand Miss Schmidt held off the thin gray Adeline, with the other she dangled a sheaf of papers over the woman, who appeared like a dog trying to reach a bone.

"What is it? What do you mean?" Miss Schmidt shouted at Julie, released at last from her frozen surprise and dropping her hand from her friend's arm that was red where it had been held. But in that brief letting down of Miss Schmidt's guard Adeline, panting and gasping, plunged for the papers, and there was a vicious sound as she tore them again and again.

"She is destroying a lifetime's work," Miss Schmidt cried to Julie, beside herself and forgetting her anger with the girl, "and her poems are as beautiful as Heine's!"

Again the name Heine seemed to throw the other woman into a frenzy. "They are vile," she screamed, "because they are written in the German language of vileness!"

"The barn is burning!" Julie cried into the disordered scene.

"Oh, my God!" Instantly Miss Schmidt was turning her back on the room and all that had happened in it, but her friend was already bent, sobbing, over the mutilation which she herself had wrought.

"Get the others!" Miss Schmidt ordered, pleaded with Julie. "They must help me!"

And as Julie again ran up the stairs she heard Miss Schmidt pleading with the telephone. "Operator! Operator! Get the fire brigade! The barn is burning! God! God!"

Operator! God! But Julie knew that God at least never listened. She banged on the first door she came to and, when

it opened to the dusk of drawn blinds, saw Tomorrow hastily drawing on his bathrobe. Behind him, as on the floor below, was a great tumbled bed, on which a woman, his wife, woke—and on her face was the waking expression, fear.

These two were not quarreling like the ones below, they were too quiet, and the thought of what they might have done in that shared quietness sickened her, they were so old____

"The barn is on fire!" She spat out her revulsion.

"Now it begins here, too!" Tomorrow exclain^ed.

"What begins here, too?"

"The fire of hatred!" He pushed her out of his^room, but Julie struggled against him and his gibberish.

"What are you talking about? The barn is burning, I tell you. *The barn!"*

He shoved her Over the in rest iold, and his hands were rough rough. "Our barn, or Swastikas burning on German moun tains, or fiery crosses in the south! It is all the same wake the others We will fight fire with fire!"

But it was herself who must be wakened to the meaning of his words, and she tried to do so by protesting, "Fight fire with *waterl"* His door slammed in her face, and she hurried down the corridor; she entered all the rooms and entered into the stupefying nightmares of afternoon. The occupants answered her news with words that she could not grasp. "So it happens here too!" ... "Now it begins!" ... and from one, hastily lacing a corset across a bulging stomach, a wail like an echo from the excursion: "What is it they have against us, *what?"*

When at last she ran across the back lawn, the coarse reek of smoke poisoned the day, and the sound of the timbers crackling was more terrifying than the sight of the fire itself. Behind her she heard others running and then, as in a night-

mare, everything changed, and she felt that she was no longer leading, pointing out the way, but that all those behind were pursuing her, and she tried to keep distance between them and herself. She had brought evil news, and she seemed to herself to be the source of that news and of its evil.

The flames had broken through the roof; they were pale in the bright day. But inside, behind the cracked window of the barn, they were the color of blood. She could not reach back through the reek of smoke to that once remembered aroma of hay and gentle animals that had solaced her childhood. Through the flames that glittered behind the cracked window she could never reach again to the warm happy gloom that had taken her childhood in. She stood watching her childhood burn, and, listening to the ragged voice of fire, she could almost make out words, as though they were spoken in a language to which she had no clue.

Then she saw a man, small, naked to the waist, stagger up with a pail and empty it into the enormous blaze. She laughed, and felt strong fingers digging into her shoulders.

"Cry!" the German woman screamed at her. "Cry! Everything from my father's house is gone! His chair, my cradle, and the curtains from the windows! The curtains! Cry! Cry!" But Julie could not possibly have cried—though the German woman seemed to be saying that her childhood was gone, too—for down Miss Schmidt's face tears were falling, and Julie could only watch fascinated. It seemed to take so long for the water in the eyes to gather, to shape into round drops, tremble on the eyelids, and then, shaken by their own weight, roll down the cheeks. It took so long for tears to form and to expend themselves. "Everything is gone, her poems, and the lovely curtains from the windows." Even as Julie wondered at this strange settling on one strange object, cur-

tains, out of all the welter of furniture and bric-a-brac that Miss Schmidt had brought out of her past (Julie could picture the stiff starched cloth hanging beside the German windows, framing them so that the window was like a mirror into which one could look back at the past) Miss Schmidt snatched her fingers from Julie's shoulder. She ran toward the barn, as though at last really experiencing her loss, and was held back by Tomorrow. "We stand here," she cried, "we stand here and everything goes down each minute, more, worse; we stand here and we do nothing! We must form the bucket brigade!"

It was the afternoon, the light, that forced this scene to the height of a nightmare. At night the drama of flame, of the ripping sound of timbers, of the guests' outcries would have been more seemly, for night made pain private. Now they had been driven out from their darkened sleeping-chambers into the open, and there was nothing to hide them from each other, and from themselves. Like the flames through which the sky was visible, their misery, in daylight, was transparent, and revealed their conviction of the world's entire menace. Thus, in smaller measure, because the fire was paled by the sky, they were forced to reckon its destructive power greater than it was—they could not afford to take a chance and lose more than the barn.

Julie saw Friedrich still staggering with his pailful of water, and for one instant as he raised it and stood, arms uplifted, he seemed to her to be, not a fire fighter, but a tender and stoker of the flames. They boiled and surged within the structure, and then that inner fury could no longer be contained but burst through what had been body and flesh of fine red wood and consumed it. The wildness entered into her, her inmost desires consumed her, and in the nightmare afternoon she

wanted to do something there with Friedrich before them all, to call his violence again to penetrate hers. Her own fury frightened her. She felt icy in all that glare, her teeth chattered.

And then someone caught her up. "For God's sake, you're young, you're strong!" And Tomorrow swept her into the line that had been formed to fight the fire, and Friedrich, too, far off, beyond reach of her sickening passion, was acting with them to put out the blaze. He flailed the handle of the old pump in the yard; then a bucket was passed from hand to hand, and at last Tomorrow ran with the bucket and pitched it into the flames. It reminded her of a child's game that she had played long ago—she could no longer remember the name, because the games of childhood were at last definitely behind her. All the time that Tomorrow ran and sweated and labored for his team he exhorted it. When she finally listened to his words they called her back to day, to light, to the time for wakefulness and understanding, the time that must be free from the tyranny of dreams and lack of will. It might have been her anger that roused her, as even in sleep one can be roused by a real and present danger. When she listened, she understood his earlier words and the words of the others. "I knew this would happen," Tomorrow gasped, panted. "From the first minute of summer I knew this would happen. They hate us! Even the girls who wait on us hate us! They attacked us at the picnic!"

The arms, lifting and falling as the bucket was passed, were like arms that beat on a breast, and somewhere a voice wailed as though begging forgiveness. But who had committed the sin?

"They have made the sign of their hatred . . . brazen ... in open day ..."

Julie could not endure the wailing. Who had committed the sin? The guests? The hired girls?

"From the first minute, I knew this would happen. This summer . .. this terrible summer . .."

The daylight, out of which the fire had burned all shadows, made his words more jangling; he had not even the excuse of night and its dictatorship of fear that returned, unbidden, in dreams. It was then that Julie separated herself from them. She pulled her hand out of the one behind hers. For an instant, the line was broken; then they made it intact again, and without her. In no way was she one of them any longer. Her father's precept—"Thou shalt not commit . . ."—was their precept, too. And she had broken it. An outcast, a pariah. Or merely a girl who stepped away from her childhood and its laws, as she now stepped away from them.

"Julie!" Her mother's voice reached her over all the other sounds. "Where are you going?" And then Julie found that the voice whose peremptoriness she had obeyed in childhood was giving her a direction and a purpose. She called back, "I'll go around and see if the fire has spread." It appeared to her now foolish of them—even Friedrich—not to have thought of this precaution.

"Be careful!" her mother called. "Be careful, Julie!"

She began to skirt the vicinity of the fire. A few of the tree tops were scorched and smelled unpleasant. Now and then she could hear a timber crashing to the earth and sparks would shoot up into the air, a fireworks paled by day and therefore more deadly.

As she searched the area where fire might have spread, she thought she would simply like to continue, to go across the fields that stretched ahead and then up over the mountains and down on their other side, and continue across whatever kind of land lay beyond the mountains, and never return to

the people she had left, and to the bitter nagging ties of love. As on that other time, when she had wandered from the house and remained for hours of the night alone at the lake, she began to feel, not the happiness that she had experienced then, but a similar peace. There was peace only in the brief illusion that she could actually leave them, and even Friedrich, behind her—and all their joyless somber lives.

As she continued she saw that the fire had not spread; the earth was drenched, the grass and trees, with all of summer's rain. All summer it had fallen on their innocent little pleasures, and now in the time when it was needed, when it might have put out a fire, rain withheld itself. The ragged smell of smoke hung all about her, and she lay down on the grass and buried her face in its sweetness. She could live a better life, she told herself, hungry except for what grew in the fields, unsheltered except for what housing nature offered, than if she returned to those who found no meanings of joy in life, but responded with a dark severity to all its gifts. And at the same time she realized that this belief that she could go naked and unarmed into the world belonged among the myths of childhood that she had given up. And she wondered whether there were not other ways to go away from them than the slow flight by foot, the fast one by plane.

But when she rose from the grass she knew that this time there was no question of not returning to them. Directly in her way a scrap of silk shimmered, and even before she lifted it she knew to whom it belonged. Whenever Genevieve had come into her room, to make the beds, to sweep, this scarf had bound her hair and the scent of the silly evil perfume that drenched it had been left behind, and Julie could not cleanse her room though she opened all the windows and the door. Had the scarf really any longer a scent? Here outside, without windows or a door to open, an odor seemed to assail her with-

out limit. Was she to bring this to Tomorrow? *From the first minute of summer I \new this would happen.* How had he known. Tomorrow? How could he have known? Had not the days been fine, except for those brief showers that passed as quickly as they came; had not the hired girls been friendly, rescuing the chair, the cushions, all the summer trivia of the guests from rain? Had not the summer invited them to partake of its majesty?

And then slowly it had been poisoned, or they had poisoned it. The guests whispered; the girls, Genevieve, whispered. The circle of family shrank to smaller and ever smaller dimension; the faces of the girls, of Genevieve, had become mute and baleful. Who had begun it, which mistrust and fear had fed the other?

The scarf was crumpled in her hands, a small hard ball. She shook it out and looked at it again. How could Tomorrow have known? her anger asked. Or had his very expectation, his certainty, put a curse on the summer?

Holding up this scrap of silk before her as though it might answer for Genevieve, she saw that it was discolored, torn, rotted by damp and mildew. It did answer for Genevieve; it must have lain on the grass for days, lost perhaps when the girl had run with a country lad through the woods. There could no longer cling to it any scent. Yet as she thought of Genevieve in the woods—Genevieve, untroubled, giggling—Julie seemed to inhale a perfume that was no longer evil, but rich and heady.

She rolled the evidence, that would confirm all their fears and self-mistrust, into a ball again, small enough to be concealed in her pocket, and she walked back in the direction of the fire. Childhood was over; one made one's choices and stood by them. She made herself responsible; she made herself judge of the evidence and found it wanting.

When she came around to the fire again, she saw the people to whom she had returned standing in a hopeless little group before the blackened gaping structure. Their bucket was abandoned, their project of fighting fire. The fire had begun to destroy itself; it must die when there was nothing left to feed on.

In the bright hot afternoon the guests were more pitiful than they could have been at night. Now their poverty of means was exposed, the poverty of their means of fighting danger or their own fear. They appeared like a little band of refugees who have been routed up from a familiar life without a moment's notice and have not been able, therefore, to bring away with them one smallest token out of a life that was already past. They had no slightest talisman against cruelty.

She turned her back on them and approached the fire until the heat of the ground beneath her shoes told her she could go no farther. She put her hand in her pocket and took out the rotting little silken ball and threw it into the fire that was dying down; and as she did so she repeated to herself that she made herself responsible. There was a brief little flare-up of flame where she had thrown the rag, and she thought, It has started again, I have started it…. She would have put in her hand, burned it, to recall her action. But already there was nothing except the reek that the cloth left. Had she betrayed them? Had she set free a guilty girl who hated them? Briefly it seemed to her that those words almost suited herself. Then she considered that if she had thrown the rag into their midst their terror would have been fired anew, their self-doubt and unhappiness. She had taken it on herself to save them from a larger misery, and she did not hate them. Was it possible that she had begun to love them?

Friedrich was not among them. Then she saw him a little

way off, stretched under a tree. She approached him quietly and stood looking down at his sleeping face. He did not resemble her father or anyone else whom she knew, not even himself as she had seen him all this summer, obscured by her own troubled longings. It was the face of one who endlessly suffers, who has taken with him into sleep the anguish on which he has closed his eyes.

A bell jangled in the quiet afternoon, and Friedrich's eyes opened. She nodded at him ceremoniously, as though welcoming his return to daylight and life.

A little old-fashioned fire engine had drawn to a stop and, behind it, automobiles from which men were running. The chief said, "We came as soon as we could." His face was disturbed; he was a farmer, and he knew what it meant to lose a good red barn.

And Miss Schmidt replied, as grave and courteous, "It was already too late when I called."

Julie turned to Friedrich again. "I dreamed I was back there," he said. "And then to wake and find it was you bending over me!"

Her bitterness could not entirely leave her, and she did not trust herself to speak lest her words be those she would not want him to take away to that lonely country where, for a brief time, she had glimpsed him in endless suffering.

"Yes," he said, his face white, weary, "for a little while yet..."

And now through her tears his face was all distorted, all shattered. Then the tears dried in her eyes, but the coarse reek of smoke seemed to stifle her so that she could not breathe. She knew she must learn to breathe in this polluted atmosphere, for now in the world death would be the daily air.

Chapter Nineteen

WHEN she helped her mother close the trunk, when she slammed the lock, Julie felt that she had partaken in the very act of finality. In the morning her mother and her uncle and Friedrich were returning to the city, and she did not want to go with them. She felt the need to prolong the summer within herself and to keep alive all the emotions it had dealt out to her, however shattering. She was like a convalescent who must cling to the shadows from which she has escaped, lest a too quick return to life shock her into illness again.

Her mother sat exhausted on the bed. "Why don't you pack, Julie?"

The room was terrible. Like memory itself, it had thrown up all the clashing objects discarded by the season that was over. Here was a flower Julie had pressed, but she no longer knew why: had Rog given it to her, or Friedrich, or had she picked it for herself? Here was a clipping from a newspaper about a child violinist who had received an ovation. Reading it over, she found that she had already forgotten why it had moved her enough to cut it out. Was it the triumph of the child that had moved her, the tiny figure on the stage, holding the auditorium spellbound—the adults, those who had life behind them, and experience. Was it that? Perhaps she had saved

the wrong scrap, thrown away what had really meant something to her—news of the fighting, of Warsaw? How often one did just that! Here was a stone of no particular color or shape that she had brought back from the time when she had gone away from them all and stayed half the night at the lake. Was this a souvenir of her solitude, or of their love for her? How frightened they had all been by her disappearance! Now it was the reverse; she wanted them all to go way and leave her, even Friedrich.

It was night, and every light in the room was turned on the disorder so that they could see into every corner and leave nothing behind them. The clarity with which all these disconnected objects that had been her life stood out, made them appear more merciless, each pulling her in a different direction.

"Why don't you pack?"

Julie opened the closet door. There hung all her dresses and it made her shiver, now that the nights were so cold, to look at their thin frail stuffs.

"Why don't you pack?"

"I don't want to go home," Julie said. Then her voice broke and she pleaded, "I want to stay here a little longer. Only a week. Please let me stay! Please! Please!" She almost cried childishly, for, like a child's, her brief respite depended on her mother alone.

There was a long silence, and then her mother said, "You don't have to carry on like that. Stay!"

Again there was silence, and at last her mother said, "Do you think I want to go back, either? I am so tired of them all. I don't even want to go downstairs where they are. You live with people for a lifetime—why shouldn't you get tired of them? Tomorrow has become so stupid! And your uncle—

not stupid, I suppose he could never be stupid—but tiresome, so tiresome! Like a child, he is after me all the time. Now, all of a sudden, the little sister (Didn't he always look down on me? I wasn't a philosopher like him)—all of a sudden he can't do without me for a minute. Even last night—you were sleeping—he knocked on the wall between his room and ours, and in my sleep I thought walls were falling, houses, cities. Maybe I was dreaming about the war. Then I woke up and, really, his knock was such a small noise. I thought at first it was only a mouse. In the old days, if your uncle had wanted something, he would have bellowed like a bull. Not that time makes us gentler; we just haven't got the strength. … I sat with your uncle until he fell asleep, and long after, yes, yes, and now I have this terrible headache beginning. I looked at him asleep, and he was like any other man, who has never had any great ideas, his mouth open, snoring a little. Yes, his great ideas—who cares about them now? He gave his life to them, and now this whole world we live in is just a mockery of them. The time will come, he believed, when there will be no government, because each human being will be so fine he will govern himself! Ah, my God, how foolish it all seems now! Though who can say it was not a beautiful foolishness? I told him what nonsense it all was!"

Julie pictured the midnight scene, her mother sitting upright in the chair, strong, vindictive, and her uncle lying helpless on the bed, reading on her moving lips the sentence she pronounced on him: oblivion.

"Don't look so angry at me!" Her mother gave a shrill little laugh. "Couldn't I tell him, after a lifetime, what I thought? Couldn't I at last tell him, then when he lay asleep?" She yawned and looked about her at the squalor

of departure. "I can't bear this room one minute longer! I'd rather even be downstairs with them!"

In the living room the few last guests sat, and they too looked squalid, a faded, crumpled company, wearing their least cherished summer clothes, that they could stuff into their bags the last thing tonight, and tomorrow be ready in stiff sober attire for the train and the city. Only Miss Schmidt, in a severe woolen dress, appeared decorous and prepared for the season that was at hand, the autumn.

The next night at this time they would be in the city, and in the familiar, the turbulent and unlovely surroundings, the war—and the fire—might seem more actual than here where they felt themselves surrounded on their little island by the wild inimical Adirondack country. It might seem more actual and therefore less frightening. "Brazen . .. brazen .. ." Tomorrow would murmur at intervals. "In broad daylight, to start a fire ..." Dr. Jennison sat alone, his face turned away from them in shadow, and his hands held a book—was it *The Origin of Species,* the account of man's orderly progression upward ?—into which he did not look. "Brazen... brazen ..." Tomorrow continued to murmur. And Miss Schmidt, as though at last to end his lamentation, said, while a wretched, an almost furtive expression crossed her face, "Could it have been the old paint rags in the barn ? The cans of oil and turpentine ? My friend sometimes paints."

There was no answer to this except Tomorrow's snort, "Hm! Can art be so destructive!" No, they would not soon forget her friend's unspeakable behavior on the excursion. In the atmosphere that was now thick with discomfort Mrs. Dreyfuss asked: "Tell me, Miss Schmidt—I don't know why I never asked before—was there insurance for the barn?"

Again that expression, wretched and furtive, crossed Miss Schmidt's face, as though she felt her friend accused, or as though, even, she struggled not to take a guilt on herself and confess that it was she who had run into the afternoon from the quarrel that Julie had witnessed—she who had struck a match to the oil-soaked rags, the turpentine, the paintings. But the barn had been already on fire—perhaps, Julie thought fancifully, set off by her anger. At last Miss Schmidt answered Mrs. Dreyfuss' question. "There was nowhere enough insurance to cover value."

Julie remembered Adeline tearing up the paper on which her poems were written and showering it like dingy snow over the room. And then she remembered the other, the first scene, long before, glimpsed through the window, when Miss Schmidt had seemed to be the figure of punishment, herself tearing up papers at which her friend had hopelessly tried to grasp. Was it possible that Julie had seen wrongly that night? Or did a vindictive act drive the victim to become the punisher? Did they, in the end, merely change places?

"And what amount can ever cover the value," Mrs. Dreyfuss asked, "of what is really lost to us, even the smallest thing?" She yawned painfully. "Oh, I have one of my really good headaches. Come with me, Julie, for a breath of air!" She rose and addressed herself to the mournful shadows who inhabited the room. "Did you hear? A fire can start from nothing, from itself, from old soaked rags. Brazen! . .. Daylight! . . . Not in my country! In my country such things don't happen!"

Tomorrow was already on his feet. "And didn't it happen that day on the excursion?" he screamed. "Well, didn't it?"

She had no answer except to hurry from the room. She had long ago renounced her mother country, and it was not

possible for her to admit any presence of evil in the adopted land—or where, to what, could she turn? As she led Julie out of the room, her brother turned to them from the shadows. On his face was a weak and childish sorrow as though he appealed to his sister and his niece not to go away, not to leave him. But they had already turned their backs and did not see, and they did not hear the sound as the unopened book fell from his hands.

They went outside, and there was nothing splendid about this night, as there had been about so many others when stars or a moon had risen to the black brilliant sky. This was a night gray and sodden with rain about to fall; but now the world could weep for any single instant of its existence.

They walked back and forth over the driveway, back and forth; and in darkness, and barely able to distinguish the figure beside her, Julie felt again the need to speak, to confess and find peace. How could she begin? "I took your watch . .." or "There is nothing I, too, do not know ..." or simply blurt out her grief? With that decision to speak she felt ill, suffocated, and she caught at her mother and heard a moan rise, shaking the body to which she clung. From outside, from beyond herself, she heard the expression of her own pain.

"Oh, my God, my God!" Her mother's words emerged distorted by her yawn. "The misery we have from our bodies! Why don't we take every pleasure our bodies offer us, every joy? But if I had my life to live over again, I would live it in the same way. I cannot change myself; I cannot change what I am. But I am wrong, wrong, wrong!"

Now the relief of confession was offered to Julie, and she was torn between the two poles of her mother's nature—the one that might forgive and set her at peace, the other that might accuse and fasten a larger guilt. / *cannot change my-*

self. . . . Yet, silent, not confessing, Julie would continue to be the punisher and the victim of herself. She had made herself responsible for her deed with Friedrich too, and the only result was that the war raged within her, enclosed, and there was no promise of peace.

They continued to walk back and forth as though they realized, both, that they were prisoners given only a small space in which to move—the limitations which they imposed on themselves.

From the house a sound came; the oracle of the black box spoke. With distance the words were indistinguishable, and the voice had a sweet and elegiac quality as it told, perhaps, of the first bombs that now were only fragments, and told of those who stared up with dead bloody eyes at a sky from which murder had reached out at them. Sometimes her mother's voice, telling of her years that were over—a child weeping for a home she would never see again, a girl weeping for a youth that was not young—had fallen into that same register of sweetness. Time, like distance, muffled all that was essentially savage, whether the vast murder by war or the murder of one tender spirit by life's first offensive. There must have been a young and gentle quality in Julie's mother that had been killed—or crippled—when she said farewell to a father she had loved, to a life and a land that had been familiar.

And then, as though the elegiac voice that spoke of the past—of hard round bombs that were shrapnel now, of lives that had already become only memories—forced her to her own past and its considerations, her mother said without prelude, "Did I do everything wrong? There was Jennie, Tomorrow's wife—did she work like I did, did she struggle to raise herself like I did? No, she was pretty, she dressed herself up, she even powdered her face; and in those days and among

our people that was considered almost like being a prostitute. And Tomorrow, that attracted him, that caught him. So who was wrong and who was right? Or does it all make no difference? Have we ended up so differently, Jennie and I, two women growing old? She no longer paints her face; we are both getting gray; and I have no husband and she has no child?"

And all that this hinted Julie wanted to push away. Her mother was thrusting her off to a shifting ground where she foundered in unease, an unfamiliar ground beyond the orbit of family and of dull daily life. But her mother would not let her off; she continued. "Ah, the mistakes we make! The mistakes of joy!"

"Mistakes of joy," Julie repeated dully. Yes, she was her mother's daughter, she could not escape. Out of all this summer with Friedrich had she been able to salvage one brief remembrance of joy, one pure moment unpunished by the chill bleak judge, herself?

"The casting out of joy," her mother said. "That was the mistake. The letting youth slip by ... Those moments, those certain moments when the eyes meet … Do you think I don't know what such moments are?"

Julie tried to stop her ears with her own unhappy recollections so that she would not hear her mother's words. It was too painful to have disclosure made—it was almost obscene—to be accepted as an equal by the overwhelming figure of one's childhood, when there had been no equality, but only mystery.

"Yes," her mother went on, the torrent of words, or feeling, no longer to be pent up, "yes, stay in the country! Be alone! Seeing you these days so pale and silent, my own youth comes back to me, and I know there must have been unhappiness

from that young man who is gone now—what is his name, Rog? And if you denied yourself, as one must—see, I have not changed, I cannot change—I understand the suffering. Your father would not have understood, but there I am different from him. And why, really, must one deny oneself? Why, why? I ask, I find no answer. I only know that is my nature, and in that I am strong." And then, giving Julie no fraction of time, no amnesty in which to shield herself against all these fragments that pierced her like a very shrapnel of pain, her mother was carried on. "I know! I know! Did I not once love Tomorrow?"

"No!" Julie did not know for whom she was suffering—herself, her mother, or her father, whom her mother's words seemed to betray.

"Do you think," her mother went on, "that Tomorrow was always like he is now, old and ugly and stupid? He was like a young god. I came across a picture of him last year, taken on his day of graduation, so proud, so happy, and I tore it up. I could not stand to think what had become of him!"

"Tomorrow," Julie said harshly, "and not my father?" And now she felt a cold antagonism, exactly what her mother would have felt if Julie had disclosed that it was not the young man whom she had denied, but the other whom she had accepted—the other, too old, too tired, foreign to her in every way.

"I don't love Tomorrow," her mother said. "I knew him long before I knew your father, and at twenty how is one to feel about a young god? Let us be a little kind to what we were at twenty. I loved your father; I love him. I only remember what Tomorrow was like, and I am miserable for what time does to us." And, still yawning, moaning, her mother left her and went into the house.

Julie remained outside. In Friedrich's window there was no light. Perhaps he already slept, his few belongings packed. Or perhaps he, too, was somewhere outside, savoring the last moments in this countryside where he could still walk alone, unwatched, free. In her mother's room the light went out. And now she felt no anger; it seemed to her, rather, that her mother, her twenty-year-old mother whom she could never know, had been more natural than herself, and more free, choosing a young and splendid figure to love. It was strange, but in the end it had been her mother who had confessed, and not herself. How painful confession was for the one who must listen! She was not able yet to accept the young woman that her mother had been, suffering from love, rejected—had Tomorrow not chose another ? Her mother had stepped down from the marble eminence where Julie's childhood had placed her and, like the shattering of an enchantment, with speech the marble became human, became flesh. Perhaps some day, when she herself was older Julie would be able to accept this and even prefer it. But now her severance from childhood was too recent, the surgery too drastic, the wound not yet healed.

Now all the lights in the house were out except for the one pale lamp in the hall. On this night the lamp would only light her way to sleep. Gradually, as she continued to sit on the steps of the sleeping house, she began to feel that her mother, by sacrificing her secret life, had tried to give her, the daughter, peace. She tried to picture Tomorrow as he must have been when her mother had loved him. He had not taken the place of Julie's father, but had appeared before him, the herald, the presage of love. She wondered whether she, too, would one day find a love that was real, that must not return to the secret source from which it had come, like a phantom, a ghost.... She tried again to picture the young

god that once had been, but there rose before her the only face she knew, bald and bloated, with drooping eyes and mouth, and she felt her mother's sorrow for the carnage that time commits, and "for that which is really lost to us, the smallest thing." Was that what her mother had meant, the loss of a man's beauty, and her own love? Julie heard a moan that came from the open window of her mother's room. It was followed by another and another as her mother gave herself up to her grief and made no attempt to control it for the sake of those who were trying to sleep, any more than she ever had. And now this appeared to Julie neither as callous nor selfish; in those outcries she found an impersonal quality, magnificent, even monumental. She seemed to hear in her mother's voice the protest of an entire world against cruelty, whether the cruelty turned on one by others, or only by oneself.

Chapter Twenty

JULIE had the lawn to herself. They were all gone home; the rocking chairs had been removed and stored. It was strange to be alone, and yet she welcomed her solitude, the condition for convalescence.

It was one of those perfect days at the opening of a season—with it the autumn began—which seem an omen or a promise that the season to follow will be rare, perfect. In her listless state Julie felt that this mocked and humiliated her. Only later, in retrospect, when the autumn was over and all the dank gloomy days ran together, a space of time in which nothing could be distinguished, did she come to realize that this day had been intended neither as a promise nor a mockery, but simply as a gift, which she had let slip from her.

In the cool brilliant light she could make out each tree on the mountains across the valley. Or, similarly, looking up into the tree beneath which she sat, and which from her window had seemed so formidable, she could discern each leaf, distinct and separate against each other leaf, until the last ones lay upon the sky, their veins burning through the green that was still unchanged by autumn and the cold nights.

But the coldness was in herself, like a last residue of illness which the convalescent brings back with her into life. She

shivered, her hands were icy, her heart was a lump, cold. She could not imagine it actually expanding and contracting, pumping the blood through her body——Move into the sun, she told herself, and could not move. When she had first sat down under this tree there had been sun that had passed as the hours passed; now she lay in shade and saw, a little beyond, the grass open to the sun; it seemed completely beyond her ability to reach it. She had said good-by to Friedrich; she would never see him again.

It seemed to her that this was the worst time that she had been called on to live through, and if she endured—she knew, but could not realize that one did—she would remember this, and, remembering, forget; it would be assimilated into the tissue of her life. Now, in the experiencing, she was numb. She had, in childhood, known this dread—or grief—that immobilized, but not since then with such intensity.

Childhood ... The recollection seemed to direct her attention at last to a little object glittering on the tree. Listlessly she reached out, and it came away in her hand. It was the shell of a katydid. The tree had not yet turned, but the katydid had left its mark of surrender to the autumn and the winter that would follow. Holding this little relic of summer, she remembered a moment out of her childhood, remembered it distantly and without emotion, as though she, too, were a shell from which life had gone. The impressions life had made remained—or perhaps there remained only the means by which it had once sustained itself. Holding the little relic up to the light, she could distinguish the ridges where veins had been, antennae, eyes, all the delicate living tissue that, without this little house, this refuge, must suffer unspeakable pain. And she wondered to what mysterious and sleeping existence the little body had returned.

She remembered a morning that had been as cool and glittering as this. Her mother had turned her out into the garden, which had been all weedy and overgrown, a jungle, an enchantment. The beauty of the day had been too heady; she had not wanted to leave it for an instant, not even for one last visit to the barn that rose bright and red behind the farmhouse. She was returning to the city with her mother in an hour, a day (she could no longer remember which—only that the summer had been over). And, crawling, exploring, burned by the sun, cooled by the tart wind, she had found on a tree the shell of a katydid. And, on the next tree, another shell. A feeling of utter bliss had possessed her as she ran from tree to tree, picking off the shells until her hands were filled and all the jewel-like little forms were spilling from them, as her rapture itself overflowed in a torrent she had not known afterward, or again.

Now, remembering, she could only question and wonder: Why? Had the secret of her bliss been the imminent return? But she had hated city streets. Had it been the sense of the year's beginning with autumn's color and glitter? She had felt like a little animal, hopeless and caged, in the grim gray school. Had it been the promise of having her father again? "When I catch the first glimpse of goldenrod in the park I am so happy; I know I will have you and your mother back with me soon." But in the dark chill house she had caught scarcely a glimpse of him as he slipped in and out of his office, receiving patients who told him most private matters, who undressed before him; had caught scarcely a glimpse as he slipped in or out of the front door on his round of calls that overburdened his burdened heart. Why? Why? In that far-off burst of rapture she had not questioned or wondered; perhaps in that the answer lay. Locked out from the farmhouse

by her mother, who packed, put away, closed up, she had had one timeless unthinking moment to herself. A period of respite between a summer already over, that had been burdened by her mother's self-torment—"He is killing himself in the hot city"—and the season that was about to begin, with all its dreary griefs of city streets, school, father who was there yet never there.

Now once again she was given a little rift of time between a summer she had not enjoyed and a winter whose dreary sorrows loomed. Now she brought to it only numbness; perhaps only thus could healing begin.

It was then that Miss Schmidt came out of the house and walked very slowly—it seemed to Julie—down the steps and across the lawn. That slowness seemed to make her advance toward Julie inexorable, not to be side-stepped. In her black dress she seemed to the girl like a black arrow of woe, and Julie slowly rose to her feet, waiting to receive the arrow in a breast already still.

Miss Schmidt spoke in an oddly formal manner. "You are called to the telephone," she said, and then turned away, beginning to weep. "I thought so highly of him," she said.

The arrow, transfixing Julie, did not kill, but brought her to life. She did not stop to ask Miss Schmidt who, why, but ran from the shade of the tree into the sun, and from the sun to the shadow of the porch and then of the long straight hall. When she picked up the telephone and heard the voice that answered "Julie! Julie!" she felt the surge of blood—her heart was not dead—through her arteries and veins and pulses.

In the whirling confusion she could not begin to understand Friedrich nor her own answers. And then she became aware that he was telling her good-by, and that her uncle,

too, had said good-by—not only to him, Friedrich, but to Julie, his niece. Her uncle was ill, very ill, and Friedrich was telling her that she must return to the city. "Oh, no! No!" she protested, fearful of the face of death and of the sweet sick perfume with which it is anointed against the odor of corruption. Friedrich was telling her she must return, was telling her he must depart, the ship waited. And she thought then that she jcould make out the noises of departure, of the dock, the cranes loading, men shouting, and somewhere, it seemed to her, very distinctly, the sound of crying.

No, Friedrich said, he was at home—her home, her mother's. It was her mother who had asked him to summon Julie, but he would have called her—he would, in any case, have called to say good-by. It went against him terribly to leave her uncle at this time, and her mother; there was something great about them, yes, there was....

Uncle, Julie grieved, uncle, mother, my people. . . . Friedrich had made her forget them for a little while, and now he was making her think of them again.

But he could not remain, Friedrich said. Long ago the ship had been designated, the day of sailing, and he continued to repeat this as though he were explaining, or even protesting against, his own unwillingness to postpone his departure, as though he himself felt that there was some strange compulsion, dressed in a heroic cloak, that sent him seeking out death when he could have tried to find life. Her uncle did not look for death, it had found him out, she tried to explain to Friedrich, and he, answering her, trying in turn to explain to her, said that during the span of her uncle's years there had been the anxiety to live well; now there was only the anxiety to die well. Now, if no one ran away from dying, from the victims of death, one would never stop hearing their howls

in one's ears, or the howls of one's own fear, and that would be even more unendurable.

And then, as though to turn this argument, this struggle that had so long continued between them, he said, "I will call you again this afternoon before I board ship."

"This afternoon!" she cried. "But I will take the train tonight. I will be in the city in the morning. Very early in the morning."

No, he said, he could not forfeit his berth on the ship; the ships were overcrowded, bringing those back to Europe who had no right to remain here, or who, like himself, felt they had no right even though their visas had not yet expired. If he gave up his place, he did not know when he might find another. In Europe the old men were dying, dying without honor or dignity—"Not like your uncle, Julie, not like he is going." He was torn, yes, torn between the need to stay with this old man whom he admired and the urgency to return. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." They needed to hear someone speak those words to them in their ghetto, behind their wall. "And I am not a sentimental man, Julie."

"Oh, that I know," she said. "That I know."

"I will be an old man___" Perhaps, she thought, perhaps. "And you will still be a beautiful young woman. That is bitter to me."

"Oh, but I only said that because I was angry."

"It is true, Julie. It is true. But I am not a sentimental man. Only enough to want to talk to you once more. Only that way I am sentimental. I would have called you in any case. Why must my news be bitter?"

"Because everything between us must be bitter," she murmured.

There was no answer. Perhaps he had not heard, or per-

haps he had hung up and ended this last communication between them.

"Friedrich!" she said at last. "Friedrich?"

"Julie, yes?" Across distance and invisible miles his voice murmured a last desperate question in her ear. And she wanted to answer with some final word that would unite her suffering with his, her humanity with his, now while he was still there, not seen and still there. But the only words that would come were still an angry protest, as though she still tried to struggle with him against what appeared to her as a willful suicide, a willful rejection of her. Nevertheless she tried valiantly to end her bitterness, to give him something out of this summer to carry with him, into whatever lonely region he must go. But it was exactly there that he would find his meanings, denied, perforce, to her, who must continue unheroic and small of stature. And she heard her own voice, stilted and shrill. "I will remember you, Friedrich! Oh, I will always remember you!" and felt that with those words she had already consigned him to death; it is the dead who live in memory. But perhaps to him she sounded neither stilted nor shrill; perhaps he heard her, young as she was, struggling against abandonment and panic, because he said, "I will call you again, Julie—this afternoon, just before I get on the ship. Julie, Julie .. ."

Oh, but that I could not bear, she wanted to tell him, shout* But then she wondered, might he find some cold comfort in one more communication with her, and with what, for him, might be the last summer? "Yes," she said, "call me again." And then, as though farewell, loss, were too much for her, she turned backward in time and made the sacrifice a child might have; it was her last childish action. "You may hang up first," she said. The sacrifice was real enough. She heard

the little click of finality, the circuit broken, the communication ended. Though he now, by those final sounds, became dead to her, she had given to him the last illusion of life, permitted him to be the acting one, the one who went away. It was harder to be the one who was left, helpless, empty.

But all the time that she packed, walking back and forth across the room, emptying closets, bureau drawers, making the room again squalid and disorderly, she did not cry, sustained in her own lonely region by a fierce pride.

When his last call came for her it was from the dock. Now she could in reality hear the sounds of departure, porters, cranes, the scream of the smokestacks; these sounds interfered with his voice and with hers. She could make no sign of unity with his suffering—they could scarcely hear each other. Perhaps she had made it earlier when she consented to this last communication that was, as she had known it would be, a futile suffering. And now, "Good-by." She could just hear the word from him as she herself spoke it, while the smokestacks gave forth a last enormous groan—and then, at the identical moment, they hung up.

She closed her eyes and saw him going up the gangplank, saw him taking his place at the rail, looking for a last time at the skyline of her city, and then, as the ship slowly headed for the sea, saw him pale and resolved against the wide horizon before he slowly faded from her sight.

Outside earth, mountains, sky still existed in a perfect harmony; there was no sign that an old man was dying, that a younger man had given up hope. The world carried no mark and no sign of its unending misery.

Chapter Twenty-one

NOW the guests were on another journey to the country, though the rain fell and the autumn was chill.

Julie came down the steps of the meeting hall to the street, where the large shining limousine waited. The chauffeur stood beside the door. He opened it and helped her mother in, and Julie followed without will, obeying the motions that others had set up for her.

When she sat down in the automobile, whose paint, whose upholstery was black, unrelieved; when she heard the door slam—she knew she should not have obeyed will-lessly, but she could no longer escape. The black car had begun to move; she was committed to this journey.

Through the window ahead she saw the squared-off carriage that was bringing her uncle back to the country. Were they not taking advantage of his helplessness? He would never have consented to set off for his long vacation on such a day as this, chill and raining. But his querulous protest was locked in the box whose lid they had closed on him. *Mollie .. .* That first day returned, when Julie had watched him and her mother retreat from the weather, the world. *Mollie, I will catch my death. . . .* But it was death that had caught him; she would not hear his voice again. Nor her

father's. Nor Friedrich's. "Do you know what the dead are sometimes called?" Friedrich had asked her once. *"Die Mehreren.* The majority." Those to whom she had given her loyalty, her allegiance, her love were the majority; she remained in air, in light, alone.

The limousine moved slowly through the downtown city, slowly bringing her uncle away from the streets that had first received him, that had first received her mother and her father. What other quarter of the city would have taken them in and given them refuge except the poorest, the meanest? In these streets her roots began. A red barn'had nothing to do with her, nor a rented farmhouse. This city was her home place—its dirty turbulent streets her native soil, beloved.

The flag on the meeting hall in which her uncle had so often lectured, thumped, shouted, had been at half-mast, but here in the streets no one knew that a man was silent who had once spoken for them in the world. Crossing the corners, the passers-by got in the way of the procession, held it up, deflected and broke its course. They wore shawls and shivered as they trudged through the unfriendly day, haggling for food for their families. They sat beside their push-carts, blowing on their raw chill hands as they waited for customers, and, waiting, lifted their eyes to the procession of death that one day would stop at the pushcart, at the curb. They were preoccupied, they were bowed-down; they were anything but the shouting, pushing, vivid throng she had remembered out of her childhood. She saw them, shadows, gray, the color of misery as Friedrich had revealed them to her.

She turned her head to share this with Friedrich, but of course he was not there. It had merely seemed natural that he should be sitting in this black empty space between her

mother and herself on her uncle's last journey. No, Friedrich was making his own journey somewhere in Europe, crossing frontiers farther and farther back in the escape from freedom until he would find himself behind the last frontier, the wall of the ghetto. Perhaps in Europe, confronted with his own resolve, which she could now even less understand, for she had just looked into her uncle's dead face and knew no one could wish to be dead—perhaps Friedrich might set his face to the sea again, to frontiers that led to the sea and life. No, he would not. *Comfort ye* ...

His resolve, l!ke that of Rog, who was already a soldier in a foreign army, seemed to her remarkable but not healthy. Life must ask more from one than simply to die. Perhaps by his death Friedrich would live. She remembered now that when she had entered the black automobile a man had been screaming out the news of the papers he was selling. The words which he screamed had seemed to her, then, to sum up the meaning of her uncle's life, of Friedrich's, her own, that of everyone who had ever existed in this common house under the roof of the sky. She had thought she would remember those words all her life, and now they were obliterated from her mind—a clue, a key that was completely lost. She could not contain within herself, alone, the poignancy of this loss. But when she looked at her mother she knew she could not diminish it in her; her mother was wringing her hands and wailing. This loss had returned her to that first and overwhelming one, the loss of her husband. Julie watched in her mother the acting out of an emotion that dwelt too deep within herself for expression; she could not articulate it in movement or sound. It was a grief, not for her uncle, but for her father; not for her father, but for Friedrich; not for Friedrich, but for herself. She was a widow, like her mother, a half existing by itself, torn, bloody.

Outside the rain-splashed window the streets of the city ghetto passed by, and they, too, were not as she had remembered them. Was it the rain? Was it this death that wound with them through the city? The doorways of the tenements gaped open like the black doorways of rotting mausoleums, and through the glass of the limousine window a smell seemed to reach her—a smell of filth and corruption. She shivered as once her mother had. And as her mother had once cried to her, "Hurry! Hurry!" so she now wanted to cry out to the chauffeur who brought them with inexorable slowness farther along on their journey. And then the car turned and went down a street she knew and passed a house she knew. Already it was behind them, but she still saw it, the windows boarded up, the stoop cracking away from the structure, the bricks blackened, and small, so small, as it crumbled under the gray sky. How had her uncle's house, which had been so imposing to her childhood, shrunk to such small measure? If she could have, she would wept for herself, and for her uncle, who had not been able to keep even this small heritage, a house. No, long ago the city had encroached on it; the terrible streets that had once received him ate it up, swallowed even this humble heritage that he had been forced to abandon.

It was then that she remembered the man screaming the news on the corner, then that she remembered what he had said to her. The message was not contained in the words he had said: war, murder, death winding through the streets of the cities of Europe. There had been recalled to her news that she herself had read this day while her uncle lay in state, cold, in the next room; news which had seemed printed for herself alone, about her uncle, his death and life and his lineage, which he had never divulged to her and which now became hers. Her uncle was descended from a man of greatness and

of history, and whatever remained of that eminence, diminished by centuries, must be housed, perforce, for a little time in her own body. She would never understand now out of what motive her uncle had withheld this from her, the enormous, the real heritage. It would—might it yet?—have given her, in these years of distress, a sense of being rooted in the meaning and continuity of the world, no longer lost, cast adrift, cast out. She could never ask her uncle: why? He had taken his answer with him, his own inviolate secret. And at last it came to her that it was this very lack of disclosure that was the meaning she had found, the key, the clue to her uncle's life, Friedrich's, anyone's.

When, a little while ago, she had looked for the very last time at her uncle's dead face she had felt the pain neither of fear nor loss, but only of defeat. That large, that leonine head lay on a silken cushion, and it had been powdered and rouged by the undertaker, the lips had been turned into a smile they had never worn. Someone behind pushed at her to go on, to pass by so that the unending procession could continue and take its farewell of him. But she had held her ground, looking at the painted face that had no resemblance to her uncle's, and behind which he would lie until eternity, alone to himself, whatever he was, unknown to her behind this mask; he had taken with him the secret motive for her disinheritance, the ancestor withheld—had taken with him his "beautiful nonsense," his young man's life, his love and sorrow for the wife whom she could scarcely remember. A mystery, a private kingdom enclosed behind his own wall, locked within his own ghetto.

But as she stood there, pushed, shoved, or hearing whispers as though from a world beyond, "Let her be, she is his flesh and blood," the sense of unending solitude, of frozen self-

imprisonment turned back on her, and it was she, who was still flesh and blood, who could still look on—she who became, by his removal from her, his abandonment, a private kingdom in which all her own past, her own life, her loss and grief were imprisoned. There was some terrible defeat here, and, standing beside her uncle's coffin, she looked down at her father, Friedrich, herself, everyone. In this box lay the final minority, and the one that would not survive.

Looking down, she became aware with horror that on his cheek a tear lay, and somewhere she heard a murmuring of voices like wind in a world beyond. Could he weep still? Her hand went to his cheek. It was cold and hard. In that outer world the murmuring of the wind increased, and on his cold cheek her living fingers felt, with an even greater horror, that the tear was warm, it was her own. She wiped it away, she could not add the burden of even one tear to whatever griefs now became his forever; now they could shut the lid on him; uncle, good-by, kinsman, ancestor. ...

But at this instant she was aware of actual wind beating. It beat on the windows of the limousine, louder, harsher than all the voices that she had felt to be protesting her despoilment of her uncle's cheek. The limousine was on the bridge that rose above the river and led to the country; it was rattling, speeding. And she wanted to cry to the inexorable driver, "Oh, do not hurry! Do not hurry!" For a short time yet that one was still with them who must be left behind in the cold country. Sometimes from the streets of her city she had looked up at the black span across the river and the black processions that hurtled across it. She had accompanied her father, and she had come to think of this as the bridge of death.

And then she remembered how her mother, a young girl,

had once traveled across it to the green land of Brooklyn and a little time of happiness and of family. And gradually family was ending for her mother; she had crossed with her husband and now with her brother. The sorrow for her mother was greater even than that for herself. Was there no way to reach out, to touch her mother? Or must the living tear fall always on the cold cheek? Again she remembered her uncle's painted face, and she felt herself stifled, choked in this box whose windows, whose doors were locked as it rushed her across the bridge. And in her own terror of death every other emotion was obliterated. The ribs of the bridge whirled around her like the prison bars of a nightmare; the city beyond, the river, the sky were the reality, the awakening to which she could not grope. It was an interval in which she lived again every bad thing that had ever happened to her: the first paralyzing moment of fear when she had been alone with Friedrich and there was no one to cry to for help; the moment when, lying half senseless on her bed, she had heard the feet of the undertaker's men mounting the stairs to her father's room to perform their obscene rites; the moment when she had heard her uncle's last breath, wheezing, gasping, struggling not to leave his body. This was an interval so pure in its terror that, as her lips parted and the little strangulated cry of nightmare emerged, terror itself purged her. And then she saw her mother's face turn to her, called by her, her mother's moans stilled. Unable to speak, she found herself smiling at her mother—in this strange unendurable moment, smiling. What did she mean by this smile, a covenant between their loneliness, like the arc reaching across the sky, the bridge of color that could not be crossed, that was an illusion and yet was present to the sight? Her mother looked

back at her, dazed, not comprehending and not taking in the smile.

But Julie sat up beside her window, straight, rigid, awake. They had left the river behind them, and they were on a broad highway, cluttered and hideous with life's day-to-day needs. But gradually these dwindled out, the gray houses in which people lived, the gasoline stands from which they traveled, the gardens of uprooted uncarved tombstones, and at last in the dignity of quiet the road brought them to the green country of the cemeteries.

The limousine slowed, turned into a driveway that curved like the one Julie had so often followed in the summer, and that, like it, was lined with evergreens, glistening in the rain. Uprooted from their Adirondack soil, they at last had beauty for her here, sentinels of those who seemed so similar in their dark and somber passion; sentinels and sleepers, they both seemed native to this solemn place.

The driveway came to an end, and it was not the great house that waited, but hundreds of little white houses so close to one another that almost no green was visible. And, looking at that quiet field, Julie wondered that those passionate restless lives did not shake the ground in unending earthquake. And now they did; now the ground shook and trembled through her tears.

The chauffeur opened the door, but before Julie could help her mother out, she had broken away. Alone, hatless in the rain, not caring, not thinking, her mother ran through the jumble of white houses, and Julie, going after her, was lost. For one moment she was frightened, being lost among the dead. Then, running down this row and that, she saw the house of the man who had built the bridge over which they

had come, saw the house of another whom thousands had followed on foot through the downtown streets of the city, and then, still running, she was stopped by the carved name of the tenant who had been her mother's friend, who long ago had held Julie on her lap in love and tenderness. Where was that remembered fabulous beauty and that love? And now, with the recollection of love, her fear left her. These were her dead, these were the ancestors, her father, her uncle and an entire generation who had made this land hers by leaving their immigrant bodies in it; there would be no further migration. She would never lie here with them; they had left no room in this cold country for their children, who would live lives different from theirs and be buried in places alien to them. Here the circle of Anarchist brothers buried themselves, knowing that with them died their peculiar humanity, their peculiar treasure.

Far off down an alley of stone she saw the living figure, her mother. She was leaning on a grave, weeping in the rain, and when Julie came up she saw that in all this overcrowded landscape there remained one empty place, one mound, one strip of soil. Beside her father's grave the earth was empty, waiting for her mother. And Julie grasped her mother's arm and snatched her, all weeping, all broken, away.

The mourners stood squeezed between the rows of graves, and, all around, the dead hemmed them in. They stood in the rain, and they did not think of running away. Seeing all those who had peopled her summer already against their last background, she felt a pity for them that was more than love. And for a blinding instant she thought that on the edge she saw a slight dark figure hovering, and then realized that longing alone had evoked the image. Father? Friedrich? The lost who must return to its own origins?

When she looked back, she saw her uncle's coffin being lowered into the earth.

The mourners stood another moment. They stood another moment in the rain, and they did not try to find a refuge. Then they turned and, still slowly and without anxiety, began to walk back to the automobiles that would bear them away.

She followed them, and she was not lost among the graves. She walked very slowly on the path that led away, not wanting to leave the dead.. .. She might leave them; they would never leave her. In her blood and bone she would carry their peculiar gift, their dark and somber passion. She was a descendant.

She turned for one last glance backward and saw her father's white grave and the narrow strip of earth beside it, waiting. And, Mother, Mother!" she called, running after the broken weeping figure, and assailed already by a grief whose source still remained in the future. "Oh, Mother, Mother!" She brought her love to the one who was still here; she made the mark and the sign to the one who was still here, because she had not to him who was absent. And in the moment when she caught her mother, when she was still able to catch her mother, her love split, divided, and she seemed in herself to be her mother who had made the long trip across the ocean, and to be the man, the stranger who had made the long trip back.

Standing quiet and unhurried in the rain, they prepared to return from the country.