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Author Richard Summers

Title Craft of the Short Story

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CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY

CRAFT

OF THE SHORT STORY

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HOLT, RINEHART AND WINSTON
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INTRODUCTION

ALL WRITERS suffer from a certain amount of confusion and uncertainty, even after they have been long established and are regarded by the world as eminently successful. The typical young writer who comes to college wants to write, feels an urge to create something of his own, put it on paper, and have it praised. He writes blindly, in confusion, with mixed impulses derived from children's books, from nineteenth-century novels, from current writing in popular magazines, from his college anthologies.

I have known and taught hundreds of him. In general, he believes that writing is a quick path to wealth and fame; he is almost inevitably doomed to disillusionment, disappointment, and despair.

It is my hope that this book will set him straight on a large number of matters, that it will help him to find in writing the short story what he is best suited to do, or whether or not he is really suited at all to creative writing. Certain types of intellectual young writers are often very promising, but if they are to attain any success whatever, they must realize that ahead of them lies a long period of apprenticeship and training, of reaching maturity in critical judgment and in perfection of craftsmanship. In general, they cannot anticipate that writing as a profession will give them a living. Other young writers who show great facility in putting together light and entertaining stories in the traditional pattern are often misdirected and even discouraged in college writing courses where emphasis is laid entirely upon the "quality" story.

It seems to me that a college course in short story writing should have as its main aim a kind of sampling of the various forms of the short story, both commercial and literary—especially when there is such a wide gulf between the "quality" story and the type of story that can be termed "craft" or "commercial." These differences should be pointed out, and the student should be encouraged to follow his particular talent. Although the emphasis throughout CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY is laid upon artistic expression in the short story form, there is recognition that another kind of story exists—and sells much more

readily. The reasons why it markets more easily are explained in careful detail in Part I.

This is a book intended primarily to serve as an inspiration and a starting point for creative writing and only secondarily as a basis for understanding tendencies in the modern short story. Therefore the stories in the anthology sections have been chosen with the following points in mind: (1) Except where it was thought advisable to indicate influences upon modern fiction, the stories are up to date. (2) The authors are either American or widely known in America. (3) All of the writers selected except Stephen Leacock are known for their short stories, or, if novelists, they are recognized masters in both fields. (4) As much as for individual excellence, short stories have been chosen to suggest to the student a wide variety of method, type, and attitude toward material, while the themes are those which the student may very well translate into original stories reached through his own experience. (5) Stories have been deliberately selected for contrast and comparison: there are three stories on the Negro question, three stories for adults dealing in quite different fashion with the problems or experiences of children, and so on. (6) It has been my notion that the "craft" or "commercial" story can be a good story, that differences are largely a matter of technique in handling material and in intellectual approach. By classifying stories as "craft" or "commercial" I do not intend to imply that they are inferior stories.

With full realization that college instructors in short story writing pretty much follow their individual bents, I have included discussion material, exercises, and suggestions for writing in both the analytical section and the anthology sections. In order to accommodate those who do not follow the given sequence of the book, I have intentionally made some of the exercises for writing overlap. It is not my intention that all exercises be assigned. There are sufficient throughout so that the instructor may assign some of them or ignore most of them, or he may use them as a starting point for other assignments. Many of the living writers included in the anthology have written comments or advice for CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY, material which follows their stories.

CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY is designed for use either as complete textbook material for one semester or as partial textbook material for two semesters, in either case the first half of the work being devoted to

"quality" or "artistic" writing and the last half to commercial writing, with wide latitude allowed the student in his choice of type for his own compositions. I suggest that the student be assigned a few pages of Chapter III in order to start him on planning his own first story and that then, in the sequence presented, his assignments be alternated between Part I and Part II, with emphasis upon Part I until the first two chapters have been completed. However, the book is adaptable to other sequences, such as studying Part I in its entirety before proceeding to Part II, or even vice versa.

The purpose of Part I is to clarify for the student the problems of the whole field of creative writing, exemplifying the numerous "tricks of the trade" as I have learned them myself in twenty years of free-lance writing, as I have discovered them from students in helping to solve their problems, and as I have learned them from more than a score of writing friends successful in both the "quality" and the "commercial" fields.

CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY should encourage the really promising handful to continue with their efforts, knowing much better the problems of marketing technique that they must overcome. It should give to the many who are unsuited for creative writing a realization of the endless patience and determined skill involved in successful short story writing and thus sharpen both their writing skill and their critical taste.

R.S.

Tucson, Arizona
May, 1948

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Part I

LITERARY AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

I. MOTIVATION

MAKE no mistake about it. Every successful writer, whether he earns his living composing pulp-paper Westerns at a cent a word, doing stories on contract for the various women's magazines, writing scenarios for the motion pictures, or creating works of art that appear in "quality" magazines and in anthologies, takes himself and his work seriously; otherwise he would not be successful. His writing is more important to him than anything else. Even though he has other regular employment and writes only an hour a day, every day, his writing has to be more important to him than his work or he would not continue long to write that hour a day when he is tired.

A writer must feel that writing is the most important thing in life.

Nothing annoys him more than to hear a gushing friend remark in casual sophistication that she intends to write a book some day when she gets the time, as though there were nothing more to writing a good short story or book than sitting down and doing it. Writing—creative writing—is a skilled and very technical craft, requiring many years of arduous and usually unrewarded toil before one is in a position even to attempt to market his first story. And writing is a solitary and lonesome adventure, for no matter how much advice is given and received, the writing craft, unlike other crafts, must be self-taught.

If you are a dabbler who expects to do an occasional story when the mood is in you, with the typical notion that it would be rather delightful to have "a story accepted for publication," give up now the idea of writing and seek another less strenuous and heartbreaking hobby, or use whatever creative impulses you have in composing long letters to friends.

Another widely current misconception about writing is the golden notion that one can sit down and dash off a short story or two in a few hours and spend the rest of his days in pleasant travel, or in building a house or buying a new car, or in paying off the family mortgage. Nothing could be further from the truth, with extremely rare exceptions that attain too much publicity. It has been asserted (and is probably true) that more money is taken from hopeful writers by publishers

who publish at the writer's expense—"vanity publishers"—by agents who exact large reading fees, by manuscript typists and the like, than is paid out in royalty checks from publishers and purchase checks from magazine editors. The average first novel yields the writer about three hundred dollars for a year of work. One may be fortunate enough to sell a story to *Collier's,* let us say, for five hundred or a thousand dollars; but it may be many months or many years before *Collier's* accepts a second story from that particular writer.

Further, the average "first novel" published is almost always the third or sixth or sixteenth; [1] the average "first story" is likely to be the thirtieth or sixtieth or hundred and tenth. The typical experience of a writer who takes his work seriously and labors with diligence throughout a long period of years is that (even though he may have published a few stories and a book or two) up to the age of thirty-five he has hardly broken even. It is quite possible that he would have made more money for the typing he has done at the standard rate per page for typists. At last, however, he may begin to draw dividends on a considerable investment of time and energy.

Or he may have been a flash writer, as sometimes happens; he may have made a great deal of money for two or three years, then declined into a slump from which he is unable to extricate himself.

There are always exceptions, but for the vast majority of successful and *publishing* writers, creative writing has not been an easy path to fame and riches.

Nor is there any truth to the notion that one writes solely for his own enjoyment and cares not a fig whether he has an audience. Ridiculous! (Although there have been a few exceptions among the poets.) One writes because he believes he has something to say that will give pleasure, satisfaction, understanding, or information to his fellow man and will thus reflect to his own credit. Writers write for an intended audience of some sort, an audience that must be reached through the printed medium of magazine or book or pamphlet.

And herein lies the weakness of many courses in the short story. The main aim of writing—which is to find an audience either now or in the future, i.e., to publish—is ignored as though such an aim did

[1] In extremely rare cases a publishing house will employ a competent "ghost" to rewrite and put into publishable shape an actual first novel because the editors believe that the material in the novel, if carefully reworked, can be developed into a best seller. And almost all books by prominent people are "ghosted."

not exist. The student is given little or no help in analyzing himself and his work and in understanding the requirements and limitations of the kind of writing he is able to do best. The tendency is to try to make Poes, Conrads, Jameses—or more recently Hemingways, Steinbecks, Mansfields—of every student in a college course.

Actually of fifty aspiring writers in any course there might be one potential Steinbeck, given the talent, the training, the dogged perseverance, and the downright good luck necessary, and perhaps two or even three potential commercial writers. Most of the rest, in their creative efforts and their study of the short story, gain greater facility in the use of language and a broader understanding of creative writing.

In summary, then, (1) one cannot dabble and make a leisurely hobby out of writing; (2) as a profession writing is usually very unremunerative; (3) one must learn to write for an audience.

Acceptance of these truths will make the student's way easier. First, it will enable him to decide whether he really wants to go on with writing. It has been estimated that there are more than two million aspiring writers in the United States. Of this number probably not more than ten thousand free-lance writers earn a reasonably good living. So the profession is more overcrowded than any other. Second, if one is determined to make a writer of himself, acceptance of these facts may well assist in guiding him in his various decisions and may enable him to face the vicissitudes of the craft with greater equanimity.

Just why do intelligent people, knowing all this, continue to write? The answer is not easy to formulate. It lies in the character of the individual. A novelist friend of mine maintains that people keep on struggling to write, even after they discover all this, because they can't help themselves. They have to write. This is a partial explanation and a good answer for the student.

Ask yourself whether you will be unhappy if you renounce all ambition to be a creative writer. Will such a choice make you restless and dissatisfied with life? Do you have nearly uncontrollable urges to put something on paper, to watch a story shape up and discover how the characters evolve under your nimble fingers? Is there tragedy in life that you see and feel and must make others see and feel? Or comedy?

If the answer is *yes,* then you have one of the most important qualifications for making a writer of yourself.

Of course there are other motives for writing. The very habit of writing, for one. And second, the gambling instinct: will or won't the publisher accept a certain story or book? (I know of many writers who regulate their day by the coming of the postman.) Will a new novel prove to be a best seller, a gold mine? Third, one's situation in life may give him a great deal of spare time, and creative writing passes this time most pleasantly for him. For a fourth, a deep-rooted need for self-justification.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE WRITER

Three questions are often asked by students and other aspiring writers:

1) What are the qualifications necessary to becoming a successful writer?

2) Do I have these qualifications?

3) What sort of course or program in college will best prepare me to be a writer?

Under the heading of personal qualifications for writing, I would list first the matter already discussed: the overwhelming necessity within the individual to express his creative impulses in writing, a need so urgent that he will be unhappy if he does not yield to it. Second, I would list persistence in the face of adversity and discouragement, a blind faith in oneself and one's will to succeed no matter what the opinion of others may be.[2]

I believe that all writers must have these two qualifications—the creative urge and persistent faith in themselves—and do have them in common. This second quality may be the one that causes laymen to

---

[2] An older student of considerable promise writes: "All beginning writers should ponder long the sad fact that any marriage is somewhat of a career. Unless assured of a steady income, the young writer who marries with the intention of raising a family automatically shoulders a back-breaking handicap. . . . Successful writing seems to beget parental failure, and the health of the nation is more dependent on parental success than on *Strange Interludes*. . . . Only one wife in a million will encourage a husband to write unpublished masterpieces, instead of scheming ways of cornering a pile of Yankee dollars. Most writers make notoriously poor husbands anyhow: they are always staring absent-mindedly out of the window when they should be concentrating on a five no-trump bid. Also they almost invariably become members at large in the royal and convivial order of the brass rail and the bent elbow. 'But,' you say, 'there will never be another girl like Josephine.' O.K. Marry the girl. There's nothing finer than a family."

consider writers conceited beyond reasonable bounds. Actually most of them are not. Many are timid and unsure of themselves, extremely shy and sensitive. But they do possess this colossal faith in their own destiny as writers.

Beyond these common qualifications there are no others. Writers are as different from one another as people in general. Some successful short story writers hold Ph.D. degrees; some have not completed the seventh grade. (For verification, see the biographical notes in Parts II and III of this volume.) Some have traveled widely. Some have never gone beyond the outskirts of a single community except on short visits. Some have roots boring deep into a particular region; others have no roots and simply drift with the wind. Some live in New York City or Hollywood or in art colonies scattered over the country and seek the companionship and stimulation of fellow writers, while others deliberately avoid contact with them.

All this should answer a very common incidental question: Must one travel in order to write? Of course not. Travel is stimulating and broadening, but it does not make writers, nor is it necessary for a career in creative writing. Your next-door neighbor is more likely material for a story than the natives of Borneo. It seems to me that the chief advantage to be found in traveling is in the enquiring attitude of the traveler: he seeks to discover how foreign people live—what they eat, what they think, how they pass the time; he is determined to know all about them. The same attitude in one's home environment will attain the same results.

Several other helpful qualifications for the writer are visual-mindedness, the ability to observe and remember a multiplicity of small details; a willingness (or rather a delight) in experimenting with new words, a new style, a new technique, a new subject; and finally a capacity for experiencing emotion.

These qualifications were not mentioned earlier as essentials because they are attainments that may be acquired deliberately and consciously. A brief explanation of each will clarify my meaning.

By visual-mindedness I mean that the mind's inner eye sees vividly and clearly and in detail a remembered or imagined scene as though it were actually before him: how a man rises and walks to a table, soldiers squirming across swampy land on their bellies, a cowboy on a bucking horse, the gestures of a man quarreling with his wife, and so

on. The knack of observing small details and creating word pictures of them can be and usually is cultivated. The exact cut, color, and quality of a dress; the kind and condition of a piece of furniture; the appearance and position of sweat on a human face; the way moonlight strikes a shard of broken glass; the exact image of paddles dipping water; the behavior of shadows on a white wall—this is the sort of thing that one finds packed into good professional writing. In fact it is one of the most important distinctions between good writing and amateur writing.

The average beginner weaves into his work, not the things he has actually seen or heard and then reobserved with his inner eye, but the traditional word patterns of things seen and heard by many other writers before him—the scenes and terminology of his reading. *He is merely imitating someone else's observations*—the direct cause of triteness and clichés. To be a good writer, one must learn to see for himself and to record what he has seen.

Especially when a writer is young and in the process of development, before he has fashioned his attitude toward life and arrived at a style of his own, he should spur himself to attempt totally new kinds of subjects, to use words he has never used before, to depict scenes never to his knowledge attempted, to dump tradition overboard and play with the language in a style of his own devising. The results will probably be bad; they usually are. But by the very fact of his attempt he has acquired something of value for the future.

Above all, a writer must cultivate sensitivity to the inherent emotions of imagined or real-life episodes. He must *feel* whatever he writes. Herein lies the explanation for the failure of many an aspiring writer. He may have good vocabulary, good style, keen intelligence, a knowledge of life, and all else necessary, and yet be unable to write successfully because he cannot or will not "let his hair down." You may be sure that if a story makes you happy or sad, excited or moody, the writer has experienced those same emotions in double or triple measure during its composition. If a story thickens your throat, actual tears may have fallen on the typewriter keys. This statement is not an exaggeration; it has been confirmed by many writers. Lack of such sensitivity explains the failure of many people who possess good writing technique. And it is also a partial explanation of why the emo-

tional life of a writer is often unstable. In the writing process he artificially stimulates his emotions. He loves and hates, is envious, angry, grimly determined, somber, exhilarated, all in a morning of work. (All this is not intended to imply that a good writer permits his emotions to flow like rivers over the printed page, nor that the capacity for experiencing emotion promises in itself a potential writer.)

If you lack the capacity for experiencing emotions exquisitely or the courage to portray these emotions, then it is better to seek creative outlet in nonfiction, for as exposition is primarily the presentation of fact, so fiction is primarily the presentation of emotion, the impact of fact upon the human nervous system.

One often hears the naïve say, "I think I'll write a story for *Blank Magazine*. Why, 'Wide Margins' was really the silliest stuff. A child could have written it." Why doesn't the struggling young genius, in the throes of composing a very fine novel, dash off a few pulp-paper Westerns or true stories or write a nice, easy yarn for *Collier's* or the *Post* to earn a thousand dollars or so for his bread and butter? Why is it that the literary lady, who decides suddenly that children's stories ought to be easy to do because they're for such young and immature minds that any halfway intelligent person could write them, fails to find a publisher for her children's book?

A partial answer lies in the preceding discussion. A writer must take seriously and must *feel* whatever he is working on. He cannot look down his nose at his medium. The "unpublished author" of the serious novel may be a better writer than some of the authors of *Post* and *Collier's* stories, but the very fact that he is a serious novelist and cannot put his heart and soul into an inconsequential love story means probable failure should he make the attempt. You can be sure that a man who earns a living from writing pulp-paper Westerns, although he may acknowledge that pulp-paper Westerns are not particularly literary or worth while, takes his work seriously and expends all his energy upon it. The same holds true for the popular magazine writer or the scenario writer. Nor can one deprecate children's books and be successful in writing them.

One should not attempt to write the kind of thing that he despises. If he hates the motion pictures, he should not go to Hollywood even

though the opportunity offers.[3] If love stories in the traditional vein are an anathema, he should not attempt them. The best advice to the novice is to write the kind of thing he most enjoys reading.

Further, there is the matter of technique. Critically we may frown on the true story, the Western, the murder mystery, light humor. That is our privilege as critics. But when we say a child could have written "Wide Margins" we are being ridiculous. We may mean that we haven't much respect for the way the author of "Wide Margins" looks at life or for the mass audience that makes such writing acceptable and profitable, but as novice writers, not as critics, we must recognize that a good deal of training and technique has gone into both kinds of stories; that it is much easier to be a critic than a writer; that anything printed in a national magazine or by a national publisher is likely to have behind it a good deal of technical skill.

Here again, in this matter of technique, is found the answer to another frequent question. Adelaide Jones is told by numerous friends that she is a marvelous letter writer and should certainly put her talents to work composing short stories. Ignoring flattery or bad taste as an explanation, and granting that Adelaide Jones is "a marvelous letter writer," one must still inform Adelaide Jones that letter writing and story writing are altogether different forms of expression and the chances are ninety-nine to one that until she has trained herself in story writing her stories will be bad. The same applies to Mrs. Mary Smith, with the local reputation for holding children utterly spellbound for an hour with her children's stories. And to the Right Reverend Joshua Drayton, whose sermons are masterpieces of oratory; hence why shouldn't he write "simply marvelous and uplifting stories based on his interpretations of the Bible"?

Again the answer is that writing stories and speaking to an audience are different media of communication. With the spoken word much depends on the gesture, the facial expressions, vocal intonations—all lacking in the story. For a test of this truth, try taking down and then reading some of Mary Smith's stories or ask to borrow and read silently one of Reverend Drayton's sermons.

[3] Recently a literary agent was bemoaning to me the number of promising novelists who have migrated to Hollywood and "been ruined." If they have been "quality writers" it takes them awhile to readjust themselves to the Hollywood mold—or they leave in disgust. It is altogether too apparent that those who remain almost always cease to produce worth-while novels.

WRITING AS A CAREER

The student decides that he has the necessary qualifications to make creative writing his aim. How should he go about preparing himself? He's not in any hurry, of course, not expecting to set the world on fire the moment he graduates from college. Can he look forward to earning a living from creative writing, or should he select some other profession for his livelihood and write systematically during his spare time?

None of these questions can be definitely and finally answered. Only a number of years of time, the caliber of the writer's persistence, and the plain element of luck will furnish the answer. However, a clear understanding of what confronts the young writer should save him some heartaches and disappointments and should eliminate much misdirected effort. Even well-established writers with long years of experience and success behind them, especially if a family is dependent on them, work constantly in the shadow of economic necessity: the fear of going stale, a not uncommon phenomenon; fear that the taste of the public may suddenly and unaccountably change so that their work of the same quality will find no market.

Early in his creative efforts the writer should decide what kind of writing he is best adapted to and adhere to his choice, for there are two kinds of creative writing as unlike as popular and classical music, and very few men are masters of both. For lack of better terms, we have called these two kinds "quality" and "commercial," without any opprobrium attached to the best of commercial writing. (The commercial story is more salable because the public likes the romantic tone, a plot with strong suspense, usually a more definite atmosphere, a love interest or a sentimental interest in young people or old people, and a way of looking at life that does not violate the accepted mores of our society.)

"Quality" writing or "experimental" writing and "commercial" writing or "craft" writing seldom overlap, though a quality story may sell commercially, and a commercial story may contain in part the technique of the quality story.

An estimated 98 per cent of all stories sold are of this commercial type, and in the big commercial magazines they command far higher prices than quality stories. Possibly 70 per cent of all stories sold are of the "love-rack" type: i.e., under various circumstances and with

various backgrounds handsome boy meets beautiful girl; outward or inward circumstances keep boy and girl separated and "on the rack"; handsome boy marries beautiful girl. Almost all motion pictures use this theme. The next most common type of commercial story treats of the happy solution of various kinds of marital troubles.

An earnest young writer reads an anthology or collection of short stories consisting entirely of the quality type, as most such anthologies do, writes a story, and sends it to *Collier's* or *Cosmopolitan* or *Red Book* or *McCall's,* and it is returned promptly with a printed rejection slip. Conceivably he could have produced the finest story of the year on such a forbidden theme as homosexualism, and his story would have been rejected without editorial comment or praise. Did he not learn of the mistake he was making, the rejections would continue indefinitely, no matter how well the stories were written.

Most writers appear in a college anthology, not by virtue of a single story, but rather by reputation for a large body of work whose worth is recognized. If a quality writer's story is by chance accepted for publication in a big commercial magazine, his reputation and the salesmanship of his literary agent are responsible for his surmounting the commercial barrier, and even then he has had to meet certain requirements and taboos.

Well, then, what about an agent? Shouldn't a young writer secure the services of a literary agent and let the agent worry about marketing? Certainly, if he can find an agent who will have him as a client and who is in the business of selling stories and not of collecting fat reading fees from a gullible public.[4] A legitimate agent is a businessman. Rarely indeed is a young writer of sufficient promise to be worth his time—time to wade through countless unsolicited manuscripts. Therefore the average literary agent will have little to do with unestablished, "unpublished" writers unless they come to him highly recommended by someone whose judgment he trusts.

Although there are many ways for a young writer to break into print when he is ready, it seems to me that most writers tend to

[4] There are two kinds of literary agents: those who live from reading fees, typing fees, criticism fees received from aspiring writers and those who live by selling stories and books. The latter seldom advertise. And although a legitimate agent may charge a fee for a first story in order to discourage unsolicited contributions, once he accepts a client he charges no further reading or criticism fees.

follow one of three courses. Once a young writer has decided that he possesses the taste, temperament, critical judgment, and dissatisfaction with the current social order that seem to characterize the "quality" writer (the potential serious novelist), he should be in no hurry to establish himself. Even though in a sense every writer is writing for a market, to him this market should be secondary to writing what he feels and thinks to the uttermost of his ability, striving always to extend himself beyond the limits of his preceding work. The chances are that he will begin to establish himself through the publication of a serious novel rather than through short stories, though a part of his effort should be directed toward reading short stories and occasionally submitting serious stories to the various quality magazines, even to magazines which pay him nothing. The novels he attempts will probably contain some sort of significance—regional, racial, historical, social—and may be marked by great originality of treatment and theme. He is not likely to publish the first novel, or even the second, but these failures should not discourage him, provided competent and honest people find promise in his work and he knows that with each effort he is stretching his intellect and his artistic perceptions to a farther point.

In the end the successful "quality" writer or "significant" writer is likely to travel farther and derive greater satisfaction and pleasure from his work than the quickly successful "commercial" writer, who began receiving large checks from "slick paper" magazines and even movie sales at a time when the intellectual was happy indeed to allow one of his stories to be published for nothing.

If one's tastes and abilities lean toward the kind of writing that is likely to be popular with a large audience, the attainment of success has usually a quite different history. Commercial writing is exactly what the term implies—commercial. It is writing done for a specific market. There is no reason to despise it merely because it is commercial, unless one is ready to despise O. Henry, Damon Runyon, Booth Tarkington, Ring Lardner, Bret Harte, Paul Gallico, even Mark Twain.

A man wishing to sell anything must consider the needs and desires of the purchaser. Therefore he who would sell to the great commercial market which caters to the common taste of the general public must study the requirements of this market. He must read the magazines to find out what editors will buy. He must accept the taboos. And he must

realize, as any salesman knows, that his own product must be similar to that already in use, yet just enough better to cause the purchaser (editor) to shift his buying from a regular contributor to a new one.

A frequent method used by a commercial writer to establish himself is to begin in the pulp field: Western stories, true stories, detective stories, pseudo-scientific stories, sweetheart stories, war stories, aviation stories. He should decide which type he likes best and then study that market thoroughly, reading several magazines from cover to cover. He should then write a succession of stories for that market, bombarding the competitive editors with one story after another, decently spaced. Gradually, if his work has merit, he focuses attention on himself. And he has proved that he is not a "one-story" writer. Then a story will be returned with suggestions for revision. The young author revises, the story is accepted, a check comes. The next story will be easier to place, the one after that still easier. Soon he has published a sufficient number of stories for an agent to become interested. The agent takes over. A story written for the "pulps" may be appropriate for one of the "slicks." It is sold. The young writer is now well on his way toward becoming commercially established.

Another way of beginning a career as a commercial writer is to study best-selling novels done in the current fashion and to write a book deliberately injecting into it the various elements that will give it popular appeal. Once a novel is a success, the way toward marketing short stories is much easier.[5]

Most commercial writers write only one story. The background is different, the characters have different names, and the plot complications are different in detail, but the skeleton is the same—story after story; theme, plot, emotional appeal are the same. P. G. Wodehouse and Damon Runyon are good examples. This is not altogether the fault of the writers: the general public and thus the editors want that particular story. This tendency is common Hollywood practice.

Once the kind of career is decided on, the young writer asks: How

[5] Recently I was told of an insurance salesman who suddenly decided to make a writer of himself. He chose a phenomenally successful writer to imitate and spent a year studying this one writer's work, imitating style and vocabulary, reading part of a scene, finishing it in his own writing, and then checking his treatment against the original. Once he launched himself on his own career he was immediately successful, publishing in such magazines as the *Post*, publishing a novel, and securing a Hollywood contract for a very large sum.

best can I prepare myself? What courses shall I take? Shall I major in English or in some other field? Shall I study journalism?

The answer depends entirely on the individual. In the case of the commercial writer, I cannot see that it matters much. In fact, most college writing courses beyond a certain point and most college literature courses may very well be detrimental to a career in commercial writing, for the English major is likely to become too critical minded to meet the technical and emotional (often superficial) demands of the commercial market.

On the other hand, the more a serious intellectual person desiring to do creative writing studies, the larger his background, the greater his critical faculties, the more deeply he penetrates human thought and human behavior, the more likely is his work to be a finished product, authentic and worth while. A surprising number of our "quality" writers are or have been college professors with advanced degrees. Because the way is long for the serious writer, it is usually better for him to prepare himself in some other profession besides writing (unless he has a private income), for writing is not likely to furnish his livelihood for a good long while.

WRITING DURING THE APPRENTICE-SHIP PERIOD

All arguments to the contrary, writers learn by imitation. They are likely to go through Conrad periods, Hemingway periods, Mark Twain periods. This is all as it should be, a part of the process of learning. There is no great harm (probably rather a benefit) in deliberately analyzing and imitating the style of a favorite idol, or the plot structure, or the method of character delineation. Many commercial writers read in their own fields for ideas.

Read widely. Borrow liberally. But don't plagiarize plot or ideas. In fact a program of reading and imitation can be a valuable aid in learning to write. With one caution, however: the very extreme style of a Hemingway or a Saroyan is in part responsible for his eminence and is a reason for not imitating too closely. Many have tried to write like Hemingway, but only Hemingway has succeeded.

All writers agree that inspiration is not a fairy muse which creeps upon one unawares. He who waits for inspiration simply waits. In-

spiration comes from the mechanics of the writing process—from the forced sitting and waiting and thinking when an idea will not shape up, from scribbling notes or an outline, from the feel of the typewriter keys, or from the simple act of inserting a white sheet of blank paper into a typewriter. This is not to say that a writer's mind is not active and at work a good deal of the time when he is not at his desk. But writing will be done only if the young writer sets aside a certain number of hours each day or certain hours of certain days during the week when he plans for nothing except writing and does nothing else, even though he must sit and stare at the keys or sharpen pencils or pace about.

All writers of my acquaintance or knowledge have such a schedule and adhere rigidly to it.

By adhering to such a schedule, the apprentice writer will automatically fulfill the next suggestion for learning to write, which is to write, write, write, and write more. One learns to write primarily by writing rather than by reading and criticizing, although critical training can be a valuable supplement. No one can teach the young author to write. He may be guided, he may be helped by criticism and suggestion and revision under guidance; he may be aided by having certain matters of technique pointed out to him. But in the end he must teach himself by experiment and failure, by writing and rewriting, by seizing hungrily every opportunity for self-expression and gradually weeding out his mistakes and acquiring a facility which, once acquired, will never desert him.

One learns to write by writing, and in no other way. As one continues to practice, as one completes his three hundred thousandth word, his half millionth, his millionth, he discovers a new sense of confidence, a feeling of power over his medium. He discovers to his delightful amazement that he has become a master craftsman, that he is no longer an apprentice. From somewhere deep in his mind spring words and phrases that he did not even realize he was acquainted with.

But he has acquired more than simply a mastery of words. He may discover that there is a swing to his writing, a rhythm, a staccato beat, a lightness and ease, a deftness to the word patterns. Then he is no longer imitating. He has found a style of his own.

Such mastery may not come with the half millionth or millionth word. There is no set number. It may come with the hundred thou-

sandth or the two millionth. When it does come, the writer will know. He will piece together certain real events along with imagined events, and there will be a story. He may observe a humming bird and find a story with a symbol. He may see a man take a drink in a certain way and find a story. He may watch the grimace of a girl as she sees a boy in the distance, and find a story. He will discover that life and fiction interweave in an arresting pattern.

I repeat that the only way to learn to write is by writing and more writing; and that, though guidance may be furnished by someone else and short cuts indicated, all writers must teach themselves.

WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT

Ignoring the familiar, some young people, strongly romantic, feel the need of expressing themselves about things far away or long ago. They must write of the French Foreign Legion, of the Amazon jungles, of adventures in China or the Arabian desert. An amusing cartoon during the war illustrated this yearning of the young for romance beyond the visible horizon; it portrayed a group of paratroopers in a transport plane, all of them garbed for action and waiting to drop on enemy soil, and the entire group was huddled about an open cartoon magazine of Superman! In the midst of the most exciting and dangerous adventure yet conceived, these young people found a ridiculous comic-strip character diverting adventure. True to life? Of course. It is amusing to visit isolated ranches of the Southwest and find cowboys reading pulp-paper magazines concerned with a West that never existed, not once associating themselves with the never-never land of the pulp-paper story.

One young person, following in the footsteps of Richard Halliburton, wrote in disillusioned misery from an isolated island, "I have discovered romance to be a sirloin steak smothered with onions, a clean bed with clean sheets."

This yearning for adventure and finding outlet for such yearning in fiction may be used to good advantage. There is market for the pure adventure story in the Western pulps, adventure magazines, pseudo-scientific stories, and the murder mystery group. But the young writer should approach the project intelligently, both by studying what is wanted and then, before attempting to write of a faraway land never

visited, by reading a number of authoritative nonfiction books about it. Or such romantic impulses may find outlet in historical fiction, which can be both worth-while and profitable work. Here again the writer must do a good deal of reading and note taking before he is prepared to write: notes on manners, customs, historical characters, incidents, geography. No one can say how copious these notes must be. Some successful historical writers make as meticulous and complete a study of their period in its every detail as though they were doing research for a thesis. The study of others is more superficial. The writer himself must decide how complete his notes must be.

Here again is a point to be noted. Many, many stories, especially of the commercial type, contain a background of exact factual information. The notion that stories spring full-blown from the imagination is more often false than true. In fact, many commercial stories and motion pictures, too often unbelievable in the events they contain and their view of life, attain a certain air of verisimilitude through the accuracy of their background material. If one is writing about a little tailoring establishment he should find out all about tailoring either from observation or from reading. He should ask detailed questions, just as a reporter does, or work in the shop. If one is doing a story concerning the insurance business, he should first find out all he can about it. Incidentally, reading may be a partial source for story ideas.

Of course, background must not intrude into the story. The writer must not allow the focus of interest to remain too long upon the complexities of the insurance business, or he will find that instead of writing a story he is doing an article. Preferably some of this real-life material is woven into the plot, becomes an integral part of the story: boredom in the monotonous, day-after-day job of steam pressing; a certain clause in an insurance policy that leads to success, failure, murder.

Everything in life, inner emotions and external events, is grist for the writer's mill. In general, a good rule to follow is to write about what one is familiar with. Ordinarily one's home community, his neighbors in the block, his companions, his places of amusement, the poorer section of his town across the tracks furnish his best source of material for fiction. He should have a profound interest in people, in their behavior under stress, for after all—no matter how good the background, the descriptions, the exciting plot—the primary reader interest in any kind

of fiction, commercial or quality, is and must be people: their troubles, their quirks and foibles, their actions and reactions.

How true to life must fiction be? When a student tells me, "That's exactly the way it happened in real life," my presumption is that the story is a failure, and usually it is. Make this test for yourself. Listen to a conversation between two wives shopping, two college students in a drugstore, two businessmen talking shop, and jot down what they say as though it were dialogue in a story. As fiction it will probably sound very weak. It may even sound unnatural. Why? Because it leads nowhere. It has no beginning and no end and no special significance. The writer's job is selecting and interpreting, not simply recording.

A comparison to photography may be made. An ordinary snapshot contains everything within the focus of the lens just about as it actually appeared at the moment the picture was snapped. But the artist-photographer arranges his lighting, the angle of his camera, and the background, even the area of the focus of his lens (done often in enlarging) to bring out certain qualities and submerge others into indistinctness or invisibility so that, viewing the photograph and the original scene, one may find scarcely any resemblance between the two except in major outline. The photographer has interpreted the scene. The result may be a work of art.

HOW WRITERS WRITE

There has been a good deal of nonsense written about putting the subconscious to work on a story, about an inner creative well of the mind not entirely understood, which devises a short story or novel while one sleeps. A certain amount of truth in all this, yes. And yet nine stories out of ten, after the first flash of an idea, are worked out by sheer grit, by sticking with the story, forcing one's mind to play with it, trying this pattern and that. Suddenly the plan falls into a shape that somehow the author knows positively is the right one.

Most professional writers plan beforehand exactly how a story will end, how each scene will dovetail into the next, what focus will be used, what traits in the characters will be emphasized, what events will be included and what omitted—they know before they set a word to paper.

There are a few writers, however, who begin with a story idea and a set of characters, and somehow the mechanics of the process of writing stimulates them to weave the story as they write—or so they maintain. This knack is rare, probably more commonly used in the novel than in the short story, and is not to be recommended. Probably those who assert that they use this method of composition have a mental plan much better organized than they realize.

Successful authors write in as various ways and by as various methods as there are successful authors. Some compose on the typewriter and would feel utterly helpless if forced to write with pen and ink, and vice versa. Some write in the evening. Some write in the morning. Some write one draft; some write ten. Some cannot write if a radio is playing; some cannot write unless a radio is playing dance music or a symphony. Some require certain surroundings in order to write; others can write anywhere at any time and under almost any circumstances. Some revise by writing twice as much as they intend the finished product to be, then halving with a blue pencil, excising everything that the story can do without. Others are successful by writing half the length of the proposed work, then enlarging in successive drafts.

Method of work, then, is an entirely individual problem for the novice, a system to be adjusted to his own temperament through trial and error. But it might be of interest to know how professional writers, who have been successful in their fields, do their work.[6]

Writer A

(QUALITY WRITER: NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES)

After a great deal of careful library preparation Writer A is ready to work. For a novel he does a regular five drafts. The first draft, a hundred pages in length, is a kind of synopsis. The second draft is two hundred pages in length. The remaining drafts are full length, with fourth and fifth drafts polishing work. Writer A is an outstanding stylist and craftsman. He writes from eight in the morning until one,

[6] Recommended reading for those who would know more concerning the methods used by nearly a hundred well-known modern writers is Robert van Gelder's *Writers and Writing*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946. Most of these writers agree that writing is lonely and harrowing work, that the easiest thing in the world to find is an excuse for not writing.

working rapidly, doing from fifteen to twenty-five typewritten pages. Afternoons he spends in the library. During the evenings he corrects what he has written and makes notes for work the following day.

Writer B

(QUALITY WRITER: SHORT STORIES AND NOVELS)

Writer B works four hours each morning. He does only one draft of a story, composing with extreme care with frequent thoughtful pauses. In a morning he may do only half a page, though usually his output runs to several pages. When the story is completed and corrected, it is typed by a secretary.

Writer C

(QUALITY AND CHILDREN'S BOOK WRITER)

Works in spasmodic periods of intense activity, interrupted by periods of reading or other diversion in which no writing is attempted. During a creative period Writer C may work twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours in a day, not even pausing for meals. Twenty pages of serious fiction in a week is a large output. Writer C revises as the story progresses, feverishly snatching a page out of the typewriter, throwing it away, rewriting without reference to the discarded page. The story must be perfect to the very last comma on one page before she is able to proceed to the next.

Writer D

(COMMERCIAL WRITER: SHORT STORIES AND NOVELS)

Writer D hails himself as a storyteller but not as a literary man; he says he is the best "second-rate fiction writer in the country." He works four to five hours a day, usually in the morning, but he can write while being dummy in a bridge game. He tries for 2,500 words a day but is satisfied with 10,000 a week, which he corrects and has a typist copy. For historical tales he employs others to gather his material and uses this material pretty much as he pleases. Critically not rated very well,

he has made a great deal of money, and unlike many other commercial writers is well satisfied with the kind of success he has attained.

Writer E

(COMMERCIAL WRITER: PULP-PAPER STORIES AND NOVELETTES)

Writer E sets himself a million published words a year, a task which requires him to be at his typewriter from eight to ten hours a day, seven days a week. His work is done in one draft, twenty-five to thirty pages a day, which he corrects at night and turns over to a typist to retype. He obtains his ideas from reading other pulp-paper stories.

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Jot down notes on memories of your own most vivid childhood experiences. Do any of them promise enough novelty or interest to be developed into a sketch? Remember that story writing is the reshaping and emphasizing of real-life material, but the story need not follow the exact circumstances. It should be colored with imagination and given purpose. Some significance must be derived from it.

Write what you regard as the most interesting and vivid of these childhood experiences into a three-page (thousand-word) sketch or vignette.

2. Read one or two of the following in Parts II & III: "Mother," "The Sin," "Penrod's Busy Day," "Little Miss Marker," "The Circus."

Plan and write a story based on one of your own childhood experiences, either from the viewpoint of the child or from the viewpoint of the adult—first or third person. Such a story will differ from an anecdote or sketch in that it will have a theme of some sort—adolescent disillusion, religious awakening, insoluble childhood problem, hurt from an experience, harmless and amusing mischief of children that can lead into complications, good or bad influences of children on adults, and the like. Remember that your story must definitely arrive somewhere, at some sort of climax and conclusion (denouement).

3. Write an autobiography of approximately two thousand words, emphasizing especially any of your experiences or emotional crises that might prove useful later for story material. You may, if you wish, divide this writing into sections, each section being the possible subject matter or situation for a later story.

Append to this autobiography a brief synopsis of the kind of reading you like best. Be absolutely honest, because the kind of reading you do has much bearing on the kind of writing that you may be successful in.

4. Purchase a copy of one of the "quality" magazines—*Story, Harper's, Atlantic Monthly, New Yorker, Partisan Review, Kenyon Review*—and a copy of one of the "commercial" magazines—*Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal.* Read at least two stories and preferably three in each of the two types of magazines. Look over the advertising and the format. Now write a three-page (thousand word) critical essay on the differences you discover in the kinds of stories and in the editorial policies of the two kinds of magazines.

II. ESSENTIALS OF THE SHORT STORY

EVERY short story must contain suspense and foreshadowing, plot and trap and dramatic conflict, theme, character delineation, immediacy and atmosphere, a point of view, limited focus, and unity. In addition, the story writer may employ repetition, symbolism, impressionism, restraint, implication. These ingredients will be discussed in this chapter. All these matters are a part of the technique of narrative writing. But it is doubtful whether any writer lists them over on his fingers, either before he sits down to write or after he has finished writing. In fact, he may be very agreeably surprised when critics call attention to his symbolism, his impressionistic method, his use of atmosphere to forward plot. He will probably say quite honestly that his whole purpose was merely to write a good yarn.

These terms are critical tags in the analysis of the short story after it is written, although the quality writer may have such matters as symbolism, restraint, and social significance in mind as he writes.

Young writers should be familiar with these labels and their meanings both for experimental purposes and for understanding criticisms of their early works. When a competent judge says that a story lacks a feeling of immediacy, or the focus shifts too often, or the writer fails to bring his characters to life, the writer should understand these terms. In addition, they are of value in analyzing the technique of successful writers.

DEFINITION OF THE SHORT STORY

What is a short story? And how does it differ from exposition (the article, the essay)? Within this difference is to be found at least a partial definition of the short story. No complete definition can be formulated, for any effort to be all-inclusive is futile. There are notable exceptions to everything one can say about the short story.

Then why make an effort to define it? Because an analysis of what the short story is and what it is not may save the student early failures. An article is not a short story. A character sketch is not a short story.

A description is not a short story. A dialogue is not necessarily a short story. A record of events, such as a diary or a detailed account of a sinking ship, is not a short story. Yet a vignette—a short representation of one of life's little incidents (usually ironic)—can be and often is a short story. A character sketch, a dialogue, a record of events, even a description can be changed into a short story by a slight alteration of the writer's attitude and purpose.

Let us say that one writes an account of how a horse is broken. The cowboy who breaks the horse may be named. The horse may be named and some of the experiences of its colthood listed. The setting may be described. Even included may be an analysis of the cowboy's character and appearance. Yet all of this remains an article because the writer's purpose is to portray the method used on this ranch to break a horse. Let him shift his purpose to dealing with the conflict of wills between the horse and the cowboy, with the eventual triumph of one or the other, and he is writing a story. Or let him have as his theme the conquest of nature (represented by the horse) by man, or the necessity of breaking that particular horse for a particular purpose, or any of a dozen other themes, and he is writing a story.

The short story contains an interpretation of the writer's conception of life, either by direct statement or by implication.

So does the familiar essay. So may a biography or a sketch. Hence a short story must be more than an interpretation of life.

To understand this difference, an analysis of structure becomes necessary. In Chapter I it was pointed out that a shorthand record of the conversation between two businessmen, two women shopping, two college students in a drugstore—a dialogue—would not only lack interest but would not be a short story any more than excerpts from a diary. Yet the conversation of several women at a bridge table, of several soldiers about to enter battle, could be changed into a short story by making the conversation lead somewhere, to a conclusion either expressed or implied, and by eliminating all talk not related to this conclusion. Successful experimental stories have been written entirely in dialogue without a single word interpolated relating to identity of the speaker or to surroundings or action ("The Bloodhound," for example). Radio has little explanation beyond dialogue, although radio does utilize sound effects and a narrator to establish the scene and the characters and to indicate their activity.

In other words, *a short story must produce a single effect upon the mind of the reader.* All extraneous material, material which does not contribute to this single effect, even though relevant and interesting, must be eliminated.

But, even more, there is something in both the tone and the method of presenting the story that sets it apart from other media of communication. Let us say that someone is writing of the miserable conditions in a particular factory of a town as typical of conditions in the town and the region. If he writes an article, his method is first to prepare a logical plan, then to follow this plan, dealing intelligently and in an orderly fashion with the material he has uncovered: the appearance of the women, the hours of work, the factory environment, the home environment. Any idea that is not lucidly clear and completely treated in the logical order of the article annoys the reader. The writer's main aim is to appeal to the reader's intellectual understanding of facts.

The storyteller's approach is quite different. He strives to take you along with him and makes you *live with* the unfortunate workers. He will cause you to identify yourself with a particular woman worker in a particular household. He "personalizes" everything. For the time being, you become this worker. You see the disorderly sights, smell the smells, work the hours, suffer the tiredness and dispiritedness of her life.

The short story must have a feeling of immediacy, and it appeals primarily to the emotions and only secondarily to the intellect.

Further, while the article or essay should have clarity of organization and meaning, the short story is often deliberately clouded in meaning, even garbled. Where all gaps in the article must be bridged by adequate transitional words, sentences, paragraphs, the short story may leave large gaps of time and many events unrecorded—gaps and abridgments that the reader fills in for himself. Where the article must answer questions that occur in the reader's mind, the short story leaves those questions unanswered until the end or may not answer them at all. The novice, failing to recognize this distinction, often ruins his short stories by striving to explain everything, to account for all lapses of time. His story is cluttered with exposition of what occurred before the story opened, of everything that occurs during the story, and of events that happen after the denouement is reached.

The short story contains deliberately selected details and incidents, which may leave gaps and questions in the reader's mind.

There is no set length for a short story. It may run from a 500-word vignette or short-short up to 40,000 words. Many so-called short novels are really extended short stories. In fact there is no sharp dividing line between the short story and the novelette, the difference probably being a matter of unity—the extended short story of 30,000 or 40,000 words having greater unity of time and sharper focus, the short novel usually having wider range and less compact unity. In the quality market there is no standard length, although quality stories tend to be of the "episodic" type and usually, therefore, of shorter length—2,000 to 3,000 words. In the commercial market, where length is important in the format of the magazine, there are a number of standard lengths that the writer may well consider. A double-spaced typewritten page with reasonably wide margins all around it contains about 300 words. Short-shorts run from 1,000 to 1,500 words, with the latter preferred. There are two regular lengths for short stories: 3,000 to 3,500 words, and 5,000 words—the latter more common. A few magazines prefer the 6,000 to 8,000 word story. Novelettes are stories running anywhere from 12,000 to 30,000 words, while so-called magazine "novels"—often extended short stories—vary from 35,000 to 60,000 words. The average novel in book form is usually about 100,000 words in length.

SUSPENSE AND FORESHADOWING

Every short story must contain the element of suspense, which is another way of saying that the reader wonders and continues to wonder throughout the story what is going to happen, how things are to be explained or worked out. Will or will not the hero win the girl? Will the murderer be found out? What becomes of the wastrel? How is the apparently insoluble mental tangle solved? Or even merely to what conclusion is the author leading the reader? Suspense may be attained, in fact, by the simple device of being so abstruse that, to the end of the story, the reader keeps trying to find out what the totality of implications means.

This element of suspense does not occur by accident. It will not be present in a story if the author does not deliberately inject it by two

simple expedients: first, by knowing himself exactly how his story will culminate and by cleverly leading the reader toward that end; and second, by *not* telling everything he knows at once in an orderly fashion, but by deliberately withholding information that would satisfy the reader's curiosity.

A vast temptation to the young writer, if he is depicting a scene, for example, of a hunter drawing bead on an elk, is to have the shot follow immediately; or if he is representing a boy-girl scene to have the kiss occur soon after the first meeting; or if he is dealing with a group of sons and daughters of an old couple trying to decide whether or not to move the old people off the farm, to move them and be done with it. He must resist the temptation. The experienced writer teases, tempts, coaxes the reader along with other relevant details between the drawing of the bead and the firing of the gun; or a whole story or novel may be written between the boy's holding the girl's hand and his first kissing her. Ruth Suckow's very successful story "Uprooted" is made up of the conversations of the sons and daughters as they try to decide whether or not to move the old farm couple.

Although suspense in better stories is often mental (internal struggle), a graphic example of what is meant by the term can better be made with physical suspense. Picture a young woman on a ledge twelve stories above the street and threatening a suicide jump. Here is vivid physical suspense. Will she or won't she jump, or will she vacillate long enough for rescue somehow to be effected? Possibly she does not really intend to jump at all. It is to find the answer to this question that a large, morbid crowd gathers below. They are not there to view a mashed body, although that may be an incidental ghoulish interest. They are there to discover the answer to the question of whether the girl will or will not leap. They are in a state of extreme suspense, which will not end until either the leap is made or the girl is rescued, a period that may occupy many hours.

Too often the temptation to the amateur writer is to have the girl leap and get along to something else. But the skilled writer, comprehending the state of his reader's mind, takes advantage of the unanswered question to write paragraphs, possibly pages, dealing with the general appearance and behavior of the crowd and perhaps some of the individuals composing it (depending on his theme), then with the

wail of a siren, the arrival of the police, their various psychological efforts to lure the girl off the ledge (if the theme happens to be the mind of a girl who would do this sort of thing). The writer will not answer the question of whether or not she leaps until the end of the story. Or he may not even answer it then, but rather leave the reader to imagine the actual jump, only implying that it will be made.

It is possible, of course, that the writer might have the girl walk out onto the ledge and jump immediately, but then this episode would become a minor happening, part of the background of another story such as various reactions to the tragedy or effects of the tragedy on a group of related people or on the girl's husband or sweetheart.

The trained writer realizes that the more interest, sympathy, and understanding concerning the girl on the ledge he arouses in the reader's mind the greater will be the uneasiness and tension concerning the answer to the question. But this is a matter of character delineation, discussed under another heading.

In "The Gift of the Magi" (see Part III), it will be observed, O. Henry sets the stage by introducing the two main characters, Della and Jim, as seen through Della, showing their straitened finances and their love for one another, emphasizing several times by different methods their pride in their two most prized possessions, Jim's watch and Della's beautiful hair (foreshadowing). Della goes out, sells her hair, buys a chain for Jim's watch. Jim returns home. Note the scene. Della with hair clipped short has just murmured, "Please, God, make him think I am still pretty." Jim stands with eyes fixed on Della, an "expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her." Actually the story is now complete with Jim's explanation that he has sold the watch in order to buy a set of combs for Della's vanished hair. A single paragraph, even a sentence, could complete the story. But O. Henry, master craftsman, takes his time. He has not yet reached the climax. He occupies approximately 40 per cent of the word length of the story in unraveling the tangled threads of the skein, knowing that the reader will wait excitedly for the denouement. Suspense handled expertly.

It is well for the young writer to know that the moment he introduces into his story a male and female attractive to one another, no matter what their age, marital status, or position in life, he has created a situation with suspense until he answers the question of what happens to their relationship. In fact, they need not even be attractive

to one another, provided the reader is in sympathy with at least one of them and that the focus is centered on their relationship. Thousands upon thousands of stories make use of this device, and it is present in most novels.

Foreshadowing is closely allied to both suspense and plot, while suspense is an integral part of plot. By foreshadowing is meant exactly what the term implies: the shadow of events to come. The writer, knowing how he intends to shape these events, with a few words, more often a sentence, rarely a paragraph, hints at something that will occur later on in the story, and then drops the subject to deal with something else. He has piqued the reader's interest. He has urged the reader to come along with him to find out the answer to the question. Or he has placed in the reader's mind the background for a surprising turn of events or a surprise ending so that the reader will accept them without question.

Although foreshadowing is a conscious and artificial device to stimulate reader interest, practically all short stories contain it. Often it is used at the beginning of a story to tide the reader over introductory material necessary to set the stage for action.

"Ellen had not meant to go." This is the opening sentence in a story. Why had she not intended to go? The reader wonders; the writer refuses to explain until later.

"This time it would be different, she plotted, as she looked in the mirror of her drawing room. . . ." How different? What was true the last time? Why did she want it changed?

"It had been a mistake, maybe, to come rushing here full tilt without a bite of lunch. . . ."

All the foregoing examples of foreshadowing are the opening sentences of published stories in commercial magazines. (The quality story opening is usually less obvious foreshadowing.) The aim has been to bridge the introductory gap and carry interest along into the dramatic action. Equally important is foreshadowing the end of a story by inserting anticipatory sentences here and there throughout while the dramatic conflict unfolds.

In Wilbur Daniel Steele's skillfully constructed "Footfalls" we find the entire plot hinging upon the ability of a blind man to identify people by the sound of their footsteps. The reader and all the town believe that Manuel, this blind shoemaker's son, is guilty of murdering Camp-

bell Wood, the bank clerk, setting fire to the shop to destroy the identity of the murdered man, and absconding with a large sum of the bank's money—all so believe, that is, except Boaz, the blind shoemaker, who dares not reveal his certain knowledge that it is the other way around, that Manuel, his son, has been murdered by the absconding Campbell Wood. While the blind shoemaker is waiting through the years for the murderer to return so that he can exact vengeance, the reader believes until the very end that Boaz is going to kill his own son and is surprised—yet convinced that he should have known all along—that the guilty man is Campbell Wood.

Technically this is a very difficult story to do. The old man's recognition of people by their footsteps cannot be overemphasized or the reader would know—the old man having heard retreating footsteps on the night of the murder—that the old man is sure of the murderer's identity. In five or six places amid other material that seems more important we are told of the old man's accuracy in such identification. In addition, we must be made to feel that Manuel is a pretty worthless sort of person so that we will naturally assume him to be the murderer. We are given a good deal of information about his laziness, his gambling habits, the fact that all the inhabitants of the village regard him as of no account. But mingled with this impression is the thrice-expressed assertion of the old man that Manuel is a good boy—again foreshadowing.

Such a story is a result of careful planning by a master craftsman, of careful weighing of what effect a sentence or even a word will have upon the reader.

PLOT, TRAP, OR DRAMATIC CONFLICT

Plot, trap, and dramatic conflict all mean more or less the same thing. Plot is dramatic conflict. In the traditional pattern still followed in most commercial and craft writing, the forces of good, represented by hero and heroine, are depicted in a series of mental or physical clashes with the forces of evil, the villains of the piece, out of which the forces of good usually emerge victorious (comedy), or are conquered by the forces of evil (tragedy).

These various clashes are selected and recorded by the writer, are carried along by suspense (curiosity and tension regarding the out-

come), and lead inevitably and with unity toward some sort of conclusion.

The usual stages in the story pattern are the following:

1) The situation
2) The generating circumstances
3) The rising action
4) The climax
5) The denouement

The clash of good and evil in its simplest formula is probably an inheritance from our religious history, a direct descendant of the miracle and morality plays of the Middle Ages.

Our spontaneous sympathy is with the forces for good. To obtain our sympathy, the writer must arouse our interest and anxiety, usually by depicting traits in the hero and heroine that we readers recognize as similar to our own better traits or impulses, or at least as a part of our mores as to the "good life" in contrast to the "bad life." [1]

Superficially this is an analysis of the plot situation of a large majority of commercial or craft stories and motion pictures. The villain may not be too much of a villain. We recognize him as a force opposing and retarding the consummation of the hero's honorable and desirable ambitions. We may hate him. We may sympathize with him, yet still wish to see him defeated. We may even like him. The crusty, obstinate father of the hero's adored might be an example of a likable villain. The result is humorous comedy.

The plot need not be limited to physical conflict. There may be mental conflict between the forces of good and evil, without physical violence or even physical manifestation. Or the dramatic conflict may occur within the mind of a single individual, the forces for good opposing the forces for evil within a man's or woman's own temperament.

More frequently, the short story is a combination of these various kinds of conflict. For example, an older woman who will die without an expensive operation is openly in conflict with jewel thieves and succeeds in getting hold of the jewels. The woman's background is a bit shady. Shall she turn the jewels over to the police, or sell them to a

[1] These terms must be construed very elastically. A Raymond Chandler hero, a tough, hard-drinking, sophisticated detective, is leading the "good life" in that he fulfills our conception of the masculine, adventurous hero doing good by solving crime and setting "bad" people straight. Nowadays divorce is generally regarded as an acceptable act of the "good life" provided there is reason for it.

"fence" she used to know, have the operation, and save her own life? Mental conflict between good and evil in a single individual, while the suspense in the physical conflict is still in progress. Virtue triumphs. She calls the police even while the villain's car is drawing up to the curb outside. The villain arrives, kills the woman, secures the jewels, only to be caught as the police arrive.

As already pointed out, the quality writer, instead of accepting life as he finds it portrayed in typical fiction, has looked about him at mankind and has discovered that most people are neither "good" nor "evil," but rather that almost every real individual is a combination of various traits of character, some of which might be classified as "good" and some as "bad."

He may even deny the accepted definition of the term; he may be unwilling to concede that religion's conflict of good and evil is authentic. He discovers that man is a creature of his environment and his glands, that his behavior has much to do with the number of vitamins in his system and the financial circumstances of his everyday life; that given fifty dollars more salary a month a man might be a different person. In fact, man is so unpredictable that he may react differently to the same set of circumstances on Monday and on Tuesday.

In addition, the intellectual writer has observed that people superficially belonging to the heroes in actuality may be the most villainous villains in a whole community. (See Katherine Brush's "Good Wednesday.") The frowned-on divorcée, the conscientious objector, the delinquent college student may be discovered, with a little probing, to be individuals of heroic proportions. He knows from his own psychological studies, from the writings of such men as Freud and Joyce and a host of others, and from his own experience that the very best of men, so-called "good" men, may have startlingly "evil" propensities which they keep well concealed from the world. He knows that an ignorant, slow-witted person may have his I.Q. raised many points by the proper diet or by being cured of a debilitating disease; that the town's worst reprobate may be changed suddenly into a "good" man by a successful operation or by getting a better job.

Finally, the intellectual writer may believe that society as it is constituted upon the European pattern is not necessarily as it ought to be. Because he is a thinking person he will certainly question some of the prevailing standards of manners and morals that the unthinking never

question. He may regard patriotism (nationalism) as "evil" instead of "good," a real stumbling block to world unity. He may doubt the benefit, even the sense, of our tradition of troubadour love so extolled and exalted in popular nineteenth-century writing and carried over into the twentieth—abstinence, yearning, engagement, monogamous marriage. He may see in marriage a hideous enslavement (Strindberg's plays). He is likely to scoff at monetary success, to find more that is worth while in an itinerant tramp than in the local millionaire or the college president. He may believe sincerely that religion is a barrier to leading a good life.

All this is not to say that he is right, but only that he is privileged to believe what to him seems true and to persuade others if he can.

Thus, much of our modern quality writing consists of revelation of the fact that "good" is not always "good" and "evil" is not always "evil" and in demonstrating that our accepted customs and behavior in modern society are not necessarily either "good" or correct. In other words, the quality writer often discards the traditional plot pattern of good as opposed to evil, of hero as opposed to villain. The more that science, that psychology and psychiatry and medicine reveal of man, the wider the gap between the commercial or traditional pattern of good and evil and the intellectual pattern of man struggling in the trap of his environment. Thus the quality writer tends to substitute for the good-versus-evil plot, the man-versus-nature, man-versus-society, man-versus-himself conflict. Though he may use man-versus-man, the quality story will usually lack the hero-villain implication.

However, like the commercial story, the quality story, even of the episodic type, usually contains situation, generating circumstances, rising action, climax, denouement.

Trap grows from plot or conflict. If there is no trap there is no reader interest. By the term *trap* is meant that the main character is confronted by a seemingly insoluble situation caused by the opposing force, the villain, by impulses within himself, or by outward circumstances beyond his control. He is trapped and seemingly cannot extricate himself: trapped by a love he does not want; by a life he cannot change; by the drink habit; by a low position in society; and so on and so on. The reader asks, "What does he do?" "What can he do?" "How can he extricate himself?" Thus trap creates suspense in the reader's mind.

John Russell's "Jetsam," a story built along traditional lines, contains the following trap: The hero awakens from a long alcoholic binge to find himself penniless on a sparsely inhabited coral island in the South Pacific with no way of escaping. Will he escape? Will he conquer the drink habit? How can he leave? By lucky chance a piece of valuable ambergris comes into his hands, washed up by the tide. It represents escape and solution provided the young man resists the drink habit. Enter the villain, the Sidney Duck, a beachcomber, who steals the ambergris and carries it to an inaccessible place. The hero seems hopelessly trapped. He must physically conquer the Sidney Duck and his companion and retrieve the ambergris and must mentally conquer himself.

Mary Porter Russell's "Arrival" illustrates the sort of trap used in the quality or experimental story: Joan, a little girl, and her mother arrive in a small Western community to be with the child's tubercular father. They have come against his wishes because they love him and cannot remain away from him. He knows that if they stay his daughter will surely contract the disease and the mother may. This is the trap. What can they do? Will mother and girl leave safely or remain at imminent risk to their health? Dramatic forces in conflict are love represented by the mother and duty represented by the father.

The two solutions illustrate the differences in traditional and quality treatment. In "Jetsam" the hero is regenerated after a wild physical combat with the villains. In "Arrival" love apparently triumphs over duty, mother and daughter remaining, but by implication love is a snare that will lead beyond the bounds of the story into tragedy.

THEME

Every short story must have a theme. *Theme is nothing more than the total meaning of the story.* Sometimes this theme is stated, sometimes only implied. Theme is extremely important; without it a story lacks point or purpose. It guides the writer in deciding what angles or facets of his characters to emphasize, what action or events to unfold, what viewpoint to use, and what focus of interest, what material to include and what to omit. Theme is the purpose of the story. It is a lesson or revelation about life that the author is conveying to the reader by the events recorded.

Traditional themes found in commercial and craft stories are frequently such as these:

1) Young love will triumph over all obstacles.

2) Mother love is sacred and is stronger than any other love.

3) Courageous patriotism is more precious than life itself.

4) It is worth all necessary sacrifice to preserve the sanctity of the home.

5) Successful consummation of young love is more precious than anything else on earth.

6) With sufficient fortitude and ingenuity, poverty can be made bearable, even pleasant and exciting.

7) Renunciation of love, friendship, home, and the like for the sake of an ideal is the most exalted of all acts.

8) "And a little child shall lead them." Children in their naïve wisdom often reveal to adults the solutions to their difficulties or problems.

9) When all else is lost, religion is the answer to life's tragedy.

10) Courageous self-sacrifice is worth while and will in the end pay dividends.

11) Good fortune and success will inevitably come to those with sufficient ingenuity, perseverance, and courage, provided they lead "good" lives and "play fair."

12) Old age is valuable for the knowledge and worldly wisdom which it brings, usually expressed in adages and old sayings.

These are but a few of the countless traditional themes that might be listed. And of course there are all sorts of variations and combinations of them. For example, Hugh MacNair Kahler uses No. 11 in "The Buckpasser," but varies the theme so that the hero, naturally lazy but well-meaning, passes all decisions on to others, who are so complimented by his confidence in them that they bring about the hero's rapid rise in business and his marriage to the boss's daughter. These themes must be varied in unusual ways, with original characters and original setting, to produce successful stories.

But in all seriousness, these themes, when handled convincingly and arrestingly, and with a sentimental twist, are almost always salable in the commercial market and form the large bulk of our reading. Why? Because they are units in a national ideal. Because even though the reader has not necessarily seen them confirmed by the lives of people around him, nonetheless that is the way life ought to be and that is the

way he wants to read about it or see it on the screen or hear it over his radio during his periods of relaxation. Those themes fit readily into an emotional pattern which has been a part of the average reader's training and which therefore he responds to emotionally.

Quality story writers often deliberately violate these themes. Young love may end in an insoluble dilemma of race or religious conflict. A mother may hate instead of love her daughter and crush her in sly little ways, or a daughter may be inordinately jealous of a mother. Or the daughter may have a strong father fixation which destroys her. Courageous acts of patriotism may be demonstrated as foolish and unnecessary sacrifice. Or the theme of a quality story may be that it is better to break up a home, that no matter how bad the home environment a daughter cannot leave it because of her father's will, that personal integrity is more precious than love, that poverty not only is unbearable but should not be permitted, that good fortune often comes to the undeserving.

The theme of the quality story usually is a deliberate refutation of the traditional theme. A great deal of quality writing is studied rebellion against the falsehoods of traditional writing. Here, for example, are some themes of well-known quality stories:

1) Katherine Mansfield's "A Cup of Tea": The generosity of the rich is often only vanity.

2) Harold W. Brecht's "Vienna Roast": A man struggling along year after year in the trap of a clerk's underpaid job, no matter how hard he strives to better himself, has no hope of escape.

3) Conrad Aiken's "The Dark City": In the superficial happiness of an ideal family life, there is always the shadow of evil and tragedy.

4) Sherwood Anderson's "I Want to Know Why": In the hero-worship of the adolescent, there is almost inevitable disillusion.

5) William Faulkner's "Spotted Horses": Evil doers often go unpunished and are successful in their community.

6) Erskine Caldwell's "Dorothy": The inevitable fate of poverty is sin without redemption.

CHARACTER DELINEATION

Although a reader is interested in the representation of the world (description), and in the various events which happen to people either

in the real world or in the fictional world, and even in the explanation of how things are done and made (exposition) and in various philosophies of life, his primary interest, in fiction at any rate, is people. One of the typical mistakes of the young writer is to plow into his story without establishing the individuality of his characters. If the reader is not interested in and sympathetic with the people of the story, he certainly will not care what happens to them, no matter how exciting the events that take place, no matter how vivid the descriptions, no matter how clear the exposition.

Establishing a character as an individual is a subtle matter. Sometimes it is very easy, sometimes extremely difficult; and unfortunately there are no rules that can be laid down, few tricks of the trade that can be of real help. A single word may create a character in the reader's mind, which after all is the purpose of the writer. We may say, "Joe was fat, and wore a salamander smile." An immediate conception of exactly what Joe is like may flash into the reader's mind, or he may ask, "Now just what is meant by a salamander smile?" A writer may compose many pages dealing with a character, yet the character may remain blurred and unconvincing.

There are many ways of presenting character, all of them still practiced by modern writers:

1) Physical description
2) Portrayal of thought stream or of conscious thought
3) Reactions to events
4) Direct author analysis
5) Discussion of environment, such as a room or a desk where character works
6) Character's type of conversation
7) Reaction of others to character
8) Conversation of others about character

From the preceding list, one can see that character is so inextricably involved in the unfolding of the action of the story and in other story elements that it cannot be separated from them. It should be remembered, though, that stories are memorable by their portrayal of character long after plot, theme, suspense, and the rest are forgotten, that it is usually character that makes a story great, a single character around which the other characters move. (See Limited Focus and Unity at the end of this chapter.)

During the nineteenth century, particularly in the longer novels then in vogue, it was customary to devote many paragraphs, even pages, to physical description of the various characters. In commercial writing now it is usual to give shorter but nonetheless specific descriptions of lips, mouth, hair, nose, shoulders, legs, feet, figure, dress, and so on, although some commercial writing does not make much use of these devices.

Direct description of a story character may take one of two forms: static description, the character immobile; and dynamic, the character viewed in some sort of typical activity. Both are used. The latter, on the whole, gives a story more vitality.

Many modern writers, arguing correctly that one sees and estimates people, not by the shape of the nose or the length of the fingers but by single whole impressions, believe that character should be presented by single whole impressions, often in a sentence—that beyond these single impressions the character's thoughts, behavior, and reactions are far more revealing than a catalogue of physical attributes. They argue —and correctly—that no matter how detailed a physical description, the reader invariably forms his own pictures of the various characters, nearly always relating them to actual people and visualizing those people as actors in the story; and that these mental images differ widely among different readers and vary greatly from the author's own conceptions of his characters.

Thus a great deal of modern writing, even among commercial writers, contains very little physical description. In fact, entire short stories and even full-length novels might be cited lacking a single word about the static facial and bodily appearance of any character.

James M. Cain, a very successful craft writer, expresses this idea rather amusingly:

> . . . I care almost nothing for what my characters look like, being almost exclusively concerned with their insides. Yet when a number of people complained, after publication of my novel *Serenade* that they had to read half the book before they found out what the singer looked like, I decided in Mr. Harris's language, to "wrap that up in a little package for them so they've got it and will stop worrying about it." My choice of what a character looks like is completely phoney, and it may surprise you to learn that I haven't the faintest idea what he looks like. The movie writer's description of a character's externals, "a Clark Gable type," would do perfectly for me. . . . All three

stories [three of his novels] involve women whose figures are more vivid than their faces, but this doesn't bother me either. In women's appearance I take some interest, but I pay much more attention to their figures than their faces. . . . Their faces are masks, more or less consciously controlled. But their bodies, the way they walk, sit, hold their heads, gesticulate, and eat, betray them. But here again, on paper, I am more concerned with what goes on inside them than with what they look like.[2]

One trick of character revelation worth noting is the method of focusing strongly upon a single characteristic to the exclusion of others. "She observed that his hands were pudgy, his fingernails black with greasy dirt." "He wore on his middle finger a heavy gold ring set with a large green stone—but somehow the stone looked cheap." "She had a habit of flicking her long fingers at the back of her hair, yet never really touching its arrangement." "When he sat, his stomach rested comfortably on his legs." "Mr. Dahlberg always looked sweaty; even on a cold day he looked sweaty and flustered."

How true must characters be to life? I believe that there are two approaches to selection and presentation of characters. Certain kinds of people are so familiar to the reading public, to movie goers and theater audiences, to those who listen regularly to the radio, that they are, or seem to be, real people in a world of fantasy. Probably they have attained verity by the constant repetition of their roles, even though the reading public and various audiences may never have known similar people in real life.

They are the stock characters of the screen, of stage and radio; and they are repeatedly reproduced—with variations—in popular magazine stories. There are scores of them. The listing of only a few should bring many other examples to mind:

1) The motherly mother—fat, good-natured, affectionate, and understanding; always a good cook and long on advice concerning the ways of life

2) The dimpled, curly-haired little girl who breezes through life sing-

[2] By permission of James M. Cain. As a word of caution, Mr. Cain is here expressing a purely masculine viewpoint. It is to be observed that the more a magazine is "slanted" toward women readers, the more the writers are preoccupied with women's faces, hair arrangement, make-up, tilt of nose and chin, kinds of slips, dresses, shoes, and with very specific details of their surroundings such as the sort of bedrooms they have and the beds they sleep in, their living rooms and kitchens and closets. And it might be added that until recently at least the general reading public for fiction has consisted largely of women.

ing and dancing and seemingly making her whole aim the happiness of others

3) The detestable brat—male or female—usually with a streak of goodness in him

4) The crusty individual with the heart of gold, male or female: editor, father, gangster, gunman

5) The stage Englishman, slow-spoken and slow-witted, well-dressed, with suave voice and polished manners

6) The stage Frenchman, the stage Scotchman, the stage Mexican, the stage female South American siren, the stage Chinaman, the stage Jew. (Each of these types is always given certain characteristics and a certain way of talking. As a single example, the stage Jew is invariably penurious, uses his hands a great deal, and talks in broken English. Probably much of our racial misconception is based upon these stock characters. We never stop to think of all the generous Jews we have known, and the Jews who speak flawless English.)

7) The American gangster (serious)

8) The American gangster (humorous)

9) The American banker or other well-to-do businessman—heavy-set, cigar-smoking, brusque

10) The bashful, morally upright, courageous cowboy

11) The teen-ager, female and male

12) The lovely heroine

13) The vivacious heroine

14) The sophisticated heroine

15) The hard-boiled bad woman

16) The simple-minded, bumbling but lovable comic character

The point which the young writer too often fails to appreciate, however, is that these characters as they appear in successful commercial writing almost invariably have certain qualities or characteristics drawn from life and coupled with their stock characteristics so that each is a bit different from other stock types in the same category—qualities that may cause the reader or audience to say of a particular quirk, "Isn't that just like so-and-so." Because the stock character is as familiar as real-life people—often better known, really—the uninitiated may say of a certain story or motion picture that it is truly representative of life.

It is rare, however, that any stock character will live in fiction, for

tures and popular writing. The people are not people at all; they bear no resemblance to the man next door or the woman down the street. One seeks in vain for the motherly mother, finds instead a thin, harrassed, nervous woman, badly overworked, hardly able at times to control her temper; similarly, one fails to find the competent and efficient woman working part-time in an office who keeps her worldly wisdom to herself, or the slender, well-groomed woman who employs a cook, sends out the laundry, and serves tea delightfully while talking of the latest books, and so on.

Serious writers tend to draw their characters from life, to fictionalize living people. Often a character that rings true in every word and act in a story or novel either is actually a living person or a composite of several living people, of course altered by the sifting process of the author's imagination. One of the tricks sometimes employed by serious writers to enhance the authenticity of their characters is to use the real-life name of the prototype in the first draft of a story or novel, then in succeeding drafts to change the name to a fictional one. In fact a good deal of quality fiction contains thinly disguised real-life people and happenings that have gone through the author's process of winnowing and interpretation until they are far truer to life, for that matter, than the so-called true story.

Another method often used by writers is to jot down character sketches of the two or three main characters, including physical characteristics, background, education, manifestations of personality. Much of this material may never be used in the final story, but it helps to shape and clarify the author's original conceptions.

IMMEDIACY AND ATMOSPHERE

Immediacy is that quality which makes the reader feel that he is living in a story, not reading about it. Immediacy is attained by "personalizing" events, making them happen to a person introduced already. It is attained by giving details as though they are happening at the moment. Immediacy is lost by "backtracking," by telling the end of the story at the beginning and then attaching a *had* to every verb.

Most ambitious young writers have mastered already or sensed the methods of attaining immediacy. Their chief danger, as I have observed it, is in losing this air of immediacy by struggling to tell everything

that happens to a character during a time lapse in the main current of the narrative. As a result the reader suddenly finds himself reading dull exposition. The correction of the fault is either omission, if the material is unimportant, leaving the reader's mind to bridge the two-year gap by the simple device of spacing; or if the material is necessary to the story, enlarging the synopsis, giving sufficient detail so that the reader feels again that he is living in the story.

Another cause of failure is trying to tell too much, endeavoring to deal with too many events in too short a space. The writing of the short story is essentially a process of selection and focus, as discussed below, highlighting the events that give the story unity and subduing or omitting less important ones, narrowing the limits of the story sufficiently so that there is room for minutiae that make a story lifelike.

Some young hopefuls are never able to attain this air of immediacy. They always write not with but *about* characters and events.

The following is a student story utterly lacking in any feeling of immediacy:

And then there was his music. He loved it. Playing the trumpet had seemed to him a very good way to spend his time—much better than playing football. He hadn't liked the hard work of practicing, but he had liked being able to play. And in addition he could earn money evenings, money that contributed toward paying his expenses. Besides, he played in the high school band, and he enjoyed the tours they went on. But he decided when he arrived at college to stop paying so much attention to recreation and to be a good student. Everyone had been amazed that he had done so. In this new plan he had no time for girls. He sold his snappy roadster that had attracted girls in high school days and bought himself an old rattle-trap.

Things had been going along according to schedule when Virginia Dumas had come to school during his senior year. He had told her that he had found himself wanting to see her more and more, but too often someone else had a date with her already. This had happened several times. In desperation he asked her to go out with him exclusively.

At first she had been quite impressed with his wanting to earn his own way through school, but when his ambitions began keeping him from her, her sympathy with these ambitions lessened. She had expected him to fit his study plans in with her social life. But though he was very much in love with her, dazzled by the thoughts of going out with such an attractive girl, yet he would not alter his plans for the future.

All this made Virginia feel secondary to Bob's studies. And she did not

like the feeling at all. Previous boys she had gone out with had spoiled her. With them she had been always first. Now here the first boy she had ever cared for put her second to his studies and to his ambition.

She told him so. He had to make up his mind. They had a quarrel and poutingly she left him, and when he called her up she refused to answer the telephone. . . .

Really this is little more than a partial story synopsis. The story has not yet been written. If the boy's interest in music is an essential ingredient, then we should see the boy playing and feel his intense interest. If it is not an essential ingredient, this portion should be omitted, or mentioned casually as part of the background for some immediate scene.

In the second paragraph, when he asks her to go with him exclusively, if this is a really essential ingredient, then we need to feel his jealousy and desperation, we need to wait as breathless as he for her answer, not knowing whether it will be *yes* or *no*. And what of this struggle between his sense of duty and his ambition and his desire to please her? This could be made dramatic. This could be the whole story, in fact.

"They had a quarrel . . ." How flat and dull! What was the quarrel like? What did Bob say to try to placate Virginia? How did she answer? Where did the quarrel take place? During the quarrel did she bite her nails, mash a handkerchief, walk about, or sit dead-pan? How did Bob feel when she left him? Whose story is it, Bob's or Virginia's? The writer must take the reader with him into the body and spirit of one or the other.

All this does not mean that the fragment above could be turned into a successful story, even though injected with the quality of immediacy, because the thinking and the plan are altogether too inconsequential and lacking in significance or appeal to be worth further effort. It does prove conclusively, for the rest of the story is similar, that the author lacks story sense.

Atmosphere is in part created by the feeling of immediacy; the two qualities work together, for atmosphere also helps to create immediacy. Setting by itself means very little, but setting as a part of atmosphere is extremely important. Some very successful stories have been written without specific setting—but these are exceptional, products of

real masters of fiction. It is well for the beginner to visualize every scene of his story in a familiar place, a town or part of the country he knows, a house he is well acquainted with, a known room or store or street or outdoor location.

Had the author of the fragment above visualized the various occurrences as taking place in specific settings—if she had seen in her mind's eye the trees, the campus lawn, the library, or the darkened street where the quarrel took place with the rattle-trap car drawn up to the curb, night sounds or night stillness about the couple, or had she pictured the activity and confusion of the sorority house—then automatically her problem of lack of immediacy would have been in part overcome.

Try to imagine vividly the setting of every scene of a story. Of course, not every detail of a setting should be recorded. But the writer must see the surroundings clearly and then select from the whole scene sharp bits of detail that will both heighten the atmosphere and enable the reader to complete the picture for himself.

Atmosphere is much more complex than setting; setting is only a part of the problem of atmosphere. For atmosphere may be attained in many other ways besides description and is an integral part of plot, theme, character, and so on. The very style, choice of words, length and rhythmical pattern of sentences, all contribute to atmosphere. The way the characters talk and what they talk about are a part of atmosphere.

Below are some brief examples of atmosphere successfully created by writers who know what they are about. Words which specifically have to do with the atmosphere are italicized:

I

"No sir-ee. Something happened to them four chaps. And another thing—"

I fancied I heard a *sea-bird whining in the darkness* overhead. A *shape moved out of the gloom* ahead, passed to the left, *lofty and silent,* and *merged once more with the gloom behind,* a barge at anchor, with the *sea-grass clinging around her water-line.*

"Funny about that other chap," the old fellow speculated. "Bjornsen—I b'lieve he called 'im. Now that story sounds to me kind of—" He *feathered* his oars with a *suspicious* jerk and peered at me. "This McCord a friend of yourn?" he inquired.

"In a way," I said.

"Hm-m—well—" He turned on his *thwart* to squint ahead. "There she is," he announced, *with something of relief, I thought.*[3]

II

"Everything we want's the dinner, eh? That's the way you work it?"

"I can give you ham and eggs, bacon and eggs, liver—"

"I'll take ham and eggs," the man called Al said. He wore a *derby hat and a black overcoat buttoned across his chest.* His face was small and white and *he had tight lips.* He wore a silk muffler and gloves.

"Give me bacon and eggs," said the other man. He was about the same size as Al. Their faces were different, but *they were dressed like twins.* Both wore overcoats *too tight for them.* They sat leaning forward, *their elbows on the counter.*

"Got anything to drink?" Al asked.

"Silver beer, bevo, gingle-ale," George said.

"I mean you got anything to drink?" [4]

(In addition to those words indicated by italics, atmosphere is secured by the staccato conversation, by repetition, even by the kind of food and drink offered.)

III

Jonathan stayed a little longer in the water. He floated, *gently moving his hands like fins,* and letting the *sea rock his long skinny body.* It was curious, but in spite of everything he was fond of Stanley Burnell. True, he had a fiendish desire to tease him sometimes, to poke fun at him, but at the bottom he was sorry for the fellow. There was something pathetic in his determination to make a job of everything. You couldn't help feeling he'd be caught out one day, and then what an almighty cropper he'd come! At that moment *an immense wave lifted Jonathan, rode past him, and broke along the beach with joyful sound. What a beauty! And now there came another.* That was the way to live—*carelessly, recklessly, spending oneself.* He got on to his feet and began to *wade towards shore, pressing his toes into the firm wrinkled sand.* To take things easy, not to fight against *the ebb and flow of life,* but to give way to it—that was what was needed. It was this tension that was all

[3] From *Land's End* by Wilbur Daniel Steele. Copyright, 1918, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by permission of the author.

[4] Reprinted from *Men Without Women* by Ernest Hemingway; copyright 1927 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

wrong. To live—to live! And the *perfect morning, so fresh and fair, basking in the light, as though laughing at its own beauty,* seemed to whisper, "Why not?" [5]

(Many writers, like Katherine Mansfield in the preceding selection, attain atmosphere by injecting vivid bits of description, of setting, into a contemplative paragraph, making the setting an essential part of the thought pattern.)

POINT OF VIEW

As already emphasized, both unity and the necessity for a feeling of immediacy require a point of view. Points of view are usually classified as follows:

1. Author-omniscient (third person)
2. Author-participant (first person)
   a. As a main character
   b. As a subordinate character
3. Author-observer (third person)
   (*Note:* This involves an objective treatment, as though the story teller had no inner sight into his characters' thinking or behavior.)
4. Multiple (third person)

The omniscient author, writing in the third person, sees whatever he wants to see inside or outside his character, in privacy or in public, and interprets as he chooses. However, it is preferable to select one character as the central focus and to see and feel the passing events as they relate to and affect this character, usually analyzing the thoughts of only the main character and presenting external manifestations of the others. In the novel there is space to absorb the reader in many characters. But it is better for the beginner not to shift in the short story. Occasionally the plot and theme make a shift necessary, but then there should be only one shift to the second character and back to the original. If the young writer will keep this in mind, he will find his task easier.

Selection of point of view should be almost inherent in the story material as the writer mulls over it in his mind. First-person telling has advantages and disadvantages. For the inexperienced writer it is easier to

[5] Reprinted from *The Garden Party* by Katherine Mansfield, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1922 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

get under way and he is likely to be more natural and less stilted, while transitions are easier. But the dangers are many. The story may ramble and lose force by the introduction of irrelevancies. If the author chooses to be the main character, he is likely to seem either too conceited or too modest. There are likely to be too many *I's* for a good style. And finally the scope of the author-hero or the author-subordinate character is too limited, particularly if plot and action are complex.[6]

The author–observer point of view necessitates objective writing—the author has seen and heard the following, which evolves into a story. Author-observer may comment and interpret what he thinks is going on in a character's mind, but there is no certainty for him or the reader except as the interpretations are corroborated by the events that follow. This point of view is very similar to the first person–subordinate character except that it is done in the third person. Most cult-of-the-simple-writing, of which Hemingway is the originator and leading exponent, is written as author-observer rather than as author-omniscient.

Multiple is rarely used. Multiple is usually fragmentary and impressionistic and may shift from first to third person and from character to character. Some "stream-of-consciousness" writing makes use of a sort of abstract or multiple point of view.

LIMITED FOCUS AND UNITY

Little need be said further of limited focus and unity, for both have been discussed under various other headings in the preceding analysis. By restricting the number of scenes to a minimum, by selecting a point of view, by deciding on the main character and giving major emphasis to this character, by discarding material not relevant to the situation, the climax and denouement, the author is forced to limit his story and thus secures unity. For the short story, like any other piece of writing, must have unity and coherence in order to be successful.

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write a 300- to 500-word critical appraisal of three of the stories in Part II and III of this textbook. Select stories that either are similar in tone, theme,

[6] Diary stories are out of vogue, as they should be, for they are usually formless and ineffective. Editors now shun juveniles written in the first person—despite all the juvenile first-person classics—because they say that children will not read them.

and character treatment, or are in rather violent contrast. Deal with theme, plot technique, point of view, atmosphere, character handling, climax, and denouement. In your conclusion evaluate the three in comparison with one another, stating which is the best story and why.

2. Phrase five themes which appeal to you as possible subjects for stories that you could write. Your instructor will indicate which theme or themes seem most promising. After you have studied Chapter III, to follow, build plot synopses around these chosen themes.

3. Make it a point to overhear—while unobserved—a dialogue between two, or among more than two people, and to jot down as rapidly as possible exactly what is said as it is spoken. After allowing the material to "cool" and allowing yourself time to think over what you have heard and written, build an episodic (single episode) story around this conversation, choosing some single piece in the conversation to emphasize and repeat as you develop the story. (About 2,000 words.)

4. Prepare two-page character sketches of three people you know well and regard as interesting—people in some way in contact with one another through business, social, or family ties. After a suitable period for gestation, build these three characters into a story that will be based upon some quirk or foible or idiosyncrasy of one of the characters, who will become the main character and the center of focus of the story. Make use of bits from your character sketches, but do not fall into the error of trying to incorporate large portions of these sketches into your story. The climax and denouement of the tale may very well hinge upon the foible or idiosyncrasy you are emphasizing, or upon a slight change in character, or upon a misunderstanding of one character's temperament or behavior by another.

5. The experience of rising in the morning and dressing is universal. Its frequent use in short stories and novels would tend to indicate that it is perennially interesting to the reader. In addition, it furnishes limited action and limited focus by the nature of the situation, giving opportunity for a good deal of detailed minutiae, impressions, reactions, drifting thoughts. This period may also be a small climax in the lives of people because it usually brings into strong inner perspective the prospects of the day and the events of the evening before. Write a sketch or vignette dealing with the awakening and arising of a single character—first or third person. The conclusion will probably involve some sort of decision.

6. Write as vividly as you can a one-page sketch of a character in a dramatic situation, which may or may not have some sort of culminating conclusion. Now in three separate additional pieces of writing, present this same sketch or episode from three other points of view.

7. Choose from the anthology section a story notable for the atmosphere which is built up. Plan and write a story in a different setting and with a somewhat different plot yet imitating the same atmosphere or tone.

III. THE STORY-PLAN METHOD

FROM my experience I am convinced that there is only one way to approach the writing of the short story—by writing a whole story as a unit. The gradual, piecemeal-mastery method usually ends in failure. The student may learn to compose excellent descriptions; he may do two or three pages of natural and exciting dialogue; he may write character sketches as convincing as the people themselves; and his exposition may be flawless. All of these attainments are of value both as good writing practice and as ends in themselves—that is, doing good dialogue, description, exposition, character study. But so far as mastery of the short story technique is concerned, they bring him no nearer than he was before he started. The reason lies in the complex elements of the short story which must be gracefully and flawlessly interwoven. The way to learn to weave is by trial and error in weaving, making mistakes and correcting them—not by spinning separate threads. The way to learn to write short stories is by writing them and failing and writing again.

But one device can prove extremely helpful to students: the story-plan or plot-synopsis method. Instead of dreaming up only a mental outline, then plunging into the story, the student thinks over his story material and writes a preliminary short synopsis of his intentions. This is submitted to his instructor, commented upon and returned. The student may or may not accept the suggestions as he works out the story.

Until the apprentice writer becomes a skilled craftsman, the advantages of such a procedure are numerous:

1) The writer is forced to think specifically about his story. If he has only vague ideas, either he will be forced to dig deeper and evolve a story or he cannot write a sensible plan.

2) A definite plan recorded on paper usually makes the writing of the story easier.

3) Glaring defects, invisible while the plan is in the mental stage, appear in the written plan, often obvious enough for the student himself to recognize.

4) A good instructor or critic can point out errors in technique before the story is written and thus save much time and effort.

5) Fellow students profit immeasurably in their own critical perspective by recognizing or by having pointed out to them the weaknesses in the plans of others. Their ability to construct plot-plans (and stories) of their own improves.

Fourteen story plans follow. They have been selected, not as models, but for their great variety and for the fact that they illustrate a large number of the common mistakes of young writers. They are interesting in that each plan is followed by the critic's suggestions and then by the actual results; i.e., whether the story was or was not finally written and whether it was successful or a failure.

While it is true that no matter how well thought out and effective the plan, if the writing technique is bad, the story will fail; yet it is also true that no matter how competent the writing, if the plan is unsound, the story will fail.

Study these plans. In your own mind weigh the suggestions as though *you* were the author of the plan, and it was *you* who must write the story. Feel free to differ with the expressed criticism, for tastes in the short story vary widely.

Plan 1

HUDSON DAY LINE

The Hudson Day Line runs a trip hundreds of New Yorkers take as an escape from the wet stifling heat of the city. A trip some take for sheer joy of the wind through their hair, some for the beauty of the scene, and still others for just something to do. Mostly, couples fill the crowded decks, some young, some old, all rushing to get a seat nearest the rail. Groups of girls in slacks and sweat shirts glance around slyly, searchingly. A pathetic three-piece band beats out its meager rhythms for those inclined to listen. The excitement, laughter, and screams of this varied cargo mount in unison with the midsummer heat. The boat noisily removes its bulk from the shore and the ticket seller wipes his brow with a sigh of relief while the few latecomers pantingly turn away in rage.

I intend to tell what it is like to spend a day on this boat, all about my experiences on the Hudson Day Line.

Comment: This is no story. It has no focus of interest, no plot and mounting action, no characters. Rather, it is a description and ex-

position. To make a story out of it, you must have some sort of central character to whom this trip is of great importance. These scenes may produce in him some sort of climactic change.

Result: The student used a returning, disillusioned soldier as her central character. Around him the excursion activity whirled. In his background was unexplained tragedy so that the trip rubbed his nerves raw, especially as he remembered taking this same trip jubilantly several years before. At the end, he is gazing into the water at an apple core bobbing about. A successful episodic "quality" story.

Plan 2

CONCHITA'S PILGRIMAGE (LAID IN MEXICO)

Conchita Matos had been very ill during her third pregnancy. The doctor gave her no hope that her baby could be born alive or that she could recover without being crippled. She prayed to San Francisco for the recovery of herself and for the life of her baby. In return, if he answered her prayers, she would make a pilgrimage to Magdalena to pay him for the baby's life with a solid silver image of the child. (This is a typical custom of Mexican peasantry.)

A miraculous recovery followed her prayers; a few weeks later a healthy baby was born. Both she and her husband Roberto were filled with thankfulness to the good San Francisco. However, the baby was so well and strong that the need for the payment to the saint seemed less urgent. Time passed. There was little money for the trip or the silver image, and Conchita's time was more than filled with the care of the three small children.

When baby Rosa was three months old, she became ill. This time neither Conchita nor Roberto thought of calling the doctor. It was plainly not an ordinary ailment, but a grim reminder that San Francisco had not forgotten the debt that was owing him.

Not only must the payment be made, but Conchita must pass the test of lifting the statue of the saint with one hand. Only after succeeding would she know whether the offering had been accepted.

Arrangements were made with difficulty, but Conchita did make the pilgrimage, and the saint replied in his own manner.

Comment: This is the stuff that life is made of, all right, but where is the story? Not enough dramatic appeal. Possibly if Conchita made her pilgrimage while the baby was sick and might or might not die (catch

up the rest of the story briefly as you get under way) then you might secure suspense, with perhaps the ironic touch that the real reason for the baby's recovery was a potion administered by a Mexican witch (they do have witches, you know)—evil versus good, with evil achieving the good. Or more likely, this could be made into a thematic story: the utter devotion of the Mexican mother; the Mexican's blind faith in religion; or the mother spending so much time with her saints and her prayers and her trip to Magdalena that the baby dies of neglect.

Result: The story was begun on the bus. No theme was introduced. Much local color gave the story some authentic interest in Mexicana, but it lacked suspense and character interest so that the reader did not especially care how San Francisco reacted to the appeal.

Plan 3

THE RED DRESS

Two things happen to Marian, fifteen, at the beginning of her school year. First, her mother allows her to buy a red taffeta dress. Second, the family receives word of the death of their oldest son, twenty-nine, whom Marian hardly knows.

The family immediately goes into mourning. School clothes are exchanged for black ones, parties cancelled. The red dress is hung in the back of Marian's closet, a bright flame against the somber black wardrobe. Marian protests many times to her mother. She is bitterly resentful at having to sacrifice her pretty clothes for a man she hardly remembers. Black makes her face look pale.

The months go by, and the children talk often against the constant wearing of black. Marian's red dress in the closet is like candy out of reach. At the end of six months the mourners are allowed to wear white with the black. The mother decides to let the children buy some light spring clothes. Later on, after quite a discussion between Aunt Sue and mother, Marian is given permission to wear the red dress to Anne's party. Overjoyed, she runs upstairs to her room to try on the dress. She jerks it out of the closet and holds it up to the light. The flagrant color is repulsive. She recalls briefly her brother's face. She knows she cannot wear the dress and returns it to the closet, far back, out of sight.

Comment: This sounds promising as a quality type. Suggest that action, strung out too much, is likely to become dull. Why not write a two-scene story, the first scene depicting Marian's resentment and her inability to

recall her brother, her putting away the red dress with loving care; the second scene, the discussion six months later between mother and aunt about Anne's party, then the girl's discovery that she can't wear the red dress? Make the red dress symbolize carefree childhood, its renunciation, Marian's reaching young womanhood.
Result: A successful student story.

Plan 4

CRACKER

A beautiful young girl, Ella Mae Roberts, a "cracker" from Florida's backwoods, takes a position as a nursemaid in the home of a prominent family in a small town. The husband, Peter Gilbert, is a weak man dominated and harassed by his sophisticated, ambitious wife Lydia. He finds soft-spoken Ella Mae a gentle companion and seeks her company as often as possible. She thinks he is wonderful and worships him blindly, but is no fool and avoids any relationship that might cause talk or suspicion. Against her wishes, he enters her room one night when Lydia is out and attempts to make love to her. She resists him, begging him to leave. Just then Lydia comes in unexpectedly and finds them locked in one another's arms. She lashes out at the girl, ignoring the fact that the situation might be Peter's fault. She throws Ella Mae out of the house and proceeds to blacken the girl's name about the town. Peter, weak, cowardly, does not rise to the girl's defense for fear of his own reputation, and she, still loyal, does not betray him. Unable to get a job and scorned by the town, the innocent girl gradually becomes the character the town believes her to be.

Comment: This is a typically bad plot synopsis and story idea. The wronged maid, the weak householder, the unexpected return of the wife are creakingly ancient devices, and here they are especially bad because the material is directionless and lacking in theme and single point of view. Why make the girl a cracker? What small town is the story laid in? There are thousands of weak husbands dominated by their wives. Of what particular interest is Mr. Gilbert? And finally the story covers too much ground. Hopeless. Try another.
Result: The story was not written. Instead, using this basic material, the author opens the story with the "cracker" mother and her illegitimate child three years after the event. The husband is away and never appears in the story. The serving girl mother, still working at the Gilbert house, has stolen a loving cup won by a dog given her by Mr. Gilbert

but never actually delivered. And this loving cup has become the symbol of her marriage to Peter Gilbert—spiritual marriage. Mrs. Gilbert suspects her of the theft and comes to her shabby dwelling to find the cup. The girl refuses to surrender it, but will not explain. Suddenly Mrs. Gilbert understands the implication in the girl's possession of the loving cup and leaves without further words. A fairly successful student story.

Plan 5

PET

This story concerns Colin, a sensitive little boy, who is an only child with little or no contact with other children. His parents buy him a kitten, and the story is developed by depicting the child's thoughts and his conversations with the cat. Teena, the cat, responds to his affection and thus mitigates some of the dreadful loneliness in Colin's life. The child, realizing how much happier this cat has made him, begins to feel strongly the compulsion to do something for the cat to show his gratitude. He decides that he will find another animal friend for the cat because he believes that his pet may be as lonesome for one of his kind as Colin has been. With his allowance he buys a baby rabbit and brings it home, thinking that the animal's terror will vanish when he gets used to the cat. So he puts the two creatures together and trots off, leaving them alone to become acquainted. He returns to discover the cat killing the rabbit. The reader feels Colin's dismay, horror, disillusionment. Colin is unable to save the rabbit and watches it die. He is unable to understand how the cat could behave so. The cat comes in her accustomed friendly manner to rub against the boy's leg. The child shrinks away from his pet.

Comment: This has the potentialities for a fine "quality" story.
Result: The story was a good student story, but no more. The student was too immature and inexperienced to handle the vast potentialities concerning man and his code in contrast to nature inherent in this situation.

Plan 6

LIFE OF THE PARTY

The study of character is exciting. Often I have wondered what really went on in the mind of a certain woman I know. Her husband is verbose, arrogant,

and profligate. She is taciturn, beautifully poised, apparently accepting his obnoxious qualities, and seemingly devoted to him.

I intend to record her floating thoughts as she is seated at the dinner table with him and a number of their guests and is compelled to listen to the accounts of his adventures and conquests, to hear him tell what a good singer he is and how he wowed them at the American Legion, to review the time he was caught in a house of prostitution on the night his son was killed, to watch him run his eyes insinuatingly over the women guests and maid servants, patting their hands and making other unpleasant advances. Throughout the story will run the symbol of the carving knife, lying on the table, and she will debate killing him there at that moment, her anger rising and welling in her to a point where she is about to consummate the act, and then the maid servant comes in and takes the knife away.

Comment: The situation is typical enough and dramatic enough to result in a good quality story of the episodic type. But I wonder about the knife and about her contemplating murder at the table in front of her guests. Her contemplated stage for killing him would be a private one. Might she not rather be wondering grimly whether she could go on with him? When tension reached its highest point and he had become most obnoxious, might she not simply excuse herself, go and powder her nose, return with a calm smile and perfect manners to say something nice to him, the implication being that she would go on with him to the end? This would seem to be more typical of life than the other, and more typical of the quality type story which this is.
Result: This story was handled with restraint and perceptiveness about life, pretty much as in the original plan, and the results were good.

Plan 7

BIGSHOT BANDIT

The plot of my story will go something like this. Alvarez, my chief character, is making his way across the desert. As he rides along, hot and weary, he is thinking of what a happy future he is going to have and how sly and cunning he has been in providing for himself. His thoughts inform him of what he has just done. Together with his partner, Cafari, he has robbed a bank and shot two witnesses in making the getaway. The two robbers have hidden out in a shack where they are in comparative safety from the police. Here in cold blood the domineering Alvarez has shot the meek little Cafari and lit out across the desert with the loot in an attempt to reach Mexico. The story in its

thought then returns to the present tense, where Alvarez is musing about his happy future life and how much like suckers people are in general and how much of a sucker Cafari was in particular. He is in sight of his goal, the Mexican border, when he takes a drink from his canteen which Cafari has poisoned (with poison he requested Cafari to get for use if the two were apprehended). Alvarez's death is much like that of Cafari.

The reader will derive satisfaction in seeing how Alvarez, the self-impressed bigshot, who thinks he has dominated the meek Cafari, dies a death ironically similar to that of one whom he believes he has defeated easily.

Comment: Your story suffers from two serious faults. The first is the all-too-common student failing of beginning the story near the end and then backtracking over the dramatic action. Second, you are attempting something almost impossible to do: You are taking all the ingredients of a traditional pattern—the Western story—and endeavoring to make a character or quality story, without any action whatever, with only the thoughts of a single character. A real master like Maugham can use the traditional South Sea island pattern and ingredients and weave excellent stories of a serious nature from them; or a Conrad can do the same with the sea-story pattern. But in doing so they are assuming at the start and overcoming a serious handicap. By beginning with the bank hold-up, introducing some sort of hero, and making the ending much more clever, you might make of this a pretty good Western. (See the pulp-paper Western in Part III.)

Result: The student wrote the story as he had planned it. The story failed miserably.

Plan 8

CAMPUS INVADERS

The story centers about one collective impression which two college coeds receive during a brief and distant relationship with two off-campus invaders. The situation reaches a climax when the two "invaders" are shown through the turn of events their actual standing in the opinions of the two coeds.

Comment: No story. What is the distant relationship? What is the turn of events that creates the climax? What was their actual standing in the opinions of the coeds? You have done no thinking on this.

Result: No story.

Plan 9

I FELT BUTTERFLIES

I propose to write a tale about my first date somewhat imitative of the current movie "Janie." I will begin with my desire as a fifteen-year-old girl to wear a formal evening gown to the Junior Stomp that would give me the allure of a *femme fatale.* The dress I chose, to use my boy friend's own words, "was designed as an intentional conspiracy against man's better nature."

Before my date a humorous (I hope) discussion between Mother and me concerning the "birds, bees and flower" theme to prepare me "to go out with boys" will ensue. Climaxed by my delicious apprehension at receiving my first sweetheart kiss and a glowing realization that at last "I had begun to live!"

Comment: Sounds promising if handled well—not too silly a treatment. Might secure forward movement and suspense by foreshadowing that kiss throughout the story, then have the kiss very inept, possibly on the ear or something of the sort, yet the young miss thoroughly satisfied.
Result: Suggestions taken. A very good student story.

Plan 10

SCHOOLTEACHER

Fernando Ramirez is sent to a Mexican village for the purpose of establishing a school. He is given an old adobe building partly in ruins in which to open the school.

Since there has never been a school in the village he is confronted with the task of convincing the villagers that there is a need for one. His problem is made more difficult by the fact that the state has no laws requiring the children to attend.

After visiting all the families which have children of school age and explaining the benefits of attendance, he starts the year with only three pupils.

Fernando has set out to prove to the Mexican villagers that education is valuable. He does this by helping the villagers to solve their problems through his own education and knowledge.

As he convinces the community, the children drift in to the school, which then becomes a permanent part of the village.

Comment: This is very much like life; that is one trouble with it. In addition, you have avoided the specific circumstances of how he wins over the community, facts which will make a story of the material. The tale should start, I think, with the opening of school, with only three children present. The reader must feel the Latin intensity of the teacher, the stubbornness and superstition of the lethargic villagers. Possibly the teacher changes their minds with a series of kindly acts, then a climactic situation and triumph as the school fills. With a love interest and much local color this is the kind of story that might be developed into a successful commercial type.

Result: The student tried several times, but never succeeded in writing the story.

Plan 11

TENDER GARROTE

I would like to use the idea in one of Browning's poems in which the thwarted lover strangles his sweetheart with her own hair. I intend stressing the psychological.

A beautiful, selfish girl callously breaks her engagement to an earnest young reporter because he can't give her wealth and social prestige. They are at the beach when she tells him she no longer loves him. She has amazingly beautiful hair, which at the moment of rejection blows into the hero's face and stings his eyes. In order to forget the girl, the hero becomes a war correspondent and goes to the South Pacific. There he develops a strange obsession. The illusion of the girl's soft golden hair weaving and swaying in slow undulating waves like corn silk stirred by a light breeze haunts him every time he tries to sleep. As soon as he closes his eyes the coiling mass of hair seems to be choking his brain, clouding his vision, causing him to spring up clawing an imaginary veil from his face.

Sent home by doctors who pronounce him psychoneurotic he arranges a midnight rendezvous with the girl on a stormy night in a lonely mountain cabin. While making passionate love to her he strangles her with her own hair. The denouement finds the hero committing suicide by driving his car over a cliff with the body of the dead girl in his arms.

Comment: Superficially this may sound rather gripping and promising, but I don't think so. I am dubious for several reasons: Poetry can make melodrama convincing where prose is likely to make it simply

silly. Second, you have too many shifting and not closely related scenes —lack of unity. If you follow your plot this way you should probably start with your hero in the South Seas. Third, in modern writing, by having your hero strangle the girl and drive over a cliff you are encroaching on the murder mystery tradition. At that this might make a pretty good murder mystery, if you begin with the murder. Make the hero seem normal, badly broken up over the girl's death and apparently very much in love with her. But the clever detective reveals him by discovering his neurosis about hair. Or you might try to turn this into a commercial story, using the same situation, but having the hero cut off her hair and throw it into the fireplace. The girl's first reaction would be extreme anger. Secondarily, she would realize by the violent act how much she really loves the hero, who by the very act of cutting her hair short has begun the recovery from his neurosis. As it stands, I don't see much hope for it.

Result: The student wrote the story as outlined. Though it contained some vivid passages, it inspired audience laughter instead of sympathy because of its overwritten melodramatic qualities. (See plan below for contrast.)

Plan 12

DECADENT BLOSSOM

This story is to concern the thoughts of a young naval officer home on leave. His wife has just had a baby and is overjoyed to see him.

On the other hand, though he knows he should be glad, his entire attitude toward his marriage has changed because of his experiences during his absence. He tries to make everything seem as usual, but his uncontrolled thoughts from the past and the shocking realization that he experiences only revulsion in looking at his wife and baby frighten him and disgust him.

His whole leave is spent in fighting back his morbid state of mind. He is actually relieved when he is called back into the service early, before his leave has expired.

Comment: This sounds like a promising episodic type story, with conflict largely in the young man's mind, but also a secondary conflict with the wife. There is need for some sort of implied significance in the conclusion. Possibly something might be made, if not too obvious,

of the immemorial and symbolic conflict between birth as in the new baby and death as represented by the young lieutenant and war. Actually, of course, the conflict is sexual.

Result: This plan produced a readable and interesting experimental story.

Plan 13

TIMING

Shortly after his arrival in New York a European writer calls on a newspaper woman who came from Paris, a refugee too, some while ago. He wants to see his friend Rudolph, a former newspaper publisher of Vienna, whom he had last seen in Paris. Dinah, the young woman, was Rudolph's mistress.

He learns from Dinah of Rudolph. For a long while he had been bedridden in Paris, stricken with stomach cancer. As the Germans approached, he was unable to leave, and Dinah refused to leave without him. Suddenly, just in time, Rudolph died of heart trouble, and Dinah was able to make her escape.

While the European writer is still pondering on the strange coincidence—death by heart trouble in time for Dinah to get out of Paris—a young American enters the apartment and the writer leaves. Sitting and musing on a bench, the writer gradually pieces together the history of his friend Rudolph, who he knows would not have allowed Dinah to remain in Paris and suffer mistreatment and even death at the hands of the Germans. Stomach cancer—small doses of morphine daily to alleviate the pain. But if the morphine were not taken, enough could be collected to be lethal. A race between the Germans and the mounting treasure of morphine capsules, with Rudolph lacking any sedative and therefore writhing in the agony of stomach cancer.

Enough morphine just in time, and Dinah escapes. Now Dinah is evidently the mistress of the young American. The writer leaves the park bench and goes home.

Comment: (This story plan was written by a refugee novelist with full knowledge of his background, and the episode was based on life.) This plan has excellent dramatic possibilities, but the oblique manner of telling it will probably detract from its suspense and effectiveness. Why not omit the writer-storyteller and start in Paris with Rudolph and his mistress? It may be that the single episode of sacrifice, heroic and interesting as it is, may not be enough to carry the story, but it is worth a trial.

Result: Both methods of writing the story were tried. The oblique method failed in a welter of confusion because of shifting focus. The direct method was much better, but the writer, owing to a language handicap, could not seem to make the most of his story situation.

Plan 14

RETURN

When Mrs. Klauser discovers that she has all the symptoms of tuberculosis she visits her doctor, who confirms her fears. She is afraid to tell her husband, and yet she doesn't want to endanger him or their child. She decides to run away. She goes to a sanitorium, and after several years the doctor tells her that she is well. She returns home only to find that her husband and daughter have sold the place and left.

She rents the house from the new owner. Later she finds out from her husband's employers that he has returned to Germany. For years Mrs. Klauser writes letters to different places in Germany, but no one can tell her where her husband is. Her money is gone, and she has been working to be able to pay the rent on her house.

Next, the United States declares war on Germany, and one day Mrs. Klauser reads her husband's and daughter's names in the newspaper list of Americans returning from Germany. She writes to the captain of the ship that brought these people, and the captain locates Mr. Klauser. A few days later Mrs. Klauser receives a letter from husband and daughter saying how glad they are that she is alive and well and that they are coming home right away—flying home.

The next afternoon finds Mrs. Klauser awaiting the arrival of her family. There is a knock at the door. It is a messenger boy. There has been a plane crash. Mr. Klauser and daughter were among those killed.

Comment: Possibly this is more or less a real biography. As a story it is hopeless because you have not followed the first principle of short story writing, which is selecting and eliminating. The various coincidences are bad, especially the ending, which has no point or significance. Some of the facts are dubious: the trip to Germany, the return after war is declared, the captain locating the family, even Mrs. Klauser's running off—and what did she live on during her long illness?

Possibly a story might be made of your first paragraph: Mrs. Klauser secretly debating within herself what to do when she discovers she has

tuberculosis; the conflict between selfless love for the family and selfish love for the family. But even here I don't think there is much worth writing. Modern methods of treating tuberculosis would eliminate any real problem and therefore any real conflict.
Result: The story was not written.

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write the plot plans or story synopses for three stories that you believe you could write successfully. (You may base them upon ideas or stories in the anthology sections of this book, or they may be entirely original.) Hand the two best to your instructor.

2. Of the five story plans which follow, three were written by students; two are summaries of well-known published stories. Decide which were composed by students, which by professionals. (Answer will be found at the end of this section.)

A

I, an amateur palmist, am reading palms at a party. When I get to the palm of a calm, steady professor, I jokingly reverse his reading, and among other comments, say that he has a tendency to suicide. In the weeks that follow we notice that he has become moody, quick-tempered and haggard-looking. Early one morning my telephone rings—the professor has been found dead, a suicide. I examine the body, pick up his hand, and observe there a suicide line, which somehow I had overlooked in my first reading.

B

The scene opens with the writer-author talking to a couple, husband and wife, in a cocktail bar. The wife, a well-known novelist, mentions as excellent material for a story, a woman who has married five husbands, a true experience with fictional possibilities. She reveals that all four previous husbands have died in various accidental ways, each one after approximately five years of marriage. All three speculate upon what will happen to the fifth. The one telling the story says he believes there is something in the psychology of the oft-married woman that will cause her to bring about the death of the fifth husband, even though superficially she does not want it and apparently was in no way

responsible for the deaths of the first four. Meanwhile the husband of the novelist goes to the bar and becomes interested in a blond. Gradually it becomes clear to the reader that the novelist and her husband have been talking about themselves—that this is the fifth husband; the novelist, the oft-married wife. And it is now revealed that this fifth husband has just enlisted in the air corps. But the novelist implores the man telling the story to believe that she begged her husband not to enlist.

C

A Mr. Staples has just finished a course in salesmanship and goes to the store where he is employed with the intention of showing himself how much he has profited by it. His first customers, a man and a woman, behave very peculiarly as he displays his newly acquired technique. They do not respond. The woman tries to be polite, but the man remains aloof. They are buying a suit for a little boy, and Mr. Staples persuades them to get the best. He has been taught that a salesman can control any atmosphere, and he does his best, but he fails badly. Reading the newspaper that night, he chances to notice the name of his first customer of the morning—it is a death notice of a little twelve-year-old boy. The mother and father had been buying a suit for their dead son.

D

A young woman is sitting alone in the fog in San Francisco at a late hour at night waiting for a bus. A sailor comes up and asks her if he can sit beside her and she agrees pleasantly. He stares at her queerly, saying she is the first nice person who has spoken to him as a human being in the thirty-six hours since he landed.

He keeps saying, "I've got to tell you something—I've got to tell you something about my buddies." She encourages him to talk, but he keeps edging around the subject, repeating that he has to tell her, yet never able to tell her anything except that he must talk to her.

Suddenly to her surprise he presses five dollars into her hand saying, "I've got to pay you. You're the first person in town that's treated me decent. You're the only nice person in Frisco."

As he vanishes, the woman, who up to this time has seemed a respectable and sympathetic housewife, rolls the bill in with several other five dollar bills and rouges her lips.

E

This is the story of three different men who possess a picture of the same girl. One of the men is in Africa, one in the South Pacific, and one in England. The story is not about the girl, but rather is about her picture. Each of the three men is portrayed in action, then killed, and each of the three parts of the story ends with the discovery of the girl's picture, the same picture in the possession of each man. She had promised to wait for one of them, and the reader knows or should know which of the three he is.

3. The following defective student story plans are bad mainly because the writer is endeavoring to cover too much territory and needs to sharpen his focus of interest. Point out in written form the section or idea in each synopsis that might be worked into a successful story.

A

John Henry, an unwanted only child of an invalid father and an extrovert mother, struggles for the love and understanding of his parents. His father, who had been closer to him than his mother, dies during John Henry's senior year in high school, and his mother begins, shortly afterward, to carry on an affair with Curt Giles, a pool-hall operator and former best friend of his father. He becomes furious over Giles' usurpation of his father's former place in the home, a turbulent scene results, and he leaves to take a job in Kansas City, where he meets Lois, with whom he eventually falls in love. But she, unfortunately, does not love John Henry, and after several efforts at trying to convince her that she should marry him, he finally realizes the fruitlessness of his desire and greatly discouraged returns to his shabby room, with the bitter realization that he is destined to be lonely all his life.

B

Cecilia Morrison, a girl of about twenty years of age, is in bed, long ill from disease. She is remembering parts of her life and thinking of her future, weighing life against death. Her mind dwells on the latter, debating the nature of death. Ed, her one-time fiancé whom she has refused to marry because of her illness, comes in, and they talk lightly, until Cecilia tells him that she knows her death is near, that she has

decided that after her death she will return in some way. Ed accepts this seemingly seriously, but in reality he believes the idea to be the concoction of a sick mind. Cecilia changes the subject and playfully plucks a white rose from a vase of flowers and slips it through his buttonhole. She quotes a verse to him. About nine months later Cecilia dies. The years pass. The incident is forgotten. Ed has finally married another woman, Marilyn, who is attractive and sympathetic, but somehow they do not make out very well, neither understanding the reason. Ten years after the death of Cecilia, Marilyn makes the same gesture of plucking a white rose and quoting a verse as she puts the rose into Ed's buttonhole. Thereafter they are much happier.

C

As the story opens, Cynthia Drake is waiting in Union Station in Chicago for her sister, Ellen, who is arriving home from Reno, where she has just secured a divorce. The train is late. As Cyn waits, her mind wanders back to the major incidents in their lives.

The first recollection is that of the girls' parents being killed in an automobile accident. Their father's financial affairs were left in bad shape. The girls, who had been studying art at Northwestern University, are forced to quit school. Because of her mother's last wishes, Cyn allows Ellen to take a very expensive trip to Europe to study, a trip that Ellen has looked forward to. Ellen selfishly accepts saying, "Cyn, darling, what a wonderful sister you are." Cyn gets a job in an advertising agency doing art work.

The next recollection is that of Ellen returning from abroad, meeting, and stealing Cyn's fiancé, Arthur Butler, a doctor. The day after Ellen elopes, she greets Cyn by saying, "Cyn, darling, you do understand, don't you? What a wonderful sister you are!"

The next incident recalled occurred during the time that Arthur was serving in the medical branch of the Army. Ellen had spent one night in another man's apartment. The man was later killed. During the police investigation, Cyn lies to the police, telling them that Ellen had spent that night with her. "Cyn, darling, you're wonderful!" Ellen says later.

The final recollection is that of Arthur returning from the Army and Ellen leaving him to get a divorce in Reno. Arthur begins to drink heavily. Cyn, who still loves him, offers her help, but he refuses. He finally loses his practice and is taken to a state institution.

As Cyn waits in the station she wonders why she promised to meet

Ellen or to let her use her apartment for the next month. She also wonders what Ellen will say. Suddenly the train comes in and Ellen is walking toward her saying, "Cyn, darling!"

4. Write a criticism of each of the following story plans, much in the manner of the "Comment" of the preceding chapter. If you think the plan promises a good story, say so and express your reasons. If it is hopeless, say so. If with certain revisions, changes, or limitations it might be developed into a good story, make these points clear. Limit each criticism to one hundred words. When you have finished, if any of the plans you have suggested sound promising, and you have altered the original to a considerable extent, you may use your own plans for future stories.

A

The main character, after a bad fall, learns to understand horses and thus conquers her fear of them induced by that fall. A cowboy helps her to do this, and she falls in love with him, even though beforehand she had despised him because she was rich and he was poor.

B

Miss Julia Allen, age 29, for ten years a repressed grade school teacher in Prairie View, Oklahoma, determines to leave small town life behind her and boards the train for Washington, D.C., and a clerical job. Like most timid souls she yearns for men and romance. A. B. Sewall, a county school superintendent with political ambitions in Arkansas, joins her as seat companion in the coach and becomes attracted. Each tries to impress the other, and slowly Miss Allen thaws under attention. Thirty-six hours later as the train pulls into Washington, Miss Allen is convinced that life in a small Arkansas town might not be too bad or too improbable for her. Her dreams were shattered as Sewall's wife meets the train.

C

The man and the woman sit in the dining room all night. They have been separated nearly a year but have met for dinner on this, their anniversary. The woman, an egocentric, had tried to remake the man to her own pattern. He had left her. She discusses their past life together in the light of the many things she had tried to do for him. She re-

members the happy hour they had spent a year before at this time, the hour before sunrise. She relives each precious detail. He says nothing. She turns as she had done the year before to summon him to walk with her out the French window, to go up the hill together and watch the sunrise. Then only does she return to reality, remembering that she had poisoned him at dinner after his last refusal to conform to her ideas and return to her. She calls the police. Then she starts up the hill alone.

D

The mother brings her small son, Michael, out into the front yard. She leaves him and returns to her work in the house.

Alone, Michael amuses himself with thoughts of his family and friends. The world is a strange one because Michael is blind—but he is unaware of his handicap since he has never been able to see. His thoughts show his sensitivity and imagination.

He has certain places in the garden marked off as his favorite spots. He counts each step and turn from the sundial in the center of the garden.

Michael has a conversation with a woman who is passing. He is fascinated by her. We see her through his imagination as a lovely person.

As she leaves, Michael's mother comes quickly across the lawn to take him into the house. She has seen the woman—a notorious character who lives on their street—and she is anxious to get Michael away.

E

This is to be the story of a misfit in uniform, a former newspaperman about 35 who has been existing between week-end drunks ever since he became No. 39,249,354. He works at corps headquarters, and when this story opens he is entering a Dallas cafe where beer is served. He arrived in town a few minutes earlier on a three-day pass. He is fascinated by a dream. . . . Never mind how it happened. He is a hero. By sheer accident he has become the No. 1 hero of World War II. He has no ambition to be a hero for the glory of it; his chief aim in life is to become a civilian again. But this is different. He is an articulate hero with plenty to say, and for weeks in a hospital he has been working on a speech, and now the war has ended and Gen. Eisenhower has made arrangements for him to address the first contingent of soldiers returning to America. And over a trans-Atlantic hookup!

Anyhow, he drinks beer all afternoon, fascinated by this dream, and then he is joined by Sally, a blonde waitress whose husband is in the South Pacific. She looks lonely. Her husband has been overseas eighteen months. She sits down in the booth with our hero, Joe Crenshaw, and they get tight together and eventually wind up in his hotel room.

The whole thing must be built up to a climax that occurs next morning after he awakens in bed, alone, and only vaguely remembers what happened the night before. It's somewhat of a psychological study of a drunk possessed of a dream and also it shows what America means to him. It must end with a good kick line.

F

Mr. Theodore H. Bartholomew had been out of love with his wife for a long time. She no longer cares much for him either. Every day she irks him more and more in various mean little petty ways. One of her characteristics bothers him intensely. She has long chestnut brown hair which she takes enormous pride in. She is always brushing it and having it put up and is vociferous about the colors around her, of clothes, furniture, theater or restaurant which bring out its beautiful tints and luster. The husband, hating her, develops an overwhelming desire to strangle her with her own hair. One night while she is brushing it, he comes up behind her and is almost reaching for her to do the deed when he realizes he can't kill her. They must continue to go along as before, fighting and bickering.

G

Mr. Sylvester arrives home to a wife, typically hypochondriacal, who now complains that she must be getting a tumor. For twenty years of married life he has been affectionate with her and put up with her whims, though at times it had been rather difficult. Now his two grown-up boys are taken care of, one in the Navy, the other working as a real-estate salesman. He had married young, had not dared to grasp the opportunities that came his way for independent success, but had pushed up the hard safe way in a corporation. Mrs. Sylvester decides she had better see a doctor.

Mr. Sylvester asks her to go for a ride with him in his launch. As usual, she refuses. He goes alone. The wildness of the bay, the freedom of the open water suddenly bring him the notion of escape. The boys are taken care of. He has enough to give Mrs. Sylvester a reasonable al-

lowance. Tomorrow he will file a memorandum with the company announcing his resignation. He will leave; he will go wherever he pleases.

He returns home and goes at once to his study to write his resignation. As he comes downstairs, Mrs. Sylvester has returned from the doctor's office. She is pregnant. Slowly Mr. Sylvester tears up his resignation.

H

This is the story of a small boy at a baseball game, a boy about eleven or twelve years old, with round, hero-worshiping eyes, a freckled nose. As small boys will do, he regards baseball players with veneration. His particular hero is the pitcher, Big Swede. Big Swede is the favorite of the crowd too—that is, until Big Swede allows two men to get on base with no outs. He walks the third man and is yanked. The crowd, fickle as always, boos him. Only the small boy remains loyal to him. After the game, the boy waits for Big Swede outside the club house. Although the youth senses that the pitcher is through as a big league player, he talks to the man in such a way that Big Swede takes new heart, thinks this is only a bad day, and tomorrow will be better. As the two walk together down the street it becomes clear that they are father and son.

I

Diana's parents had given her everything she wanted: clothes, a college education, everything that money could buy. But they couldn't give her happiness or understanding. Diana wanted to be treated as a grown person, not as merely something to be ordered about, to be scolded as though she were five instead of twenty-two. After graduating from college she convinces herself that her parents will never stop dominating her, will never let her lead her own life. But it isn't until her mother frightens Ted Thames so that he never comes to the house again that Diana decides to leave home. At the end of the story she is sitting in the living room of her new apartment far from home. She feels a little lonely and sad, for she knows that in spite of their injustice to her, her parents loved her in their own way. However, she has secured a teaching position in a small high school and the future is already beginning to look brighter. Diana feels certain that she has taken the right steps toward happiness.

I

This story, told in the first person, appears on the surface to be only the leisurely reminiscing of an old man who had once known a musician intimately. He tells of the creation of a particular piece of music, its effect, first on the composer, second on the wife of the composer, and third on a young girl living next door. It is such a beautiful piece of music that it does not seem possible a man of such mediocre talents as the composer has could have written it. The composer himself is smugly satisfied with it—does not dream it is infinitely superior to the pot-boilers he has been grinding out for years. His wife feels in it what their love could have been had circumstances been slightly different. The young girl sees it as the embodiment of her life dreams—being the beloved of the composer. They have all somehow barely missed happiness because none of them ever tried hard enough—like the composer in his music—to attain happiness. In the end the reader discovers indirectly, or at least strongly suspects, that the narrator is the composer himself, now grown old.

Answer to Question 2

Plan B is a story by Vardis Fischer, "A Partnership with Death." Plan C is a widely known story by Mary Ellen Chase, "Salesmanship." The other three are student plans.

IV. TECHNICAL DEVICES—MISTAKES TO AVOID

It is said to be much easier to advise what not to do than what to do. My intention is to advise both ways, with the emphasis in this chapter on destructive—and in Chapter V on constructive—suggestions. The list of forbidden or dubious practices that follows is pared to a minimum. It should be added that successful writers have been guilty of all seven, even of all seven in the same story. But successful story writers who ignore them are usually successful in spite of their faults.

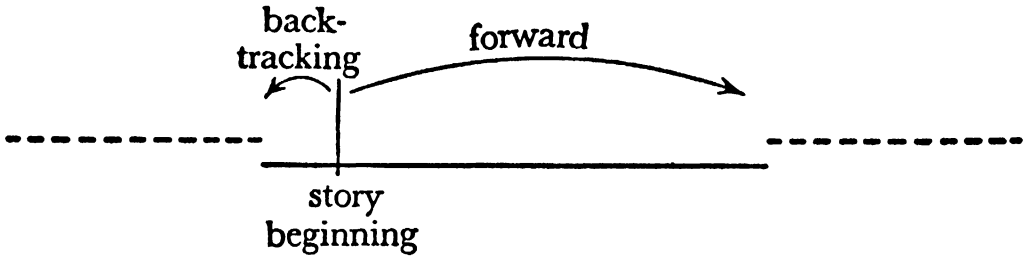
BACKTRACKING

As pointed out, most writers foreshadow the plot complications of their stories, often with an opening statement intended to pique the reader's interest, a statement which may mention some event or decision that will occur later in the story. The student, having become accustomed to this device, somehow arrives at the notion that a story should begin near the end or at the climactic moment of decision. Thereby too often he tells almost the entire story in retrospect. The result is a series of *had* verbs—*had learned, had known, had bargained*—and an utter lack of a feeling of immediacy, of the imminence of events, of mounting tension.

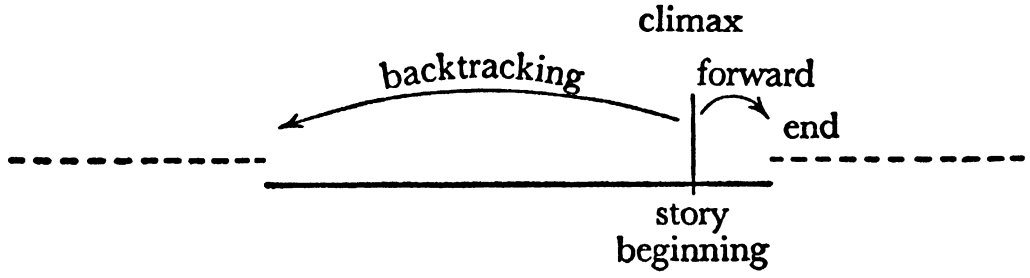
Another cause for backtracking is probably the young writer's uncertainty or his fear of being unable to portray successfully the emotions and the moods of the immediate moment—yet these are the very essentials that make the story a success.

Frequently, it is true, a professional writer will start with a moment of climactic decision or action. But when he does so, it is to be observed, he does not remain at this point of static action and tell everything that had preceded. He leaves the situation unresolved, and takes the reader with him, in flashbacks or accumulating episodes, to the events that led to the climax, the reader moving along with a feeling of immediacy, the climax unresolved until the end of the story.

Study the following diagrams. Unless the student knows exactly what he is doing and has a reason for it, he should begin his story at the point suggested in the diagram. The broken lines indicate events and other material that have been discarded by the process of selection; the unbroken lines, the events and material actually used in the story.



Usually Correct Technique



Defective Technique

Backtracking is quite different from setting the stage for an aged storyteller recalling a dramatic tale of his youth, because in such cases the main body of the story is his tale in the first person. However, this device is increasingly less popular, and unless there are special reasons for using it, the inexperienced writer should probably avoid it.

MISUSED ADJECTIVES

Young reporters are often given the advice that a strong style is composed essentially of good verbs and of substantives that form concrete images, that adverbs should be used sparingly and adjectives shunned. This is not necessarily true in the short story, in which well-chosen adjectives can sometimes contribute immeasurably to the crea

tion of atmosphere.[1] But increasingly in modern times, good writers tend to make minimum use of adjectives; those that they do use are skillfully and deftly chosen for flavor, for newness, or for special connotation. They shun the ordinary stale adjectives.

Some young writers have developed a bad habit of preceding nearly every noun with two (and sometimes three) adjectives. Such a habit should be broken as soon as one becomes conscious that he is addicted to it. The following paragraphs are typical:

A

A pale wan moon seeped cautiously through the rolling black clouds to cast a mystic, magical glow upon the lake. Low willow branches sighed as the soft gentle breeze swayed them rhythmically over the calm tranquil water. The busy frogs croaked steadily among themselves.

B

The lovely campus was green now—the grass, the trees, the vines which climbed the old stone buildings. Along the familiar winding path to the library fragrant beautiful lilacs were flourishing, and the cool spring breeze wafted their delicious perfume to her room. She breathed deeply and sighed.

Note: Young writers seem especially prone to the overuse of adjectives when composing descriptions of nature.

TRITENESS AND CLICHÉS

In portraying certain scenes, situations, or characters it is perfectly natural for the inexperienced writer to seize upon words and phrases

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[1] Thomas Wolfe's style is in part dependent upon his use and repetition of adjectives. Study his handling of adjectives in this paragraph: "The sly words slid away from me like oil: there was nothing to pin him to or grasp him by, the yellowed eyes looked casually away and would not look at me, the sensual face was suavely grave, the discolored buckteeth shone obscenely through the coarse loose mouth, and the suggestion of the foul loose smile was so pronounced now that it seemed that at any moment he would have to turn away with heavy trembling shoulders, and stifle the evil jeering laugh that was welling up in him. But he remained suavely grave and non-committal to the end, and when I asked him if I should come again to try it on, he said in the same oily tone, never looking at me . . ."—Reprinted from *Of Time and the River* by Thomas Wolfe; copyright 1935 by Thomas Wolfe; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

that are common coin. The basic cause for such defection is his failure to see and feel for himself. Rather he is seeing and feeling synthetically through the writers of the stories he has read—secondhand. Consequently, he tends to make use of words and phrases threadbare from previous use and exhausted of real meaning. Such expressions should be weeded out of his writing and more telling words substituted. In the two student paragraphs above, for example, there are a number of trite expressions and clichés. Reread them and observe:

Paragraph A	*Paragraph B*
pale moon	winding path
mystic glow	fragrant lilacs
soft gentle breeze	cool spring breeze
branches sighed	breeze wafted
swayed rhythmically	delicious perfume
calm tranquil water	breathed deeply
(redundant as well)	

If you were to revise this sort of writing, you should ask yourself, just what is meant by pale moon? Is it really pale or *yellow*, or perhaps *butter yellow?* Perhaps it's cream-colored, or ivory, or amber, or like a ship's lantern or a pumpkin moon or corruscated. Or perhaps it should simply be *moon,* sans any adjective.

Can you feel the soft gentle breeze? What does it feel like—brushing fingers, warm water flowing over your skin, the tickle of feathers? Or shall you leave it a breeze without any descriptive term? And these branches that sigh. Have you ever heard them sigh? Usually branches of trees knock or rattle or scrape or fuss or sometimes even squeal.

Avoid clichés and triteness by seeing, hearing, feeling for yourself, by sensing your own reactions at firsthand. Do not accept the pattern of words handed down from the past without re-examining them. The list of trite expressions below is taken directly from student stories. It is far, far from complete, but should demonstrate the kind of thing meant by "cliché."

as far as the eye could see	shapely lines of an exquisitely moulded vase
the acme of perfection	tall, broad-shouldered (hero)
high shrill voice	tanned, outdoor look
fell back gasping for breath	bronzed skin
somehow nothing mattered	

cold fury
seared through his mind in a blinding flash
one false move
shrill scream
still air
deafening roar
silhouetted against the sky
all seemed in vain
widely heralded
the crowd roared
sensuous touch of her soft lips
their lips met
he crushed her to him
he kissed her hungrily
heat was like a blast from a furnace
falling thick and fast
reflected glory
soft rounded curves
stout hearts
proud possessor
like a Greek god
pulsing rhythm
as a cat does a mouse
golden-haired, blue-eyed girl
a blinding flash
move at a snail's pace
froze with fear
miraculously presented itself
burst forth in a blaze of glory
rising sun spread its rays
cast long shadows
with a sudden pang
only the sound of————broke the silence
to no avail
it was all so strange
a sob escaped her
bewitched by the glory of
caught my eye
strong supple body
roar like thunder

STILTED WRITING

Stilted or unnatural writing has very much the same basic cause as the use of clichés—too great self-consciousness on the writer's part and too little relating of his story to life, to what he himself has observed rather than to what he has read. Stiltedness occurs particularly in dialogue, though it may occur elsewhere, as will be demonstrated. The cure is to ask yourself how *you* would talk. How would your friends talk? Real-life dialogue contains many fragments, many half-completed thoughts, many interrupted sentences. Although the writer cannot use life conversations verbatim, he may very well borrow from the *form* to give a feeling of verisimilitude to his dialogue.

Examples of Unnatural or Stilted Writing

A

"I think that's pretty much up to you, Kathy," he replied. "You know that I'm leaving for overseas in the near future. Now that this has occurred,

I don't think that either of us could believe a wedding would honestly be the best solution. But I would like to believe that you are waiting for me—really waiting for me. Would you care to keep my ring and wait for me awhile longer? It would please me greatly if you would."

Comment: The following rewritten version is more natural.

"Up to you, Kathy." He seemed to find trouble with the words. He cleared his throat. "I—well, you know it's overseas—too soon. This happening. We can't have the wedding now. It wouldn't be right. But—oh, Kathy it's hard to say—but I *must* have you waiting for me. Please, you must. You *have* to. Here, take this." With an awkward jerk, like an impulsive adolescent, he plumped the ring into her hand.

B

"You little fool, fool—" I repeated again and again. "Couldn't you know you'd go on loving Ardeth forever, forever?"

I knew now I would never, never have more need to violate our love. Fears, doubts, torment—all were gone, forgotten in the sweetness of the present, in the wonder now mine, rightfully mine. "I love you, love you," I said.

Comment: This aimless repetition of words, in the mistaken notion that emotional tension is aroused, is a not uncommon student failing.

C

"You have been so good today that I am going to give you a treat. I am going to let you rest while I play for you. Perhaps it will give you more inspiration if you know just how this composition is supposed to sound."

D

"Oh, don't be silly. Be reasonable, my love," she said.

He studied her. "I think you and I are different from the two people we were three years ago. I think you as well as I are tired of this relationship. I wish a divorce."

"A divorce!" she exclaimed. "It's what you've wanted all along. Don't blame it on me. You were always in love with Helen."

"Who mentioned Helen?" he asked.

"She's the cause of this. You've been meeting her secretly for more than a year. Perhaps it is longer than that."

"You know that isn't true."

"How should I know it?"

"Johanna, let us not continue this quarrel."

E

It had been an unpleasant summer, as she had expected. "I wish I could break away and completely forget the past." Bitterly she kicked her legs harder and forcefully dug her strokes as though trying to free herself from an invisible enemy. "The simple truth is that I'm a coward. If I weren't afraid of being near people I'd be lying out there luxuriously bathing in the sun with the others, instead of trying to fool myself that I enjoy swimming alone. If only I could drive those haunting remarks from the back of my mind. My sisters didn't intend to hurt me, but they succeeded in making me very self-conscious. If I can't forget their taunts, what was the use of rebelling against them and leaving that stuffy little town where the family made all of its money and where everyone knew all that happened? Of what good are the hours I've spent grooming myself and gaining charm and poise?" At the other end of the pool she stopped to catch her breath, leaning weakly on the edge. "I won't admit failure yet," she said half aloud in a wavering tone.

Comment: This paragraph is an effort at thought-stream depiction—"stream-of-consciousness" technique. It comes close to being satisfactory. Its defect lies in the author's effort to make the girl's thoughts completely rounded, clear, and connected—too expository. Actually one's thinking is seldom complete, coherent, and logical. The unnatural tone could be easily corrected with red-pencil deletions. Compare it to Virginia Woolf's style:

The way she said "Here is my Elizabeth!"—that annoyed him. Why not "Here's Elizabeth" simply? It was insincere. And Elizabeth didn't like it either. (Still the last tremors of the great booming voice shook the air round him; the half-hour; still early; only half-past eleven still.) For he understood young people; he liked them. There was always something cold in Clarissa, he thought. She had always, as a girl, a sort of timidity, which in middle age becomes conventionality, and then it's all up, it's all up, he thought, looking rather drearily into the glassy depths, and wondering

whether by calling at that hour he had annoyed her; overcome with shame suddenly at having been a fool; wept; been emotional; told her everything, as usual. . . .[2]

With the modern popularity of the cult-of-the-simple-writing, a good deal of profanity has crept into many "quality" stories and thus into the works of young writers. Expertly handled, the natural use of typical oaths can aid in creating a certain kind of "hard-boiled" atmosphere. But unless one has made use of profanity himself or has overheard its use to a considerable extent, *God!* or *My God!* or *Jesus Christ!* in the script is likely to be wholly out of tone. It is a good rule to make use of oaths only sparingly, and then with a definite consciousness that they are necessary to heighten atmosphere and give a feeling of verity to the writing. It is interesting to recall that Stevenson's pirates in *Treasure Island* seem rough, hard-boiled and often profane seamen, yet because the book was intended for children, I believe there is not a single printed oath in the entire work. One of the taboos of the commercial magazines is profanity.

ADVERB ENDINGS

Not nearly so common now as in the past is the monotonous repetition of an adverb with an *ly* ending after every *he said, he asked, he remarked.* Study the following example:

"Son, could you tell me something?" Jed asked *slowly.*

"Sure," the boy answered *quickly.*

"Is there any water on this train?" Jed asked *thirstily.*

The boy looked surprised. "Sure, right down there in the men's washroom," he told the farmer *cordially.*

"You mean you got a washroom on this train?" Jed asked *dubiously.*

"Your first trip, I'll bet," the boy said *amusedly.* "Come on and I'll show you."

There are several remedies for this weakness. The simplest correction is the omission of the adverbs. But this doesn't entirely solve the problem, because the author is trying to say something with each adverb. The experienced writer learns to incorporate bits of description

[2] From *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, copyright, 1925, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

between pieces of dialogue—short items concerning physical appearance or behavior or mental processes—all of which are used to forward the rising action and create the mood of the story. Another device sometimes employed to break the monotony of too much dialogue is an indirect quotation instead of a direct. Now study the revised dialogue below, into which many of these suggestions have been incorporated:

Jed reached across the aisle and touched a young soldier's sleeve. "Son, could you tell me something?"

The boy looked up, cross and sleepy. He grunted.

"Is there any water on this train?"

The boy seemed surprised. "Sure, right down there in the men's washroom," he said. He said that it was easy to find.

"You mean they got a washroom on this train?" Jed wished he hadn't said that. He was afraid that the boy would laugh. The little corporal only smiled.

"Your first trip, I'll bet. Come on and I'll show you."

WEAK EXPOSITION

The tendency of some young writers, feeling a compulsion to inform the reader about everything concerning the main character in a story, is to begin with long explanations, introducing background material first instead of neatly inserting it later on in minor and incidental positions. This failing led one editor to say, "All but very experienced writers should throw away their first page and begin their revision on the second page, or even the third. They will find, frequently, that all the information on their first two pages can be boiled down into a sentence or two later on—all the essential information, that is."

This seems good advice.

Another danger point for weak expository writing is in transitions, especially time gaps. Or, commonly, the inexperienced writer tends to emphasize and explain the unimportant, skipping over the really dramatic portions of his story in a sentence or two.

Study the examples of weak student exposition that follow:

A

We had been traveling two months over country I never want to see again. My feet were almost too sore for me to go on. Had it not been for the gold

that awaited us, if and when we found the deposit from which the aborigines brought the yellow rocks they used for trading with the whites, I'd have stopped a month before when the rest of the company dropped out. But now our goal was only a little farther on. "Two days," the blacks had said as they pointed westward. All that Art could say did not induce them to lead us farther. We would be able to hold out but little longer ourselves. As it was, Art had been living off the roots of the small vegetation in the wilderness for days, letting Tom and me have his share of the very few provisions left.

Comment: This passage occurs in the middle of the story. Either the suffering involved in reaching the gold deposit is a part of the story and should be elaborated on more and given immediacy, or it should be entirely omitted. It could be implied by picturing the exhausted condition of the travelers as they reach the deposit, with the time gap indicated by spacing.

B

Dodie watched her from the corner of her eye. She liked Cas, but she couldn't stand the thoughtless way in which she had hurt Kirk these past three months. She and Cas had always been good friends, rivals in a way, but never where Kirk was concerned. The moment Kirk had met Cas, every other girl in his life had just stopped registering and everyone knew it, but most of all Cas. Dodie liked Kirk as a good friend. As Jan had said, they used to win jitterbug contests in high school, and as she had forgotten to say, she had worn Kirk's senior class ring. It hadn't meant much, of course, but still Dodie liked him better than she liked most boys she knew, even now. She didn't know whether Kirk had ever told Cas or not. The one thing that Cas did know was that she had Kirk hook, line, and sinker. Dodie thought Cas took advantage of this knowledge every now and then, and she played with the idea of telling Kirk that just because he was in love he shouldn't forget the effectiveness of keeping a woman guessing. Now she could see that something constructive would have to be done.

Comment: This passage occurs in the middle of the story. Either it is essential and should be developed in more detail, or it should be omitted, or greatly abbreviated, because the forward movement of the story stops dead here while the confused reader tries to puzzle out just what the writer is trying to explain.

C

Jane sat in the ladies' powder room waiting. She didn't know exactly what she was waiting for, but she couldn't go outside. That was too horrible. She'd rather face almost anything than those people again. At least for awhile. The sound of the music was strong—even in here. It was wonderful music. The beat of it was not too jittery and yet not too slow. Just the kind for smooth dancing. To most people it brought back memories of past romances or it excited present romances. Always something to do with romance. It reminded Jane of that awful boy outside who insisted on dancing whenever that good music was played. It was just the right time for him, he always said. If he only knew! Jane loved to dance—in fact there was nothing she loved more. But dancing and mere walking around the floor completely out of rhythm and inhibited by some great bulk in front of you were two different matters. Why was it everybody else had romance except Jane? Maybe it was because she was the outdoor type. The great American outdoor girl. It was fine while you were outdoors. She'd had many a delightful tennis game with many an eligible bachelor. And many of them had ended as love matches—but not the right kind of love. Her kind was the kind that meant the bachelor had no score and she had all the score. It made the bachelor feel quite superior. So much so that he never asked for more. Jane always knew that any sensible girl would let the man be the victor. They are such egotistical beings that they can't stand to see some mere woman beat them, even if she is number-one player at the state university.

Comment: This is the opening of a story. Possibly it is the way a girl really would be thinking, but except for the first six lines the whole thing is static. Some of it is good stream-of-consciousness writing. The real defect is that we have a great block of material here before any story is foreshadowed. It might be broken up and used in various parts of the story. Or it might be used pretty much as it is provided our suspense and interest have been aroused beforehand.

LACK OF ACCURACY IN DETAILS

A successful commercial writer has told me that after the publication of one of her stories in which the plot turned on a certain procedure in child-adoption cases, she received over a hundred letters protesting that she knew nothing about modern practice and the laws in

adoption cases. Actually she had ascertained beforehand that the only state having laws compatible with her plot was Oregon; she laid the story, therefore, in Oregon.

Among the several million women who would read her story, many thousands, she knew, would have experienced the whole procedure of adopting children. She felt impelled to be accurate. Continued inaccuracies would soon cause her readers to lose confidence in her, no matter how entertaining the stories she wrote.

The writer has no choice except to avoid mistakes and misstatements. Occasionally, being human, he will fall into an error of some sort, no matter how careful he is. And then, if he is well known, he is likely never to hear the last of it.

The young writer, working toward an audience, should cultivate the habit of accuracy. If the background and atmosphere of his story require knowledge of an airplane plant, a drygoods store, a law office, a foundry, he should check what he already knows about the subject with someone who is an authority or with the information to be obtained in any good library. This is especially true if the denouement of his plot hinges on the workings of a trade or profession or organization or machine or what not. Many writers of detective stories assume as a part of their craft the duty of keeping abreast of the latest methods in crime detection. In addition, many of them read widely for background material to incorporate into each new book.

Contradictions in fictional details occur infrequently in short stories, more often in novels. Such mistakes in personal characteristics as shifting the heroine's eyes from brown to blue, or giving to a person pudgy fingers in one chapter and tapering, artistic fingers in another are not uncommon in published books, though extremely embarrassing to the author. Other types of inaccuracies are such mistakes as calling violets (spring flowers) summer flowers or having one's characters eating breakfast at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Another type of error is making one's characters do the impossible: leap thirty feet, climb down a sheer precipice, drive a nonexistent car, rise before sitting down, leave before arriving, jounce on the heels, spring into a saddle that is not there.

Historical accuracy is expected in utmost detail where there is no good reason for failing to be accurate, as in describing the appearance of a well-known historical personage, kinds of clothes worn, weapons

used, kind of food eaten, conditions in a specifically named prison. The author is permitted to juggle and adjust his historical data, even dates, where such changes are essential to the working out of the plot or theme or to the dramatic action of the story. He is also allowed considerable latitude in his interpretation of historical figures from known material.

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Examine several pages of O. Henry's "Gift of the Magi," and Bret Harte's "Outcasts of Poker Flat." Because these are older stories, what might have been acceptable expressions at the time they were written have now become antiquated. Make a list of any trite adjectives or other clichés that you are able to discover.

2. Study closely the last story that you have written. Make a list of any trite expressions or clichés that you discover.

3. Rewrite Example E on page 79 to make it more closely approach the stream-of-consciousness technique. Rewrite Example C on page 83, changing it into a more effective story beginning.

V. TECHNICAL DEVICES—TRICKS OF TECHNIQUE

THEME REPETITION

DEFINITELY in the quality story, less commonly in the commercial story, the theme is repeated often where it is important to the full effect of the tale. Not too obviously, however. It is usually expressed in different quiet ways that do not jar the reader's sensibilities, although occasionally it will be given a short hard emphasis in a single-sentence paragraph. Sometimes it is repeated at regular intervals like a refrain.

Often the theme of the quality story is additionally expressed in its title: "Uprooted," "Bloodhound," "They Shall Inherit the Earth."

One example of the interweaving of the theme throughout a story will suffice to illustrate the method. Ruth Suckow's "Uprooted" involves the removal of the old folks, too old to remain on the farm yet unwilling to leave. The second generation insist that they must leave. At irregularly spaced intervals we are made aware of this mental struggle, twenty times by actual count. A half dozen of these twenty repetitions are quoted below:

1) The little parlor was suddenly and overwhelmingly eloquent of the life that had been in it . . . the enlarged pictures on the walls looked as if they had frozen into their silver frames . . . closed organ . . . black memorial card . . . bunch of withered pampas. . . .

2) "Grandma's crying in there," she observed coldly.

3) "Well, then, you know things can't go on always as they have been. You and pa oughtn't to be left alone this way—"

4) She managed to whisper, "I don't want to leave here. I've always lived here—all my things is here—"

5) "Why I'd hate awful to leave the place," he said uncertainly, with a glance at his wife.

6) It was strange how people seemed to take root in a place. He should think anyone would be glad to leave this rundown, miserable spot. See how the steps were coming apart.

WORD AND IDEA REPETITION

In life conversations, in the thinking we do in real life, we indulge in a good deal of repetition. Up to the point of monotony, repetition, well handled, can be very effective in the emphasis that it gives.

A frequent device used is the opening and closing of a story with the same sentence or same idea, often related to the theme. The result is extreme emphasis and the impression that such conditions or situations continue beyond the bounds of the story.

The opening sentence in Katharine Brush's "Good Wednesday" is, "It was Wednesday." Her closing paragraph begins with the sentence, "Miss Baxter was bound for prayer meeting, for this was Wednesday evening." Stephen Benét's "The Devil and Daniel Webster" opens with this sentence: "It's a story they tell in the border country, where Massachusetts joins Vermont and New Hampshire." And it closes with, "And he hasn't been seen in the state of New Hampshire from that day to this. I'm not talking about Massachusetts or Vermont." Guido D'Agostino's "The Dream of Angelo Zara" contains this sentence in its opening paragraph: "But most unfortunate of all was the fact that he wasn't built for a dream of such terrific and far-reaching proportions." And the closing sentences are: "Is too big only for me. Was five other man have this dream too." Countless other illustrations could be cited. This kind of repetition is a commonly used and often very effective device.

Repetition of words, repetition of an idea are frequently and successfully employed by some writers to create a unique style effect and a mounting emotional tension. The short passage that follows is quoted from Ernest Hemingway's best-known short story, "The Killers." Here the wall is made to symbolize the blank hopelessness of Ole Andreson. Use of this symbol is indicated in capital letters, while other repetitions are italicized:

Nick followed the woman up a flight of stairs and back to the end of the corridor. She knocked on the door.

"Who is it?"

"*It's* somebody to see you, Mr. Andreson," the woman said.

"*It's* Nick Adams."

"Come in."

Nick opened *the door* and went into the room. Ole Andreson was lying on the bed with all his clothes on. He had been a heavyweight prizefighter and he was too long for the *bed.* He lay with his head on two pillows. He did not look at Nick.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I was up at Henry's," Nick said, "and two fellows came in and tied up me and the cook, and they said they were going to kill you."

It sounded silly when *he said* it. Ole Andreson *said* nothing.

"They put us out in the kitchen," Nick went on. "They were going to shoot you when you came in to supper."

Ole Andreson LOOKED AT THE WALL and *did not say anything.*

"George thought I better come and tell you about it."

"There isn't anything I can do about it," Ole Andreson said.

"I'll tell you what they were like."

"I don't want to know *what they were like," Ole Andreson said.* HE LOOKED AT THE WALL. "Thanks for coming to tell me about it."

"That's all right."

Nick looked at the big man *lying on the bed.*

"Don't you want me to go and see the police?"

"No," Ole Andreson said. "That wouldn't do any good."

"Isn't there something I could do?"

"No. There ain't *anything to do."*

"Maybe it was just a bluff."

"No. It *ain't just a bluff."*

Ole Andreson rolled over TOWARD THE WALL.[1]

Thomas Wolfe is another writer who makes frequent use of word and phrase and idea repetition to attain the effects he secures in his writing. The following paragraph is a good example of idea repetition. (Word repetition is italicized.)

The girl was slender, tall and very lovely with the kind of beauty they have when they are beautiful—a *beauty* so fresh, fair, and delicate that it seems to be given to just a few of them to compensate for all the grimly weathered ugliness of the rest. Her voice was lovely, *sweet,* and musical, and when she talked all the notes of tenderness and love were in it. But she had the same hard bright look in her eye that her mother had, the faint set smile around her mouth: as we stood there talking she was standing very close to me, and I could smell the fragrance of her hair, and felt an

[1] Reprinted from *Men Without Women* by Ernest Hemingway; copyright 1927 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

intolerable desire to put my hand upon hers and was almost certain she would not draw away. But *the hard bright look was in her eye, the faint set smile around her mouth,* and I did nothing.[2]

RESTRAINT

The following two excerpts both concern death. Which do you believe to be the better writing?

A

Her tears of grief fell copiously; she was crushed by the weight of her grief. No more would she ever see the adorable smile or feel the tiny hands in hers or be able to press the little form to her bosom.

B

Her arms dropped laxly to her sides. She said nothing; there was nothing to say.

Both of the following scenes concern love and death. Which is more moving and convincing? (It is unfair, of course, to compare student and professional writing. The comparison is made here for the sake of emphasizing contrast.)

A

"Do you remember last year, Charles?" She talked to the glass in the door, her eyes noting the gleaming prisms of the elaborate paneling. "Do you remember? How we stood here before the window watching the sun come up over Bredon Hill and planned, Charles, planned your future? And you put your arms about me and said that your life was mine to do with as I wished, that all my ambitions were your ambitions. How wonderful to hear you say those words, Charles. How wonderful. And you held me so tightly, you stroked my chin and you told me how beautiful I was and how much you loved me. I remember the exact tone of your voice when you whispered in my ear, your lips exciting me, that you could never be angry with me again, could never resent my unselfish efforts to better our position."

She turned. "Why don't you answer me, Charles?" she shrieked. "I was

[2] Reprinted from *Of Time and the River* by Thomas Wolfe; copyright 1935 by Thomas Wolfe; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

being unselfish. I only wanted to make both of us happy. Isn't that true, Charles? Isn't that true?" [3]

B

"You must not talk so much," the doctor said.

"All right," Catherine said.

"Do you want me to do anything, Cat? Can I get anything?"

Catherine smiled, "No." Then a little later, "You won't do our things with another girl, or say the same things, will you?"

"Never."

"I want you to have girls, though."

"I don't want them."

"You are talking too much," the doctor said. "Mr. Henry must go out. He can come back again later. You are not going to die. You must not be silly."

"All right," Catherine said. "I'll come and stay with you nights," she said. It was very hard for her to talk.

"Please go out of the room," the doctor said.

. . . . .

It seems that she had one hemorrhage after another. They couldn't stop it. I went into the room and stayed with Catherine until she died. She was unconscious all the time, and it did not take her very long to die.

. . . . .

Outside the room, in the hall, I spoke to the doctor, "Is there anything I can do tonight?"

"No. There is nothing to do. Can I take you to your hotel?"

"No, thank you. I am going to stay here awhile."

"I know there is nothing to say. I cannot tell you—"

"No," I said, "there's nothing to say."

"Goodnight," he said. "I cannot take you to your hotel?"

"No, thank you."

"It was the only thing to do," he said. "The operation proved—"

"I do not want to talk about it," I said.

"I would like to take you to your hotel."

"No, thank you."

He went down the hall. I went to the door of the room.

"You can't come in now," one of the nurses said.

"Yes, I can," I said.

"You can't come in yet."

---

[3] From a student story.

"You get out," I said. "The other one too."

But after I had got them out and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn't any good. It was like saying goodby to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain.[4]

It is maintained that Wordsworth's most compelling line concerns Michael, when the old man's utter grief is implied in the words ". . . and never lifted up a single stone."

All great writing must of necessity have the quality of restraint, for the intensity of the reader's emotions is heightened if they are experienced firsthand rather than secondhand, if the reader is made to discover for himself the pathos in a situation rather than having it repeatedly and ineffectively pointed out to him. His reaction, in the latter case, is likely to be: *sentimentality, bathos, sob stuff.*

But restraint must not be confused with indifference or lack of feeling, or a dull, stodgy way of telling the tale. The trick is to be true to life and to grasp the essential and inherent pathos of the dramatic situation, of the conflict, of the characters' behavior. Then in general the less the reader is told how he ought to be feeling the more he is likely to be emotionally aroused. On the whole, commercial writing—the commercial story, the motion picture, the radio—tends to be more detailed and more specific in handling emotional situations than the quality story or the serious novel. The more intelligent the audience, the greater the necessity for restraint.

THE ARTIST'S TOUCH

Good writing is crammed with clever ways of saying things (yet not too forced or unnatural): snatches of human behavior never before recorded or at least never recorded in quite the same manner, unusual observations, flash (single sentence) descriptions—devices that elevate writing above the commonplace and give it character and force.

The following are examples from professional writing:

A

Mother's face was broken. Mother was crying, and nothing was safe. Terror and strangeness reached out of the gray woods and seized Mary Alice. . . .—ROSE WILDER LANE

[4] Reprinted from *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway; copyright 1929 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

B

The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight, colorless and clean.—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

C

Jim waked first, coming quickly out of sleep and sitting up in bed to take fresh hold of the things in his head, starting them up again out of the corners of his mind where sleep had tucked them.—EDWIN GRANBERRY

D

Suddenly, at the green heart of June, I heard my father's voice again.—THOMAS WOLFE

E

At twelve o'clock a procession of cloaks issued single file from the women's dressing-room and, each one pairing with a coated beau like dancers meeting in a cotillion figure, drifted through the door with sleepy happy laughter. . . .—F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

F

Warm golden candlelight and cold golden wine: the little table in the corner was a yellow island in a sea of cigarette smoke, a sunny silence in the comforting hum of other people's chatter.—CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

G

The sky was very low; purplish lead-coloured clouds let down curtains of mist into the valleys between the pine ridges.—WILLA CATHER

H

As for roses, you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress people at garden-parties; the only flowers that everybody is certain of knowing.—KATHERINE MANSFIELD

I

Flies struck the screen with little bumps and droned away.—JOHN STEINBECK

J

Take of London fog 30 parts; malaria 10 parts; gas leaks 20 parts; dewdrops gathered in a brickyard at sunrise 25 parts; odor of honeysuckle 15 parts. Mix. The mixture will give you an approximate conception of a Nashville drizzle.—O. HENRY

For the sake of contrast compare the following good student work:

A

Everything about Todd seemed jumbled as though someone in a great hurry had mixed a rush of events and places together and put them into a small space.

B

He could see his name on a thousand book covers, on a million magazine covers—Jim Nash. *That was the same fellow he shaved every morning.*

C

The worst thing about being in love is that it makes you so dependent on someone else.

D

Her neatly typed sheets were unexpectedly wrinkled with blobby spots as though they had been left out in the rain.

E

Automobile accident, I thought. The scar made him seem different from other men. More exciting.

This sort of thing cannot be overdone, else it will lead to an impression of unnaturalness or of too great striving for effect. Probably the student

who wrote, "Thick slices of time were sandwiched between a feeling of horror at himself and a sweep of blankness," went too far.

SYMBOLISM

Our lives are full of symbols. Our national flag is a symbol, a bit of colored cloth that represents the ideals, traditions, and standards of the nation. As a piece of colored cloth it means nothing. Engagement and wedding rings are symbolic. They represent a traditional contract, love, loyalty, obedience. Intrinsically they are only bits of metal and stone. Flowers in our daily lives are often symbolic: roses for love; Easter lilies for spring and resurrection; forget-me-nots for memories. Our physical hearts furnish traditional symbols. To some a black cat or howling dog is symbolic. A broom may be merely a tool to sweep the house, or it may symbolize housework, the housewife's place or duty, a witch's Sabbath. A green vase on the mantel may be merely a decorative piece of bric-a-brac, but if this vase has been used by one's mother and grandmother for garden flowers it may become in a particular household a symbol for the coming of spring, for family warmth and hearth side. A painter might make use of this vase to symbolize rebirth, beauty, or plenty.

A part of the appeal of religion is due to its mystical and ritualistic symbolism. The entire ceremony of Communion, for example, is symbolic. The cross is our most common symbol. The altar, the steps, the minister's garb, the candles—almost everything within a church is symbolic.

Poe called symbolism in creative writing "the element of artistic piquancy" and made almost continual use of it in both poetry and short stories. To him the story symbol represented the theme or emotional pattern of his tale. To cite only a few examples: the goldbug, the black cat, the raven.

Many modern authors utilize symbolism in various ways. In Katherine Mansfield's "A Cup of Tea," the cup of tea symbolizes ease and wealth as opposed to poverty. Galsworthy finds in a pair of boots the symbolic difference between the excellent work of a master craftsman and modern factory methods. In "Vienna Roast" the unpleasant and almost inedible concoction represents poverty for the vast mass of working slaves; in fact, the hero himself is a symbol of the enslavement of

the working man. Novelists and poets of the recent Irish renaissance made such continual and often abstruse use of symbolism that much of their work, such as that of Yeats, is impossible to understand in its full meaning without familiarity with the traditional symbols of Irish folklore and legend.

A symbol, then, is a concrete object that represents an abstract conception such as love, beauty, birth, death, evil, loyalty, fear, inheritance, poverty, madness. When symbol and theme in a story are one, or even when the symbol is not the theme but is important to a full comprehension of the meaning, then the symbol is placed before the reader several times during a story. Additional or extreme emphasis is given to the symbol by making it the title; for example, "The Yellow Cat," "The Overcoat," "Turkey Red," "The Goldbug."

Conscious and studied symbolism is not an essential ingredient of the short story. Many—perhaps most—short stories are written without using it. Yet it is worth pointing out that great stories, those that seemingly are surviving the test of time, almost invariably employ some sort of symbolism to attain their effects: De Maupassant's "The Necklace," Maugham's "Rain," Chekhov's "The Kiss."

Focusing attention on the theme of a story through the use of symbolism involves two risks for the young writer—either that his symbol will be so obvious as to make the story seem superficial or silly, or so abstruse that no one except himself can discover it. The cure is experimentation until he can make use of symbolism effectively—or until he is convinced that he should avoid it.

IMPLICATION

"Your silence speaks louder than words" is a graphic way of expressing what is meant by implication. What is left unwritten in a story, yet is there by implication, is often the most effective part.

It is a little difficult to explain why. One would think that good writing would be that sort of writing which expresses with utmost clarity exactly what the writer is trying to say. Yet this is not true of fiction. One of the most common devices of good writing is to present emotional effects by implication, by the things left unsaid.

For proof of this statement, compare the following examples:

A

EXPRESSED EMOTION

The Redmond family talked over the young son's [Benny's] enlistment in the Air Corps. Pa Redmond was very proud of Benny. He felt his pride tingle all over his body, and refused to think of the dangers Benny would experience, even the possibility of the boy's death.

Ma Redmond was broken-hearted, utterly crushed by her thoughts of the various catastrophes that might happen to Benny, this son she loved above all her other children. She was sure that he would be killed, and he was only seventeen, too young to die.

However, she did not wish her family to know the extent of her grief and sorrow and her fear for Benny's future. So she pretended to yawn and said that she'd better go to bed, she was tired. She wanted to get away by herself before they guessed how badly she felt.

Pa and Cal could tell, though, by the slow way she went up the stairs and by the way she dropped her shoes to the floor.

IMPLIED EMOTION

"He'll come out all right," Pa said. "Lookit all the broncs he's rode without ever bustin' his neck." Then Pa added, "Benny's got good stuff in him —good American stock— fighting blood."

"A bullet is different," Ma said.

"You know," Cal said, "I can't have my kid brother showing me up. Ben going off to war while I sit home warming my fanny. By Christ—"

"Cal, I wish you wouldn't swear," Ma said.

Then Ma patted her open mouth with her hand. "I'm right tired. Guess I'll go off to bed. Didn't get much sleep last night."

Cal and Pa heard her heavy tread on the stairs, slow and heavy with the weight she carried. The sound stopped halfway up, waited a minute or two, then resumed. They heard her shoes being dropped to the floor of the bedroom. Usually Ma placed them soundlessly on the floor and pushed them under the bed.

B

EXPRESSED CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

Miss Baxter was an extremely unattractive old maid, who delighted to spy on her neighbors in order to gossip about them. One day, peering

through a little hole she had cut in the shade, she saw a white florist's box on the window sill next door. This seemed to her to mean that the wife was receiving flowers from another man.

Other characteristics of Miss Baxter were that she kept her front door not only locked but also chained and bolted. It annoyed Miss Baxter the way the paper boy rolled and twisted her paper. Time and again she had told him never to roll it, but to bring it up the steps and lay it down flat on the porch, like a little man. This way of addressing him was extremely annoying to the boy. Didn't Miss Baxter realize, too, that a boy had to deliver a hundred papers, and to put each paper on every porch would take him all night? But that sort of thing is extremely characteristic of old maids, who know very little about life and are concerned only with their own comforts and with scandal about others.

IMPLIED CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

Today she had caught an oblique glimpse of something on a window sill next door, and when her own window was shut she applied one eye to a little hole that there happened to be in the shade, just about eye-level. She was able to discover that the thing on the opposite sill was a square white florist's box. For some reason this appeared to anger Miss Baxter. She sniffed. It was plain that the sight of the box conveyed more to her than it would have to you or to me. . . .

Arriving for the second time that morning in her lower hall, she unlocked, unchained, and unbolted the front door and opened it. Her copy of the *Daily Herald* lay on the porch, rolled tight and twisted and tossed up there from the sidewalk. She emitted a sound of impatience when she saw it. How many times, she wondered, had she told that little Mooney boy not to roll her paper, and not to twist it, and not to throw it, but to bring it up the steps and lay it down flat like a little man.[5]

IMPRESSIONISM

Kindred to implication is impressionistic writing or impressionism. In the various arts the term is broadly applied to mean the giving of sensory impressions without specific image. Here, however, we will use the term more narrowly to mean the conveying of thoughts, feelings, images by means of suggestion rather than by complete explanation. It is commonly employed by a great many writers, both craft and quality,

[5] Reprinted from "Good Wednesday" by Katharine Brush, *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1930. Used by permission of Harold Ober.

to present in small space a large sweeping picture or to combine sensory impression of the immediate picture to yield the effect of universal application or universal meaning. Frequently the writer will employ fragments rather than complete sentences, or sometimes very much broken and interrupted dialogue, or fleeting dream thoughts in garbled pattern, each part having little meaning of its own but intended to mean much in totality.

There follow several examples of entirely different types of impressionistic writing:

A

The thump of the basket drum, the scraping of sandaled feet. The noise growing into her, getting into her blood. Dully she watched the moving figures pass like wraith shadows before her in the candlelight. She wanted to dance with the shadows, to leap up with a cry, to throw off her clothing and dance naked with them in the circle, raising her head, letting her throat give out the chant which stirred her. . . . Many hours it continued, its tempo rising, sinking away, mounting to a furiousness as though all of them stood drenched in the midst of a lashing desert storm, the heavens crashing their thunder, the rain biting, the sky hanging over them like a low ceiling. And they all alone. Only the three shamen contesting against the large forces around them, holding up the low ceiling, holding back annihilation. . . .

B

He should have brought the spray of peach blossoms or the pot of honeysuckle—they would have had some relation with her sweetness—but he had chosen the orchid for her. He couldn't leave the reddened island behind where the orchids belonged in time of memories. The pale violet petals curled with what seemed a cunning and sly self-caress, horrible and decadent—an inverted caress. The realization of what was in his mind there in the room with Candace made him cold.

C

"Street of the night!" they cried, "great street of mystery and suspense, terror and delight, eagerness and pending joy, an unknown happiness and fulfilment, street of gayety, warmth, and evil, street of great hotels, the

lavish bars and restaurants, and the softly golden glow, the fading lights and empetalled whiteness of a thousand hushed white thirsty faces in the crowded theatres, street of the tidal flood of faces, lighted with your million lights and all thronging, tireless and unquenched in their insatiate searching after pleasure, street of the lovers coming along with slow steps, their faces turned toward each other, lost in the oblivions of love among the everlasting web and weaving of the crowd, street of the white face, the painted mouth, the shining and inviting eye—oh, street of the night, with all your mystery, joy, and terror—we have thought of you proud street." [6]

D

Cars whisking by on 66. License plates. Mass., Tenn., R.I., N.Y., Vt., Ohio. Going west. Fine cars, cruising at sixty-five.

There goes one of them Cords. Looks like a coffin on wheels.

But, Jesus, how they travel!

See that La Salle? Me for that. I ain't a hog. I go for a La Salle.

'F ya goin' big, what's a matter with a Cad? Jus' a little bigger, little faster.

I'd take a Zephyr myself. You ain't ridin' no fortune, but you got class an' speed. Give me a Zephyr.

Well, sir, you may get a laugh outa this—I'll take a Buick-Puick. That's good enough.

But hell, that costs in the Zephyr class an' it ain't got the sap.

I don't care. I don't want nothin' to do with nothing of Henry Ford's. I don't like 'im. Never did. Got a brother worked in the plant. Oughta hear him tell.

Well, a Zephyr got sap.

The big cars on the highway. . . .[7]

ORGANIC DESCRIPTION

A rather universal tendency of the young writer is to separate his nature descriptions, character descriptions, and setting descriptions from the body and movement of his story—as though they were separate entities. This tendency is a direct inheritance from the great nineteenth-century novelists, who frequently made use of pages of description of

[6] Reprinted from *Death to the Morning* by Thomas Wolfe; copyright 1935 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

[7] From *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Copyright 1939 by John Steinbeck. By permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

nature or setting, pages of character analysis, before they began the story, or as a deliberate break in the middle of a tale.

Modern writers tend to make description an essential part of character, plot, suspense, rising action, and all the other elements that compose the story. One method already noted is to interweave character or setting description with the dialogue.

After all, the modern writer argues, it is not the view that is important, no matter how beautiful or grand or breath-taking, but rather the impact of the view upon the perceptions and emotions of the one who sees it. Nor is it the appearance of a room, but the manner in which that room is related to the person who occupies it.

Organic description, then, is description that is a part of the forward movement of the story. The writer does not raise the curtain upon a stage empty of people. If a desert composes the surroundings, then one is likely to discover the main character in the middle of that desert pumping up a flat tire, hunting mountain sheep, or cracking rocks with a geologist's hammer. In other words, the character is portrayed in action of some sort or in some mood which relates him to his surroundings.

Study the following examples of organic description:

A

NATURE

Overhead the sky was billowy with piled-up masses of clouds, while the mountains on the rim of the mesa were a barrier of blue steel. Lupe was dreamy in her thoughts of Jonathan, Maria already half forgotten. She was thinking of the clouds as cool water, and of herself as bathing in them, their delicate substance foamy against her body. Jonathan must be there also, with her, his big hands scooping up bits of cloud and splashing them into her face.

B

CHARACTER

In front of the crowd a strong-looking man, dressed very well, very snugly in a grey overcoat, grey silk scarf, thick gloves and dark felt hat, marched up and down, twirling his folded umbrella. He seemed to be the

leader of the little crowd on the wharf and at the same time to keep them together. He was something between the sheep-dog and the shepherd. But what a fool—what a fool he had been not to bring any glasses.[8]

C

ENVIRONMENT

The apartment where Danny Blake lived was an above-and-below sort of place; from the floor to the windows it was basement, but the bottoms of the windows were on a level with the sidewalk outside, so that anybody looking out the window could just stand there and look at the feet that walked by. It was a good enough pastime, but it ended by making Danny very conscious of the seams in women's stockings.[9]

CHARACTER NAMES

The names given to the actors in his story are far more important than the average young writer realizes. Although in real life people's names may be entirely out of keeping with their dispositions or temperaments or the impressions they make on others—one may find a Cecil or a Percy who plays left guard on the college team and weighs 220 pounds, or a Silas who is a polished gentleman from Boston or a New York businessman, or a Zebediah J. Montescue who is a veritable Adonis—in the fictional world a character is already half-characterized by the name he is given. Cecil is likely to be a well-bred Englishman or a man with similar qualities, probably slender, esthetic, intelligent. Percy cannot escape being somewhat effeminate. Silas has bits of hay clinging to his clothing or claims New England or the Midwest as his home. And Zebediah J. Montescue must be a stuffy little old man, a comic character. Mose will be a Negro, Hannah a cook or housegirl, Patricia more somber and thoughtful than light-hearted Betty.

Writers sometimes deliberately employ such names for opposite kinds of people and then gradually break down the connotation of the name.

The temptation to give a character the first name that springs into mind has two dangers. Such a writer's stories are likely to be peopled with Bills, Jims, Jacks, and Joes; Marys, Helens, Ruths, and Annes. All of these names are colorless to start with, and if used must be given

[8] Reprinted from *The Garden Party* by Katherine Mansfield, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1922 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

[9] Dorothy Baker, "Romance."

color by the personality of the character. In employing them the writer has lost his best and easiest opportunity for concise characterization.

Surnames are almost equally important. Mary Delhart is usually better than Mary Smith or Mary Jones.

A second danger of giving no thought to names is that if the story is published there may be considerable embarrassment because real-life names have been employed. Often such names lurk in the subconscious and are the first to pop into mind. Not a few novelists and short story writers have discovered to their chagrin, after a book or story is in print, that they have named a robust hero or sneaking villain after a friend, or more likely a town celebrity or businessman. Or like the Western story writer, they may call a burly two-gun villain Ginger Rogers—as happened when that well-known actress was just beginning her climb to fame. (Fortunately the editor caught the mistake.)

Names, therefore, are worth a good deal of thoughtful attention. A city directory or telephone book may be a storehouse for names, provided no complete name is used; that is, provided one uses the first name of one listing and the second name of another. Some writers invent the names of their important characters in order to be reasonably certain that no duplicate exists.

TREATMENT OF FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER

Many professional writers have said that they can always arouse a reader's interest by discussing food, especially food that is appealing and well prepared. Like the relationships of men and women, young and old, friends and enemies, food is one of the fundamentals of living. Kinds of food, how prepared, how enjoyed are of primary interest as they relate to main characters. Clothing and shelter follow in reader interest in the order given. Clothing seems to appeal more to women readers than to men readers: all the little details of make-up, hair style, cut and appearance of various pieces of wearing apparel and the impression they make. Shelter, the least of the three, is of interest as it reflects the main characters' tastes and habits.

Undoubtedly these three elements of living receive more attention in commercial and popular writing than in the quality story, but they are present in both.

USE OF COLOR

The use of various colors is an important characteristic of all fictional writing. Colors flash a quick image; the repetition of a certain color helps to create atmosphere and may set the whole tone of a story. Recently in studying several pages of fiction to discover how the drab, monotonous feeling was conveyed, I discovered that a good part of the effect was attained by the use of the word *gray* fifteen times.

The young writer tends to call anything of a reddish hue *red,* or anything of a bluish hue *blue.* Here he neglects an opportunity for variety and for creating unusual sensory impressions, for there are dozens of shades of and synonyms for red and blue. *Red:* scarlet, cardinal, vermilion, carmine, crimson, pink, rose, cerise, cherry, salmon, maroon, carnation, magenta, solferino, damask. *Blue:* azure, cerulean, sky blue, navy blue, midnight blue, cadet blue, robin's-egg blue, baby blue, ultramarine, aquamarine, electric blue, indigo, sapphire, green-blue. Additionally, many striking color images may be made with simile and metaphor.

HANDLING OF DIALECT

In most modern writing, because of the belief that excessive use of dialect causes too great reading difficulty, dialect is held to a minimum. Rather, the professional seeks to obtain the effect of dialect by various devices such as the selection of a few well-chosen foreign words, carefully chosen errors in grammar, and exotic disarrangement of the accepted order of the sentence.

On the whole this has seemed a satisfactory method of suggesting broken speech without verbatim recording. The writer strives for artistic verity rather than photographic accuracy.

SURPRISE

In life unexpected surprises of an agreeable nature bring great delight. In fiction there is the same sort of reaction to surprise. O. Henry capitalized upon this fact to the extent of giving a surprise ending to most of his stories. Although commercial writers still make some use

of surprise endings, they are far less popular than they used to be except in humorous writing and in the short-short story.

However, surprises are not limited to trick endings. Good writing of the commercial type is full of surprises of all sorts—surprise in the unexpected turn of the plot, surprise in an additional complication of the trap, surprise in the revelation of a new trait of character, surprise in the appearance or reaction of a certain character contrary to what one has been led to expect.

But such surprises cannot be totally unexpected or the reader will not accept them. The writer, anticipating the surprise, must prepare the reader for it by some sort of early hint. To be a successful device, surprise must be foreshadowed.

Surprise, however, is artificial and thus is found commonly in craft or commercial writing but rarely in quality writing except as character revelation comes as surprise.

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

1. With the aid of a city directory or telephone book, but not using the names of actual people, make a list of three names each for hero, heroine, comic character, older person, young girl, young boy.

2. Write six synonyms or similes and metaphors for each of the following colors: yellow, green, gray, black, white.

3. Select a paragraph either from your own work or from another's in which emotion is presented directly (explained) and rewrite it, endeavoring to convey emotion indirectly through dialogue, action, and situation.

4. Select and copy either from Parts II and III or from other stories ten examples of "flash descriptions" or "artistic touch."

5. In the next short story you write, deliberately employ a symbol which you use as your title and make reference to it several times throughout the story. Use also repetition of word and idea, organic description, and impressionism. Indicate in the margin of your story where you have employed these various devices.

VI. DECISION: ARTIST OR CRAFT WRITER

THE LITERARY ARTIST

THE attitude of a writer toward his work is seldom a matter of choice; in part it has already been decided for him by the parents that happen to be his, by his home environment, by his youthful activities and interests, by his university training or lack of it, by the experiences and hardships of his young manhood—the work he is forced into by economic circumstances—by how much of an introvert or extrovert he happens to be. All of these help to fashion his attitude toward people and toward life and toward his own purpose in living.

A college course in short story writing, or any other literature or composition course, must demonstrate to the student what is best. But the student should realize that writing or any other form of art of high artistic value has seldom been widely appreciated at the time it was created; that even in a prosperous country like America the artist composing an immortal symphony or creating a poem that will be remembered a hundred years later or painting a masterpiece that will hang in a famous art gallery long after he is dead—that artist may be literally starving while the trumpet blower down the way, the hack writer across the street, the dauber in the next block, finding a ready market for their mediocre talents, may live in comparative luxury.

Unfortunately, there is no sure way of ascertaining that the man who is starving in a garret is an artist of potential immortality. He may be just another hack suffering needlessly in the erroneous belief that he is a genius. The answer cannot be found even within a man's own soul, for the greatest of artists, even after attaining recognition, suffer periods of bleak despair during which they regard themselves as incompetents and failures, while hacks too often have large delusions of grandeur, as anyone who has met the author of a first best seller will testify to most heartily.

There is no answer except the faith that one has within himself.

But early in his career the young writer should take inventory of his talents, and with outside critical judgment endeavor to weigh himself

and his own prospects and to decide whether to give up altogether or, if not, what sort of writing to attempt.

To be frank, the literary apprentice craftsman, unless excessively fortunate, is likely to have a very miserable time in life—first because of economic pressures and second because of his own emotional nature. There is very limited market for his work. He must be prepared to face the keenest sort of competition from the best minds.

In the last thirty years or so, from the beginning of the movements toward naturalism and experimental verse and from the time that the influence of Freud and others in the fields of psychology and psychiatry began to be felt here in America, the gulf between what is termed "commercial" or "craft" and what is termed "literary" or "quality" or "experimental" has gaped wider and wider, until anyone who fails to take into consideration that there are now being written two entirely different kinds of stories and novels, some as different in technique and structure, for example, as short stories and stage plays, is being extremely impractical.

So great is this difference that some critics believe the modern experimental or psychological story has escaped life as far in one direction as have romanticism and traditionalism in the other, creating in the form of the short story little more than a case history of a neurotic adult, deliberately shunning beauty and simplicity and naturalness and entertainment for a kind of bitter pill intended as a catharsis for the human soul.

True, commercial magazines have been tending recently to broaden their editorial policy by publishing a few experimental stories having the outward form and outward technique of the quality story. Closely analyzed, most of these are the old product in a new wrapping: the same themes, the same emotional appeals, the same superficial treatment of life.

Many thoughtful people believe that the very institution of democracy pulls down fictional standards. Because of the motion pictures, the radio, and dubious advertisements, writers, in order to sell, must appeal to a steadily lowering taste. Even in the past, writers found it necessary to play the clown in order to sell—Mark Twain is an example; to write what they themselves regarded as hack work in order to gain fame and fortune while their really good work remains unread. Longfellow wrote his "Village Blacksmith," "Evangeline," "Hiawatha,"

for adults with children's minds. His adult sonnets, really fine poems, went unread. When Herman Melville left his popular South Sea tales to create *Moby Dick,* he lost his public. Much of Whitman is dross to catch the public eye and fancy. Emily Dickinson died almost unknown, but is now critically regarded as one of America's great poets. Henry James escaped to Europe, and with a private income to support himself, wrote psychological stories that found only a small critical audience, yet his work survives and he is acclaimed one of America's really great short story writers. Most of his life Poe starved while many hacks of his period, now forgotten, prospered.

Great artists have, it is true, sometimes caught the public fancy in one way or another and still retained their stature—for instance, Mark Twain and Walt Whitman. Stephen Crane (from whom the cult of the simple has borrowed much) might have done so had he lived longer. Mark Twain made people laugh. Whitman and Crane shocked them. But they attained greatness (and this is worth noting for the young modern writer who feels that he must be shocking) not because they were shocking but rather because they shocked people into attention for their further messages. (Nor can one nowadays even obtain a hearing by merely being shocking, for the public is well-nigh shock-proof.)

More recently artists like Amy Lowell have attracted attention by personal eccentricities while greater poets languished in obscurity. Ernest Hemingway caught the public fancy by a completely different style of writing, but Hemingway is bigger than his style. John Steinbeck captured and retained his public by a strong strain of sentimentality in his novels, which critics decry, yet Steinbeck is larger than this weakness.

Almost the only market for a quality story written by an unknown is the "little magazines." Usually these publications pay nothing for accepted material, yet from publication in one of them the young author can obtain a certain amount of prestige that may help him to market further work and will at least place his name before the public. Several such appearances may lay the foundation for the publication of a serious novel.

A glance at the circulation figures of a few typical magazines will demonstrate why quality magazines pay little and literary quarterlies usually pay nothing:

Harper's	105,000
Scribner's	out of print
Atlantic Monthly	109,000
Poetry	3,000
Sewanee Review	3,000
Virginia Quarterly	3,000
New Yorker	205,000
Saturday Evening Post	3,745,000
Life	3,393,000
Collier's (about)	2,500,000

Figures are for 1944, and are larger now. Circulation of several of the women's magazines is over three million.

P. R. Blackmur, writing in the *Sewanee Review,* after pointing out that the average annual income of authors from the sale of books is less than $1,181, goes on to say:

The account may be clarified a little by particular examples. One of the most distinguished poets of my acquaintance, well and favorably known here and abroad, who devotes his entire time to writing, has never in thirty-odd years of writing earned more than three thousand in a year, and has averaged about five hundred. One of the most distinguished novelists in this country, who has sold widely in England, and has been translated into French, German, and Russian—and who has not, I should add, any extravagant tastes or heavy burdens—was nevertheless only able to live a year or so ago with the aid of a two-thousand-dollar Guggenheim Fellowship, and subsequently applied for a job teaching freshman composition at Harvard. Of the three most distinguished painters I know, one has private means but has never sold more than enough to pay his overhead as a painter, one lived—or starved—on about six dollars a week, and the third told me he had not paid an income tax for six years.

The market system as it affects writers is very much like the market system as it affects society as a whole; it dissolves all but the lowest values and preserves only the cheapest values: those which can be satisfactorily translated into money; for it is only the cheapest sort of life, of thought, of art that can throw its values into the competition of the open market as the market developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries without loss of the values themselves. In the market system the automatic adjustment of economic value under free competition is supposed to take care of all the human values which make economic value significant, and it is supposed to do so by natural law. As an illustration of what actually happens

instead I suggest consideration of the transformation of the policy of the *Saturday Evening Post* from an editorial to an economic policy. The magazine no longer tries either to create or buttress opinion or to provide a special form of entertainment; it no longer attempts to get the best material within its standards on subjects which its editors believe important; instead, it runs a sort of Gallup Poll among its readers and commissions contributions according to its findings.[1]

But the *Saturday Evening Post* is only going one further step towards accepting the standards of the new illiteracy than has been the general tendency of magazines ever since automatic university education and automatic free market began their double growth.[2]

Professor Blackmur goes on to say that the artist must either lower his standards to meet those of the market, or earn his living otherwise and devote only his spare time to the arts.

On the other hand, W. Somerset Maugham, an example of the extremely successful craft or commercial writer, feels that he has sacrificed nothing whatever to the demands of the market. After pointing out that a writer must write what is in him to write, Maugham has this to say of the commercial story writer's attitude:

So when magazines flourish which have room for stories of considerable length, stories of that length are written; when on the other hand newspapers publish fiction, but can give it no more than a small space, stories to fill that space are supplied. There is nothing disgraceful in this. The competent author can write a story in a couple of thousand words as easily as he can write one in ten thousand. But he chooses a different story and treats it in a different way. . . . The point I want to make is this: The nature of the vehicle whereby the writer approaches his public is one of the conventions he has to accept, and on the whole he finds that he can do this without any violence to his own inclinations.[3]

After making clear that he is not posing as a critic but rather is rendering the judgment of one individual, Mr. Maugham proceeds to express his views of new tendencies in the short story:

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[1] One of the book-of-the-month clubs is conducted on this same basis.

[2] R. P. Blackmur, "The Economy of the American Writer," *The Sewanee Review*, Spring, 1945. Used by permission of *The Sewanee Review*.

[3] From *Teller of Tales* by W. Somerset Maugham, copyright 1939 Doubleday & Company, Inc.

In the short story naturalism in the nineteenth century came into fashion in reaction to a romanticism that had become tedious. One after the other writers attempted to portray life with unflinching veracity. . . . Writers of this school looked upon life with less partial eyes than those of the generation that had preceded them; they were less sugary and less optimistic, more violent and more direct; their dialogue was more natural and they chose their characters from a world that since the days of Defoe writers of fiction had somewhat neglected; but they made no innovations in technique. So far as the essentials of the story are concerned they were content with the old models. The effects they pursued were still those that had been pursued by Poe; they used the formula he had laid down. Their merit proves its value; their artificiality exposes its weakness.[4]

The serious writer has much greater freedom for expressing himself than does the commercial writer, hemmed in by many taboos, market demands, and format necessities. The big magazines with enormous circulations and hundreds of thousands of dollars to dispense are really nothing more than wealthy advertising periodicals, containing stories only incidentally as stories, more specifically as lures toward wider distribution of the advertising material (the curse of radio as well). The editor of such a magazine dares not risk the displeasure of any large block of readers. He knows that a certain segment of his market resides in backward sections of the South and Midwest known as the "Bible Belt"; that these sections buy a great many of his magazines; that his advertisers are capitalists; that he sells a hundred thousand magazines in the Los Angeles area. And he realizes all too well that his magazine sells to the public for a good deal less than it costs to produce—a ten cent magazine may cost as much as twenty-five to fifty cents or more. The purchase price hardly pays the postage and retail commissions. It is the advertiser who foots the bill and yields the profits to the corporation owning the magazine.

Of necessity, then, the editor frowns on certain things, in the same order as given above: anything derogatory to religion or to a literal interpretation of the Bible, anything which makes a section of the South seem inferior to a section of the North, anything concerning the unfair practices of big business, anything derogatory to a large municipality, such as Los Angeles or Miami, which might injure the tourist trade.

[4] *Ibid.*

These are only a few of a long list of taboos. In fact, among two or three million readers it is almost impossible not to step on someone's toes unless stories are completely innocuous—but quite well written. All this is not invariably true, but a skimming over of the stories in a half dozen of the big commercial magazines will furnish proof of the type of story usually published: homespun stuff, love problems, marriage problems, stories with domestic setting or with an exotic flavor, of the sea, of foreign places and peoples. None of these carry any great risk.

Intelligent people bewail the low taste of the soap opera and of the average story in the women's and family magazines. These would not be so poor if the audience did not wish them that way. The weekly circulation of the so-called comic magazines—23,000,000—is no accident. They sell thus widely because adults as well as children wish to buy them and read them. The standards of Hollywood are low, not because there are not brilliant people in the motion-picture industry who could raise those standards overnight, given the opportunity, but because it has been repeatedly proved—with only an occasional rare exception—that better pictures will not draw sufficient mass audiences to make them pay.

A successful commercial writer for the women's magazines recently told a group of aspiring writers: "Whatever you do, do not believe that you can reform a magazine with a better story. The editor knows how and will buy better stories as soon as her average reading public wishes the magazine improved."

The young writer perforce must accept the rules of the craft—just as a young doctor or a lawyer does—and regard his work as a profession, perfecting himself in it. Or he must realize that as a struggling idealist in a badly paying art, he may write as he sees fit but is unlikely to attain any degree of financial success and will experience harrowing difficulties in reaching even a small audience. Neither road is easy. With rare exceptions, even novelists who have published a number of books do not make a living unless Hollywood buys their novels. And novels are sold to Hollywood either because they have been best sellers or because they are the kind of story that can be readily adapted to motion-picture requirements. With the exception of producing best-selling books—and comparatively few books are best sellers—one can derive

a good living from creative writing in only two ways: by regular publication in the various commercial magazines or by selling either directly or indirectly to the motion pictures or the radio.

To be a successful craft writer one must accept with good grace the tastes and standards of the great mass of the reading public and must write in a manner convincingly upholding those tastes and standards.

A reader may never have known the faithful Negress cook "lovin' dat man," but nevertheless that is the way he likes to think of his fictional Negress. To violate that notion disturbs him, and he does not like to be disturbed. If he is sufficiently disturbed he will stop buying the magazine or attending the moving-picture house or turning on the radio, angry that anyone should question such obvious truths.

By renouncing the commercial market, the quality writer attains something very precious: the scope to express himself as he wishes, a great latitude for novel ideas and for new technique and material, and the luxury of retaining his own integrity.

READING PROGRAM

Creative writing during a specific generation or period can be likened to a stream with many tributaries, and all writing considered as a part of this stream, which may be muddy and turgid or clear and smooth flowing. No single writer can change the appearance and composition of this stream. Nor can a writer escape being a part of it. Therefore it is well for the young writer to have a reading program in which he seeks to become acquainted with what is being done by other writers, some of whom he will admire and possibly tend to imitate, while others he will not care for. The craft or commercial writer tends to read within his field, but commercial writers I have known also read widely among the quality writers and the novelists.

The following is a list of writers well worth investigation. Older writers are included because of their definite influence upon the modern stream.

Precursors

Anton Chekhov
Stephen Crane
Feodor Dostoevski
Gustave Flaubert
Anatole France
Thomas Hardy

Bret Harte
Nathaniel Hawthorne
O. Henry
Henry James
Jack London
Guy de Maupassant
Herman Melville
Edgar Allan Poe
Robert Louis Stevenson
Leo Tolstoy
Mark Twain

Moderns

Sherwood Anderson
Sholom Asch
Kay Boyle
Katharine Brush
Pearl Buck
James M. Cain
Erskine Caldwell
Willa Cather
Mary Ellen Chase
Joseph Conrad
A. E. Coppard
John Dos Passos
Theodore Dreiser
James T. Farrell
William Faulkner
Vardis Fisher
F. Scott Fitzgerald
Ernest Hemingway
Paul Horgan
Aldous Huxley
Will James
James Joyce
Franz Kafka
Ring Lardner
D. H. Lawrence
Stephen Leacock
Sinclair Lewis
Thomas Mann
Katherine Mansfield
John P. Marquand
Don Marquis
W. Somerset Maugham
Christopher Morley
John O'Hara
Dorothy Parker
Luigi Pirandello
Katherine Anne Porter
Saki (H. H. Munro)
William Saroyan
Upton Sinclair
John Steinbeck
Wilbur Daniel Steele
Wallace Stegner
Ruth Suckow
James Thurber
Eudora Welty
Edith Wharton
E. B. White
Thomas Wolfe
Virginia Woolf

The serious student will also be interested in the two best-known anthologies of current stories, issued annually: *The Best Short Stories of* ———, edited until his death by Edward J. O'Brien, with the editorship continued by Martha Foley, who is also coeditor of the magazine *Story;* and the O. Henry Memorial Collection. The former is regarded as more authoritative.

Some of the "little magazines" not in general circulation that the student may wish to examine are the following: [5]

Story
Yale Review
Partisan Review
Sewanee Review
Southwest Review
Chimera
New Mexico Quarterly Review
Accent
Western Review

NOTEBOOKS; OLD MANUSCRIPTS

Commercial writers seldom keep notebooks. Quality or literary writers often do—notebooks in which they jot down thoughts for further investigation, ideas to incorporate into new manuscripts, a bit of phrasing they hope to use later.

It is a good policy not a throw away old manuscripts in disgust, as one is often tempted to do. These manuscripts can readily be stored. It is quite possible that some of them, many years later, may be reworked into other forms.

COMMERCIAL WRITING

What has already been said about commercial writing will not be repeated here except for the emphasis upon several more important matters. As in any other market there must be a demand for the product before that product will be purchased. Study the market. STUDY THE MARKET. Read thoroughly a particular magazine, imitate, read again. Keep reading and writing for that market until the product you are trying to sell is a product that the editor wishes to buy, feels impelled to buy because *within his editorial limitations* IT IS A BETTER STORY THAN THE ONES HE IS PUBLISHING.

The notion that it is easy to write commercially is utterly false. Story writers that appear regularly in the big "slick paper" magazines are skilled technicians and craftsmen who work hard and under

[5] The addresses of these magazines may be found in the Appendix.

pressure to keep their places at the top. Commercial success in its own way is as difficult to attain as quality success. Such success requires talent, cleverness, persistence, and adaptability. Once it is attained, the financial returns may be excellent. It is not uncommon for the larger magazines to pay a thousand dollars for a short story, six, eight, ten thousand dollars for a novelette. In addition, the motion-picture industry often buys short stories and novelettes that have appeared in popular magazines because these stories are much closer to screen requirements than quality writing.

With adequate income, the commercial writer can live more or less where he pleases.[6] Nor is he tied to the local social system, for both his income and his interests lie beyond the boundaries of the town where he lives. He can make his own hours for work and for recreation. He can indulge in hobbies impossible for others.

Nor is there any reason why the commercial writer should be ashamed of his calling, as many of them seem to be. (A pulp-paper story writer told me his one ambition was to write a serious novel that would receive high critical praise. His income at the time from pulp-paper stories was over twenty thousand dollars a year.) The commercial writer tends to be defensive about his stories appearing in popular magazines, either contending that they are really better than the stories in the "little magazines" or shrugging off his commercial success with the assertion that he intends to do something really good some time. The two fields are not comparable, nor is there any necessity that they should be.[7] The quality writer is struggling badly or well with an art. The commercial writer is in the business or profession of producing stories that will sell to a market. That he cannot regard his work as a way of making money is due in part to a confusion of aims and purposes, and in part to the fact that good commercial writing cannot be largely mechanical, but always involves tension, emotion, and nervous strain beyond ordinary routine endeavor.

Again I repeat, study the market. Derive ideas from published stories in the field chosen. Imitate but do not plagiarize. It is well to remember that almost all salable commercial stories are built around romanticized juveniles, romanticized old people, the problems of mar-

[6] It is true, however, that most of them live in either New York or Hollywood.

[7] The big commercial magazines are notoriously neglected in the various annual collections of best short stories.

riage, or, most commonly, the boy-girl or man-woman situation, people attracted strongly to one another but held apart through the story trap.[8]

On this score James M. Cain has delivered some very excellent advice for the young writer:

. . . . Until then, my ideal of writing, as well as I can recall it, was that the story correspond with life, mirror it, give a picture whose main element was truth. Lawrence had no objection to this, but insisted that truth was not all. He said if truth were the main object of writing, I would have a hard time competing with a $3 camera. He said if truth were what a writer really worshipped, he would write, not a novel, but a case history. Then he recalled for me Dreiser's play, *The Hand of the Potter*. He pointed out that this play was truthful enough, but utterly pointless, since it made a plea for a degenerate, without ever once attempting to get you interested in that degenerate.

Writing, narrative writing, whether in the theatre, a book or a picture house, he said, must first make you *care* about the people whose fortunes you follow. Then he expounded to me the principle of the love-rack, as he calls it; and as it is this which has had such an effect on Hollywood picture writing, I shall give in a little detail what he had to say about it: "O.K., Cain, it's Romeo and Juliet, they're out on the balcony, it's the worst love scene in the world, but anyway it's some kind of love scene, and what makes it? The balcony, lad, that piece of wood that's shoved on just before the curtain goes up. If she ever knocks it over some night, and that guy can really climb up there, it'll lay an egg so bad the Department of Health will move in. In this true story you think you want to write, they meet, they have lunch, they talk, they like each other, they fall in love. That's how it does happen. But I don't pay $5.50 for that. It may be love, but it's not a play. I don't *feel* anything, and making me feel it is what you're after. Look, I'm sitting at a window, looking down at the park. There's two benches there, one with a couple on it holding hands. Well, there's no news in that, is there? I guess they're in love but they can go right down and get married and send me a card from Niagara Falls and I don't care a bit. On the other bench is a girl reading a book. She's got a little dog there, and every now and then she exercises him by throwing the ball out on the grass and making him bring it back. A guy comes along, takes a look at her and passes by. But when he takes another look at her I know he likes her looks, and right away

[8] Humor is more difficult to market, although once a writer has established himself as a humorist he is in an excellent commercial position. Humor not too satirical can often be a commercial outlet for one with "quality" propensities. So also can the detective story, which has become much more than the whodunit of past decades.

I wonder what's going to happen. Now if she looks up from the book, and jumps up and runs over to him and kisses him, it's still love, but I'm bored. But if she looks up, and he walks away quick, I know they're strangers. I see him stop at a peanut vendor's, and I wonder what he's up to. He buys peanuts, comes back, sits on the bench, pays no attention to her. But the dog he pats on the head. He starts on the peanuts, but right away he peels one and pitches it up in the air for the dog. The dog catches it, pricks up his ears for another. Turns out the dog likes peanuts. Next thing, the girl is watching it and laughs. The guy raises his hat, moves over. They both play with the dog. He's done it, Cain, he's *pulled* something, he's got me interested. I stay to see how this comes out. After a while, when he flags a cab and they all three drive off together, he, she, and the dog, they're my favorite lovers for that day. It's the same way with anything you write. Before you can interest me in a story, you got to interest me in them.[9]

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read several stories in one of the recent editions of *Best Short Stories.* Discover one which is similar to a story in Parts II or III and write a critical comparison of the two stories. (The length of your paper should be three to four hundred words.)

2. Choose two or three writers from the list of contemporaries on page 113, writers whom you are at present unacquainted with. Decide on one of these and skim a book or two and several short stories. Be prepared to evaluate this writer in the contemporary picture.

3. Secure a typical pulp-paper magazine, representative of a certain field such as Western story, detective story, sweetheart story, true story. Now find its approximate counterpart among the slick paper magazines, that is, a Western story in *The Saturday Evening Post,* a detective story in *Collier's,* a sweetheart story or a true story in one of the women's magazines. Write a critical appraisal and comparison (approximately a thousand words) dealing with similarities and differences in style, theme, denouement, tone, atmosphere, and the like.

4. Select a particular magazine and read several issues of it (slick paper or pulp paper). Prepare orally or in writing your appraisal of that magazine's editorial policy, its taboos, the kinds of stories that might find a market in it. Now plan a story for that market. Have the plan checked by your instructor. Then write the story.

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[9] Reprinted from *Three of a Kind* by James M. Cain, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

5. Prepare the plan for a story based on folk material of your own region. Ideally you should combine some library reading with personal investigation and note taking as background for this story. You may select a legend, or a folk custom, or a tradition of your region, and you should endeavor to color it with folk custom and folk speech. (Examine Stephen Vincent Benét's "The Devil and Daniel Webster"; or William Faulkner's "Spotted Horses"; or the works of Bill Nye as models.) To make your story more dramatic, interesting, or significant, do not hesitate to change the material you unearth. After your plan has been checked, write the story.

6. Investigate historical material of your own region—old diaries, newspapers, photographs, and the like—and plan a story of a particular period. After your plan has been checked, read further, gathering necessary notes, until you feel you are ready to write the story and to give it an air of immediacy and authenticity.

VII. MECHANICS

REVISION

THE revision of a manuscript is an important part of the writing process, extremely important; yet it entails a quite different approach from that of the original creation. It is partly mechanical, partly critical, often an uncertain performance that may, after a considerable expenditure of time and energy, ruin a story instead of improving it.

Revision consists of much more than producing careful, well-knit sentences or choosing what seem to be unusual or forceful words. The deletion or addition of a single word on a page can spoil the tone or emotional effect of the whole page or even of the entire story. Good revision is often as delicate a task as a surgical operation.

Nor can any rules be laid down. Each story is a separate and entirely different undertaking involving new problems and new decisions. In fact competent people often disagree on how a story should be revised or edited. Both may be right; neither may be right. It is quite possible that the story can't be improved. Some stories show great promise of improvement if an editorial operation is performed but fail to survive it.

An individual's method of writing may decide how a story should be revised. He may revise as he composes, writing and rewriting a page until it is done to his satisfaction before moving along. Then the processes of composing and revising are done in the same operation, and when he is finished the story is complete. Others write faster for totality of effect, and then rewrite several times—two, three, five, even ten times—introducing new scenes, eliminating old, cutting some and expanding others.

A few suggestions may prove helpful:

1) People are seldom good critics of their own work, even those experienced in criticism of other people's work. The explanation is simple. The writer knows his own intentions, the mood of the story is in him when he reads it, and thus he reacts to his own creative mood rather than to the wording of his story. All writers need the outside criticism of at least one person in whom they have confidence. All

criticism, even by competent people, is not always good criticism, and sometimes may be very bad. Before a writer undertakes revision on the basis of criticism, he should be enthusiastic about the changes he proposes to make and convinced within himself that the critic is right. Unless he can have this attitude, it is better either to secure further criticism or to lay the story aside.

2) It is always a good idea to let a manuscript "cool" over a period of time before attempting revision. Immediately following the heat of composition, a writer is in no mood to observe the defects of his story. No set "cooling" period can be recommended. A full day may be sufficient, though two or three days, or a week, or even a month may be advisable.

3) Some writers revise successfully by writing half again as much material as they intend to use in the finished story and then cutting. This is not necessarily a good practice for everyone to follow. But a writer should never fear cutting, throwing away. The young writer wants to hold onto everything. He should take his cue from the experienced novelist who tosses a hundred pages of manuscript into the wastebasket without turning a hair. One method of revision sometimes followed is to write the first draft of a story, throw it away, and write the second draft without reference to the first, on the theory that the story has thus been organized and planned and that greater spontaneity can be obtained by an entirely new writing. Study especially the first several pages of your story as a good part to cut.

4) Examine your story for clichés, for naturalness in dialogue, for wordy or too expository transitions. Remember that a white space in the middle of your story may be stronger writing than four hundred words of transition or lame explanation.

5) It is seldom wise to revise a story by padding or expanding, by adding words here and there.

6) Do not spend too much of your creative time in revision. Young writers tend to improve more rapidly if they lay aside stories not easily repaired and go on to new creative endeavor.

Examples of Revision

A

ORIGINAL

Somewhere in the darkness a whistle was blowing. It was the doctor's call from the oil refinery, two long and one short, blowing continuously. At the same time the telephone started to ring. Steve and I got out of bed, fearful of an explosion at the refinery.

REVISED VERSION

The doctor's call whistle shrilled in the darkness, two long and one short, blowing continuously. The telephone jangled. Steve and I bounded out of bed, fearful of an explosion at the oil refinery.

Comment: This is the beginning of a story. There is an effort to revise for greater directness and forcefulness.

B

ORIGINAL

"Hey, Stan," a pleasantly rough voice called, making him start nervously. He glanced quickly over his shoulder and saw one of his buddies coming toward him.

"Oh, hiya, Mac," he said.

"What's wrong with you, guy? Lately you jump at your own shadow. I don't blame you none, though. I'd hate to be surrounded by a bunch of dirty little Nips armed with nothing but a blamed typewriter."

"It's not the Nips that bother me, Mac," Stan tried to explain. "You see, it's a girl, a girl with beautiful hair," he ended aimlesly.

"Hell, if that's all that's wrong with you, maybe I can fix you up a date with one of the—" Mac stopped talking; he scratched his head and muttered anxiously, "Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle; something's gotta be done about that guy."

REVISED VERSION

Stan jerked nervously as a voice shouted *hey!* behind him. The fear melted from his eyes as he recognized Mac strolling toward him. Mac was one of his buddies.

"Oh, hiya," Stan said.

"Say, what's eating you anyhow?" Mac wanted to know. "The way you jump, a guy would think fifty Nips were coming at you, and you only a typewriter to throw at them." Mac laughed.

"It's not the Nips. It's—well, I can't explain."

"Girl trouble," Mac said cheerfully. "Girl trouble, I'll bet my last peseta."

"Maybe."

"Hell, if that's all it is I can fix you up. Now a date with one of those—Hey!" Mac scratched his head. "What's eating that guy?" Mac asked himself. Something should be done about it.

Comment: The author has succeeded in the revision in making the dialogue less stilted, more natural and smoother in tone.

C

ORIGINAL

Laredo was not with him when he died.

At the age of sixty-six he had ridden from Dolores toward Magdalena, near San Ignacio, there to dedicate a chapel to his patron San Xavier. It was a pleasant task for him. As he rode along the trail with half a dozen Pimas from Dolores he was happy in his work and in the springtime which surrounded him, in the carpet of desert wild flowers and the delicate odors of a green desert with the spring rains plentiful. Often he looked back at the blue cap of Sierra Azul and then ahead to the line of purple mountains.

Campos was already at Magdalena and came striding out to meet him. Friends for eighteen years in their labors in Pimeria Alta, they clasped hands warmly, the big Campos much the same as ever in his gruff good nature. "I have a pleasing dish," said Campos.

REVISED VERSION

Laredo was not able to be with him in his humble and tragic death.

At the ripe age of sixty-six, he had ridden from Dolores toward Magdalena, near San Ignacio, a very strenuous and long journey indeed, to dedicate a chapel there to his dear patron saint San Xavier. It was an exceedingly pleasant task for him. As he rode happily along the trail with a half dozen Pimas from Dolores he was well pleased with the work he had done and thoroughly enjoyed the lovely springtime which surrounded him. The desert was carpeted with multi-hued wild flowers that filled the air with perfumed scent, and was very green because the spring rains that year had been

plentiful. Often he looked back at the striking blue cap of Sierra Azul and ahead at the distant purple mountains misted in a desert haze. He had lived a good life, worth while and thoroughly Christian, and that is partly why he found such satisfaction in this journey.

Campos was already at Magdalena and hastened out to meet him at the moment of his arrival. They had been friends for eighteen long years in their religious labors in Pimeria Alta. They clasped hands with great warmth and affection, as such friends would. The big Campos was much the same as ever in his gruff good nature. "I have a dish that will please you, my friend," Campos said with great joviality and high spirit.

Comment: It should be quite obvious to the student that the original is vastly superior to the revised version. This is the kind of revision, adding words and phrases, that is very dangerous, and that in this instance has ruined a simple, clean-cut style.

PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

The instructions that follow concern manuscripts submitted to editors. The procedure for class submission will differ somewhat in the matter of folding and of name and address. For these variations follow your instructor's directions.

For submission to publisher, all manuscripts should be typed, always double spaced. (Always double-space first drafts as well, to allow room for inserted corrections.) Page margins should be ample on both sides and at the top and bottom: the page should not look crowded, nor should it give the impression of endeavoring to make the manuscript appear longer than it really is. Probably an inch margin all around makes the neatest page. Pages should be numbered either at the top or at the bottom. Be sure, before you start, that the typewriter keys are clean so as to make a clean unblurred impression, and that your ribbon is not so worn that the type is difficult to read.

Always make a carbon copy of your manuscript, for either class submission or submission elsewhere. Neither publishers nor agents hold themselves liable for the loss of any manuscript submitted to them, and manuscripts are occasionally lost in transit or in the publisher's office, where thousands of submissions may be handled weekly.

In the past it has been customary to use a title page, containing the name of the story, your name and address, and the statement that the

manuscript is submitted at regular rates. Now editors seem to prefer that this information appear on the first page, name and address and statement of submission at the upper right of page one, the title capitalized about the middle of this first page, the story proper beginning on the lower half.

If the manuscript is mailed loose, the name of the writer should appear in the upper right-hand corner of each page. If the manuscript is fastened with a punch-clip or bound in any other way, this precaution is unnecessary. Some writers put a legal binder on the backs of manuscripts in order to protect them in the mails.

Publishers tend to prefer that manuscripts be submitted unfolded in a large Manila envelope. This practice involves a somewhat cumbrous method, however, of mailing and storing. Most writers fold their stories three times crosswise and mail in the large-sized envelopes obtainable at the post office.

A *brief* letter of submission may accompany the manuscript. This letter may make a brief statement about the story or about yourself; it may tell of other work that you have had published or why you regard the story as suitable for that particular magazine. Such an accompanying letter is not regarded as an essential with short manuscripts but always accompanies book-length manuscripts.

Included in your envelope should be a self-addressed folded envelope with correct postage affixed for the return of the manuscript. This is usually more satisfactory than enclosing loose stamps which may be lost or mislaid, and it saves the publisher the trouble of typing a return envelope, a small chore on your part but multiplied many hundredfold in a publisher's office.

Never tell an editor that if he doesn't like a story he is to throw it into the wastebasket. He may think that's where it belongs without bothering to read it.

Short stories must be sent first-class mail. Manuscripts weighing over two pounds are sent by Railway Express, prepaid, with instructions to return the manuscript, if it is not wanted, by express collect.

CORRECTNESS

It is said that a professional writer is the one person who never needs to worry about his spelling and punctuation, for the editor always

corrects the manuscript anyhow. Up to a certain point this is true. But bad spelling, for example, can make an exceedingly bad impression on the preliminary reader and may keep an otherwise worth-while story from going any farther, while the young writer who neglects skilled use of punctuation not only increases a bad impression but ignores one of his most important tools for conveying shades of meaning to the reader. A good writer is very careful of his mechanics, and in matters of punctuation knows—or should know—exactly why he wishes a certain mark in a certain place.

The ability to take pains is one of the hallmarks of the professional writer, and such pains almost invariably include considerable skill and care in the appearance and correctness of a manuscript.

Neatness is a first essential, for as one's first judgment of another person is in large part based upon the clothes he wears, so one's first judgment of a manuscript is unconsciously based on its appearance. Some professional writers retype a page that contains a single error, in typing or otherwise. Most are not quite that meticulous. Draw a single line through the error, with a caret indicate the position of the correction, and in ink neatly write in the correction. But not too many of these should appear on the page—two or three at most. If there are more, retype the page.

It is assumed that the young writer interested in the short story has already acquired some knowledge of what correctness is. The discussion of mechanics which follows is very brief and is limited to typical mistakes of the novice as he first undertakes the short story.

Fragments

Fragments are quite acceptable in fiction writing, provided the writer intends them and there is some purpose in their use. Fragments are constructions not complete sentences but ending with periods. Usually they are participial phrases or substantives intended for impressionism or speed of movement or a sharp breaking off of thought.

Fused Sentences

Modern writers often tie one sentence to another with a comma instead of a semicolon or period. They do so deliberately in order to secure a closer coordination:

1. He tricked you into it, I came to warn you.
2. Chills and fever wracked his body, his feet swelled.

Do not abuse this privilege. The foregoing examples are quite different from the following, which indicates a student who does not yet understand the first rudiments of sensible punctuation:

1. We were the cavalry, Friday morning the outposts sent word back that the Japanese were approaching, the Colonel sent out two scouting parties, we prepared to fight.

Spelling

If you are a poor speller (not uncommon among writers), the reason is a sloppy indifference to that skill rather than inability to learn to spell, as has been proved in countless instances. The way to learn to spell is to concentrate on the appearance of words, on syllabication, on words within words, and on special letters, and *to use a dictionary constantly*. Go over your manuscript at least once for spelling only. Some students improve their spelling by reading the manuscript backward, thus observing individual words without any meaning attached.

And and *But*

Contrary to popular belief, it is quite correct to begin sentences with either *and* or *but*. Unless one is seeking a specialized stylistic effect, however, as Pearl Buck does, one should not abuse this privilege.

Direct Quotation

The mechanical punctuation of direct quotation seems to continue to cause some college students difficulty. The following reminders may be helpful:

1) Quotation marks almost invariably (49 times out of 50) follow and enclose other marks of punctuation.

a. "Please come," he said. RIGHT
b. "Please come", he said. WRONG
c. "Won't you be there?" he asked. RIGHT
d. "Won't you be there"? he asked. WRONG

2) Governing or directive words, words which control the quotation, begin with a small letter, lower case. Additional statements begin with a capital, upper case.

a. "Won't you be there?" he asked. RIGHT
b. "Won't you be there?" He hadn't wanted to see me, I knew. RIGHT
c. He said, "That's the way it is, you see." RIGHT

3) Split quotations are handled in the following manner:

a. "I refuse to go," she said, "unless you really want me."

4) The situation of quotations within quotations is avoided in modern fiction. In the circumstance of introducing a character with dialogue and then having him tell a story, the modern practice is to allow a space after this introductory material and then use double quotations only.

Indirect Quotations

In modern writing direct thoughts are handled as indirect quotation:

a. I can't face him, I thought, I can't, I can't. RIGHT
b. He told himself, Ralph is right. I must see him. RIGHT

Dash, Exclamation Mark

The dash and the exclamation mark are often abused in novice writing. No absolute rule can be given, but it would be safe to say that the occurrence of either one more than twice on any typewritten page will cause a loss of effectiveness.

Ellipsis

Students tend to abuse ellipsis. Three dots (no more) following an idea indicate that an omission has been made, either in a direct quotation, or—in the case of narrative writing—in a broken thought. The fourth dot, if used, is the period to indicate the end of a sentence. Following the fourth dot, there will be a capital. Following three dots will

be a small letter. Ellipsis has been used a good deal in impressionistic writing to indicate the fragmentary nature of the thinking.

Do not overuse ellipsis. If fragments are scattered through the entire story use single periods.

Dots across a page indicate a larger break or omission. These are customarily rather widely spaced. Extra spacing seems to be a more popular method for indicating such a break—that is, if the body of a story is double-spaced, the break will be quadruple-spaced.

Apostrophe

Creative writers tend to neglect the apostrophe. Its use to indicate possession is commonly known; its omission is usually a matter of carelessness.

In dialogue when indicating errors of speech or slurred words, use the apostrophe for any omitted letter, although two apostrophes in the same word should be avoided.

Heavy Punctuation

On the whole, exposition—article writing—tends toward more formal and traditional punctuation than story writing. The modern fiction writer is striving for a lighter style, with inherent unity within the sentence so as to avoid too much punctuation and too much broken or inverted order. Most writers avoid semicolons and too many commas within the sentence. They tend to use close appositives without commas and closely modifying phrases and clauses.

Liberties

The creative writer is allowed a good many liberties in his use of words, in punctuation, and in capitalization, provided he is being intentionally experimental and not simply careless, a difference readily recognized by any intelligent reader. The perfectly orthodox and traditional story full of errors is simply full of errors. The experimentalist may abandon most capitalization, run words together, punctuate as he pleases, but by the connotations and implications of his writing, by the tone, by the material, by impressionistic bits, he makes the reader understand that he is doing experimental work and accept it as such.

Exactly the same difference is involved as between Hemingway sentences and the sentences and vocabulary of a second-grader.

This is a matter not always thoroughly understood by the young writer. One must be familiar with the traditional before he can safely depart from it.

Errors in Grammar

Within the dialogue of a story, the character may make as many errors in grammar as the writer wishes. Outside the quotation marks, however, the writer is responsible for errors. By the time one has become an aspiring writer, he has usually weeded out most elementary errors. He need not worry much about case—*who* and *whom, I* and *me.* Nor need confusion of adjectives and adverbs, split infinitives, position of *only,* subjunctive mode, *shall* and *will* cause him any special effort—depending of course upon how formal or informal his style is.

But certain kinds of grammatical correctness the reader expects and the writer must supply. The most common errors seem to be the following:

1) Dangling constructions—prepositional phrases, participles

2) Incorrect reference of pronoun. Every personal and relative pronoun should refer without question to *one* antecedent substantive.

3) Incorrect number of the verb

4) Misuse of words

The following are words often abused in student stories either by overuse or by incorrect use: *lot, got, fix, contact* (as a verb), *kid, mad, also, like* and *as, bunch, cannot help but, couple, date, guess, in* and *into, kind of a, lie* and *lay, pretty, thing.*

Any of these matters that you are in doubt about, investigate either in a dictionary or in a handbook of correct usage.

Part II

THE QUALITY STORY

EVELINE

James Joyce

SHE sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odor of dusty cretonne. She was tired.

Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it—not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field—the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however, never played: he was too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep *nix* and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up; her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the colored print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word:

"He is in Melbourne now."

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about

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her. Of course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her, especially whenever there were people listening.

"Miss Hill, don't you see these ladies are waiting?"

"Look lively, Miss Hill, please."

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married—she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were growing up he had never gone for her, like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl; but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake. And now she had nobody to protect her. Ernest was dead, and Harry, who was in the church decorating business, was nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably. She always gave her entire wages —seven shillings—and Harry always sent up what he could but the trouble was to get any money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets, and much more, for he was usually fairly bad on Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under her load of provisions. She had hard work to keep the house together and to see that the two young children who had been left to her charge went to school regularly and got their meals regularly. It was hard work—a hard life—but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night

boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Aires where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see *The Bohemian Girl* and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little. People knew that they were courting and, when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him. He had tales of distant countries. He had started as a deck boy at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Aires, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him.

"I know these sailor chaps," he said.

One day he had quarrelled with Frank and after that she had to meet her lover secretly.

The evening deepened in the avenue. The white of two letters in her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her father. Ernest had been her favorite but she liked Harry too. Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mother's bonnet to make the children laugh.

Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odor of dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the

home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sickroom saying:

"Damned Italians! Coming over here!"

As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on the very quick of her being—that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness. She trembled as she heard again her mother's voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:

"Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!"

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her.

She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall. He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage, over and over again. The station was full of soldiers with brown baggage. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist. If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Aires. Their passage had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.

A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand:

"Come!"

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

"Come!"

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish!

"Eveline! Evvy!"

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

Analysis

"Eveline," although not typical of James Joyce's later works, demonstrates his keen psychological insight and his delicate perceptiveness.

1. What is the theme of "Eveline" and how does this theme differ from that of Katherine Mansfield's "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," which follows? How is it similar?

2. Almost the entire story of "Eveline" is told in retrospect. Ordinarily this is a dangerous arrangement to employ because of the likelihood of losing the feeling of immediacy. How does Joyce overcome this danger? What element creates suspense?

3. Point out specifically what gives the story atmosphere. In what way does atmosphere contribute toward the creation of character?

4. Do you anticipate the choice that Eveline makes? How has the author foreshadowed the inevitability of this ending?

5. "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" may be construed as social criticism. Can "Eveline"? Explain your answer.

6. The influence of parents upon children is an often-recurring modern theme. Keep in mind "Eveline" as you read such stories based upon this same theme as "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," "Mother," "They Shall Inherit the Earth," "The Sin."

7. Can you evolve from your own experience any story themes based on the influence of parents upon children and their behavior?

James Joyce

James Joyce (1882–1941) was born in Dublin, Ireland, and educated there at Belvidere College and University College. In 1904 he left Ireland to spend most of his remaining years on the Continent—in Italy, Switzerland, and finally France, where he composed most of his significant works.

The Dubliners, from which "Eveline" is reprinted, was first published in 1914, a collection of penetrating and vivid stories of Dublin life, but not typical in their technique of Joyce's later productions. Scarcely a serious modern writer has failed to come under the influence of Joyce's three later

books, particularly the first two: *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses,* and *Finnegan's Wake.* Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Thomas Wolfe, Conrad Aiken, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, to name only a few of the better known, were influenced by Joyce's writings.

Joyce conceived of reality as the drifting thoughts of the individual mind rather than the physical world, which he regarded as incidental. He was constantly experimenting to discover new forms and symbols to express human character by means of the individual thought stream. A book like *Ulysses* seems jumbled and fragmentary, a confused mass of unrelated trivia—on superficial reading—rather than a carefully evolved and profound study of individual impressions, with symbolic meaning, in a realistic framework that carries realism into the abstract, like expressionism in painting and drama.



THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE COLONEL

Katherine Mansfield

THE week after was one of the busiest weeks of their lives. Even when they went to bed it was only their bodies that lay down and rested; their minds went on, thinking things out, talking things over, wondering, deciding, trying to remember where . . .

Constantia lay like a statue, her hands by her sides, her feet just overlapping each other, the sheet up to her chin. She stared at the ceiling.

"Do you think father would mind if we gave his top-hat to the porter?"

"The porter?" snapped Josephine. "Why ever the porter? What a very extraordinary idea!"

"Because," said Constantia slowly, "he must often have to go to funerals. And I noticed at—at the cemetery that he only had a bowler." She paused. "I thought then how very much he'd appreciate a top-hat. We ought to give him a present, too. He was always very nice to father."

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"But," cried Josephine, flouncing on her pillow and staring across the dark at Constantia, "father's head!" And suddenly, for one awful moment, she nearly giggled. Not, of course, that she felt in the least like giggling. It must have been habit. Years ago, when they had stayed awake at night talking, their beds had simply heaved. And now the porter's head, disappearing, popped out, like a candle, under father's hat. . . . The giggle mounted, mounted; she clenched her hands; she fought it down; she frowned fiercely at the dark and said "Remember" terribly sternly.

"We can decide to-morrow," she sighed.

Constantia had noticed nothing; she sighed.

"Do you think we ought to have our dressing-gowns dyed as well?"

"Black?" almost shrieked Josephine.

"Well, what else?" said Constantia. "I was thinking—it doesn't seem quite sincere, in a way, to wear black out of doors and when we're fully dressed, and then when we're at home—"

"But nobody sees us," said Josephine. She gave the bedclothes such a twitch that both her feet became uncovered, and she had to creep up the pillows to get them well under again.

"Kate does," said Constantia. "And the postman very well might."

Josephine thought of her dark-red slippers, which matched her dressing-gown, and of Constantia's favourite indefinite green ones which went with hers. Black! Two black dressing-gowns and two pairs of black woolly slippers, creeping off to the bathroom like black cats.

"I don't think it's absolutely necessary," said she.

Silence. Then Constantia said, "We shall have to post the papers with the notice in them to-morrow to catch the Ceylon mail. . . . How many letters have we had up till now?"

"Twenty-three."

Josephine had replied to them all, and twenty-three times when she came to "We miss our dear father so much" she had broken down and had to use her handkerchief, and on some of them even to soak up a very light-blue tear with an edge of blotting-paper. Strange! She couldn't have put it on—but twenty-three times. Even now, though, when she said over to herself sadly. "We miss our dear father *so* much" she could have cried if she'd wanted to.

"Have you got enough stamps?" came from Constantia.

"Oh, how can I tell?" said Josephine crossly. "What's the good of asking me that now?"

"I was just wondering," said Constantia mildly.

Silence again. There came a little rustle, a scurry, a hop.

"A mouse," said Constantia.

"It can't be a mouse because there aren't any crumbs," said Josephine.

"But it doesn't know there aren't," said Constantia.

A spasm of pity squeezed her heart. Poor little thing! She wished she'd left a tiny piece of biscuit on the dressing-table. It was awful to think of it not finding anything. What would it do?

"I can't think how they manage to live at all," she said slowly.

"Who?" demanded Josephine.

And Constantia said more loudly than she meant to, "Mice."

Josephine was furious. "Oh, what nonsense, Con!" she said. "What have mice got to do with it? You're asleep."

"I don't think I am," said Constantia. She shut her eyes to make sure. She was.

Josephine arched her spine, pulled up her knees, folded her arms so that her fists came under her ears, and pressed her cheek hard against the pillow.

II

Another thing which complicated matters was they had Nurse Andrews staying on with them that week. It was their own fault; they had asked her. It was Josephine's idea. On the morning—well, on the last morning, when the doctor had gone, Josephine had said to Constantia, "Don't you think it would be rather nice if we asked Nurse Andrews to stay on for a week as our guest?"

"Very nice," said Constantia.

"I thought," went on Josephine quickly, "I should just say this afternoon, after I've paid her, 'My sister and I would be very pleased, after all you've done for us, Nurse Andrews, if you would stay on for a week as our guest.' I'd have to put that in about being our guest in case—"

"Oh, but she could hardly expect to be paid!" cried Constantia.

"One never knows," said Josephine sagely.

Nurse Andrews had, of course, jumped at the idea. But it was a bother. It meant they had to have regular sit-down meals at the proper

times, whereas if they'd been alone they could just have asked Kate if she wouldn't have minded bringing them a tray wherever they were. And meal-times now that the strain was over were rather a trial.

Nurse Andrews was simply fearful about butter. Really they couldn't help feeling that about butter, at least, she took advantage of their kindness. And she had that maddening habit of asking for just an inch more bread to finish what she had on her plate, and then, at the last mouthful, absent-mindedly—of course it wasn't absent-mindedly—taking another helping. Josephine got very red when this happened, and she fastened her small, bead-like eyes on the tablecloth as if she saw a minute strange insect creeping through the web of it. But Constantia's long, pale face lengthened and set, and she gazed away—away—far over the desert, to where that line of camels unwound like a thread of wool. . . .

"When I was with Lady Tukes," said Nurse Andrews, "she had such a dainty little contrayvance for the buttah. It was a silvah Cupid balanced on the—on the bordah of a glass dish, holding a tayny fork. And when you wanted some buttah you simply pressed his foot and he bent down and speared you a piece. It was quite a gayme."

Josephine could hardly bear that. But "I think those things are very extravagant" was all she said.

"But whey?" asked Nurse Andrews, beaming through her eye-glasses. "No one, surely, would take more buttah than one wanted—would one?"

"Ring, Con," cried Josephine. She couldn't trust herself to reply.

And proud young Kate, the enchanted princess, came in to see what the old tabbies wanted now. She snatched away their plates of mock something or other and slapped down a white, terrified blanc-mange.

"Jam, please, Kate," said Josephine kindly.

Kate knelt and burst open the sideboard, lifted the lid of the jam-pot, saw it was empty, put it on the table, and stalked off.

"I'm afraid," said Nurse Andrews a moment later, "there isn't any."

"Oh, what a bother!" said Josephine. She bit her lip. "What had we better do?"

Constantia looked dubious. "We can't disturb Kate again," she said softly.

Nurse Andrews waited, smiling at them both. Her eyes wandered, spying at everything behind her eye-glasses. Constantia in despair went

back to her camels. Josephine frowned heavily—concentrated. If it hadn't been for this idiotic woman she and Con would, of course, have eaten their blanc-mange without. Suddenly the idea came.

"I know," she said. "Marmalade. There's some marmalade in the sideboard. Get it, Con."

"I hope," laughed Nurse Andrews, and her laugh was like a spoon tinkling against a medicine-glass— "I hope it's not very bittah marmalayde."

III

But, after all, it was not long now, and then she'd be gone for good. And there was no getting over the fact that she had been very kind to father. She had nursed him day and night at the end. Indeed, both Constantia and Josephine felt privately she had rather overdone the not leaving him at the very last. For when they had gone in to say good-bye Nurse Andrews had sat beside his bed the whole time, holding his wrist and pretending to look at her watch. It couldn't have been necessary. It was so tactless, too. Supposing father had wanted to say something—something private to them. Not that he had. Oh, far from it! He lay there, purple, a dark, angry purple in the face, and never even looked at them when they came in. Then, as they were standing there, wondering what to do, he had suddenly opened one eye. Oh, what a difference it would have made, what a difference to their memory of him, how much easier to tell people about it, if he had only opened both! But no—one eye only. It glared at them a moment and then . . . went out.

IV

It had made it very awkward for them when Mr. Farolles, of St. John's, called the same afternoon.

"The end was quite peaceful, I trust?" were the first words he said as he glided towards them through the dark drawing-room.

"Quite," said Josephine faintly. They both hung their heads. Both of them felt certain that eye wasn't at all a peaceful eye.

"Won't you sit down?" said Josephine.

"Thank you, Miss Pinner," said Mr. Farolles gratefully. He folded

his coat-tails and began to lower himself into father's arm-chair, but just as he touched it he almost sprang up and slid into the next chair instead.

He coughed. Josephine clasped her hands; Constantia looked vague.

"I want you to feel, Miss Pinner," said Mr. Farolles, "and you, Miss Constantia, that I'm trying to be helpful. I want to be helpful to you both, if you will let me. These are the times," said Mr. Farolles, very simply and earnestly, "when God means us to be helpful to one another."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Farolles," said Josephine and Constantia.

"Not at all," said Mr. Farolles gently. He drew his kid gloves through his fingers and leaned forward. "And if either of you would like a little Communion, either or both of you, here *and* now, you have only to tell me. A little Communion is often very help—a great comfort," he added tenderly.

But the idea of a little Communion terrified them. What! In the drawing-room by themselves—with no—no altar or anything! The piano would be much too high, thought Constantia, and Mr. Farolles could not possibly lean over it with the chalice. And Kate would be sure to come bursting in and interrupt them, thought Josephine. And supposing the bell rang in the middle? It might be somebody important—about their mourning. Would they get up reverently and go out, or would they have to wait . . . in torture?

"Perhaps you will send round a note by your good Kate if you would care for it later," said Mr. Farolles.

"Oh yes, thank you very much!" they both said.

Mr. Farolles got up and took his black straw hat from the round table.

"And about the funeral," he said softly. "I may arrange that—as your dear father's old friend and yours, Miss Pinner—and Miss Constantia?"

Josephine and Constantia got up too.

"I should like it to be quite simple," said Josephine firmly, "and not too expensive. At the same time, I should like—"

"A good one that will last," thought dreamy Constantia, as if Josephine were buying a nightgown. But of course Josephine didn't say that. "One suitable to our father's position." She was very nervous.

"I'll run round to our good friend Mr. Knight," said Mr. Farolles soothingly. "I will ask him to come and see you. I am sure you will find him very helpful indeed."

V

Well, at any rate, all that part of it was over, though neither of them could possibly believe that father was never coming back. Josephine had had a moment of absolute terror at the cemetery, while the coffin was lowered, to think that she and Constantia had done this thing without asking his permission. What would father say when he found out? For he was bound to find out sooner or later. He always did. "Buried. You two girls had me *buried!*" She heard his stick thumping. Oh, what would they say? What possible excuse could they make? It sounded such an appallingly heartless thing to do. Such a wicked advantage to take of a person because he happened to be helpless at the moment. The other people seemed to treat it all as a matter of course. They were strangers; they couldn't be expected to understand that father was the very last person for such a thing to happen to. No, the entire blame for it all would fall on her and Constantia. And the expense, she thought, stepping into the tight-buttoned cab. When she had to show him the bills. What would he say then?

She heard him absolutely roaring, "And do you expect me to pay for this gimcrack excursion of yours?"

"Oh," groaned poor Josephine aloud, "we shouldn't have done it, Con!"

And Constantia, pale as a lemon in all that blackness, said in a frightened whisper, "Done what, Jug?"

"Let them bu-bury father like that," said Josephine, breaking down and crying into her new, queer-smelling mourning handkerchief.

"But what else could we have done?" asked Constantia wonderingly. "We couldn't have kept him, Jug—we couldn't have kept him unburied. At any rate, not in a flat that size."

Josephine blew her nose; the cab was dreadfully stuffy.

"I don't know," she said forlornly. "It is all so dreadful. I feel we ought to have tried to, just for a time at least. To make perfectly sure. One thing's certain"—and her tears sprang out again—"father will never forgive us for this—never!"

VI

Father would never forgive them. That was what they felt more than ever when, two mornings later, they went into his room to go through his things. They had discussed it quite calmly. It was even down on Josephine's list of things to be done. *Go through father's things and settle about them*. But that was a very different matter from saying after breakfast:

"Well, are you ready, Con?"

"Yes, Jug—when you are."

"Then I think we'd better get it over."

It was dark in the hall. It had been a rule for years never to disturb father in the morning, whatever happened. And now they were going to open the door without knocking even. . . . Constantia's eyes were enormous at the idea; Josephine felt weak in the knees.

"You—you go first," she gasped, pushing Constantia.

But Constantia said, as she always had said on those occasions, "No, Jug, that's not fair. You're eldest."

Josephine was just going to say—what at other times she wouldn't have owned to for the world—what she kept for her very last weapon, "But you're tallest," when they noticed that the kitchen door was open, and there stood Kate. . . .

"Very stiff," said Josephine, grasping the doorhandle and doing her best to turn it. As if anything ever deceived Kate!

It couldn't be helped. That girl was . . . Then the door was shut behind them, but—but they weren't in father's room at all. They might have suddenly walked through the wall by mistake into a different flat altogether. Was the door just behind them? They were too frightened to look. Josephine knew that if it was it was holding itself tight shut; Constantia felt that, like the doors in dreams, it hadn't any handle at all. It was the coldness which made it so awful. Or the whiteness—which? Everything was covered. The blinds were down, a cloth hung over the mirror, a sheet hid the bed; a huge fan of white paper filled the fireplace. Constantia timidly put out her hand; she almost expected a snowflake to fall. Josephine felt a queer tingling in her nose, as if her nose was freezing. Then a cab klop-klopped over the cobbles below, and the quiet seemed to shake into little pieces.

"I had better pull up a blind," said Josephine bravely.

"Yes, it might be a good idea," whispered Constantia.

They only gave the blind a touch, but it flew up and the cord flew after, rolling round the blindstick, and the little tassel tapped as if trying to get free. That was too much for Constantia.

"Don't you think—don't you think we might put it off for another day?" she whispered.

"Why?" snapped Josephine, feeling, as usual, much better now that she knew for certain that Constantia was terrified. "It's got to be done. But I do wish you wouldn't whisper, Con."

"I didn't know I was whispering," whispered Constantia.

"And why do you keep on staring at the bed?" said Josephine, raising her voice almost defiantly. "There's nothing *on* the bed."

"Oh, Jug, don't say so!" said poor Connie. "At any rate, not so loudly."

Josephine felt herself that she had gone too far. She took a wide swerve over to the chest of drawers, put out her hand, but quickly drew it back again.

"Connie!" she gasped, and she wheeled round and leaned with her back against the chest of drawers.

"Oh, Jug—what?"

Josephine could only glare. She had the most extraordinary feeling that she had just escaped something simply awful. But how could she explain to Constantia that father was in the chest of drawers? He was in the top drawer with his handkerchiefs and neckties, or in the next with his shirts and pyjamas, or in the lowest of all with his suits. He was watching there, hidden away—just behind the door-handle—ready to spring.

She pulled a funny old-fashioned face at Constantia, just as she used to in the old days when she was going to cry.

"I can't open," she nearly wailed.

"No, don't, Jug," whispered Constantia earnestly. "It's much better not to. Don't let's open anything. At any rate, not for a long time."

"But—but it seems so weak," said Josephine, breaking down.

"But why not be weak for once, Jug?" argued Constantia, whispering quite fiercely. "If it is weak." And her pale stare flew from the locked writing-table—so safe—to the huge glittering wardrobe, and she began to breathe in a queer, panting way. "Why shouldn't we be weak for once in our lives, Jug? It's quite excusable. Let's be weak—be weak, Jug. It's much nicer to be weak than to be strong."

And then she did one of those amazingly bold things that she'd done about twice before in their lives; she marched over to the wardrobe, turned the key, and took it out of the lock. Took it out of the lock and held it up to Josephine, showing Josephine by her extraordinary smile that she knew what she'd done, she'd risked deliberately father being in there among his overcoats.

If the huge wardrobe had lurched forward, had crashed down on Constantia, Josephine wouldn't have been surprised. On the contrary, she would have thought it the only suitable thing to happen. But nothing happened. Only the room seemed quieter than ever, and bigger flakes of cold air fell on Josephine's shoulders and knees. She began to shiver.

"Come, Jug," said Constantia, still with that awful callous smile, and Josephine followed just as she had that last time, when Constantia had pushed Benny into the round pond.

VII

But the strain told on them when they were back in the dining-room. They sat down, very shaky, and looked at each other.

"I don't feel I can settle to anything," said Josephine, "until I've had something. Do you think we could ask Kate for two cups of hot water?"

"I really don't see why we shouldn't," said Constantia carefully. She was quite normal again. "I won't ring. I'll go to the kitchen door and ask her."

"Yes, do," said Josephine, sinking down into a chair. "Tell her, just two cups, Con, nothing else—on a tray."

"She needn't even put the jug on, need she?" said Constantia, as though Kate might very well complain if the jug had been there.

"Oh no, certainly not! The jug's not at all necessary. She can pour it direct out of the kettle," cried Josephine, feeling that would be a labour-saving indeed.

Their cold lips quivered at the greenish brims. Josephine curved her small red hands round the cup; Constantia sat up and blew on the wavy stream, making it flutter from one side to the other.

"Speaking of Benny," said Josephine.

And though Benny hadn't been mentioned Constantia immediately looked as though he had.

"He'll expect us to send him something of father's, of course. But it's so difficult to know what to send to Ceylon."

"You mean things get unstuck so on the voyage," murmured Constantia.

"No, lost," said Josephine sharply. "You know there's no post. Only runners."

Both paused to watch a black man in white linen drawers running through the pale fields for dear life, with a large brown-paper parcel in his hands. Josephine's black man was tiny; he scurried along glistening like an ant. But there was something blind and tireless about Constantia's tall, thin fellow, which made him, she decided, a very unpleasant person indeed. . . . On the veranda, dressed all in white and wearing a cork helmet, stood Benny. His right hand shook up and down, as father's did when he was impatient. And behind him, not in the least interested, sat Hilda, the unknown sister-in-law. She swung in a cane rocker and flicked over the leaves of the *Tatler*.

"I think his watch would be the most suitable present," said Josephine.

Constantia looked up; she seemed surprised.

"Oh, would you trust a gold watch to a native?"

"But of course I'd disguise it," said Josephine. "No one would know it was a watch." She liked the idea of having to make a parcel such a curious shape that no one could possibly guess what it was. She even thought for a moment of hiding the watch in a narrow cardboard corset-box that she'd kept by her for a long time, waiting for it to come in for something. It was such beautiful firm cardboard. But, no, it wouldn't be appropriate for this occasion. It had lettering on it: *Medium Women's 28. Extra Firm Busks.* It would be almost too much of a surprise for Benny to open that and find father's watch inside.

"And of course it isn't as though it would be going—ticking, I mean," said Constantia, who was still thinking of the native love of jewellery. "At least," she added, "it would be very strange if after all that time it was."

VIII

Josephine made no reply. She had flown off on one of her tangents. She had suddenly thought of Cyril. Wasn't it more usual for the only grandson to have the watch? And then dear Cyril was so appreciative,

and a gold watch meant so much to a young man. Benny, in all probability, had quite got out of the habit of watches; men so seldom wore waistcoats in those hot climates. Whereas Cyril in London wore them from year's end to year's end. And it would be so nice for her and Constantia, when he came to tea, to know it was there. "I see you've got on grandfather's watch, Cyril." It would be somehow so satisfactory.

Dear boy! What a blow his sweet, sympathetic little note had been! Of course they quite understood; but it was most unfortunate.

"It would have been such a point, having him," said Josephine.

"And he would have enjoyed it so," said Constantia, not thinking what she was saying.

However, as soon as he got back he was coming to tea with his aunties. Cyril to tea was one of their rare treats.

"Now, Cyril, you mustn't be frightened of our cakes. Your Auntie Con and I bought them at Buszard's this morning. We know what a man's appetite is. So don't be ashamed of making a good tea."

Josephine cut recklessly into the rich dark cake that stood for her winter gloves or the soling and heeling of Constantia's only respectable shoes. But Cyril was almost unmanlike in appetite.

"I say, Aunt Josephine, I simply can't. I've only just had lunch, you know."

"Oh, Cyril, that can't be true! It's after four," cried Josephine. Constantia sat with her knife poised over the chocolate-roll.

"It is, all the same," said Cyril. "I had to meet a man at Victoria, and he kept me hanging about till . . . there was only time to get lunch and to come on here. And he gave me—phew"—Cyril put his hand to his forehead—"a terrific blow-out," he said.

It was disappointing—to-day of all days. But still he couldn't be expected to know.

"But you'll have a meringue, won't you, Cyril?" said Aunt Josephine. "These meringues were bought specially for you. Your dear father was so fond of them. We were sure you are, too."

"I *am,* Aunt Josephine," cried Cyril ardently. "Do you mind if I take half to begin with?"

"Not at all, dear boy; but we mustn't let you off with that."

"Is your dear father still so fond of meringues?" asked Auntie Con gently. She winced faintly as she broke through the shell of hers.

"Well, I don't quite know, Auntie Con," said Cyril breezily.

At that they both looked up.

"Don't know?" almost snapped Josephine. "Don't know a thing like that about your own father, Cyril?"

"Surely," said Auntie Con softly.

Cyril tried to laugh it off. "Oh, well," he said, "it's such a long time since—" He faltered. He stopped. Their faces were too much for him.

"Even *so,*" said Josephine.

And Auntie Con looked.

Cyril put down his teacup. "Wait a bit," he cried. "Wait a bit, Aunt Josephine. What am I thinking of?"

He looked up. They were beginning to brighten. Cyril slapped his knee.

"Of course," he said, "it was meringues. How could I have forgotten? Yes, Aunt Josephine, you're perfectly right. Father's most frightfully keen on meringues."

They didn't only beam. Aunt Josephine went scarlet with pleasure; Auntie Con gave a deep, deep sigh.

"And now, Cyril, you must come and see father," said Josephine. "He knows you were coming to-day."

"Right," said Cyril, very firmly and heartily. He got up from his chair; suddenly he glanced at the clock.

"I say, Auntie Con, isn't your clock a bit slow? I've got to meet a man at—at Paddington just after five. I'm afraid I shan't be able to stay very long with grandfather."

"Oh, he won't expect you to stay *very* long!" said Aunt Josephine.

Constantia was still gazing at the clock. She couldn't make up her mind if it was fast or slow. It was one or the other, she felt almost certain of that. At any rate, it had been.

Cyril still lingered. "Aren't you coming along, Auntie Con?"

"Of course," said Josephine, "we shall all go. Come on, Con."

IX

They knocked at the door, and Cyril followed his aunts into grandfather's hot, sweetish room.

"Come on," said Grandfather Pinner. "Don't hang about. What is it? What've you been up to?"

He was sitting in front of a roaring fire, clasping his stick. He had a

thick rug over his knees. On his lap there lay a beautiful pale yellow silk handkerchief.

"It's Cyril, father," said Josephine shyly. And she took Cyril's hand and led him forward.

"Good afternoon, grandfather," said Cyril, trying to take his hand out of Aunt Josephine's. Grandfather Pinner shot his eyes at Cyril in the way he was famous for. Where was Auntie Con? She stood on the other side of Aunt Jospehine; her long arms hung down in front of her; her hands were clasped. She never took her eyes off grandfather.

"Well," said Grandfather Pinner, beginning to thump, "what have you got to tell me?"

What had he, what had he got to tell him? Cyril felt himself smiling like a perfect imbecile. The room was stifling, too.

But Aunt Josephine came to his rescue. She cried brightly, "Cyril says his father is still very fond of meringues, father dear."

"Eh?" said Grandfather Pinner, curving his hand like a purple meringue-shell over one ear.

Josephine repeated, "Cyril says his father is still very fond of meringues."

"Can't hear," said old Colonel Pinner. And he waved Josephine away with his stick, then pointed with his stick to Cyril. "Tell me what she's trying to say," he said.

(My God!) "Must I?" said Cyril, blushing and staring at Aunt Josephine.

"Do, dear," she smiled. "It will please him so much."

"Come on, out with it!" cried Colonel Pinner testily, beginning to thump again.

And Cyril leaned forward and yelled, "Father's still very fond of meringues."

At that Grandfather Pinner jumped as though he had been shot.

"Don't shout!" he cried. "What's the matter with the boy? *Meringues!* What about 'em?"

"Oh, Aunt Josephine, must we go on?" groaned Cyril desperately.

"It's quite all right, dear boy," said Aunt Josephine, as though he and she were at the dentist's together. "He'll understand in a minute." And she whispered to Cyril, "He's getting a bit deaf, you know." Then she leaned forward and really bawled at Grandfather Pinner, "Cyril only

wanted to tell you, father dear, that *his* father is still very fond of meringues."

Colonel Pinner heard that time, heard and brooded, looking Cyril up and down.

"What an esstrordinary thing!" said old Grandfather Pinner. "What an esstrordinary thing to come all this way here to tell me!"

And Cyril felt it *was*.

"Yes, I shall send Cyril the watch," said Josephine.

"That would be very nice," said Constantia. "I seem to remember last time he came there was some little trouble about the time."

X

They were interrupted by Kate bursting through the door in her usual fashion, as though she had discovered some secret panel in the wall.

"Fried or boiled?" asked the bold voice.

Fried or boiled? Josephine and Constantia were quite bewildered for the moment. They could hardly take it in.

"Fried or boiled what, Kate?" asked Josephine, trying to begin to concentrate.

Kate gave a loud sniff. "Fish."

"Well, why didn't you say so immediately?" Josephine reproached her gently. "How could you expect us to understand, Kate? There are a great many things in this world, you know, which are fried or boiled." And after such a display of courage she said quite brightly to Constantia, "Which do you prefer, Con?"

"I think it might be nice to have it fried," said Constantia. "On the other hand, of course boiled fish is very nice. I think I prefer both equally well . . . Unless you . . . In that case—"

"I shall fry it," said Kate, and she bounced back, leaving their door open and slamming the door of her kitchen.

Josephine gazed at Constantia; she raised her pale eyebrows until they rippled away into her pale hair. She got up. She said in a very lofty, imposing way, "Do you mind following me into the drawing-room, Constantia? I've something of great importance to discuss with you."

For it was always to the drawing-room they retired when they wanted to talk over Kate.

Josephine closed the door meaningly. "Sit down, Constantia," she said, still very grand. She might have been receiving Constantia for the first time. And Con looked round vaguely for a chair, as though she felt indeed quite a stranger.

"Now the question is," said Josephine, bending forward, "whether we shall keep her or not."

"That is the question," agreed Constantia.

"And this time," said Josephine firmly, "we must come to a definite decision."

Constantia looked for a moment as though she might begin going over all the other times, but she pulled herself together and said, "Yes, Jug."

"You see, Con," explained Josephine, "everything is so changed now." Constantia looked up quickly. "I mean," went on Josephine, "we're not dependent on Kate as we were." And she blushed faintly. "There's not father to cook for."

"That is perfectly true," agreed Constantia. "Father certainly doesn't want any cooking now, whatever else—"

Josephine broke in sharply, "You're not sleepy, are you, Con?"

"Sleepy, Jug?" Constantia was wide-eyed.

"Well, concentrate more," said Josephine sharply, and she returned to the subject. "What it comes to is, if we did"—and this she barely breathed, glancing at the door—"give Kate notice"—she raised her voice again—"we could manage our own food."

"Why not?" cried Constantia. She couldn't help smiling. The idea was so exciting. She clasped her hands. "What should we live on, Jug?"

"Oh, eggs in various forms!" said Jug, lofty again. "And, besides, there are all the cooked foods."

"But I've always heard," said Constantia, "they are considered so very expensive."

"Not if one buys them in moderation," said Josephine. But she tore herself away from this fascinating bypath and dragged Constantia after her.

"What we've got to decide now, however, is whether we really do trust Kate or not."

Constantia leaned back. Her flat little laugh flew from her lips.

"Isn't it curious, Jug," said she, "that just on this one subject I've never been able to quite make up my mind?"

XI

She never had. The whole difficulty was to prove anything. How did one prove things, how could one? Suppose Kate had stood in front of her and deliberately made a face. Mightn't she very well have been in pain? Wasn't it impossible, at any rate, to ask Kate if she was making a face at her? If Kate answered "No"—and of course she would say "No"—what a position! How undignified! Then again Constantia suspected, she was almost certain that Kate went to her chest of drawers when she and Josephine were out, not to take things but to spy. Many times she had come back to find her amethyst cross in the most unlikely places, under her lace ties or on top of her evening Bertha. More than once she had laid a trap for Kate. She had arranged things in a special order and then called Josephine to witness.

"You see, Jug?"

"Quite, Con."

"Now we shall be able to tell."

But, oh dear, when she did go to look, she was as far off from a proof as ever! If anything was displaced, it might so very well have happened as she closed the drawer; a jolt might have done it so easily.

"You come, Jug, and decide. I really can't. It's too difficult."

But after a pause and a long glare Josephine would sigh, "Now you've put the doubt into my mind, Con, I'm sure I can't tell myself."

"Well, we can't postpone it again," said Josephine. "If we postpone it this time—"

XII

But at that moment in the street below a barrel-organ struck up. Josephine and Constantia sprang to their feet together.

"Run, Con," said Josephine. "Run quickly. There's sixpence on the—"

Then they remembered. It didn't matter. They would never have to stop the organ-grinder again. Never again would she and Constantia be told to make that monkey take his noise somewhere else. Never

would sound that loud, strange bellow when father thought they were not hurrying enough. The organ-grinder might play there all day and the stick would not thump.

It never will thump again,
It never will thump again,

played the barrel-organ.

What was Constantia thinking? She had such a strange smile; she looked different. She couldn't be going to cry.

"Jug, Jug," said Constantia softly, pressing her hands together. "Do you know what day it is? It's Saturday. It's a week to-day, a whole week."

A week since father died,
A week since father died,

cried the barrel-organ. And Josephine, too, forgot to be practical and sensible; she smiled faintly, strangely. On the Indian carpet there fell a square of sunlight, pale red; it came and went and came—and stayed, deepened—until it shone almost golden.

"The sun's out," said Josephine, as though it really mattered.

A perfect fountain of bubbling notes shook from the barrel-organ, round, bright notes, carelessly scattered.

Constantia lifted her big, cold hands as if to catch them, and then her hands fell again. She walked over to the mantelpiece to her favourite Buddha. And the stone and gilt image, whose smile always gave her such a queer feeling, almost a pain and yet a pleasant pain, seemed to-day to be more than smiling. He knew something; he had a secret. "I know something that you don't know," said her Buddha. Oh, what was it, what could it be? And yet she had always felt there was . . . something.

The sunlight pressed through the windows, thieved its way in, flashed its light over the furniture and the photographs. Josephine watched it. When it came to mother's photograph, the enlargement over the piano, it lingered as though puzzled to find so little remained of mother, except the earrings shaped like tiny pagodas and a black feather boa. Why did the photographs of dead people always fade so? wondered Josephine. As soon as a person was dead their photograph died too. But, of course, this one of mother was very old. It was thirty-five years old. Josephine remembered standing on a chair and pointing out that feather boa to Constantia and telling her that it was a snake that had killed

their mother in Ceylon. . . . Would everything have been different if mother hadn't died? She didn't see why. Aunt Florence had lived with them until they had left school, and they had moved three times and had their yearly holiday and . . . and there'd been changes of servants, of course.

Some little sparrows, young sparrows they sounded, chirped on the window-ledge. *Yeep—eyeep—yeep.* But Josephine felt they were not sparrows, not on the window-ledge. It was inside her, that queer little crying noise. *Yeep—eyeep—yeep.* Ah, what was it crying, so weak and forlorn?

If mother had lived, might they have married? But there had been nobody for them to marry. There had been father's Anglo-Indian friends before he quarrelled with them. But after that she and Constantia never met a single man except clergymen. How did one meet men? Or even if they'd met them, how could they have got to know men well enough to be more than strangers? One read of people having adventures, being followed, and so on. But nobody had ever followed Constantia and her. Oh yes, there had been one year at Eastbourne a mysterious man at their boarding-house who had put a note on the jug of hot water outside their bedroom door! But by the time Connie had found it the steam had made the writing too faint to read; they couldn't even make out to which of them it was addressed. And he had left next day. And that was all. The rest had been looking after father, and at the same time keeping out of father's way. But now? But now? The thieving sun touched Josephine gently. She lifted her face. She was drawn over to the window by gentle beams. . . .

Until the barrel-organ stopped playing Constantia stayed before the Buddha, wondering, but not as usual, not vaguely. This time her wonder was like longing. She remembered the times she had come in here, crept out of bed in her nightgown when the moon was full, and lain on the floor with her arms outstretched, as though she was crucified. Why? The big, pale moon had made her do it. The horrible dancing figures on the carved screen had leered at her and she hadn't minded. She remembered too how, whenever they were at the seaside, she had gone off by herself and got as close to the sea as she could, and sung something, something she had made up, while she gazed all over that restless water. There had been this other life, running out, bringing

things home in bags, getting things on approval, discussing them with Jug, and taking them back to get more things on approval, and arranging father's trays and trying not to annoy father. But it all seemed to have happened in a kind of tunnel. It wasn't real. It was only when she came out of the tunnel into the moonlight or by the sea or into a thunderstorm that she really felt herself. What did it mean? What was it she was always wanting? What did it all lead to? Now? Now?

She turned away from the Buddha with one of her vague gestures. She went over to where Josephine was standing. She wanted to say something to Josephine, something frightfully important, about—about the future and what . . .

"Don't you think perhaps—" she began.

But Josephine interrupted her. "I was wondering if now—" she murmured. They stopped; they waited for each other.

"Go on, Con," said Josephine.

"No, no, Jug; after you," said Constantia.

"No, say what you were going to say. You began," said Josephine.

"I . . . I'd rather hear what you were going to say first," said Constantia.

"Don't be absurd, Con."

"Really, Jug."

"Connie!"

"Oh, *Jug!*"

A pause. Then Constantia said faintly, "I can't say what I was going to say, Jug, because I've forgotten what it was . . . that I was going to say."

Josephine was silent for a moment. She stared at a big cloud where the sun had been. Then she replied shortly, "I've forgotten too."

Analysis

Katherine Mansfield, one of the earlier moderns, wrote exquisitely finished stories dealing with seemingly unimportant yet significant events in the lives of upper-middle-class English people. Most of her stories are thematic, demonstrate a social awareness, employ symbolism, and utilize unusual stylistic devices. She has exerted considerable influence upon the modern "quality" story, especially stories of the episodic type.

1. Compare the themes of "Eveline" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel."

2. Select and analyze two or three passages that illustrate unusual stylistic devices.

3. Death in its various manifestations is an often-recurring theme of fiction. How does Katherine Mansfield's handling of death indicate that she is a social satirist and rebellious against the traditional conceptions of death?

4. There are several very amusing scenes. Point them out. Are they really humorous, or is the story essentially tragic? Explain.

5. Is this an episodic (single episode) story? Is normal narrative order employed (chronological order), or are there flashbacks? If so, explain the reason for their use.

6. Review the story to ascertain how much physical description is given of Constantia and Josephine. How have they been so vividly characterized? Are they types or real people? What characteristic is continually repeated? Observe the manner of this repetition and explain the need for re-emphasis.

7. For what reasons were nephew and cook introduced?

8. What purpose is served by the ending of the story? Is it satisfying and conclusive?

Katherine Mansfield (Kathleen Beauchamp)

Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923) was born and spent the early part of her life in Wellington, New Zealand. In 1902 she went to England to complete her education at Queen's College, in London. Returning to New Zealand at the end of three years she began her writing career, which was furthered by a return to London on an allowance from her father, a banker. In 1911 her first book of short stories, *In a German Pension,* was published. Already her health had broken down, and she continued in frail health for the remainder of her life, finally dying of tuberculosis in 1923 at the age of thirty-five. In 1913 she had married the English critic, J. Middleton Murry, who was at least in part responsible for the wide critical attention that her writing obtained. Her three best-known collections of stories are *Bliss* (1920), *The Garden Party* (1922), and *The Dove's Nest* (1923). "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" is reprinted from *The Garden Party.*

Katherine Mansfield was always extremely critical of her own work and never quite satisfied with it. In her constant striving for perfection she attained a delicate and poetic insight into contemporary morals and manners. Influenced in all likelihood by the Russian realists, especially Chekov, she in turn has exerted wide influence on contemporary literature in England and America.



MOTHER

Sherwood Anderson

ELIZABETH WILLARD, the mother of George Willard, was tall and gaunt and her face was marked with smallpox scars. Although she was but forty-five, some obscure disease had taken the fire out of her figure. Listlessly she went about the disorderly old hotel looking at the faded wall-paper and the ragged carpets and, when she was able to be about, doing the work of a chambermaid among beds soiled by the slumbers of fat traveling men. Her husband, Tom Willard, a slender, graceful man with square shoulders, a quick military step, and a black mustache, trained to turn sharply up at the ends, tried to put the wife out of his mind. The presence of the tall ghostly figure, moving slowly through the halls, he took as a reproach to himself. When he thought of her he grew angry and swore. The hotel was unprofitable and forever on the edge of failure and he wished himself out of it. He thought of the old house and the woman who lived there with him as things defeated and done for. The hotel in which he had begun life so hopefully was now a mere ghost of what a hotel should be. As he went spruce and businesslike through the streets of Winesburg, he sometimes stopped and turned quickly about as though fearing that the spirit of the hotel and of the woman would follow him even into the streets. "Damn such a life, damn it!" he sputtered aimlessly.

Tom Willard had a passion for village politics and for years had been the leading Democrat in a strongly Republican community. Some day, he told himself, the tide of things political will turn in my favor and the years of ineffectual service count big in the bestowal of rewards. He dreamed of going to Congress and even of becoming governor. Once when a younger member of the party arose at a political conference and began to boast of his faithful service, Tom Willard grew white with fury. "Shut up, you," he roared, glaring about. "What do you know of service? What are you but a boy? Look at what I've done here! I was a Democrat here in Winesburg when it was a crime to be a Democrat. In the old days they fairly hunted us with guns."

Between Elizabeth and her one son George there was a deep unexpressed bond of sympathy, based on a girlhood dream that had long

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ago died. In the son's presence she was timid and reserved, but sometimes while he hurried about town intent upon his duties as a reporter, she went into his room and closing the door knelt by a little desk, made of a kitchen table, that sat near a window. In the room by the desk she went through a ceremony that was half a prayer, half a demand, addressed to the skies. In the boyish figure she yearned to see something half forgotten that had once been a part of herself recreated. The prayer concerned that. "Even though I die, I will in some way keep defeat from you," she cried, and so deep was her determination that her whole body shook. Her eyes glowed and she clenched her fists. "If I am dead and see him becoming a meaningless drab figure like myself, I will come back," she declared. "I ask God now to give me that privilege. I demand it. I will pay for it. God may beat me with his fists. I will take any blow that may befall if but this my boy be allowed to express something for us both." Pausing uncertainly, the woman stared about the boy's room. "And do not let him become smart and successful either," she added vaguely.

The communion between George Willard and his mother was outwardly a formal thing without meaning. When she was ill and sat by the window in her room he sometimes went in the evening to make her a visit. They sat by a window that looked over the roof of a small frame building into Main Street. By turning their heads they could see, through another window, along an alleyway that ran behind the Main Street stores and into the back door of Abner Groff's bakery. Sometimes as they sat thus a picture of village life presented itself to them. At the back door of his shop appeared Abner Groff with a stick or an empty milk bottle in his hand. For a long time there was a feud between the baker and a grey cat that belonged to Sylvester West, the druggist. The boy and his mother saw the cat creep into the door of the bakery and presently emerge followed by the baker who swore and waved his arms about. The baker's eyes were small and red and his black hair and beard were filled with flour dust. Sometimes he was so angry that, although the cat had disappeared, he hurled sticks, bits of broken glass, and even some of the tools of his trade about. Once he broke a window at the back of Sinning's Hardware Store. In the alley the grey cat crouched behind barrels filled with torn paper and broken bottles above which flew a black swarm of flies. Once when she was alone, and after watching a prolonged and ineffectual outburst on the

part of the baker, Elizabeth Willard put her head down on her long white hands and wept. After that she did not look along the alleyway any more, but tried to forget the contest between the bearded man and the cat. It seemed like a rehearsal of her own life, terrible in its vividness.

In the evening when the son sat in the room with his mother, the silence made them both feel awkward. Darkness came on and the evening train came in at the station. In the street below feet tramped up and down upon a board sidewalk. In the station yard, after the evening train had gone, there was a heavy silence. Perhaps Skinner Leason, the express agent, moved a truck the length of the station platform. Over on Main Street sounded a man's voice, laughing. The door of the express office banged. George Willard arose and crossing the room fumbled for the doorknob. Sometimes he knocked against a chair, making it scrape along the floor. By the window sat the sick woman, perfectly still, listless. Her long hands, white and bloodless, could be seen drooping over the ends of the arms of the chair. "I think you had better be out among the boys. You are too much indoors," she said, striving to relieve the embarrassment of the departure. "I thought I would take a walk," replied George Willard, who felt awkward and confused.

One evening in July, when the transient guests who made the New Willard House their temporary homes had become scarce, and the hallways, lighted only by kerosene lamps turned low, were plunged in gloom, Elizabeth Willard had an adventure. She had been ill in bed for several days and her son had not come to visit her. She was alarmed. The feeble blaze of life that remained in her body was blown into a flame by her anxiety and she crept out of bed, dressed and hurried along the hallway toward her son's room, shaking with exaggerated fears. As she went along she steadied herself with her hand, slipped along the papered walls of the hall and breathed with difficulty. The air whistled through her teeth. As she hurried forward she thought how foolish she was. "He is concerned with boyish affairs," she told herself. "Perhaps he has now begun to walk about in the evening with girls."

Elizabeth Willard had a dread of being seen by guests in the hotel that had once belonged to her father and the ownership of which still stood recorded in her name in the county courthouse. The hotel was continually losing patronage because of its shabbiness and she thought of herself as also shabby. Her own room was in an obscure corner and

when she felt able to work she voluntarily worked among the beds, preferring the labor that could be done when the guests were abroad seeking trade among the merchants of Winesburg.

By the door of her son's room the mother knelt upon the floor and listened for some sound from within. When she heard the boy moving about and talking in low tones a smile came to her lips. George Willard had a habit of talking aloud to himself and to hear him doing so had always given his mother a peculiar pleasure. The habit in him, she felt, strengthened the secret bond that existed between them. A thousand times she had whispered to herself of the matter. "He is groping about, trying to find himself," she thought. "He is not a dull clod, all words and smartness. Within him there is a secret something that is striving to grow. It is the thing I let be killed in myself."

In the darkness in the hallway by the door the sick woman arose and started again toward her own room. She was afraid that the door would open and the boy come upon her. When she had reached a safe distance and was about to turn a corner into a second hallway she stopped and bracing herself with her hands waited, thinking to shake off a trembling fit of weakness that had come upon her. The presence of the boy in the room had made her happy. In her bed, during the long hours alone, the little fears that had visited her had become giants. Now they were all gone. "When I get back to my room I shall sleep," she murmured gratefully.

But Elizabeth Willard was not to return to her bed and to sleep. As she stood trembling in the darkness the door of her son's room opened and the boy's father, Tom Willard, stepped out. In the light that streamed out at the door he stood with the knob in his hand and talked. What he said infuriated the woman.

Tom Willard was ambitious for his son. He had always thought of himself as a successful man, although nothing he had ever done had turned out successfully. However, when he was out of sight of the New Willard House and had no fear of coming upon his wife, he swaggered and began to dramatize himself as one of the chief men of the town. He wanted his son to succeed. He it was who had secured for the boy the position on the *Winesburg Eagle.* Now, with a ring of earnestness in his voice, he was advising concerning some course of conduct. "I tell you what, George, you've got to wake up," he said sharply. "Will Henderson has spoken to me three times concerning

the matter. He says you go along for hours not hearing when you are spoken to and acting like a gawky girl. What ails you?" Tom Willard laughed good-naturedly. "Well, I guess you'll get over it," he said. "I told Will that. You're not a fool and you're not a woman. You're Tom Willard's son and you'll wake up. I'm not afraid. What you say clears things up. If being a newspaper man had put the notion of becoming a writer into your mind that's all right. Only I guess you'll have to wake up to do that too, eh?"

Tom Willard went briskly along the hallway and down a flight of stairs to the office. The woman in the darkness could hear him laughing and talking with a guest who was striving to wear away a dull evening by dozing in a chair by the office door. She returned to the door of her son's room. The weakness had passed from her body as by a miracle and she stepped boldly along. A thousand ideas raced through her head. When she heard the scraping of a chair and the sound of a pen scratching upon paper, she again turned and went back along the hallway to her own room.

A definite determination had come into the mind of the defeated wife of the Winesburg hotel keeper. The determination was the result of long years of quiet and rather ineffectual thinking. "Now," she told herself, "I will act. There is something threatening my boy and I will ward it off." The fact that the conversation between Tom Willard and his son had been rather quiet and natural, as though an understanding existed between them, maddened her. Although for years she had hated her husband, her hatred had always before been a quite impersonal thing. He had been merely a part of something else that she hated. Now, and by the few words at the door, he had become the thing personified. In the darkness of her own room she clenched her fists and glared about. Going to a cloth bag that hung on a nail by the wall she took out a long pair of sewing scissors and held them in her hand like a dagger. "I will stab him," she said aloud. "He has chosen to be the voice of evil and I will kill him. When I have killed him something will snap within myself and I will die also. It will be a release for all of us."

In her girlhood and before her marriage with Tom Willard, Elizabeth had borne a somewhat shaky reputation in Winesburg. For years she had been what is called "stage-struck" and had paraded through the streets with traveling men guests at her father's hotel, wearing loud

clothes and urging them to tell her of life in the cities out of which they had come. Once she startled the town by putting on men's clothes and riding a bicycle down Main Street.

In her own mind the tall dark girl had been in those days much confused. A great restlessness was in her and it expressed itself in two ways. First there was an uneasy desire for change, for some big definite movement to her life. It was this feeling that had turned her mind to the stage. She dreamed of joining some company and wandering over the world, seeing always new faces and giving something out of herself to all people. Sometimes at night she was quite beside herself with the thought, but when she tried to talk of the matter to the members of the theatrical companies that came to Winesburg and stopped at her father's hotel, she got nowhere. They did not seem to know what she meant, or if she did get something of her passion expressed, they only laughed. "It's not like that," they said. "It's as dull and uninteresting as this here. Nothing comes of it."

With the traveling men when she walked about with them, and later with Tom Willard, it was quite different. Always they seemed to understand and sympathize with her. On the side streets of the village, in the darkness under the trees, they took hold of her hand and she thought that something unexpressed in herself came forth and became a part of an unexpressed something in them.

And then there was the second expression of her restlessness. When that came she felt for a time released and happy. She did not blame the men who walked with her and later she did not blame Tom Willard. It was always the same, beginning with kisses and ending, after strange wild emotions, with peace and then sobbing repentance. When she sobbed she put her hand upon the face of the man and had always the same thought. Even though he were large and bearded she thought he had become suddenly a little boy. She wondered why he did not sob also.

In her room, tucked away in a corner of the old Willard House, Elizabeth Willard lighted a lamp and put it on a dressing table that stood by the door. A thought had come into her mind and she went to a closet and brought out a small square box and set it on the table. The box contained material for make-up and had been left with other things by a theatrical company that had once been stranded in Winesburg. Elizabeth Willard had decided that she would be beautiful. Her

hair was still black and there was a great mass of it braided and coiled about her head. The scene that was to take place in the office below began to grow in her mind. No ghostly worn-out figure should confront Tom Willard, but something quite unexpected and startling. Tall and with dusky cheeks and hair that fell in a mass from her shoulders, a figure should come striding down the stairway before the startled loungers in the hotel office. The figure would be silent—it would be swift and terrible. As a tigress whose cub had been threatened would she appear, coming out of the shadows stealing noiselessly along and holding the long wicked scissors in her hand.

With a little broken sob in her throat, Elizabeth Willard blew out the light that stood upon the table and stood weak and trembling in the darkness. The strength that had been as a miracle in her body left and she half reeled across the floor, clutching at the back of the chair in which she had spent so many long days staring out over the tin roofs into the main street of Winesburg. In the hallway there was the sound of footsteps and George Willard came in at the door. Sitting in a chair beside his mother he began to talk. "I'm going to get out of here," he said. "I don't know where I shall go or what I shall do but I am going away."

The woman in the chair waited and trembled. An impulse came to her. "I suppose you had better wake up," she said. "You think that? You will go to the city and make money, eh? It will be better for you, you think, to be a business man, to be brisk and smart and alive?" She waited and trembled.

The son shook his head. "I suppose I can't make you understand, but oh, I wish I could," he said earnestly. "I can't even talk to father about it. I don't try. There isn't any use. I don't know what I shall do. I just want to go away and look at people and think."

Silence fell upon the room where the boy and woman sat together. Again, as on the other evenings, they were embarrassed. After a time the boy tried again to talk. "I suppose it won't be for a year or two but I've been thinking about it," he said, rising and going toward the door. "Something father said makes it sure that I shall have to go away." He fumbled with the door knob. In the room the silence became unbearable to the woman. She wanted to cry out with joy because of the words that had come from the lips of her son, but the expression of joy had become impossible to her. "I think you had better go out among

the boys. You are too much indoors," she said. "I thought I would go for a little walk," replied the son stepping awkwardly out of the room and closing the door.

Analysis

Sherwood Anderson and Theodore Dreiser in the second decade of this century were leaders in the naturalistic movement in the United States—i.e., the natural man with his natural appetites and failings as opposed to idealized man. *Winesburg, Ohio,* from which the story "Mother" is reprinted, is a shrewd, blunt penetration into the lives of the people of a small Midwestern community, a series of sketches loosely knit together by the personality of young George Willard, the reporter.

1. How does the manner of treatment of motherhood differ here from the usual treatment to be found in current magazines? Illustrate with a specific popular story that you have read recently.
2. Sherwood Anderson's style is said to be blunt, curt, lacking in finesse and subtlety, yet of considerable force and vigor. Show with specific examples how this is true of "Mother." Compare Anderson's style to James Joyce's in "Eveline." Compare to Erskine Caldwell's in "The People *vs.* Abe Lathan, Colored." Comment on Anderson's method of handling dialogue.
3. What evidences do you find that this story is, at least in part, autobiographical? (See brief biography below.)
4. What is the meaning of the episode of the cat and Abner Groff? If symbolic, explain the symbolism.
5. Is the prevailing theme of this story the mother's great love for the boy George Willard or her hostility toward her husband Tom? Explain the reasons for this hostility as implied throughout the story—point out specific passages.
6. Is the ending satisfactory to the reader? What is implied?
7. Do you know of anyone like Mrs. Willard who by careful probing and analysis might be used as the central character in an original story?

Sherwood Anderson

Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941), born in Camden, Ohio, lived an erratic boyhood in various parts of the Midwest, the scene of most of his later writing. His schooling was desultory and incomplete. Various menial pursuits, however, furnished a rich background for his writing: farm hand,

factory worker, race track hanger-on. He served in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, returned to Ohio, married, was president of a paint factory. Later, while writing for an advertising firm in Chicago, he became acquainted with and was probably influenced by both Carl Sandburg and Theodore Dreiser, as well as by Freud and by Gertrude Stein. Not until 1919, when he was said to have in his possession a trunkful of unpublished manuscripts, did his first book appear, *Winesburg, Ohio,* from which "Mother" is reprinted. He went on to publish *Triumph of the Egg* (1921), *Horses and Men* (1923), and many other books.

His influence on younger writers has been great. He pointed the way to a totally different kind of American short story—the tale of common folk, told in a colloquial style yet with mystical overtones, the revelation of their characters in the humdrum life of the American town and village, their frustrations in trying to understand the world and themselves, and their gropings for something better.

As small-town sage and editor of a weekly paper, a role thoroughly to his liking, Sherwood Anderson spent the last years of his life in Marion, Virginia. He died in Panama while on a good-will mission to South America.

In answering questions put to him by the *Partisan Review* (1939) Sherwood Anderson had the following to say of himself and his writing: "I spend little time thinking of either the past or the future. It is my passionate desire to live in the NOW. Mine is not a very critical mind. . . . I do not believe that I ever think of an audience as a definite thing. I often sing to myself in bathrooms. I tell myself stories. . . . Like most writers I am really not a great reader. I did most of my reading before I began writing. Now I am chiefly interested in the lives of people immediately about me. . . . I have had to do all sorts of things to keep going but believe also that men working seriously in any of the arts have always had a hard time making a living. Now that I have been writing for twenty or twenty-five years enough does usually trickle in to keep me going. It has, however, been a long hard pull."



FIFTY GRAND

Ernest Hemingway

"How are you going yourself, Jack?" I asked him.

"You seen this Walcott?" he says.

"Just in the gym."

"Well," Jack says, "I'm going to need a lot of luck with that boy."

"He can't hit you, Jack," Soldier said.

"I wish to hell he couldn't."

"He couldn't hit you with a handful of bird-shot."

"Bird-shot'd be all right," Jack says. "I wouldn't mind bird-shot any."

"He looks easy to hit," I said.

"Sure," Jack says, "he ain't going to last long. He ain't going to last like you and me, Jerry. But right now he's got everything."

"You'll left-hand him to death."

"Maybe," Jack says. "Sure. I got a chance to."

"Handle him like you handled Kid Lewis."

"Kid Lewis," Jack said. "That kike!"

The three of us, Jack Brennan, Soldier Bartlett, and I were in Handley's. There were a couple of broads sitting at the next table to us. They had been drinking.

"What do you mean, kike?" one of the broads says. "What do you mean, kike, you big Irish bum?"

"Sure," Jack says. "That's it."

"Kikes," this broad goes on. "They're always talking about kikes, these big Irishmen. What do you mean, kikes?"

"Come on. Let's get out of here."

"Kikes," this broad goes on. "Whoever saw you ever buy a drink? Your wife sews your pockets up every morning. These Irishmen and their kikes! Ted Lewis could lick you too."

"Sure," Jack says. "And you give away a lot of things free too, don't you?"

We went out. That was Jack. He could say what he wanted to when he wanted to say it.

Jack started training out at Danny Hogan's health farm over in Jersey. It was nice out there but Jack didn't like it much. He didn't like being away from his wife and the kids, and he was sore and grouchy

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most of the time. He liked me and we got along fine together; and he liked Hogan, but after a while Soldier Bartlett commenced to get on his nerves. A kidder gets to be an awful thing around a camp if his stuff goes sort of sour. Soldier was always kidding Jack, just sort of kidding him all the time. It wasn't very funny and it wasn't very good, and it began to get to Jack. It was sort of stuff like this. Jack would finish up with the weights and the bag and pull on the gloves.

"You want to work?" he'd say to Soldier.

"Sure. How you want me to work?" Soldier would ask. "Want me to treat you rough like Walcott? Want me to knock you down a few times?"

"That's it," Jack would say. He didn't like it any, though.

One morning we were all out on the road. We'd been out quite a way and now we were coming back. We'd go along fast for three minutes and then walk a minute, and then go fast for three minutes again. Jack wasn't ever what you would call a sprinter. He'd move around fast enough in the ring if he had to, but he wasn't any too fast on the road. All the time we were walking Soldier was kidding him. We came up the hill to the farmhouse.

"Well," says Jack, "you better go back to town, Soldier."

"What do you mean?"

"You better go back to town and stay there."

"What's the matter?"

"I'm sick of hearing you talk."

"Yes?" says Soldier.

"Yes," says Jack.

"You'll be a damn sight sicker when Walcott gets through with you."

"Sure," says Jack, "maybe I will. But I know I'm sick of you."

So Soldier went off on the train to town that same morning. I went down with him to the train. He was good and sore.

"I was just kidding him," he said. We were waiting on the platform. "He can't pull that stuff with me, Jerry."

"He's nervous and crabby," I said. "He's a good fellow, Soldier."

"The hell he is. The hell he's ever been a good fellow."

"Well," I said, "so long, Soldier."

The train had come in. He climbed up with his bag.

"So long, Jerry," he says. "You be in town before the fight?"

"I don't think so."

"See you then."

He went in and the conductor swung up and the train went out. I rode back to the farm in the cart. Jack was on the porch writing a letter to his wife. The mail had come and I got the papers and went over on the other side of the porch and sat down to read. Hogan came out the door and walked over to me.

"Did he have a jam with Soldier?"

"Not a jam," I said. "He just told him to go back to town."

"I could see it coming," Hogan said. "He never liked Soldier much."

"No. He don't like many people."

"He's a pretty cold one," Hogan said.

"Well, he's always been fine to me."

"Me too," Hogan said. "I got no kick on him. He's a cold one, though."

Hogan went in through the screen door and I sat there on the porch and read the papers. It was just starting to get fall weather and it's nice country there in Jersey, up in the hills, and after I read the paper through I sat there and looked out at the country and the road down below against the woods with cars going along it, lifting the dust up. It was fine weather and pretty nice-looking country. Hogan came to the door and I said, "Say, Hogan, haven't you got anything to shoot out here?"

"No," Hogan said. "Only sparrows."

"Seen the paper?" I said to Hogan.

"What's in it?"

"Sande booted three of them in yesterday."

"I got that on the telephone last night."

"You follow them pretty close, Hogan?" I asked.

"Oh, I keep in touch with them," Hogan said.

"How about Jack?" I says. "Does he still play them?"

"Him?" said Hogan. "Can you see him doing it?"

Just then Jack came around the corner with the letter in his hand. He's wearing a sweater and an old pair of pants and boxing shoes.

"Got a stamp, Hogan?" he asks.

"Give me the letter," Hogan said. "I'll mail it for you."

"Say, Jack," I said, "didn't you used to play the ponies?"

"Sure."

"I knew you did. I knew I used to see you out at Sheepshead."

"What did you lay off them for?" Hogan asked.

"Lost money."

Jack sat down on the porch by me. He leaned back against a post. He shut his eyes in the sun.

"Want a chair?" Hogan asked.

"No," said Jack. "This is fine."

"It's a nice day," I said. "It's pretty nice out in the country."

"I'd a damn sight rather be in town with the wife."

"Well, you only got another week."

"Yes," Jack says. "That's so."

We sat there on the porch. Hogan was inside at the office.

"What do you think about the shape I'm in?" Jack asked me.

"Well, you can't tell," I said. "You got a week to get around into form."

"Don't stall me."

"Well," I said, "you're not right."

"I'm not sleeping," Jack said.

"You'll be all right in a couple of days."

"No," says Jack, "I got the insomnia."

"What's on your mind?"

"I miss the wife."

"Have her come out."

"No. I'm too old for that."

"We'll take a long walk before you turn in and get you good and tired."

"Tired!" Jack says. "I'm tired all the time."

He was that way all week. He wouldn't sleep at night and he'd get up in the morning feeling that way, you know, when you can't shut your hands.

"He's stale as poorhouse cake," Hogan said. "He's nothing."

"I never seen Walcott," I said.

"He'll kill him," said Hogan. "He'll tear him in two."

"Well," I said, "everybody's got to get it sometime."

"Not like this, though," Hogan said. "They'll think he never trained. It gives the farm a black eye."

"You hear what the reporters said about him?"

"Didn't I! They said he was awful. They said they oughtn't to let him fight."

"Well," I said, "they're always wrong, ain't they?"

"Yes," said Hogan. "But this time they're right."

"What the hell do they know about whether a man's right or not?"

"Well," said Hogan, "they're not such fools."

"All they did was pick Willard at Toledo. This Lardner, he's so wise now, ask him about when he picked Willard at Toledo."

"Aw, he wasn't out," Hogan said. "He only writes the big fights."

"I don't care who they are," I said. "What the hell do they know? They can write maybe, but what the hell do they know?"

"You don't think Jack's in any shape, do you?" Hogan asked.

"No. He's through. All he needs is to have Corbett pick him to win for it to be all over."

"Well, Corbett'll pick him," Hogan says.

"Sure. He'll pick him."

That night Jack didn't sleep any either. The next morning was the last day before the fight. After breakfast we were out on the porch again.

"What do you think about, Jack, when you can't sleep?" I said.

"Oh, I worry," Jack said. "I worry about property I got up in the Bronx, I worry about property I got in Florida. I worry about the kids. I worry about the wife. Sometimes I think about fights. I think about that kike Ted Lewis and I get sore. I got some stocks and I worry about them. What the hell don't I think about?"

"Well," I said, "to-morrow night it'll all be over."

"Sure," said Jack. "That always helps a lot, don't it? That just fixes everything all up, I suppose. Sure."

He was sore all day. We didn't do any work. Jack just moved around a little to loosen up. He shadow-boxed a few rounds. He didn't even look good doing that. He skipped the rope a little while. He couldn't sweat.

"He'd be better not to do any work at all," Hogan said. We were standing watching him skip rope. "Don't he ever sweat at all any more?"

"He can't sweat."

"Do you suppose he's got the con? He never had any trouble making weight, did he?"

"No, he hasn't got any con. He just hasn't got anything inside any more."

"He ought to sweat," said Hogan.

Jack came over, skipping the rope. He was skipping up and down in front of us, forward and back, crossing his arms every third time.

"Well," he says. "What are you buzzards talking about?"

"I don't think you ought to work any more," Hogan says. "You'll be stale."

"Wouldn't that be awful?" Jack says and skips away down the floor, slapping the rope hard.

That afternoon John Collins showed up out at the farm. Jack was up in his room. John came out in a car from town. He had a couple of friends with him. The car stopped and they all got out.

"Where's Jack?" John asked me.

"Up in his room, lying down."

"Lying down?"

"Yes," I said.

"How is he?"

I looked at the two fellows that were with John.

"They're friends of his," John said.

"He's pretty bad," I said.

"What's the matter with him?"

"He don't sleep."

"Hell," said John. "That Irishman could never sleep."

"He isn't right," I said.

"Hell," John said. "He's never right. I've had him for ten years and he's never been right yet."

The fellows who were with him laughed.

"I want you to shake hands with Mr. Morgan and Mr. Steinfelt," John said. "This is Mr. Doyle. He's been training Jack."

"Glad to meet you," I said.

"Let's go up and see the boy," the fellow called Morgan said.

"Let's have a look at him," Steinfelt said.

We all went upstairs.

"Where's Hogan?" John asked.

"He's out in the barn with a couple of his customers," I said.

"He got many people out here now?" John asked.

"Just two."

"Pretty quiet, ain't it?" Morgan said.

"Yes," I said. "It's pretty quiet."

We were outside Jack's room. John knocked on the door. There wasn't any answer.

"Maybe he's asleep," I said.

"What the hell's he sleeping in the daytime for?"

John turned the handle and we all went in. Jack was lying asleep on the bed. He was face down and his face was in the pillow. Both his arms were around the pillow.

"Hey, Jack!" John said to him.

Jack's head moved a little on the pillow. "Jack!" John says, leaning over him. Jack just dug a little deeper in the pillow. John touched him on the shoulder. Jack sat up and looked at us. He hadn't shaved and he was wearing an old sweater.

"Christ! Why can't you let me sleep?" he says to John.

"Don't be sore," John says. "I didn't mean to wake you up."

"Oh no," Jack says. "Of course not."

"You know Morgan and Steinfelt," John said.

"Glad to see you," Jack says.

"How do you feel, Jack?" Morgan asks him.

"Fine," Jack says. "How the hell would I feel?"

"You look fine," Steinfelt says.

"Yes, don't I?" says Jack. "Say," he says to John, "you're my manager. You get a big enough cut. Why the hell don't you come out here when the reporters was out! You want Jerry and me to talk to them?"

"I had Lew fighting in Philadelphia," John said.

"What the hell's that to me?" Jack says. "You're my manager. You get a big enough cut, don't you? You aren't making me any money in Philadelphia, are you? Why the hell aren't you out here when I ought to have you?"

"Hogan was here."

"Hogan," Jack says. "Hogan's as dumb as I am."

"Soldier Bathlett was out here wukking with you for a while, wasn't he?" Steinfelt said to change the subject.

"Yes, he was out here," Jack says. "He was out here all right."

"Say, Jerry," John said to me. "Would you go and find Hogan and tell him we want to see him in about half an hour?"

"Sure," I said.

"Why the hell can't he stick around?" Jack says. "Stick around, Jerry."

Morgan and Steinfelt looked at each other.

"Quiet down, Jack," John said to him.

"I better go find Hogan," I said.

"All right, if you want to go," Jack says. "None of these guys are going to send you away, though."

"I'll go find Hogan," I said.

Hogan was out in the gym in the barn. He had a couple of his health-farm patients with the gloves on. They neither one wanted to hit the other, for fear the other would come back and hit him.

"That'll do," Hogan said when he saw me come in. "You can stop the slaughter. You gentlemen take a shower and Bruce will rub you down."

They climbed out through the ropes and Hogan came over to me.

"John Collins is out with a couple of friends to see Jack," I said.

"I saw them come up in the car."

"Who are the two fellows with John?"

"They're what you call wise boys," Hogan said. "Don't you know them two?"

"No," I said.

"That's Happy Steinfelt and Lew Morgan. They got a poolroom."

"I been away a long time," I said.

"Sure," said Hogan. "That Happy Steinfelt's a big operator."

"I've heard his name," I said.

"He's a pretty smooth boy," Hogan said. "They're a couple of sharpshooters."

"Well," I said. "They want to see us in half an hour."

"You mean they don't want to see us until a half an hour?"

"That's it."

"Come on in the office," Hogan said. "To hell with those sharpshooters."

After about thirty minutes or so Hogan and I went upstairs. We knocked on Jack's door. They were talking inside the room.

"Wait a minute," somebody said.

"To hell with that stuff," Hogan said. "When you want to see me I'm down in the office."

We heard the door unlock. Steinfelt opened it.

"Come on in, Hogan," he says. "We're all going to have a drink."

"Well," says Hogan. "That's something."

We went in. Jack was sitting on the bed. John and Morgan were sitting on a couple of chairs. Steinfelt was standing up.

"You're a pretty mysterious lot of boys," Hogan said.

"Hello, Danny," John says.

"Hello, Danny," Morgan says and shakes hands.

Jack doesn't say anything. He just sits there on the bed. He ain't with the others. He's all by himself. He was wearing an old blue jersey and pants and had on boxing shoes. He needed a shave. Steinfelt and Morgan were dressers. John was quite a dresser too. Jack sat there looking Irish and tough.

Steinfelt brought out a bottle and Hogan brought in some glasses and everybody had a drink. Jack and I took one and the rest of them went on and had two or three each.

"Better save some for your ride back," Hogan said.

"Don't you worry. We got plenty," Morgan said.

Jack hadn't drunk anything since the one drink. He was standing up and looking at them. Morgan was sitting on the bed where Jack had sat.

"Have a drink, Jack," John said and handed him the glass and the bottle.

"No," Jack said, "I never liked to go to these wakes."

They all laughed. Jack didn't laugh.

They were all feeling pretty good when they left. Jack stood on the porch when they got into the car. They waved to him.

"So long," Jack said.

We had supper. Jack didn't say anything all during the meal except, "Will you pass me this?" or "Will you pass me that?" The two health-farm patients ate at the same table with us. They were pretty nice fellows. After we finished eating we went out on the porch. It was dark early.

"Like to take a walk, Jerry?" Jack asked.

"Sure," I said.

We put on our coats and started out. It was quite a way down to the main road and then we walked along the main road about a mile and a half. Cars kept going by and we would pull out to the side until they were past. Jack didn't say anything. After we had stepped out into the

bushes to let a big car go by Jack said, "To hell with this walking. Come on back to Hogan's."

We went along a side road that cut up over the hill and cut across the fields back to Hogan's. We could see the lights of the house up on the hill. We came around to the front of the house and there standing in the doorway was Hogan.

"Have a good walk?" Hogan asked.

"Oh, fine," Jack said. "Listen, Hogan. Have you got any liquor?"

"Sure," says Hogan. "What's the idea?"

"Send it up to the room," Jack says. "I'm going to sleep tonight."

"You're the doctor," Hogan says.

"Come on up to the room, Jerry," Jack says.

Upstairs Jack sat on the bed with his head in his hands.

"Ain't it a life?" Jack says.

Hogan brought in a quart of liquor and two glasses.

"Want some ginger ale?"

"What do you think I want to do, get sick?"

"I just asked you," said Hogan.

"Have a drink?" said Jack.

"No, thanks," said Hogan. He went out.

"How about you, Jerry?"

"I'll have one with you," I said.

Jack poured out a couple of drinks. "Now," he said, "I want to take it slow and easy."

"Put some water in it," I said.

"Yes," Jack said. "I guess that's better."

We had a couple of drinks without saying anything. Jack started to pour me another.

"No," I said, "that's all I want."

"All right," Jack said. He poured himself out another big shot and put water in it. He was lighting up a little.

"That was a fine bunch out here this afternoon," he said. "They don't take any chances, those two."

Then a little later, "Well," he says, "they're right. What the hell's the good in taking chances?"

"Don't you want another, Jerry?" he said. "Come on, drink along with me."

"I don't need it, Jack," I said. "I feel all right."

"Just have one more," Jack said. It was softening him up.

"All right," I said.

Jack poured one for me and another big one for himself.

"You know," he said, "I like liquor pretty well. If I hadn't been boxing I would have drunk quite a lot."

"Sure," I said.

"You know," he said, "I missed a lot, boxing."

"You made plenty of money."

"Sure, that's what I'm after. You know I miss a lot, Jerry?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well," he says, "like about the wife. And being away from home so much. It don't do my girls any good. 'Whose your old man?' some of those society kids 'll say to them. 'My old man's Jack Brennan.' That don't do them any good."

"Hell," I said, "all that makes a difference is if they got dough."

"Well," says Jack, "I got the dough for them all right."

He poured out another drink. The bottle was about empty.

"Put some water in it," I said. Jack poured in some water.

"You know," he says, "you ain't got any idea how I miss the wife."

"Sure."

"You ain't got any idea. You can't have an idea what it's like."

"It ought to be better out in the country than in town."

"With me now," Jack said, "it don't make any difference where I am. You can't have an idea what it's like."

"Have another drink."

"Am I getting soused? Do I talk funny?"

"You're coming on all right."

"You can't have an idea what it's like. They ain't anybody can have an idea what it's like."

"Except the wife," I said.

"She knows," Jack said. "She knows all right. She knows. You bet she knows."

"Put some water in that," I said.

"Jerry," said Jack, "you can't have an idea what it gets to be like."

He was good and drunk. He was looking at me steady. His eyes were sort of too steady.

"You'll sleep all right," I said.

"Listen, Jerry," Jack says. "You want to make some money? Get some money down on Walcott."

"Yes?"

"Listen, Jerry." Jack put down the glass. "I'm not drunk now, see? You know what I'm betting on him? Fifty grand."

"That's a lot of dough."

"Fifty grand," Jack says, "at two to one. I'll get twenty-five thousand bucks. Get some money on him, Jerry."

"It sounds good," I said.

"How can I beat him?" Jack says. "It ain't crooked. How can I beat him? Why not make money on it?"

"Put some water in that," I said.

"I'm through after this fight," Jack says. "I'm through with it. I got to take a beating. Why shouldn't I make money on it?"

"Sure."

"I ain't slept for a week," Jack says. "All night I lay awake and worry my can off. I can't sleep, Jerry. You ain't got an idea what it's like when you can't sleep."

"Sure."

"I can't sleep. That's all. I just can't sleep. What's the use of taking care of yourself all these years when you can't sleep?"

"It's bad."

"You ain't got an idea what it's like, Jerry, when you can't sleep."

"Put some water in that," I said.

Well, about eleven o'clock Jack passes out and I put him to bed. Finally he's so he can't keep from sleeping. I helped him get his clothes off and got him into bed.

"You'll sleep all right, Jack," I said.

"Sure," Jack says, "I'll sleep now."

"Good-night, Jack," I said.

"Good-night, Jerry," Jack says. "You're the only friend I got."

"Oh, hell," I said.

"You're the only friend I got," Jack says, "the only friend I got."

"Go to sleep," I said.

"I'll sleep," Jack says.

Downstairs Hogan was sitting at the desk in the office reading the papers. He looked up. "Well, you get your boy friend to sleep?" he asks.

"He's off."

"It's better for him than not sleeping," Hogan said.

"Sure."

"You'd have a hell of a time explaining that to these sport writers though," Hogan said.

"Well, I'm going to bed myself," I said.

"Good-night," said Hogan.

In the morning I came downstairs about eight o'clock and got some breakfast. Hogan had his two customers out in the barn doing exercises. I went out and watched them.

"One! Two! Three! Four!" Hogan was counting for them. "Hello, Jerry," he said. "Is Jack up yet?"

"No. He's still sleeping."

I went back to my room and packed up to go into town. About nine-thirty I heard Jack getting up in the next room. When I heard him go downstairs I went down after him. Jack was sitting at the breakfast table. Hogan had come in and was standing beside the table.

"How do you feel, Jack?" I asked him.

"Not so bad."

"Sleep well?" Hogan asked.

"I slept all right," Jack said. "I got a thick tongue but I ain't got a head."

"Good," said Hogan. "That was good liquor."

"Put it on the bill," Jack says.

"What time you want to go into town?" Hogan asked.

"Before lunch," Jack says. "The eleven o'clock train."

"Sit down, Jerry," Jack said. Hogan went out.

I sat down at the table. Jack was eating a grape-fruit. When he'd find a seed he'd spit it out in the spoon and dump it on the plate.

"I guess I was pretty stewed last night," he started.

"You drank some liquor."

"I guess I said a lot of fool things."

"You weren't bad."

"Where's Hogan?" he asked. He was through with the grape-fruit.

"He's out in front in the office."

"What did I say about betting on the fight?" Jack asked. He was holding the spoon and sort of poking at the grape-fruit with it.

The girl came in with some ham and eggs and took away the grapefruit.

"Bring me another glass of milk," Jack said to her. She went out.

"You said you had fifty grand on Walcott," I said.

"That's right," Jack said.

"That's a lot of money."

"I don't feel too good about it," Jack said.

"Something might happen."

"No," Jack said. "He wants the title bad. They'll be shooting with him all right."

"You can't ever tell."

"No. He wants the title. It's worth a lot of money to him."

"Fifty grand is a lot of money," I said.

"It's business," said Jack. "I can't win. You know I can't win anyway."

"As long as you're in there you got a chance."

"No," Jack says. "I'm all through. It's just business."

"How do you feel?"

"Pretty good," Jack said. "The sleep was what I needed."

"You might go good."

"I'll give them a good show," Jack said.

After breakfast Jack called up his wife on the long-distance. He was inside the booth telephoning.

"That's the first time he's called her up since he's out here," Hogan said.

"He writes her every day."

"Sure," Hogan says, "a letter only costs two cents."

Hogan said good-by to us and Bruce, the nigger rubber, drove us down to the train in the car.

"Good-by, Mr. Brennan," Bruce said at the train, "I sure hope you knock his can off."

"So long," Jack said. He gave Bruce two dollars. Bruce had worked on him a lot. He looked kind of disappointed. Jack saw me looking at Bruce holding the two dollars.

"It's all in the bill," he said. "Hogan charged me for the rubbing."

On the train going into town Jack didn't talk. He sat in the corner of the seat with his ticket in his hat-band and looked out of the window. Once he turned and spoke to me.

"I told the wife I'd take a room at the Shelby to-night," he said. "It's just around the corner from the Garden. I can go up to the house to-morrow morning."

"That's a good idea," I said. "Your wife ever see you fight, Jack?"

"No," Jack says. "She never seen me fight."

I thought he must be figuring on taking an awful beating if he doesn't want to go home afterward. In town we took a taxi up to the Shelby. A boy came out and took our bags and we went in to the desk.

"How much are the rooms?" Jack asked.

"We only have double rooms," the clerk says. "I can give you a nice double room for ten dollars."

"That's too steep."

"I can give you a double room for seven dollars."

"With a bath?"

"Certainly."

"You might as well bunk with me, Jerry," Jack says.

"Oh," I said, "I'll sleep down at my brother-in-law's."

"I don't mean for you to pay it," Jack says. "I just want to get my money's worth."

"Will you register, please?" the clerk says. He looked at the names. "Number 238, Mister Brennan."

We went up in the elevator. It was a nice big room with two beds and a door opening into a bath-room.

"This is pretty good," Jack says.

The boy who brought us up pulled up the curtains and brought in our bags. Jack didn't make any move, so I gave the boy a quarter. We washed up and Jack said we better go out and get something to eat.

We ate a lunch at Jimmey Handley's place. Quite a lot of the boys were there. When we were about half through eating, John came in and sat down with us. Jack didn't talk much.

"How are you on the weight, Jack?" John asked him. Jack was putting away a pretty good lunch.

"I could make it with my clothes on," Jack said. He never had to worry about taking off weight. He was a natural welterweight and he'd never gotten fat. He'd lost weight out at Hogan's.

"Well, that's one thing you never had to worry about," John said.

"That's one thing," Jack says.

We went around to the Garden to weigh in after lunch. The match

was made at a hundred forty-seven pounds at three o'clock. Jack stepped on the scales with a towel around him. The bar didn't move. Walcott had just weighed and was standing with a lot of people around him.

"Let's see what you weigh, Jack," Freedman, Walcott's manager, said.

"All right, weigh *him* then," Jack jerked his head toward Walcott.

"Drop the towel," Freedman said.

"What do you make it?" Jack asked the fellows who were weighing.

"One hundred and forty-three pounds," the fat man who was weighing said.

"You're down fine, Jack," Freedman says.

"Weigh *him,*" Jack says.

Walcott came over. He was a blond with wide shoulders and arms like a heavyweight. He didn't have much legs. Jack stood about half a head taller than he did.

"Hello, Jack," he said. His face was plenty marked up.

"Hello," said Jack. "How do you feel?"

"Good," Walcott says. He dropped the towel from around his waist and stood on the scales. He had the widest shoulders and back you ever saw.

"One hundred and forty-six pounds and twelve ounces."

Walcott stepped off and grinned at Jack.

"Well," John says to him, "Jack's spotting you about four pounds."

"More than that when I come in, kid," Walcott says. "I'm going to go and eat now."

We went back and Jack got dressed. "He's a pretty tough-looking boy," Jack says to me.

"He looks as though he'd been hit plenty of times."

"Oh, yes," Jack says. "He ain't hard to hit."

"Where are you going?" John asked when Jack was dressed.

"Back to the hotel," Jack says. "You looked after everything?"

"Yes," John says. "It's all looked after."

"I'm going to lie down a while," Jack says.

"I'll come around for you about a quarter to seven and we'll go and eat."

"All right."

Up at the hotel Jack took off his shoes and his coat and lay down

for a while. I wrote a letter. I looked over a couple of times and Jack wasn't sleeping. He was lying perfectly still but every once in a while his eyes would open. Finally he sits up.

"Want to play some cribbage, Jerry?" he says.

"Sure," I said.

He went over to his suitcase and got out the cards and the cribbage board. We played cribbage and he won three dollars off me. John knocked at the door and came in.

"Want to play some cribbage, John?" Jack asked him.

John put his kelly down on the table. It was all wet. His coat was wet too.

"Is it raining?" Jack asks.

"It's pouring," John says. "The taxi I had, got tied up in the traffic and I got out and walked."

"Come on, play some cribbage," Jack says.

"You ought to go and eat."

"No," says Jack. "I don't want to eat yet."

So they played cribbage for about half an hour and Jack won a dollar and a half off him.

"Well, I suppose we got to go eat," Jack says. He went to the window and looked out.

"Is it still raining?"

"Yes."

"Let's eat in the hotel," John says.

"All right," Jack says, "I'll play you once more to see who pays for the meal."

After a little while Jack gets up and says, "You buy the meal, John," and we went downstairs and ate in the big dining-room.

After we ate we went upstairs and Jack played cribbage with John again and won two dollars and a half off him. Jack was feeling pretty good. John had a bag with him with all his stuff in it. Jack took off his shirt and collar and put on a jersey and a sweater, so he wouldn't catch cold when he came out, and put his ring clothes and his bathrobe in a bag.

"You all ready?" John asks him. "I'll call up and have them get a taxi."

Pretty soon the telephone rang and they said the taxi was waiting.

We rode down in the elevator and went out through the lobby, and

got in a taxi and rode around to the Garden. It was raining hard but there was a lot of people outside on the streets. The Garden was sold out. As we came in on our way to the dressing-room I saw how full it was. It looked like half a mile down to the ring. It was all dark. Just the lights over the ring.

"It's a good thing, with this rain, they didn't try and pull this fight in the ball park," John said.

"They got a good crowd," Jack says.

"This is a fight that would draw a lot more than the Garden could hold."

"You can't tell about the weather," Jack says.

John came to the door of the dressing-room and poked his head in. Jack was sitting there with his bathrobe on, he had his arms folded and was looking at the floor. John had a couple of handlers with him. They looked over his shoulder. Jack looked up.

"Is he in?" he asked.

"He's just gone down," John said.

We started down. Walcott was just getting into the ring. The crowd gave him a big hand. He climbed through between the ropes and put his two fists together and smiled, and shook them at the crowd, first at one side of the ring, then at the other, and then sat down. Jack got a good hand coming down through the crowd. Jack is Irish and the Irish always get a pretty good hand. An Irishman don't draw in New York like a Jew or an Italian but they always get a good hand. Jack climbed up and bent down to go through the ropes and Walcott came over from his corner and pushed the rope down for Jack to go through. The crowd thought that was wonderful. Walcott put his hand on Jack's shoulder and they stood there just for a second.

"So you're going to be one of these popular champions," Jack says to him. "Take your goddam hand off my shoulder."

"Be yourself," Walcott says.

This is all great for the crowd. How gentlemanly the boys are before the fight! How they wish each other luck!

Solly Freedman came over to our corner while Jack is bandaging his hands and John is over in Walcott's corner. Jack puts his thumb through the slit in the bandage and then wrapped his hand nice and smooth. I taped it around the wrist and twice across the knuckles.

"Hey," Freedman says. "Where do you get all that tape?"

"Feel of it," Jack says. "It's soft, ain't it? Don't be a hick."

Freedman stands there all the time while Jack bandages the other hand, and one of the boys that's going to handle him brings the gloves and I pull them on and work them around.

"Say, Freedman," Jack asks, "what nationality is this Walcott?"

"I don't know," Solly says. "He's some sort of a Dane."

"He's a Bohemian," the lad who brought the gloves said.

The referee called them out to the centre of the ring and Jack walks out. Walcott comes out smiling. They met and the referee put his arm on each of their shoulders.

"Hello, popularity," Jack says to Walcott.

"Be yourself."

"What do you call yourself 'Walcott' for?" Jack says. "Didn't you know he was a nigger?"

"Listen—" says the referee, and he gives them the same old line. Once Walcott interrupts him. He grabs Jack's arm and says, "Can I hit when he's got me like this?"

"Keep your hands off me," Jack says. "There ain't no moving-pictures of this."

They went back to their corners. I lifted the bathrobe off Jack and he leaned on the ropes and flexed his knees a couple of times and scuffed his shoes in the rosin. The gong rang and Jack turned quick and went out. Walcott came toward him and they touched gloves and as soon as Walcott dropped his hands Jack jumped his left into his face twice. There wasn't anybody ever boxed better than Jack. Walcott was after him, going forward all the time with his chin on his chest. He's a hooker and he carries his hands pretty low. All he knows is to get in there and sock. But every time he gets in there close, Jack has the left hand in his face. It's just as though it's automatic. Jack just raises the left hand up and it's in Walcott's face. Three or four times Jack brings the right over but Walcott gets it on the shoulder or high up on the head. He's just like all these hookers. The only thing he's afraid of is another one of the same kind. He's covered everywhere you can hurt him. He don't care about a left-hand in his face.

After about four rounds Jack has him bleeding bad and his face all cut up, but every time Walcott's got in close he's socked so hard he's got two big red patches on both sides just below Jack's ribs. Every time he gets in close, Jack ties him up, then gets one hand loose and

uppercuts him, but when Walcott gets his hands loose he socks Jack in the body so they can hear it outside in the street. He's a socker.

It goes along like that for three rounds more. They don't talk any. They're working all the time. We worked over Jack plenty too, in between the rounds. He don't look good at all but he never does much work in the ring. He don't move around much and that left-hand is just automatic. It's just like it was connected with Walcott's face and Jack just had to wish it in every time. Jack is always calm in close and he doesn't waste any juice. He knows everything about working in close too and he's getting away with a lot of stuff. While they were in our corner I watched him tie Walcott up, get his right hand loose, turn it and come up with an uppercut that got Walcott's nose with the heel of the glove. Walcott was bleeding bad and leaned his nose on Jack's shoulder so as to give Jack some of it too, and Jack sort of lifted his shoulder sharp and caught him against the nose, and then brought down the right hand and did the same thing again.

Walcott was sore as hell. By the time they'd gone five rounds he hated Jack's guts. Jack wasn't sore; that is, he wasn't any sorer than he always was. He certainly did used to make the fellows he fought hate boxing. That was why he hated Kid Lewis so. He never got the Kid's goat. Kid Lewis always had about three new dirty things Jack couldn't do. Jack was as safe as a church all the time he was in there, as long as he was strong. He certainly was treating Walcott rough. The funny thing was it looked as though Jack was an open classic boxer. That was because he had all that stuff too.

After the seventh round Jack says, "My left's getting heavy."

From then he started to take a beating. It didn't show at first. But instead of him running the fight it was Walcott was running it, instead of being safe all the time now he was in trouble. He couldn't keep him out with the left hand now. It looked as though it was the same as ever, only now instead of Walcott's punches just missing him they were just hitting him. He took an awful beating in the body.

"What's the round?" Jack asked.

"The eleventh."

"I can't stay," Jack says. "My legs are going bad."

Walcott had been just hitting him for a long time. It was like a baseball catcher pulls the ball and takes some of the shock off. From now on Walcott commenced to land solid. He certainly was a socking-

machine. Jack was just trying to block everything now. It didn't show what an awful beating he was taking. In between the rounds I worked on his legs. The muscles would flutter under my hands all the time I was rubbing them. He was sick as hell.

"How's it go?" he asked John, turning around, his face all swollen.

"It's his fight."

"I think I can last," Jack says. "I don't want this bohunk to stop me."

It was going just the way he thought it would. He knew he couldn't beat Walcott. He wasn't strong any more. He was all right though. His money was all right and now he wanted to finish it off right to please himself. He didn't want to be knocked out.

The gong rang and we pushed him out. He went out slow. Walcott came right out after him. Jack put the left in his face and Walcott took it, came in under it and started working on Jack's body. Jack tried to tie him up and it was just like trying to hold on to a buzz-saw. Jack broke away from it and missed with the right. Walcott clipped him with a left-hook and Jack went down. He went down on his hands and knees and looked at us. The referee started counting. Jack was watching us and shaking his head. At eight John motioned to him. You couldn't hear on account of the crowd. Jack got up. The referee had been holding Walcott back with one arm while he counted.

When Jack was on his feet Walcott started toward him.

"Watch yourself, Jimmy," I heard Solly Freedman yell to him.

Walcott came up to Jack looking at him. Jack stuck the left hand at him. Walcott just shook his head. He backed Jack up against the ropes, measured him and then hooked the left very light to the side of Jack's head and socked the right into the body as hard as he could sock, just as low as he could get it. He must have hit him five inches below the belt. I thought the eyes would come out of Jack's head. They stuck way out. His mouth come open.

The referee grabbed Walcott. Jack stepped forward. If he went down there went fifty thousand bucks. He walked as though all his insides were going to fall out.

"It wasn't low," he said. "It was a accident."

The crowd were yelling so you couldn't hear anything.

"I'm all right," Jack says. They were right in front of us. The referee looks at John and then he shakes his head.

"Come on, you polak son-of-a-bitch," Jack says to Walcott.

John was hanging onto the ropes. He had the towel ready to chuck in. Jack was standing just a little way out from the ropes. He took a step forward. I saw the sweat come out on his face like somebody had squeezed it and a big drop went down his nose.

"Come on and fight," Jack says to Walcott.

The referee looked at John and waved Walcott on.

"Go in there, you slob," he says.

Walcott went in. He didn't know what to do either. He never thought Jack could have stood it. Jack put the left in his face. There was such a hell of a lot of yelling going on. They were right in front of us. Walcott hit him twice. Jack's face was the worst thing I ever saw,—the look on it! He was holding himself and all his body together and it all showed on his face. All the time he was thinking and holding his body in where it was busted.

Then he started to sock. His face looked awful all the time. He started to sock with his hands low down by his side, swinging at Walcott. Walcott covered up and Jack was swinging wild at Walcott's head. Then he swung the left and it hit Walcott in the groin and the right hit Walcott right bang where he'd hit Jack. Way low below the belt. Walcott went down and grabbed himself there and rolled and twisted around.

The referee grabbed Jack and pushed him toward his corner. John jumps into the ring. There was all this yelling going on. The referee was talking with the judges and then the announcer got into the ring with the megaphone and says, "Walcott on a foul."

The referee is talking to John and he says, "What could I do? Jack wouldn't take the foul. Then when he's groggy he fouls him."

"He'd lost it anyway," John says.

Jack's sitting on the chair. I've got his gloves off and he's holding himself in down there with both hands. When he's got something supporting it his face doesn't look so bad.

"Go over and say you're sorry," John says into his ear. "It'll look good."

Jack stands up and the sweat comes out all over his face. I put the bathrobe around him and he holds himself in with one hand under the bathroom and goes across the ring. They've picked Walcott up and they're working on him. There're a lot of people in Walcott's corner. Nobody speaks to Jack. He leans over Walcott.

"I'm sorry," Jack says. "I didn't mean to foul you."

Walcott doesn't say anything. He looks too damned sick.

"Well, you're the champion now," Jack says to him. "I hope you get a hell of a lot of fun out of it."

"Leave the kid alone," Solly Freedman says.

"Hello, Solly," Jack says. "I'm sorry I fouled your boy."

Freedman just looks at him.

Jack went to his corner walking that funny jerky way and we got him down through the ropes and through the reporters' tables and out down the aisle. A lot of people want to slap Jack on the back. He goes out through all that mob in his bathrobe to the dressing-room. It's a popular win for Walcott. That's the way the money was bet in the Garden.

Once we got inside the dressing-room Jack lay down and shut his eyes.

"We want to get to the hotel and get a doctor," John says.

"I'm all busted inside," Jack says.

"I'm sorry as hell, Jack," John says.

"It's all right," Jack says.

He lies there with his eyes shut.

"They certainly tried a nice double-cross," John said.

"Your friends Morgan and Steinfelt," Jack said. "You got nice friends."

He lies there, his eyes are open now. His face has still got that awful drawn look.

"It's funny how fast you can think when it means that much money," Jack says.

"You're some boy, Jack," John says.

"No," Jack says. "It was nothing."

Analysis

For the past two decades the influence of the Hemingway technique, often called "the cult of the simple," has been almost incalculable, although believed by some observers of modern tendencies in fiction to be now on the wane. It has extended even into the detective story field where it has evolved into a new kind of melodrama. (See James M. Cain's "The Girl in the Storm" and Raymond Chandler's "I'll Be Waiting," Part III.) Super-

ficial characteristics of Hemingway technique are extreme terseness, frequent use of word and idea repetition, extremely simple vocabulary, emphasis upon dialogue, emphasis upon external events, extreme objectivity and restraint. Strong tough men are represented in a physical struggle with an environment that usually overwhelms them, yet often they obtain spiritual regeneration in failure. More subtly, the best of this kind of writing conveys a strong undercurrent of tension and tragedy in its revelation of character.

1. Illustrate with several examples from "Fifty Grand" each of the following characteristics of the cult of the simple: (a) simplicity of vocabulary, (b) repetition, (c) restraint, (d) naturalism, (e) emphasis on dialogue.

2. Money in its various aspects is often the main or auxiliary theme for the story of social criticism. Point out several passages illustrating that money is an important factor in building up the character of Jack Brennan. Does Brennan develop into a heroic or sympathetic character or not? Explain.

3. Is the atmosphere convincing? Indicate passages in the story which convince you that Hemingway is drawing upon real life for his background.

4. What is the advantage of the point of view used? What function do the other customers of the training camp serve? In their brief appearances are they characterized? How?

5. Explain the ending of the story.

6. Several of Hemingway's stories, such as "Fifty Grand," "The Killers," "The Undefeated," "My Old Man," are conceded by critics generally to be among the best stories published in the past twenty years. Personally evaluate "Fifty Grand." What qualities make it an outstanding story?

Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway (1898—) was born in Oak Park, a suburb of Chicago. During his boyhood there he went on hunting and fishing trips into northern Michigan with his father, a physician. In school he was outstanding in athletics. Upon graduation from high school he worked for the Kansas City *Star,* with desultory work as day laborer, sparring partner, farm hand. Before the United States entered World War I, Hemingway volunteered for service in an American ambulance unit, later transferring to the Italian Arditi. He was wounded in action, twice decorated by the Italian government. From these experiences he drew the material for his novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), which secured his fame. His adventures in the Spanish civil war led to his well-known novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). During World War II he served as a magazine correspondent and was often under fire.

Other notable books by Hemingway are *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *In*

Our Time (1925), and *Men Without Women* (1927). "Fifty Grand" is reprinted from *Men Without Women.*

As reported in an interview with Robert Van Gelder, Ernest Hemingway says of his writing methods: "I start work each morning at seven-thirty and work until about two-thirty. The first thing I do when I'm writing a novel is read back through all that has gone before. That way I break the back of the job. Then I put the words in—like laying bricks. I write in longhand and don't try to make much time. I've tried this speed writing, getting it all down and then going over it, but the trouble is if you speed too much you don't know if you have a book or not when you've finished the first draft. . . . I don't know how many words I write a day. Some days a lot, some days a little. I never write to fit a thesis or plan. I start with blank paper and put all I know at the time on the blank paper. Most of the time it is tough going."

At the time of this interview (1940) Hemingway is said to have arrived in New York City from his Spanish adventure, without funds and to have received an advance from his publisher while he was working upon the proof of *For Whom the Bell Tolls.*



RAID

William Faulkner

GRANNY wrote the note with pokeberry juice. "Take it straight to Mrs. Compson and come straight back," she said. "Don't you-all stop anywhere."

"You mean we got to walk?" Ringo said. "You gonter make us walk all them four miles to Jefferson and back, with them two horses standing in the lot doing nothing?"

"They are borrowed horses," Granny said. "I'm going to take care of them until I can return them."

"I reckon you calls starting out to be gone you don't know where and you don't know how long taking care of—" Ringo said.

"Do you want me to whup you?" Louvinia said.

"Nome," Ringo said.

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We walked to Jefferson and gave Mrs. Compson the note, and got the hat and the parasol and the hand mirror, and walked back home. That afternoon we greased the wagon, and that night after supper Granny got the pokeberry juice again and wrote on a scrap of paper, "Colonel Nathaniel G. Dick, —th Ohio Cavalry," and folded it and pinned it inside her dress. "Now I won't forget it," she said.

"If you was to, I reckon these hellion boys can remind you," Louvinia said. "I reckon they ain't forgot him. Walking in that door just in time to keep them others from snatching them out from under your dress and nailing them to the barn door like two coon hides."

"Yes," Granny said. "Now we'll go to bed."

We lived in Joby's cabin then, with a red quilt nailed by one edge to a rafter and hanging down to make two rooms. Joby was waiting with the wagon when Granny came out with Mrs. Compson's hat on, and got into the wagon and told Ringo to open the parasol and took up the reins. Then we all stopped and watched Joby stick something into the wagon beneath the quilts; it was the barrel and the iron parts of the musket that Ringo and I found in the ashes of the house.

"What's that?" Granny said. Joby didn't look at her.

"Maybe if they just seed the end of hit they mought think hit was the whole gun," he said.

"Then what?" Granny said. Joby didn't look at anybody now.

"I was just doing what I could to help git the silver and the mules back," he said.

Louvinia didn't say anything either. She and Granny just looked at Joby. After a while he took the musket barrel out of the wagon. Granny gathered up the reins.

"Take him with you," Louvinia said. "Leastways he can tend the horses."

"No," Granny said. "Don't you see I have got about all I can look after now?"

"Then you stay here and lemme go," Louvinia said. "I'll git um back."

"No," Granny said. "I'll be all right. I shall inquire until I find Colonel Dick, and then we will load the chest in the wagon and Loosh can lead the mules and we will come back home."

Then Louvinia began to act just like Uncle Buck McCaslin did the morning we started to Memphis. She stood there holding to the wagon

wheel and looked at Granny from under father's old hat, and began to holler. "Don't you waste no time on colonels or nothing!" she hollered. "You tell them niggers to send Loosh to you, and you tell him to get that chest and them mules, and then you whup him!" The wagon was moving now; she had turned loose the wheel, and she walked along beside it, hollering at Granny: "Take that pairsawl and wear hit out on him!"

"All right," Granny said. The wagon went on; we passed the ash pile and the chimneys standing up out of it; Ringo and I found the insides of the big clock too. The sun was just coming up, shining back on the chimneys; I could still see Louvinia between them standing in front of the cabin, shading her eyes with her hand to watch us. Joby was still standing behind her, holding the musket barrel. They had broken the gates clean off; and then we were in the road.

"Don't you want me to drive?" I said.

"I'll drive," Granny said. "These are borrowed horses."

"Case even Yankee could look at um and tell they couldn't keep up with even a walking army," Ringo said. "And I like to know how anybody can hurt this team lessen he ain't got strength enough to keep um from laying down in the road and getting run over with they own wagon."

We drove until dark, and camped. By sunup we were on the road again. "You better let me drive a while," I said.

"I'll drive," Granny said. "I was the one who borrowed them."

"You can tote this pairsawl a while, if you want something to do," Ringo said. "And give my arm a rest." I took the parasol and he laid down in the wagon and put his hat over his eyes. "Call me when we gitting nigh to Hawkshurst," he said, "so I can commence to look out for that railroad you tells about."

We went on; we didn't go fast. Or maybe it seemed slow because we had got into a country where nobody seemed to live at all; all that day we didn't even see a house. I didn't ask and Granny didn't say; she just sat there under the parasol with Mrs. Compson's hat on and the horses walking and even our own dust moving ahead of us; after a while even Ringo sat up and looked around.

"We on the wrong road," he said. "Ain't even nobody live here, let alone pass here."

But after a while the hills stopped, the road ran out flat and straight;

and all of a sudden Ringo hollered, "Look out! Here they come again to git these uns!" We saw it, too, then—a cloud of dust away to the west, moving slow—too slow for men riding—and then the road we were on ran square into a big broad one running straight on into the east, as the railroad at Hawkshurst did when Granny and I were there that summer before the war; all of a sudden I remembered it.

"This is the road to Hawkshurst," I said. But Ringo was not listening; he was looking at the dust, and the wagon stopped now with the horses' heads hanging and our dust overtaking us again and the big dust cloud coming slow up in the west.

"Can't you see um coming?" Ringo hollered. "Git on away from here!"

"They ain't Yankees," Granny said. "The Yankees have already been here." Then we saw it, too—a burned house like ours, three chimneys standing above a mound of ashes, and then we saw a white woman and a child looking at us from a cabin behind them. Granny looked at the dust cloud, then she looked at the empty broad road going on into the east. "This is the way," she said.

We went on. It seemed like we went slower than ever now, with the dust cloud behind us and the burned houses and gins and thrown-down fences on either side, and the white women and children—we never saw a nigger at all—watching us from the nigger cabins where they lived now like we lived at home; we didn't stop. "Poor folks," Granny said. "I wish we had enough to share with them."

At sunset we drew off the road and camped; Ringo was looking back. "Whatever hit is, we done went off and left hit," he said. "I don't see no dust." We slept in the wagon this time, all three of us. I don't know what time it was, only that all of a sudden I was awake. Granny was already sitting up in the wagon. I could see her head against the branches and the stars. All of a sudden all three of us were sitting up in the wagon, listening. They were coming up the road. It sounded like about fifty of them; we could hear the feet hurrying, and a kind of panting murmur. It was not singing exactly; it was not that loud. It was just a sound, a breathing, a kind of gasping, murmuring chant and the feet whispering fast in the deep dust. I could hear women, too, and then all of a sudden I began to smell them.

"Niggers," I whispered. "Sh-h-h-h," I whispered.

We couldn't see them and they did not see us; maybe they didn't

even look, just walking fast in the dark with that panting, hurrying murmuring, going on. And then the sun rose and we went on, too, along that big broad empty road between the burned houses and gins and fences. Before, it had been like passing through a country where nobody had ever lived; now it was like passing through one where everybody had died at the same moment. That night we waked up three times and sat up in the wagon in the dark and heard niggers pass in the road. The last time it was after dawn and we had already fed the horses. It was a big crowd of them this time, and they sounded like they were running, like they had to run to keep ahead of daylight. Then they were gone. Ringo and I had taken up the harness again; when Granny said, "Wait. Hush." It was just one, we could hear her panting and sobbing, and then we heard another sound. Granny began to get down from the wagon. "She fell," she said. "You-all hitch up and come on."

When we turned into the road, the woman was kind of crouched beside it, holding something in her arms, and Granny standing beside her. It was a baby, a few months old; she held it like she thought maybe Granny was going to take it away from her. "I been sick and I couldn't keep up," she said. "They went off and left me."

"Is your husband with them?" Granny said.

"Yessum," the woman said. "They's all there."

"Who do you belong to?" Granny said. Then she didn't answer. She squatted there in the dust, crouched over the baby. "If I give you something to eat, will you turn around and go back home?" Granny said. Still she didn't answer. She just squatted there. "You see you can't keep up with them and that they ain't going to wait for you," Granny said. "Do you want to die here in the road for buzzards to eat?" But she didn't even look at Granny; she just squatted there.

"Hit's Jordan we coming to," she said. "Jesus gonter see me that far."

"Get in the wagon," Granny said. She got in; she squatted again just like she had in the road, holding the baby and not looking at anything—just hunkered down and swaying on her hams as the wagon rocked and jolted. The sun was up; we went down a long hill and began to cross a creek bottom.

"I'll get out here," she said. Granny stopped the wagon and she got out. There was nothing at all but the thick gum and cypress and thick underbrush still full of shadow.

"You go back home, girl," Granny said. She just stood there. "Hand me the basket," Granny said. I handed it to her and she opened it and gave the woman a piece of bread and meat. We went on.

When I looked back, the woman was still standing there by the road. We went on up the other hill, but when I looked back this time the road was empty again.

"Were the others there in that bottom?" Granny asked Ringo.

"Yessum," Ringo said. "She done found um. Reckon she gonter lose um again tonight though."

That was early on the fourth day. Late that afternoon we began to go around a hill and I saw the graveyard and Uncle Denny's grave. "Hawkshurst," I said.

"Hawkshurst?" Ringo said. "Where's that railroad?"

The sun was going down. We came out where the sun shone level across where I remembered the house; we didn't stop; we just looked across at the mound of ashes and the four chimneys standing in the sun like the chimneys at home. We came to the gate. Cousin Denny was running down the drive toward us. He was ten; he ran up to the wagon with his eyes round and his mouth already open for hollering.

"Denny," Granny said, "do you know us?"

"Yessum," Cousin Denny said. He looked at me, hollering, "Come see—"

"Where's your mother?" Granny said.

"In Jingus' cabin," Cousin Denny said; he didn't even look at Granny. "They burnt the house!" he hollered. "Come see what they done to the railroad!"

We ran, all three of us. Granny hollered something and I turned and put the parasol back into the wagon and hollered "Yessum!" back at her, and ran on and caught up with Cousin Denny and Ringo in the road, and we ran on over the hill, and then it came in sight. When Granny and I were here before, Cousin Denny showed me the railroad, but he was so little then that Jingus had to carry him. It was the straightest thing I ever saw, running straight and empty and quiet through a long empty gash cut through the trees, and the ground, too, and full of sunlight like water in a river, only straighter than any river, with the crossties cut off even and smooth and neat, and the light shining on the rails like on two spider threads, running straight on to where you couldn't even see that far. It looked clean and neat, like the yard

behind Louvinia's cabin after she had swept it on Saturday morning, with those two little threads that didn't look strong enough for anything to run on running straight and fast and light, like they were getting up speed to jump clean off the world.

Jingus knew when the train would come; he held my hand and carried Cousin Denny, and we stood between the rails and he showed us where it would come from, and then he showed us where the shadow of a dead pine would come to a stob he had driven in the ground, and then you would hear the whistle. And we got back and watched the shadow, and then we heard it; it whistled and then it got louder and louder fast, and Jingus went to the track and took his hat off and held it out with his face turned back toward us and his mouth hollering, "Watch now! Watch!" even after we couldn't hear him for the train; and then it passed. It came roaring up and went past; the river they had cut through the trees was all full of smoke and noise and sparks and jumping brass, and then empty again, and just Jingus' old hat bouncing and jumping along the empty track behind it like the hat was alive.

But this time what I saw was something that looked like piles of black straws heaped up every few yards, and we ran into the cut and we could see where they had dug the ties up and piled them and set them on fire. But Cousin Denny was still hollering, "Come see what they done to the rails!" he said.

They were back in the trees; it looked like four or five men had taken each rail and tied it around a tree like you knot a green cornstalk around a wagon stake, and Ringo was hollering, too, now.

"What's them?" he hollered. "What's them?"

"That's what it runs on!" Cousin Denny hollered.

"You mean hit have to come in here and run up and down around these here trees like a squirrel?" Ringo hollered. Then we all heard the horse at once; we just had time to look when Bobolink came up the road out of the trees and went across the railroad and into the trees again like a bird, with Cousin Drusilla riding astride like a man and sitting straight and light as a willow branch in the wind. They said she was the best woman rider in the country.

"There's Dru!" Cousin Denny hollered. "Come on! She's been up to the river to see them niggers! Come on!" He and Ringo ran again. When I passed the chimneys, they were just running into the stable.

Cousin Drusilla had already unsaddled Bobolink, and she was rubbing him down with a croker sack when I came in. Cousin Denny was still hollering, "What did you see? What are they doing?"

"I'll tell about it at the house," Cousin Drusilla said. Then she saw me. She was not tall; it was the way she stood and walked. She had on pants, like a man. She was the best woman rider in the country. When Granny and I were here that summer before the war and Gavin Breckbridge had just given Bobolink to her, they looked fine together; it didn't need Jingus to say that they were the finest-looking couple in Alabama or Mississippi either. But Gavin was killed at Shiloh and so they didn't marry. She came and put her hand on my shoulder.

"Hello," she said. "Hello, John Sartoris." She looked at Ringo. "Is this Ringo?" she said.

"That's what they tells me," Ringo said.

"How are you?" Cousin Drusilla said.

"I manages to stand hit," Ringo said.

"I'll finish Bobolink for you," I said.

"Will you?" she said. She went to Bobolink's head. "Will you stand for Cousin Bayard, lad?" she said. "I'll see you-all at the house, then," she said. She went out.

"Yawl sho must 'a' had this horse hid good when the Yankees come," Ringo said.

"This horse?" Cousin Denny said. "Ain't no damn Yankee going to fool with Dru's horse no more." He didn't holler now, but pretty soon he began again: "When they come to burn the house, Dru grabbed the pistol and run out here—she had on her Sunday dress—and them right behind her. She run in here and she jumped on Bobolink bareback, without even waiting for the bridle, and one of them right there in the door hollering, 'Stop,' and Dru said, 'Get away, or I'll ride you down,' and him hollering, 'Stop! Stop!' with his pistol out too"—Cousin Denny was hollering good now—"and Dru leaned down to Bobolink's ear and said, 'Kill him, Bob,' and the Yankee jumped back just in time. The lot was full of them, too, and Dru stopped Bobolink and jumped down in her Sunday dress and put the pistol to Bobolink's ear and said, 'I can't shoot you all, because I haven't enough bullets, and it wouldn't do any good anyway; but I won't need but one shot for the horse, and which shall it be?' So they burned the house and went away!" He was hollering good now, with Ringo staring at him so you

could have raked Ringo's eyes off his face with a stick. "Come on!" Cousin Denny hollered. "Le's go hear about them niggers at the river!"

Cousin Drusilla was already talking, telling Granny mostly. Her hair was cut short; it looked like father's would when he would tell Granny about him and the men cutting each other's hair with a bayonet. She was sunburned and her hands were hard and scratched like a man's that works. She was telling Granny mostly: "They began to pass in the road yonder while the house was still burning. We couldn't count them; men and women carrying children who couldn't walk and carrying old men and women who should have been at home waiting to die. They were singing, walking along the road singing, not even looking to either side. The dust didn't even settle for two days, because all that night they still passed; we sat up listening to them, and the next morning every few yards along the road would be the old ones who couldn't keep up any more, sitting or lying down and even crawling along, calling to the others to help them; and the others—the young strong ones—not stopping, not even looking at them. I don't think they even heard or saw them. 'Going to Jordan,' they told me. 'Going to cross Jordan.'"

"That was what Loosh said," Granny said. "That General Sherman was leading them all to Jordan."

"Yes," Cousin Drusilla said. "The river. They have stopped there; it's like a river itself, dammed up. The Yankees have thrown out a brigade of cavalry to hold them back while they build the bridge to cross the infantry and artillery; they are all right until they get up there and see or smell the water. That's when they go mad. Not fighting; it's like they can't even see the horses shoving them back and the scabbards beating them; it's like they can't see anything but the water and the other bank. They aren't angry, aren't fighting; just men, women and children singing and chanting and trying to get to that unfinished bridge or even down into the water itself, and the cavalry beating them back with sword scabbards. I don't know when they have eaten; nobody knows just how far some of them have come. They just pass here without food or anything, exactly as they rose up from whatever they were doing when the spirit or the voice or whatever it was told them to go. They stop during the day and rest in the woods; then, at night, they move again. We will hear them later—I'll wake you—marching on up the road until the cavalry stops them. There was an officer, a

major, who finally took time to see I wasn't one of his men; he said, 'Can't you do anything with them? Promise them anything to go back home?' But it was like they couldn't see me or hear me speaking; it was only that water and that bank on the other side. But you will see for yourself tomorrow, when we go back."

"Drusilla," Aunt Louise said, "you're not going back tomorrow or any other time."

"They are going to mine the bridge and blow it up when the army has crossed," Cousin Drusilla said. "Nobody knows what they will do then."

"But we cannot be responsible," Aunt Louise said. "The Yankees brought it on themselves; let them pay the price."

"Those Negroes are not Yankees, mother," Cousin Drusilla said. "At least there will be one person there who is not a Yankee either." She looked at Granny. "Four, counting Bayard and Ringo."

Aunt Louise looked at Granny. "Rosa, you shan't go. I forbid it. Brother John will thank me to do so."

"I reckon I will," Granny said. "I've got to get the silver anyway."

"And the mules," Ringo said; "don't forget them. And don't yawl worry about Granny. She 'cide what she want and then she kneel down about ten seconds and tell God what she aim to do, and then she git up and do hit. And them that don't like hit can git outen the way or git trompled."

"And now I reckon we'd better go to bed," Granny said.

We went to bed. And this time I don't know how late it was either, except that it was late. It was Cousin Denny shaking me. "Dru says to come on out if you want to hear them passing," he whispered.

She was outside the cabin; she hadn't undressed even. I could see her in the starlight—her short jagged hair and the man's shirt and pants. "Hear them?" she said. We could hear it again, like we had in the wagon—the hurrying feet, the sound like they were singing in panting whispers, hurrying on past the gate and dying away up the road. "That's the third tonight," Cousin Drusilla said. "Two passed while I was down at the gate. You were tired, and so I didn't wake you before."

"I thought it was late," I said. "You haven't been to bed even. Have you?"

"No," she said. "I've quit sleeping."

"Quit sleeping?" I said. "Why?"

She looked at me. I was as tall as she was; we couldn't see each other's faces; it was just her head with the short jagged hair like she had cut it herself without bothering about a mirror, and her neck that had got thin and hard like her hands since Granny and I were here before. "I'm keeping a dog quiet," she said.

"A dog?" I said. "I haven't seen any dog."

"No. It's quiet now," she said. "It doesn't bother anybody any more now. I just have to show it the stick now and then." She was looking at me. "Why not stay awake now? Who wants to sleep now, with so much happening, so much to see? Living used to be dull, you see. Stupid. You lived in the same house your father was born in, and your father's sons and daughters had the sons and daughters of the same Negro slaves to nurse and coddle; and then you grew up and you fell in love with your acceptable young man, and in time you would marry him, in your mother's wedding gown, perhaps, and with the same silver for presents she had received; and then you settled down forevermore while you got children to feed and bathe and dress until they grew up, too; and then you and your husband died quietly and were buried together maybe on a summer afternoon just before supper-time. Stupid, you see. But now you can see for yourself how it is; it's fine now; you don't have to worry now about the house and the silver, because they get burned up and carried away; and you don't have to worry about the Negroes, because they tramp the roads all night waiting for a chance to drown in homemade Jordan; and you don't have to worry about getting children to bathe and feed and change, because the young men can ride away and get killed in the fine battles; and you don't even have to sleep alone, you don't even have to sleep at all; and so, all you have to do is show the stick to the dog now and then and say, 'Thank God for nothing.' You see? . . . There. They've gone now. And you'd better get back to bed, so we can get an early start in the morning. It will take a long time to get through them."

"You're not coming in now?" I said.

"Not yet," she said. But we didn't move. And then she put her hand on my shoulder. "Listen," she said. "When you go back home and see Uncle John, ask him to let me come there and ride with his troop. Tell him I can ride, and maybe I can learn to shoot. Will you?"

"Yes," I said. "I'll tell him you are not afraid too."

"Aren't I?" she said. "I hadn't thought about it. It doesn't matter

anyway. Just tell him I can ride and that I don't get tired." Her hand was on my shoulder; it felt thin and hard. "Will you do that for me? Ask him to let me come, Bayard."

"All right," I said. Then I said, "I hope he will let you."

"So do I," she said. "Now you go back to bed. Good night."

I went back to bed. After a while I was asleep.

And by sunup we were on the road again, with Cousin Drusilla on Bobolink beside the wagon.

It took us all that day to get through them, like Cousin Drusilla said. We began to see the dust almost at once, and then I began to smell them, and then we were in the middle of them—men carrying babies, and women dragging children by the hand, and women carrying babies, and old ones kind of pulling themselves along with sticks or sitting beside the road and holding up their hands and even calling to us when we passed, and one old woman even running along holding to the wagon and hollering at Granny to at least let her see the water before she died.

But mostly they didn't even look at us. We didn't try to ask them to let us through; it was like we could look at their faces and know that they couldn't have heard us. They were not singing yet; they were just hurrying, with our horses pushing slow through them, and their blank eyes not looking at anything out of faces caked with dust and sweat, and our horses and Bobolink shoving slow through them like trying to ride up a creek full of floating logs, and the dust everywhere, and Ringo holding the parasol over Granny and his eyes getting whiter and whiter, and Granny with Mrs. Compson's hat on, and the smell of them, and Granny looking sicker and sicker. Then it was afternoon. I had forgot about time. All of a sudden we began to hear them where the cavalry was holding them back from the bridge.

It was just a sound at first, like wind, like it might be in the dust itself, and Cousin Drusilla hollering, "Look out, Aunt Rosa! Oh, look out!"

It was like we all heard it at the same time—us in the wagon and on the horse—and the faces all around us under the sweat-caked dust. They made a kind of long wailing sound, and then I could feel the whole wagon rise up and begin to run forward. I saw our old rib-gaunted horses standing on their hind feet one minute and then turned sideways in the traces the next, and Cousin Drusilla leaning forward a

little and holding Bobolink, and I saw men and women and children going down under the horses, and we could feel the wagon going over them and we could hear them screaming. And we couldn't stop any more than if the earth had tilted up and was sliding us all down toward the river.

It went fast, like that, like it did every time; it was like the Yankees were a kind of gully, and every time Granny and Ringo and I got close to them, we would go rushing down into the gully like three rocks. Because all of a sudden it was sunset; there was a high, bright, rosy glow quiet behind the trees and shining on the river, and we saw the bridge full of Yankee soldiers running across to the other bank. I remember watching horses' and mules' heads mixed up with the bayonets, and then the barrels of cannon tilted up and kind of rushing slow across the high air, like split-cane clothespins being jerked along the clothesline, and the singing everywhere up and down the river bank, with the voices of the women coming out of it high, and then hollering "Glory!" and "Jesus!"

They were fighting now. There was a cleared space between the end of the bridge and the backs of the cavalry. I was watching the horses rearing and shoving against them, and the men beating at them with their scabbards, and the last of the infantry running onto the bridge, and all of a sudden there was an officer holding his scabbarded sword by the little end like a stick and hanging onto the wagon and hollering at us. I could see his little white face with a stubble of beard on it and a long streak of blood, and barcheaded, and with his mouth open.

"Get back!" he hollered. "Get back! We're going to blow the bridge!" and Granny hollering back at him, with Mrs. Compson's hat knocked to one side of her head, and hers and the Yankee's faces not a yard apart:

"I want my silver! I'm John Sartoris' mother-in-law! Send Colonel Dick to me!" Then the Yankee officer was gone, right in the middle of hollering and still beating at the nigger heads with his saber, and with his little hollering face and all. I don't know what became of him; he just vanished holding onto the wagon and flailing about him with the sword, and then Cousin Drusilla was there, on Bobolink; she had our nigh horse by the bridle and she was trying to turn the wagon sideways. I started to jump down. "Stay in the wagon," she said. She didn't holler; she just said it. "Take the lines and turn them." When

we got the wagon turned sideways, we stopped. And then for a minute I thought we were going backward, until I saw that it was the niggers. Then I saw that the cavalry had broken; I saw the whole mob of it—horses and men and sabers and niggers—kind of rolling toward the end of the bridge, like when a dam breaks, for about ten clear seconds behind the last of the infantry. And then the bridge vanished. I was looking right at it; I could see the clear gap between the infantry and the wave of niggers and cavalry, with the little empty thread of bridge joining them together in the air above the water, and then there was a bright glare, and then I felt my insides suck, and then a clap of wind hit me on the back of the head. I didn't hear anything at all. I just sat there in the wagon with a funny buzzing in my ears and a funny taste in my mouth, and watched little toy men and horses and pieces of plank floating along over the water. But I couldn't hear anything at all; I couldn't even hear Cousin Drusilla. She was right beside the wagon now, leaning toward us, hollering something.

"What?" I hollered.

"Stay in the wagon!" she hollered.

"I can't hear you!" I hollered. That's what I said; that's what I was thinking; I didn't realize even that the wagon was moving again. But then I did; it was like the whole side of the river had turned and risen up and was rushing down toward the water, and us sitting in the wagon and rushing down toward the water on another river of faces that couldn't see or hear either. Cousin Drusilla had the nigh horse by the bridle again, and I dragged at them, too, and Granny was standing up in the wagon and beating at the faces with Mrs. Compson's parasol, and then the whole rotten bridle came off in Cousin Drusilla's hand.

"Get away!" I hollered. "The wagon will float!"

"Yes," she said, "it will float. Just stay in it. Watch Aunt Rosa and Ringo."

"Yes," I hollered. Then she was gone. We passed her; turned, and holding Bobolink like a rock again and leaning down talking to him and patting his cheek, she was gone. Then maybe the bank did cave. I don't know. I didn't even know we were in the river. It was just like the earth had fallen out from under the wagon and the faces and all, and we all rushed down slow, with the faces looking up and their eyes blind and their mouths open and their arms held up. High up in the air across the river I saw a cliff and a big fire on it running fast side-

ways; and then all of a sudden the wagon was moving fast sideways, and then a dead horse came shining up from out of the yelling faces and went down slow again, exactly like a fish feeding, with, hanging over his rump by one stirrup, a man in a black uniform, and then I realized that the uniform was blue, only it was wet. They were screaming then, and now I could feel the wagon bed tilt and slide as they caught at it. Granny was kneeling beside me now, hitting at the screaming faces with Mrs. Compson's parasol. Behind us they were still marching down the bank and into the river, singing.

A Yankee patrol helped Ringo and me cut the drowned horses out of the harness and drag the wagon ashore. We sprinkled water on Granny until she came to, and they rigged harness with ropes and hitched up two of their horses. There was a road on top of the bluff, and then we could see the fires along the bank. They were still singing on the other side of the river, but it was quieter now. But there were patrols still riding up and down the cliff on this side, and squads of infantry down at the water where the fires were. Then we began to pass between rows of tents, with Granny lying against me, and I could see her face then; it was white and still, and her eyes were shut. She looked old and tired; I hadn't realized how old and little she was. Then we began to pass big fires, with niggers in wet clothes crouching around them and soldiers going among them passing out food; then we came to a broad street, and stopped before a tent with a sentry at the door and a light inside. The soldiers looked at Granny.

"We better take her to the hospital," one of them said.

Granny opened her eyes; she tried to sit up. "No," she said. "Just take me to Colonel Dick. I will be all right then."

They carried her into the tent and put her in a chair. She hadn't moved; she was sitting there with her eyes closed and a strand of wet hair sticking to her face when Colonel Dick came in. I had never seen him before—only heard his voice while Ringo and I were squatting under Granny's skirt and holding our breath—but I knew him at once, with his bright beard and his hard bright eyes, stooping over Granny and saying, "Damn this war. Damn it. Damn it."

"They took the silver and the darkies and the mules," Granny said. "I have come to get them."

"Have them you shall," he said, "if they are anywhere in this corps.

I'll see the general myself." He was looking at Ringo and me now. "Ha!" he said. "I believe we have met before also." Then he was gone again.

It was hot in the tent, and quiet, with three bugs swirling around the lantern, and outside the sound of the army like wind far away. Ringo was already asleep, sitting on the ground with his head on his knees, and I wasn't much better, because all of a sudden Colonel Dick was back and there was an orderly writing at the table, and Granny sitting again with her eyes closed in her white face.

"Maybe you can describe them," Colonel Dick said to me.

"I will do it," Granny said. She didn't open her eyes. "The chest of silver tied with hemp rope. The rope was new. Two darkies, Loosh and Philadelphy. The mules, Old Hundred and Tinney."

Colonel Dick turned and watched the orderly writing. "Have you got that?" he said.

The orderly looked at what he had written. "I guess the general will be glad to give them twice the silver and mules just for taking that many niggers," he said.

"Now I'll go see the general," Colonel Dick said.

Then we were moving again. I don't know how long it had been, because they had to wake me and Ringo both; we were in the wagon again, with two Army horses pulling it on down the long broad street, and there was another officer with us and Colonel Dick was gone. We came to a pile of chests and boxes that looked higher than a mountain. There was a rope pen behind it full of mules and then, standing to one side and waiting there, was what looked like a thousand niggers, men, women and children, with their wet clothes dried on them. And now it began to go fast again; there was Granny in the wagon with her eyes wide open now and the lieutenant reading from the paper and the soldiers jerking chests and trunks out of the pile. "Ten chests tied with hemp rope," the lieutenant read. "Got them? . . . A hundred and ten mules. It says from Philadelphia—that's in Mississippi. Get these Mississippi mules. They are to have rope and halters."

"We ain't got a hundred and ten Mississippi mules," the sergeant said.

"Get what we have got. Hurry." He turned to Granny. "And there are your niggers, madam."

Granny was looking at him with her eyes wide as Ringo's. She was

drawn back a little, with her hand at her chest. "But they're not—they ain't—" she said.

"They ain't all yours?" the lieutenant said. "I know it. The general said to give you another hundred with his compliments."

"But that ain't— We didn't—" Granny said.

"She wants the house back, too," the sergeant said. "We ain't got any houses, grandma," he said. "You'll just have to make out with trunks and niggers and mules. You wouldn't have room for it on the wagon, anyway."

We sat there while they loaded the ten trunks into the wagon. It just did hold them all. They got another set of trees and harness, and hitched four mules to it. "One of you darkies that can handle two span come here," the lieutenant said. One of the niggers came and got on the seat with Granny; none of us had ever seen him before. Behind us they were leading the mules out of the pen.

"You want to let some of the women ride?" the lieutenant said.

"Yes," Granny whispered.

"Come on," the lieutenant said. "Just one to a mule, now." Then he handed me the paper. "Here you are. There's a ford about twenty miles up the river; you can cross there. You better get on away from here before any more of these niggers decide to go with you."

We rode until daylight, with the ten chests in the wagon and the mules and our army of niggers behind. Granny had not moved, sitting there beside the strange nigger with Mrs. Compson's hat on and the parasol in her hand. But she was not asleep, because when it got light enough to see, she said, "Stop the wagon." The wagon stopped. She turned and looked at me. "Let me see that paper," she said.

We opened the paper and looked at it, at the neat writing:

Field Headquarters,
——th Army Corps,
Department of Tennessee,
August 14, 1864.

To all Brigade, Regimental and Other Commanders: You will see that bearer is repossessed in full of the following property, to wit: Ten (10) chests tied with hemp rope and containing silver. One hundred ten (110) mules captured loose near Philadelphia in Mississippi. One hundred ten (110) Negroes of both sexes belonging to and having strayed from the same locality.

You will further see that bearer is supplied with necessary food and forage to expedite his passage to his destination.

By order of the General Commanding.

We looked at one another in the gray light. "I reckon you gonter take um back now," Ringo said.

Granny looked at me. "We can get food and fodder too," I said.

"Yes," Granny said. "I tried to tell them better. You and Ringo heard me. It's the hand of God."

We stopped and slept until noon. That afternoon we came to the ford. We had already started down the bluff when we saw the troop of cavalry camped there. It was too late to stop.

"They done found hit out and headed us off," Ringo said. It was too late; already an officer and two men were riding toward us.

"I will tell them the truth," Granny said. "We have done nothing." She sat there, drawn back a little again, with her hand already raised and holding the paper out in the other when they rode up. The officer was a heavy-built man with a red face; he looked at us and took the paper and read it and began to swear. He sat there on his horse swearing while we watched him.

"How many do you lack?" he said.

"How many do I what?" Granny said.

"Mules!" the officer hollered. "Mules! Mules! Do I look like I had any chests of silver or niggers tied with hemp rope?"

"Do we—" Granny said, with her hand to her chest, looking at him; I reckon it was Ringo that knew first what he meant.

"We like fifty," Ringo said.

"Fifty, hey?" the officer said. He cursed again; he turned to one of the men behind him and cursed him now. "Count 'em!" he hollered. "Do you think I'm going to take their word for it?"

The man counted the mules; we didn't move; I don't think we even breathed hardly. "Sixty-three," the man said.

The officer looked at us. "Sixty-three from a hundred and ten leaves forty-seven," he said. He cursed. "Get forty-seven mules!" he hollered. "Hurry!" He looked at us again. "Think you can beat me out of three mules, hey?" he hollered.

"Forty-seven will do," Ringo said. "Only I reckon maybe we better eat something, like the paper mention."

We crossed the ford. We didn't stop; we went on as soon as they brought up the other mules, and some more of the women got on them. We went on. It was after sundown then, but we didn't stop.

"Hah!" Ringo said. "Whose hand was that?"

We went on until midnight before we stopped. This time it was Ringo that Granny was looking at. "Ringo," she said.

"I never said nothing the paper never said," Ringo said. "Hit was the one that said it; hit wasn't me. All I done was to told him how much the hundred and ten liked; I never said we liked that many. 'Cides, hit ain't no use in praying about hit now; ain't no telling what we gonter run into 'fore we gits home. The main thing now is, whut we gonter do with all these niggers."

"Yes," Granny said. We cooked and ate the food the cavalry officer gave us; then Granny told all the niggers that lived in Alabama to come forward. It was about half of them. "I suppose you all want to cross some more rivers and run after the Yankee Army, don't you?" Granny said. They stood there, moving their feet in the dust. "What? Don't any of you want to?" They just stood there. "Then who are you going to mind from now on?"

After a while, one of them said, "You, missy."

"All right," Granny said. "Now listen to me. Go home. And if I ever hear of any of you straggling off like this again, I'll see to it. Now line up and come up here one at a time while we divide the food."

It took a long time until the last one was gone; when we started again, we had almost enough mules for everybody to ride, but not quite, and Ringo drove now. He didn't ask; he just got in and took the reins, with Granny on the seat by him; it was just once that she told him not to go so fast. So I rode in the back then, on one of the chests, and that afternoon I was asleep; it was the wagon stopping that woke me. We had just come down a hill onto a flat, and then I saw them beyond a field, about a dozen of them, cavalry in blue coats. They hadn't seen us yet, trotting along, and then I saw Granny and Ringo watching them.

"They ain't hardly worth fooling with," Ringo said. "Still, they's horses."

"We've already got a hundred and ten," Granny said. "That's all the paper calls for."

"All right," Ringo said. "You wanter go on?" Granny didn't answer, sitting there drawn back a little, with her hand at her breast again.

"Well, what you wanter do?" Ringo said. "You got to 'cide quick, or they be gone." He looked at her; she didn't move. Ringo leaned out of the wagon. "Hey!" he hollered. They looked back quick and saw us and whirled about. "Granny say come here!" Ringo hollered.

"You, Ringo," Granny whispered.

"All right," Ringo said. "You want me to tell um to never mind?" She didn't answer; she was looking past Ringo at the two Yankees who were riding toward us across the field, with that kind of drawn-back look on her face and her hand holding the front of her dress. It was a lieutenant and a sergeant; the lieutenant didn't look much older than Ringo and me. He saw Granny and took off his hat, and Granny sitting there. And then all of a sudden she took her hand away from her chest; it had the paper in it; she held it out to the lieutenant without saying a word. The lieutenant opened it, the sergeant looking over his shoulder. Then the sergeant looked at us.

"This says mules, not horses," he said.

"Just the first hundred was mules," Ringo said. "The extra twelve is horses."

"Damn it!" the lieutenant said. He sounded like a girl swearing. "I told Captain Bowen not to mount us with captured stock!"

"You mean you're going to give them the horses?" the sergeant said.

"What else can I do?" the lieutenant said. He looked like he was fixing to cry. "It's the general's own signature!"

So then we had enough stock for all of them to ride except about fifteen or twenty. We went on. The soldiers stood under a tree by the road, with their saddles and bridles on the ground beside them—all but the lieutenant. When we started again, he ran along by the wagon; he looked like he was going to cry, trotting along by the wagon with his hat in his hand, looking at Granny.

"You'll meet some troops somewhere," he said. "I know you will. Will you tell them where we are and to send for us? You won't forget?"

"They're some of yawl about twenty or thirty miles back that claim to have three extry mules," Ringo said. "But when we sees any more of um, we'll tell um about yawl."

We went on. We came in sight of a town, but we went around it; Ringo didn't even want to stop and send the message in, but Granny made him stop and we sent the message in by one of the niggers.

"That's one more mouth to feed we got shed of," Ringo said.

We went on. We went fast now, changing the mules every few miles; a woman told us we were in Mississippi again, and then, in the afternoon, we came over the hill, and there our chimneys were, standing up into the sunlight, and the cabin behind them and Louvinia bending over a washtub and the clothes on the line, flapping bright and peaceful.

"Stop the wagon," Granny said.

We stopped—the wagon, the hundred and twenty-two mules and horses, and the niggers we never had had time to count.

Granny got out slow and turned to Ringo. "Get out," she said; then she looked at me. "You too," she said. "Because you said nothing at all." We got out of the wagon. She looked at us. "We have lied," she said.

"Hit was the paper that lied; hit wasn't us," Ringo said.

"The paper said a hundred and ten. We have a hundred and twenty-two," Granny said. "Kneel down."

"But they stole them 'fore we did," Ringo said.

"But we lied," Granny said. "Kneel down." She knelt first. Then we all three knelt by the road while she prayed. The washing blew soft and peaceful and bright on the clothesline. And then Louvinia saw us; she was already running across the pasture while Granny was praying.

Analysis

In William Faulkner's work can be traced the influence of both James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway, and yet in his realistic portrayal of the psychological aspects of his characters, in his violence, in the parallel development of a number of characters in small space he is working entirely in his own medium. Many of his stories contain local color material dealing with Southern speech and manners.

1. "Raid" is a historical tale handled at times in an impressionistic manner. How does it differ in technique and tone from other historical stories you have read? Exactly what is the theme? If you have read *Gone With the Wind,* be prepared to comment upon differences in handling much the same material.

2. Although not a "local color" story, "Raid" is full of local color background woven into the tale. How is this atmosphere attained? What scenes are memorable?

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of Faulkner's first-person point of view?

4. In this story does Faulkner succeed in "the parallel development of a number of characters in small space"? Comment on Cousin Drusilla, pointing out passages which bring her character into focus. She is representative of what group? Is she a kind of symbol?

5. Does the surprise ending detract from or add to the effectiveness of the story? Explain. In what way is it used to round out Granny's character. This story appeared originally in *The Saturday Evening Post.* What concessions, if any, has Faulkner made to the commercial market?

6. Is there any historical or folk material in your native region or community, with which you are familiar, that might lend itself to local color use or use as atmosphere in an original story?

William Faulkner

William Faulkner (1897–) was born in Mississippi, where he has spent most of his life. His education was casual, though he did receive some formal academic training in high school and at the University of Mississippi. He has been at varying times carpenter, clerk, stoker, newspaperman. During World War I he served with the Canadian Flying Corps and was wounded in combat flying over France. His better-known books are *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Sanctuary* (1931), *Light in August* (1932), and *The Hamlet* (1940), which some critics regard as his most mature piece of writing.



THE PEOPLE *VS.* ABE LATHAN, COLORED

Erskine Caldwell

UNCLE ABE was shucking corn in the crib when Luther Bolick came down from the big white house on the hill and told him to pack up his household goods and move off the farm. Uncle Abe had grown a little deaf and he did not hear what Luther said the first time.

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"These old ears of mine are bothering me again, Mr. Luther!" Uncle Abe said. "I just can't seem to hear as good as I used to."

Luther looked at the Negro and scowled. Uncle Abe had got up and was standing in the crib door where he could hear better.

"I said, I want you and your family to pack up your furniture and anything else that really belongs to you, and move off."

Uncle Abe reached out and clutched at the crib door for support.

"Move off?" Uncle Abe said.

He looked into his landlord's face unbelievingly.

"Mr. Luther, you don't mean that, do you?" Uncle Abe asked, his voice shaking. "You must be joking, ain't you, Mr. Luther?"

"You heard me right, even if you do pretend to be half deaf," Luther said angrily, turning around and walking several steps. "I want you off the place by the end of the week. I'll give you that much time if you don't try to make any trouble. And when you pack up your things, take care you don't pick up anything that belongs to me. Or I'll have the law on you."

Uncle Abe grew weak so quickly that he barely managed to keep from falling. He turned a little and slid down the side of the door and sat on the crib floor. Luther looked around to see what he was doing.

"I'm past sixty," Uncle Abe said slowly, "but me and my family works hard for you, Mr. Luther. We work as hard as anybody on your whole place. You know that's true, Mr. Luther. I've lived here, working for you, and your daddy before you, for all of forty years. I never mentioned to you about the shares, no matter how big the crop was that I raised for you. I've never asked much, just enough to eat and a few clothes, that's all. I raised up a houseful of children to help work, and none of them ever made any trouble for you, did they, Mr. Luther?"

Luther waved his arm impatiently indicating that he wanted the Negro to stop arguing. He shook his head, showing that he did not want to listen to anything Uncle Abe had to say.

"That's all true enough," Luther said, "but I've got to get rid of half the tenants on my place. I can't afford to keep eight or ten old people like you here any longer. All of you will have to move off and go somewhere else."

"Ain't you going to farm this year, and raise cotton, Mr. Luther?"

Uncle Abe asked. "I can still work as good and hard as anybody else. It may take me a little longer sometimes, but I get the work done. Ain't I shucking this corn to feed the mules as good as anybody else could do?"

"I haven't got time to stand here and argue with you," Luther said nervously. "My mind is made up, and that's all there is to it. Now, you go on home as soon as you finish feeding the mules and start packing the things that belong to you like I told you."

Luther turned away and started walking down the path toward the barn. When he got as far as the barnyard gate, he turned around and looked back. Uncle Abe had followed him.

"Where can me and my family move to, Mr. Luther?" Uncle Abe said. "The boys are big enough to take care of themselves. But me and my wife have grown old. You know how hard it is for an old colored man like me to go out and find a house and land to work on shares. It don't cost you much to keep us, and me and my boys raise as much cotton as anybody else. The last time I mentioned to you about the shares has been a long way in the past, thirty years or more. I'm just content to work like I do and get some rations and a few clothes. You know that's true, Mr. Luther. I've lived in my little shanty over there for all of forty years, and it's the only home I've got. Mr. Luther, me and my wife is both old now, and I can't hire out to work by the day, because I don't have the strength any more. But I can still grow cotton as good as any other colored man in the country."

Luther opened the barnyard gate and walked through it. He shook his head as though he was not even going to listen any longer. He turned his back on Uncle Abe and walked away.

Uncle Abe did not know what to say or do after that. When he saw Luther walk away, he became shaky all over. He clutched at the gate for something to hold on to.

"I just can't move away, Mr. Luther," he said desperately. "I just can't do that. This is the only place I've got to live in the world. I just can't move off, Mr. Luther."

Luther walked out of sight around the corner of the barn. He did not hear Uncle Abe after that.

The next day, at a little after two o'clock in the afternoon, a truck drove up to the door of the three-room house where Uncle Abe, his wife, and their three grown sons lived. Uncle Abe and his wife were

sitting by the fire trying to keep warm in the winter cold. They were the only ones at home then.

Uncle Abe heard the truck drive up and stop, but he sat where he was, thinking it was his oldest boy, Henry, who drove a truck sometimes for Luther Bolick.

After several minutes had passed, somebody knocked on the door, and his wife got up right away and went to see who it was.

There were two strange white men on the porch when she opened the door. They did not say anything at first, but looked inside the room to see who was there. Still not saying anything, they came inside and walked to the fireplace where Uncle Abe sat hunched over the hearth.

"Are you Abe Lathan?" one of the men, the oldest, asked.

"Yes, sir, I'm Abe Lathan," he answered, wondering who they were, because he had never seen them before. "Why do you want to know that?"

The man took a bright metal disk out of his pocket and held it in the palm of his hand before Uncle Abe's eyes.

"I'm serving a paper and a warrant on you," he said. "One is an eviction, and the other is for threatening to do bodily harm."

He unfolded the eviction notice and handed it to Uncle Abe. The Negro shook his head bewilderedly, looking first at the paper and finally up at the two strange white men.

"I'm a deputy," the older man said, "and I've come for two things—to evict you from this house and to put you under arrest."

"What does that mean—evict?" Uncle Abe asked.

The two men looked around the room for a moment. Uncle Abe's wife had come up behind his chair and put trembling hands on his shoulder.

"We are going to move your furniture out of this house and carry it off the property of Luther Bolick. Then, besides that, we're going to take you down to the county jail. Now, come on and hurry up, both of you."

Uncle Abe got up, and he and his wife stood on the hearth not knowing what to do.

The two men began gathering up the furniture and carrying it out of the house. They took the beds, tables, chairs, and everything else in the three rooms except the cook-stove, which belonged to Luther

Bolick. When they got all the things outside, they began piling them into the truck.

Uncle Abe went outside in front of the house as quickly as he could.

"White folks, please don't do that," he begged. "Just wait a minute while I go find Mr. Luther. He'll set things straight. Mr. Luther is my landlord, and he won't let you take all my furniture away like this. Please, sir, just wait while I go find him."

The two men looked at each other.

"Luther Bolick is the one who signed these papers," the deputy said, shaking his head. "He was the one who got these court orders to carry off the furniture and put you in jail. It wouldn't do you a bit of good to try to find him now."

"Put me in jail?" Uncle Abe said. "What did he say to do that for?"

"For threatening bodily harm," the deputy said. "That's for threatening to kill him. Hitting him with a stick or shooting him with a pistol."

The men threw the rest of the household goods into the truck and told Uncle Abe and his wife to climb into the back. When they made no effort to get in, the deputy pushed them to the rear and prodded them until they climbed into the truck.

While the younger man drove the truck, the deputy stood beside them in the body so they could not escape. They drove out the lane, past the other tenant houses, and then down the long road that went over the hill through Luther Bolick's land to the public highway. They passed the big white house where he lived, but he was not within sight.

"I never threatened to harm Mr. Luther," Uncle Abe protested. "I never did a thing like that in my whole life. I never said a mean thing about him, either. Mr. Luther is my boss, and I've worked for him ever since I was twenty years old. Yesterday he said he wanted me to move off his farm, and all I did was say that I thought he ought to let me stay. I won't have much longer to live, anyway. I told him I didn't want to move off. That's all I said to Mr. Luther. I ain't never said I was going to try to kill him. Mr. Luther knows that as well as I do. You ask Mr. Luther if that ain't so."

They had left Luther Bolick's farm, and had turned down the highway toward the county seat, eleven miles away.

"For more than forty years I've lived here and worked for Mr. Luther," Uncle Abe said, "and I ain't never said a mean thing to his

face or behind his back in all that time. He furnishes me with rations for me and my family, and a few clothes, and me and my family raise cotton for him, and I been doing that ever since I was twenty years old. I moved here and started working on shares for his daddy first, and then when he died, I kept right on like I have up to now. Mr. Luther knows I've worked hard and never answered him back, and only asked for rations and a few clothes all this time. You ask Mr. Luther."

The deputy listened to all that Uncle Abe said, but he did not say anything himself. He felt sorry for the old Negro and his wife, but there was nothing he could do about it. Luther Bolick had driven to the courthouse early that morning and secured the papers for eviction and arrest. It was his job to serve the papers and execute the court orders. But even if it was his job, he could not keep from feeling sorry for the Negroes. He didn't think that Luther Bolick ought to throw them off his farm just because they had grown old.

When they got within sight of town, the deputy told the driver to stop. He drew the truck up beside the highway when they reached the first row of houses. There were fifteen or eighteen Negro houses on both sides of the road.

After they had stopped, the two white men began unloading the furniture and stacking it beside the road. When it was all out of the truck, the deputy told Uncle Abe's wife to get out. Uncle Abe started to get out, too, but the deputy told him to stay where he was. They drove off again, leaving Uncle Abe's wife standing in a dazed state of mind beside the furniture.

"What you going to do with me now?" Uncle Abe asked, looking back at his wife and furniture in the distance.

"Take you to the county jail and lock you up," the deputy said.

"What's my wife going to do?" he asked.

"The people in one of those houses will probably take her in."

"How long will you keep me in jail locked up?"

"Until your case comes up for trial."

They drove through the dusty streets of the town, around the courthouse square, and stopped in front of a brick building with iron bars across the windows.

"Here's where we get out," the deputy said.

Uncle Abe was almost too weak to walk by that time, but he managed to move along the path to the door. Another white man opened the

door and told him to walk straight down the hall until he was told to stop.

Just before noon Saturday, Uncle Abe's oldest son, Henry, stood in Ramsey Clark's office, hat in hand. The lawyer looked at the Negro and frowned. He chewed his pencil for a while, then swung around in his chair and looked out the window into the courthouse square. Presently he turned around and looked at Uncle Abe's son.

"I don't want the case," he said. "I don't want to touch it."

The boy stared at him helplessly. It was the third lawyer he had gone to see that morning, and all of them had refused to take his father's case.

"There's no money in it," Ramsey Clark said, still frowning. "I'd never get a dime out of you niggers if I took this case. And, besides, I don't want to represent any more niggers at court. Better lawyers than me have been ruined that way. I don't want to get the reputation of being a 'nigger lawyer.'"

Henry shifted the weight of his body from one foot to the other and bit his lips. He did not know what to say. He stood in the middle of the room trying to think of a way to get help for his father.

"My father never said he was going to kill Mr. Luther," Henry protested. "He's always been on friendly terms with Mr. Luther. None of us have ever given Mr. Luther any trouble. Anybody will tell you that. All the other tenants on Mr. Luther's place will tell you my father has always stood up for Mr. Luther. He never said he would try to hurt Mr. Luther in any way."

The lawyer waved for him to stop. He had heard all he wanted to listen to.

"I told you I wouldn't touch the case," he said angrily, snatching up papers and slamming them down on his desk. "I don't want to go into court and waste my time arguing a case that won't make any difference one way or the other, anyway. It's a good thing for you niggers to get a turn on the 'gang every once in a while. It doesn't make any difference whether Abe Lathan threatened Mr. Bolick, or whether he didn't threaten him. Abe Lathan said he wasn't going to move off the farm after Mr. Bolick had told him to, didn't he? Well, that's enough to convict him in court. When the case comes up for trial, that's all the judge will want to hear. He'll be sent to the 'gang quicker than a flea can hop. No lawyer is going to spend a lot of time preparing a case

when he knows how it's going to end. If there was money in it, it might be different. But you niggers don't have a thin dime to pay me with. No, I don't want the case. I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole."

Henry backed out of Ramsey Clark's office and went to the jail. He secured permission to see his father for five minutes.

Uncle Abe was sitting on his bunk in the cage looking through the bars when Henry entered. The jailer came and stood behind him at the cage door.

"Did you see a lawyer and tell him I never said anything like that to Mr. Luther?" Uncle Abe asked the first thing.

Henry looked at his father, but it was difficult for him to answer. He shook his head, dropping his gaze until he could see only the floor.

"You tried, didn't you, Henry?" Uncle Abe asked.

Henry nodded.

"But when you told the lawyers how I never said a mean thing about Mr. Luther, or his daddy before him, in all my whole life, didn't they say they would help me get out of jail?"

Henry shook his head.

"What did the lawyers say, Henry? When you told them how respectful I've always been to Mr. Luther, and how I've always worked hard for him all my life, and never mentioned to him about the shares, didn't they say they would help me then?"

Henry looked up at his father, moving his head sideways in order to see him between the bars of the cage. He had to swallow hard several times before he could speak at all.

"I've already been to see three lawyers," he said finally. "All of them said they couldn't do anything about it, and to just go ahead and let it come up for trial. They said there wasn't anything they could do, because the judge would give you a term on the 'gang, anyway."

He stopped for a moment, looking down at his father's feet through the bars.

"If you want me to, I'll go see if I can try to find some other lawyers to take the case. But it won't do much good. They just won't do anything."

Uncle Abe sat down on his bunk and looked at the floor. He could not understand why none of the lawyers would help him.

Presently he looked up through the bars at his son. His eyes were fast filling with tears that he could not control.

"Why did the lawyers say the judge would give me a term on the 'gang, anyway, Henry?" he asked.

Henry gripped the bars, thinking about all the years he had seen his father and mother working in the cotton fields for Luther Bolick and being paid in rations, a few clothes, and a house to live in, and nothing more.

"Why did they say that, Henry?" his father insisted.

"I reckon because we are colored folks," Henry said at last. "I don't know why else they would say things like that."

The jailer moved up behind Henry, prodding him with his stick. "Hurry along," the jailer kept saying. "Time's up! Time's up!" Henry walked down the hall between the rows of cages towards the door that led to the street. He did not look back.

Analysis

Erskine Caldwell's stories "crackle with violence." A writer with an intense social awareness, whose avowed purpose is to present conditions in the South in such a manner that he may help to improve them, he has made a place for himself in contemporary letters, but has not become what critics of his earlier work hoped for: "our outstanding proletarian novelist." Naturalistic influences, in particular the cult of the simple, are evident in his work.

1. "The People *vs.* Abe Lathan, Colored" has been termed an editorial in fictional form. If you were to write an editorial based on the material in this story, what would be your main points?

2. Compare the style of Erskine Caldwell to that of Ernest Hemingway. What similarities do you find? What differences? How does each handle dialogue? How does Caldwell employ repetition?

3. Is this story too restrained? Point out specifically scenes where restraint is employed.

4. More and more, the problems of the Negro are absorbing serious writers. Compare the treatment of colored people here to that in "Raid" and in "The Bracelet of Wavia Lea," which follows. Compare Caldwell's handling of colored people and the race question to treatment in current popular magazines. What of this question in radio?

5. Comment on Caldwell's physical descriptions and use of dialect, or lack of both. Explain why he has deliberately shunned dialect. Is Luther Bolick a villain? Carefully explain your answer.

6. This story is typical of the trap-situation story. Make clear what the trap is and how it is resolved at the end of the tale.

7. When dealing with social conditions within the realm of fiction, a writer has the problem of deciding how typical his material should be. Beyond a certain point of typicality, his story is likely to shift from realism to propaganda. Express your opinion as to Caldwell's typicality. Compare the treatment of the Negroes in this story with John Steinbeck's treatment of the Okies in *Grapes of Wrath.*

8. Are there any classes of people in your region or community whose social or economic conditions could be utilized as background and theme for an original story?

Erskine Caldwell

Erskine Caldwell (1903–), son of a country preacher, was born and grew up in the South, in White Oak, Georgia. Economic pressures at home forced him to work early as a farm hand and mill laborer. His sporadic education at prep school and one year in the University of Virginia were financed by his football playing. When first he began to pay his expenses by prowess in football, he was one of the lightest centers on record, ninety-eight pounds. Following school, after a brief stint in professional football and as a newspaper reporter, he decided to earn his living by creative writing, and moved to Maine for that purpose. Writing furnished a precarious livelihood until the phenomenal success of the play *Tobacco Road,* adapted from his novel of the same title. For the past few years he has made his home in Tucson, Arizona.

Caldwell's best-known works are *Tobacco Road* (1932), *God's Little Acre* (1933), and *Jackpot* (1940), from which "The People *vs.* Abe Lathan, Colored" is reprinted. He has written over a hundred short stories dealing with various aspects of the Southern scene.

Although Mr. Caldwell is interested in the development of young writers, he feels a bit sorry for people who attend writing courses, believing that most of them are wasting their time. The best writers, he thinks, are those who have been driven by life and who dig their stories out of life with both hands.

The violence inherent in his own work had its origin in things he saw as a boy such as lynchings, the beating to death of a mule because a man was tired, a displeased employer knocking a Negro farmhand unconscious.

Mr. Caldwell is happy only when he is writing, he says, not caring so much what he is writing provided he is immersed in the creative process. In recent years he has done occasional work for the Hollywood studios,

served as newspaper correspondent abroad, and acted as reader-critic for a New York publishing house.



THE BRACELET OF WAVIA LEA

Bessie Breuer

TRULY, Deaconess, I don't want for a thing, thank you kindly. They treat me just as if I were an honored guest at our own hotel, I suppose on account of Momma. Not that it makes any difference to me. All I want is for everybody to forget I ever lived. But I hate for anyone to feel disgraced on account of me. So if you could explain it all to Hanley I'd be beholden to you. He sent word he wants his bracelet back. But I didn't have it so I told Momma to tell him I would write and explain.

But I just can't write him a letter. I've tried and tried but the words fumble up so. Maybe because I never had enough practice. I'm only seventeen after all and everybody I know lives right here and I never had to write only to Sears and such like business for Momma and when I asked to go North to school Momma would say, You know right well there's things no hired help got the brains to do, but she did promise me a trip to New York for a honeymoon present when Hanley and I got married. But now that can never be, and I want him to have no regret. I hate a sorry life and I can't see any sense or meaning to it somehow when you try to do the best you can and it ends up in such a mess of trouble.

I have nothing to do but think about everything all day long and in the night and sometimes I feel sure it never would have happened if it hadn't been for the Northern girls that started coming down to our place. Hanley always wanted me to be like them, and I only acted with the nigger the way I thought a Northern girl would, only this is the South.

Isn't it strange how the tiniest little old thing will come along and

From *Letter,* Winter, 1945, used by permission of the author, Bessie Breuer, and of *Letter.*

upset everything? I never thought when that car drove up to our hotel I would remember it with anything but pride. It's funny that with all the cars coming through here this is the first time a car with a Northern colored chauffeur stopped for the night. Of course, there've been plenty of cars with just plain niggers driving that you could send in to sleep with our old nigger cook, Jim, but when that long black car so shiny that it flashed white stopped, everybody pinned their eyes to the nigger chauffeur who walked back to open the door for the little old woman who stepped out, he was so tall and elegant. After I showed her into the dining room I led him into the kitchen for his dinner and I had a funny feeling he wasn't a nigger at all. He didn't speak to old Jim the way niggers take up as if they were long lost kin getting together again. And no one even thought to put him in Jim's bed for the night, with him standing so grand in the kitchen.

You know how sometimes when it's getting dark in the kitchen you just can't see Jim he's so black, while this man was sort of honey-gray color like Cubans we let sit in our restaurant. And his hair lay even flatter than Hanley's and was almost the same kind, and he was taller than Hanley and his clothes were the most beautiful I ever did see. Most of the Northerners that stop here winters wear dirty old slacks and sweatshirts and go barefoot like fishermen even if they have chefs and captains on their boats, but this chauffeur wore a smooth satiny gray suit, a uniform I guess, only it didn't look like one, and his high boots were shining black and his white cuffs stood out. He really was the most polished, cleanest man I ever did see and his eyes flicked everybody staring high away out the window as if he didn't want to see what was inside, the clouds of flies on everything, the big cans full of swill, the water in the dishpans so dirty looking because it comes from the cistern.

I was always after Momma to get the kitchen fixed up—you know those big holes where the rats come up, but she never did get round to it she was so busy, but it made me mad to see how insolent that nigger was as if by looking so far away he needn't see our hired boys snuffling away at their food. But Momma paid him no mind. She is always the same with everybody, and she says to him, friendly and direct as she is with everybody, I'll feed you but I just ain't got a place for you to sleep. And when I went into the dining room and told his lady that, she stood up sort of excited, and the words came quick: "Really

. . . I shall never come South again . . ." and then she sort of bit off what was coming next, and I could see her breath coming high under her black silk jersey and she looked at me as if I were some curious horrid animal. And then her blue eyes narrowed and her eyes got that same funny look—that secret look of all Northerners closed against us.

I didn't want her to hate me, she was such a lovely little old thing all fine and gray and delicate. Somehow Northerners seemed closer to me than my own folks and I hungered to be like Northern girls. They were like movie stars and heroines in books and my dreams of a fine life all rolled into one. They would go barebodied and even smoke and drink whiskey, and yet their talk was never just plain folks talk. It was talk with the whole world rushing through it like a wind and every known place and wonder seemed part of their everyday life like grits and fatback is a cracker's daily food. But always, no matter who they were, and no matter how they hated each other—and sometimes they did—they had a secret together from us that made them kin. Judges, writers, rich men, women and girls, they all had the same secret and that same enemy look came into their eyes that was now in this lady's looking at me.

"I'm sorry," I said, and then I had to look away because it seemed like she could look right through me and knew as well as I that we had two vacancies. There was that tiny moment when all the Northerners that I liked looked away and mostly it had to do with niggers. But outside of that we were the best of friends, and everybody, even the fishermen and the waitresses, would be sort of excited when they came down in the winter, and we would wake up mornings excited wondering what would happen that day that was sure to be different while they were here and it was like a wonderful party going on all the time. Momma felt it too and had us put on our tulle party dresses evenings and we would sit quietly by, while the Northern girls would come down still in their fishing pants and say, "How gorgeous," looking at us, only they said it too many times, smoking and drinking and grabbing boys to dance and cutting capers, and Momma would say, "They're Yankees. It's all right for Yankees to act like that," but I know that except for the drinking they were everything I wanted, and were honest though sometimes cruel, and though they always told us we Southern girls were wonderful and we were first-name friends, there

was that same look, sharp and like an enemy, and then they would look at each other and when they looked again at us their eyes were cold. And now here was that same look, as if I were all the white people of the South who had ever done a wrong.

I did want her to understand that I was on her side so I said again I was sorry, and then her eyes got kinder and she said in a low voice as if it was a secret, "It's been this way ever since we reached Washington. I had no idea . . . this is the first time I've driven South." Then she stopped as if she didn't want to say anything that would hurt me, but I said, "I know . . ." I felt so bad and must have looked it, because again she spoke with hardly the words sounding out.

"I had to get Edward a suite—a suite, think of it, in hotels. Poor boy, he's a college graduate. He couldn't be more intelligent and considerate if he were my own son. I had no idea these things happened."

The South, the South, what curse is it that's been put on us, so that everybody is always making us feel guilty? Sometimes I think it's only because we're poor and that it takes money even to be kind and just. In any town in the North a girl like me could get a good education staying right at home, but here you have to go away for everything and there isn't that kind of money down here for nobody almost. Wait for the fishing season, wait for the winter tourists, wait for the oranges, the strawberries, the vegetables. Seems to me everybody that's Southern is always waiting with a strapped-in belt and then the cold and storms come and everybody's ruined. Maybe that's why everybody gets so mean sort of and nervous. I don't know. Anyhow I began to get mad hearing her, and then she put her old hand sort of shaking on mine . . . "I don't know how to tell it to Edward," she said. "I'm so ashamed for us."

When she said *Us* that softened my hard will against her. Quickly I told her I'd find him a place to sleep. And I went around to the kitchen and told him to come along with me.

You know how awful our Ford looks with the back seat out to make room for carrying all our hotel and farm stuff and cowfeed and trash spilled all over, and Rover's hair sticking all over the plush front seats, so when he got in alongside me I just naturally had to apologize for the mess, and everybody passing, their eyes bugging out, made me so angry I started off with the brakes still set, and he put out his hand to loosen it and the knob yanked off a long time ago by someone and

I began to explain that and that the car joggled so because even new springs break on our washboard road and he didn't say anything only a piece of smile I could see, and I got so hot perspiration started out all over me like a river. I looked at the side of his face, he seemed so gentle and refined, and I thought, after all Cubans are as dark, darker, and I had a strange feeling of excitement that was at the same time comfort and rest. Can you understand that, Deaconess? and almost like crying because everything was really so awful and I was always trying so hard to be something and I had no sort of soft kindness that people like in a girl and even this man could feel that. They are always saying O Youth is such a happy time and I was so young and had really never been happy and it was always such a fight to pretend to be and I had never been anywhere and I was choking mad that I couldn't take for granted that this was what any Northern chauffeur was like. But I just couldn't help myself somehow. I kept showing him things we passed just as if he was anyone else nice from the North, I just had to. That's a Royal Palm Hammock, I said, and there's a group of prenuptial egrets fighting. If you stop to listen you'll hear them like roosters crowing, and look, there's a pump-handle, and then I felt myself blushing because that's just a cracker name and I was learning the right names from the books and it was really a bittern. But the natives call him pump-handle on account there's a lump in his throat when he swells up to sing, if you can call that noise singing. Imagine me going on like that, I must have been plumb crazy or something. I just kept on talking away about how we came to be living in that run-down hotel—yes, I said those very words—and how I aimed to go North to College and hated the South and all its ways. ALL its ways, I repeated, just crazy talk—me who'd never been more than a hundred miles from home in my life, and once he turned toward me and his eyes were sort of understanding and it made me feel very queer, and I just didn't know what to do because even with Hanley I never felt like that. What is that feeling, Deaconess, so that you want to die and at the same time feel so happy?

I aimed to put him in my stepdad Robert's shack, it being Wednesday, the day he's out fishing, but when I got to the driveway the car just naturally stopped at the big house steps and anyhow I was in such a hurry to put him some place while I readied up the shack and I knew my room was clean. That's the one nice thing I had, a beige pink

shirred taffeta spread from Sears and my bed and table painted to match.

He set his satchel down by my table and I passed on to the linen closet just off my room and snatched up the first sheets that came to hand, and when I came through the room he was all hunched up in my rocker reading a book he must have got out of his satchel lying open and he seemed in the book not in the room at all and I got mad because he didn't see or hear me or stand up and I should be reading the book not he. And I went on down to the shack just boiling mad and there was that awful mess. But I just grit my teeth and said out loud, For once, Wavia Lea, this room will be clean.

Everything, the whiskey bottles, empty cokes, tin cans and trash I sent sailing out the door—I can't understand how a man can abide to live sorrier than any pig. I sloshed a bucket of water on the floor and swept out the swill and tidied up as best I could and anyhow the sheets would be a sign of quality. I was in such haste when I snatched them I hadn't seen they were our very best ones with crocheted lace and hemstitch edges, but it was too late to go back and change them and I was tired and dirty and mighty glad to be finished.

I stopped in the breezeway to wash before I went up to get him and I thought he must be thirsty up in that hot room all that time, and I had just started up the stairs with the glass of water in my hand when I heard Robert yelling and I was so surprised I almost missed my footing.

"Where's that geedee nigger!" He came running through the dining room doorway. "Just lemme at him. You dirty So-and-So you I hear you got a terrible names nigger here you aimen to put in my bed. I'll cut his throat and gizzard," and he kept on yelling more words I just couldn't bring my lips to name. He was crazy drunk and his eyes were sparking red and he had his fish-knife out slicing through the air running toward the stairs.

I shouted back, "Stop that yelling. Stop that ruckus." That's the only way Momma can stop him, command him like a baby. But he wouldn't listen, he kept on coming, and I yelled, "He's in my room. Don't you dare come up these steps." Then I got scared. He got so black mad shrieking, "You dirty This-and-That. You're goen sleep with that nigger! I'll kill you too."

Without knowing I was doing it, out went the glass of water. Hard at him. It cracked and hit him across his arm just at the wrist, and

he dropped his knife and grabbed his wrist and swore, "Goddam you gal I'll kill you sure," but I ran up and he ran backwards to the kitchen.

My door was locked. Think of it, locked! I pounded and pounded and called, and when the nigger opened it his face was gray and he was shaking all over. It made me so sick to look at him, I almost vomited. He grabbed his cap and bag and we ran down the stairs and into the car and I carried him back to the hotel as fast as the car could go. I couldn't get shet of him fast enough. He kept chattering and almost crying, "I'm going back North! I'll be killed here! I got to get out of the South!" He was just a plain scared nigger like a whipped dog. I despise a coward and I hated him so I couldn't say a word. And when we reached the hotel I motioned him to get out, and I just sat there leaning my head against the wheel, and held on to myself so I wouldn't get sick. I was so tired I didn't ever want to get up again.

Momma came out to the car. Nothing ever surprises Momma she's seen so much, and quick after I told her what happened she said, "We'll move the settee out to the side porch and make up a bed for him there. Now keep your mouth shut, everything will be all right." That helped put the strength in me, and Momma explained to the lady who saw us moving the settee that the house was full up at the other end. And when her chauffeur passed along through the lounge to his bed the woman said, "Edward, I am very sorry . . . it is only for this night." And to Momma, she said, "He has his private bath and room at home." But Momma understands everybody and when the woman went away Momma told the nigger he better not have a candle and to lock the screen door on the inside and he'd come to no harm.

Then all at once cars came charging up from the big house. Everybody, all my kin. Momma hustled them into her bedroom away from tourists' ears, and the door scarcely shut when they began screeching at me that Lloyd was carrying my stepdad to Tampa because his wrist just wouldn't stop bleeding . . . No one paid much attention to that part of it of course with the things that happen every time anyone gets his fish money, but what was terrible was about the chauffeur. Only that was the thing that was terrible then.

It didn't make any difference what I said about how it happened. Even Grandma said it was all my fault, she was surprised I would let a nigger sleep in Robert's bed. I love her, you know how much I love her, Deaconess, how gentle and sweet and patient she always is, and

even she scolding me was more than I could bear. "Never let a nigger in a white man's bedroom, and in a white woman's it's a sin. How come you do a wrong like that?" Her blue eyes got almost white she was so angry. And when I said I didn't think it was wrong because he had a bath and room of his own a lot better than mine right in that woman's house they said, Only a Yankee would do a sorry thing like that. And Grandma said, Stay right in this room until folks quit talking. You've shamed the family enough.

Then Cissie spoke up. And Hanley—she smiled like poison. You sure have disgraced him. And Trix the copy cat said, Yes, what about Hanley? Hanley'll have no truck with a nigger lover.

Hanley. Everything had been going so fast I'd clean forgot about Hanley. Just the thought of Hanley made me proud to answer straight into their snake eyes, curving in one hand above the other, Hanley will understand. Hanley would do just what I did. But their lips curled so mean I couldn't stand to look at them.

Why do people hate each other so? You'd think that being girls themselves—Triphona is only one year older and Cissie three, they'd understand and be on my side instead of calling me Miss Uppity because I had respect for learning and wanted to be like the Northern girls and was not satisfied just to grow up and marry. From the time they're fourteen, they start marrying here as you well know because there's nothing else to do. You meet a boy in school and go with him steady, never knowing anybody else or seeing anything, and then you marry him because there's nothing else to do. And because I wanted more is that something to hate your own cousin for? Intelligence and nothing binding them down was what made the difference between Northern and Southern girls, said Hanley, and my cousins didn't like it just because I made up my mind to reach out for that kind of life instead of sitting and waiting prettylike and saying thank you pretty please to whatever was handed out to me. So naturally when Hanley became principal of our high school I made a fuss over him because he was a man of learning to have for my own, though Cissie and Trix said, "Don't think he's going to marry a cracker like you . . . He's going to marry someone from the summer school up North in Columbia University. He's got ambitions. He ain't going to have any Florida cracker holding him back."

But you've seen yourself that Hanley did go with me, he went with

nobody else. We'd pack a lunch and go off exploring Sundays, digging into Indian middens and finding skeletons and spearheads and beautiful old pipes and broken pottery and only Northerners seeing our treasures would be excited and sometimes ask us to send them up to museums I will never see, so that we shared a life with the Northerners back in their country as well as here. Botanists coming from the North would identify our own flowers and trees and bushes to us, and professors from Iowa and such places came slodging along in high boots and trucks rigged with contraptions to catch the song of our birds and Audubon Society girls and boys with great glasses slung from their necks would go trekking on foot and in cars with us in all weather to identify our birds. That's how Hanley and I came to know our very own land, from the Northerners knowing it better and more excited about it than any of us. Yes, it might seem shameful to shelter a nigger in my bedroom but I knew Hanley would see things my way because his way and mine were one, and he was neither satisfied to be like a blindman in our own land.

Sometimes coming home in the boat from a day of exploring with Hanley and the water still like golden glass from the setting sun and lying back burned and peaceful-like and the birds we knew by their true name sailing over us and the fishes flopping out of the water we were so close to each other we didn't need to kiss and hug and drink the way the others had to. "How often blissful panting for Freedom." Hanley read that to me from a book of poems some Northerner left in a room. That's the way we were together, so I paid Cissie and Trix no mind while they kept beating at me, but Hanley seemed so long in coming. I looked down to see what time it was. There was just a pale ring of skin and no watch! I got scared for a moment, then I realized I must have slipped it off in my room before going down to wash up the shack. Quickly I sent Campion back home to get it. I just had to have it on when Hanley came, I just had to.

You've noticed, Deaconess, haven't you that I was never without my bracelet? Hanley gave it to me on my last birthday. It was a sign that Hanley did love me and it was a true love though he didn't say the word. He was never one for talk anyway, and maybe I hinted though I don't remember, but on my birthday he brought it to me in a little white box, and when I lifted it out, the golden bracelet and the watch like a tiny flower on it with Cissie and Trix and everybody looking on,

maybe I did show my pride too much kissing and hugging him before everybody. Then they said a watch bracelet and an engagement ring were two different things. But I always wore my bracelet and it was a sign they could see of the fine life I would have when I became the wife of a high school principal, and no need to answer when they called Hanley a sissy and me a prig, because I aimed to have great dignity to be Hanley's wife. That was why I took the Sunday School class for you, Deaconess, and started a Girl Scout troop, that was the real reason, to make myself worthy of Hanley and be like the Northern girls he respected. And I thought it would go right on being like that once I told him how all this about the chauffeur came to happen.

Then Campion came back saying she couldn't find my bracelet. Go back, I said. I'll give you a whole dollar. I held out a dollar bill and put it under the cold cream jar, and she got greedy-eyed so I was sure she would look everywhere this time. I asked her to hurry. I just had to be wearing it when Hanley came. I felt naked without it.

Sometimes when things happen I just can't believe it. Even of a nigger I wouldn't believe that he stole the bracelet. It was a thing I couldn't bear to say of anyone. Even to Hanley. I was in such a state I didn't know what to do. I couldn't wait for Hanley to come. I kept looking out the window, I didn't care how they kept on teasing me. I would beg him to marry me right off and take me away from all this meanness. The trouble with the South, he used to say, is there is no spring. No winter to freeze and purify; no spring for us to make a fresh start.

All evening I waited. I had my dressing gown laying right over my feet, Momma and Trix sleeping on the inside of the bed, should he come in late because he was correcting papers and maybe hadn't yet heard about the trouble. And all night I listened for the sound of his step, choked with the hatefulness of everybody sleeping so peacefully around me in the dark breathing so loud, and in the morning I scarcely noticed when the widow and her nigger left. Waiting and watching for Hanley and sure that with him I would never have those feelings that made me almost sick driving that nigger to our house, and I would be safe from everything forever.

Oh what's the use my going on and on like this, Deaconess! Hanley just didn't come. Not on the school bus in the morning, not in anybody's car, not all day, not off the school bus at night.

Have faith, I kept telling myself all that evening. But the only man to come was Sheriff Jim Hawkins knocking and calling at our bedroom door. Momma asked, It is some of the boys in trouble again? when he came in, but he just stood by the door, acting mighty queer until finally he came out with it that Robert done swore out a warrant against me.

That Robert, Momma said. Poor Momma, she had to stand and hear all that stuff. She always has to be strong for all the rest of us. She gave up Robert a long time ago as good for nothing, but she didn't believe in divorce and still took care of him, and now he was paying her back, and me too. Momma kept saying she never heard of such nonsense. You go tell Robert, Mister Hawkins, that I wish I had him here I'd paddle some sense into him. He ain't never had the bigness to know how to handle a growing girl.

You do believe me, Deaconess, don't you! I swear before God I meant him no harm. I only threw the glass of water to stop his ugly mouth, to stop him coming up the steps. I knew he would kill that nigger. Why just a little bit before Wiley killed a nice nigger boy from Alabama for less than that. You know how they get, Deaconess, raring tearing drunk and Wiley was in niggertown where he had no business to be and just shot the stomach out of the nigger for meanness and nobody to swear he did it because nobody wants feuding for life and the niggers locked their doors, afraid to come out while the boy lay dying all night out in the road because they might be blamed. And Robert could be every bit as mean as Wiley.

Well, when Mr. Hawkins told how really bad it was Momma almost fainted, and I ran and grabbed her and begged her to believe that I didn't mean to harm him. She knew right well that if I'd a wanted to be mean I'd a killed him long before when he was trying to hug or beat me either one all the time, and Mr. Hawkins was real nice and we both reasoned with her and calmed her down and she let me go away with him on his promise that Odella Hawkins would take care of me.

As you see, she and Mr. Hawkins gave me their own bedroom and treat me as an honored guest. Except they send the meals in here because it wouldn't look right if anybody strange was to walk in to see the sheriff. And Jed Sweet says it will take only a little while in court and he brought word from the Judge to Momma they'll try for it not to be unpleasant. Momma helped them all get their jobs the way she

helps everybody, so you see everything will be all right. Only I don't want to go back home, no matter what, I don't want to go back home. But I don't want to go to any other place either, any more.

At night when I can't sleep it's like a burning lump that I want to talk to Hanley. Just to talk to him. And I say over the names of all my kin for comfort. I imagine I see our hotel and the palms blowing their raggedy heads and the way the sun beats up through the water in the pass and the fish house and the bird rookeries and the pigs nuzzling in the pine islands. That's all I see and want, everything I'm cut off from and can't go back to ever. I don't want ever to face Hanley so he'd have to remember me that shamed him and lowered his dignity acting like no-account trash.

At first when Momma brought me the note from Hanley saying he wanted his bracelet back I kept thinking of the angriest things to write him, but when I put the words down on paper they were terrible. Why is it you think and think about a long time, and then when you go to put it down on paper the words seem false? So I tore up letter after letter, and I prayed to God I would be just to Hanley, please for me not to hate Hanley, and in a way God answered me, because when I look out this window at night everything is so strange I feel I'm in a dark hole way at the bottom of the world, and way up above me is the real world in which the earth is only a tiny speck, the way a tourist once explained to me, and stars that died seventy-five years ago are still up there shining for us, and then I realize my life is such a teeny thing why fuss about it! Just sitting here with nothing to do forever I see life like a tree when it's bare of leaf, the way things are truly and as if they had nothing to do with me and I am nothing. At night with only the moon glittering on it the world is so unhuman and terrifying that I pray for the comfort of anyone breathing, even Cissie or Trix, I feel so helpless. And then you begin to understand a little bit how everybody is the same, and the poison and bubbling and blaming goes out of you and you get all still inside. And then you can begin to love everybody again.

And that is really what I want to say to Hanley, that now I understand how much he gave me, that he always understood me even when I was mixed up myself. But in the South you never thank a man for that; in the South with a man it can only be love. But even if it was only friendship I am grateful because he was the only friend I had.

And when the bracelet came back I knew that God had sent a sign of his grace. Yes, Momma brought a little box that came from the Northern woman, and a letter with it that said the nigger found it in the bottom of his bag and he didn't know how it got there and how sorry she was. I was bitter and hateful inside, but now that I know the nigger didn't knowingly take it I can truly love all people again, and want to do the thing that is right.

After all, I didn't mean to touch Robert and I mortally hurt him, and I can forgive a Northern nigger accidentally brushing a bracelet off a table in his hurry to get away. Even if it's too late now to mean anything I'm glad the nigger didn't mean to take it.

You see, Deaconess, how mixed up it all is? If you will explain to Hanley that I was only doing what a Northern girl would, but that a girl can only stand so much, and I threw the glass just to stop Robert because he sure would have killed that nigger. If only it hadn't caught on the stair rail and splintered Robert would be alive today.

And tell him, please please, Deaconess, tell Hanley I understand and bear him no ill will. Tell him I'm sorry I lost my dignity and put such disgrace on him. Tell him everything so he'll have no shameful memory of me, that's all I care about. Give him the bracelet and tell him Goodbye for me. And tell him I'm grateful for everything. For everything, please be sure to say that, Deaconess.

Analysis

Bessie Breuer herself admits to falling under the influence of James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, and Gertrude Stein. Especially was she impressed with Hemingway's great clarity and his use of common words "rimmed with light." Her aim in creative writing is "the mystery and magic of truth." Critics speak of her delicate sensuousness, great depth of perception, and vigor of expression.

1. "The Bracelet of Wavia Lea" has a theme much more complex than the social ostracism of the Negro in the South. Express this theme. Clarify the author's statement that the story was built in several layers.

2. Repeated numerous times is the "look" which the Northerners give to the Southerners. What meaning is conveyed to you by this "look"—i.e., what are the Northerners thinking?

3. Point out several passages of "delicate sensuousness."

4. What are the social problems and handicaps that a Southern girl must face? Compare the Southern girl's lot as presented here with that expressed by William Faulkner, p. 202, and that portrayed by Margaret Mitchell in *Gone with the Wind.*

5. What maintains suspense? What are the advantages, in the light of the author's purpose, in the first-person point of view?

6. What local-color material typically Southern gives an air of authenticity to the tale?

7. If the bracelet is a symbol, what does it symbolize? Why is it used as the title?

8. Is Hanley's attitude a surprise ending, or is it entirely anticipated and foreshadowed? Does it have more significance than it would have had had he merely broken off the engagement? Remember that Hanley has been educated in the North and is principal of a school.

9. Are you acquainted with a girl whose lot in life or whose social or economic position could furnish the basis for an original story? Remember in planning such a story that you do not have to adhere rigidly to true-to-life facts. Seldom can a story be drawn directly from life. Usually facts must be manipulated, carefully selected, and rearranged.

Bessie Breuer

Bessie Breuer (1893–) was born in Cleveland, Ohio, but educated in the public schools of St. Louis, Missouri, and in the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri. She began her writing career in 1914 as a reporter on the St. Louis *Times.* Later she served as editor of the women's department of the New York *Tribune* and was on the editorial staff of the *Ladies' Home Journal.* She is the author of two books, *Memory of Love* (1935), and *The Daughter* (1937), and of many short stories which have appeared in such magazines as *The New Yorker* and *Harper's Bazaar.* A collection of her short stories is soon to be issued. She is married to the artist Henry Varnum Poor, and has two children.

For CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY Bessie Breuer writes: ". . . In a way I ought to be the dreadful symbol of what happens when all of one's life one is *afraid* to write! Wanting nothing else ever since I became conscious of books—eating them up, going through the children's rooms, then through the adult's, doing nothing but reading—and yet I did not write my first novel, *Memory of Love,* until I was past thirty-five. . . . It had an immediate success upon printing, being a best seller. But before that it had for two years gone the rounds and been rejected by sixteen publishers. . . . In these days I am emerging from my own self-distrust and am taking up a novel I started

twice before, both times during the war, and was unable to go on with, and went instead to OWI, where for a while a group of us—Howard Fast, Louis Untermeyer, Robert Ardrey—wrote for overseas radio dramatization. . . . All this is behind me now, and my health is better and the war depression gone, and I am taking up my novel, which has grown in stature in these years, so they have not in the end been wasted. . . .

"My aims?—they are ambitious indeed. At first they were one sole thing. To be able to write, words, sentences, that gave out some meaning—any meaning. Although I always wanted to write, I never had thoughts when I was young, only sensations, and so single words, phrases, had meaning for me. . . . I shall always revere Hemingway, because it was through his great clarity of style that I was able, word by word, situation by situation, to face my characters as they should be, and not get lost in pretty words, lying words, sentimental words, vaporous words, vague words. Or in pretty attitudes, lying attitudes, vaporous attitudes, vague attitudes, equally, for the words make the sentences and the sentences make the life of a work of art. One false word, and it echoes in the heart, or rather in the subconscious intelligence of the reader. That is the mystery and the magic and the TRUTH of creative writing. I do not choose words, I never look in dictionaries or in books of synonyms. . . . I would rather use a familiar word, for that familiar word is how in my mind I would characterize a person, a situation. And it is not in *unusual words* and through their use that one gains in subtlety, delicacy of characterization, but in *deeply felt, following out* of the emotions and the resultant actions of the person you are trying to create. Steinbeck said to me the other night (I had taken my English publisher Jonathan Cape to his house for dinner) that he could read people's characters wholly from their faces. I cannot read people's faces. My last conversation with Sherwood Anderson . . . Sherwood said, 'I walk along the street and I look into people's faces and I can't sleep all night, because the faces—remembered—cry out to me to "write a story—write of me."' A friend of Hemingway's said of Hemingway that when he was in great writing flood he was always writing actual phrases and sentences spoken by his friends upon his cuff. . . ."



THE CIRCUS

William Saroyan

ANY time a circus used to come to town, that was all me and my old pal Joey Renna needed to make us run hog-wild, as the saying is. All we needed to do was see the signs on the fences and in the empty store windows to start going to the dogs and neglecting our educations. All we needed to know was that a circus was on its way to town for me and Joey to start wanting to know what good a little education ever did anybody anyway.

After the circus *reached* town we were just no good at all. We spent all our time down at the trains, watching them unload the animals, walking out Ventura Avenue with the wagons with lions and tigers in them and hanging around the grounds, trying to win the favor of the animal men, the workers, the acrobats, and the clowns.

The circus was everything else we knew wasn't. It was adventure, travel, danger, skill, grace, romance, comedy, peanuts, popcorn, chewing-gum and soda-water. We used to carry water to the elephants and stand around afterwards and try to seem associated with the whole magnificent affair, the putting up of the big tent, the getting everything in order, and the worldly-wise waiting for the people to come and spend their money.

One day Joey came tearing into the classroom of the fifth grade at Emerson School ten minutes late, and without so much as removing his hat or trying to explain his being late, shouted, Hey, Aram, what the hell are you doing here? The circus is in town.

And sure enough I'd forgotten. I jumped up and ran out of the room with poor old Miss Flibety screaming after me, Aram Garoghlanian, you stay in this room. Do you hear me, Aram Garoghlanian?

I heard her all right and I knew what my not staying would mean. It would mean another powerful strapping from old man Dawson. But I couldn't help it. I was just crazy about a circus.

I been looking all over for you, Joey said in the street. What happened?

I forgot, I said. I knew it was coming all right, but I forgot it was today. How far along are they?

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I was at the trains at five, Joey said. I been out at the grounds since seven. I had breakfast at the circus table. Boy, it was good.

Honest, Joey? I said. How were they?

They're all swell, Joey said. Couple more years, they told me, and I'll be ready to go away with them.

As what? I said. Lion-tamer, or something like that?

I guess maybe not as a lion-tamer, Joey said. I figure more like a workman till I learn about being a clown or something, I guess. I don't figure I could work with lions right away.

We were out on Ventura Avenue, headed for the circus grounds, out near the County Fairgrounds, just north of the County Hospital.

Boy, what a breakfast, Joey said. Hot-cakes, ham and eggs, sausages, coffee. Boy.

Why didn't you tell me? I said.

I thought you knew, Joey said. I thought you'd be down at the trains same as last year. I would have told you if I knew you'd forgotten. What made you forget?

I don't know, I said. Nothing, I guess.

I was wrong there, but I didn't know it at the time. I hadn't really forgotten. What I'd done was *remembered*. I'd gone to work and remembered the strapping Dawson gave me last year for staying out of school the day the circus was in town. That was the thing that had kind of kept me sleeping after four-thirty in the morning when by rights I should have been up and dressing and on my way to the trains. It was the memory of that strapping old man Dawson had given me, but I didn't know it at the time. We used to take them strappings kind of for granted, me and Joey, on account of we wanted to be fair and square with the Board of Education and if it was against the rules to stay out of school when you weren't sick, and if you were supposed to get strapped for doing it, well, there we were, we'd done it, so let the Board of Education balance things the best way they knew how. They did that with a strapping. They used to threaten to send me and Joey to Reform School but they never did it.

Circus? old man Dawson used to say. I see. *Circus*. Well, bend down, boy.

So, first Joey, then me, would bend down and old man Dawson would get some powerful shoulder exercise while we tried not to howl.

We wouldn't howl for five or six licks, but after that we'd howl like Indians coming. They used to be able to hear us all over the school and old man Dawson, after our visits got to be kind of regular, urged us politely to try to make a little less noise, inasmuch as it was a school and people were trying to study.

It ain't fair to the others, old man Dawson said. They're trying to learn something for themselves.

We can't help it, Joey said. It hurts.

That I know, old man Dawson said, but it seems to me there's such a thing as modulation. I believe a lad can overdo his howling if he ain't thoughtful of others. Just try to modulate that awful howl a little. I think you can do it.

Then he gave Joey a strapping of twenty and Joey tried his best not to howl so loud. After the strapping his face was very red and old man Dawson was very tired.

How was that? Joey said.

That was better, old man Dawson said. By far the most courteous you've managed yet.

I did my best, Joey said.

I'm grateful to you, old man Dawson said.

He was tired and out of breath. I moved up to the chair in front of him that he furnished during these matters to help us suffer the stinging pain. I got in the right position and he said, Wait a minute, Aram. Give a man a chance to get his breath. I'm not twenty-three years old. I'm *sixty*-three. Let me rest a minute.

All right, I said, but I sure would like to get this over with.

Don't howl too loud, he said. Folks passing by in the street are liable to think this is a veritable chamber of tortures. Does it really hurt that much?

You can ask Joey, I said.

How about it, Joey? old man Dawson said. Aren't you lads exaggerating just a little? Perhaps to impress someone in your room? Some girl, perhaps?

We don't howl to impress anybody, Mr. Dawson, Joey said. We wouldn't howl if we could help it. Howling makes us feel ashamed, doesn't it, Aram?

It's awfully embarrassing to go back to our seats in our room after howling that way, I said. We'd rather not howl if we could help it.

Well, old man Dawson said, I'll not be unreasonable. I'll only ask you to try to modulate it a little.

I'll do my best, Mr. Dawson, I said. Got your breath back?

Give me just a moment longer, Aram, Mr. Dawson said.

When he got his breath back he gave me my twenty and I howled a little louder than Joey and then we went back to class. It was awfully embarrassing. Everybody was looking at us.

Well, Joey said, what did you expect? The rest of you would fall down and die if you got twenty. You wouldn't *howl a little,* you'd die.

That'll be enough out of you, Miss Flibety said.

Well, it's true, Joey said. They're all scared. A circus comes to town and what do they do? They come to school. They don't go out to the circus.

That'll be enough, Miss Flibety said.

Who do they think they are, giving us dirty looks? Joey said.

Miss Flibety lifted her hand, hushing Joey.

Now the circus was back in town, another year had gone by, it was April again, and we were on our way out to the grounds. Only this time it was worse than ever because they'd seen us at school and knew we were going out to the circus.

Do you think they'll send Stafford after us? I said.

Stafford was truant officer.

We can always run, Joey said. If he comes, I'll go one way, you go another. He can't chase *both* of us. At least one of us will get away.

All right, I said. Suppose one of us gets caught?

Well, let's see, Joey said. Should the one who isn't caught give himself up or should he wreck Stafford's Ford?

I vote for wreck, I said.

So do I, Joey said, so wreck it is.

When we got out to the grounds a couple of the little tents were up, and the big one was going up. We stood around and watched. It was great the way they did it. Just a handful of guys who looked like tramps doing work you'd think no less than a hundred men could do. Doing it with style, too.

All of a sudden a man everybody called Red hollered at me and Joey.

Here, you Arabs, he said, give us a hand.

Me and Joey ran over to him.

Yes, sir, I said.

He was a small man with very broad shoulders and very big hands. You didn't feel that he was small, because he seemed so powerful and because he had so much thick red hair on his head. You thought he was practically a giant.

He handed me and Joey a rope. The rope was attached to some canvas that was lying on the ground.

This is going to be easy, Red said. As the boys lift the pole and get it in place you keep pulling the rope, so the canvas will go up with the pole.

Yes, sir, Joey said.

Everybody was busy when we saw Stafford.

We can't run now, I said.

Let him come, Joey said. We told Red we'd give him a hand and we're going to do it.

I'll tell you what, I said. We'll tell him we'll go with him after we get the canvas up; then we'll run.

All right, Joey said.

Stafford was a big fellow in a business suit who had a beef-red face and looked as if he ought to be a lawyer or something. He came over and said, All right, you hooligans, come along with me.

We promised to give Red a hand, Joey said. We'll come just as soon as we get this canvas up.

We were pulling for all we were worth, slipping and falling. The men were all working hard. Red was hollering orders, and then the whole thing was over and we had done our part.

We didn't even get a chance to find out what Red was going to say to us, or if he was going to invite us to sit at the table for lunch, or what.

Joey busted loose and ran one way and I ran the other and Stafford came after *me*. I heard the circus men laughing and Red hollering, Run, boy, run. He can't catch *you*. He's soft. Give him a good run. He needs the exercise.

I could hear Stafford, too. He was very sore and he was cussing.

I got away, though, and stayed low until I saw him drive off in his Ford. Then I went back to the big tent and found Joey.

We'll get it this time, Joey said.

I guess it'll be Reform School this time, I said.

No, Joey said. I guess it'll be thirty. We're going to do some awful howling if it is. Thirty's a lot of whacks even if he *is* sixty-three years old. He ain't exactly a weakling.

Thirty? I said. Ouch. That's liable to make me cry.

Maybe, Joey said. Me too, maybe. Seems like ten can make you cry, then you hold off till it's eleven, then twelve, and you think you'll start crying on the next one, but you don't. We haven't so far, anyway. Maybe we will when it's thirty.

Oh, well, I said, that's tomorrow.

Red gave us some more work to do around the grounds and let us sit next to him at lunch. It was swell. We talked to some acrobats who were Spanish, and to a family of Italians who worked with horses. We saw both shows, the afternoon one and the evening one, and then we helped with the work, taking the circus to pieces again; then we went down to the trains, and then home. I got home real late. In the morning I was sleepy when I had to get up for school.

They were waiting for us. Miss Flibety didn't even let us sit down for the roll call. She just told us to go to the office. Old man Dawson was waiting for us, too. Stafford was there, too, and very sore.

I figured, Well, here's where we go to Reform School.

Here they are, Mr. Dawson said to Stafford. Take them away, if you like.

It was easy to tell they'd been talking for some time and hadn't been getting along any too well. Old man Dawson seemed irritated and Stafford seemed sore at him.

In *this* school, old man Dawson said, I do any punishing that's got to be done. Nobody else. I can't stop you from taking them to Reform School, though.

Stafford didn't say anything. He just left the office.

Well, lads, old man Dawson said. How was it?

We had lunch with them, Joey said.

Let's see now, old man Dawson said. What offense is this, the sixteenth or the seventeenth?

It ain't that many, Joey said. Must be eleven or twelve.

Well, old man Dawson said, I'm sure of one thing. This is the time I'm supposed to make it thirty.

I think the next one is the one you're supposed to make thirty, Joey said.

No, Mr. Dawson said, we've lost track somewhere, but I'm sure this is the time it goes up to thirty. Who's going to be first?

Me, I said.

All right, Aram, Mr. Dawson said. Take a good hold on the chair, brace yourself, and try to modulate your howl.

Yes, sir, I said. I'll do my best, but thirty's an awful lot.

Well, a funny thing happened. He gave me thirty all right and I howled all right, but it *was a* modulated howl. It was the most modulated howl I ever howled; because it was the *easiest* strapping I ever got. I counted them and there were thirty all right, but they didn't hurt, so I didn't cry as I was afraid I might.

It was the same with Joey. We stood together waiting to be dismissed.

I'm awfully grateful to you boys, old man Dawson said, for modulating your howls so nicely this time. I don't want people to think I'm killing you.

We wanted to thank him for giving us such easy strappings, but we couldn't say it. I think he knew the way we felt, though, because he smiled in a way that gave us an idea he knew.

Then we went back to class.

It was swell because we knew everything would be all right till the County Fair opened in September.

Analysis

William Saroyan is a nimble experimentalist who himself maintains that he has cast adrift from all traditional media. Actually this is not so, for various influences and tendencies are obvious in his work, and his philosophy for living is not new. Often berated by critics for carelessness and loose thinking, yet Saroyan has contributed new expression and a frolicsome manner to modern letters.

1. What experimental techniques do you find in "The Circus"? Do they seem self-conscious or natural?

2. What elements of the story are quite in the traditional pattern; in fact come very close to the commercial market standards?

3. What differences and similarities do you find between "The Circus" and "Penrod's Busy Day" in Part III of this volume? How do you account for one being classed as "quality" and the other as "craft"? Compare both treatments of boyhood pranks to that in *Huckleberry Finn*.

4. In the prologue to Saroyan's play, "The Time of Your Life," he sums up his philosophy of living thus: "In the time of your life, live—so that in that wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it." Does "The Circus" convey this philosophy?

5. What gives the story forward movement?

William Saroyan

William Saroyan (1909–) was born in Fresno, California, of Armenian extraction, deriving much of his material for writing both from the locale of his boyhood and the happenstance of Armenian parentage. At fifteen he left school to go to work, but in his spare time he read widely and wrote conscientiously, for when he was sixteen he had determined to make a writer of himself and gave himself until the age of thirty to attain recognition, an ambition he achieved with several years to spare. He has written more than three hundred stories, several plays, and one novel, which did not obtain any degree of critical acclaim. He would write very differently, he says, had he found it necessary too long to butt his head against indifference and frustration. But because the world has accepted and recognized him there is a "glow over his writing."

Saroyan's short stories are collected in the volumes *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze, Inhale and Exhale,* and *My Name Is Aram,* from which "The Circus" is reprinted. His best-known play is *The Time of Your Life,* and his novel, *The Human Comedy.*

For CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY, Mr. Saroyan has written the following suggestions to young writers: "The short story form, as such, is anything anybody cares to belive it is. Anonymous American jokes are probably the best examples of the form we have, especially the very good ones, which are more often than not what is loosely known as dirty. If so, let us consider why they are so, and no doubt we shall learn a little something or other about ourselves. A necessary ingredient of good dirt is speed, and all American jokes are compounded of super-naturalness and terrific timing. Guy de Maupassant, the greatest story-writer of all times, was not above telling jokes. The quality of American jokes is improving all the time, apparently, and it is possible that American short stories of the past twenty years or so have been partly responsible for this improvement, although the matter may be completely the other way around. Men incapable of writing so much as their names are frequently the most successful tellers of jokes. At the other end of the form is the long literary story which is definitely not anything anybody could tell, but something somebody might write for somebody to read. In between these two extremes are as many variations of the form as

there may happen to be people who have something to say and must say it, without bothering consciously about form at all, or people who insist upon writing something or other in order to become better known or in order to make money or in order to prove to society that they are not the imbeciles they seem to be—they are just a little shy, that's all.

" 'The Circus,' like all of the stories in *My Name Is Aram,* was written for the fun of it, for I scarcely ever felt it was necessary for me to prove to society that I am not as feeble-minded as the next man. I am. This may not be the fundamental requirement of a writer of short stories, but as the saying is, it helps. The best way to begin being a writer is to come right out and admit that one is definitely a crackpot. After that, the going is sure to be a lot easier."



THE SIN

Leonard Robinson

THE bedcovers weighed heavily on the boy's chest. In a moment there was the sudden catching inside, the feeling that an object had moved into the upper part of his windpipe, and he struggled and threshed about in a sweating horror to force the air into his body. It took every bit of his strength to get enough air. Then in a second the pain went from him, and his windpipe opened again and his body started a series of convulsive gasps, shot with chestwide agony, as it panicked for oxygen.

The spells would last for ten or fifteen minutes, and, while they did, she stood over him, Alice, the great round face, calm and kind, with just the right concern, and the right amount of concern. He had no idea he was dying, and he would never have discovered it from her face. With her there he was glad. This was the special situation, the special attention he had always expected but somehow had never received. He watched her, now that the spell had passed, looking down on his small dying body, electric with infection, and he knew that he was happy to

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be so racked. If it was necessary to be so racked to get her love, to see that look on her face, he was happy to be.

Fever corrupted sequence. She was undressing, taking off her starched nurse's uniform, the white hat with the black, magic stripe that made her different from all other people he had known and her love especially important. She unbuttoned her white dress, standing before the mirror, her back to him. He gazed, the eyes great in his thin, wasted face, calmly upon her, yet knowing, somehow, that now he must turn away. Even at eight years old he knew he must turn away.

There was never a struggle about such things. One didn't do the thing that brought pleasure; one always averted the head, turned away, prayed, swept out one's soul. His soul was a room and no one could enter or clean it but him. When his mind was pure the room was clean. But when evil thoughts came (and all thoughts had some bloom of wickedness upon them) the room became dirty, and cobwebs and spiders got into the corners and dirt littered the floor. At such times his soul-room looked like the attic his mother had taken him to see once in Aunt Theresa's house, when Aunt Theresa had died. When evil thoughts came he had to enter the dirtied soul-room and clean it out, carefully move the accumulated dirt to the center of the room and then sweep it out the door. When, at confession on Saturdays, he waited for his turn to enter the presence of the priest, he always conjured up this room, made a neat pile of his sins in the center of the room; then, when he actually went into the confessional and told his sins to the priest, he would imagine that he was sweeping the sins over the threshold and out. This was a major cleaning. But often enough he had to sweep out the room in the middle of the week even without the help of the priest.

As Alice unbuttoned her dress she turned, with her slow head, and looked at him and smiled. He smiled back and turned away. She would put on her street clothes now and go away and he would not see her till the morning. Time lost order again and the priest suddenly was there.

It was Father Frandon, the priest with the large sad eyes that showed the pain within them. It was a real pain, according to the little boy's mother. "Oh," she had said, "he suffers so much from headaches. Father Walsh told me he knows no freedom from them. He's tried everything. It's migraine." It made the priest gentle, Walter thought, saintly

and gentle. He was glad it was this priest, for his misery gave him special power. Father Frandon had never scolded him, never hurried him, and somehow, in the dark confessional, the priest's soft voice always seemed to imply recognition, recognition of Walter and his specialness, almost glad welcome, as if to say, "You're Walter Holden. I know you. You're one of us. Special. I recognize you." And once, so soft-voiced and filled with the promise of recognition and the possibility of utter forgiveness had he found Father Frandon that he almost had told him *the* sin. It hesitated to emerge on the level of speech, but it had almost come out. Later the boy had been terrified at the closeness of the escape.

Now he did not know why the priest who bent over him was there. "Hello, Walter," Father Frandon said. The large, watery brown eyes of the man were as soft as his voice.

"Hello, Father," the boy said.

"Well, you don't look so sick," the priest said; "you look as if you were just having a good rest for yourself." His mouth formed, through the pain, a slow, archaic half-smile.

The boy said nothing, his eyes going to the small black leather case the priest held in his hand. He made nothing of it and the priest offered no explanation and said no more but opened the case and took some things out of it. Presently he came to the bed and looked down at Walter for a moment.

"Walter," he said softly, "sometimes when you can't get down to the church we come up here to your house and listen to your confession and give you Holy Communion."

"Yes, Father," the boy said.

"Now," the priest continued, "I know you're a good boy but you understand that since you're sick I'm giving you a chance to tell your sins here. You *do* understand, don't you?"

"Yes, Father," the boy said. But he understood only the words, only their sound and tendency and not their meaning. To him confession was a rigid, delimited series of acts, identifiable by the long walk through the center of town, kneeling in the pew, waiting your turn, hearing the subdued murmurs from the others as they told their sins and received their penances in the dark confessional, giving yourself a good examination of conscience (which meant the thorough sweeping and cleansing of the soul-room). But this singular meeting in a bed-

room with Father Frandon did not have these distinguishing characteristics.

The priest looked down upon the boy, and somehow sensed his lack of understanding. "Look, Walter," he said, "it's just as if you walked down through Manton Square and came to church and walked into the confessional and told your sins."

The boy did not say anything, but lay silently there, his eyes fast on the priest, turning this idea over in his mind. The priest's words were transmuted into pictures. Walter saw himself walking on the red brick sidewalks, going down Florence Street and turning into Maud, then going down Washington to Pleasant, then down Pleasant to Main, then coming to the church, going up the steps, blessing himself with holy water, genuflecting before the altar. It would be Saturday afternoon. On the way he counted the different makes of cars, so many Buicks, so many Fords, so many Packards. In his pocket he had a dime to light a candle with in the church.

"You mean," he said to the priest, "I can go to confession right here without going in the confession box down in the church?"

"Yes, Walter," said the priest. He smiled at the little boy encouragingly. "Now you understand. I'll wait while you examine your conscience and then you can tell your sins."

Even then the boy was not alarmed. There was no difference. You could keep back *the* sin here as well as in the confessional. The soul-room had the special door that contained the other room inside it, and here *the* sin dwelt. This room was not dusty like the other. *The* sin was not made of impalpable cobwebs and floating dust like the small sins. It was definite, solid and complete. It could be described, he believed, in a sentence, though he had never used the words to describe it. Worst of all, and what gave it the dynamic terror properties it possessed, was the fact that it was subject to growth. For receiving Holy Communion with this sin on your soul compounded its evil. Indeed its special room often seemed scarcely large enough to hold it.

Now the priest leaned over toward Walter and said certain words that did bring on the darkness and the fear, made *the* sin writhe within its room and hurl itself against the door. "Do not be frightened, Walter," the priest murmured, his face close and his large eyes full of compassion as if, even then, the great aching pounded inside his head,

to be controlled only by a great effort of will, by his absorption in the suffering of others. "You must not be frightened to tell the truth. You must make the best confession you ever made. Tell me anything you have never told before, because God may lean down and take you up to heaven with him and this may be your last chance to tell your sins."

A deep twinge of pain started in the lungs of the child; he could feel the commencement of the constriction, the blocking of his breath. Father Frandon's words were enormously clear to him. They had used these hushed, gentle words for Aunt Theresa when she died. The words were about last times, endings. "Go in and see Aunt Theresa; she may be going away forever," they had said. "She is taking a long trip and you won't see her again." "Pray that Aunt Theresa will be happy." All the sentences were pictures, and in them Aunt Theresa was going along a dark road, white-faced and gasping as he had seen her on the bed, and she was afraid.

He knew what death was as well as he knew the enormous size of punishment. And he looked up into the gray face of the priest and made his choice. The door would not be opened, *the* sin would have no egress. He would live. He would have to live.

The priest waited for a moment. "Now tell everything, Walter; nothing must be held back," he said.

"Yes, Father," the boy said.

"Now start," the priest said. "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned—"

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned, this is two weeks since my last confession—"

Memory stopped, all mind stopped, obliterated by the integument blocking the air that the child's body sought ravenously. His mind blinked into unconsciousness and his body bent itself to win the vast struggle against death.

When he woke Doctor Anders was there smiling and the family stood around the bed and he watched the older ones, who looked happy. The younger ones, Virginia and Marty, were giggling. And the priest was gone. The temptation had passed and he had won and the sin had remained within. He started to giggle with Virginia and Marty and when his mother saw him do this she broke down and started to cry out loudly. He knew she was crying with relief, and he knew he did not deserve such love, and that made him giggle louder as he looked at Virginia and Marty.

Analysis

"The Sin" deals with a childhood experience in pathetic and convincing fashion, with overtones of social criticism. It is the *"New Yorker"* type of story. Mr. Robinson, a young writer with journalistic background, believes that the theme in a story of two thousand words must be "weighty without being sententious."

1. Express the theme of "The Sin." Is it weighty without being sententious? How is sententiousness avoided?
2. Explain the irony of the ending.
3. Point out passages which make the story seem convincingly true to life —i.e., common to your own childhood experiences.
4. Why does not the boy's recovery—the happy ending—make this a craft or commercial story?
5. Especially in the episodic story, every word, every happening, must directly contribute toward an inevitable denouement—a tight-packed unity. Explain whether or not this is true of "The Sin."
6. Compare this story with "The Circus," "Penrod's Busy Day," "Little Miss Marker," and "The Terrible Miss Dove"—all stories about children or in which children are involved. Can you find in your own youth material for one or more original stories? Do not hesitate to model your story on the tone and technique of one of the foregoing tales.

Leonard Robinson

Leonard Robinson (1913–) after attending Columbia University stayed on in New York City to work for such magazines as *The New Yorker, Life, Time, Newsweek*. In 1943 he gave up journalism to devote himself to creative writing, and since then his stories have appeared frequently in *The New Yorker, Harper's, Mademoiselle,* and other magazines. Several of his stories have already found their way into various anthologies.

Concerning his methods, he writes for CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY: "I once looked through the short stories I have written and realized that of the thirty or so, twenty have been the result of some kind of spontaneous inner activity over which I had not the slightest control; ten were manipulations of situations I had observed and extracted a theme from. The latter are the least good, for my dough. But in the former type of story I find it necessary also to extract a theme. My short stories seem to be so slight in length that I have room only to say a single thing, and everything has to be aimed at that single statement but without offending the modern appetite for the sem-

blance of naturalism—an appetite I share with the general. . . . The central movement of the story must ring with a kind of overtonal meaning, giving off ripples of implication, philosophical and psychological. 'The Sin' is partly autobiographical, but the theme was, as far as I can tell, a deductive matter. I sometimes write from a theme, creating the action to fit, and sometimes think of an action and deduce the theme. In either case I find it necessary to consult myself seriously on whether theme or material deals with an important enough aspect of the problem of reality. The problem of reality, I believe with Wallace Stevens, is *the* problem of literature. I don't mean to sound bumptious in this statement; God knows I don't feel secure enough to . . ."



THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

John Cheever

FREDERICK WILCOX made the last leg of the tiresome, all-day journey on a local that stank of tobacco and coal smoke and sounded its plaintive whistle at all the many Vermont grade crossings. He held his briefcase on his knees and tried to work on some correspondence, even though the train swerved and shook so that it was nearly impossible to read or write. It was late in the afternoon and growing dark when he closed his briefcase, took his bag down from the rack, and went out to the platform. From there he saw the Howells' barn go by, and the block of stores, and the waterfall with the mill behind it. He thought he recognized several of the people who got off at his stop, but none of them seemed to recognize him.

As he crossed the square he noticed that the basement windows of the courthouse were sandbagged and that soldiers were patrolling the bridge above town. Armed soldiers passed along the street in pairs, walking toward the Grange Hall, where they were billeted. He cut across the green, past the Civil War cannon, to the house of his parents. The windows were dark. He rang the bell four times before he heard his father's heavy step. "Home from the Indies, home from the ocean,"

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the old man said as he opened the door. They shook hands and Mr. Wilcox took his son's bag.

When Frederick stepped into the house, he noticed, as always, how bad the air was and how crowded the living room was with furniture. His mother was waiting for him there and he embraced her. "We got your wire yesterday. I'm so glad you could find the time to come and see us," she said. "We were expecting you and Lois last summer—" She seemed to catch herself complaining and asked in a lighter voice, "Did you have a nice trip, Frederick?"

"Yes," he said.

"Turn on the light, Benjamin," she told her husband. "Did you have a nice trip?" she asked again.

"Yes," Frederick repeated.

"Was the train crowded?"

"No."

"Which will you have, tea or whiskey?" his mother asked.

"Whiskey," he said, "and I'll fix it myself."

"Hannah Saville was in New York last month," his mother said, "and she wanted to see you. Lois answered the telephone and said you were busy."

"Oh, I'm sorry," Frederick said. "Lois didn't tell me."

"Hannah stayed at one of the big hotels," his mother said, "and they charged her eight dollars a day for a room that was so small she had to close the bureau drawer before she could open the bathroom door."

"Hannah told me," his father said, "that they have a place in New York for ice-skating, right in the middle of the city, and that it costs eighty-eight cents to skate. Now, is that right, Frederick?"

"Yes," he said, "that's right."

"Stoddard Eaton would make a lot of money," his father said, "if he charged eighty-eight cents to skate on the ice pond."

"They wouldn't skate on the ice pond if Stoddard charged them eighty-eight cents," his mother said seriously. "They'd skate on Jacob's Pond."

There was nothing to say; there never had been. Frederick went to the sideboard and mixed himself a drink. He tried to recall some part of his life that might interest them. "I went to Washington the week before last to see Phil Abbott," he said. "I stayed in Alexandria with

the Folsoms, and you ought to see the traffic going into Washington in the morning. I had to wait three hours to see Phil, and Harry Hopkins called him up while I was in his office."

"What time is it, Benjamin?" his mother interrupted.

"Quarter after six," Mr. Wilcox said.

"You think he'll come?" she asked.

"Well, it's hard to be sure," Mr. Wilcox said. "He said that he'd come if he could get a pass."

She turned to Frederick. "We're talking about Stevie. When the soldiers were first stationed here, we were asked to invite one of them for Sunday dinner. There are five hundred of them, you know. They sent us a nice young man from Virginia."

"About your age," his father said.

"Of course, he speaks with that Southern accent," his mother said, "but we're getting used to it. We like him so much that we tell him to come here whenever he wants to. He spends the night here sometimes and sometimes he takes a bath here, because they have to take their baths at the high school and the water isn't very hot."

"He hasn't been in the Army a year," his father said, "but he's a corporal."

"He plays checkers with your father and brings me candy. Oh, he's very attentive. He sent me that cyclamen on the table."

"It's a beautiful plant," Frederick said.

"Yes, isn't it?" his mother said. "I'm going to set it out pretty soon."

"He said that he might stop by tonight," Mr. Wilcox said, "but you can't tell. Soldiering isn't like business. It's a twenty-four-hour job. He said that he wanted to meet you and that he'd come if he could, but we try not to hold him down. I told him, 'Now, look here, Stevie, you come here when you want to and you'll always be welcome, but we won't ever expect you or make plans for you, because we understand that your time is not your own.'"

"There's always plenty to eat in this house," Mrs. Wilcox said, "and if there isn't anyone around to wait on him he can go to the icebox and help himself. He doesn't drink. He has a glass of beer with your father now and then, but he doesn't drink much."

"He doesn't drink much," Mr. Wilcox repeated.

"Well, it must have created a lot of excitement," Frederick said, "having five hundred soldiers land in a town this size. I don't know how

many there are in Washington, but you see plenty of uniforms. The war is certainly changing the way we live. We can't sell steel furniture to people who aren't on the priorities list and we can't get steel furniture to sell to people who *are* on the priorities list. When I was in New Orleans last month—"

"Stevie has been to New Orleans," his mother said.

"It wasn't New Orleans," his father said. "It was Baton Rouge."

"Baton Rouge, New Orleans," she said. "I don't see what difference it makes." Then she turned to her son. "I think dinner will be ready in a few minutes, and if you want to wash, you had better go upstairs."

"I'll go up in a minute," Frederick said. He went to the sideboard to fix himself another drink.

"I think I hear Mrs. Munson putting the things on the table," his mother said. "I think you had better go upstairs and wash now."

When Frederick came down, his mother and father were already in the dining room. Mrs. Munson, the housekeeper, brought in the dishes and sat down between Frederick and his father. She was a stout native in her forties and was treated as a member of the family. The presence of the only son, from New York City, kept her quiet until Mr. Wilcox drew her into the conversation by remarking that she had a son in the Army.

"He's in a camp in Tacoma now," Mrs. Munson said. "It's in Washington, Tacoma is—the State of Washington—and near to the Pacific Ocean."

"Mrs. Munson's son is a first-class private, Frederick," Mr. Wilcox said.

"He enlisted," Mrs. Wilcox said, "so they let him choose what branch of the service he wanted to be in."

"Ah, that's the life for a man!" Mr. Wilcox exclaimed, and fell back in his chair and sighed, as though he were faced with one of those vast and tranquil mountain views that gave him so much comfort. "They get plenty of exercise and sleep and fresh air. I've never seen a finer-looking bunch of boys than the ones they've stationed here. They're tall and strong, and Stevie says there isn't a bad soldier in the lot. They'll rule the world someday, these soldiers will, and God be with them!" He struck the table with his hand. "They'll elect the next President. They'll run the government. They'll inherit the earth."

"There's plenty more gravy in the kitchen if anyone wants it on

their potatoes," Mrs. Munson said quietly. She had taken all of what Mr. Wilcox said as a compliment and she was blushing with pride.

It was his parents' custom, Frederick knew, to go to bed very soon after dinner, but when he was there they sat up with him. He was surprised when his mother went upstairs after they had been in the living room for only a few minutes. He started to talk about Washington again to his father. The old man listened impatiently and then began to read the evening paper. Frederick went upstairs, where his mother was in bed, reading.

"Have you read this novel?" she asked.

"No. I don't have much time for reading," he said. "Lois does the reading for our family."

"It's very interesting. Stevie lent it to me. His friends sent him a lot of books for Christmas and he's been lending them to me." She laid the book down on the bed. "When do you have to go back?" she asked.

"Tomorrow," Frederick said.

"I'm so sorry you can't stay longer. I'm sorry you're not going to meet Stevie. There's a picture of him on the mantel. Don't you want to see a picture of him?"

"Yes, I'd like to," Frederick said. He brought the picture from the mantel over to the bed, where the light was better. It was a snapshot of a good-looking young man in khaki. He stood freely and he had faced the shutter of the camera with an earnest and pleasant look.

"He's taller than he seems in the picture," Mrs. Wilcox said. "It's not a very good picture. Your father took it one Sunday afternoon. Your father has never learned how to work a camera." Frederick returned the picture to the mantel and she went on reading. Frederick decided to go to bed. What troubled him was not jealousy—it couldn't be that—but he was annoyed at their unenthusiastic reception after he had travelled so far.

When he stepped into his room he saw that he had lost possession there too. It smelled of pipe tobacco. There was a pipe rack on the bureau, and beside the pipe rack, in a silver frame, a photograph of a strange woman and two girls. On top of the bookcase, between two new bronze bookends, were a Spanish grammar, a book on naval warfare, Kipling's "Barrack-Room Ballads," and a copy of the Bible. Frederick opened the Bible. It was inscribed to "Steven Wilson Langely on his sixteenth birthday, from his loving mother."

He sat down on the edge of the bed. He felt like a ghost. On the table beside the bed there were a jackknife, a police whistle, a pipe-cleaner, and the beginnings of a collection of match folders. None of these belonged to him. He looked for some pajamas in his bureau and found another man's tan shirts. He started down the hall to ask where his pajamas had been put, but his mother's room was already dark, so he went downstairs to ask his father.

"I don't know where your mother put your things," Mr. Wilcox said. "I hope you don't mind that Stevie uses that room occasionally." Frederick shook his head. "I guess he isn't going to come," the old man said. He looked at his watch. "I guess he couldn't get a pass. It's too bad. He wanted to meet you."

There were footsteps on the gravel road outside and Mr. Wilcox went to the window. "This may be him. It looks a little like him. No, no. I guess it's the Blaisey boy going home from the mill. The mill's working three shifts now. Yes, that's the Blaisey boy, all right. I don't know why I ever thought it was Stevie. That Blaisey boy isn't anything like Stevie."

Analysis

By his own account John Cheever has written a hundred stories, most of them for *The New Yorker*. Because of its frequent appearance in *The New Yorker* and seldom elsewhere, a certain type of thematic story, usually ironic, has become known as the *"New Yorker"* type of story. Other characteristics of this type are brevity (about two thousand words), considerable restraint, subtlety. Usually of the episodic type, the *"New Yorker"* story often contains social implications or social criticism.

1. "They Shall Inherit the Earth" is a succession of scenes. How, then, may it be called an episodic story?

2. What is the significance of the title? To whom does the "They" refer?

3. Compare the style in this story with that of Ernest Hemingway, Erskine Caldwell, and Leonard Robinson. Does the author make use of repetition? Exemplify the author's use of extreme restraint. Is there bitter irony?

4. Graphically demonstrate the indirect method by which each character is individualized.

5. Explain how this story deliberately contravenes the traditional themes of homecoming and parental affection. In what way does the ending, by

implication, conclude the story even while leaving the dramatic trap unresolved?

6. The relationship between parents and children is often employed in fiction. Compare the parents in "They Shall Inherit the Earth" with those in "Mother." Compare the theme. Is there any parent-child situation in your own life or in the lives of your friends or acquaintances that might lend itself to adaptation in an original story?

John Cheever

John Cheever (1912–) was born in Quincy, Massachusetts, and attended Thayer Academy in South Braintree, Massachusetts. He lived variously in Boston and New York City until the winter of 1942, when he entered the Army, from which he was discharged in 1945.

Mr. Cheever writes: "Since 1945 I have been working on a novel. Other than that I have little to say. I have never been able to write about myself, my work, the purpose of my stories, and I have no opinion on writing as a career. I cannot even converse on these subjects with my warmest friends."



NIGHT CLUB

Katharine Brush

PROMPTLY at quarter of ten P.M. Mrs. Brady descended the steps of the Elevated. She purchased from the newsdealer in the cubbyhole beneath them a next month's magazine and a to-morrow morning's paper and, with these tucked under one plump arm, she walked. She walked two blocks north on Sixth Avenue; turned and went west. But not far west. Westward half a block only, to the place where the gay green awning marked Club Français paints a stripe of shade across the glimmering sidewalk. Under this awning Mrs. Brady halted briefly, to remark to the six-foot doorman that it looked like rain and to await his performance of his professional duty. When the small green door yawned open she sighed deeply and plodded in.

The foyer was a blackness, an airless velvet blackness like the inside

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of a jeweler's box. Four drum-shaped lamps of golden silk suspended from the ceiling gave it light (a very little) and formed the jewels: gold signets, those, or cuff-links for a giant. At the far end of the foyer there were black stairs, faintly dusty, rippling upward toward an amber radiance. Mrs. Brady approached and ponderously mounted the stairs, clinging with one fist to the mangy velvet rope that railed their edge.

From the top, Miss Lena Levin observed the ascent. Miss Levin was the checkroom girl. She had dark-at-the-roots blonde hair and slender hips upon which, in moments of leisure, she wore her hands, like buckles of ivory loosely attached. This was a moment of leisure. Miss Levin waited behind her counter. Row upon row of hooks, empty as yet, and seeming to beckon—wee curved fingers of iron—waited behind her.

"Late," said Miss Levin, "again."

"Go wan!" said Mrs. Brady. "It's only ten to ten. *Whew!* Them *stairs!*"

She leaned heavily, sideways, against Miss Levin's counter, and, applying one palm to the region of her heart, appeared at once to listen and to count. "Feel!" she cried then in a pleased voice.

Miss Levin obediently felt.

"Them stairs," continued Mrs. Brady darkly, "with my bad heart, will be the death of me. Whew! Well, dearie! What's the news?"

"You got a paper," Miss Levin languidly reminded her.

"Yeah!" agreed Mrs. Brady with sudden vehemence. "I got a paper!" She slapped it upon the counter. "An' a lot of time I'll get to *read* my paper, won't I now? On a Saturday night!" She moaned. "Other nights is bad enough, dear knows—but *Saturday* nights! How I dread 'em! Every Saturday night I say to my daughter, I say, 'Geraldine, I can't,' I say, 'I can't go through it again, an' that's all there is to it,' I say. 'I'll *quit,*' I say. An' I *will,* too!" added Mrs. Brady firmly, if indefinitely.

Miss Levin, in defense of Saturday nights, mumbled some vague something about tips.

"Tips!" Mrs. Brady hissed it. She almost spat it. Plainly money was nothing, nothing at all, to this lady. "I just wish," said Mrs. Brady and glared at Miss Levin, "I just wish *you* had to spend one Saturday night, just one, in that dressing room! Bein' pushed an' stepped on and near knocked down by that gang of hussies, an' them orderin' an'

bossin' you 'round like you was *black,* an' usin' your things an' then sayin' they're sorry, they got no change, they'll be back. Yah! They *never* come back!"

"There's Mr. Costello," whispered Miss Levin through lips that, like a ventriloquist's, scarcely stirred.

"An' as I was sayin'," Mrs. Brady said at once brightly, "I got to leave you. Ten to ten, time I was on the job."

She smirked at Miss Levin, nodded, and right-about-faced. There, indeed, Mr. Costello was. Mr. Billy Costello, manager, proprietor, monarch of all he surveyed. From the doorway of the big room, where the little tables herded in a ring around the waxen floor, he surveyed Mrs. Brady, and in such a way that Mrs. Brady, momentarily forgetting her bad heart, walked fast, scurried faster, almost ran.

The door of her domain was set politely in an alcove, beyond silken curtains looped up at the sides. Mrs. Brady reached it breathless, shouldered it open, and groped for the electric switch. Lights sprang up, a bright white blaze, intolerable for an instant to the eyes, like sun on snow. Blinking, Mrs. Brady shut the door.

The room was a spotless, white-tiled place, half beauty shop, half dressing room. Along one wall stood washstands, sturdy triplets in a row, with pale-green liquid soap in glass balloons afloat above them. Against the opposite wall there was a couch. A third wall backed an elongated glass-topped dressing table; and over the dressing table and over the washstands long rectangular sheets of mirror reflected lights, doors, glossy tiles, lights multiplied. . . .

Mrs. Brady moved across this glitter like a thick dark cloud in a hurry. At the dressing table she came to a halt, and upon it she laid her newspaper, her magazine, and her purse—a black purse worn gray with much clutching. She divested herself of a rusty black coat and a hat of the mushroom persuasion, and hung both up in a corner cupboard which she opened by means of one of a quite preposterous bunch of keys. From a nook in the cupboard she took down a lace-edged handkerchief with long streamers. She untied the streamers and tied them again round her chunky black alpaca waist. The handkerchief became an apron's baby cousin.

Mrs. Brady relocked the cupboard door, fumbled her key-ring over, and unlocked a capacious drawer of the dressing table. She spread a fresh towel on the plate-glass top, in the geometrical center, and upon

the towel she arranged with care a procession of things fished from the drawer. Things for the hair. Things for the complexion. Things for the eyes, the lashes, the brows, the lips, and the finger nails. Things in boxes, and things in jars, and things in tubes and tins. Also an ash tray, matches, pins, a tiny sewing kit, a pair of scissors. Last of all, a hand-printed sign, a nudging sort of sign:

NOTICE!

These articles, placed here for your convenience, are the property of the *maid.*

And directly beneath the sign, propping it up against the looking-glass, a china saucer, in which Mrs. Brady now slyly laid decoy money: two quarters and two dimes, in four-leaf-clover formation.

Another drawer of the dressing table yielded a bottle of bromoseltzer, a bottle of aromatic spirits of ammonia, a tin of sodium bicarbonate, and a teaspoon. These were lined up on the shelf above the couch.

Mrs. Brady was now ready for anything. And (from the grim, thin pucker of her mouth) expecting it.

Music came to her ears. Rather, the beat of music, muffled, rhythmic, remote. *Umpa-um, umpa-um-mm*—Mr. "Fiddle" Baer and his band, hard at work on the first fox-trot of the night. It was teasing, foot-tapping music; but the large solemn feet of Mrs. Brady were still. She sat on the couch and opened her newspaper; and for some moments she read uninterruptedly, with special attention to the murders, the divorces, the breaches of promise, the funnies.

Then the door swung inward, admitting a blast of Mr. "Fiddle" Baer's best, a whiff of perfume, and a girl.

Mrs. Brady put her paper away.

The girl was *petite* and darkly beautiful; wrapped in fur and mounted on tall jeweled heels. She entered humming the ragtime song the orchestra was playing, and while she stood near the dressing table, stripping off her gloves she continued to hum it softly to herself:

"Oh, I know my baby loves me,
I can tell my baby loves me."

Here the dark little girl got the left glove off, and Mrs. Brady glimpsed a platinum wedding ring.

" 'Cause there ain't no maybe
In my baby's
Eyes."

The right glove came off. The dark little girl sat down in one of the chairs that faced the dressing table. She doffed her wrap, casting it carelessly over the chair-back. It had a cloth-of-gold lining, and "Paris" was embroidered in curlicues on the label. Mrs. Brady hovered solicitously near.

The dark little girl, still humming, looked over the articles "placed here for your convenience," and picked up the scissors. Having cut off a very small hangnail with the air of one performing a perilous major operation, she seized and used the manicure buffer, and after that the eyebrow pencil. Mrs. Brady's mind, hopefully calculating the tip, jumped and jumped again like a taximeter.

"Oh, I know my baby loves me—"

The dark little girl applied powder and lipstick belonging to herself. She examined the result searchingly in the mirror and sat back, satisfied. She cast some silver *Klink! Klink!* into Mrs. Brady's saucer, and half rose. Then, remembering something, she settled down again.

The ensuing thirty seconds were spent by her in pulling off her platinum wedding ring, tying it in a corner of a lace handkerchief, and tucking the handkerchief down the bodice of her tight white-velvet gown.

"There!" she said.

She swooped up her wrap and trotted toward the door, jeweled heels merrily twinkling.

" 'Cause there ain't no maybe—"

The door fell shut.

Almost instantly it opened again, and another girl came in. A blonde, this. She was pretty in a round-eyed babyish way; but Mrs. Brady, regarding her, mentally grabbed the spirits of ammonia bottle. For she looked terribly ill. The round eyes were dull, the pretty, silly little face was drawn. The thin hands, picking at the fastenings of a spacious bag, trembled and twitched.

Mrs. Brady cleared her throat. "Can I do something for you, Miss?"

Evidently the blonde girl had believed herself alone in the dressing room. She started violently, and glanced up, panic in her eyes. Panic, and something else. Something very like murderous hate—but for an instant only, so that Mrs. Brady, whose perceptions were never quick, missed it altogether.

"A glass of water?" suggested Mrs. Brady.

"No," said the girl, "no." She had one hand in the beaded bag now. Mrs. Brady could see it moving, causing the bag to squirm like a live thing, and the fringe to shiver. "Yes!" she cried abruptly. "A glass of water—please—you get it for me."

She dropped onto the couch. Mrs. Brady scurried to the water cooler in the corner, pressed the spigot with a determined thumb. Water trickled out thinly. Mrs. Brady pressed harder, and scowled, and thought, "Something's wrong with this thing. I mustn't forget, next time I see Mr. Costello—"

When again she faced her patient, the patient was sitting erect. She was thrusting her clenched hand back into the beaded bag again.

She took only a sip of the water, but it seemed to help her quite miraculously. Almost at once color came to her cheeks, life to her eyes. She grew young again—as young as she was. She smiled up at Mrs. Brady.

"Well!" she exclaimed. "What do you know about that!" She shook her honey-colored head. "I can't imagine what came over me."

"Are you better now?" inquired Mrs. Brady.

"Yes, oh, yes. I'm better now. You see," said the blonde girl confidentially, "we were at the theater, my boy friend and I, and it was hot and stuffy—I guess that must have been the trouble." She paused, and the ghost of her recent distress crossed her face. "God! I thought that last act *never* would end!" she said.

While she attended to her hair and complexion she chattered gayly to Mrs. Brady, chattered on with scarcely a stop for breath, and laughed much. She said, among other things, that she and her "boy friend" had not known one another very long, but that she was "ga-ga" about him. "He is about me, too," she confessed. "He thinks I'm grand."

She fell silent then, and in the looking-glass her eyes were shadowed, haunted. But Mrs. Brady, from where she stood, could not see the looking-glass; and half a minute later the blonde girl laughed and be-

gan again. When she went out she seemed to dance out on little winged feet; and Mrs. Brady sighing, thought it must be nice to be young . . . and happy like that.

The next arrivals were two. A tall, extremely smart young woman in black chiffon entered first, and held the door open for her companion; and the instant the door was shut, she said, as though it had been on the tip of her tongue for hours, "Amy, what under the sun *happened?*"

Amy, who was brown-eyed, brown-bobbed-haired, and patently annoyed with something, crossed to the dressing table and flopped into a chair before she made reply.

"Nothing," she said wearily then.

"That's nonsense!" snorted the other. "Tell me. Was it something she said? She's a tactless ass, of course. Always was."

"No, not anything she said. It was—" Amy bit her lip. "All right! I'll tell you. Before we left your apartment I just happened to notice that Tom had disappeared. So I went to look for him—I wanted to ask him if he'd remembered to tell the maid where we were going—Skippy's subject to croup you know, and we always leave word. Well, so I went into the kitchen, thinking Tom might be there mixing cocktails—and there he was—and there *she* was!"

The full red mouth of the other young woman pursed itself slightly. Her arched brows lifted. "Well?"

Her matter-of-factness appeared to infuriate Amy. "He was *kissing* her!" she flung out.

"Well?" said the other again. She chuckled softly and patted Amy's shoulder, as if it were the shoulder of a child. "You're surely not going to let *that* spoil your whole evening? Amy *dear!* Kissing may once have been serious and significant—but it isn't nowadays. Nowadays, it's like shaking hands. It means nothing."

But Amy was not consoled. "I hate her!" she cried desperately. "Red-headed *thing!* Calling me 'darling' and 'honey,' and s-sending me handkerchiefs for C-Christmas—and then sneaking off behind closed doors and k-kissing my h-h-husband . . ."

At this point Amy quite broke down, but she recovered herself sufficiently to add with venom, "I'd like to slap her!"

"Oh, oh, oh," smiled the tall young woman, "I wouldn't do that!"

Amy wiped her eyes with what might well have been one of the

Christmas handkerchiefs, and confronted her friend. "Well, what *would* you do, Claire? If you were I?"

"I'd forget it," said Claire, "and have a good time. I'd kiss somebody myself. You've no idea how much better you'd feel!"

"I don't do—" Amy began indignantly; but as the door behind her opened and a third young woman—red-headed, ear-ringed, exquisite—lilted in, she changed her tone. "Oh, hello!" she called sweetly, beaming at the newcomer via the mirror. "We were wondering what had become of you!"

The red-headed girl, smiling easily back, dropped her cigarette on the floor and crushed it out with a silver-shod toe. "Tom and I were talking to 'Fiddle' Baer," she explained. "He's going to play 'Clap Yo' Hands' next, because it's my favorite. Lend me a comb, will you, somebody?"

"There's a comb there," said Claire, indicating Mrs. Brady's business comb.

"But imagine using it!" murmured the red-headed girl. "Amy darling, haven't you one?"

Amy produced a tiny comb from her rhinestone purse. "Don't forget to bring it when you come," she said, and stood up. "I'm going on out; I want to tell Tom something."

She went.

The red-headed young woman and the tall black-chiffon one were alone, except for Mrs. Brady. The red-headed one beaded her incredible lashes. The tall one, the one called Claire, sat watching her. Presently she said, "Sylvia, look here." And Sylvia looked. Anybody, addressed in that tone, would have.

"There is one thing," Claire went on quietly, holding the other's eyes, "that I want understood. And that is, *'Hands off!'* Do you hear me?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"You do know what I mean!"

The red-headed girl shrugged her shoulders. "Amy told you she saw us, I suppose."

"Precisely. And," went on Claire, gathering up her possessions and rising, "as I said before, you're to keep away." Her eyes blazed sudden white-hot rage. "Because, as you very well know, he belongs to *me,*" she said and departed, slamming the door.

Between eleven o'clock and one Mrs. Brady was very busy indeed. Never for more than a moment during those two hours was the dressing room empty. Often it was jammed, full to overflowing with curled cropped heads, with ivory arms and shoulders, with silk and lace and chiffon, with legs. The door flapped in and back, in and back. The mirrors caught and held—and lost—a hundred different faces. Powder veiled the dressing table with a thin white dust; cigarette stubs, scarlet at the tips, choked the ash-receiver. Dimes and quarters clattered into Mrs. Brady's saucer—and were transferred to Mrs. Brady's purse. The original seventy cents remained. That much, and no more, would Mrs. Brady gamble on the integrity of womankind.

She earned her money. She threaded needles and took stitches. She powdered the backs of necks. She supplied towels for soapy, drippy hands. She removed a speck from a teary blue eye and pounded the heel on a slipper. She curled the straggling ends of a black bob and a gray bob, pinned a velvet flower on a lithe round waist, mixed three doses of bicarbonate of soda, took charge of a shed pink-satin girdle, collected, on hands and knees, several dozen fake pearls that had wept from a broken string.

She served chorus girls and school girls, gay young matrons and gayer young mistresses, a lady who had divorced four husbands, and a lady who had poisoned one, the secret (more or less) sweetheart of a Most Distinguished Name, and the Brains of a bootleg gang. . . . She saw things. She saw a yellow check, with the ink hardly dry. She saw four tiny bruises, such as fingers might make, on an arm. She saw a girl strike another girl, not playfully. She saw a bundle of letters some man wished he had not written, safe and deep in a brocaded handbag.

About midnight the door flew open and at once was pushed shut, and a gray-eyed, lovely child stood backed against it, her palms flattened on the panels at the sides, the draperies of her white chiffon gown settling lightly to rest around her.

There were already five damsels of varying ages in the dressing room. The latest arrival marked their presence with a flick of her eyes and, standing just where she was, she called peremptorily, "Maid!"

Mrs. Brady, standing just where *she* was, said, "Yes, Miss?"

"Please come here," said the girl.

Mrs. Brady, as slowly as she dared, did so.

The girl lowered her voice to a tense half-whisper. "Listen! Is there any way I can get out of here except through this door I came in?"

Mrs. Brady stared at her stupidly.

"Any window?" persisted the girl. "Or anything?"

Here they were interrupted by the exodus of two of the damsels-of-varying-ages. Mrs. Brady opened the door for them—and in so doing caught a glimpse of a man who waited in the hall outside, a debonair, old-young man with a girl's furry wrap hung over his arm, and his hat in his hand.

The door clicked. The gray-eyed girl moved out from the wall, against which she had flattened herself—for all the world like one eluding pursuit in a cinema.

"What about that window?" she demanded, pointing.

"That's all the farther it opens," said Mrs. Brady.

"Oh! And it's the only one—isn't it?"

"It is."

"Damn," said the girl. "Then there's *no* way out?"

"No way but the door," said Mrs. Brady testily.

The girl looked at the door. She seemed to look *through* the door, and to despise and to fear what she saw. Then she looked at Mrs. Brady. "Well," she said, "then I s'pose the only thing to do is to stay in here."

She stayed. Minutes ticked by. Jazz crooned distantly, stopped, struck up again. Other girls came and went. Still the gray-eyed girl sat on the couch, with her back to the wall and her shapely legs crossed, smoking cigarettes, one from the stub of another.

After a long while she said, "Maid!"

"Yes, Miss?"

"Peek out that door, will you, and see if there's anyone standing there."

Mrs. Brady peeked, and reported that there was. There was a gentleman with a little bit of a black mustache standing there. The same gentleman, in fact, who was standing there "just after you come in."

"Oh, Lord," sighed the gray-eyed girl. "Well . . . I can't stay here all *night*, that's one sure thing."

She slid off the couch, and went listlessly to the dressing table. There she occupied herself for a minute or two. Suddenly, without a word, she darted out.

Thirty seconds later Mrs. Brady was elated to find two crumpled one-

dollar bills lying in her saucer. Her joy, however, died a premature death. For she made an almost simultaneous second discovery. A saddening one. Above all, a puzzling one.

"Now what for," marveled Mrs. Brady, "did she want to walk off with them *scissors?*"

This at twelve-twenty-five.

At twelve-thirty a quartette of excited young things burst in, babbling madly. All of them had their evening wraps with them; all talked at once. One of them, a Dresden-china girl with a heart-shaped face, was the center of attention. Around her the rest fluttered like monstrous butterflies; to her they addressed their shrill exclamatory cries. "Babe," they called her.

Mrs. Brady heard snatches: "Not in this state unless . . ."

"Well you can in Maryland, Jimmy says." "Oh, there must be some place nearer than . . ." "Isn't this *marvelous?*" "When did it happen, Babe? When did you decide?"

"Just now," the girl with the heart-shaped face sang softly, "when we were dancing."

The babble resumed. "But listen, Babe, what'll your mother and father . . . ?" "Oh, never mind, let's hurry." "Shall we be warm enough with just these thin wraps, do you think? Babe, will you be warm enough? Sure?"

Powder flew and little pocket combs marched through bright marcels. Flushed cheeks were painted pinker still.

"My pearls," said Babe, "are *old*. And my dress and my slippers are *new*. Now let's see—what can I *borrow?*"

A lace handkerchief, a diamond bar-pin, a pair of earrings were proffered. She chose the bar-pin, and its owner unpinned it proudly, gladly.

"I've got blue garters!" exclaimed another girl.

"Give me one, then," directed Babe. "I'll trade with you. . . . There! That fixes that."

More babbling, "Hurry! Hurry . . ." "Listen, are you *sure* we'll be warm enough? Because we can stop at my house, there's nobody home." "Give me that puff, Babe, I'll powder your back." "And just to think a week ago, you'd never even met each other!" "Oh, hurry *up,* let's get *started!*" "I'm ready." "So'm I!" "Ready, Babe? You look adorable." "Come on, everybody."

They were gone again, and the dressing room seemed twice as still and vacant as before.

A minute of grace, during which Mrs. Brady wiped the spilled powder away with a damp gray rag. Then the door jumped open again. Two evening gowns appeared and made for the dressing table in a bee line. Slim tubular gowns they were, one silver, one palest yellow. Yellow hair went with the silver gown, brown hair with the yellow. The silver-gowned, yellow-haired girl wore orchids on her shoulder, three of them, and a flashing bracelet on each fragile wrist. The other girl looked less prosperous; still, you would rather have looked at her.

Both ignored Mrs. Brady's cosmetic display as utterly as they ignored Mrs. Brady, producing full field equipment of their own.

"Well," said the girl with the orchids, rouging energetically, "how do you like him?"

"Oh-h—all right."

"Meaning, 'Not any,' hmm? I suspected as much!" The girl with the orchids turned in her chair and scanned her companion's profile with disapproval. "See here, Marilee," she drawled, "are you going to be a damn fool *all* your life?"

"He's fat," said Marilee dreamily. "Fat, and—greasy, sort of. I mean, greasy in his mind. Don't you know what I mean?"

"I know *one* thing," declared the girl with the orchids. "I know Who He Is! And if I were you, that's all I'd need to know. *Under the circumstances.*"

The last three words, stressed meaningly, affected the girl called Marilee curiously. She grew grave. Her lips and lashes drooped. For some seconds she sat frowning a little, breaking a black-sheathed lipstick in two and fitting it together again.

"She's worse," she said finally, low.

"Worse?"

Marilee nodded.

"Well," said the girl with the orchids, "there you are. It's the climate. She'll never be anything *but* worse, if she doesn't get away. Out West, or somewhere."

"I know," murmured Marilee.

The other girl opened a tin of eye shadow. "Of course," she said dryly, "suit yourself. She's not *my* sister"

Marilee said nothing. Quiet she sat, breaking the lipstick, mending it, breaking it.

"Oh, well," she breathed finally, wearily, and straightened up. She propped her elbows on the plate-glass dressing-table top and leaned toward the mirror, and with the lipstick she began to make her coral-pink mouth very red and gay and reckless and alluring.

Nightly at one o'clock Vane and Moreno dance for the Club Français. They dance a tango, they dance a waltz; then, by way of encore, they do a Black Bottom, and a trick of their own called the Wheel. They dance for twenty, thirty minutes. And while they dance you do not leave your table—for this is what you came to see. Vane and Moreno. The new New York thrill. The sole justification for the five-dollar couvert extorted by Billy Costello.

From one until half past, then, was Mrs. Brady's recess. She had been looking forward to it all the evening long. When it began—when the opening chords of the tango music sounded stirringly from the room outside—Mrs. Brady brightened. With a right good will she sped the parting guests.

Alone, she unlocked her cupboard and took out her magazine—the magazine she had bought three hours before. Heaving a great breath of relief and satisfaction, she plumped herself on the couch and fingered the pages. Immediately she was absorbed, her eyes drinking up printed lines, her lips moving soundlessly.

The magazine was Mrs. Brady's favorite. Its stories were true stories, taken from life (so the Editor said); and to Mrs. Brady they were live, vivid threads in the dull, drab pattern of her night.

Analysis

The dividing line between craft and quality stories is not easy to fix, nor is such clear-cut differentiation necessary. Most of Katharine Brush's work would probably be labeled as commercial writing, sophisticated and polished.

1. Compare "Night Club" with such stories as "Eveline," "Mother," "Fifty Grand" in such matters as sentence structure, descriptive adjectives, details of setting, presentation of character. "Night Club" is smooth, "slick-paper-magazine" style. Why then was "Night Club" placed in Part II of this volume instead of in Part III?

2. "Night Club" is largely composed of a series of six vignettes. (A vignette is a very short sketch of significant occurrence, the meaning usually conveyed to the reader by implication.) Explain in what manner Mrs. Brady gives to the story both unity and theme. What is this theme?

3. Distinguish the line or lines in each of the six vignettes which convey to the reader—but not to Mrs. Brady—the situation or problem which confronts each character.

4. Mrs. Brady is uniquely characterized to contrast ironically with the various patrons of the nightclub. Write a list of her characteristics. Elaborate on the skillful ending.

Katharine Brush

Katharine Brush (1902-) was born in Middletown, Connecticut, and received her education at Centenary Collegiate Institute. After a period of newspaper work, she began the writing of fiction in 1925, publishing most of her stories in the various commercial magazines. Among her books and better-known collections of stories are *Young Man of Manhattan, Other Women, This Is on Me,* and *Night Club.*

Katharine Brush believes like W. Somerset Maugham that the writer's subconscious does most of his work, but that the subconscious is useful only "when you are really rolling," that all the conscious effort and mastered skill in the world cannot produce a good story because technique alone is very empty. Economic insecurity, she used to believe, ought to be a stimulus to writing; but from her own experience she has changed her mind. Under money pressure a writer is too likely to snatch at an idea that is not really good because he is so desperately in need of a good idea. Her working hours are from eight in the morning until two-thirty, usually supplemented by evening work—seven days a week. She keeps a filing cabinet of copious notes.



FLOWERING JUDAS

Katherine Anne Porter

BRAGGIONI sits heaped upon the edge of a straight-backed chair much too small for him, and sings to Laura in a furry, mournful voice. Laura has begun to find reasons for avoiding her own house until the latest possible moment, for Braggioni is there almost every night. No matter how late she is, he will be sitting there with a surly, waiting expression, pulling at his kinky yellow hair, thumbing the strings of his guitar, snarling a tune under his breath. Lupe the Indian maid meets Laura at the door, and says with a flicker of a glance towards the upper room, "He waits."

Laura wishes to lie down, she is tired of her hairpins and the feel of her long tight sleeves, but she says to him, "Have you a new song for me this evening?" If he says yes, she asks him to sing it. If he says no, she remembers his favorite one, and asks him to sing it again. Lupe brings her a cup of chocolate and a plate of rice, and Laura eats at the small table under the lamp, first inviting Braggioni, whose answer is always the same: "I have eaten, and besides, chocolate thickens the voice."

Laura says, "Sing, then," and Braggioni heaves himself into song. He scratches the guitar familiarly as though it were a pet animal, and sings passionately off key, taking the high notes in a prolonged painful squeal. Laura, who haunts the markets listening to the ballad singers, and stops every day to hear the blind boy playing his reed-flute in Sixteenth of September Street, listens to Braggioni with pitiless courtesy, because she dares not smile at his miserable performance. Nobody dares to smile at him. Braggioni is cruel to everyone, with a kind of specialized insolence, but he is so vain of his talents, and so sensitive to slights, it would require a cruelty and vanity greater than his own to lay a finger on the vast cureless wound of his self-esteem. It would require courage, too, for it is dangerous to offend him, and nobody has this courage.

Braggioni loves himself with such tenderness and amplitude and eternal charity that his followers—for he is a leader of men, a skilled revolutionist, and his skin has been punctured in honorable warfare—

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warm themselves in the reflected glow, and say to each other: "He has a real nobility, a love of humanity raised above mere personal affections." The excess of this self-love has flowed out, inconveniently for her, over Laura, who, with so many others, owes her comfortable situation and her salary to him. When he is in a very good humor, he tells her, "I am tempted to forgive you for being a *gringa. Gringita!*" and Laura, burning, imagines herself leaning forward suddenly, and with a sound back-handed slap wiping the suety smile from his face. If he notices her eyes at these moments he gives no sign.

She knows what Braggioni would offer her, and she must resist tenaciously without appearing to resist, and if she could avoid it she would not admit even to herself the slow drift of his intention. During these long evenings which have spoiled a long month for her, she sits in her deep chair with an open book on her knees, resting her eyes on the consoling rigidity of the printed page when the sight and sound of Braggioni singing threaten to identify themselves with all her remembered afflictions and to add their weight to her uneasy premonitions of the future. The gluttonous bulk of Braggioni has become a symbol of her many disillusions, for a revolutionist should be lean, animated by heroic faith, a vessel of abstract virtues. This is nonsense, she knows it now and is ashamed of it. Revolution must have leaders, and leadership is a career for energetic men. She is, her comrades tell her, full of romantic error, for what she defines as cynicism in them is merely "a developed sense of reality." She is almost too willing to say, "I am wrong, I suppose I don't really understand the principles," and afterward she makes a secret truce with herself, determined not to surrender her will to such expedient logic. But she cannot help feeling that she has been betrayed irreparably by the disunion between her way of living and her feeling of what life should be, and at times she is almost contented to rest in this sense of grievance as a private store of consolation. Sometimes she wishes to run away, but she stays. Now she longs to fly out of this room, down the narrow stairs, and into the street where the houses lean together like conspirators under a single mottled lamp, and leave Braggioni singing to himself.

Instead she looks at Braggioni, frankly and clearly, like a good child who understands the rules of behavior. Her knees cling together under sound blue serge, and her round white collar is not purposely nun-like. She wears the uniform of an idea, and has renounced vanities. She was

born Roman Catholic, and in spite of her fear of being seen by someone who might make a scandal of it, she slips now and again into some crumbling little church, kneels on the chilly stone, and says a Hail Mary on the gold rosary she bought in Tehuantepec. It is no good and she ends by examining the altar with its tinsel flowers and ragged brocades, and feels tender about the battered doll-shape of some male saint whose white, lace-trimmed drawers hang limply around his ankles below the hieratic dignity of his velvet robe. She has encased herself in a set of principles derived from her early training, leaving no detail of gesture or of personal taste untouched, and for this reason she will not wear lace made on machines. This is her private heresy, for in her special group the machine is sacred, and will be the salvation of the workers. She loves fine lace, and there is a tiny edge of fluted cobweb on this collar, which is one of twenty precisely alike, folded in blue tissue paper in the upper drawer of her clothes chest.

Braggioni catches her glance solidly as if he had been waiting for it, leans forward, balancing his paunch between his spread knees, and sings with tremendous emphasis, weighing his words. He has, the song relates, no father and no mother, nor even a friend to console him; lonely as a wave of the sea he comes and goes, lonely as a wave. His mouth opens round and yearns sideways, his balloon cheeks grow oily with the labor of song. He bulges marvelously in his expensive garments. Over his lavender collar, crushed upon a purple necktie, held by a diamond hoop: over his ammunition belt of tooled leather worked in silver, buckled cruelly around his gasping middle: over the tops of his glossy yellow shoes Braggioni swells with ominous ripeness, his mauve silk hose stretched taut, his ankles bound with the stout leather thongs of his shoes.

When he stretches his eyelids at Laura she notes again that his eyes are the true tawny yellow cat's eyes. He is rich, not in money, he tells her, but in power, and this power brings with it the blameless ownership of things, and the right to indulge his love of small luxuries. "I have a taste for the elegant refinements," he said once, flourishing a yellow silk handkerchief before her nose. "Smell that? It is Jockey Club, imported from New York." Nonetheless he is wounded by life. He will say so presently. "It is true everything turns to dust in the hand, to gall on the tongue." He sighs and his leather belt creaks like a saddle girth. "I am disappointed in everything as it comes. Everything."

He shakes his head. "You, poor thing, you will be disappointed too. You are born for it. We are more alike than you realize in some things. Wait and see. Some day you will remember what I have told you, you will know that Braggioni was your friend."

Laura feels a slow chill, a purely physical sense of danger, a warning in her blood that violence, mutilation, a shocking death, wait for her with lessening patience. She has translated this fear into something homely, immediate, and sometimes hesitates before crossing the street. "My personal fate is nothing, except as the testimony of a mental attitude," she reminds herself, quoting from some forgotten philosophic primer, and is sensible enough to add, "Anyhow, I shall not be killed by an automobile if I can help it."

"It may be true I am as corrupt, in another way, as Braggioni," she thinks in spite of herself, "as callous, as incomplete," and if this is so, any kind of death seems preferable. Still she sits quietly, she does not run. Where could she go? Uninvited she has promised herself to this place; she can no longer imagine herself as living in another country, and there is no pleasure in remembering her life before she came here.

Precisely what is the nature of this devotion, its true motives, and what are its obligations? Laura cannot say. She spends part of her days in Xochimilco, near by, teaching Indian children to say in English, "The cat is on the mat." When she appears in the classroom they crowd about her with smiles on their wise, innocent, clay-colored faces, crying, "Good morning, my titcher!" in immaculate voices, and they make of her desk a fresh garden of flowers every day.

During her leisure she goes to union meetings and listens to busy important voices quarreling over tactics, methods, internal politics. She visits the prisoners of her own political faith in their cells, where they entertain themselves with counting cockroaches, repenting of their indiscretions, composing their memoirs, writing out manifestoes and plans for their comrades who are still walking about free, hands in pockets, sniffing fresh air. Laura brings them food and cigarettes and a little money, and she brings messages disguised in equivocal phrases from the men outside who dare not set foot in the prison for fear of disappearing into the cells kept empty for them. If the prisoners confuse night and day, and complain, "Dear little Laura, time doesn't pass in this infernal hole, and I won't know when it is time to sleep unless I have a reminder," she brings them their favorite narcotics, and says in

a tone that does not wound them with pity, "Tonight will really be night for you," and though her Spanish amuses them, they find her comforting, useful. If they lose patience and all faith, and curse the slowness of their friends in coming to their rescue with money and influence, they trust her not to repeat everything, and if she inquires, "Where do you think we can find money, or influence?" they are certain to answer, "Well, there is Braggioni, why doesn't he do something?"

She smuggles letters from headquarters to men hiding from firing squads in back streets in mildewed houses, where they sit in tumbled beds and talk bitterly as if all Mexico were at their heels, when Laura knows positively they might appear at the band concert in the Alameda on Sunday morning, and no one would notice them. But Braggioni says, "Let them sweat a little. The next time they may be careful. It is very restful to have them out of the way for a while." She is not afraid to knock on any door in any street after midnight, and enter in the darkness, and say to one of these men who is really in danger: "They will be looking for you—seriously—tomorrow morning after six. Here is some money from Vincente. Go to Vera Cruz and wait."

She borrows money from the Roumanian agitator to give to his bitter enemy the Polish agitator. The favor of Braggioni is their disputed territory, and Braggioni holds the balance nicely, for he can use them both. The Polish agitator talks love to her over café tables, hoping to exploit what he believes is her secret sentimental preference for him, and he gives her misinformation which he begs her to repeat as the solemn truth to certain persons. The Roumanian is more adroit. He is generous with his money in all good causes, and lies to her with an air of ingenuous candor, as if he were her good friend and confidant. She never repeats anything they may say. Braggioni never asks questions. He has other ways to discover all that he wishes to know about them.

Nobody touches her, but all praise her gray eyes, and the soft, round under lip which promises gayety, yet is always grave, nearly always firmly closed: and they cannot understand why she is in Mexico. She walks back and forth on her errands, with puzzled eyebrows, carrying her little folder of drawings and music and school papers. No dancer dances more beautifully than Laura walks, and she inspires some amusing, unexpected ardors, which cause little gossip, because nothing comes of them. A young captain who had been a soldier in Zapata's army at-

tempted, during a horseback ride near Cuernavaca, to express his desire for her with the noble simplicity befitting a rude folk-hero: but gently, because he was gentle. This gentleness was his defeat, for when he alighted, and removed her foot from the stirrup, and essayed to draw her down into his arms, her horse, ordinarily a tame one, shied fiercely, reared and plunged away. The young hero's horse careered blindly after his stable-mate, and the hero did not return to the hotel until rather late that evening. At breakfast he came to her table in full charro dress, gray buckskin jacket and trousers with strings of silver buttons down the leg, and he was in a humorous, careless mood. "May I sit with you?" and "You are a wonderful rider. I was terrified that you might be thrown and dragged. I should never have forgiven myself. But I cannot admire you enough for your riding!"

"I learned to ride in Arizona," said Laura.

"If you will ride with me again this morning, I promise you a horse that will not shy with you," he said. But Laura remembered that she must return to Mexico City at noon.

Next morning the children made a celebration and spent their playtime writing on the blackboard, "We lov ar ticher," and with tinted chalks they drew wreaths of flowers around the words. The young hero wrote her a letter: "I am a very foolish, wasteful, impulsive man. I should have first said I love you, and then you would not have run away. But you shall see me again." Laura thought, "I must send him a box of colored crayons," but she was trying to forgive herself for having spurred her horse at the wrong moment.

A brown, shock-haired youth came and stood in her patio one night and sang like a lost soul for two hours, but Laura could think of nothing to do about it. The moonlight spread a wash of gauzy silver over the clear spaces of the garden, and the shadows were cobalt blue. The scarlet blossoms of the Judas tree were dull purple, and the names of the colors repeated themselves automatically in her mind, while she watched not the boy, but his shadow, fallen like a dark garment across the fountain rim, trailing in the water. Lupe came silently and whispered expert counsel in her ear: "If you will throw him one little flower, he will sing another song or two and go away." Laura threw the flower, and he sang a last song and went away with the flower tucked in the band of his hat. Lupe said, "He is one of the organizers of the Typographers Union, and before that he sold corridos in the Merced mar-

ket, and before that, he came from Guanajuato, where I was born. I would not trust any man, but I trust least those from Guanajuato."

She did not tell Laura that he would be back again the next night, and the next, nor that he would follow her at a certain fixed distance around the Merced market, through the Zócolo, up Francisco I. Madero Avenue, and so along the Paseo de la Reforma to Chapultepec Park, and into the Philosopher's Footpath, still with that flower withering in his hat, and an indivisible attention in his eyes.

Now Laura is accustomed to him, it means nothing except that he is nineteen years old and is observing a convention with all propriety, as though it were founded on a law of nature, which in the end it might well prove to be. He is beginning to write poems which he prints on a wooden press, and he leaves them stuck like handbills in her door. She is pleasantly disturbed by the abstract, unhurried watchfulness of his black eyes which will in time turn easily towards another object. She tells herself that throwing the flower was a mistake, for she is twenty-two years old and knows better; but she refuses to regret it, and persuades herself that her negation of all external events as they occur is a sign that she is gradually perfecting herself in the stoicism she strives to cultivate against that disaster she fears, though she cannot name it.

She is not at home in the world. Every day she teaches children who remain strangers to her, though she loves their tender round hands and their charming opportunist savagery. She knocks at unfamiliar doors not knowing whether a friend or a stranger shall answer, and even if a known face emerges from the sour gloom of that unknown interior, still it is the face of a stranger. No matter what this stranger says to her, nor what her message to him, the very cells of her flesh reject knowledge and kinship in one monotonous word. No. No. No. She draws her strength from this one holy talismanic word which does not suffer her to be led into evil. Denying everything, she may walk anywhere in safety, she looks at everything without amazement.

No, repeats this firm unchanging voice of her blood; and she looks at Braggioni without amazement. He is a great man, he wishes to impress this simple girl who covers her great round breasts with thick dark cloth, and who hides long, invaluably beautiful legs under a heavy skirt. She is almost thin except for the incomprehensible fullness of her breasts, like a nursing mother's, and Braggioni, who considers himself a judge of women, speculates again on the puzzle of her no-

torious virginity, and takes the liberty of speech which she permits without a sign of modesty, indeed, without any sort of sign, which is disconcerting.

"You think you are so cold, *gringita!* Wait and see. You will surprise yourself some day! May I be there to advise you!" He stretches his eyelids at her, and his ill-humored cat's eyes waver in a separate glance for the two points of light marking the opposite ends of a smoothly drawn path between the swollen curve of her breasts. He is not put off by that blue serge, nor by her resolutely fixed gaze. There is all the time in the world. His cheeks are bellying with the wind of song. "O girl with the dark eyes," he sings, and reconsiders. "But yours are not dark. I can change all that. O girl with the green eyes, you have stolen my heart away!" then his mind wanders to the song, and Laura feels the weight of his attention being shifted elsewhere. Singing thus, he seems harmless, he is quite harmless, there is nothing to do but sit patiently and say "No," when the moment comes. She draws a full breath, and her mind wanders also, but not far. She dares not wander too far.

Not for nothing has Braggioni taken pains to be a good revolutionist and a professional lover of humanity. He will never die of it. He has the malice, the cleverness, the wickedness, the sharpness of wit, the hardness of heart, stipulated for loving the world profitably. *He will never die of it.* He will live to see himself kicked out from his feeding trough by other hungry world-saviors. Traditionally he must sing in spite of his life which drives him to bloodshed, he tells Laura, for his father was a Tuscany peasant who drifted to Yucatan and married a Maya woman: a woman of race, an aristocrat. They gave him the love and knowledge of music, thus: and under the rip of his thumbnail, the strings of the instrument complain like exposed nerves.

Once he was called Delgadito by all the girls and married women who ran after him; he was so scrawny all his bones showed under his thin cotton clothing, and he could squeeze his emptiness to the very backbone with his two hands. He was a poet and the revolution was only a dream then; too many women loved him and sapped away his youth, and he could never find enough to eat anywhere, anywhere! Now he is a leader of men, crafty men who whisper in his ear, hungry men who wait for hours outside his office for a word with him, emaciated men with wild faces who waylay him at the street gate with a

timid, "Comrade, let me tell you . . ." and they blow the foul breath from their empty stomachs in his face.

He is always sympathetic. He gives them handfuls of small coins from his own pocket, he promises them work, there will be demonstrations, they must join the unions and attend the meetings, above all they must be on the watch for spies. They are closer to him than his own brothers, without them he can do nothing—until tomorrow, comrade!

Until tomorrow. "They are stupid, they are lazy, they are treacherous, they would cut my throat for nothing," he says to Laura. He has good food and abundant drink, he hires an automobile and drives in the Paseo on Sunday morning, and enjoys plenty of sleep in a soft bed beside a wife who dares not disturb him; and he sits pampering his bones in easy billows of fat, singing to Laura, who knows and thinks these things about him. When he was fifteen, he tried to drown himself because he loved a girl, his first love, and she laughed at him. "A thousand women have paid for that," and his tight little mouth turns down at the corners. Now he perfumes his hair with Jockey Club, and confides to Laura: "One woman is really as good as another for me, in the dark. I prefer them all."

His wife organizes unions among the girls in the cigarette factories, and walks in picket lines, and even speaks at meetings in the evening. But she cannot be brought to acknowledge the benefits of true liberty. "I tell her I must have my freedom, net. She does not understand my point of view." Laura has heard this many times. Braggioni scratches the guitar and meditates. "She is an instinctively virtuous woman, pure gold, no doubt of that. If she were not, I should lock her up, and she knows it."

His wife, who works so hard for the good of the factory girls, employs part of her leisure lying on the floor weeping because there are so many women in the world, and only one husband for her, and she never knows where nor when to look for him. He told her: "Unless you can learn to cry when I am not here, I must go away for good." That day he went away and took a room at the Hotel Madrid.

It is this month of separation for the sake of higher principles that has been spoiled not only for Mrs. Braggioni, whose sense of reality is beyond criticism, but for Laura, who feels herself bogged in a nightmare. Tonight Laura envies Mrs. Braggioni, who is alone, and free

to weep as much as she pleases about a concrete wrong. Laura has just come from a visit to the prison, and she is waiting for tomorrow with a bitter anxiety as if tomorrow may not come, but time may be caught immovably in this hour, with herself transfixed, Braggioni singing on forever, and Eugenio's body not yet discovered by the guard.

Braggioni says: "Are you going to sleep?" Almost before she can shake her head, he begins telling her about the May-day disturbances coming on in Morelia, for the Catholics hold a festival in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and the Socialists celebrate their martyrs on that day. "There will be two independent processions, starting from either end of town, and they will march until they meet, and the rest depends . . ." He asks her to oil and load his pistols. Standing up, he unbuckles his ammunition belt, and spreads it laden across her knees. Laura sits with the shells slipping through the cleaning cloth dipped in oil, and he says again he cannot understand why she works so hard for the revolutionary idea unless she loves some man who is in it. "Are you not in love with someone?" "No," says Laura. "And no one is in love with you?" "No." "Then it is your own fault. No woman need go begging. Why, what is the matter with you? The legless beggar woman in the Alameda has a perfectly faithful lover. Did you know that?"

Laura peers down the pistol barrel and says nothing, but a long, slow faintness rises and subsides in her; Braggioni curves his swollen fingers around the throat of the guitar and softly smothers the music out of it, and when she hears him again he seems to have forgotten her, and is speaking in the hypnotic voice he uses when talking in small rooms to a listening, close-gathered crowd. Some day this world, now seemingly so composed and eternal, to the edges of every sea shall be merely a tangle of gaping trenches, of crashing walls and broken bodies. Everything must be torn from its accustomed place where it has rotted for centuries, hurled skyward and distributed, cast down again clean as rain, without separate identity. Nothing shall survive that the stiffened hands of poverty have created for the rich and no one shall be left alive except the elect spirits destined to procreate a new world cleansed of cruelty and injustice, ruled by benevolent anarchy: "Pistols are good, I love them, cannon are even better, but in the end I pin my faith to good dynamite," he concludes, and strokes the pistol lying in her hands. "Once I dreamed of destroying this city, in case it offered resistance to General Ortíz, but it fell into his hands like an overripe pear."

He is made restless by his own words, rises and stands waiting. Laura holds up the belt to him: "Put that on, and go kill somebody in Morelia, and you will be happier," she says softly. The presence of death in the room makes her bold. "Today, I found Eugenio going into a stupor. He refused to allow me to call the prison doctor. He had taken all the tablets I brought him yesterday. He said he took them because he was bored."

"He is a fool, and his death is his own business," says Braggioni, fastening his belt carefully.

"I told him if he had waited only a little while longer, you would have got him set free," says Laura. "He said he did not want to wait."

"He is a fool and we are well rid of him," says Braggioni, reaching for his hat.

He goes away. Laura knows his mood has changed, she will not see him any more for a while. He will send word when he needs her to go on errands into strange streets, to speak to the strange faces that will appear, like clay masks with the power of human speech, to mutter their thanks to Braggioni for his help. Now she is free, and she thinks, I must run while there is time. But she does not go.

Braggioni enters his own house where for a month his wife has spent many hours every night weeping and tangling her hair upon her pillow. She is weeping now, and she weeps more at the sight of him, the cause of all her sorrows. He looks about the room. Nothing is changed, the smells are good and familiar, he is well acquainted with the woman who comes toward him with no reproach except grief on her face. He says to her tenderly: "You are so good, please don't cry any more, you dear good creature." She says, "Are you tired, my angel? Sit here and I will wash your feet." She brings a bowl of water, and kneeling, unlaces his shoes, and when from her knees she raises her sad eyes under her blackened lids, he is sorry for everything, and bursts into tears. "Ah, yes, I am hungry, I am tired, let us eat something together," he says, between sobs. His wife leans her head on his arm and says, "Forgive me!" and this time he is refreshed by the solemn, endless rain of her tears.

Laura takes off her serge dress and puts on a white linen nightgown and goes to bed. She turns her head a little to one side, and lying still, reminds herself that it is time to sleep. Numbers tick in her brain like

little clocks, soundless doors close of themselves around her. If you would sleep, you must not remember anything, the children will say tomorrow, good morning, my teacher, the poor prisoners who come every day bringing flowers to their jailor. 1-2-3-4-5—it is monstrous to confuse love with revolution, night with day, life with death—ah, Eugenio!

The tolling of the midnight bell is a signal, but what does it mean? Get up, Laura, and follow me: come out of your sleep, out of your bed, out of this strange house. What are you doing in this house? Without a word, without fear she rose and reached for Eugenio's hand, but he eluded her with a sharp, sly smile and drifted away. This is not all, you shall see— Murderer, he said, follow me, I will show you a new country, but it is far away and we must hurry. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand, no; and she clung first to the stair rail, and then to the topmost branch of the Judas tree that bent down slowly and set her upon the earth, and then to the rocky ledge of a cliff, and then to the jagged wave of a sea that was not water but a desert of crumbling stone. Where are you taking me, she asked in wonder but without fear. To death, and it is a long way off, and we must hurry, said Eugenio. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand. Then eat these flowers, poor prisoner, said Eugenio in a voice of pity, take and eat: and from the Judas tree he stripped the warm bleeding flowers, and held them to her lips. She saw that his hand was fleshless, a cluster of small white petrified branches, and his eye sockets were without light, but she ate the flowers greedily for they satisfied both hunger and thirst. Murderer! said Eugenio, and Cannibal! This is my body and my blood. Laura cried No! and at the sound of her own voice, she awoke trembling, and was afraid to sleep again.

Analysis

Katherine Anne Porter is known for her exquisitely refined style and subtle interpretations of character and mood. Many of her stories are laid in the Southwest and Mexico and concern primitive types of people. Her own expressed purpose has been ". . . to discover and understand human motives, human feelings, to make a distillation of what human relations and experiences my mind has been able to absorb."

1. In contrasting "Flowering Judas" to other stories in this anthology, what subtleties and niceties of style do you observe? Make your answer specific. Express the theme of the story, or is the theme essentially "to discover and understand human motives"? Point out the qualities which create an atmosphere of mysticism, almost of fantasy.

2. Two characteristics of "Flowering Judas" are its distinctive technique and the historical-present tense. Are you convinced that Miss Porter has lived in Mexico City, or is she basing her knowledge on reading? Is the atmosphere blended into the background so that this is a story of character rather than of setting? Explain. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the historical present tense?

3. Observe that we are never told quite directly what nationality Braggioni is, what nationality Laura is, or where the story is laid, or even that these people are under Russian influence. Point out exactly the pieces of information that lead by indirection to these conclusions.

4. Explain the significance of the title.

5. Is Braggioni a convincing character? Is Laura? Would you call them primitives? Explain. Does the author gain or lose by refusing to reveal either Laura's former history or her final fate? What is the motivation for Laura's activities? What is her implied fate?

6. Have you ever lived long enough in a foreign country to attempt an original story in a foreign setting? The danger in such an attempt is that the young author's preoccupation with his background may overwhelm other story elements.

Katherine Anne Porter

Katherine Anne Porter (1894–) was born in Indian Creek, Texas, a fact which has probably colored much of her writing in the locales which she selects, in her opposition to convention, and in the primitive types which people her stories. In all she has lived thirteen years abroad—in Berlin, Madrid, Mexico City, Basel, Switzerland, and "above all Paris for five years." She has received the Guggenheim Fellowship twice, in 1931 and again in 1938, has been awarded a gold medal from the Society of Libraries of the University of New York, and was appointed Fellow of Regional American Literature in 1944. Her home is now in Santa Monica, California, where she is working on a new novel.

Her best-known works are *Flowering Judas* (1935), *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1939), and *The Leaning Tower* (1944). In addition she has translated a book of old French songs and a Mexican novel, *The Itching Parrot,* by Fernando de Lizardi (1942), and has written various prefaces and critical articles.

In quantity her production has been small, partly because she must undergo a long "brooding" period before writing and partly because she finds it almost impossible to write except among strangers. Once she has embarked upon a piece of writing, however, she composes at white heat. Regarding criticism she says: ". . . Neither praise nor blame affects my actual work, for I am under compulsion to write as I do; when I am working I forget who approved and who dispraised and why. The worker in an art is dyed in his own color, it is useless to ask him to change his faults or his virtues." As for earning a living from writing, Miss Porter says, "If you mean, is there any place in our present economic system for the practice of literature as a source of steady income and economic security, I should say, no. . . . You cannot secure your bread and freedom of action too. You cannot be a hostile critic of society and expect society to feed you regularly."

For CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY Miss Porter writes: "I think people don't realize that it [writing] is all work and very heavy work. . . . I never showed a Ms. to anyone in my life, I never asked anyone to write anything for my use, I never wrote to an older author for interviews and criticisms. . . ."



THE PSYCHIATRIST'S STORY

Irwin Edman

I BELONG to a kind of club or association consisting of men more or less eminent in the various arts or professions. It was founded nearly a hundred years ago, so the club-book tells us, by "a hundred gentlemen of New York engaged or interested in the arts and sciences." There is a long table at which one is placed by the waiter if one comes in alone for lunch or dinner. These chance meetings with people one does not know—for the club has grown to considerably more than the original hundred—are fine for everybody. General conversation at the long table or, for that matter, casual encounters with fellow literates in the lounge afford an agreeable opportunity for a salutary exchange of ideas, or at least for exercise in audible grammatical soliloquy, or, more

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often, discipline in the art of patient listening. At various times I have learned a good deal at this club, if sometimes not much more than the personal exploits of fishing or golf or textual criticism of some of my fellow members. And I have learned how the representatives of medicine, art and the law regard philosophy, my own métier. I have noticed that the lawyers fancy themselves as controversialists, the artists are partly frightened and partly contemptuous of general ideas. But it is the doctors whose views on philosophy have usually interested me most. Most of them have a very strong interest in questions concerning first and last things. I do not presume to say just where this concern of theirs comes from, though I should judge it is not unconnected with their rather special opportunity to behold what human beings think and feel at moments of intense or final crisis. And in their presence at the final crisis itself, their presence when death comes, often despite their most ingenious and informed and devoted efforts, it is not unnatural for them to reflect on the meaning of the life of the patient they have lost, or of the lives they themselves are spending to save other people, or to come to reflect on life and death in themselves. I am reminded that Socrates in one of Plato's dialogues is made to say that the pilot does not in stormy weather ask whether his passengers are worth saving, nor a physician in healing the sick whether it is worth saving his patients. The doctor has taken the Hippocratic oath, and it is not in his capacity as a physician to ask questions as to the preciousness of the life he is trying to save from extinction. But the doctor is a man, sometimes a cultivated and reflective one, so that it is natural to him to ask such a question—and others, too. Some of my medical friends here at the club and elsewhere have, I gather from the things they sometimes say quite incidentally, felt more and more (also like Socrates) how close the body is to the spirit. Was it not Socrates who says to the youthful Charmides, complaining of a headache and asking for a cure, that he, Socrates, cannot cure the ills of the body without first curing the soul? Nor have my intelligent friends of the healing arts failed to observe how many human illnesses are the consequences of human folly on the part of individuals or stupidities in the body politic: the rich gorge themselves and our society permits malnutrition. These things may account for the recurrence of the occasions on which some doctor at the club has insisted on talking shop—my shop, philosophy.

This particular evening I had been sitting after dinner in the library

with the eminent psychiatrist. I had always liked Jamieson. He had a shrewd Scotch commonsense that saved him from some of the more fanciful flights of some of his fellow psychiatrists. Nor did he confine his psychiatry to the fashionable rich whom leisure, boredom and sometimes a vague sense of social guilt have led to the brink of insanity or occasionally suicide, or at any rate to the psychiatrist's office. He had given of his time generously—and fruitfully—to clinical practice among the quite poor. Moreover, his knowledge of books was not confined to the perhaps necessary barbarities of the newer psychiatric rhetoric. He was a fine old-fashioned humanist, and like all such he was not unversed in philosophy. He was, and felt himself, well-enough versed to twit a professional, and I was by this time used to his good-natured taunts. "We *progress* in medicine," he said to me once when I had told him that the Greeks had really said almost everything there was to say in philosophy.

On this evening at dinner when he had sat down beside me, we had talked about various matters, but neither philosophy nor psychiatry had been specifically mentioned. That was, I think, partly because an elderly Englishman, a visitor at the club who was sitting opposite us, had launched into a long discussion of salmon fishing in Canada. As neither of us knew much of anything about the subject, we had both lapsed into listening. But now, as we settled into our comfortable chairs, Jamieson took a Corona-Corona cigar out of his pocket—I used to twit him on the luxuries he could afford in his profession—and carefully cut off its top. "I've been thinking of you these last few days," he said, "and about both your work and mine, and their curious resemblances. I've been particularly reflecting that the typical classical symptoms of psychiatric disorders and the typical notions of the classic philosophies are almost identical."

"Oh," I said, and my voice, I think, betrayed just a touch of scornful indignation.

"Don't take it personally," said the psychiatrist who had a quick ear for nuances in mood. "But there are definite resemblances, truly. The delusions of grandeur, the hysterias, the sense of dawning reality or sudden supercharged reality, the hysterical assertion of the will, the overwhelming sense of futility—you can find them all among the patients who come to my office or my clinic, or among the philosophers. As a matter of fact, I've been thinking of asking you to collaborate with me

on a history of the Philosophic Neurosis, although that's a too summary name for a neurosis that is peculiarly varied and complex."

"The philosophic neurosis?" I queried. "What on earth is that?"

The psychiatrist smiled. "Like most neurotics, of course, philosophers don't know they're neurotic, and feel a little uneasy when they are labelled so. It's curious how people still flinch at the word. After all, nobody is ashamed of having a bad cold, though they have caught it by doing so silly a thing as standing in a draught after a hot bath. Well, as to the philosophic neurosis—let me see how we might define it. As a matter of fact, as you once said to me about philosophy, it seems perfectly clear what it is, but it is one of the hardest things in the world to define. Instead of giving you a definition of the philosophic neurosis, supposing I give you a case history of it? We psychiatrists, especially those of us who practise, more or less, psychoanalysis, are really novelists thinly disguised. We piece together the fragments, pell-mell and dissociated, of our patient's autobiographical confessions as he lies on the couch talking in free associations about his past. We piece together these odds and ends and call it the life or the psychological organization of our patient, and we recount it in a book with interpretative commentary and present it to you as a case history. It is a *story,* really, and usually, I think, an essentially true one. But it is a fiction put together by the psychiatrist who, like other authors, may be a more or less competent artist. So, with your permission, I'd like to tell you the tale of Edward Brodvue, a case history—a peculiarly clear one, I think—of the philosophic neurosis.

"Edward Brodvue did not become my patient until he was nearly thirty-nine years old. Up to the age of thirty-five there is no evidence, I think, that he had ever had the slightest trace of the philosophic neurosis, whose character will become evident as the story goes on. He had not the slightest trace of *Weltschmerz* or *Weltanschauung.* He had gone all through college without asking, really, one basic question, making one critical judgment or questioning one of the mores of the middle-class culture pattern, as they call it now, in which he had been brought up. You would recognize the type; you have dozens of them in your classes, though the perfect flowers of it are to be found, possibly, in the Ivy League colleges or the Big Three. He was bright, well-mannered and was well-trained enough, as well as intelligent enough, to get into college. When I say he asked no basic questions and

was wakened to no critical judgments, I do not mean that he got nothing at all out of college. He got a good deal, even scholastically. He learned to read the poets with taste and perception and got A's in nearly everything, including philosophy. But by the time he made Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year, he had not really been punctured out of the usual assumptions of his family (Westchester) and his class (upper middle). He knew about other kinds of worlds and he knew, intellectually, the limitations and faults of his own, but it never occurred to him not to conform or to inquire too closely or to be made uneasy by the stupidities or even the mere silliness of the world into which he had been born, the society in which he wished, like other personable and intelligent youths of his social stratum and his period, to be a success.

"When I say he was highly intelligent, he was. And he showed it by becoming editor of the Law Review of the first-rate university law school he attended, as you know, a distinction attained only by the top man in his class. As such gifted young law students do, he at once found a job, with Calwell and Fitzsimmons, one of the leading law firms in the whole country. Within the field of the practice of the law, especially the practice of corporation law, his mind worked—what is the phrase?—like a steel trap. He had such faith, justifiable faith, in his own competence that he took the daring step—it was the first one he had ever taken—of striking out for himself at the age of thirty. By the age of thirty-five (when the relevant part of this story really begins) he had for some years been practising law with distinction and with considerable profit to himself. But all this time it had never occurred to him, for example, to question the meaning of property, which he was dealing with daily, or its uses for his client's happiness—or even for his own.

"Then, one morning just as he had come into his office and was about to merge two corporations, he put his hand to his head and found himself asking himself what he was doing and why. Now, this had never happened before. The question and the pain he had been feeling in his head persisted. He set it down to too many cocktails at the cocktail party he had attended too long the day before, as he suddenly felt he had been too long attending such affairs altogether. But the symptoms persisted and assailed him at the most unexpected times all day long, and not that day only. He would find himself asking himself the

same question while he was carefully going over income taxes with a very wealthy old lady whose life seemed a nuisance to herself and had certainly become one to everyone else, including her patient nurse and her conscientious lawyer. He found it occurring to him in the midst of a large formal dinner he was attending. He paused suddenly one day in court in the midst of making a very cogent argument, paused suddenly, for a full minute, until the judge said sharply, 'Will counsel for the defense please proceed.' His wife noticed his apparent abstractedness repeatedly at dinner when they were home alone or even when guests were present. In the first instance she was annoyed; in the second, embarrassed. Usually she could set this down to preoccupation with an important or difficult case, but for the next few months these symptoms began to appear so often that she was in various ways disquieted. There had only been once in their married life when it had been a question of another woman, and somehow she felt that what was bothering or absorbing her husband this time was something different.

"Once she went so far as to ask him. 'I am afraid you wouldn't understand, dear,' he had said. 'No, I don't mean that,' he added as she flushed a little, for ever since the days when they had met at Junior Prom he knew that she had observed that he regarded her as something less than his mental equal. 'No, I don't mean that. But you'd think I was a little crazy. And, perhaps you'd be right.'

"She began to notice strange books lying about in their living-room: *The Meaning of God in Human Experience, Physics and Philosophy, The Nature of Thought, The Two Sources of Morality and Religion.* She now, for the first time, had no difficulty in getting him to let her read first the novels that came from the Book-of-the-Month Club.

"His colleagues (he had by this time three partners) began to notice his long absences from the office during parts of their busy season. He used to tell them at the office that he was going to the Bar Association Library and that he did not wish to be disturbed. But it was to the university library he went, the philosophical division of it. He became a familiar sight afternoons to the graduate students working there. Occasionally, he would engage some of them in conversation, but they seemed lost in issues that seemed to him not quite the major ones with which he was now concerned. Some of them seemed to him almost as legalistic as his colleagues in the law, and not as sharp or as logical. What had happened to my friend was that he had what

we psychiatrists call a 'compulsion.' Just as some patients we see feel it absolutely necessary to wash their hands fifty or sixty times a day, so Edward began with absolute urgency to feel it necessary to have a clear comprehensive view of the world. And it will not surprise you, either, that he went to look for it among the philosophers, nor that he failed to find it there. The compulsion became so acute that it assailed him at all hours of the day and even at night. He would, lying beside his wife, wake up at three in the morning and wonder not only what he was doing in the world but what *anyone* was doing and what coherence, if any, all the hurried and miscellaneous lives of men and women could be said to make. The thing became so obsessive that in some dim way he himself recognized that he had a neurosis and decided to work it out for himself by himself and alone.

"Luckily, his wife had an income of her own, there were no children, and he had an income, by this time, of his own. So he left his wife to her income and to her interests which, when he explained this to her, were, she admitted, quite clearly different from his. She had never been at all curious as to his law practice either, but at least she had shared his leisure. She had no desire to share his new preoccupation and she told him so. 'A whole and consistent view of the world,' she said, looking at him blankly, 'but dear, what do you need or want that for?' She thought it really rather a good idea when he said he wanted to go off alone to a spot he knew in Southern California, a headland above the Pacific which, when they had once passed it on a motor trip, he had thought might make an ideal spot if he ever wanted to write a book on corporation law. She went as far as Reno with him, where she left him for once and all. Before leaving New York Edward had packed into his trunk three hundred works of philosophy, classic and contemporary.

"On the lovely headland overlooking the bland blue monotony of the Pacific, he had built for himself (it was easy in pre-war days) promptly enough a modernistic quite functional little house, mostly steel and glass, with a wonderful broad uninterrupted view of the western sea. There he proceeded, as I said, to try to find somewhere in these three hundred works of philosophy a clear and consistent view of the world. And, as I said, you will not be surprised to hear that he did not find it. There was, of course, always something left out, or something that did not fit in. And what did not fit in, as doubtless

you've guessed, were the brutal miscellaneous facts of the world. It was during the depression and millions were starving. But coffee crops were being destroyed in Brazil and wheat crops in Kansas. There was meeting after meeting of diplomats in Europe, allegedly intent on making war illegal or impossible. But there were increasing and increasingly credible rumors of war. Like many another philosopher, Edward had a basic way of dealing with recalcitrant facts. He ignored them, and even arranged to keep himself systematically ignorant of them. In his case it was simple. He simply stopped reading the newspapers, except local ones which carried very few facts in any case.

"Then," the psychiatrist continued, "he began to develop what we philosophers call a phantasy. Now I know the word 'fantasy' spelt with an 'f' suggests something altogether lighthearted and free. But a phantasy as psychiatrists use it means something different. It is a systematic delusion by which neurotics, often for a long period, manage to live. It is an *imaginary* pattern of order. Well, Edward half found, half created a phantasy, a dream world in which everything added up to beauty, goodness and truth. You, as a professional philosopher, know where he found his materials. At least you can guess. For Edward had found that though the great systems always left something out, with a little rearrangement they could be made to include even recalcitrant facts, even all those oddities (and worse) in the scheme of things that can be summed up under the name of evil. He borrowed a little (don't we all?) from Plato, from Plotinus, from Spinoza and from some of the German idealists, particularly Hegel, whom, all the better for his purposes, he did not understand too well. Within three or four months he had arrived at an equilibrium in his own mind in which, he believed, he did now clearly see that everything added up to goodness, beauty and truth. It was phantasy, of course. The world in which he had stopped reading newspapers still went on disturbed and chaotic as ever. He had, as we sometimes put it, *escaped* into phantasy. But if one has an independent income and a bland blue unobstructed view of the Pacific, one can live by a phantasy indefinitely. Edward, save for the accidental and well-intentioned kindness of one of his friends, might have done so to this day.

"Edward had continued to correspond with his friends in the East. It saved him from the unmitigated emptiness of reverie. He saw almost no one among his local neighbors, most of them retired bankers from

the East and retired farmers from Iowa. His long vigils with philosophical works might have led him to the almost mad loneliness that assails serious seekers after their own salvation or serious seekers after the secret of the universe in order to find salvation. But letters from and to old friends in the East, chiefly college friends, gave him that near-substitute for society that the postman brings to the solitary. He found, for one thing, that with several old friends he became really more intimate at a distance than he was when they had met each other often, face to face. For one thing, friends in New York seldom see each other alone; they see each other surrounded by their respective families and in the midst of their respective professional preoccupations and at large crush cocktail parties. But now, when friends wrote to him out here alone in the West of their deeper hopes and fears, and he read their letters in his steel and glass cottage facing the Pacific, he, too, felt the need to draw near to someone by mail. There were a few friends, including a few classmates teaching philosophy or English at Eastern universities, who seemed glad of a chance to talk over philosophical issues with one who, as one of them put it, had really given his life over entire and undivided to the quest for the Holy Grail.

"One of these friends, fearing with a certain justice that the fresher intellectual currents took rather a long while to get to California, sent him a new volume on the reigning new intellectual enthusiasm, semantics. From that tome, a sort of summary index written by a young economist who had just discovered the subject, Edward learned something that seemed to reduce to absurdity the phantasy of Goodness, Beauty and Truth that he had built himself out of cards drawn from the decks of various philosophers, different decks differently constituted. From this then-current gospel, which was to be found on all of the more literate suburban living-room tables, Edward learned a few things that wrecked his little system and his careful happiness. He learned that everyone, but particularly the philosopher, was misusing words. Philosophers never could say exactly what they meant, and if they succeeded in doing so, which was very rare, there was never any great probability that anyone else would exactly understand. Moreover, people took words not as signs of actualities in the world, of indubitable objects, events and situations; they took them rather for their values as weapons or as flatteries. Men misled themselves and others systematically by the words they used, words which often meant nothing whatever

outside the neat little verbal games or systems in which they appeared. Philosophers peculiarly well exemplified these traits. Their whole systems were nothing but tautologies, the longwinded development of a few unverified assumptions. The history of thought was simply the long tale of vicious abstractions, and philosophers were nothing but adroit talkers about a few terms, vast, vague and undefined, relevant to nothing at all. These were their whole capital to begin with, and, after all their elaborate dialectical developments, to end with. 'All flubjubs are dingbats,' said I. A. Richards, 'this is a flubjub, therefore it is a dingbat.' This, he pointed out, was cold and empty reasoning, and a perfect paradigm of what most systematic philosophers did most of the time. The only words that really do mean anything, the semanticists pointed out, are those that point to things, persons and events; words that can be cashed in, in actual experience. Now how could one point to beauty, goodness and truth? Edward reflected on the so-called great systems of thought he had been wading through. How beautifully articulated they were in their development of premises themselves fantastic. Dialectic it was called, the systematic self-deception of the mind where there were no facts at hand to begin with. Edward saw what had been seducing him in these systems, and in his own. It was the clarity and cogency with which any thinker or he himself could build up a watertight world. He saw he had been deceived. One day he took his own notes on his own little world system and threw them into the sea. There was just a little of other people's philosophies that he kept. David Hume's *Treatise upon Human Nature,* for one thing, and his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. For Hume was obviously a sensible man who never talked nonsense, kept his eye on actual human nature and its unmistakable experience. He used an axe skillfully to destroy human pretense and illusions, and had himself no axe to grind. He reluctantly did *not* keep Plato. For all the beauty of his art, Plato did use terms very loosely indeed, terms like Beauty and Goodness and Truth, and he bandied terms about and deviled their internal relations to each other without much concern for what the original terms referred to. He threw out also all of mediaeval philosophy as a monk's abstracted and abstractionist reverie. He kept some of John Stuart Mill and a little of August Comte, who had had at least a glimpse of what a truly positivistic method might mean. He allowed himself a few indulgences about which he felt, it must be admitted, a sense of

guilt. One was Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.* The whole thing was a gigantic piece of verbalism, there were ingenious solutions of gratuitously created problems, and connections established between the parts of an elaborate intellectual fairy tale. But the architectonic was fascinating, like the structure of a musical composition. And this was still more true of Bradley's *Appearance and Reality,* which developed almost like a Bach fugue.

"But the thought of a Bach fugue itself made him uneasy. Like Othello, he found his occupation gone, but now that it was, he could not turn gladly, as a relief from the strain of his philosophic studies, to the freshening resource he had once had in music. His occupation was gone, and his recreation, too. Music had been for him a great and soothing easement from the ardors and endurances of intellectual labor. Music was a release from the sharp brittleness of words, from the confinements and constraints of practical affairs. The sounds in music were not tied to the hard specificity of words. The structure of music was not the strict necessity of verbal logic, but the free movement, or so it seemed, of spontaneous song. In music, the logical and the lyrical became one. Moreover, music, for a lonely soul (lonelier than he ever cared or dared to admit to himself), provided objects on which emotion could be expended and by which it could be absorbed. He saw no one, loved no one, but love had not died in him. He had given up conventional ambition, but a sense of frustration and defeat was vaguely present to him, a sense of helplessness in not finding any stable coherence by which he might live and to which he might commit himself wholeheartedly. Daily grief and hope, sorrow and gaiety played their changes of mood upon his solitude, despite his dedication, high, intellectual and austere. And in listening on the excellent phonograph he had purchased to works of the great composers, he could find the fulfillment of all these vague emotions, and objects by which their floating residue could be absorbed. Many people passing his small house would hear at night the strains of Schubert or Beethoven and remark on his apparently great love for music. Perhaps they were right. But the sounds floating on the clear still night air were testimony, rather, to his having found a vent for love and less mentionable emotions that had no other outlet for themselves. Even his passion for logic, never quite fulfilled by the systems of philosophy, found a wordless fulfillment in the structure of a fugue, the development of a classical sonata.

"But he found now he could not permit himself to lose himself in the half-emotional, half-intellectual orgy of music. How could an adult mind allow itself to listen to sounds that had, by definition, no meaning, that said nothing precise, clear or particular, that were simply a debauch of amorphously touching, illicitly moving notes? No, music was out, and he stored all his records and his machine as well in the cellar which he locked and, lest he be tempted to unlock it, he threw the key into the sea.

"He had also fallen into the way of reading poetry late at night before he went to sleep. Poetry had played the same part in his life that it had played once in the life of John Stuart Mill. When abstractions had suddenly made life seem thin and empty and bleak and gray (gray, Goethe had said, was all theory), the poets came to restore to life its quality and its color. Life became vivid and satisfying again when poets lighted upon the bright right words, and translated it into radiance once more. So he had thought, and in some of the darkest days of his confusion and his expression he had turned to the poets, to 'that inward eye which is the bliss of solitude.' And his heart had danced with Wordsworth's daffodils.

"That was all over and impossible now. It was bad enough that philosophers used words loosely because they couldn't help themselves. At least some philosophers, according to their lights and after their fashion, struggled to be quite clear and specific about what they meant, even if what they meant meant nothing, ultimately, at all. But poets seemed deliberately to exploit the ambiguities, the double or triple resonances of meaning in words. Poetry was a little better than the murmurous music which it closely resembled. But it was also more deceptive because it pretended to be saying something. It used words that responsible and practical men used in the affairs of life, but used them for the delights of tintinnabulation, for the vague dreaming associations of words, for the adolescent luxury of soft unprecise reverie, of indolent recollection and wistfulness. Poetry was not emotion recollected in tranquillity, but emotion deliberately befuddling and nourishing itself with metaphor and melody. No, poetry, too, had to be erased from his life.

"And there was no possible return to any sound philosophy. For now there was clearly no sound philosophy to return to. Philosophy in itself was quite reasonable by its own definitions. Philosophers either

used terms loosely or defined them wilfully, and once they had defined terms in their own wilful way, they went through the motions of developing from their absurd premises their necessary but trivial conclusions. You came out of the most subtle development of a logical system with nothing more than you brought into it; and in the case of most philosophies, practically all, you came in at the beginning with nothing at all. Nature, God, the One, the Absolute, Matter, Spirit—so much abracadabra. No, it was no use turning to the classic tradition, the sanctified verbologies of the past, for wisdom.

"One could really turn nowhere. For Edward found himself going one step beyond the semanticists; he could trust no external reports and certainly nobody else's language. And he was not, in the last, more certain that he could trust his own. Where to turn now? Well," the psychiatrist paused for the first time in quite a few minutes. "I gathered from him later," he said, "when he had become my patient that he decided to turn inward, to retire to the indubitable certainties of his soul."

"Oh," I said, "like Descartes, you mean; he was going to realize clear and distinct ideas."

"Clear and distinct ideas were the last thing Edward wanted now," said the psychiatrist. "He had been deceived by ideas. One can be clear and distinct about nothing at all. That's what the semanticists had taught him. No, he took a different line. He wanted to retire from the superficial level of logic to the very center of his own soul. If one cannot trust external reports or formal language, he thought, it is possible perhaps, by ferreting to the very living center of one's own being, to become one with the One, to be alone with the Alone. I've had patients like that," said the psychiatrist, "they come in and say they've heard a bell sound; they've plumbed to the very center of all being; they're in tune with the infinite. Or, when they have delusions of grandeur, they think that they *are* the infinite. And you've read similar asseverations, I know, in the mystics, in Plotinus the Greek, in the Persian, Al-Ghazali, in St. John of the Cross. The language is often very attractive, and in the hands of the Hindus or of the Platonist, very convincing and beautiful. But it does not make the experience or the wish that prompted it any the less abnormal!

"It's a curious thing about the mystics . . . they talk a great deal about the concentrated brevity of their rapture. They tell us time and

again that their experience was a point of flame, a rapt instant of ecstasy. Some of them say that the intensity sustained a moment or two longer would be unbearable. They are quite right. But they don't know the reason. A moment of rapture sustained a little bit too long would be just as monotonous as a pain or a headache that continued too long. It would be a very ecstasy of boredom. Then the mystics like to tell you that what they saw is indescribable. There's nothing they can say about it, and no wonder. Have you ever tried to describe pure monotony? The mystics exclude everything specific. They tell me what they were at one with was the One, not just *this* or *that;* not this beauty, nor that beauty, but *all* Beauty; not this or that at all, but the Absolute Thatness. Now it is very difficult to distinguish the ineffable from the inane.

"That's what Edward found out. He thought that if only he ever came to the pure interior being of himself, he would be one with all things, with the rich plenitude of all being. He had followed the mystic path as he remembered it. He had stopped thinking, he had stopped outside distractions. He was utterly alone, without desire, without conflict or torment. And one night he did have a vision. He felt all things melting into oneness. He felt himself becoming one with all unity, and he felt very intensely how blank and empty and foolish the All was. He had been walking alone by the sea at sunset. There was not a breath stirring. The sky was a perfect California blue. He was alone. He felt millions, not thousands, of miles from his friends.

"He felt cut off by his intellectual doubts and scruples from all reality. As you know, that's a familiar psychiatric symptom—that is, a sense of unreality of everything, everything being far, far removed. Then, suddenly, Edward felt the blue grow intenser, the silence itself more acute. He felt all things merge into oneness, and he himself merging into that unity. There was nothing but the hum of awareness and that seemed to be the very hum of silence, of Being itself. All was light, and he one now with that light. All was radiance, and he at the very core of the radiance, or that flame of love all at the center of himself.

"It lasted but an instant, or rather the happiness did. For now he seemed to be experiencing a curious variation of the mystical rapture. The oneness continued, the sense of merging with the undifferentiated continuum of being. But it seemed a mere dull and dead blankness now. He seemed at the center of the vast All-ness, and it was all irretrievably empty and colorless and valueless and dead. It was as if he

were a dead soul inhabiting a dead planet. All conflict, it is true, had vanished, but all color, all intensity, all variety, all richness, too. There was nothing in him and only nothingness everywhere. And he came back to the world, to his house all steel and glass, dispirited, disquieted, disillusioned. He had retired, as the mystics had suggested, to the very core of his own being, and, worst revelation of all, he had found, save for a brief and perhaps illusory flash of time, nothing but nothingness there. The one rock bottom of believable reality, the pulse of his own being, opened to him nothing but endless and infinite stretches of gray monotony. Not the radiance of a sunlight world, but the gray perpetual half-dawn of eternal ennui was what he had found by retreating into his soul. He had apparently arrived not at the rich plenitude of all being, but at the horrid and foolish inane."

The psychiatrist paused. "Have you ever felt your life to be filled, if I may put it so, with emptiness? Sans anything, as the poem runs?"

"Oh, once in a while," I said, "but only when I was dead tired on a good day in August."

"Well, Edward felt it all the time. He had gone inward as far as he could, and he was nowhere. The world had failed him, other men's systems had failed him, and in his own inner consciousness he had found nothing but the blankest, most meaningless darkness. He sat staring at the blank monotony of the Pacific and it seemed more blank than ever. No music, no poetry, no philosophy, no world, nothing in the world, nothing in the self. He felt, as you may imagine, pretty depressed.

"For weeks he hardly ate, for he could not bring himself to sit down in his own solitude. And now he did not read, and he began to go a little mad, whenever he began to think. It gradually dawned on him that he was quite neurotic and like a good many neurotics he thought he'd cure himself. It can't be done; a neurotic needs professional aid. He saw nowhere to go now. The outer world offered but disillusion, the inner world, worse still, emptiness absolute. It was bad enough to find confusion and delusion, futility and fantasm in the world outside himself. But worst of all, he shuddered as he thought of it, in the inner core of his own being, he found an utter vacuum, an ultimate vacuity. Where to now? He could imagine that these morbid little items one reads in the papers of suicides who left no notes had had this discovery of zero and absolute emptiness as their cause. It would require a whole

volume, not a note, to explain how one had arrived at such terrifying nullity. No Western philosopher, except, perhaps, Schopenhauer, had dared to write such a volume, and even Schopenhauer had pretended Nirvana was a goal. *Nothingness* was just that, and perhaps suicide was indicated. But suicide might not, as Hamlet saw, be the end, and an eternal nothingness—why plunge one's self deliberately into that ambiguity? Death in any case was an evasion, not a solution, of life.

"He decided that he could see clearly what was wrong with him. He had been upsetting himself with these vast unsettling theories. None of them had done anything but lead him down blind alleys or open vistas which dissolved into ironic disappointments, like the mystical rapture. He had seen it happen to his friends, this search for the ultimate in happiness, in wisdom and truth. He had seen some of them fool themselves or drug themselves with systems. Goethe was right: 'Grau ist alle Theorie, gray is all theory.' He must experience the bright colors of life again, the actualities of practical compulsion, the dear brightnesses and vividnesses of human beings, with actual faces and hands.

"For two years or more he had been living quite alone. He had made it a point not even to know his neighbors, and he had been set down as a curious sort of hermit—possibly a member of one of those Eastern cults that flourish in Southern California. He was rumored to have become an adept at Yoga. But he bothered no one and no one bothered about him, though his handsome, slightly troubled, slightly spiritualized face had been remarked upon admiringly by some of the dowager ladies whom he greeted courteously when he met them on their morning walks.

" 'Perhaps,' he thought, 'I should go back to the practice of the law.' But the thought of the abstractions he should get into there frightened him away even worse than he had been from philosophy by semantics. No, he would at first begin to return to the actual world by cultivating his neighbors. Luckily, though he had kept his distance, he had never been rude to them. And so quiet was this little village of retired rentiers that any chance of company was treasured, and there had been many of his neighbors waiting for a chance to show him some hospitality. Mrs. Elder, who had long thought he looked like a poet (because he was tall and thin and had fair hair and seemed vaguely troubled), after he

had with pointed amiability stopped to talk with her one morning when they were both on a walk, said, 'Mr. Brodvue, won't you come to dinner next Tuesday?'

" 'Madam,' he said, 'just what do you mean by Tuesday?' She looked at him in alarm and fled.

"But he did get himself invited to dinner and to several parties, and he found that it was not quite as easy to resume the normal world as he had supposed. People would talk of politics and economics, of war and peace, of art and science, or capital and labor, and the comments of the semantic critics would stick obdurately in his mind. The conversation seemed compounded of foolish tautologies and meaningless ejaculations. He had all he could do not to interrupt at every word the absurd confusions with which everyone blandly studded his conversation. He could not even bother to judge among the types of nonsense. It all seemed to him equally foolish and he felt very remote from it all. He showed it in what was generally interpreted to be a snobbish smile. One evening, when somebody had said, 'Is not Communism nonsense?' he had said, 'Is not everything, except the absolute—if there *is* an absolute?' He himself so distrusted the relative that he missed the bus from Los Angeles three times running.

"He decided to give up the West and self-cure. He turned East, hoping vaguely that the familiar associations there would restore him to normalcy. But New York seemed no less absurd and unreal than Southern California, and the pursuits of his friends rather sillier even than they had come to seem before he left. And these children took their illusions with such seriousness. 'Perhaps,' he thought, 'the surest sign that I am ill is that I can't take anything as real or serious.' He tried to persuade himself that the reason the preoccupations of his friends seemed so remote and trivial was because they actually were so artificial, so timid, so secondhand and so dishonest or so pretentious. They went through the motions of formal dinner parties, talking to people they did not care about concerning things that did not interest them. They read books they did not wish to read, attended concerts that bored them. And for all the fret and fever of their lives, they had not the courage to follow their actual impulses; despite their gay paganism, they had not even the conviction or the virility of the senses. Though they affected to satirize gentility, they continued to follow all the regulation, now slightly modified, tabus. They used first names more promiscuously

than their parents would have done at formal dinners; they wore black ties instead of white ones, or sometimes dared to come in business clothes. And they were all involved in the routines of domesticity.

"Edward plunged, without much success, into a life he had always wished to try. He went to Havana where Cuban acquaintances once known to him from the days of his legal practice helped him find his way to sophisticated dissipation. For a little while he thought he had arrived at a lasting absorption in guiltless, idea-less sensuality. Wine and sex and sunlight seemed to be one answer, or one escape from seeking one. But he suddenly found it absurd to be toasting in the sun or guzzling at night—he found liquor no longer really agreed with or delighted him—and, though he hated to admit it to himself, for he was only middle-aged, sex turned out to be both tiresome and tiring, and in the arms of some dark carefree girl he felt the physical distances that separated them, and discovered sex was no solvent of his miseries. In the very height of a night's rapture, the awful sense of the eternal blankness returned. One of the girls to whom he had become much attached finally found him too mysteriously preoccupied. And he was too melancholy even to mind her leaving him for good.

"He finally decided to seek psychiatric aid, and came to me. He was recommended by another lawyer, whom I had managed to cure of delusions of grandeur."

The psychiatrist paused. "Remarkable case," he said, "and remarkable cure."

"Oh," I said, "he *was* cured then?" wondering what it was to be cured of philosophy.

"Oh, yes," he said, "he was cured all right, but it was a long, slow business. You know, we psychiatrists are said to be overpaid, but we have to put up with a painful lot of boredom. You know, I suppose, of our free-association technique. What we do, for all of us now in one form or another are practising psychoanalysis, is to let the patient talk sufficiently and sufficiently spontaneously for a while until his blocks and forgotten fears come into the light. We hope that if he talks long enough, the pattern of his disorders will become clear, and, becoming clear, will be got rid of. It's almost like having the patient talk the devil out of himself. And when he has his complexes exteriorized, he will see clearly what has been bothering him. Seeing it clearly, it will bother him no longer, so that he will live hereafter at one with himself and

with the order of things in which and with which he must, as an adult, live."

"It takes a long time, doesn't it?" I asked.

"A very long time, often a very boring one for the doctor. Take Edward Brodvue. For the first year he said nothing at all. He came to my office every day for an hour, at fifty dollars an hour, and kept perfectly mum. He would pucker his lips as if he were about to say something, and nothing would come. It was against my principles to try to help him. The associations must be free. You can imagine, meanwhile, that it ceased to be a pleasure, even a scientific one, to sit there hour after hour listening to a patient say nothing at all. And the high fee I was getting made it no more agreeable, really.

"It was not until a year later that I learned what the trouble was. I sometimes scolded myself for not having guessed it sooner. Edward had been quite sure that he could not say exactly what he intended, or, if he did, that I would understand it, or not misunderstand it. The second year was much better."

"The *second year,*" I said, "how long did it go on?"

"It's going, right now, into the third year, though Edward only comes every other day now. In the second year, worse boredom for me, the first eight or nine months were much worse. What came out in the free associations was a quite amateur history of Eastern and Western thought, all mixed up together, with some childhood memories and some very odd sexual imagery indeed. But toward the end of the year, I began to see light, and so did he. He had been brought up by a very devoted mother, an over-devoted one, and a kind of highly disorganized one. She could never talk coherently about the same subject for more than a couple of minutes at a time. His father was a practical man who was always contemptuous of people with intellectual interests. He had been brought up in New York where nobody belongs clearly to any one fixed pattern of culture or ideas. Once, when he was a little boy, an older boy who had been playing with him on his birthday had thrown down a castle which he had built out of blocks and had said, 'This playing with blocks just doesn't make any sense.' It became clear to Edward without my pointing it out (which is best) that this desire for a clear and consistent view of the world was a childish hangover from the ruined castle of blocks over which he had wept bitterly. As for the passion to speak with exactitude, and say nothing that was not

verifiable, that was clearly a kind of perfectionism which, now that he saw its origin, he must and would get over. It was a rebellion against his father's practicality and his mother's vagueness.

"As a matter of fact, he's getting on fine now. He's not practising law, of course, but he goes out into ordinary middle-class society, uses words as loosely as anyone and doesn't mind it in the least, listens to the confused and inchoate nonsense that passes for intelligent conversation among the literate bourgeoisie and it doesn't bother him a bit. He's a well-adjusted, normal, middle-class American citizen again."

"No relapses?" I asked.

"No," said the doctor, "not a single burst of poetic meditation, of asking basic questions, of raising fundamental criticism. He's perfectly normal, or pretty near."

"Doctor," I said, "do you suppose you could cure me?"

"I've been thinking about you," he said, "you do think about these things a good deal. But after all, you get paid for it, it's part of your job, and you take ideas with a sense of proportion. Still, I have been wondering about you."

Analysis

"Little" magazines such as *The Kenyon Review* and *The Partisan Review* often print complex stories that probe into and expose our commonly accepted mores with enlightening candor. Where the "stream-of-consciousness" exponents such as James Joyce, Virgina Woolf, Gertrude Stein and a host of followers analyze a character subjectively more or less by means of the psychiatric method, Irwin Edman has used the objective method toward the same end. "The Psychiatrist's Story" is a notable contrast to the flood of popular and inaccurate fiction on similar themes.

1. In this story a series of generally accepted romantic notions of the possibility of escape from one's environment are refuted one after the other. List them.

2. The double structure of the first person introduction by one character and the first-person-observer point of view by a second character is an old-fashioned device seldom now used. Is it effective here? Or could the story have gained in force by omitting the introductory material? Explain.

3. What is the theme? What maintains interest and suspense? Would you say that Edward Brodvue's symptoms are normal or abnormal, common

or infrequent at his age? Is the story based upon a true individual case, or is the hero a composite of several cases? Whose story is it?

4. Interpret the double irony of the ending.

5. In its structure and sweep of events, this is much more of an abbreviated novel or summary of a novel than it is a short story. Explain. Point out several of the emotional and climactic situations that could have been developed into entire short stories.

Irwin Edman

Irwin Edman (1896–) was born in New York City, educated in the public schools there and at Columbia University, where he received his A.B. degree in 1917 and his Ph. D. degree in 1920, and where he has taught since that time as an instructor, assistant and associate professor, and as a full professor since 1935. He has lectured widely on philosophical subjects at such universities as Harvard, California, and the National University of Brazil, and has contributed articles and stories to such magazines as *The Nation, The New Republic, Harper's, The New Yorker, The Saturday Review of Literature.* Among a dozen or more books his better known are *The Philosopher's Holiday* (1938) and *I Believe* (1939).



Part III

THE CRAFT AND COMMERCIAL STORY

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

O. Henry

ONE dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for

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him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please, God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to

hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jewelled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

Analysis

O. Henry, ingenious craftsman, master of the sentimental story with the surprise ending, has exerted profound and extended influence, both directly

and indirectly, upon modern writers of commercial magazine stories. Although the surprise ending—except in the short-short and pulp-paper stories—has gone almost entirely out of vogue, O. Henry's gentle irony and tricks of emotional appeal are as popular currently in magazine stories, motion pictures, and radio entertainment as they were in 1904, when "The Gift of the Magi" was published.

1. A partial reason for the selection of "The Gift of the Magi" for this anthology in place of better and less well-known O. Henry stories was that it contains in brief space such a variety of appeals to popular and traditional sentiment. Name at least half a dozen.

2. The surprise ending, to be effective, must be carefully foreshadowed. Point out the various passages in which O. Henry anticipates the denouement.

3. In Part I of this volume "The Gift of the Magi" is utilized to demonstrate the manner in which suspense can be sustained. Read page 29; then reread the last three hundred words of this story.

4. Are Jim and Della real people? Have you ever known anyone like them? If you were composing complete character sketches for them, what information would you add? Would such information detract from the story? Why? What kind of story would you be writing if you added such additional information?

O. Henry (William Sydney Porter)

O. Henry (1862–1910) lived in the South, at Greensboro, North Carolina, during the Reconstruction Period, with little opportunity for education. But as a boy he read widely among the romantic tales of his time. His various travels yielded the background for his tales: a period in Texas on a ranch while caring for his wife, hopelessly ill of tuberculosis; work in a bank which led to his flight to Honduras, from where he returned because of his wife's precarious health to face trial and imprisonment; prison for three years from which he derived a number of his fictional characters; then New York as a writer, and Asheville, North Carolina. His stories, originally written for the current periodicals, have been gathered together in numerous volumes, among the better known being *Cabbages and Kings* (1904), *The Four Million* (1906), and *Roads of Destiny* (1909).



THE OUTCASTS OF POKER FLAT

Bret Harte

As Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler, stepped into the main street of Poker Flat on the morning of the 23d of November, 1850, he was conscious of a change in its moral atmosphere since the preceding night. Two or three men, conversing earnestly together, ceased as he approached, and exchanged significant glances. There was a Sabbath lull in the air, which, in a settlement unused to Sabbath influences, looked ominous.

Mr. Oakhurst's calm, handsome face betrayed small concern in these indications. Whether he was conscious of any predisposing cause, was another question. "I reckon they're after somebody," he reflected; "likely it's me." He returned to his pocket the handkerchief with which he had been whipping away the red dust of Poker Flat from his neat boots, and quietly discharged his mind of any further conjecture.

In point of fact, Poker Flat was "after somebody." It had lately suffered the loss of several thousand dollars, two valuable horses, and a prominent citizen. It was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it. A secret committee had determined to rid the town of all improper persons. This was done permanently in regard of two men who were then hanging from the boughs of a sycamore in the gulch, and temporarily in the banishment of certain other objectionable characters. I regret to say that some of these were ladies. It is but due to the sex, however, to state that their impropriety was professional, and it was only in such easily established standards of evil that Poker Flat ventured to sit in judgment.

Mr. Oakhurst was right in supposing that he was included in this category. A few of the committee had urged hanging him as a possible example, and a sure method of reimbursing themselves from his pockets of the sums he had won from them. "It's agin justice," said Jim Wheeler, "to let this yer young man from Roaring Camp—an entire stranger—carry away our money." But a crude sentiment of equity residing in the breasts of those who had been fortunate enough to win from Mr. Oakhurst overruled this narrower local prejudice.

From *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Stories.* Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

Mr. Oakhurst received his sentence with philosophic calmness, none the less coolly that he was aware of the hesitation of his judges. He was too much of a gambler not to accept fate. With him life was at best an uncertain game, and he recognized the usual percentage in favor of the dealer.

A body of armed men accompanied the deported wickedness of Poker Flat to the outskirts of the settlement. Besides Mr. Oakhurst, who was known to be a coolly desperate man, and for whose intimidation the armed escort was intended, the expatriated party consisted of a young woman familiarly known as "the Duchess"; another, who had won the title of "Mother Shipton"; and "Uncle Billy," a suspected sluice-robber and confirmed drunkard. The cavalcade provoked no comments from the spectators, nor was any word uttered by the escort. Only when the gulch which marked the uttermost limit of Poker Flat was reached, the leader spoke briefly and to the point. The exiles were forbidden to return at the peril of their lives.

As the escort disappeared, their pent-up feelings found vent in a few hysterical tears from the Duchess, some bad language from Mother Shipton, and a Parthian volley of expletives from Uncle Billy. The philosophic Oakhurst alone remained silent. He listened calmly to Mother Shipton's desire to cut somebody's heart out, to the repeated statements of the Duchess that she would die in the road, and to the alarming oaths that seemed to be bumped out of Uncle Billy as he rode forward. With the easy good humor characteristic of his class, he insisted upon exchanging his own riding-horse, "Five-Spot," for the sorry mule which the Duchess rode. But even this act did not draw the party into any closer sympathy. The young woman readjusted her somewhat draggled plumes with a feeble, faded coquetry; Mother Shipton eyed the possessor of "Five-Spot" with malevolence, and Uncle Billy included the whole party in one sweeping anathema.

The road to Sandy Bar—a camp that, not having as yet experienced the regenerating influences of Poker Flat, consequently seemed to offer some invitation to the emigrants—lay over a steep mountain range. It was distant a day's severe travel. In that advanced season, the party soon passed out of the moist, temperate regions of the foothills into the dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras. The trail was narrow and difficult. At noon the Duchess, rolling out of her saddle upon the ground, declared her intention of going no farther, and the party halted.

The spot was singularly wild and impressive. A wooded amphitheatre, surrounded on three sides by precipitous cliffs of naked granite, sloped gently toward the crest of another precipice that overlooked the valley. It was, undoubtedly, the most suitable spot for a camp, had camping been advisable. But Mr. Oakhurst knew that scarcely half the journey to Sandy Bar was accomplished, and the party were not equipped or provisioned for delay. This fact he pointed out to his companions curtly, with a philosophic commentary on the folly of "throwing up their hand before the game was played out." But they were furnished with liquor, which in this emergency stood them in place of food, fuel, rest, and prescience. In spite of his remonstrances, it was not long before they were more or less under its influence. Uncle Billy passed rapidly from a bellicose state into one of stupor, the Duchess became maudlin, and Mother Shipton snored. Mr. Oakhurst alone remained erect, leaning against a rock, calmly surveying them.

Mr. Oakhurst did not drink. It interfered with a profession which required coolness, impassiveness, and presence of mind, and, in his own language, he "couldn't afford it." As he gazed at his recumbent fellow exiles, the loneliness begotten of his pariah trade, his habits of life, his very vices, for the first time seriously oppressed him. He bestirred himself in dusting his black clothes, washing his hands and face, and other acts characteristic of his studiously neat habits, and for a moment forgot his annoyance. The thought of deserting his weaker and more pitiable companions never perhaps occurred to him. Yet he could not help feeling the want of that excitement which, singularly enough, was most conducive to that calm equanimity for which he was notorious. He looked at the gloomy walls that rose a thousand feet sheer above the circling pines around him, at the sky ominously clouded, at the valley below, already deepening into shadow; and, doing so, suddenly he heard his own name called.

A horseman slowly ascended the trail. In the fresh, open face of the newcomer Mr. Oakhurst recognized Tom Simson, otherwise known as "The Innocent," of Sandy Bar. He had met him some months before over a "little game," and had, with perfect equanimity, won the entire fortune—amounting to some forty dollars—of that guileless youth. After the game was finished, Mr. Oakhurst drew the youthful speculator behind the door and thus addressed him: "Tommy, you're a good

little man, but you can't gamble worth a cent. Don't try it over again." He then handed him his money back, pushed him gently from the room, and so made a devoted slave of Tom Simson.

There was a remembrance of this in his boyish and enthusiastic greeting of Mr. Oakhurst. He had started, he said, to go to Poker Flat to seek his fortune. "Alone?" No, not exactly alone; in fact (a giggle), he had run away with Piney Woods. Didn't Mr. Oakhurst remember Piney? She that used to wait on the table at the Temperance House? They had been engaged a long time, but old Jake Woods had objected, and so they had run away, and were going to Poker Flat to be married, and here they were. And they were tired out, and how lucky it was they had found a place to camp, and company. All this the Innocent delivered rapidly, while Piney, a stout, comely damsel of fifteen, emerged from behind the pine-tree, where she had been blushing unseen, and rode to the side of her lover.

Mr. Oakhurst seldom troubled himself with sentiment, still less with propriety; but he had a vague idea that the situation was not fortunate. He retained, however, his presence of mind sufficiently to kick Uncle Billy, who was about to say something, and Uncle Billy was sober enough to recognize in Mr. Oakhurst's kick a superior power that would not bear trifling. He then endeavored to dissuade Tom Simson from delaying further, but in vain. He even pointed out the fact that there was no provision, nor means of making a camp. But, unluckily, the Innocent met this objection by assuring the party that he was provided with an extra mule loaded with provisions, and by the discovery of a rude attempt at a log house near the trail. "Piney can stay with Mrs. Oakhurst," said the Innocent, pointing to the Duchess, "and I can shift for myself."

Nothing but Mr. Oakhurst's admonishing foot saved Uncle Billy from bursting into a roar of laughter. As it was, he felt compelled to retire up the cañon until he could recover his gravity. There he confided the joke to the tall pine-trees, with many slaps of his leg, contortions of his face, and the usual profanity. But when he returned to the party, he found them seated by a fire—for the air had grown strangely chill and the sky overcast—in apparently amicable conversation. Piney was actually talking in an impulsive girlish fashion to the Duchess, who was listening with an interest and animation she had not shown

for many days. The Innocent was holding forth, apparently with equal effect, to Mr. Oakhurst and Mother Shipton, who was actually relaxing into amiability. "Is this yer a d—d picnic?" said Uncle Billy, with inward scorn, as he surveyed the sylvan group, the glancing firelight, and the tethered animals in the foreground. Suddenly an idea mingled with the alcoholic fumes that disturbed his brain. It was apparently of a jocular nature, for he felt impelled to slap his leg again and cram his fist into his mouth.

As the shadows crept slowly up the mountain, a slight breeze rocked the tops of the pine-trees and moaned through their long and gloomy aisles. The ruined cabin, patched and covered with pine boughs, was set apart for the ladies. As the lovers parted, they unaffectedly exchanged a kiss, so honest and sincere that it might have been heard above the swaying pines. The frail Duchess and the malevolent Mother Shipton were probably too stunned to remark upon this last evidence of simplicity, and so turned without a word to the hut. The fire was replenished, the men lay down before the door, and in a few minutes were asleep.

Mr. Oakhurst was a light sleeper. Toward morning he awoke benumbed and cold. As he stirred the dying fire, the wind, which was now blowing strongly, brought to his cheek that which caused the blood to leave it,—snow!

He started to his feet with the intention of awakening the sleepers, for there was no time to lose. But turning to where Uncle Billy had been lying, he found him gone. A suspicion leaped to his brain, and a curse to his lips. He ran to the spot where the mules had been tethered —they were no longer there. The tracks were already rapidly disappearing in the snow.

The momentary excitement brought Mr. Oakhurst back to the fire with his usual calm. He did not waken the sleepers. The Innocent slumbered peacefully, with a smile on his good-humored, freckled face; the virgin Piney slept beside her frailer sisters as sweetly as though attended by celestial guardians; and Mr. Oakhurst, drawing his blanket over his shoulders, stroked his mustaches and waited for the dawn. It came slowly in a whirling mist of snowflakes that dazzled and confused the eye. What could be seen of the landscape appeared magically changed. He looked over the valley, and summed up the present and future in two words, "Snowed in!"

A careful inventory of the provisions, which, fortunately for the party, had been stored within the hut, and so escaped the felonious fingers of Uncle Billy, disclosed the fact that with care and prudence they might last ten days longer. "That is," said Mr. Oakhurst *sotto voce* to the Innocent, "if you're willing to board us. If you ain't—and perhaps you'd better not—you can wait till Uncle Billy gets back with provisions." For some occult reason, Mr. Oakhurst could not bring himself to disclose Uncle Billy's rascality, and so offered the hypothesis that he had wandered from the camp and had accidentally stampeded the animals. He dropped a warning to the Duchess and Mother Shipton, who of course knew the facts of their associate's defection. "They'll find out the truth about us *all* when they find out anything," he added significantly, "and there's no good frightening them now."

Tom Simson not only put all his worldly store at the disposal of Mr. Oakhurst, but seemed to enjoy the prospect of their enforced seclusion. "We'll have a good camp for a week, and then the snow'll melt, and we'll all go back together." The cheerful gayety of the young man and Mr. Oakhurst's calm infected the others. The Innocent, with the aid of pine boughs, extemporized a thatch for the roofless cabin, and the Duchess directed Piney in the rearrangement of the interior with a taste and tact that opened the blue eyes of that provincial maiden to their fullest extent. "I reckon now you're used to fine things at Poker Flat," said Piney. The Duchess turned away sharply to conceal something that reddened her cheeks through their professional tint, and Mother Shipton requested Piney not to "chatter." But when Mr. Oakhurst returned from a weary search for the trail, he heard the sound of happy laughter echoed from the rocks. He stopped in some alarm, and his thoughts first naturally reverted to the whiskey, which he had prudently cached. "And yet it don't somehow sound like whiskey," said the gambler. It was not until he caught sight of the blazing fire through the still blinding storm, and the group around it, that he settled to the conviction that it was "square fun."

Whether Mr. Oakhurst had cached his cards with the whiskey as something debarred the free access of the community, I cannot say. It was certain that, in Mother Shipton's words, he "didn't say 'cards' once" during that evening. Haply the time was beguiled by an accordion, produced somewhat ostentatiously by Tom Simson from his pack. Notwithstanding some difficulties attending the manipulation of this instru-

ment, Piney Woods managed to pluck several reluctant melodies from its keys, to an accompaniment by the Innocent on a pair of bone castanets. But the crowning festivity of the evening was reached in a rude camp-meeting hymn, which the lovers, joining hands, sang with great earnestness and vociferation. I fear that a certain defiant tone and Covenanter's swing to its chorus, rather than any devotional quality, caused it speedily to infect the others, who at last joined in the refrain:

"I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
And I'm bound to die in His army."

The pines rocked, the storm eddied and whirled above the miserable group, and the flames of their altar leaped heavenward, as if in token of the vow.

At midnight the storm abated, the rolling clouds parted, and the stars glittered keenly above the sleeping camp. Mr. Oakhurst, whose professional habits had enabled him to live on the smallest possible amount of sleep, in dividing the watch with Tom Simson somehow managed to take upon himself the greater part of that duty. He excused himself to the Innocent by saying that he had "often been a week without sleep." "Doing what?" asked Tom. "Poker!" replied Oakhurst sententiously. "When a man gets a streak of luck,—nigger-luck, —he don't get tired. The luck gives in first. Luck," continued the gambler reflectively, "is a mighty queer thing. All you know about it for certain is that it's bound to change. And it's finding out when it's going to change that makes you. We've had a streak of bad luck since we left Poker Flat,—you come along, and slap you get into it, too. If you can hold your cards right along you're all right. For," added the gambler, with cheerful irrelevance—

" 'I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
And I'm bound to die in His army.' "

The third day came, and the sun, looking through the white-curtained valley, saw the outcasts divide their slowly decreasing store of provisions for the morning meal. It was one of the peculiarities of that mountain climate that its rays diffused a kindly warmth over the wintry landscape, as if in regretful commiseration of the past. But it revealed

drift on drift of snow piled high around the hut,—a hopeless, uncharted, trackless sea of white lying below the rocky shores to which the castaways still clung. Through the marvelously clear air the smoke of the pastoral village of Poker Flat rose miles away. Mother Shipton saw it, and from a remote pinnacle of her rocky fastness hurled in that direction a final malediction. It was her last vituperative attempt, and perhaps for that reason was invested with a certain degree of sublimity. It did her good, she privately informed the Duchess. "Just you go out there and cuss, and see." She then set herself to the task of amusing "the child," as she and the Duchess were pleased to call Piney. Piney was no chicken, but it was a soothing and original theory of the pair thus to account for the fact that she didn't swear and wasn't improper.

When night crept up again through the gorges, the reedy notes of the accordion rose and fell in fitful spasms and long-drawn gasps by the flickering campfire. But music failed to fill entirely the aching void left by insufficient food, and a new diversion was proposed by Piney,—story-telling. Neither Mr. Oakhurst nor his female companions caring to relate their personal experiences, this plan would have failed too, but for the Innocent. Some months before he had chanced upon a stray copy of Mr. Pope's ingenious translation of the Iliad. He now proposed to narrate the principal incidents of that poem—having thoroughly mastered the argument and fairly forgotten the words—in the current vernacular of Sandy Bar. And so for the rest of that night the Homeric demigods again walked the earth. Trojan bully and wily Greek wrestled in the winds, and the great pines in the cañon seemed to bow to the wrath of the son of Peleus. Mr. Oakhurst listened with quiet satisfaction. Most especially was he interested in the fate of "Ash-heels," as the Innocent persisted in denominating the "swift-footed Achilles."

So, with small food and much of Homer and the accordion, a week passed over the heads of the outcasts. The sun again forsook them, and again from leaden skies the snowflakes were sifted over the land. Day by day closer around them drew the snowy circle, until at last they looked from their prison over drifted walls of dazzling white, that towered twenty feet above their heads. It became more and more difficult to replenish their fires, even from the fallen trees beside them, now half hidden in the drifts. And yet no one complained. The lovers

turned from the dreary prospect and looked into each other's eyes, and were happy. Mr. Oakhurst settled himself coolly to the losing game before him. The Duchess, more cheerful than she had been, assumed the care of Piney. Only Mother Shipton—once the strongest of the party—seemed to sicken and fade. At midnight on the tenth day she called Oakhurst to her side. "I'm going," she said, in a voice of querulous weakness, "but don't say anything about it. Don't waken the kids. Take the bundle from under my head, and open it." Mr. Oakhurst did so. It contained Mother Shipton's rations for the last week, untouched. "Give 'em to the child," she said, pointing to the sleeping Piney. "You've starved yourself," said the gambler. "That's what they call it," said the woman querulously, as she lay down again, and, turning her face to the wall, passed quietly away.

The accordion and the bones were put aside that day, and Homer was forgotten. When the body of Mother Shipton had been committed to the snow, Mr. Oakhurst took the Innocent aside, and showed him a pair of snowshoes, which he had fashioned from the old packsaddle. "There's one chance in a hundred to save her yet," he said, pointing to Piney; "but it's there," he added, pointing toward Poker Flat. "If you can reach there in two days she's safe." "And you?" asked Tom Simson. "I'll stay here," was the curt reply.

The lovers parted with a long embrace. "You are not going, too?" said the Duchess, as she saw Mr. Oakhurst apparently waiting to accompany him. "As far as the cañon," he replied. He turned suddenly and kissed the Duchess, leaving her pallid face aflame, and her trembling limbs rigid with amazement.

Night came, but not Mr. Oakhurst. It brought the storm again and the whirling snow. Then the Duchess, feeding the fire, found that some one had quietly piled beside the hut enough fuel to last a few days longer. The tears rose to her eyes, but she hid them from Piney.

The women slept but little. In the morning, looking into each other's faces, they read their fate. Neither spoke, but Piney, accepting the position of the stronger, drew near and placed her arm around the Duchess's waist. They kept this attitude for the rest of the day. That night the storm reached its greatest fury, and, rending asunder the protecting pines, invaded the very hut.

Toward morning they found themselves unable to feed the fire,

which gradually died away. As the embers slowly blackened, the Duchess crept closer to Piney, and broke the silence of many hours: "Piney, can you pray?" "No, dear," said Piney simply. The Duchess, without knowing exactly why, felt relieved, and, putting her head upon Piney's shoulder, spoke no more. And so reclining, the younger and purer pillowing the head of her soiled sister upon her virgin breast, they fell asleep.

The wind lulled as if it feared to waken them. Feathery drifts of snow, shaken from the long pine boughs, flew like white-winged birds, and settled about them as they slept. The moon through the rifted clouds looked down upon what had been the camp. But all human stain, all trace of earthly travail, was hidden beneath the spotless mantle mercifully flung from above.

They slept all that day and the next, nor did they waken when voices and footsteps broke the silence of the camp. And when pitying fingers brushed the snow from their wan faces, you could scarcely have told, from the equal peace that dwelt upon them, which was she that had sinned. Even the law of Poker Flat recognized this, and turned away, leaving them still locked in each other's arms.

But at the head of the gulch, on one of the largest pinetrees, they found the deuce of clubs pinned to the bark with a bowie-knife. It bore the following, written in pencil in a firm hand:

†

BENEATH THIS TREE
LIES THE BODY
OF
JOHN OAKHURST,
WHO STRUCK A STREAK OF BAD LUCK
ON THE 23D OF NOVEMBER, 1850,
AND
HANDED IN HIS CHECKS
ON THE 7TH DECEMBER, 1850.

And pulseless and cold, with a Derringer by his side and a bullet in his heart, though still calm as in life, beneath the snow lay he who was at once the strongest and yet the weakest of the outcasts of Poker Flat.

Analysis

Bret Harte's story, the oldest in this collection (1869), has been included in preference to better stories of his period, such as those by Mark Twain, because it introduced a whole genre of local color stories, in particular the "Western," stories which are currently popular commercially. Bret Harte's three famous stories—"The Outcasts of Poker Flat," "The Luck of Roaring Camp," and "Tennessee's Partner"—are essentially little different from the modern Western story and the modern Western motion picture.

1. Which of the characters in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" follow the "come-to-realize" pattern of development? Detail the causes of their reformations.
2. Indicate the various episodes by which Bret Harte builds up Oakhurst into a heroic personage.
3. All of the people in this story could be tagged stock characters. Label their types and explain exactly why they are so. Have you seen any similar types in recent motion pictures?
4. The style of "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" is of course in keeping with the Victorian period in which Bret Harte was writing. Point out words and phrases that in our own time are considered trite or quaint.
5. A close analysis of the essence of this story will demonstrate that it treats of both the kind of people and a situation that might be chosen by a modern cult-of-the-simple writer. How would the latter's treatment differ? "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" are said to have shocked by their frankness and vividness the sensibilities of a lady proofreader on the staff of the *Overland Monthly*. Comment.
6. Contrast this story with the one which follows, James M. Cain's "The Girl in the Storm."

Bret Harte

Bret Harte (1836–1902) was born in Albany, New York, and was largely self-educated. In 1854 he moved with his family to California, where he worked for a while teaching school and writing miscellaneous pieces for the local newspapers. In 1868 he became editor of the *Overland Monthly,* and soon afterward won national recognition for his California stories and poems. Following his success, he left California, again to live in New York. Strongly influenced by Charles Dickens, Harte, along with his friend Mark Twain, was one of the first to discover and exploit the Western regional story, and in his turn influenced numbers of younger writers.



THE GIRL IN THE STORM

James M. Cain

He woke up suddenly, feeling that ice had touched him, but it was an interval before his mind caught up with what he saw. Through the open door of the boxcar it was pouring rain: that much was as he remembered it from the night before. But on the floor was a spreading puddle. It was the puddle, indeed, which had touched his ribs and awakened him; he was edging away from it, even while he was blinking his eyes. When he scrambled to his feet and looked out, the breath left his body in a wailing moan. For as far as he could see no land was visible, nothing but brown, swirling water full of trees, bushes, and what might have been houses, moving in the direction of the bridge, off to his right. It was already lapping at the door of the boxcar; it was what was causing the rapidly deepening puddle.

He stood staring out at it, and became fascinated by a pile of ties across from the car. One by one the flood lifted them, as though some invisible elephant were riding it, and carried them spinning into the current, to bang against the boxcar at his feet, then go swiftly on to the bridge. He watched several go by, then turned his back to them and caught the roof of the car with his hands. He chinned himself, in an effort to climb to the roof, but there was no support for his feet, and he dropped back.

When the next tie came by, he stooped down and caught it. Hugging it to his stomach, he dragged it into the car. Then he jammed it across the door slantwise, one end at the bottom, the other halfway up. He caught the roof of the car again and, clambering up the slanting tie, pushed up high enough to get his chin over the edge. Then he managed to reach the catwalk on the roof of the car, and pulled himself toward it. Wriggling on his belly, he was safely on the walk in a few moments, and stood up.

All around him was the flood, and behind him he could hear it thunder under the bridge. About a quarter of a mile ahead of him was a loading platform, and beyond that the station. No locomotive was in sight; he had been shunted with a string of empties on to a siding and left there. Beyond the station, on higher ground, was what appeared to be a village, and he could see trucks backed up there, evidently

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evacuating whole families. He wondered if he could get a place on a truck. But it took him ten minutes, clambering down from boxcars to flat cars, and then over boxcars again, to reach the loading platform, and when he ran around it to yell at them, they were gone.

He stood looking at the station, read the name of the place: Hildalgo, California. For the moment he was sheltered from the rain; but his respite was short. The loading platform was only a few inches higher than the floor of the cars, and even while he was standing there another puddle appeared and he was retreating from it. He found himself facing the county road. It was higher than the platform, and although water was running over it in a sheet, and back toward the bridge it dipped into the flood, between this point and the village it was not inundated. To reach it he would have to go through water at least waist-deep, and he eyed it dismally. Then he squatted down, held his breath, and plunged in.

When he scrambled up on the concrete he was so wet he could feel the weight of his denim pants hanging off his hips. He started up the road at a half trot, the storm driving him from behind. He didn't know where he was going, except that he had to find shelter. And who would shelter him he had no idea, for he knew from bitter experience that nineteen-year-old hobos are seldom welcome guests, whether rain-soaked or not.

He passed a stalled car, with nobody in it. He passed several houses, in front of which he had seen the trucks. They were obviously empty, but they were below road level and surrounded by yellow ponds pocked with rain. He came to a sidewalk, but between him and the curb was a torrent, and he stayed in the center of the road. He came to a filling station, but it was deserted and six inches deep in water. Next to the filling station was a store, a chain grocery store. He headed for it, going in up to his knees in the torrent. The force of it almost upset him and forced him several paces below his goal. When he gained the sidewalk he ran at the door, wrenching at the knob and driving against it with one motion.

It was locked. As his face smashed against the glass he remembered it was Sunday.

He stood there, furiously rattling the door. Facing him, inside, he could see the clock: ten minutes to three. But nothing answered his rattling except the rain. He kicked the door, dashed away, and in a

second was under cover. Next to the store was a half-finished house, and his dive for the porch was automatic. He turned in anger at the rain, stood stamping the water off his legs, then went inside. The floor was laid, but the walls were only half finished and there was a damp smell of plaster. Off to one side were piled lumber, tar paper, and sawbucks. But the doors and windows were not in place yet, and the air felt even colder than the air outside.

He stood shivering in his soaking denims; started to take off the coat. As the air met his wet chest he pulled it around him again. At the touch of the clammy cloth he gritted his teeth and took it off. He took off his shoes and his pants. He wore no socks or undershirt. He was left in a pair of tattered shorts, and while he was draping the denims over a sawbuck he collapsed on the tar paper, shaking with chill. But soon he was quiet, and he could think of but one thing: that he had to get warm. He thought of fire, and looked around.

On one side of the room was a fireplace, the mortar in it still damp. The tar paper would do to start it, all right, and there were bricks outside he could use to build it on. The lumber would burn, if there were any pieces short enough to go in the fireplace. He spied a kit of carpenter's tools in one corner, went over to examine it, wincing as the crumbs of plaster hurt his feet.

The main tool in the kit was a saw. Quickly he set up two sawbucks, laid a joist between them and cut it up with the saw. The exercise made him feel better. When he had a pile of wood, he got two bricks and began to build a fire. He tore up tar paper and laid it on the bricks, found the carpenter's trimming knife and whittled kindling, laid the big pieces he had sawed on top. But when he went to his coat and fished the matches out of the pocket, the tips were nothing but smelly wet smears.

He cursed, screamed, and pounded his fist against the wall. He went all through the house, searching every place he could think of, trying to find a match. He began to shake from chill again, and ran to the front door to shake his fist at the rain.

Down the road, creeping slowly, came a car, its lights on. It was a small sedan, and it went cautiously past him. Bitterly he wondered where the driver thought he was going, for the lake of flood waters down by the station would make further progress impossible. About this time the driver seemed to see the flood too, for a little beyond

the grocery store the car came to a stop. Then, as though it were part of a slow movie, it began to slide. It slid into the torrent, lurched against the curb, stopped. Almost at once the taillight went out. That, he decided, was because the water had shorted the ignition. This car, like the other one, was there to stay a while.

He watched, wondered if the guy would have a match. Then the door opened, the left-hand door, next to the road, and a foot appeared, then a leg. It wasn't a man's leg; it was a woman's. A girl got out, and staggered as the storm hit her. She was a smallish girl, in a raincoat. She slammed the door shut and started toward him, around the back of the car, heading for the curb. He opened his mouth to yell at her, but he was too late. The water staggered her and she went down. She tried to get up; the current tumbled her under the wheels of the car.

He leaped from the porch, went scampering to her in his shorts. Taking her by the hand, he jerked her to her feet, put his arms around her, ran her to the house. As he pulled her into the cold interior her teeth chattered. He grabbed her dripping handbag, clawed it open. "You got a match? We'll freeze if we don't get a match!"

"There's some in the car."

He dashed out again, ran down to the car, jerked the door open, jumped inside. In the dashboard compartment he found a package of paper matches, wiped his hand dry on the seat before he touched them. He looked around for something to wrap them in, to keep the rain off them. On the back seat he saw robes. He grabbed them, wrapped them around the matches.

When he got back to the house he waited only to open the robes and dry his hands again, pawing with them on the wool. Then he struck a match, and it lit. He touched the tar paper with it. A blue flame appeared, hesitated, spread out, and licked the wood. The fire crackled. It turned yellow and light filled the room. He felt warmth. He crowded so close he was almost in the fireplace.

"Come on, kid, you better get warm."

"I'm already here."

She picked up one of the robes, held it in front of the fire to warm it, put it around him. Then she warmed the other one, pulled it around herself, squatted down beside him. He sat down on the robe, tucked it around his feet. The fire burned up, scorched his face. He didn't

move. The heat reached him through the robe. His shivering stopped, he relaxed with a long, quavering sigh. She looked at him.

"My, you must have been cold."

"You don't know the half of it."

"I almost died, myself. If you hadn't come, I don't know what I would have done. I went clear down in that water."

"I yelled at you, but you was already in it."

"I don't know what's going to happen to the car."

"It'll be all right soon as it dries out."

"You think so?"

"Just got water in it, that's all."

"I hope that's all."

"Some rain!"

"It's awful, and it's going to get worse. I had the radio on in the car. They're warning people. Over in Hildalgo they took everybody out. Half the town's washed away."

"Yeah, I seen them."

"You were in Hildalgo?"

"Yeah . . . What you talking about? This *is* Hildalgo."

"*This is* Hildalgo?"

"That's what it says on the sign at the station."

"Oh, my! I thought Hildalgo was on the other road."

"Well? So it's Hildalgo."

"But there's nobody here. They took them all away."

"O.K. Then it's us."

"Suppose this washes away?"

"Till it does, we got a fire."

She got up, holding the robe tightly around her, and pulled a sawbuck over to the fire. On it, he noticed for the first time, were her sweater, stockings, and skirt. She must have taken them off while he was down in the car. She looked around.

"Are those your things over there? Don't you want me to move them closer to the fire, so they'll dry?"

"I'll do it."

The sight of her absurdly small things had made him suddenly aware of her as a person, and he was afraid to let her move his denims to the fire for fear that in the heat they would stink. He got up, pulled the pile of tar paper to the fire for her to sit on. Then he took the

denims off the sawbuck and went back with them to the kitchen. The fixtures were in, though caked with grit, and on his previous tour of the place he had seen a bucket and some soap. He dumped the denims on the floor, filled the bucket with water, carried it to where she was. By poking with a piece of flooring he made a place for it on the fire, and while it was heating, studied her.

She wasn't a pretty girl exactly. She was small, with sandy hair and freckles on her nose. But she had a friendly smile, and she wasn't bawling at her plight. Indeed, she seemed to take it more philosophically than he did. He took her to be about his own age.

"What's your name?"

"Flora. Flora Hilton. . . . It's really Dora, but they all began calling me Dumb Dora, so I changed it."

"Yes, I guess that was bad."

"What's yours?"

"Jack. Jack Schwab."

"You come from California?"

"Pennsylvania. I—kind of travel around."

"Hitchhike?"

"Sometimes. Other times I ride the freights."

"I didn't think you talked like California."

"What you doing out in this storm?"

"I went over to my uncle's. I went over there last night, to stay till Monday. But when it started to rain I thought I better get back. It wasn't so bad over where he lives, and I didn't know it was going to be like this. They've got no radio or anything. But then, when I turned the car radio on, I found out. I still thought I could make it, though. I thought I was on the main road. I didn't know I was coming through Hildalgo."

"Well, they'll be coming for you. The cops, or somebody. We'll see them when they find the car."

"I don't know if they'll be coming for me."

"Oh, they will."

"My father, he don't even know I started out, and my uncle, he probably thinks I'm home by now."

"Then we got it to ourselves."

"Sure looks like it."

The water was steaming by now. He wrapped the hot bucket handle

in tar paper, lifted it off the fire, and went back to the kitchen with it. First washing out the sink, then using a piece of tar paper as a stopper, he soaped the denims and washed them. The water turned so black he felt a sense of shame. He put them through two or three waters, wrung them dry. The last of the hot water he saved for the shorts he had on. With a quick glance toward the front of the house, he stepped out of them, washed them, wrung them out. Then he spread them, to step back into them. They were no wetter than when he took them off, but he hated the idea of having them touch him. However, they were hot from the water, and felt unexpectedly pleasant when he buttoned them up.

Back at the fire, he draped the denims on the sawbuck, beside her things, to dry.

"Well, Flora, nice climate you got."

"Sunny California! It can rain harder here than any place on earth. Well, you know what they say. We only have two kinds of weather in California, magnificent and unusual."

"I'll say it's unusual."

"Just listen to that rain come down."

"What do you do with yourself, Flora?"

"Me? Oh, I work. I got a job in a drive-in."

"Slinging hot dogs, hey?"

"I wish you'd talk about something else."

"A hot dog sure would go good now, wouldn't it?"

"I was the one that played dumb this morning. They wanted me to wait for breakfast, but I was in such a hurry to get away I wouldn't listen to them. I haven't had anything to eat all day."

"Breakfast? Say, that's a laugh."

"Haven't you had anything to eat either?"

"I haven't et a breakfast in so long I've forgot what it tastes like. By the time they get around to me it's always dinnertime, and even then, when they get to me, sometimes they close the window in my face."

"I guess it's hard, hitchhiking and—"

"Flora! Are we the couple of dopes!"

"What's the matter, Jack?"

"Talking about hot dogs and breakfast. That store! There's enough grub in there to feed an army!"

"You mean—just take it?"

"You think it's going to walk over here and ask us to eat it? Come on! Here's where we eat!"

When he seized the largest of the carpenter's chisels and the hammer, she still sat there, watching him, and didn't follow when he went outside. He splashed around to the rear of the store, drove the chisel into the crack of the door, pulled. Something snapped, and he pushed the door open. He waited a moment, the rain pouring on him from the roof, for the sound of the burglar alarm, but he heard nothing. He groped for the light switch, found it, snapped it, but nothing happened. If all wires were down in the storm, that might explain the silent burglar alarm. He began to grope his way toward the shelves. Suddenly he felt her beside him, there in the murk.

"If you've got the nerve, I have."

She was looking square into his eyes, and he felt a throb of excitement.

"The worst they can do is put us in jail. Well—I been there before, haven't I? Plenty of times—but I'm still here."

He turned to the shelves again, didn't see her look at him queerly, hesitate, and start to leave before deciding to follow him. His hand touched something and he gave an exclamation.

"What is it, Jack?"

"Matches! Now we're coming."

Lighting matches, poking and peering, they located the canned-goods section.

"Here's soup. My, Jack, that'll be good!"

"O.K. on soup."

"What kind do you like?"

"Any kind. So it's got meat in it."

"Mulligatawny?"

"Take two. Small size, so they'll heat quick."

"Peas?"

"O.K."

She set the cans on the counter, but he continued searching, and presently yelled:

"Got it, Flora, got it! I knew it had to be there!"

"What is it, Jack?"

"Chicken! Canned chicken! Just look at it!"

He found currant jelly, found instant coffee, condensed milk, a package of lump sugar, found cigarettes.

"O.K., Flora. Anything else you want?"

"I can't think of anything else, Jack."

"Let's go."

When they got back to the house again, it was dark. He put more wood on the fire, went back to the kitchen, filled the bucket again. When he returned, to put it on the fire, he noticed she had put on her stockings, sweater, and skirt. He felt his own denims. They were dry. He put them on. But when he went to put on his shoes his feet recoiled from their cold dampness. He let them lie, sat down, and pulled the robe over his feet. She started to laugh.

"Wonder what we're going to eat off of?"

"We'll soon fix that."

He found the saw, found a piece of smooth board, sawed off two squares. "How's that?"

"Fine. Just like plates."

"Here's a couple of chisels for forks."

"We sure do help ourselves."

"If you don't help yourself, nobody'll do it for you."

When the water began to steam, they dropped the cans in—the big can of chicken shaped like a flatiron first, the others on top of it. They sat side by side and watched. After a while they fished out the soup, and he took a chisel and hammer and neatly excised the tops. "Take it easy, Flora. Watch you don't cut your lip."

They put the cans to their mouths, drank. "Oh, is that good! Is that good!" Her voice throbbed as she spoke.

Panting, they gulped the soup, tilting the cans to let the meat and vegetables slip down their throats.

They fished out the other cans then, and he opened them, the chicken last. She took it by a leg and quickly lifted it to one of their plates.

"Don't spill the juice. We'll drink that out of the can."

"I haven't spilled a drop, Flora. Wait a minute. There's a knife here, I'll cut it in half."

He jumped up, looked for the carpenter's trimming knife he had used to whittle the kindling. He couldn't find it.

"Damn it, there was a knife here. What did I do with it?"

She said nothing.

He cut the chicken in half with the hammer and chisel. They ate like a pair of animals, sometimes stopping to gasp for breath. Presently nothing was left but wet spots on the board plates. He got fresh water and set it on the fire. It heated quickly. He went to the kitchen, washed out the soup cans, came back, made the coffee in them. He opened the milk and sugar, gave each can a judicious dose.

"There you are, Flora. You can stir it with a chisel."

"That's just what I was wishing for all the time—that I could have a good cup of coffee, and then it would be perfect."

"Is it O.K.?"

"Grand."

He offered her a cigarette, but she said she didn't smoke. He lit up, inhaled, lay back on the couch of tar paper. He was warm, full, and content. He watched her when she got up and cleared away the cans and bucket. She found a rag in the tool kit, dipped it in the last of the hot water.

"Don't you want me to wipe the grease off your hands?"

He held out his hands, and she wiped them. She wiped her own hands, put the rag with the other stuff, sat down beside him. He held out his hand, open. She hesitated, looked at him a moment as she had looked at him in the store, put her hand in his.

"We ain't got it so bad, Flora."

"I'll say we haven't. Not to what we might have. We could have been drowned."

He put his arm around her, drew her to him. She let her head fall on his shoulder. He could smell her hair, and his throat contracted, as though he were going to cry. For the first time in his short battered life he was happy. His grip on her tightened, he pushed his cheek against hers. She buried her face in his neck. He kept nuzzling her, felt his lips nearing her mouth. Then he pulled her to him hard, felt her yield, turn her head for his kiss.

Convulsively he winced. There was a sharp pain in the pit of his stomach. He looked down, saw something rough and putty-stained about the neck of her sweater. Instantly he knew what it was, what it was there for. He jumped up.

"So—that's where the knife was. I pull you out of the gutter, feed you, take you in my arms, and all the time you're getting ready to stick me in the back with that thing."

She started to cry. "I never saw you before. You said you'd been in jail, and I didn't know what you were fixing to do to me!"

He lit a cigarette, walked around the room. Once more he felt cold, forlorn, and bitter, the way he felt on the road. He looked out. The rain was slackening. He threw away the cigarette, sat down on the floor, drove his feet into the cold clammy shoes. Savagely he knotted the stiff laces. Then, without a word to her, he went slogging out into the night.

Analysis

James M. Cain's stories and novels are elemental, gripping, often melodramatic, always fast-moving (because, he says, he fears boring the reader). Some of his writing sets him apart from the "hard-boiled" mystery story school because he shows a social awareness and an ability to suggest depth and significance in the behavior pattern of his characters. Most of his work is laid in California.

1. Does "The Girl in the Storm" carry out successfully Cain's declared story formula: ". . . They all concern some high adventure on which a man and a woman embark?" Can limiting oneself to this formula be a weakness? Explain.

2. In some respects "The Girl in the Storm" approaches "quality" writing in both style and method of handling material. Yet closer analysis demonstrates that it is commercial writing in intent, just as close analysis demonstrated that Katharine Brush's "Night Club" was quality writing. Explain. It is not essential that stories always be so classified. It is essential only that the young writer understand how such classification is arrived at in order that he may be guided in his own writing purpose.

3. What similarities do you find between this story and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat"? How do the stories differ?

4. What maintains suspense?

5. Is there any theme here? Any social significance? What use is made of symbolism?

6. The idea or theme of a man and a woman or men and women placed alone in a dangerous predicament in an isolated place is often used successfully in both commercial magazine stories and in the motion pictures. Can you write an original story plan built around such a situation, preferably laid in your home region or in a region you are thoroughly familiar with?

James M. Cain

James M. Cain (1892–) was born in Annapolis, Maryland, and received his A.B. from Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland, in 1910, and his master's degree from the same college in 1917. Thereafter he was a newspaper writer and college professor of journalism at St. Johns College, Annapolis, his work there interrupted by a stint in the Army during World War I as a private first-class. He wrote for such papers as the Baltimore *Sun* and the Baltimore *American,* and then between 1924 and 1931 as editorial writer for the New York *World.* In 1931 he began work for a magazine syndicate. With the publication of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934) his fame and success were assured. Other well-known books by Mr. Cain are *Double Indemnity* (1936), *Serenade* (1937), and *Past All Dishonor* (1945).



THE JELLY-BEAN

F. Scott Fitzgerald

JIM POWELL was a Jelly-bean. Much as I desire to make him an appealing character, I feel that it would be unscrupulous to deceive you on that point. He was a bred-in-the-bone, dyed-in-the-wool, ninety-nine three-quarters per cent Jelly-bean and he grew lazily all during Jelly-bean season, which is every season, down in the land of the Jelly-beans well below the Mason-Dixon line.

Now if you call a Memphis man a Jelly-bean he will quite possibly pull a long sinewy rope from his pocket and hang you to a convenient telegraph-pole. If you call a New Orleans man a Jelly-bean he will probably grin and ask you who is taking your girl to the Mardi Gras ball. The particular Jelly-bean patch which produced the protagonist of this history lies somewhere between the two—a little city of forty thousand that has dozed sleepily for forty thousand years in southern Georgia, occasionally stirring in its slumbers and muttering something

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about a war that took place sometime, somewhere, and that everyone else has forgotten long ago.

Jim was a Jelly-bean. I write that again because it has such a pleasant sound—rather like the beginning of a fairy story—as if Jim were nice. It somehow gives me a picture of him with a round, appetizing face and all sorts of leaves and vegetables growing out of his cap. But Jim was long and thin and bent at the waist from stooping over pool-tables, and he was what might have been known in the indiscriminating North as a corner loafer. "Jelly-bean" is the name throughout the undissolved Confederacy for one who spends his life conjugating the verb *to idle* in the first person singular—I am idling, I have idled, I will idle.

Jim was born in a white house on a green corner. It had four weather-beaten pillars in front and a great amount of lattice-work in the rear that made a cheerful criss-cross background for a flowery sun-drenched lawn. Originally the dwellers in the white house had owned the ground next door and next door to that and next door to that, but this had been so long ago that even Jim's father scarcely remembered it. He had, in fact, thought it a matter of so little moment that when he was dying from a pistol wound got in a brawl he neglected even to tell little Jim, who was five years old and miserably frightened. The white house became a boarding-house run by a tight-lipped lady from Macon, whom Jim called Aunt Mamie and detested with all his soul.

He became fifteen, went to high school, wore his hair in black snarls, and was afraid of girls. He hated his home where four women and one old man prolonged an interminable chatter from summer to summer about what lots the Powell place had originally included and what sort of flowers would be out next. Sometimes the parents of little girls in town, remembering Jim's mother and fancying a resemblance in the dark eyes and hair, invited him to parties, but parties made him shy and he much preferred sitting on a disconnected axle in Tilly's Garage, rolling the bones or exploring his mouth endlessly with a long straw. For pocket money, he picked up odd jobs, and it was due to this that he stopped going to parties. At his third party little Marjorie Haight had whispered indiscreetly and within hearing distance that he was a boy who brought the groceries sometimes. So instead of the two-step and polka, Jim had learned to throw any number he desired on the dice and had listened to spicy tales of all the shootings that had occurred in the surrounding country during the past fifty years.

He became eighteen. The war broke out and he enlisted as a gob and polished brass in the Charleston Navy-yard for a year. Then by way of variety, he went North and polished brass in the Brooklyn Navy-yard for a year.

When the war was over he came home. He was twenty-one, his trousers were too short and too tight. His buttoned shoes were long and narrow. His tie was an alarming conspiracy of purple and pink marvellously scrolled, and over it were two blue eyes faded like a piece of very good old cloth long exposed to the sun.

In the twilight of one April evening when a soft gray had drifted down along the cottonfields and over the sultry town, he was a vague figure leaning against a board fence, whistling and gazing at the moon's rim above the lights of Jackson Street. His mind was working persistently on a problem that had held his attention for an hour. The Jelly-bean had been invited to a party.

Back in the days when all the boys had detested all the girls, Clark Darrow and Jim had sat side by side in school. But, while Jim's social aspirations had died in the oily air of the garage, Clark had alternately fallen in and out of love, gone to college, taken to drink, given it up, and, in short, become one of the best beaux of the town. Nevertheless Clark and Jim had retained a friendship that, though casual, was perfectly definite. That afternoon Clark's ancient Ford had slowed up beside Jim, who was on the sidewalk and, out of a clear sky, Clark had invited him to a party at the country club. The impulse that made him do this was no stranger than the impulse which made Jim accept. The latter was probably an unconscious ennui, a half-frightened sense of adventure. And now Jim was soberly thinking it over.

He began to sing, drumming his long foot idly on a stone block in the sidewalk till it wobbled up and down in time to the low throaty tune:

> One mile from Home in Jelly-bean town,
> Lives Jeanne, the Jelly-bean Queen.
> She loves her dice and treats 'em nice;
> No dice would treat her mean.

He broke off and agitated the sidewalk to a bumpy gallop.

"Daggone!" he muttered, half aloud.

They would all be there—the old crowd, the crowd to which, by right of the white house, sold long since, and the portrait of the officer in gray over the mantel, Jim should have belonged. But that crowd had grown up together into a tight little set as gradually as the girls' dresses had lengthened inch by inch, as definitely as the boys' trousers had dropped suddenly to their ankles. And to that society of first names and dead puppy-loves Jim was an outsider—a running mate of poor whites. Most of the men knew him, condescendingly; he tipped his hat to three or four girls. That was all.

When the dusk had thickened into a blue setting for the moon, he walked through the hot, pleasantly pungent town to Jackson Street. The stores were closing and the last shoppers were drifting homeward, as if borne on the dreamy revolution of a slow merry-go-round. A street-fair farther down made a brilliant alley of vari-colored booths and contributed a blend of music to the night—an oriental dance on a calliope, a melancholy bugle in front of a freak show, a cheerful rendition of "Back Home in Tennessee" on a hand-organ.

The Jelly-bean stopped in a store and bought a collar. Then he sauntered along toward Soda Sam's, where he found the usual three or four cars of a summer evening parked in front and the little darkies running back and forth with sundaes and lemonades.

"Hello, Jim."

It was a voice at his elbow—Joe Ewing sitting in an automobile with Marylyn Wade. Nancy Lamar and a strange man were in the back seat.

The Jelly-bean tipped his hat quickly.

"Hi, Ben—" then, after an almost imperceptible pause—"How y' all?"

Passing, he ambled on toward the garage where he had a room upstairs. His "How y' all?" had been said to Nancy Lamar, to whom he had not spoken in fifteen years.

Nancy had a mouth like a remembered kiss and shadowy eyes and blue-black hair inherited from her mother who had been born in Budapest. Jim passed her often in the street, walking small-boy fashion with her hands in her pockets, and he knew that with her inseparable Sally Carrol Hopper she had left a trail of broken hearts from Atlanta to New Orleans.

For a few fleeting moments Jim wished he could dance. Then he laughed and as he reached his door began to sing softly to himself:

Her Jelly Roll can twist your soul,
Her eyes are big and brown,
She's the Queen of the Queens of the Jelly-beans—
My Jeanne of Jelly-bean town.

II

At nine-thirty Jim and Clark met in front of Soda Sam's and started for the Country Club in Clark's Ford.

"Jim," asked Clark casually, as they rattled through the jasmine-scented night, "how do you keep alive?"

The Jelly-bean paused, considered.

"Well," he said finally, "I got a room over Tilly's Garage. I help him some with the cars in the afternoon an' he gives it to me free. Sometimes I drive one of his taxis and pick up a little thataway. I get fed up doin' that regular though."

"That's all?"

"Well, when there's a lot of work I help him by the day—Saturdays usually—and then there's one main source of revenue I don't generally mention. Maybe you don't recollect I'm about the champion crap-shooter of this town. They make me shoot from a cup now because once I get the feel of a pair of dice they just roll for me."

Clark grinned appreciatively.

"I never could learn to set 'em so's they'd do what I wanted. Wish you'd shoot with Nancy Lamar some day and take all her money away from her. She *will* roll 'em with the boys and she loses more than her daddy can afford to give her. I happen to know she sold a good ring last month to pay a debt."

The Jelly-bean was non-committal.

"The white house on Elm Street still belong to you?"

Jim shook his head.

"Sold. Got a pretty good price, seein' it wasn't in a good part of town no more. Lawyer told me to put it into Liberty bonds. But Aunt Mamie got so she didn't have no sense, so it takes all the interest to keep her up at Great Farms Sanitarium."

"H'm."

"I got an old uncle up-state an' I reckon I kin go up there if ever I get sure enough pore. Nice farm, but not enough niggers around to

work it. He's asked me to come up and help him, but I don't guess I'd take much to it. Too daggone lonesome—" He broke off suddenly. "Clark, I want to tell you I'm much obliged to you for askin' me out, but I'd be a lot happier if you'd just stop the car right here an' let me walk back into town."

"Shucks!" Clark grunted. "Do you good to step out. You don't have to dance—just get out there on the floor and shake."

"Hold on," exclaimed Jim uneasily. "Don't you go leadin' me up to any girls and leavin' me there so I'll have to dance with 'em."

Clark laughed.

" 'Cause," continued Jim desperately, "without you swear you won't do that I'm agoin' to get out right here an' my good legs goin' carry me back to Jackson Street."

They agreed after some argument that Jim, unmolested by females, was to view the spectacle from a secluded settee in the corner where Clark would join him whenever he wasn't dancing.

So ten o'clock found the Jelly-bean with his legs crossed and his arms conservatively folded, trying to look casually at home and politely uninterested in the dancers. At heart he was torn between overwhelming self-consciousness and an intense curiosity as to all that went on around him. He saw the girls emerge one by one from the dressing-room, stretching and pluming themselves like bright birds, smiling over their powdered shoulders at the chaperones, casting a quick glance around to take in the room and, simultaneously, the room's reaction to their entrance—and then, again like birds, alighting and nestling in the sober arms of their waiting escorts. Sally Carrol Hopper, blonde and lazy-eyed, appeared clad in her favorite pink and blinking like an awakened rose. Marjorie Haight, Marylyn Wade, Harriet Cary, all the girls he had seen loitering down Jackson Street by noon, now, curled and brilliantined and delicately tinted for the overhead lights, were miraculously strange Dresden figures of pink and blue and red and gold, fresh from the shop and not yet fully dried.

He had been there half an hour, totally uncheered by Clark's jovial visits which were each one accompanied by a "Hello, old boy, how you making out?" and a slap at his knee. A dozen males had spoken to him or stopped for a moment beside him, but he knew that they were each one surprised at finding him there and fancied that one or two were even slightly resentful. But at half past ten his embarrassment suddenly

left him and a pull of breathless interest took him completely out of himself—Nancy Lamar had come out of the dressing-room.

She was dressed in yellow organdie, a costume of a hundred cool corners, with three tiers of ruffles and a big bow in back until she shed black and yellow around her in a sort of phosphorescent lustre. The Jelly-bean's eyes opened wide and a lump arose in his throat. For a minute she stood beside the door until her partner hurried up. Jim recognized him as the stranger who had been with her in Joe Ewing's car that afternoon. He saw her set her arms akimbo and say something in a low voice, and laugh. The man laughed too and Jim experienced the quick pang of a weird new kind of pain. Some ray had passed between the pair, a shaft of beauty from that sun that had warmed him a moment since. The Jelly-bean felt suddenly like a weed in a shadow.

A minute later Clark approached him, bright-eyed and glowing.

"Hi, old man," he cried with some lack of originality. "How you making out?"

Jim replied that he was making out as well as could be expected.

"You come along with me," commanded Clark. "I've got something that'll put an edge on the evening."

Jim followed him awkwardly across the floor and up the stairs to the locker-room where Clark produced a flask of nameless yellow liquid.

"Good old corn."

Ginger ale arrived on a tray. Such potent nectar as "gold old corn" needed some disguise beyond seltzer.

"Say, boy," exclaimed Clark breathlessly, "doesn't Nancy Lamar look beautiful?"

Jim nodded.

"Mighty beautiful," he agreed.

"She's all dolled up to a fare-you-well to-night," continued Clark. "Notice that fellow she's with?"

"Big fella? White pants?"

"Yeah. Well, that's Ogden Merritt from Savannah. Old man Merritt makes the Merritt safety razors. This fella's crazy about her. Been chasing after her all year.

"She's a wild baby," continued Clark, "but I like her. So does everybody. But she sure does do crazy stunts. She usually gets out alive, but she's got scars all over her reputation from one thing or another she's done."

"That so?" Jim passed over his glass. "That's good corn."

"Not so bad. Oh, she's a wild one. Shoots craps, say, boy! And she do like her highball. Promised I'd give her one later on."

"She in love with this—Merritt?"

"Damned if I know. Seems like all the best girls around here marry fellas and go off somewhere."

He poured himself one more drink and carefully corked the bottle.

"Listen, Jim, I got to go dance and I'd be much obliged if you just stick this corn right on your hip as long as you're not dancing. If a man notices I've had a drink he'll come up and ask me and before I know it it's all gone and somebody else is having my good time."

So Nancy Lamar was going to marry. This toast of a town was to become the private property of an individual in white trousers—and all because white trousers' father had made a better razor than his neighbor. As they descended the stairs Jim found the idea inexplicably depressing. For the first time in his life he felt a vague and romantic yearning. A picture of her began to form in his imagination—Nancy walking boylike and debonnaire along the street, taking an orange as tithe from a worshipful fruit-dealer, charging a dope on a mythical account at Soda Sam's, assembling a convoy of beaux and then driving off in triumphal state for an afternoon of splashing and singing.

The Jelly-bean walked out on the porch to a deserted corner, dark between the moon on the lawn and the single lighted door of the ballroom. There he found a chair and, lighting a cigarette, drifted into the thoughtless reverie that was his usual mood. Yet now it was a reverie made sensuous by the night and by the hot smell of damp powder puffs, tucked in the fronts of low dresses and distilling a thousand rich scents to float out through the open door. The music itself, blurred by a loud trombone, became hot and shadowy, a languorous overtone to the scraping of many shoes and slippers.

Suddenly the square of yellow light that fell through the door was obscured by a dark figure. A girl had come out of the dressing-room and was standing on the porch not more than ten feet away. Jim heard a low-breathed "doggone" and then she turned and saw him. It was Nancy Lamar.

Jim rose to his feet.

"Howdy?"

"Hello—" she paused, hesitated, and then approached. "Oh, it's—Jim Powell."

He bowed slightly, tried to think of a casual remark.

"Do you suppose," she began quickly, "I mean—do you know anything about gum?"

"What?"

"I've got gum on my shoe. Some utter ass left his or her gum on the floor and of course I stepped in it."

Jim blushed, inappropriately.

"Do you know how to get it off?" she demanded petulantly. "I've tried every damn thing in the dressing-room. I've tried soap and water—and even perfume and I've ruined my powder-puff trying to make it stick to that."

Jim considered the question in some agitation.

"Why—I think maybe gasolene—"

The words had scarcely left his lips when she grasped his hand and pulled him at a run off the low veranda, over a flower bed and at a gallop toward a group of cars parked in the moonlight by the first hole of the golf course.

"Turn on the gasolene," she commanded breathlessly.

"What?"

"For the gum, of course. I've got to get it off. I can't dance with gum on." Obediently Jim turned to the cars and began inspecting them with a view to obtaining the desired solvent. Had she demanded a cylinder he would have done his best to wrench one out.

"Here," he said after a moment's search. "Here's one that's easy. Got a handkerchief?"

"It's up-stairs wet. I used it for the soap and water."

Jim laboriously explored his pockets.

"Don't believe I got one either."

"Doggone it! Well, we can turn it on and let it run on the ground."

He turned it on fuller. The dripping became a flow and formed an oily pool that glistened brightly, reflecting a dozen tremulous moons on its quivering bosom.

"Ah," she sighed contentedly, "let it all out. The only thing to do is to wade in it."

In desperation he turned on the tap full and the pool suddenly widened, sending tiny rivers and trickles in all directions.

"That's fine. That's something like."

Raising her skirts she stepped gracefully in.

"I know this'll take it off," she murmured.

Jim smiled.

"There's lots more cars."

She stepped daintily out of the gasolene and began scraping her slippers, side and bottom, on the running-board of the automobile. The Jelly-bean contained himself no longer. He bent double with explosive laughter and after a second she joined in.

"You're here with Clark Darrow, aren't you?" she asked as they walked back toward the veranda.

"Yes."

"You know where he is now?"

"Out dancin', I reckin."

"The deuce. He promised me a highball."

"Well," said Jim, "I guess that'll be all right. I got his bottle right here in my pocket."

She smiled at him radiantly.

"I guess maybe you'll need ginger ale though," he added.

"Not me. Just the bottle."

"Sure enough?"

She laughed scornfully.

"Try me. I can drink anything any man can. Let's sit down."

She perched herself on the side of a table and he dropped into one of the wicker chairs beside her. Taking out the cork, she held the flask to her lips and took a long drink. He watched her, fascinated.

"Like it?"

She shook her head breathlessly.

"No, but I like the way it makes me feel. I think most people are that way."

Jim agreed.

"My daddy liked it too well. It got him."

"American men," said Nancy gravely, "don't know how to drink."

"What?" Jim was startled.

"In fact," she went on carelessly, "they don't know how to do anything very well. The one thing I regret in my life is that I wasn't born in England."

"In England?"

"Yes. It's the one regret of my life that I wasn't."

"Do you like it over there?"

"Yes. Immensely. I've never been there in person, but I've met a lot of Englishmen who were over here in the army, Oxford and Cambridge men—you know, that's like Sewanee and University of Georgia are here—and of course I've read a lot of English novels."

Jim was interested, amazed.

"D'you ever hear of Lady Diana Manners?" she asked earnestly.

No, Jim had not.

"Well, she's what I'd like to be. Dark, you know, like me, and wild as sin. She's the girl who rode her horse up the steps of some cathedral or church or something and all the novelists made their heroines do it afterwards."

Jim nodded politely. He was out of his depths.

"Pass the bottle," suggested Nancy. "I'm going to take another little one. A little drink wouldn't hurt a baby.

"You see," she continued, again breathless after a draught. "People over there have style. Nobody has style here. I mean the boys here aren't really worth dressing up for or doing sensational things for. Don't you know?"

"I suppose so—I mean I suppose not," murmured Jim.

"And I'd like to do 'em an' all. I'm really the only girl in town that has style."

She stretched out her arms and yawned pleasantly.

"Pretty evening."

"Sure is," agreed Jim.

"Like to have boat," she suggested dreamily. "Like to sail out on a silver lake, say the Thames, for instance. Have champagne and caviare sandwiches along. Have about eight people. And one of the men would jump overboard to amuse the party and get drowned like a man did with Lady Diana Manners once."

"Did he do it to please her?"

"Didn't mean to drown himself to please her. He just meant to jump overboard and make everybody laugh."

"I reckin they just died laughin' when he drowned."

"Oh, I suppose they laughed a little," she admitted. "I imagine she did, anyway. She's pretty hard, I guess—like I am."

"You hard?"

"Like nails." She yawned again and added, "Give me a little more from that bottle."

Jim hesitated but she held out her hand defiantly.

"Don't treat me like a girl," she warned him. "I'm not like any girl *you* ever saw." She considered. "Still, perhaps you're right. You got—you got old head on young shoulders."

She jumped to her feet and moved toward the door. The Jelly-bean rose also.

"Good-bye," she said politely, "good-bye. Thanks, Jelly-bean."

Then she stepped inside and left him wide-eyed upon the porch.

III

At twelve o'clock a procession of cloaks issued single file from the women's dressing-room and, each one pairing with a coated beau like dancers meeting in a cotillion figure, drifted through the door with sleepy happy laughter—through the door into the dark where autos backed and snorted and parties called to one another and gathered around the water-cooler.

Jim, sitting in his corner, rose to look for Clark. They had met at eleven; then Clark had gone in to dance. So, seeking him, Jim wandered into the soft-drink stand that had once been a bar. The room was deserted except for a sleepy Negro dozing behind the counter and two boys lazily fingering a pair of dice at one of the tables. Jim was about to leave them when he saw Clark coming in. At the same moment Clark looked up.

"Hi, Jim!" he commanded. "C'mon over and help us with this bottle. I guess there's not much left, but there's one all around."

Nancy, the man from Savannah, Marylyn Wade, and Joe Ewing were lolling and laughing in the doorway. Nancy caught Jim's eye and winked at him humorously.

They drifted over to a table and arranging themselves around it waited for the waiter to bring ginger ale. Jim, faintly ill at ease, turned his eyes on Nancy, who had drifted into a nickel crap game with the two boys at the next table.

"Bring them over here." suggested Clark.

Joe looked around.

"We don't want to draw a crowd. It's against club rules."

"Nobody's around," insisted Clark, "except Mr. Taylor. He's walking up and down like a wild-man trying to find out who let all the gasolene out of his car."

There was a general laugh.

"I bet a million Nancy got something on her shoe again. You can't park when she's around."

"O Nancy, Mr. Taylor's looking for you!"

Nancy's cheeks were glowing with excitement over the game. "I haven't seen his silly little flivver in two weeks."

Jim felt a sudden silence. He turned and saw an individual of uncertain age standing in the doorway.

Clark's voice punctuated the embarrassment.

"Won't you join us, Mr. Taylor?"

"Thanks."

Mr. Taylor spread his unwelcome presence over a chair. "Have to, I'm waiting till they dig me up some gasolene. Somebody got funny with my car."

His eyes narrowed and he looked quickly from one to the other. Jim wondered what he had heard from the doorway—tried to remember what had been said.

"I'm right tonight," Nancy sang out, "and my four bits is in the ring."

"Faded!" snapped Taylor suddenly.

"Why, Mr. Taylor, I didn't know you shot craps!" Nancy was overjoyed to find that he had seated himself and instantly covered her bet. They had openly disliked each other since the night she had definitely discouraged a series of rather pointed advances.

"All right, babies, do it for your mama. Just one little seven." Nancy was *cooing* to the dice. She rattled them with a brave underhand flourish, and rolled them out on the table.

"Ah-h! I suspected it. And now again with the dollar up."

Five passes to her credit found Taylor a bad loser. She was making it personal, and after each success Jim watched triumph flutter across her face. She was doubling with each throw—such luck could scarcely last.

"Better go easy," he cautioned her timidly.

"Ah, but watch this one," she whispered. It was eight on the dice and she called her number.

"Little Ada, this time we're going South."

Ada from Decatur rolled over the table. Nancy was flushed and half-hysterical, but her luck was holding. She drove the pot up and up, refusing to drag. Taylor was drumming with his fingers on the table, but he was in to stay.

Then Nancy tried for a ten and lost the dice. Taylor seized them avidly. He shot in silence, and in the hush of excitement the clatter of one pass after another on the table was the only sound.

Now Nancy had the dice again, but her luck had broken. An hour passed. Back and forth it went. Taylor had been at it again—and again and again. They were even at last—Nancy lost her ultimate five dollars.

"Will you take my check," she said quickly, "for fifty, and we'll shoot it all?" Her voice was a little unsteady and her hand shook as she reached to the money.

Clark exchanged an uncertain but alarmed glance with Joe Ewing. Taylor shot again. He had Nancy's check.

"How 'bout another?" she said wildly. "Jes' any bank'll do—money everywhere as a matter of fact."

Jim understood—the "good old corn" he had given her—the "good old corn" she had taken since. He wished he dared interfere—a girl of that age and position would hardly have two bank accounts. When the clock struck two he contained himself no longer.

"May I—can't you let me roll 'em for you?" he suggested, his low, lazy voice a little strained.

Suddenly sleepy and listless, Nancy flung the dice down before him.

"All right—old boy! As Lady Diana Manners says, 'Shoot 'em, Jelly-bean'— My luck's gone."

"Mr. Taylor," said Jim, carelessly, "we'll shoot for one of those there checks against the cash."

Half an hour later Nancy swayed forward and clapped him on the back.

"Stole my luck, you did." She was nodding her head sagely.

Jim swept up the last check and putting it with the others tore them into confetti and scattered them on the floor. Someone started singing, and Nancy, kicking her chair backward, rose to her feet.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she announced. "Ladies—that's you, Marylyn. I want to tell the world that Mr. Jim Powell, who is a well-known Jelly-bean of this city, is an exception to a great rule—'lucky in dice

—unlucky in love.' He's lucky in dice, and as matter of fact I—I *love* him. Ladies and gentlemen, Nancy Lamar, famous dark-haired beauty often featured in the *Herald* as one th' most popular members of younger set as other girls are often featured in this particular case. Wish to announce—wish to announce, anyway, gentlemen—" She tipped suddenly. Clark caught her and restored her balance.

"My error," she laughed, "she stoops to—stoops to—anyways— We'll drink to Jelly-bean . . . Mr. Jim Powell, King of the Jelly-beans."

And a few minutes later as Jim waited hat in hand for Clark in the darkness of that same corner of the porch where she had come searching for gasolene, she appeared suddenly beside him.

"Jelly-bean," she said, "are you here, Jelly-bean? I think—" and her slight unsteadiness seemed part of an enchanted dream—"I think you deserve one of my sweetest kisses for that, Jelly-bean."

For an instant her arms were around his neck—her lips were pressed to his.

"I'm a wild part of the world, Jelly-bean, but you did me a good turn."

Then she was gone, down the porch, over the cricket-loud lawn. Jim saw Merritt come out the front door and say something to her angrily—saw her laugh and, turning away, walk with averted eyes to his car. Marylyn and Joe followed, singing a drowsy song about a Jazz baby.

Clark came out and joined Jim on the steps. "All pretty lit, I guess," he yawned. "Merritt's in a mean mood. He's certainly off Nancy."

Over east along the golf course a faint rug of gray spread itself across the feet of the night. The party in the car began to chant a chorus as the engine warmed up.

"Good-night, everybody," called Clark.

"Good-night, Clark."

"Good-night."

There was a pause, and then a soft, happy voice added,

"Good-night, Jelly-bean."

The car drove off to a burst of singing. A rooster on a farm across the way took up a solitary mournful crow, and behind them a last negro waiter turned out the porch light. Jim and Clark strolled over toward the Ford, their shoes crunching raucously on the gravel drive.

"Oh boy!" sighed Clark softly, "how you can set those dice!"

It was still too dark for him to see the flush on Jim's thin cheeks—or to know that it was a flush of unfamiliar shame.

IV

Over Tilly's Garage a bleak room echoed all day to the rumble and snorting down-stairs and the singing of the negro washers as they turned the hose on the cars outside. It was a cheerless square of a room punctuated with a bed and a battered table on which lay a half dozen books—Joe Miller's "Slow Train Through Arkansas," "Lucile," in an old edition very much annotated in an old-fashioned hand, "The Eyes of the World," by Harold Bell Wright, and an ancient prayer-book of the Church of England with the name Alice Powell and the date 1831 written on the fly-leaf.

The east, gray when the Jelly-bean entered the garage, became a rich and vivid blue as he turned on his solitary electric light. He snapped it out again, and going to the window rested his elbows on the sill and stared into the deepening morning. With the awakening of his emotions, his first perception was a sense of futility, a dull ache at the utter grayness of his life. A wall had sprung up suddenly around him, hedging him in, a wall as definite and tangible as the white wall of his bare room. And with his perception of this wall all that had been the romance of his existence, the casualness, the light-hearted improvidence, the miraculous open-handedness of life faded out. The Jelly-bean strolling up Jackson Street humming a lazy song, known at every shop and street stand, cropful of easy greeting and local wit, sad sometimes for only the sake of sadness and the flight of time—that Jelly-bean was suddenly vanished. The very name was a reproach, a triviality. With a flood of insight he knew that Merritt must despise him, that even Nancy's kiss in the dawn would have awakened not jealousy but only a contempt for Nancy so lowering herself. And on his part the Jelly-bean had used for her a dingy subterfuge learned from the garage. He had been her moral laundry; the stains were his.

As the gray became blue, brightened and filled the room, he crossed to his bed and threw himself down on it, gripping the edges fiercely.

"I love her," he cried aloud. "God!"

As he said this something gave way within him like a lump melting

in his throat. The air cleared and became radiant with dawn, and turning over on his face he began to sob dully into the pillow.

In the sunshine of three o'clock Clark Darrow chugging painfully along Jackson Street was hailed by the Jelly-bean, who stood on the curb with his fingers in his vest pockets.

"Hi!" called Clark, bringing his Ford to an astonishing stop alongside. "Just get up?"

The Jelly-bean shook his head.

"Never did go to bed. Felt sorta restless, so I took a long walk this morning out in the country. Just got into town this minute."

"Should think you *would* feel restless. I been feeling thataway all day—"

"I'm thinkin' of leavin' town," continued the Jelly-bean, absorbed by his own thoughts. "Been thinkin' of goin' up on the farm, and takin' a little that work off Uncle Dun. Reckin I been bummin' too long."

Clark was silent and the Jelly-bean continued:

"I reckin maybe after Aunt Mamie dies I could sink that money of mine in the farm and make somethin' out of it. All my people originally came from that part up there. Had a big place."

Clark looked at him curiously.

"That's funny," he said. "This—this sort of affected me the same way."

The Jelly-bean hesitated.

"I don't know," he began slowly, "somethin' about—about that girl last night talkin' about a lady named Diana Manners—an English lady, sorta got me thinkin'!" He drew himself up and looked oddly at Clark. "I had a family once," he said defiantly.

Clark nodded.

"I know."

"And I'm the last of 'em," continued the Jelly-bean, his voice rising slightly, "and I ain't worth shucks. Name they call me by means jellweak and wobbly like. People who weren't nothin' when my folks was a lot turn up their noses when they pass me on the street."

Again Clark was silent.

"So I'm through. I'm goin' today. And when I come back to this town it's going to be like a gentleman."

Clark took out his handkerchief and wiped his damp brow.

"Reckon you're not the only one it shook up," he admitted gloomily. "All this thing of girls going round like they do is going to stop right quick. Too bad, too, but everybody'll have to see it thataway."

"Do you mean," demanded Jim in surprise, "that all that's leaked out?"

"Leaked out? How on earth could they keep it secret? It'll be announced in the papers tonight. Doctor Lamar's got to save his name somehow."

Jim put his hands on the sides of the car and tightened his long fingers on the metal.

"Do you mean Taylor investigated those checks?"

It was Clark's turn to be surprised.

"Haven't you heard what happened?"

Jim's startled eyes were answer enough.

"Why," announced Clark dramatically, "those four got another bottle of corn, got tight and decided to shock the town—so Nancy and that fella Merritt were married in Rockville at seven o'clock this morning."

A tiny indentation appeared in the metal under the Jelly-bean's fingers.

"Married?"

"Sure enough. Nancy sobered up and rushed back into town, crying and frightened to death—claimed it'd all been a mistake. First, Doctor Lamar went wild and was going to kill Merritt, but finally they got it patched up some way, and Nancy and Merritt went to Savannah on the two-thirty train."

Jim closed his eyes and with an effort overcame a sudden sickness.

"It's too bad," said Clark philosophically. "I don't mean the wedding —reckon that's all right, though I don't guess Nancy cared a darn about him. But it's a crime for a nice girl like that to hurt her family that way."

The Jelly-bean let go the car and turned away. Again something was going on inside him, some inexplicable but almost chemical change.

"Where you going?" asked Clark.

The Jelly-bean turned and looked dully back over his shoulder.

"Got to go," he muttered. "Been up too long; feelin' right sick."

"Oh."

The street was hot at three and hotter still at four, the April dust seeming to enmesh the sun and give it forth again as a world-old joke forever played on an eternity of afternoons. But at half past four a first layer of quiet fell and the shades lengthened under the awnings and heavy foliaged trees. In this heat nothing mattered. All life was weather, a waiting through the hot where events had no significance for the cool that was soft and caressing like a woman's hand on a tired forehead. Down in Georgia there is a feeling—perhaps inarticulate—that this is the greatest wisdom of the South—so after a while the Jelly-bean turned into a pool-hall on Jackson Street where he was sure to find a congenial crowd who would make all the old jokes—the ones he knew.

Analysis

F. Scott Fitzgerald, known as the interpreter of "the jazz age" which followed World War I, shows penetrating facility in depicting the lives of the young people of that period—the "flippancy, hard-boiled sentimentality, and cockeyed idealism" of the early twenties.

1. Is this a thematic story? If so, what is the theme? Is social criticism implied—i.e., the rich and the poor in conflict? Note similarities and differences between the treatment of the poor boy and the rich girl here and the poor boy and the middle-class girl in James M. Cain's "The Girl in the Storm." Point out differences in the presentation of the two "bums."

2. Point out how Fitzgerald secures a romantic and haunting atmosphere while handling very realistic material. Specify passages that create this atmosphere. What is the author's attitude toward his characters?

3. Demonstrate how the author anticipates and foreshadows the surprise ending, deliberately cushioning the shock to the reader's sensitivities so that he is well satisfied with the jelly-bean's retrogression to his former habits of living.

4. This is the "come-to-realize" type of story—the hero regenerated—as in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat." Is the Jelly-bean's temporary reform handled convincingly?

5. "The Gift of the Magi," "The Girl in the Storm," and "The Jelly-bean" all employ the boy-meets-girl pattern—the story of young love, even present in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat." With this in mind, what factors maintain reader-interest in "The Jelly-bean"?

6. Point out similarities in style and tone between O. Henry and Fitzgerald.

7. Observe dialect and idiom employed in "The Jelly-bean." Contrast to lack of dialect in Erskine Caldwell's "The People *vs.* Abe Lathan, Colored." Comment specifically apropos quality and craft stories.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940) was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, but spent most of his boyhood in New York. His schooling at Princeton was interrupted when he enlisted in the Army in 1917. During this service, when he was not sent abroad, he began his writing, continuing after the war to do advertising copy and to write stories until the success of his first novel, *This Side of Paradise,* in 1920, enabled him to devote all his time to writing. Other well-known books of his are *The Great Gatsby, All the Sad Young Men, Taps at Reveille,* and *Tales of the Jazz Age.* "The Jelly-bean" is reprinted from *Tales of the Jazz Age.*



THE SNOOPOPATHS OR FIFTY STORIES IN ONE

Stephen Leacock

THIS particular study in the follies of literature is not so much a story as a sort of essay. The average reader will therefore turn from it with a shudder. The condition of the average reader's mind is such that he can take in nothing but fiction. And it must be thin fiction at that—thin as gruel. Nothing else will "sit on his stomach."

Everything must come to the present-day reader in this form. If you wish to talk to him about religion, you must dress it up as a story and label it *Bath-sheba, or The Curse of David;* if you want to improve the reader's morals, you must write him a little thing in dialogue called *Mrs. Potiphar Dines Out.* If you wish to expostulate with him about drink you must do so through a narrative called *Red Rum*—short

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enough and easy enough for him to read it, without overstraining his mind, while he drinks cocktails.

But whatever the story is about it has got to deal—in order to be read by the average reader—with *A MAN* and *A WOMAN*. I put these words in capitals to indicate that they have got to stick out of the story with the crudity of a drawing done by a child with a burnt stick. In other words, the story has got to be snoopopathic. This is a word derived from the Greek—"snoopo"—or if there never was a Greek verb snoopo, at least there ought to have been one—and it means just what it seems to mean. Nine out of ten short stories written in America are snoopopathic.

In snoopopathic literature, in order to get its full effect, the writer generally introduces his characters simply as "the man" and "the woman." He hates to admit that they have names. He opens out with them something after this fashion:

"The Man lifted his head. He looked about him at the gaily-bedizzled crowd that besplotched the midnight cabaret with riotous patches of colour. He crushed his cigar against the brass of an Egyptian tray—'Bah!' he murmured, 'Is it worth it?' Then he let his head sink again."

You notice it? He lifted his head all the way up and let it sink all the way down, and you still don't know who he is.

For The Woman the beginning is done like this:

"The Woman clenched her white hands till the diamonds that glittered upon her fingers were buried in the soft flesh. 'The shame of it,' she murmured. Then she took from the table the telegram that lay crumpled upon it and tore it into a hundred pieces. 'He dare not!' she muttered through her closed teeth. She looked about the hotel room with its garish furniture. 'He has no right to follow me here,' she gasped."

All of which the reader has to take in without knowing who the woman is, or which hotel she is staying at, or who dare not follow her or why. But the modern reader loves to get this sort of shadowy incomplete effect. If he were told straight out that the woman's name was Mrs. Edward Dangerfield of Brick City, Montana, and that she had left her husband three days ago and that the telegram told her that he had discovered her address and was following her, the reader would refuse to go on.

This method of introducing the characters is bad enough. But the

new snoopopathic way of describing them is still worse. The Man is always detailed as if he were a horse. He is said to be "tall, well set up, with straight legs."

Great stress is always laid on his straight legs. No magazine story is acceptable now unless The Man's legs are absolutely straight. Why this is, I don't know. All my friends have straight legs—and yet I never hear them make it a subject of comment or boasting. I don't believe I have, at present, a single friend with crooked legs.

But this is not the only requirement. Not only must The Man's legs be straight, but he must be "clean-limbed," whatever that is; and of course he must have a "well-tubbed look about him." How this look is acquired, and whether it can be got with an ordinary bath and water, are things on which I have no opinion.

The Man is of course "clean-shaven." This allows him to do such necessary things as "turning his clean-shaven face towards the speaker," "laying his clean-shaven cheek in his hand," and so on. But everyone is familiar with the face of the up-to-date clean-shaven snoopopathic man. There are pictures of him by the million on magazine covers and book jackets, looking into the eyes of The Woman—he does it from a distance of about six inches—with that snoopy earnest expression of brainlessness that he always wears. How one would enjoy seeing a man —a real one with Nevada whiskers and long boots—land him one solid kick from behind.

Then comes The Woman of the snoopopathic story. She is always "beautifully groomed" (Who these grooms are that do it, and where they can be hired, I don't know), and she is said to be "exquisitely gowned."

It is peculiar about The Woman that she never seems to wear a *dress* —always a "gown." Why this is, I cannot tell. In the good old stories that I used to read, when I could still read for the pleasure of it, the heroines—that was what they used to be called—always wore dresses. But now there is no heroine, only a woman in a gown. I wear a gown myself—at night. It is made of flannel and reaches to my feet, and when I take my candle and go out to the balcony where I sleep, the effect of it on the whole is not bad. But as to its "revealing every line of my figure"—as The Woman's gown is always said to—and as to its "suggesting even more than it reveals"—well, it simply does *not*. So when I talk of "gowns" I speak of something that I know all about.

Yet whatever The Woman does, her "gown" is said to "cling" to her. Whether in the street or in a cabaret or in the drawing-room, it "clings." If by any happy chance she throws a lace wrap about her, then *it* clings; and if she lifts her gown—as she is apt to—it shows—not what I should have expected—but a *jupon,* and even that clings. What a *jupon* is I don't know. With my gown, I never wear one. These people I have described, The Man and The Woman—The Snoopopaths—are, of course, not husband and wife, or brother and sister, or anything so simple and old-fashioned as that. She is someone else's wife. She is *The Wife of the Other Man.* Just what there is, for the reader, about other men's wives, I don't understand. I know tons of them that I wouldn't walk round a block for. But the reading public goes wild over them. The old-fashioned heroine was unmarried. That spoiled the whole story. You could see the end from the beginning. But with Another Man's Wife, the way is blocked. Something has *got* to happen that would seem almost obvious to anyone.

The writer, therefore, at once puts the two snoopos—The Man and The Woman—into a frightfully indelicate position. The more indelicate it is, the better. Sometimes she gets into his motor by accident after the theatre, or they both engage the drawing-room of a Pullman car by mistake, or else, best of all, he is brought accidentally into her room at a hotel at night. There is something about a hotel room at night, apparently, which throws the modern reader into convulsions. It is always easy to arrange a scene of this sort. For example, taking the sample beginning that I gave above, The Man—whom I left sitting at the cabaret table, above, rises unsteadily—it is the recognised way of rising in a cabaret—and, settling the reckoning with the waiter, staggers into the street. For myself I never do a reckoning with the waiter. I just pay the bill as he adds it, and take a chance on it.

As The Man staggers into the "night air," the writer has time—just a little time, for the modern reader is impatient—to explain who he is and why he staggers. He is rich. That goes without saying. All clean-limbed men with straight legs are rich. He owns copper mines in Montana. All well-tubbed millionaires do. But he has left them, left everything, because of the Other Man's Wife. It was that or madness—or worse. He had told himself so a thousand times. (This little touch about "worse" is used in all the stories. I don't just understand what the "worse" means. But snoopopathic readers reach for it with great readi-

ness.) So The Man had come to New York (the only place where stories are allowed to be laid) under an assumed name, to forget, to drive her from his mind. He had plunged into the mad round of—I never could find it myself, but it must be there, and as they all plunge into it, it must be as full of them as a sheet of Tanglefoot is of flies.

"As The Man walked home to his hotel, the cool, night air steadied him, but his brain is still filled with the fumes of the wine he had drunk." Notice these "fumes." It must be great to float round with them in one's brain, where they apparently lodge. I have often tried to find them, but I never can. Again and again I have said, "Waiter, bring me a Scotch whiskey and soda with fumes." But I can never get them.

Thus goes The Man to his hotel. Now it is in a room in this same hotel that The Woman is sitting, and in which she has crumpled up the telegram. It is to this hotel that she has come when she left her husband, a week ago. The readers know, without even being told, that she left him "to work out her own salvation"—driven, by his cold brutality, beyond the breaking point. And there is laid upon her soul, as she sits there with clenched hands, the dust and ashes of a broken marriage and a loveless life, and the knowledge, too late, of all that might have been.

And it is to this hotel that The Woman's Husband is following her.

But The Man does not know that she is in the hotel; nor that she has left her husband; it is only accident that brings them together. And it is only by accident that he has come into her room, at night, and stands there—rooted to the threshold.

Now as a matter of fact, in real life, there is nothing at all in the simple fact of walking into the wrong room of a hotel by accident. You merely apologise and go out. I had this experience myself only a few days ago. I walked right into a lady's room—next door to my own. But I simply said, "Oh, I beg your pardon, I thought this was No. 343."

"No," she said, "this is 341."

She did not rise and "confront" me, as they always do in the snoopopathic stories. Neither did her eyes flash, nor her gown cling to her as she rose. Nor was her gown made of "rich old stuff." No, she merely went on reading her newspaper.

"I must apologise," I said. "I am a little short-sighted, and very often a *one* and a *three* look so alike that I can't tell them apart. I'm afraid—"

"Not at all," said the lady. "Good evening."

"You see," I added, "this room and my own being so alike, and mine being 343 and this being 341, I walked in before I realised that instead of walking into 343 I was walking into 341."

She bowed in silence, without speaking, and I felt that it was now the part of exquisite tact to retire quietly without further explanation, or at least with only a few murmured words about the possibility of to-morrow being even colder than to-day. I did so, and the affair ended with complete *savoir faire* on both sides.

But the Snoopopaths, Man and Woman, can't do this sort of thing, or, at any rate, the snoopopathic writer won't let them. The opportunity is too good to miss. As soon as The Man comes into The Woman's room—before he knows who she is, for she has her back to him—he gets into a condition dear to all snoopopathic readers.

His veins simply "surged." His brain beat against his temples in mad pulsation. His breath "came and went in quick, short pants." (This last might perhaps be done by one of the hotel bellboys, but otherwise it is hard to imagine.)

And The Woman—"Noiseless as his step had been she seemed to *sense* his presence. A wave seemed to sweep over her—" She turned and rose "fronting him full." This doesn't mean that he was full when she fronted him. Her gown—but we know about that already. "It was a coward's trick," she panted.

Now if The Man had had the kind of *savoir faire* that I have, he would have said: "Oh, pardon me! I see this room is 341. My own room is 343, and to me a *one* and a *three* often look so alike that I seem to have walked into 341 while looking for 343." And he could have explained in two words that he had no idea that she was in New York, was not following her, and not proposing to interfere with her in any way. And she would have explained also in two sentences why and how she came to be there. But this wouldn't do. Instead of it, The Man and The Woman go through the grand snoopopathic scene which is so intense that it needs what is really a new kind of language to convey it.

"Helene," he croaked, reaching out his arms—his voice tensed with the infinity of his desire.

"Back," she iced. And then, "Why have you come here?" she hoarsed. "What business have you here?"

"None," he glooped, "none. I have no business." They stood sensing one another.

"I thought you were in Philadelphia," she said—her gown clinging to every fibre of her as she spoke.

"I was," he wheezed.

"And you left it?" she sharped, her voice tense.

"I left it," he said, his voice glumping as he spoke. "Need I tell you why?" He had come nearer to her. She could hear his pants as he moved.

"No, no," she gurgled. "You left it. It is enough. I can understand"—she looked bravely up at him—"I can understand any man leaving it." Then as he moved still nearer her, there was the sound of a sudden swift step in the corridor. The door opened and there stood before them—The Other Man, the Husband of The Woman—Edward Dangerfield.

This, of course, is the grand snoopopathic climax, when the author gets all three of them—The Man, The Woman, and The Woman's Husband—in a hotel room at night. But notice what happens.

He stood in the opening of the doorway looking at them, a slight smile upon his lips. "Well?" he said. Then he entered the room and stood for a moment quietly looking into The Man's face.

"So," he said, "it was you." He walked into the room and laid the light coat that he had been carrying over his arm upon the table. He drew a cigar case from his waistcoat pocket.

"Try one of these Havanas," he said.

Observe the *calm* of it. This is what the snoopopath loves—no rage, no blustering—calmness, cynicism. He walked over towards the mantelpiece and laid his hat upon it. He set his boot upon the fender.

"It was cold this evening," he said. He walked over to the window and gazed a moment into the dark.

"This is a nice hotel," he said. (This scene is what the author and the reader love; they hate to let it go. They'd willingly keep the man walking up and down for hours saying "Well!")

The Man raised his head! "Yes, it's a good hotel," he said. Then he let his head fall again.

This kind of thing goes on until, if possible, the reader is persuaded into thinking that there is nothing going to happen. Then:—

"He turned to The Woman. 'Go in there,' he said, pointing to the bedroom door. Mechanically she obeyed." This, by the way, is the first

intimation that the reader has that the room in which they were sitting was not a bedroom. The two men were alone. Dangerfield walked over to the chair where he had thrown his coat.

"I bought this coat in St. Louis last fall," he said. His voice was quiet, even passionless. Then from the pocket of the coat he took a revolver and laid it on the table. Marsden watched him without a word.

"Do you see this pistol?" said Dangerfield.

Marsden raised his head a moment and let it sink.

Of course the ignorant reader keeps wondering why he doesn't explain. But how can he? What is there to say? He has been found out of his own room at night. The penalty for this in all the snoopopathic stories is death. It is understood that in all the New York hotels the night porters shoot a certain number of men in the corridors every night.

"When we married," said Dangerfield, glancing at the closed door as he spoke, "I bought this and the mate to it—for her—just the same, with the monogram on the butt—see! And I said to her, 'If things ever go wrong between you and me, there is always this way out.'"

He lifted the pistol from the table, examining its mechanism. He rose and walked across the room till he stood with his back against the door, the pistol in his hand, its barrel pointing straight at Marsden's heart. Marsden never moved. Then as the two men faced one another thus, looking into one another's eyes, their ears caught a sound from behind the closed door of the inner room—a sharp, hard, metallic sound as if someone in the room within had raised the hammer of a pistol—a jewelled pistol like the one in Dangerfield's hand.

And then—

A loud report, and with a cry, the cry of a woman, one shrill despairing cry—

Or no, hang it—I can't consent to end up a story in that fashion, with the dead woman prone across the bed, the smoking pistol, with a jewel on the hilt, still clasped in her hand—the red blood welling over the white laces of her gown—while the two men gaze down upon her cold face with horror in their eyes. Not a bit. Let's end it like this:—

"A shrill despairing cry,—'Ed! Charlie! Come in here quick! Hurry! The steam coil has blown out a plug! You two boys quit talking and come in here, for Heaven's sake, and fix it.'"

And, indeed, if the reader will look back he will see there is nothing

in the dialogue to preclude it. He was misled, that's all. I merely said that Mrs. Dangerfield had left her husband a few days before. So she had—to do some shopping in New York. She thought it mean of him to follow her. And I never said that Mrs. Dangerfield had any connection whatever with The Woman with whom Marsden was in love. Not at all. He knew her, of course, because he came from Brick City. But she had thought he was in Philadelphia, and naturally she was surprised to see him back in New York. That's why she exclaimed "Back!" And as a matter of plain fact, you can't pick up a revolver without its pointing somewhere. No one said he meant to fire it.

In fact, if the reader will glance back at the dialogue—I know he has no time to, but if he does—he will see that, being something of a snoopopath himself, he has invented the whole story.

Analysis

For several decades Stephen Leacock's gentle satire has ranged through modern manners and customs, economics, education, and medieval lore in numerous volumes of familiar essays. Lawton Mackall says of Leacock's satire, "As a man of feeling he has been kind to the balloons he has popped; not pricking them maliciously, nor bashing them . . . but gently fomenting their inflation till they burst with spontaneous bang." "The Snoopopaths or Fifty Stories in One" appears here as the first of several humorous pieces.

1. Stephen Leacock announces at the beginning that "The Snoopopaths or Fifty Stories in One" is not a story but is rather a sort of essay. Carefully explain your opinion as to whether it is story or essay.

2. How does Professor Leacock attain his humor?

3. With the knowledge that he is satirizing the typical magazine story, enumerate the various weaknesses that he holds up to ridicule. "The Snoopopaths or Fifty Stories in One" was published a number of years ago. Which of Leacock's criticisms no longer apply? Which of them still hold true in the commercial magazine? In the motion pictures? In radio?

4. Which, if any, of these criticisms apply to the stories you have already studied in Part III? Do any of them hold true of any of the stories in Part II?

5. Does Leacock anywhere poke fun at himself? What radio programs derive most of their humor from self-castigation?

6. "The Snoopopaths or Fifty Stories in One" contains probably as many as a hundred clichés. Write a list of twenty of them. Of these how many might occur in your own writing?

Stephen Leacock

Stephen Leacock (1869–1944) was born in Swanmoor, Hampshire, England, but received his preparatory training in Canada at Upper Canada College, Toronto, and his B.A. degree from the University of Toronto in 1891. In 1903 the University of Chicago granted him his Ph.D. degree. Thereafter he received many honorary degrees from various colleges and universities. From 1901 until his retirement in 1936 he taught at McGill University of Montreal as a professor of political economy, and from 1908 until his retirement he acted as head of his department. He was widely known both in England and the United States not only as a writer but as a lecturer on humorous themes. His writings were both academic and popular in such volumes as *Elements of Political Science* (1906), *Literary Lapses* (1910), *Nonsense Novels* (1911), *Iron Man and Tin Woman* (1929).



ALL'S WELL WITH BINGO

P. G. Wodehouse

A BEAN and a Crumpet were in the smoking room of the Drones Club having a quick one before lunch, when an Egg who had been seated at the writing table in the corner rose and approached them.

"How many 'r's' in 'intolerable'?" he asked.

"Two," said the Crumpet. "Why?"

"I am writing a strong letter to the committee," explained the Egg, "drawing their attention to the intolerable . . . Great Scott!" he cried, breaking off. "There he goes again!"

A spasm contorted his face. Outside in the passage a fresh young voice had burst into a gay song with a good deal of vo-de-o-de-o about it. The Bean cocked an attentive ear as it died away in the direction of the dining room.

"Who is this linnet?" he enquired.

From *The Crime Wave at Blandings Castle*, by P. G. Wodehouse, copyright 1931, 1936, 1937 by Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

"Bingo Little, blast him! He's always singing nowadays. That's what I'm writing my strong letter to the committee about—the intolerable nuisance of this incessant heartiness of his. Because it isn't only his singing. He slaps backs. Only yesterday he came sneaking up behind me in the bar and sloshed me between the shoulder blades, saying 'Aha!' as he did so. Might have choked me. How many 's's' in 'incessant'?"

"Three," said the Crumpet.

"Thanks," said the Egg.

He returned to the writing table. The Bean seemed perplexed.

"Odd," he said. "Very odd. How do you account for young Bingo carrying on like this?"

"Just joie de vivre."

"But he's married. Didn't he marry some female novelist or other?"

"That's right. Rosie M. Banks, authoress of *Only A Factory Girl, Mervyn Keene, Clubman, 'Twas Once In May,* and other works. You see her name everywhere. I understand she makes a packet with the pen."

"I didn't know married men had any joie de vivre."

"Not many, of course. But Bingo's union has been an exceptionally happy one. He and the other half of the sketch have hit it off from the start like a couple of lovebirds."

"Well, he oughtn't to slap backs about it."

"You don't know the inside facts. Bingo is no mere wanton backslapper. What has made him that way at the moment is the fact that he recently had a most merciful escape. There was within a toucher of being very serious trouble in the home."

"But you said they were like a couple of lovebirds."

"Quite. But even with lovebirds circumstances can arise which will cause the female lovebird to get above herself and start throwing her weight about. If Mrs Bingo had got on Bingo what at one time it appeared inevitable that she must get on him, it would have kept her in conversation for the remainder of their married lives. She is a sweet little thing, one of the best, but women are women and I think that there can be no doubt that she would have continued to make passing allusions to the affair right up to the golden wedding day. The way Bingo looks at it is that he has escaped the fate that is worse than death, and I am inclined to agree with him."

The thing started one morning when Bingo returned to the love nest for a bite of lunch after taking the Pekingese for a saunter. He was in the hall trying to balance an umbrella on the tip of his nose, his habit when at leisure, and Mrs Bingo came out of her study with a wrinkled brow and a couple of spots of ink on her chin.

"Oh, there you are," she said. "Bingo, have you ever been to Monte Carlo?"

Bingo could not help wincing a little at this. Unwittingly, the woman had touched an exposed nerve. The thing he had always wanted to do most in the world was to go to Monte Carlo, for he had a system which couldn't fail to clean out the Casino, but few places, as you are probably aware, are more difficult for a married man to sneak off to.

"No," he said with a touch of moodiness. Then, recovering his usual sunny aplomb, "Look," he said. "Watch, old partner in sickness and in health. I place the umbrella so. Then, maintaining a perfect equilibrium . . ."

"I want you to go there at once," said Mrs Bingo.

Bingo dropped the umbrella. You could have knocked him down with a toothpick. For a moment, he tells me, he thought that he must be dreaming some beautiful dream.

"It's for my book. I can't get on without some local colour."

Bingo grasped the gist. Mrs Bingo had often discussed this business of local colour with him, and he had got the strength of it. Nowadays, he knew, if you are providing wholesome fiction for the masses, you have simply got to get your atmosphere right. The customers have become cagey. They know too much. Chance your arm with the *mise en scène,* and before you can say, "What ho," you've made some bloomer and people are writing you nasty letters, beginning, "Dear Madam: Are you aware . . ."

"And I can't go myself. There's the Pen and Ink Dinner on Friday, and on Tuesday the Writers Club is giving a luncheon to Mrs Carrie Melrose Bopp, the American novelist. And any moment now I shall be coming to the part where Lord Peter Shipbourne breaks the bank. So do you think you could possibly go, Bingo darling?"

Bingo was beginning to understand how the Israelites must have felt when that manna started descending in the wilderness.

"Of course I'll go, old egg," he said heartily. "Anything I can—"

His voice trailed away. A sudden thought had come, biting into his

soul like acid. He had remembered that he hadn't a bean to his name. He had lost every penny he possessed two weeks before on a horse called Bounding Beauty which was running—if you could call it running—in the two-thirty at Haydock Park.

The trouble with old Bingo is that he will allow his cooler judgment to be warped by dreams and omens. Nobody had known better than he that by the ruling of the form book Bounding Beauty hadn't a chance; but on the eve of the race he had a nightmare in which he saw his uncle Wilberforce dancing the rumba in the nude on the steps of the National Liberal Club and, like a silly ass, accepted this as a bit of stable information. And bang, as I say, had gone every penny he had in the world.

For a moment he reeled a bit. Then he brightened. Rosie, he reasoned, would scarcely expect him to undertake an irksome job like sweating all the way over to Monte Carlo without financing the tedious expedition.

"Of course, of course, of course," he said. "Yes, rather! I'll start tomorrow. And about expenses. I suppose a hundred quid would see me through, though two would be still better, and even three wouldn't hurt . . ."

"Oh no, that's all right," said Mrs Bingo. "You won't need any money."

Bingo gulped like an ostrich swallowing a brass doorknob.

"Not . . . need . . . any . . . money?"

"Except a pound or two for tips and so on. Everything is arranged. Dora Spurgeon is at Cannes, and I'm going to phone her to get you a room at the Hôtel de Paris at Monte Carlo, and all the bills will be sent to my bank."

Bingo had to gulp a couple more times before he was able to continue holding up his end of the duologue.

"But I take it," he said in a low voice, "that you want me to hobnob with the international spies and veiled women and so forth and observe their habits carefully, don't you? This will run into money. You know what international spies are. It's champagne for them every time, and no half bots, either."

"You needn't bother about the spies. I can imagine them. All I want is the local colour. An exact description of the Rooms and the Square

and all that. Besides, if you had a lot of money, you might be tempted to gamble."

"What!" cried Bingo. "Gamble? Me?"

"No, no," said Mrs Bingo remorsefully. "I'm wronging you, of course. Still, I think I'd sooner we did it the way I've arranged."

So there you have the position of affairs, and you will not be surprised to learn that poor old Bingo made an indifferent lunch, toying with the minced chicken and pushing the roly-poly pudding away untasted. His manner during the meal was distrait, for his brain was racing like a dynamo. Somehow he had got to get the stuff. But how? How?

Bingo, you see, is not a man who finds it easy to float a really substantial loan. People know too much about his financial outlook. He will have it in sackfuls some day, of course, but until he realises on his uncle Wilberforce—who is seventy-six and may quite easily go to par—the wolf, as far as he is concerned, will always be in or about the vestibule. The public is aware of this, and it makes the market sluggish.

It seemed to him, brooding over the thing, that his only prospect for the sort of sum he required was Oofy Prosser. Oofy, while not an easy parter, is a millionaire, and a millionaire was what he required. So round about cocktail time he buzzed off to the club, only to be informed that Oofy was abroad. The disappointment was so severe that he was compelled to go to the smoking room and have a restorative. I was there when he came in, and so haggard and fishlike was his demeanour that I asked him what was up, and he told me all.

"You couldn't lend me between twenty and twenty-five or, better still, thirty quid, could you?" he said.

I said, No, I couldn't, and he heaved a long, low, quivering sigh.

"And so it goes on," he said. "That's life. Here I am with this unique opportunity of making a stupendous fortune, and crippled for lack of the essential capital. Did you ever hear of a chap called Garcia?"

"No."

"Skinned the Monte Carlo administration of a hundred thousand quid in his day. Ever hear of a chap called Darnborough?"

"No."

"Eighty-three thousand of the best was what he pocketed. Did you ever hear of a chap called Owers?"

"No."

"His winning streak lasted for more than twenty years. These three birds of whom I speak simply went to Monte Carlo and lolled back in their chairs with fat cigars and the Casino just thrust the money on them. And I don't suppose any of them had a system like mine. Oh hell, oh blast, oh damn, a thousand curses!" said Bingo.

Well, there isn't much you can say when a fellow's in the depths like that. The only thing I could suggest was that he should put some little trinket up the spout temporarily. His cigarette case, for instance, I said, and it was then that I learned that that cigarette case of his is not the solid gold we have always imagined. Tin, really. And except for the cigarette case, it appeared, the only trinket he had ever possessed was a diamond brooch which, being in funds at the moment as the result of a fortunate speculation at Catterick Bridge, he had bought Mrs Bingo for a birthday present.

It all seemed pretty hopeless, accordingly, so I merely offered him my heartfelt sympathy and another snootful. And next morning he steamed off on the eleven-o'clock express, despair in his soul and in his pocket a notebook, four pencils, his return ticket, and about three pounds for tips and so on. And shortly before lunch on the following day he was alighting at Monte Carlo station.

I don't know if you remember a song some years ago that went "Ti-um-ti-um-ti-um-ti-um, ti-um-ti-um-ti-ay," and then, after a bit more of that, finished up:

"*Ti-um-ti-um-ti-um-ti-um-ti*-um,
The curse of an aching heart."

You don't hear it much nowadays, but at one time you were extraordinarily apt to get it shot at you by basses at smoking concerts and entertainments in aid of the Church Organ Fund in the old village hall. They would pause for a moment after the *"um"* and take a breath that came up from their anklebones, and then:

"It's the curse of an a-ching heart."

Most unpleasant, of course, the whole thing, and I wouldn't have mentioned it, only the phrase absolutely puts in a nutshell the way

poor old Bingo felt during his first two days at Monte Carlo. He had an aching heart, and he cursed like billy-o. And I'm not surprised, poor chap, for he was suffering severe torments.

All day long, though it was like twisting the knife in the wound, he would wander through the Rooms, trying out that system of his on paper; and the more he tried it out, the more ironclad it revealed itself. Simply couldn't lose.

By bedtime on the second night he found that, if he had been playing in hundred-franc chips, he would have been no less than two hundred and fifty pounds ahead—just like that. In short, there was all that stuff—his for the picking up, as you might say—and he couldn't get it.

Garcia would have got it. Darnborough would have got it. So would Owers. But he couldn't. Simply, mark you, for lack of a trifling spot of initial capital which a fellow like Oofy Prosser could have slipped him and never felt it. Pretty bitter.

And then, on the third morning, as he sat glancing through the continental New York *Herald* over the breakfast table, he saw a news item which brought him up in his chair with a jerk, choking over his coffee.

Among recent arrivals at the Hotel Magnifique at Nice, it said, were their serene highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Graustark, His Majesty the ex-King of Ruritania, Lord Percy Poffin, the Countess of Goffin, Major General Sir Everard Slurk, K.V.O., and Mr Prosser.

Well, of course, it might be some other brand of Prosser, but Bingo didn't think so. A hotel where serene highnesses were to be found was just the place for which a bally snob like Oofy would have made a beeline. He rushed to the telephone and was presently in communication with the concierge.

"Hullo? Yes?" said the concierge. "This is the Hotel Magnifique. Hall porter speaking."

"Dites-moi," said Bingo. "Esker-vous avez dans votre hotel un monsieur nommé Prosser?"

"Yes sir. Quite correct. There is a Mr Prosser staying in the hotel."

"Est-il un oiseau avec beaucoup de . . . Oh hell, what's the French for 'pimples'?"

"The word you are trying to find is *bouton*," said the concierge. "Yes sir, Mr Prosser is liberally pimpled."

"Then put me through to his room," said Bingo. And pretty soon he heard a sleepy and familiar voice hullo-ing.

"Hullo, Oofy, old man," he cried. "This is Bingo Little."

"Oh God!" said Oofy, and something in his manner warned Bingo that it would be well to proceed with snakiness and caution.

There were, he knew, two things which rendered Oofy Prosser a difficult proposition for the ear biter. In the first place, owing to his habit of mopping it up at late parties, he nearly always had a dyspeptic headache. In the second place, his position as the official moneyed man of the Drones Club had caused him to become shy and wary, like a bird that's been a good deal shot over. You can't touch a chap like that on the telephone at ten in the morning. It would, he perceived, if solid results were to be obtained, be necessary to sweeten Oofy.

"I just this minute saw in the paper that you were in these parts, Oofy, old man. A wonderful surprise it was. Gosh, I said. Golly, I said. Dear old Oofy, I said. Well, well, well!"

"Get on with it," said Oofy. "What do you want?"

"Why, to give you lunch, of course, old chap," said Bingo.

Yes, he had made the great decision. That money which he had been earmarking for tips must be diverted to another end. It might lead to his having to sneak out of the hotel at the conclusion of his visit with his face scarlet and his ears hanging down, but the risk had to be taken. Nothing venture, nothing have.

At the other end of the telephone he heard a sort of choking gasp.

"There must be something wrong with this wire," said Oofy. "It sounds just as if you were saying you want to give me lunch."

"So I am."

"*Give* me lunch?"

"That's right."

"What, pay the bill?"

"Yes."

There was a silence.

"I must send this to Ripley," said Oofy.

"Ripley?"

"The 'Believe-it-or-not' man."

"Oh?" said Bingo. He was not quite sure that he liked Oofy's attitude, but he remained sunny. "Well, where and when? What time? What place?"

"We may as well lunch here. Come fairly early, because I'm going to the races this afternoon."

"Right," said Bingo. "I'll be on the mat at one sharp."

And at one sharp there he was, his little all in his pocket. His emotions, he tells me, as he drove in on the Monte Carlo–Nice bus, were mixed. One moment, he was hoping that Oofy would have his usual dyspeptic headache, because that would blunt his appetite and enable him to save something out of the wreck; the next, he was reminding himself that an Oofy with dull, shooting pains about the temples would be less likely to come across. It was all very complex.

Well, as it turned out, Oofy's appetite was the reverse of blunted. The extraordinary position in which he found himself—guest and not host to a fellow member of the Drones—seemed to have put an edge on it. It is not too much to say that from the very outset he ate like a starving python. The light, casual way in which he spoke to the head-waiter about hothouse grapes and asparagus froze Bingo to the marrow. And when—from force of habit, no doubt—he called for the wine list and ordered a nice, dry champagne, it began to look to Bingo as if the bill for this binge was going to resemble something submitted to Congress by President Roosevelt in aid of the American farmer.

However, though once or twice—notably when Oofy started wading into the caviare—he had to clench his fists and summon up all his iron self-control, he did not on the whole repine. Each moment, as the feast proceeded, he could see his guest becoming more and more mellow. It seemed merely a question of time before the milk of human kindness would come gushing out of him as if the dam had burst. Feeling that a cigar and liqueur ought just about to do the trick, Bingo ordered them; and Oofy, unbuttoning the last three buttons of his waistcoat, leaned back in his chair.

"Well," said Oofy, beaming, "this will certainly be something to tell my grandchildren. I mean, that I once lunched with a member of the Drones Club and didn't get stuck with the bill. Listen, Bingo, I'd like to do something for you in return."

Bingo felt like some great actor who has received his cue. He leaned forward and relighted Oofy's cigar with a loving hand. He also flicked a speck of dust off his coatsleeve.

"And what I'm going to do is this. I'm going to give you a tip. On

these races this afternoon. Back Spotted Dog for the Prix Honoré Sauvan. A sure winner."

"Thanks, Oofy, old man," said Bingo. "That's splendid news. If you will lend me a tenner, then, Oofy, old boy, I'll put it on."

"What do you want me to lend you a tenner for?"

"Because, after I've paid the lunch bill, Oofy, old chap, I shan't have any money."

"You won't need any money," said Oofy, and Bingo wondered how many more people were going to make this blithering remark to him. "My London bookie is staying here. He will accommodate you in credit, seeing that you are a friend of mine."

"But doesn't it seem a pity to bother him with a lot of extra book-keeping, Oofy, old fellow?" said Bingo, flicking another speck of dust off Oofy's other coat sleeve. "Much better if you would just lend me a tenner."

"Joking aside," said Oofy, "I think I'll have another kümmel."

And it was at this moment, when the conversation appeared to have reached a deadlock, and there seemed no hope of finding a formula, that a stout, benevolent-looking man approached their table. From the fact that he and Oofy at once began to talk odds and figures, Bingo deduced that this must be the bookie from London.

"And my friend, Mr Little," said Oofy, in conclusion, "wants a tenner on Spotted Dog for the Prix Honoré Sauvan."

And Bingo was just about to shake his head and say that he didn't think his wife would like him to bet, when the glorious Riviera sunshine, streaming in through the window by which they sat, lit up Oofy's face and he saw that it was a perfect mass of spots. A moment later, he perceived that the bookie had a pink spot on his nose and the waiter, who was now bringing the bill, a bountifully spotted forehead. A thrill shot through him. These things, he knew, are sent to us for a purpose.

"Right ho," he said. "A tenner at the current odds."

And then they all went off to the races. The Prix Honoré Sauvan was the three o'clock. A horse called Lilium won it. Kerry second, Maubourget third, Ironside fourth, Irresistible fifth, Sweet and Lovely sixth, Spotted Dog seventh. Seven ran. So there was Bingo owing ten quid to this bookie and not a chance of a happy ending unless the fellow would consent to let the settlement stand over for a bit.

So he buttonholed the bookie and suggested this, and the bookie said, certainly.

"Certainly," said the bookie. He put his hand on Bingo's shoulder and patted it. "I like you, Mr Little," he said.

"Do you?" said Bingo, putting his hand on the bookie's and patting that. "Do you, old pal?"

"I do, indeed," said the bookie. "You remind me of my little boy Percy, who took the knock the year Worcester Sauce won the Jubilee Handicap. Bronchial trouble. So when you ask me to wait for my money, I say, of course I'll wait for my money. Suppose we say till next Friday?"

Bingo blenched a bit. The period he had had in mind had been something more along the lines of a year or eighteen months.

"Well," he said, "I'll try to brass up then . . . but you know how it is . . . you mustn't be disappointed if . . . this world-wide money shortage . . . circumstances over which I have no control . . ."

"You think you may not be able to settle?"

"I'm a bit doubtful."

The bookie pursed his lips.

"I do hope you will," he said, "and I'll tell you why. It's silly to be superstitious, I know, but I can't help remembering that every single bloke that's ever done me down for money has had a nasty accident occur to him. Time after time I've seen it happen."

"Have you?" said Bingo, beginning to exhibit symptoms of bronchial trouble like the late Percy.

"I have, indeed," said the bookie. "Time after time after time. It almost seems like some kind of fate. Only the other day there was a fellow with a ginger moustache named Watherspoon. Owed me fifty for Plumpton and pleaded the gaming act. And would you believe it, less than a week later he was found unconscious in the street—must have got into some unpleasantness of some kind—and had to have six stitches."

"Six!"

"Seven. I was forgetting the one over his left eye. Makes you think, that sort of thing does. Hoy, Erbut," he called.

A frightful plug-ugly appeared from nowhere, as if he had been a djinn and the bookie had rubbed a lamp.

"Erbut," said the bookie, "I want you to meet Mr Little, Erbut. Take a good look at him. You'll remember him again?"

The plug-ugly drank Bingo in. His eye was cold and gray, like a parrot's.

"Yus," he said. "Yus, I won't forget him."

"Good," said the bookie. "That will be all, Erbut. Then about that money, Mr Little, we'll say Friday without fail, shall we?"

Bingo tottered away and sought out Oofy.

"Oofy, old man," he said, "it is within your power to save a human life."

"Well, I'm jolly well not going to," said Oofy, who had now got one of his dyspeptic headaches. "The more human lives that aren't saved, the better I shall like it. I loathe the human race. Any time it wants to stand in front of the Cornish Express, it will be all right with me."

"If I don't get a tenner by Friday, a fearful bounder named Erbut is going to beat me into a pulp."

"Good," said Oofy, brightening a little. "Capital. Splendid. That's fine."

Bingo then caught the bus back to Monte Carlo.

That night, he dressed for dinner moodily. He was unable to discern the bluebird. In three months from now he would be getting another quarter's allowance, but a fat lot of good that would be. In far less than three months, if he had read aright the message in Erbut's eyes, he would be in some hospital or nursing home with stitches all over him. How many stitches, time alone could tell. He fell to musing on Watherspoon. Was it, he wondered, to be his fate to lower that ginger-moustached man's melancholy record?

His thoughts were still busy with the stitch outlook, when the telephone rang.

"Hullo," said a female voice. "Is that Rosie?"

"No," said Bingo, and might have added that the future was not, either. "I'm Mr Little."

"Oh, Mr Little, this is Dora Spurgeon. Can I speak to Rosie?"

"She isn't here."

"Well, when she comes in, will you tell her that I'm just off to Corsica in some people's yacht. We leave in an hour, so I shan't have time to

come over and see her, so will you give her my love and tell her I am sending the brooch back."

"Brooch?"

"She lent me her brooch when I left London. I think it's the one you gave her on her birthday. She told me to take special care of it, and I don't feel it's safe having it with me in Corsica—so many brigands about—so I am sending it by registered post to the Hôtel de Paris. Goodbye, Mr Little. I must rush."

Bingo hung up the receiver and sat down on the bed to think this over. Up to a point, of course, the situation was clear. Dora Spurgeon, a muddleheaded poop if ever there was one, obviously supposed that Mrs Bingo had accompanied him to Monte Carlo. No doubt Mrs Bingo had gone to some pains in her telephone call to make it thoroughly clear that she was remaining in London, but it was no good trying to drive things into a head like Dora Spurgeon's by means of the spoken word. You needed a hammer. The result was that on the morrow that brooch which he had given Mrs Bingo would arrive at the hotel.

So far, as I say, Bingo found nothing to perplex him. But what he could not make up his mind about was this: should he, after he had pawned the brooch, send the proceeds straight to that bookie? Or should he take the money and go and have a whack at the Casino?

Far into the silent night he pondered without being able to reach a decision, but next morning everything seemed to clarify, as is so often the way after a night's sleep, and he wondered how he could ever have been in doubt. Of course he must have a whack at the Casino.

The catch about sending the money to the bookie was that, while this policy would remove from his future the dark shadow of Erbut, it would not make for contentment and happiness in the home. When Mrs Bingo discovered that he had shoved her brooch up the spout in order to pay a racing debt, friction would ensue. He unquestionably had a moral claim on the brooch—bought with his hard-earned money—the thing, you might say, was really his to do what he liked with—nevertheless, something told him that friction would ensue.

By going and playing his system he would avoid all unpleasantness. It was simply a matter of strolling into the Rooms and taking the stuff away.

And, as it turned out, he couldn't have paid off Erbut's bookie, any-

way, because the local popshop would only give him a fiver on the brooch. He pleaded passionately for more, but the cove behind the counter was adamant. So, taking the fiver, he lunched sparingly at a pub up the hill, and shortly after two o'clock was in the arena, doing his stuff.

I have never been able quite to get the hang of that system of Bingo's. He has explained it to me a dozen times, but it remains vague. However, the basis of it, the thing that made it so frightfully ingenious, was that instead of doubling your stake when you lost, as in all these other systems, you doubled it when you won. It involved a lot of fancy-work with a pencil and a bit of paper, because you had to write down figures and add figures and scratch figures out, but that, I gathered, was the nub of the thing—you doubled up when you won, thus increasing your profits by leaps and bounds and making the authorities look pretty sick.

The only snag about it was that in order to do this you first had to win, which Bingo didn't.

I don't suppose there is anything—not even Oofy Prosser—that has a nastier disposition than the wheel at Monte Carlo. It seems to take a sinister pleasure in doing down the common people. You can play mentally by the hour and never get a losing spin, but once you put real money up the whole aspect of things alters. Poor old Bingo hadn't been able to put a foot wrong so long as he stuck to paper punting, but he now found himself in the soup from the start.

There he stood, straining like a greyhound at the leash, waiting for his chance of doubling up, only to see all his little capital raked in except one solitary hundred-franc chip. And when with a weary gesture he bunged this on black, up came zero and it was swept away.

And scarcely had he passed through this gruelling spiritual experience, when a voice behind him said, "Oh, there you are!" and, turning, he found himself face to face with Mrs Bingo.

He stood gaping at her, his heart bounding about inside him like an adagio dancer with nettle rash. For an instant, he tells me, he was under the impression that this was no flesh and blood creature that stood before him, but a phantasm. He thought that she must have been run over by a bus or something in London, and that this was her spectre looking in to report, as spectres do.

"You!" he said, like someone in a play.

"I've just arrived," said Mrs Bingo, very merry and bright.

"I—I didn't know you were coming."

"I thought I would surprise you," said Mrs Bingo, still bubbling over with joyous animation. "You see, what happened was that I was talking to Millie Pringle about my book, and she said that it was no use getting local colour about the Rooms, because a man like Lord Peter Shipbourne would never go to the Rooms—he would do all his playing at the Sporting Club. And I was just going to wire you to go there, when Mrs Carrie Melrose Bopp trod on a banana skin in the street and sprained her ankle, and the luncheon was postponed, so there was nothing to prevent me coming over, so I came. Oh, Bingo darling, isn't this jolly!"

Bingo quivered from cravat to socks. The adjective "jolly" was not the one he would have selected. And it was at this point that Mrs Bingo appeared to observe for the first time that her loved one was looking like a corpse that has been left out in the rain for a day or two.

"Bingo!" she cried. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing," said Bingo. "Nothing. Matter? How do you mean?"

"You look . . ." A wifely suspicion shot through Mrs Bingo. She eyed him narrowly. "You haven't been gambling?"

"No, no," said Bingo. He is a fellow who is rather exact in his speech, and the word "gambling," to his mind, implied that a chap had a chance of winning. All that he had done, he felt, had been to take his little bit of money and give it to the administration. You couldn't describe that as gambling. More like making a donation to a charity. "No, no," he said. "Rather not."

"I'm so glad. Oh, by the way, I found a letter from Dora Spurgeon at the hotel. She said she was sending my brooch. I suppose it will arrive this afternoon."

Bingo's gallant spirit was broken. It seemed to him that this was the end. It was all over, he felt, except the composition of the speech in which he must confess everything. And he was just turning over in his mind a few opening remarks, beginning with the words "Listen, darling," when his eye fell on the table, and there on black was a pile of chips, no less than three thousand, two hundred francs worth in all —or, looking at it from another angle, about forty quid. And as he gazed at them, wondering which of the lucky stiffs seated round the

board had got ahead of the game to that extent, the croupier at the bottom of the table caught his eye and smirked congratulatingly, as croupiers do when somebody has won a parcel and they think that there is going to be something in it for them in the way of largesse.

And Bingo, tottering on his base, suddenly realised that this piled-up wealth belonged to him. It was the increment accruing from that last hundred francs of his.

What he had forgotten, you see, was that though, when zero turns up, those who have betted on numbers, columns and what not get it in the neck, stakes on the even chances aren't scooped up—they are what is called put in prison. I mean, they just withdraw into the background for the moment, awaiting the result of the next spin. And, if that wins, out they come again.

Bingo's hundred francs had been on black, so zero had put it in prison. And then, presumably, black must have turned up, getting it out again. And, as he hadn't taken it off, it had of course stayed on black. And then, while he was immersed in conversation with Mrs Bingo about brooches, the wheel, from being a sort of mechanical Oofy Prosser, had suddenly turned into a Santa Claus. Seven more times it had come up black, putting Bingo in the position in which that system of his ought to have put him—viz. of doubling up when he won. And the result, as I say, was that the loot now amounted to the colossal sum of forty quid, more than double what he required in order to be able to pay off all his obligations and look the world in the eye again.

The relief was so terrific that Bingo tells me he came within a toucher of swooning. And it was only as he was about to snatch the stuff up and trouser it and live happily ever after—he had, indeed, actually poised himself for the spring—that he suddenly saw that there was a catch. To wit, that if he did, all must be discovered. Mrs Bingo would know that he had been gambling; she would speedily ascertain the source whence had proceeded the money he had been gambling with, and the home, if not actually wrecked, would unquestionably become about as hot for him as the inside of a baked potato.

And yet, if he left the doubloons where they were, the next spin might see them all go down the drain.

I expect you know the expression "A man's crossroads." Those were what Bingo was at, at this juncture.

There seemed just one hope—to make a face at the croupier and do

it with such consummate skill that the other would see that he wanted those thirty-two hundred francs taken off the board and put on one side till he was at liberty to come and collect. So he threw his whole soul into a face, and the croupier nodded intelligently and left the money on. Bingo, he saw, was signalling to him to let the works ride for another spin, and he admired his sporting spirit. He said something to the other croupier in an undertone—no doubt "Quel homme!" or "Epatant!" or something of that kind.

And the wheel, which now appeared definitely to have accepted the role of Bingo's rich uncle from Australia, fetched up another black.

Mrs Bingo was studying the gamesters. She didn't seem to think much of them.

"What dreadful faces these people have," she said.

Bingo did not reply. His own face at this moment was nothing to write home about, resembling more than anything else that of an anxious fiend in hell. He was watching the wheel revolve.

It came up black again, bringing his total to twelve thousand eight hundred.

And now at last it seemed that his tortured spirit was to be at rest. The croupier, having shot another smirk in his direction, was leaning forward to the pile of chips and had started scooping. Yes, all was well. At the eleventh hour the silly ass had divined the message of that face of his and was doing the needful.

Bingo drew a deep, shuddering breath. He felt like one who has passed through the furnace and, though a bit charred in spots, can once more take up the burden of life with an easy mind. Twelve thousand eight hundred francs . . . Gosh! It was over a hundred and fifty quid, more than he had ever possessed at one time since the Christmas, three years ago, when his uncle Wilberforce had come over all Dickensy as the result of lemon punch and had given him a cheque on which next day he had vainly tried to stop payment. There was a frost in the Rooms which you could have cut with a knife, but he drew it into his lungs as if it had been the finest ozone. Birds seemed to be twittering from the ceiling and soft music playing everywhere.

And then the world went to pieces again. The wheel had begun to spin, and there on black lay twelve thousand francs. The croupier, though he had scooped, hadn't scooped enough. All he had done was to remove from the board the eight hundred. On that last coup, you

see, Bingo had come up against the limit. You can't have more than twelve thousand on an even chance.

And, of course, eight hundred francs was no use to him whatever. It would enable him to pay off Erbut and the bookie, but what of the brooch?

It was at this point that he was aware that Mrs Bingo was saying something to him. He came slowly out of his trance with a where-am-I look.

"Eh?" he said.

"I said, 'Don't you think so?' "

"Think so?"

"I was saying that it didn't seem much good wasting any more time in here. Millie Pringle was quite right. Lord Peter Shipbourne would never dream of coming to a place like this. He would never stand the smell, for one thing. I have drawn him as a most fastidious man. So shall I go on to the Sporting Club . . . Bingo?"

Bingo was watching the wheel, tense and rigid. He was tense and rigid, I mean, not the wheel. The wheel was spinning.

"Bingo!"

"Hullo?"

"Shall I go on to the Sporting Club and pay our entrance fees?"

A sudden bright light came into Bingo's face, rendering it almost beautiful. His brow was bedewed with perspiration and he rather thought his hair had turned snowy white, but the map was shining like the sun at noon, and he beamed as he had seldom beamed before.

For the returns were in. The wheel had stopped. And once again black had come up, and even now the croupier was removing twelve thousand francs from the pile and adding them to the eight hundred before him.

"Yes do," said Bingo. "Do. Yes do. That'll be fine. Splendid. I think I'll just stick on here for a minute or two. I like watching these weird blokes. But you go on and I'll join you."

Twenty minutes later he did so. He walked into the Sporting Club a little stiffly, for there were forty-eight thousand francs distributed about his person, some of it in his pockets, some of it in his socks, and quite a good deal tucked inside his shirt. He did not see Mrs Bingo at first; then he caught sight of her sitting over in the bar with a bottle of vittel in front of her.

"What ho, what ho," he said, lumbering up.

Then he paused, for it seemed to him that her manner was rummy. Her face was sad and set, her eyes dull. She gave him an odd look, and an appalling suspicion struck him amidships. Could it be, he asked himself, was it possible that somehow, by some mysterious wifely intuition . . .

"There you are," he said. He sat down beside her, hoping that he wasn't going to crackle. "Er—how's everything?" He paused. She was still looking rummy. "I've got that brooch," he said.

"Oh?"

"Yes. I—er—thought you might like to have it, so I—ah—nipped out and got it."

"I'm glad it arrived safely . . . Bingo!" said Mrs Bingo.

She was staring sombrely before her. Bingo's apprehension increased. He now definitely feared the worst. It was as if he could feel the soup plashing about his ankles. He took her hand in his and pressed it. It might, he felt, help. You never knew.

"Bingo," said Mrs Bingo, "we always tell each other everything, don't we?"

"Do we? Oh yes. Yes."

"Because when we got married, we decided that that was the only way. I remember your saying so on the honeymoon."

"Yes," said Bingo, licking his lips and marvelling at the depths of fatheadedness to which men can sink on their honeymoons.

"I'd hate to feel that you were concealing anything from me. It would make me wretched."

"Yes," said Bingo.

"So if you had been gambling, you would tell me, wouldn't you?"

Bingo drew a deep breath. It made him crackle all over, but he couldn't help that. He needed air. Besides, what did it matter now if he crackled like a forest fire? He threw his mind back to those opening sentences which he had composed.

"Listen, darling," he began.

"So I must tell you," said Mrs Bingo. "I've just made the most dreadful fool of myself. When I came in here, I went over to that table there to watch the play, and suddenly something came over me . . ."

Bingo uttered a snort which rang through the Sporting Club like a bugle.

"You didn't have a pop?"

"I lost over two hundred pounds in ten minutes. Oh, Bingo, can you ever forgive me?"

Bingo had still got hold of her hand, for he had been relying on the soothing effects of hanging on to it during the remarks which he had outlined. He squeezed it lovingly. Not immediately, however, because for perhaps half a minute he had felt so boneless that he could not have squeezed a grape.

"There, there!" he said.

"Oh, Bingo!"

"There, there, there!"

"You do forgive me?"

"Of course. Of course."

"Oh, Bingo," cried Mrs Bingo, her eyes like twin stars, and damp ones at that, "there's nobody like you in the world."

"Would you say that?"

"You remind me of Sir Galahad. Most husbands—"

"Ah," said Bingo, "but I understand these sudden impulses. I don't have them myself, but I understand them. Not another word. Good gosh, what's a couple of hundred quid, if it gave you a moment's pleasure?"

His emotions now almost overpowered him, so strenuously did they call for an outlet. He wanted to shout, but he couldn't shout—the croupiers would object. He wanted to give three cheers, but he couldn't give three cheers—the barman wouldn't like it. He wanted to sing, but he couldn't sing—the customers would complain.

His eye fell on the bottle of vittel.

"Ah!" said Bingo. "Darling!"

"Yes, darling?"

"Watch, darling," said Bingo. "I place the bottle so. Then, maintaining a perfect equilibrium . . ."

Analysis

P. G. Wodehouse's feather-brained young Englishmen, their astute butlers, their romantic and brainy sweethearts, and their doddering and wealthy relatives of the English nobility have for twenty years lived in a hilarious and nonexistent world in the popular fiction of America and England. That

heroes and heroines and minor characters are nearly always of the same stamp and that the plot structures are nearly always identical have not dimmed their popularity. "All's Well with Bingo" is a typical Wodehouse short story.

1. Observe the increasing complexity of the plot trap. Make a list of the various accumulating events and circumstances that render the hero's plight apparently hopeless—most of them in themselves rather ordinary events. Is the surprise ending foreshadowed anywhere, or is it purely coincidental?

2. How does "All's Well with Bingo" comply with the boy-meets-girl formula? How does it differ?

3. From what does the humor derive? Be specific. Point out the differences between this method of handling humor and that of Stephen Leacock.

4. What is the function of the opening pages? What advantages are gained by the first-person-observer point of view?

5. Does the story contain any of the traditional emotional themes or devices? Explain whether or not Bingo Little and his wife are stock characters. Upon what two of Bingo Little's characteristics does the entire plot turn? Note how often and where in the story these characteristics are mentioned.

6. Comment upon the ending of the story.

7. Humorous and serious commercial stories are often built around the theme of small disagreements between young married couples. Can you evolve a convincing story plot out of such a situation? The couple need not be married, of course. The various small events which gradually increase the plot trap and lead to a convincing denouement must be carefully thought out beforehand.

P. G. Wodehouse

P. (Pelham) G. (Grenville) Wodehouse (1881–) was born in Guildford, Surrey, England, and received his education at Dulwich College from 1894 to 1900. From 1903 to 1909 he wrote a humorous column for the London *Glove* under the title "By the Way." In 1910 his first novel was published, and in 1910 he made the first of numerous trips to the United States. Thereafter he wrote approximately a novel a year, also a number of short stories for popular magazines, with a steadily mounting popularity. He reached large audiences and a wide recognition with such books as *Piccadilly Jim* (1917), *Jeeves* (1923), *Leave it to Psmith* (1924), and *Thank You, Jeeves* (1934). During his internment by the Nazis in World War II, he made a number of broadcasts to England intended to be satiric and humorous, but they were interpreted otherwise; and for awhile he declined in public favor.

His popularity seems to be on the rebound. He is now in the United States working on another book.

Mr. Wodehouse writes for CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY: "With most of my stories your question of 'How did you come to write it?' would be a hard one to answer, but it so happens that 'All's Well with Bingo' was based on an experience of my own, and I can remember the various steps which led to the assembling of the material. I was in the Casino at Le Touquet one night, wandering about and occasionally risking a small sum at one of the tables, and zero came up when I was backing black, and at the same moment I happened to get into conversation with someone, and it was only sometime later that I observed a pile of counters on black and realized that they were mine. My gratification at scooping in the stuff was heightened by the immediate realization that I had got the core of a story.

"Obviously, the hero's gambling would have to be on a larger and more important scale than mine, so I started hunting around for a means of heightening the drama. This soon led me to Bingo Little and Mrs Bingo, and everything fell into shape without any trouble. Feeling that the drama could stand still another shot in the arm, I tried to think of something that would make the winning of the money vital to Bingo, and hit on the bookie stuff. And so on.

"My stories don't usually come out that way. As a rule, I start by saying to myself that I will write a story about one of my characters and then sit and hold my head till I have found what happened to him. But this one started with a scene and I worked from that. That way of composition is much easier, but the trouble is you have to have the 'scene,' and it is not often that 'scenes' drop out of a blue sky. In fact the only other one I can remember in my books is the bit in *A Damsel in Distress* (if anyone remembers *A Damsel in Distress*) where the girl jumps into the hero's taxi and he has to hide her.

"The thing that makes the writers of humorous stories pick at the coverlet is the haunting fear that they have overlooked something and laid themselves open to the question, 'Well, if your hero was in this jam, why didn't he do so-and-so?' the inference being that if he had, there would have been no story. But in 'All's Well with Bingo' I think that, given that Bingo could not simply draw himself to his full height and defy his wife, the thing hangs together."



PENROD'S BUSY DAY

Booth Tarkington

ALTHOUGH the pressure had thus been relieved and Penrod found peace with himself, nevertheless there were times during the rest of that week when he felt a strong distaste for Margaret. His schoolmates frequently reminded him of such phrases in her letter as they seemed least able to forget, and for hours after each of these experiences he was unable to comport himself with human courtesy when constrained (as at dinner) to remain for any length of time in the same room with her. But by Sunday these moods had seemed to pass; he attended church in her close company, and had no thought of the troubles brought upon him by her correspondence with a person who throughout remained unknown to him.

Penrod slumped far down in the pew with his knees against the back of that in front, and he also languished to one side, so that the people sitting behind were afforded a view of him consisting of a little hair and one bored ear. The sermon—a noble one, searching and eloquent—was but a persistent sound in that ear, though, now and then, Penrod's attention would be caught by some detached portion of a sentence, when his mind would dwell dully upon the phrases for a little while—and lapse into a torpor. At intervals his mother, without turning her head, would whisper, "Sit up, Penrod," causing him to sigh profoundly and move his shoulders about an inch, this mere gesture of compliance exhausting all the energy that remained to him.

The black backs and gray heads of the elderly men in the congregation oppressed him; they gave him a lethargic and indefinite feeling that he was immersed among lives of repellent dullness. But he should have been grateful to the lady with the artificial cherries upon her hat. His gaze lingered there, wandered away, and hopelessly returned again and again, to be a little refreshed by the glossy scarlet of the cluster of tiny globes. He was not so fortunate as to be drowsy; that would have brought him some relief—and yet, after a while, his eyes became slightly glazed; he saw dimly, and what he saw was distorted.

The church had been built in the early 'Seventies, and it contained some naïve stained glass of that period. The arch at the top of a window

From *Penrod and Sam,* published by Doubleday & Company, Inc. Copyright, 1916, by

facing Penrod was filled with a gigantic Eye. Of oyster-white and raw blues and reds, inflamed by the pouring sun, it had held an awful place in the infantile life of Penrod Schofield, for in his tenderer years he accepted it without question as the literal Eye of Deity. He had been informed that the church was the divine dwelling—and there was the Eye!

Nowadays, being no longer a little child, he had somehow come to know better without being told, and though the great flaming Eye was no longer the terrifying thing it had been to him during his childhood, it nevertheless retained something of its ominous character. It made him feel spied upon, and its awful glare still pursued him, sometimes, as he was falling asleep at night. When he faced the window his feeling was one of dull resentment.

His own glazed eyes, becoming slightly crossed with an *ennui* which was peculiarly intense this morning, rendered the Eye more monstrous than it was. It expanded to horrible size, growing mountainous; it turned into a volcano in the tropics, and yet it stared at him, indubitably an Eye implacably hostile to all rights of privacy forever. Penrod blinked and clinched his eyelids to be rid of this dual image, and he managed to shake off the volcano. Then, lowering the angle of his glance, he saw something most remarkable—and curiously out of place.

An inverted white soup-plate was lying miraculously balanced upon the back of a pew a little distance in front of him, and upon the upturned bottom of the soup-plate was a brown cocoanut. Mildly surprised, Penrod yawned, and, in the effort to straighten his eyes, came to life temporarily. The cocoanut was revealed as Georgie Bassett's head, and the soup-plate as Georgie's white collar. Georgie was sitting up straight, as he always did in church, and Penrod found this vertical rectitude unpleasant. He knew that he had more to fear from the Eye than Georgie had, and he was under the impression (a correct one) that Georgie felt on intimate terms with it and was actually fond of it.

Penrod himself would have maintained that he was fond of it, if he had been asked. He would have said so because he feared to say otherwise; and the truth is that he never consciously looked at the Eye disrespectfully. He would have been alarmed if he thought the Eye had any way of finding out how he really felt about it. When not off his guard, he always looked at it placatively.

By and by, he sagged so far to the left that he had symptoms of a "stitch in the side," and, rousing himself, sat partially straight for several moments. Then he rubbed his shoulders slowly from side to side against the back of the seat, until his mother whispered, "Don't do that, Penrod."

Upon this, he allowed himself to slump inwardly till the curve in the back of his neck rested against the curved top of the back of the seat. It was a congenial fit, and Penrod again began to move slowly from side to side, finding the friction soothing. Even so slight a pleasure was denied him by a husky, "Stop that!" from his father.

Penrod sighed, and slid farther down. He scratched his head, his left knee, his right biceps, and his left ankle, after which he scratched his right knee, his right ankle, and his left biceps. Then he said, "Oh, hum!" unconsciously, but so loudly that there was a reproving stir in the neighbourhood of the Schofield pew, and his father looked at him angrily.

Finally, his nose began to trouble him. It itched, and after scratching it, he rubbed it harshly. Another "Stop that!" from his father proved of no avail, being greeted by a desperate-sounding whisper, "I *got* to!"

And, continuing to rub his nose with his right hand, Penrod began to search his pockets with his left. The quest proving fruitless, he rubbed his nose with his left hand and searched with his right. Then he abandoned his nose and searched feverishly with both hands, going through all of his pockets several times.

"What *do* you want?" whispered his mother.

But Margaret had divined his need, and she passed him her own handkerchief. This was both thoughtful and thoughtless—the latter because Margaret was in the habit of thinking that she became faint in crowds, especially at the theatre or in church, and she had just soaked her handkerchief with spirits of ammonia from a small phial which she carried in her muff.

Penrod hastily applied the handkerchief to his nose and even more hastily exploded. He sneezed stupendously; he choked, sneezed again, wept, passed into a light convulsion of coughing and sneezing together —a mergence of sound which attracted much attention—and, after a few recurrent spasms, convalesced into a condition marked by silent tears and only sporadic instances of sneezing.

By this time his family were unanimously scarlet—his father and mother with mortification, and Margaret with the effort to control the almost irresistible mirth which the struggles and vociferations of Penrod had inspired within her. And yet her heart misgave her, for his bloodshot and tearful eyes were fixed upon her from the first and remained upon her, even when half-blinded with his agony; and their expression—as terrible as that of the windowed Eye confronting her—was not for an instant to be misunderstood. Absolutely, he considered that she had handed him the ammonia-soaked handkerchief deliberately and with malice, and well she knew that no power on earth could now or at any time henceforth persuade him otherwise.

"Of course I didn't mean it, Penrod," she said, at the first opportunity upon their homeward way. "I didn't notice—that is, I didn't think—" Unfortunately for the effect of sincerity which she hoped to produce, her voice became tremulous and her shoulders moved suspiciously.

"Just you wait! You'll see!" he prophesied, in a voice now choking, not with ammonia, but with emotion. "Poison a person, and then laugh in his face!"

He spake no more until they had reached their own house, though she made some further futile efforts at explanation and apology.

And after brooding abysmally throughout the meal that followed, he disappeared from the sight of his family, having answered with one frightful look his mother's timid suggestion that it was almost time for Sunday-school. He retired to his eyry—the sawdust box in the empty stable—and there gave rein to his embittered imaginings, incidentally forming many plans for Margaret.

Most of these were much too elaborate, but one was so alluring that he dwelt upon it, working out the details with gloomy pleasure, even after he had perceived its defects. It involved a considerable postponement—in fact, until Margaret should have become the mother of a boy about Penrod's present age. This boy would be precisely like Georgie Bassett—Penrod conceived that as inevitable—and, like Georgie, he would be his mother's idol. Penrod meant to take him to church and force him to blow his nose with an ammonia-soaked handkerchief in the presence of the Eye and all the congregation.

Then Penrod intended to say to this boy, after church, "Well, that's exackly what your mother did to me, and if you don't like it, you better look out!"

And the real Penrod in the sawdust box clenched his fists. "Come ahead, then!" he muttered. "You talk too much!" Whereupon, the Penrod of his dream gave Margaret's puny son a contemptuous thrashing under the eyes of his mother, who besought in vain for mercy. This plan was finally dropped, not because of any lingering nepotism within Penrod, but because his injury called for action less belated.

One after another, he thought of impossible things; one after another, he thought of things merely inane and futile, for he was trying to do something beyond his power. Penrod was never brilliant, or even successful, save by inspiration.

At four o'clock he came into the house, still nebulous, and as he passed the open door of the library he heard a man's voice, not his father's.

"To me," said this voice, "the finest lines in all literature are those in Tennyson's 'Maud'—

> " 'Had it lain for a century dead,
> My dust would hear her and beat,
> And blossom in purple and red,
> There somewhere around near her feet.'

"I think I have quoted correctly," continued the voice nervously, "but, at any rate, what I wished to—ah—say was that I often think of those—ah—words; but I never think of them without thinking of—of—of *you*. I—ah—"

The nervous voice paused, and Penrod took an oblique survey of the room, himself unobserved. Margaret was seated in an easy chair and her face was turned away from Penrod, so that her expression of the moment remained unknown to him. Facing her, and leaning toward her with perceptible emotion, was Mr. Claude Blakely—a young man with whom Penrod had no acquaintance, though he had seen him, was aware of his identity, and had heard speech between Mrs. Schofield and Margaret which indicated that Mr. Blakely had formed the habit of calling frequently at the house. This was a brilliantly handsome young man; indeed, his face was so beautiful that even Penrod was able to perceive something about it which might be explicably pleasing—at least to women. And Penrod remembered that, on the last evening before Mr. Robert Williams's departure for college, Margaret had been

peevish because Penrod had genially spent the greater portion of the evening with Robert and herself upon the porch. Margaret made it clear, later, that she strongly preferred to conduct her conversations with friends unassisted—and as Penrod listened to the faltering words of Mr. Claude Blakely, he felt instinctively that, in a certain contingency, Margaret's indignation would be even more severe to-day than on the former occasion.

Mr. Blakely coughed faintly and was able to continue.

"I mean to say that when I say that what Tennyson says—ah—seems to—to apply to—to a feeling about you—"

At this point, finding too little breath in himself to proceed, in spite of the fact that he had spoken in an almost inaudible tone, Mr. Blakely stopped again.

Something about this little scene was making a deep impression upon Penrod. What that impression was, he could not possibly have stated; but he had a sense of the imminence of a tender crisis, and he perceived that the piquancy of affairs in the library had reached a point which would brand an intentional interruption as the act of a cold-blooded ruffian. Suddenly it was as though a strong light shone upon him: he decided that it was Mr. Blakely who had told Margaret that her eyes were like blue stars in heaven—*this* was the person who had caused the hateful letter to be written! That decided Penrod; his inspiration, so long waited for, had come.

"I—I feel that perhaps I am not plain," said Mr. Blakely, and immediately became red, whereas he had been pale. He was at least modest enough about his looks to fear that Margaret might think he had referred to them. "I mean, not plain in another sense—that is, I mean not that *I* am not plain in saying what I mean to you—I mean, what you mean to *me!* I feel—"

This was the moment selected by Penrod. He walked carelessly into the library, inquiring in a loud, bluff voice:

"Has anybody seen my dog around here anywheres?"

Mr. Blakely had inclined himself so far toward Margaret, and he was sitting so near the edge of the chair, that only a really wonderful bit of instinctive gymnastics landed him upon his feet instead of upon his back. As for Margaret, she said, "Good gracious!" and regarded Penrod blankly.

"Well," said Penrod breezily, "I guess it's no use lookin' for him—

he isn't anywheres around. I guess I'll sit down." Herewith, he sank into an easy chair, and remarked, as in comfortable explanation, "I'm kind of tired standin' up, anyway."

Even in this crisis, Margaret was a credit to her mother's training.

"Penrod, have you met Mr. Blakely?"

"What?"

Margaret primly performed the rite.

"Mr. Blakely, this is my little brother Penrod."

Mr. Blakely was understood to murmur, "How d'ye do?"

"I'm well," said Penrod.

Margaret bent a perplexed gaze upon him, and he saw that she had not divined his intentions, though the expression of Mr. Blakely was already beginning to be a little compensation for the ammonia outrage. Then, as the protracted silence which followed the introduction began to be a severe strain upon all parties, Penrod felt called upon to relieve it.

"I didn't have anything much to do this afternoon, anyway," he said. And at that there leaped a spark in Margaret's eye; her expression became severe.

"You should have gone to Sunday-school," she told him crisply.

"Well, I didn't!" said Penrod, with a bitterness so significant of sufferings connected with religion, ammonia, and herself, that Margaret, after giving him a thoughtful look, concluded not to urge the point.

Mr. Blakely smiled pleasantly. "I was looking out of the window a minute ago," he said, "and I saw a dog run across the street and turn the corner."

"What kind of a lookin' dog was it?" Penrod inquired, with languor.

"Well," said Mr. Blakely, "it was a—it was a nice-looking dog."

"What colour was he?"

"He was—ah—white. That is, I think—"

"It wasn't Duke," said Penrod. "Duke's kind of brownish-gray-like."

Mr. Blakely brightened.

"Yes, that was it," he said. "This dog I saw first had another dog with him—a brownish-gray dog."

"Little or big?" Penrod asked, without interest.

"Why, Duke's a little dog!" Margaret intervened. "Of *course,* if it was little, it must have been Duke."

"It *was* little," said Mr. Blakely too enthusiastically. "It was a little bit of a dog. I noticed it because it was so little."

"Couldn't 'a' been Duke, then," said Penrod. "Duke's a kind of a middle-sized dog." He yawned, and added: "I don't want him now. I want to stay in the house this afternoon, anyway. And it's better for Duke to be out in the fresh air."

Mr. Blakely coughed again and sat down, finding little to say. It was evident, also, that Margaret shared his perplexity; and another silence became so embarrassing that Penrod broke it.

"I was out in the sawdust-box," he said, "but it got kind of chilly." Neither of his auditors felt called upon to offer any comment, and presently he added, "I thought I better come in here where it's warmer."

"It's too warm," said Margaret, at once. "Mr. Blakely, would you mind opening a window?"

"By all means!" the young man responded earnestly, as he rose. "Maybe I'd better open two?"

"Yes," said Margaret; "that would be much better."

But Penrod watched Mr. Blakely open two windows to their widest, and betrayed no anxiety. His remarks upon the relative temperatures of the sawdust-box and the library had been made merely for the sake of creating sound in a silent place. When the windows had been open for several minutes, Penrod's placidity, though gloomy, denoted anything but discomfort from the draft, which was powerful, the day being windy.

It was Mr. Blakely's turn to break a silence, and he did it so unexpectedly that Margaret started. He sneezed.

"Perhaps—" Margaret began, but paused apprehensively. "Perhaps-per-per—" Her apprehensions became more and more poignant; her eyes seemed fixed upon some incredible disaster; she appeared to inflate while the catastrophe she foresaw became more and more imminent. All at once she collapsed, but the power decorum had over her was attested by the mildness of her sneeze after so threatening a prelude.

"Perhaps I'd better put one of the windows down," Mr. Blakely suggested.

"Both, I believe," said Margaret. "The room has cooled off, now, I think."

Mr. Blakely closed the windows, and, returning to a chair near Margaret, did his share in the production of another long period of quiet. Penrod allowed this one to pass without any vocal disturbance on his

part. It may be, however, that his gaze was disturbing to Mr. Blakely, upon whose person it was glassily fixed with a self-forgetfulness that was almost morbid.

"Didn't you enjoy the last meeting of the Cotillion Club?" Margaret said finally.

And upon Mr. Blakely's answering absently in the affirmative, she suddenly began to be talkative. He seemed to catch a meaning in her fluency, and followed her lead, a conversation ensuing which at first had all the outward signs of eagerness. They talked with warm interest of people and events unknown to Penrod; they laughed enthusiastically about things beyond his ken; they appeared to have arranged a perfect way to enjoy themselves, no matter whether he was with them or elsewhere—but presently their briskness began to slacken; the appearance of interest became perfunctory. Within ten minutes the few last scattering semblances of gayety had passed, and they lapsed into the longest and most profound of all their silences indoors that day. Its effect upon Penrod was to make him yawn and settle himself in his chair.

Then Mr. Blakely, coming to the surface out of deep inward communings, snapped his finger against the palm of his hand impulsively.

"By George!" he exclaimed, under his breath.

"What is it?" Margaret asked. "Did you remember something?"

"No, it's nothing," he said. "Nothing at all. But, by the way, it seems a pity for you to be missing the fine weather. I wonder if I could persuade you to take a little walk?"

Margaret, somewhat to the surprise of both the gentlemen present, looked uncertain.

"I don't know—" she said.

Mr. Blakely saw that she missed his point.

"One can talk better in the open, don't you think?" he urged, with a significant glance toward Penrod.

Margaret also glanced keenly at Penrod. "Well, perhaps." And then, "I'll get my hat," she said.

Penrod was on his feet before she left the room. He stretched himself.

"I'll get mine, too," he said.

But he carefully went to find it in a direction different from that taken by his sister, and he joined her and her escort not till they were at the front door, whither Mr. Blakely—with a last flickering of hope—had urged a flight in haste.

"I been thinkin' of takin' a walk, all afternoon," said Penrod pompously. "Don't matter to me which way we go."

The exquisite oval of Mr. Claude Blakely's face merged into outlines more rugged than usual; the conformation of his jaw became perceptible, and it could be seen that he had conceived an idea which was crystallizing into a determination.

"I believe it happens that this is our first walk together," he said to Margaret, as they reached the pavement, "but, from the kind of tennis you play, I judge that you could go a pretty good gait. Do you like walking fast?"

She nodded. "For exercise."

"Shall we try it then?"

"You set the pace," said Margaret. "I think I can keep up."

He took her at her word, and the amazing briskness of their start seemed a little sinister to Penrod, though he was convinced that he could do anything that Margaret could do, and also that neither she nor her comely friend could sustain such a speed for long. On the contrary, they actually increased it with each fleeting block they covered.

"Here!" he panted, when they had thus put something more than a half-mile behind them. "There isn't anybody has to have a doctor, I guess! What's the use our walkin' so fast?"

In truth, Penrod was not walking, for his shorter legs permitted no actual walking at such a speed; his gait was a half-trot.

"Oh, *we're* out for a *walk!*" Mr. Blakely returned, a note of gayety beginning to sound in his voice. "Marg—ah—Miss Schofield, keep your head up and breathe through your nose. That's it! You'll find I was right in suggesting this. It's going to turn out gloriously! Now, let's make it a little faster."

Margaret murmured inarticulately, for she would not waste her breath in a more coherent reply. Her cheeks were flushed; her eyes were brimming with the wind, but when she looked at Penrod, they were brimming with something more. Gurgling sounds came from her.

Penrod's expression had become grim. He offered no second protest, mainly because he, likewise, would not waste his breath, and if he would, he could not. Of breath in the ordinary sense—breath, breathed automatically—he had none. He had only gasps to feed his straining lungs, and his half-trot, which had long since become a trot, was

changed for a lope when Mr. Blakely reached his own best burst of speed.

And now people stared at the flying three. The gait of Margaret and Mr. Blakely could be called a walk only by courtesy, while Penrod's was becoming a kind of blind scamper. At times he zigzagged; other times, he fell behind, wabbling. Anon, with elbows flopping and his face sculptured like an antique mask, he would actually forge ahead, and then carom from one to the other of his companions as he fell back again.

Thus the trio sped through the coming of autumn dusk, outflying the fallen leaves that tumbled upon the wind. And still Penrod held to the task that he had set himself. The street lamps flickered into life, but on and on Claude Blakely led the lady, and on and on reeled the grim Penrod. Never once was he so far from them that they could have exchanged a word unchaperoned by his throbbing ear.

"Oh!" Margaret cried, and, halting suddenly, she draped herself about a lamp-post like a strip of bunting. "Guh-uh-guh-*goodness!"* she sobbed.

Penrod immediately drooped to the curb-stone, which he reached, by pure fortune, in a sitting position. Mr. Blakely leaned against a fence, and said nothing, though his breathing was eloquent. "We—we must go—go home," Margaret gasped. "We must, if—if we can drag ourselves!"

Then Penrod showed them what mettle they had tried to crack. A paroxysm of coughing shook him; he spoke through it sobbingly:

"'Drag!' 'S just lul-like a girl! Ha-why I walk—*oof!*—faster'n that every day—on my—way to school." He managed to subjugate a tendency to nausea. "What you—want to go—home for?" he said. "Le's go on!"

In the darkness Mr. Claude Blakely's expression could not be seen, nor was his voice heard. For these and other reasons, his opinions and sentiments may not be stated.

. . . Mrs. Schofield was looking rather anxiously forth from her front door when the two adult figures and the faithful smaller one came up the walk.

"I was getting uneasy," she said. "Papa and I came in and found the house empty. It's after seven. Oh, Mr. Blakely, is that you?"

"Good-evening," he said. "I fear I must be keeping an engagement. Good-night. Good-night, Miss Schofield."

"Good-night."

"Well, good-night," Penrod called, staring after him. But Mr. Blakely was already too far away to hear him, and a moment later Penrod followed his mother and sister into the house.

"I let Della go to church," Mrs. Schofield said to Margaret. "You and I might help Katie get supper."

"Not for a few minutes," Margaret returned gravely, looking at Penrod. "Come upstairs, Mamma; I want to tell you something."

Penrod cackled hoarse triumph and defiance.

"Go on! Tell! What *'I* care? You try to poison a person in church again, and then laugh in his face, you'll see what you get!"

But after his mother had retired with Margaret to the latter's room, he began to feel disturbed in spite of his firm belief that his cause was wholly that of justice victorious. Margaret had insidious ways of stating a case; and her point of view, no matter how absurd or unjust, was almost always adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Schofield in cases of controversy.

Penrod became uneasy. Perceiving himself to be in danger, he decided that certain measures were warranted. Unquestionably, it would be well to know beforehand in what terms Margaret would couch the charges which he supposed he must face in open court—that is to say, at the supper-table. He stole softly up the stairs, and, flattening himself against the wall, approached Margaret's door, which was about an inch ajar.

He heard his mother making sounds which appalled him—he took them for sobs. And then Margaret's voice rang out in a peal of insane laughter. Trembling, he crept nearer the door. Within the room Margaret was clinging to her mother, and both were trying to control their hilarity.

"He did it all to get even!" Margaret exclaimed, wiping her eyes. "He came in at just the right time. That *goose* was beginning to talk his silly, soft talk—the way he does with every girl in town—and he was almost proposing, and I didn't know how to stop him. And then Penrod came in and did it for me. I could have hugged Penrod, mamma, I actually could! And I saw he meant to stay to get even for that ammonia—and, oh, I worked so hard to make him think I wanted him to

go! Mamma, mamma, if you could have *seen* that walk! That *goose* kept thinking he could wear Penrod out or drop him behind, but I knew he couldn't so long as Penrod believed he was worrying us and getting even. And that *goose* thought I *wanted* to get rid of Penrod, too; and the conceited thing said it would turn out 'gloriously,' meaning we'd be alone together pretty soon—I'd like to shake him! You see, I pretended so well, in order to make Penrod stick to us, that *goose* believed I meant it! And if he hadn't tried to walk Penrod off his legs, he wouldn't have wilted his own collar and worn himself out, and I think he'd have hung on until you'd have had to invite him to stay to supper, and he'd have stayed on all evening, and I wouldn't have had a chance to write to Robert Williams. Mamma, there have been lots of times when I haven't been thankful for Penrod, but to-day I could have got down on my knees to you and papa for giving me such a brother!"

In the darkness of the hall, as a small but crushed and broken form stole away from the crack in the door, a gigantic Eye seemed to form —seemed to glare down upon Penrod—warning him that the way of vengeance is the way of bafflement, and that genius may not prevail against the trickeries of women.

"This has been a *nice* day!" Penrod muttered hoarsely.

Analysis

In the romantic American tradition in both his humorous and his serious writings Booth Tarkington found fame and a considerable fortune in a leisurely and gentle presentation of family life of the upper middle classes in the Midwestern town. He violated no taboos, instituted no experiments, yet for more than a generation was loved by the large American reading public.

1. What commonly accepted beliefs and ideals concerning the American family are upheld in "Penrod's Busy Day"?
2. How does Booth Tarkington's method of handling humor differ from that of P. G. Wodehouse? In what ways are their techniques similar?
3. Compare Penrod's behavior in church with that of Tom Sawyer. In your conclusion do you find any key to evaluating the permanence of the work of Mark Twain and that of Booth Tarkington? (Note: Mark Twain has been called both satirist and cynic.)

4. What keeps the story moving in the opening pages while the situation is being built up, before the plot begins to take shape? What is the plot trap?

5. Is the surprise ending successful? Has it been foreshadowed?

6. Comment upon Booth Tarkington's style, quoting specific passages to support your appraisal.

7. Stories of young people for adult reading seem perennially popular, as a glance at the pages of almost any of the commercial women's magazines will confirm. Often these stories are humorously or lightly handled; often they are treated more seriously, as in "The Terrible Miss Dove" in this volume. Write the story plan of a carefully plotted story concerning adolescents which will lend itself to humorous or light treatment. Note that these stories have to do with very ordinary events which the plot complications make significant, the plot turning on the boy-girl relationship, either of the juveniles themselves or of older young people.

Booth Tarkington

Booth Tarkington (1869–1946) was born in Indianapolis and educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and was for a while at Princeton. After some travel abroad, he settled down to a serious career in letters, continuing to write successfully until almost the time of his death, despite near blindness. At one time—1902–1903—he was a member of the Indiana House of Representatives. Purdue and Princeton awarded him honorary degrees; twice he was awarded the Pulitzer prize for literature. His best-known books are *A Gentleman from Indiana* (1899), *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1900), *Penrod* (1914), *Seventeen* (1917), and *Alice Adams* (1921).



LITTLE MISS MARKER

Damon Runyon

ONE evening along toward seven o'clock, many citizens are standing out on Broadway in front of Mindy's restaurant, speaking of one thing and another, and particularly about the tough luck they have playing the races in the afternoon, when who comes up the street with a little

From *Blue Plate Special*. Copyright, 1932, 1934, by Damon Runyon. Published by J. B. Lippincott Co.

doll hanging onto his right thumb but a guy by the name of Sorrowful.

This guy is called Sorrowful because this is the way he always is about no matter what, and especially about the way things are with him when anybody tries to put the bite on him. In fact, if anybody who tries to put the bite on Sorrowful can listen to him for two minutes about how things are with him and not bust into tears, they must be very hard-hearted, indeed.

Regret, the horse player, is telling me that he once tries to put the bite on Sorrowful for a sawbuck, and by the time Sorrowful gets through explaining how things are with him, Regret feels so sorry for him that he goes out and puts the bite on somebody else for the saw and gives it to Sorrowful, although it is well known to one and all that Sorrowful has plenty of potatoes hid away somewhere.

He is a tall, skinny guy with a long, sad, mean-looking kisser, and a mournful voice. He is maybe sixty years old, give or take a couple of years, and for as long as I can remember he is running a handbook over in Forty-ninth Street next door to a chop-suey joint. In fact, Sorrowful is one of the largest handbook makers in this town.

Any time you see him he is generally by himself, because being by himself is not apt to cost him anything, and it is therefore a most surprising scene when he comes along Broadway with a little doll.

And there is much speculation among the citizens as to how this comes about, for no one ever hears of Sorrowful having any family, or relations of any kind, or even any friends.

The little doll is a very little doll indeed, the top of her noggin only coming up to Sorrowful's knee, although of course Sorrowful has very high knees, at that. Moreover, she is a very pretty little doll, with big blue eyes and fat pink cheeks, and a lot of yellow curls hanging down her back, and she has fat little legs and quite a large smile, although Sorrowful is lugging her along the street so fast that half the time her feet are dragging the sidewalk and she has a license to be bawling instead of smiling.

Sorrowful is looking sadder than somewhat, which makes his face practically heart-rending as he pulls up in front of Mindy's and motions us to follow him in. Anybody can see that he is worried about something very serious, and many citizens are figuring that maybe he suddenly discovers all his potatoes are counterfeit, because nobody can think of anything that will worry Sorrowful except money.

Anyway, four or five of us gather around the table where Sorrowful sits down with the little doll beside him, and he states a most surprising situation to us.

It seems that early in the afternoon a young guy who is playing the races with Sorrowful for several days pops into his place of business next door to the chop-suey joint, leading the little doll, and this guy wishes to know how much time he has before post in the first race at Empire.

Well, he only has about twenty-five minutes, and he seems very downhearted about this, because he explains to Sorrowful that he has a sure thing in this race, which he gets the night before off a guy who is a pal of a close friend of Jockey Workman's valet.

The young guy says he is figuring to bet himself about a deuce on this sure thing, but he does not have such a sum as a deuce on him when he goes to bed, so he plans to get up bright and early in the morning and hop down to a spot on Fourteenth Street where he knows a guy who will let him have the deuce.

But it seems he oversleeps, and here it is almost post time, and it is too late for him to get to Fourteenth Street and back before the race is run off, and it is all quite a sad story indeed, although of course it does not make much impression on Sorrowful, as he is already sadder than somewhat himself just from thinking that somebody may beat him for a bet during the day, even though the races do not start anywhere as yet.

Well, the young guy tells Sorrowful he is going to try to get to Fourteenth Street and back in time to bet on the sure thing, because he says it will be nothing short of a crime if he has to miss such a wonderful opportunity.

"But," he says to Sorrowful, "to make sure I do not miss, you take my marker for a deuce, and I will leave the kid here with you as security until I get back."

Now, ordinarily, asking Sorrowful to take a marker will be considered great foolishness, as it is well known to one and all that Sorrowful will not take a marker from Andrew Mellon. In fact, Sorrowful can almost break your heart telling you about the poorhouses that are full of bookmakers who take markers in their time.

But it happens that business is just opening up for the day, and Sorrowful is pretty busy, and besides the young guy is a steady customer for

several days, and has an honest pan, and Sorrowful figures a guy is bound to take a little doll out of hock for a deuce. Furthermore, while Sorrowful does not know much about kids, he can see the little doll must be worth a deuce, at least, and maybe more.

So he nods his head, and the young guy puts the little doll on a chair and goes tearing out of the joint to get the dough, while Sorrowful marks down a deuce bet on Cold Cuts, which is the name of the sure thing. Then he forgets all about the proposition for a while, and all the time the little doll is sitting on the chair as quiet as a mouse, smiling at Sorrowful's customers, including the Chinks from the chop-suey joint who come in now and then to play the races.

Well, Cold Cuts blows, and in fact is not even fifth, and along late in the afternoon Sorrowful suddenly realizes that the young guy never shows up again, and that the little doll is still sitting in the chair, although she is now playing with a butcher knife which one of the Chinks from the chop-suey joint gives her to keep her amused.

Finally it comes on Sorrowful's closing time, and the little doll is still there, so he can think of nothing else to do in this situation, but to bring her around to Mindy's and get a little advice from different citizens, as he does not care to leave her in his place of business alone, as Sorrowful will not trust anybody in there alone, not even himself.

"Now," Sorrowful says, after giving us this long spiel, "what are we to do about this proposition?"

Well, of course, up to this minute none of the rest of us know we are being cut in on any proposition, and personally I do not care for any part of it, but Big Nig, the craps shooter, speaks up as follows:

"If this little doll is sitting in your joint all afternoon," Nig says, "the best thing to do right now is to throw a feed into her, as the chances are her stomach thinks her throat is cut."

Now this seems to be a fair sort of an idea, so Sorrowful orders up a couple of portions of ham hocks and sauerkraut, which is a very tasty dish in Mindy's at all times, and the little doll tears into it very enthusiastically, using both hands, although a fat old doll who is sitting at the next table speaks up and says this is terrible fodder to be tossing into a child at such an hour and where is her mamma?

"Well," Big Nig says to the old doll, "I hear of many people getting a bust in the snoot for not minding their own business in this town,

but you give off an idea, at that. Listen," Big Nig says to the little doll, "where is your mamma?"

But the little doll does not seem to know, or maybe she does not wish to make this information public, because she only shakes her head and smiles at Big Nig, as her mouth is too full of ham hocks and sauerkraut for her to talk.

"What is your name?" Big Nig asks, and she says something that Big Nig claims sounds like Marky, although personally I think she is trying to say Martha. Anyway, it is from this that she gets the name we always call her afterward, which is Marky.

"It is a good monicker," Big Nig says. "It is short for marker, and she is certainly a marker unless Sorrowful is telling us a large lie. Why," Big Nig says, "this is a very cute little doll, at that, and pretty smart. How old are you, Marky?"

She only shakes her head again, so Regret, the horse player, who claims he can tell how old a horse is by its teeth, reaches over and sticks his finger in her mouth to get a peek at her crockery, but she seems to think Regret's finger is a hunk of ham hock and shuts down on it so hard Regret lets out an awful squawk. But he says that before she tries to cripple him for life he sees enough of her teeth to convince him she is maybe three, rising four, and this seems reasonable, at that. Anyway, she cannot be much older.

Well, about this time a guinea with a hand organ stops out in front of Mindy's and begins grinding out a tune while his ever-loving wife is passing a tambourine around among the citizens on the sidewalk and, on hearing this music, Marky slides off of her chair with her mouth still full of ham hock and sauerkraut, which she swallows so fast she almost chokes, and then she speaks as follows:

"Marky dance," she says.

Then she begins hopping and skipping around among the tables, holding her little short skirt up in her hands and showing a pair of white panties underneath. Pretty soon Mindy himself comes along and starts putting up a beef about making a dance hall of his joint, but a guy by the name of Sleep-out, who is watching Marky with much interest, offers to bounce a sugar bowl off of Mindy's sconce if he does not mind his own business.

So Mindy goes away, but he keeps muttering about the white panties being a most immodest spectacle, which of course is great nonsense, as

many dolls older than Marky are known to do dances in Mindy's, especially on the late watch, when they stop by for a snack on their way home from the night clubs and the speaks, and I hear some of them do not always wear white panties, either.

Personally, I like Marky's dancing very much, although of course she is no Pavlowa, and finally she trips over her own feet and falls on her snoot. But she gets up smiling and climbs back on her chair and pretty soon she is sound asleep with her head against Sorrowful.

Well, now there is much discussion about what Sorrowful ought to do with her. Some claim he ought to take her to a police station, and others say the best thing to do is to put an ad in the Lost and Found columns of the morning bladders, the same as people do when they find Angora cats, and Pekes, and other animals which they do not wish to keep, but none of these ideas seems to appeal to Sorrowful.

Finally he says he will take her to his own home and let her sleep there while he is deciding what is to be done about her, so Sorrowful takes Marky in his arms and lugs her over to a fleabag in West Forty-ninth Street where he has a room for many years, and afterwards a bell hop tells me Sorrowful sits up all night watching her while she is sleeping.

Now what happens but Sorrowful takes on a great fondness for the little doll, which is most surprising, as Sorrowful is never before fond of anybody or anything, and after he has her overnight he cannot bear the idea of giving her up.

Personally, I will just as soon have a three-year-old baby wolf around me as a little doll such as this, but Sorrowful thinks she is the greatest thing that ever happens. He has a few inquiries made around and about to see if he can find out who she belongs to, and he is tickled silly when nothing comes of these inquiries, although nobody else figures anything will come of them anyway, as it is by no means uncommon in this town for little kids to be left sitting in chairs, or on doorsteps, to be chucked into orphan asylums by whoever finds them.

Anyway, Sorrowful says he is going to keep Marky, and his attitude causes great surprise, as keeping Marky is bound to be an expense, and it does not seem reasonable that Sorrowful will go to any expense for anything. When it commences to look as if he means what he says, many citizens naturally figure there must be an angle, and soon there are a great many rumors on the subject.

Of course one of these rumors is that the chances are Marky is Sorrowful's own offspring which is tossed back on him by the wronged mamma, but this rumor is started by a guy who does not know Sorrowful, and after he gets a gander at Sorrowful, the guy apologizes, saying he realizes that no wronged mamma will be daffy enough to permit herself to be wronged by Sorrowful. Personally, I always say that if Sorrowful wishes to keep Marky it is his own business, and most of the citizens around Mindy's agree with me.

But the trouble is Sorrowful at once cuts everybody else in on the management of Marky, and the way he talks to the citizens around Mindy's about her, you will think we are all personally responsible for her. As most of the citizens around Mindy's are bachelors, or are wishing they are bachelors, it is most inconvenient to them to suddenly find themselves with a family.

Some of us try to explain to Sorrowful that if he is going to keep Marky it is up to him to handle all her play, but right away Sorrowful starts talking so sad about all his pals deserting him and Marky just when they need them most that it softens all hearts, although up to this time we are about as pally with Sorrowful as a burglar with a copper. Finally every night in Mindy's is meeting night for a committee to decide something or other about Marky.

The first thing we decide is that the fleabag where Sorrowful lives is no place for Marky, so Sorrowful hires a big apartment in one of the swellest joints on West Fifty-ninth Street, overlooking Central Park, and spends plenty of potatoes furnishing it, although up to this time Sorrowful never sets himself back more than about ten bobs per week for a place to live and considers it extravagance, at that. I hear it costs him five G's to fix up Marky's bedroom alone, not counting the solid gold toilet set that he buys for her.

Then he gets her an automobile and he has to hire a guy to drive it for her, and finally when we explain to Sorrowful that it does not look right for Marky to be living with nobody but him and a chauffeur, Sorrowful hires a French doll with bobbed hair and red cheeks by the name of Mam'selle Fifi as a nurse for Marky, and this seems to be quite a sensible move, as it insures Marky plenty of company.

In fact, up to the time that Sorrowful hires Mam'selle Fifi, many citizens are commencing to consider Marky something of a nuisance and are playing the duck for her and Sorrowful, but after Mam'selle

Fifi comes along you can scarcely get in Sorrowful's joint on Fifty-ninth Street, or around his table in Mindy's when he brings Marky and Mam'selle Fifi in to eat. But one night Sorrowful goes home early and catches Sleep-out guzzling Mam'selle Fifi and Sorrowful makes Mam'selle Fifi take plenty of breeze, claiming she will set a bad example to Marky.

Then he gets an old tomato by the name of Mrs. Clancy to be Marky's nurse, and while there is no doubt Mrs. Clancy is a better nurse than Mam'selle Fifi and there is practically no danger of her setting Marky a bad example, the play at Sorrowful's joint is by no means as brisk as formerly.

You can see that from being closer than a dead heat with his potatoes, Sorrowful becomes as loose as ashes. He not only spends plenty on Marky, but he starts picking up checks in Mindy's and other spots, although up to this time picking up checks is something that is most repulsive to Sorrowful.

He gets so he will hold still for a bite, if the bite is not too savage and, what is more, a great change comes over his kisser. It is no longer so sad and mean-looking, and in fact it is almost a pleasant sight at times, especially as Sorrowful gets so he smiles now and then, and has a big hello for one and all, and everybody says the Mayor ought to give Marky a medal for bringing about such a wonderful change.

Now Sorrowful is so fond of Marky that he wants her with him all the time, and by and by there is much criticism of him for having her around his hand-book joint among the Chinks and the horse players, and especially the horse players, and for taking her around night clubs and keeping her out at all hours, as some people do not consider this a proper bringing-up for a little doll.

We hold a meeting in Mindy's on this proposition one night, and we get Sorrowful to agree to keep Marky out of his joint, but we know Marky is so fond of night clubs, especially where there is music, that it seems a sin and a shame to deprive her of this pleasure altogether, so we finally compromise by letting Sorrowful take her out one night a week to the Hot Box in Fifty-fourth Street, which is only a few blocks from where Marky lives, and Sorrowful can get her home fairly early. In fact, after this Sorrowful seldom keeps her out any later than 2 A.M.

The reason Marky likes night clubs where there is music is because she can do her dance there, as Marky is practically daffy on the sub-

ject of dancing, especially by herself, even though she never seems to be able to get over winding up by falling on her snoot, which many citizens consider a very artistic finish, at that.

The Choo-Choo Boys' band in the Hot Box always play a special number for Marky in between the regular dances, and she gets plenty of applause, especially from the Broadway citizens who know her, although Henri, the manager of the Hot Box, once tells me he will just as soon Marky does not do her dancing there, because one night several of his best customers from Park Avenue, including two millionaires and two old dolls, who do not understand Marky's dancing, bust out laughing when she falls on her snoot, and Big Nig puts the slug on the guys, and is trying to put the slug on the old dolls, too, when he is finally headed off.

Now one cold, snowy night, many citizens are sitting around the tables in the Hot Box, speaking of one thing and another and having a few drams, when Sorrowful drops in on his way home, for Sorrowful has now become a guy who is around and about, and in and out. He does not have Marky with him, as it is not her night out and she is home with Mrs. Clancy.

A few minutes after Sorrowful arrives, a party by the name of Milk Ear Willie from the West Side comes in, this Milk Ear Willie being a party who is once a prize fighter and who has a milk ear, which is the reason he is called Milk Ear Willie, and who is known to carry a John Roscoe in his pants pocket. Furthermore, it is well known that he knocks off several guys in his time, so he is considered rather a suspicious character.

It seems that the reason he comes into the Hot Box is to shoot Sorrowful full of little holes, because he has a dispute with Sorrowful about a parlay on the races the day before, and the chances are Sorrowful will now be very dead if it does not happen that, just as Milk Ear outs with the old equalizer and starts taking dead aim at Sorrowful from a table across the room, who pops into the joint but Marky.

She is in a long nightgown that keeps getting tangled up in her bare feet as she runs across the dance floor and jumps into Sorrowful's arms, so if Milk Ear Willie lets go at this time he is apt to put a slug in Marky, and this is by no means Willie's intention. So Willie puts his rod back in his kick, but he is greatly disgusted and stops as he is

going out and makes a large complaint to Henri about allowing children in a night club.

Well, Sorrowful does not learn until afterward how Marky saves his life, as he is too much horrified over her coming four or five blocks through the snow bare-footed to think of anything else, and everybody present is also horrified and wondering how Marky finds her way there. But Marky does not seem to have any good explanation for her conduct, except that she wakes up and discovers Mrs. Clancy asleep and gets to feeling lonesome for Sorrowful.

About this time, the Choo-Choo Boys start playing Marky's tune, and she slips out of Sorrowful's arms and runs out on the dance floor.

"Marky dance," she says.

Then she lifts her nightgown in her hands and starts hopping and skipping about the floor until Sorrowful collects her in his arms again, and wraps her in an overcoat and takes her home.

Now what happens, but the next day Marky is sick from being out in the snow barefooted and with nothing on but her nightgown, and by night she is very sick indeed, and it seems that she has pneumonia, so Sorrowful takes her to the Clinic hospital, and hires two nurses and two croakers, and wishes to hire more, only they tell him these will do for the present.

The next day Marky is no better, and the next night she is worse, and the management of the Clinic is very much upset because it has no place to put the baskets of fruit and candy and floral horseshoes and crates of dolls and toys that keep arriving every few minutes. Furthermore, the management by no means approves of the citizens who are tiptoeing along the hall on the floor where Marky has her room, especially such as Big Nig, and Sleep-out, and Wop Joey, and the Pale Face Kid and Guinea Mike and many other prominent characters, especially as these characters keep trying to date up the nurses.

Of course I can see the management's point of view, but I wish to say that no visitor to the Clinic ever brings more joy and cheer to the patients than Sleep-out, as he goes calling in all the private rooms and wards to say a pleasant word or two to the inmates, and I never take any stock in the rumor that he is looking around to see if there is anything worth picking up. In fact, an old doll from Rockville Center, who is suffering with yellow jaundice, puts up an awful holler when Sleep-out is heaved from her room, because she says he is right in the

middle of a story about a traveling salesman and she wishes to learn what happens.

There are so many prominent characters in and around the Clinic that the morning bladders finally get the idea that some well-known mob guy must be in the hospital full of slugs, and by and by the reporters come buzzing around to see what is what. Naturally they find out that all this interest is in nothing but a little doll, and while you will naturally think that such a little doll as Marky can scarcely be worth the attention of the reporters, it seems they get more heated up over her when they hear the story than if she is Jack Diamond.

In fact, the next day all the bladders have large stories about Marky, and also about Sorrowful and about how all these prominent characters of Broadway are hanging around the Clinic on her account. Moreover, one story tells about Sleep-out entertaining the other patients in the hospital, and it makes Sleep-out sound like a very large-hearted guy.

It is maybe three o'clock on the morning of the fourth day Marky is in the hospital that Sorrowful comes into Mindy's looking very sad, indeed. He orders a sturgeon sandwich on pumpernickel, and then he explains that Marky seems to be getting worse by the minute and that he does not think his doctors are doing her any good, and at this Big Nig, the craps shooter, speaks up and states as follows:

"Well," Big Nig says, "if we are only able to get Doc Beerfeldt, the great pneumonia specialist, the chances are he will cure Marky like breaking sticks. But of course," Nig says, "it is impossible to get Doc Beerfeldt unless you are somebody like John D. Rockefeller, or maybe the President."

Naturally, everybody knows that what Big Nig says is very true, for Doc Beerfeldt is the biggest croaker in this town, but no ordinary guy can get close enough to Doc Beerfeldt to hand him a ripe peach, let alone get him to go out on a case. He is an old guy, and he does not practice much any more, and then only among a few very rich and influential people. Furthermore, he has plenty of potatoes himself, so money does not interest him whatever, and anyway it is great foolishness to be talking of getting Doc Beerfeldt out at such an hour as this.

"Who do we know who knows Doc Beerfeldt?" Sorrowful says. "Who can we call up who may have influence enough with him to get him to just look at Marky? I will pay any price," he says. "Think of somebody," he says.

Well, while we are all trying to think, who comes in but Milk Ear Willie, and he comes in to toss a few slugs at Sorrowful, but before Milk Ear can start blasting Sleep-out sees him and jumps up and takes him off to a corner table, and starts whispering in Milk Ear's good ear.

As Sleep-out talks to him Milk Ear looks at Sorrowful in great surprise, and finally he begins nodding his head, and by and by he gets up and goes out of the joint in a hurry, while Sleep-out comes back to our table and says like this:

"Well," Sleep-out says, "let us stroll over to the Clinic. I just sent Milk Ear Willie up to Doc Beerfeldt's house on Park Avenue to get the old Doc and bring him to the hospital. But, Sorrowful," Sleep-out says, "if he gets him, you must pay Willie the parlay you dispute with him, whatever it is. The chances are," Sleep-out says, "Willie is right. I remember once you out-argue me on a parlay when I know I am right."

Personally, I consider Sleep-out's talk about sending Milk Ear Willie after Doc Beerfeldt just so much nonsense, and so does everybody else, but we figure maybe Sleep-out is trying to raise Sorrowful's hopes, and anyway he keeps Milk Ear from tossing these slugs at Sorrowful, which everybody considers very thoughtful of Sleep-out, at least, especially as Sorrowful is under too great a strain to be dodging slugs just now.

About a dozen of us walk over to the Clinic, and most of us stand around the lobby on the ground floor, although Sorrowful goes up to Marky's floor to wait outside her door. He is waiting there from the time she is first taken to the hospital, never leaving except to go over to Mindy's once in a while to get something to eat, and occasionally they open the door a little to let him get a peek at Marky.

Well, it is maybe six o'clock when we hear a taxi stop outside the hospital and pretty soon in comes Milk Ear Willie with another character from the West Side by the name of Fats Finstein, who is well known to one and all as a great friend of Willie's, and in between them they have a little old guy with a Vandyke beard, who does not seem to have on anything much but a silk dressing gown and who seems somewhat agitated, especially as Milk Ear Willie and Fats Finstein keep prodding him from behind.

Now it comes out that this little old guy is nobody but Doc Beerfeldt, the great pneumonia specialist, and personally I never see a madder guy, although I wish to say I never blame him much for being mad when I learn how Milk Ear Willie and Fats Finstein boff his

butler over the noggin when he answers their ring, and how they walk right into old Doc Beerfeldt's bedroom and haul him out of the hay at the point of their Roscoes and make him go with them.

In fact, I consider such treatment most discourteous to a prominent croaker, and if I am Doc Beerfeldt I will start hollering copper as soon as I hit the hospital, and for all I know maybe Doc Beerfeldt has just such an idea, but as Milk Ear Willie and Fats Finstein haul him into the lobby who comes downstairs but Sorrowful. And the minute Sorrowful sees Doc Beerfeldt he rushes up to him and says like this:

"Oh, Doc," Sorrowful says, "do something for my little girl. She is dying, Doc," Sorrowful says. "Just a little bit of a girl, Doc. Her name is Marky. I am only a gambler, Doc, and I do not mean anything to you or to anybody else, but please save the little girl."

Well, old Doc Beerfeldt sticks out his Vandyke beard and looks at Sorrowful a minute, and he can see there are large tears in old Sorrowful's eyes, and for all I know maybe the doc knows it has been many and many a year since there are tears in these eyes, at that. Then the doc looks at Milk Ear Willie and Fats Finstein and the rest of us, and at the nurses and internes who are commencing to come running up from every which way. Finally he speaks as follows:

"What is this?" he says. "A child? A little child? Why," he says, "I am under the impression that these gorillas are kidnapping me to attend to some other sick or wounded gorilla. A child? This is quite different. Why do you not say so in the first place? Where is the child?" Doc Beerfeldt says, "and," he says, "somebody get me some pants."

We all follow him upstairs to the door of Marky's room and we wait outside when he goes in, and we wait there for hours, because it seems that even old Doc Beerfeldt cannot think of anything to do in this situation no matter how he tries. And along toward ten-thirty in the morning he opens the door very quietly and motions Sorrowful to come in, and then he motions all the rest of us to follow, shaking his head very sad.

There are so many of us that we fill the room around a little high narrow bed on which Marky is lying like a flower against a white wall, her yellow curls spread out over her pillow. Old Sorrowful drops on his knees beside the bed and his shoulders heave quite some as he kneels there, and I hear Sleep-out sniffing as if he has a cold in his head. Marky seems to be asleep when we go in, but while we are standing around

the bed looking down at her, she opens her eyes and seems to see us and, what is more, she seems to know us, because she smiles at each guy in turn and then tries to hold out one of her little hands to Sorrowful.

Now very faint, like from far away, comes a sound of music through a half-open window in the room, from a jazz band that is rehearsing in a hall just up the street from the hospital, and Marky hears this music because she holds her head in such a way that anybody can see she is listening, and then she smiles again at us and whispers very plain, as follows:

"Marky dance."

And she tries to reach down as if to pick up her skirt as she always does when she dances, but her hands fall across her breast as soft and white and light as snowflakes, and Marky never again dances in this world.

Well, old Doc Beerfeldt and the nurses make us go outside at once, and while we are standing there in the hall outside the door, saying nothing whatever, a young guy and two dolls, one of them old, and the other not so old, come along the hall much excited. The young guy seems to know Sorrowful, who is sitting down again in his chair just outside the door, because he rushes up to Sorrowful and says to him like this:

"Where is she?" he says. "Where is my darling child? You remember me?" he says. "I leave my little girl with you one day while I go on an errand, and while I am on this errand everything goes blank, and I wind up back in my home in Indianapolis with my mother and sister here, and recall nothing about where I leave my child, or anything else."

"The poor boy has amnesia," the old doll says. "The stories that he deliberately abandons his wife in Paris and his child in New York are untrue."

"Yes," the doll who is not old puts in. "If we do not see the stories in the newspapers about how you have the child in this hospital we may never learn where she is. But everything is all right now. Of course we never approve of Harold's marriage to a person of the stage, and we only recently learn of her death in Paris soon after their separation there and are very sorry. But everything is all right now. We will take full charge of the child."

Now while all this gab is going on, Sorrowful never glances at them. He is just sitting there looking at Marky's door. And now as he is looking at the door a very strange thing seems to happen to his kisser, for all of a sudden it becomes the sad, mean-looking kisser that it is in the days before he ever sees Marky, and furthermore it is never again anything else.

"We will be rich," the young guy says. "We just learn that my darling child will be sole heiress to her maternal grandpapa's fortune, and the old guy is only a hop ahead of the undertaker right now. I suppose," he says, "I owe you something?"

And then Sorrowful gets up off his chair, and looks at the young guy and at the two dolls, and speaks as follows:

"Yes," he says, "you owe me a two-dollar marker for the bet you blow on Cold Cuts, and," he says, "I will trouble you to send it to me at once, so I can wipe you off my books."

Now he walks down the hall and out of the hospital, never looking back again, and there is a very great silence behind him that is broken only by the sniffing of Sleep-out, and by some first-class sobbing from some of the rest of us, and I remember now that the guy who is doing the best job of sobbing of all is nobody but Milk Ear Willie.

Analysis

Damon Runyon achieved wide popularity for more than two decades both as a sports reporter and a commentator and as a short story writer, a number of his stories such as "Little Miss Marker" having been adapted for the motion pictures. His story formula was said to be to "make 'em laugh and make 'em cry" and his plots to follow the ingredients of either "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" or "Cinderella." His bizarre language and historical-present narration in the first person set a pattern for popular stories which has been often imitated. Many of the peculiar terms he uses, rather than originating in the New York City underworld, were probably coined by Runyon himself and later adopted by the underworld, some of them finding their way into general American slang.

1. Explain how "Little Miss Marker" fulfills the formula of "make 'em laugh and make 'em cry." Be specific.
2. Point out the various coincidences necessary to the working out of the plot.

3. Cite several episodes that could not possibly happen in real life? How does Runyon make them convincing?

4. Name various traditional beliefs that are upheld in this story. What are the devices that Runyon employs to bring about his emotional effects?

5. Does the ending convey reader satisfaction? How did the motion picture of the same title end?

6. What elements in the works of Runyon and Charles Dickens are similar?

7. Runyon's style and treatment are especially well adapted to the sentimental sports story. Can you evolve a plot plan for such a story?

Damon Runyon

Damon Runyon (1884–1946) was born in Manhattan, Kansas, attended public schools in Pueblo, Colorado, began at the age of twelve to work on his father's newspaper. At fourteen, leaving school, he finally managed to enlist in the 13th Minnesota Volunteers and saw two years of service in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. From 1900 to 1910 he served his apprenticeship as a reporter in Pueblo, Denver, and San Francisco, in 1911 going as a sports writer to the New York *American*. In 1912 he served as a war correspondent for Hearst in Mexico, was with the Pershing Expedition there in 1916 and was with the First Army in France during World War I. Thereafter he became a feature writer and columnist for King Features and International News Service. He always regarded himself as a newspaper man rather than a storyteller, yet it is said that many of his stories sold at three dollars a word to such magazines as *Cosmopolitan* and *Collier's*. Best known of his books are *Guys and Dolls* (1932), *Money from Home* (1933), and *Take It Easy* (1939).



LORD MOUNTDRAGO

W. Somerset Maugham

DOCTOR AUDLIN looked at the clock on his desk. It was twenty minutes to six. He was surprised that his patient was late, for Lord

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Mountdrago prided himself on his punctuality; he had a sententious way of expressing himself which gave the air of an epigram to a commonplace remark, and he was in the habit of saying that punctuality is a compliment you pay to the intelligent and a rebuke you administer to the stupid. Lord Mountdrago's appointment was for five-thirty.

There was in Doctor Audlin's appearance nothing to attract attention. He was tall and spare, with narrow shoulders and something of a stoop; his hair was gray and thin, his long, sallow face deeply lined. He was not more than fifty, but he looked older. His eyes, pale blue and rather large, were weary. When you had been with him for a while you noticed that they moved very little; they remained fixed on your face, but so empty of expression were they that it was no discomfort. They seldom lit up. They gave no clue to his thoughts nor changed with the words he spoke. If you were of an observant turn it might have struck you that he blinked much less often than most of us. His hands were on the large side, with long, tapering fingers; they were soft but firm, cool but not clammy. You could never have said what Doctor Audlin wore unless you had made a point of looking. His clothes were dark. His tie was black. His dress made his sallow, lined face paler and his pale eyes more wan. He gave you the impression of a very sick man.

Doctor Audlin was a psychoanalyst. He had adopted the profession by accident and practised it with misgiving. When the war broke out he had not been long qualified and was getting experience at various hospitals; he offered his services to the authorities, and after a time was sent out to France. It was then that he discovered his singular gift. He could allay certain pains by the touch of his cool, firm hands, and by talking to them often induce sleep in men who were suffering from sleeplessness. He spoke slowly. His voice had no particular color, and its tone did not alter with the words he uttered, but it was musical, soft and lulling. He told the men that they must rest, that they mustn't worry, that they must sleep; and rest stole into their jaded bones, tranquillity pushed their anxieties away, like a man finding a place for himself on a crowded bench, and slumber fell on their tired eyelids like the light rain of spring upon the fresh-turned earth. Doctor Audlin found that by speaking to men with that low, monotonous voice of his, by looking at them with his pale, quiet eyes, by stroking their weary foreheads with his long firm hands, he could soothe their perturba-

tions, resolve the conflicts that distracted them and banish the phobias that made their lives a torment. Sometimes he effected cures that seemed miraculous. He restored speech to a man who, after being buried under the earth by a bursting shell, had been struck dumb, and he gave back the use of his limbs to another who had been paralyzed after a crash in a plane. He could not understand his powers; he was of a sceptical turn, and though they say that in circumstances of this kind the first thing is to believe in yourself, he never quite succeeded in doing that; and it was only the outcome of his activities, patent to the most incredulous observer, that obliged him to admit that he had some faculty, coming from he knew not where, obscure and uncertain, that enabled him to do things for which he could offer no explanation. When the war was over he went to Vienna and studied there, and afterwards to Zurich; and then settled down in London to practise the art he had so strangely acquired. He had been practising now for fifteen years, and had attained, in the specialty he followed, a distinguished reputation. People told one another of the amazing things he had done, and though his fees were high, he had as many patients as he had time to see. Doctor Audlin knew that he had achieved some very extraordinary results; he had saved men from suicide, others from the lunatic asylum, he had assuaged griefs that embittered useful lives, he had turned unhappy marriages into happy ones, he had eradicated abnormal instincts and thus delivered not a few from a hateful bondage, he had given health to the sick in spirit; he had done all this, and yet at the back of his mind remained the suspicion that he was little more than a quack.

It went against his grain to exercise a power that he could not understand, and it offended his honesty to trade on the faith of the people he treated when he had no faith in himself. He was rich enough now to live without working, and the work exhausted him; a dozen times he had been on the point of giving up practice. He knew all that Freud and Jung and the rest of them had written. He was not satisfied; he had an intimate conviction that all their theory was hocus-pocus, and yet there the results were, incomprehensible, but manifest. And what had he not seen of human nature during the fifteen years that patients had been coming to his dingy back room in Wimpole Street? The revelations that had been poured into his ears, sometimes only too willingly, sometimes with shame, with reservations, with anger, had long ceased to surprise him. Nothing could shock him any

longer. He knew by now that men were liars, he knew how extravagant was their vanity; he knew far worse than that about them; but he knew that it was not for him to judge or to condemn. But year by year as these terrible confidences were imparted to him his face grew a little grayer, its lines a little more marked and his pale eyes more weary. He seldom laughed, but now and again when for relaxation he read a novel he smiled. Did their authors really think the men and women they wrote of were like that? If they only knew how much more complicated they were, how much more unexpected, what irreconcilable elements coexisted within their souls and what dark and sinister contentions afflicted them!

It was a quarter to six. Of all the strange cases he had been called upon to deal with, Doctor Audlin could remember none stranger than that of Lord Mountdrago. For one thing the personality of his patient made it singular. Lord Mountdrago was an able and a distinguished man. Appointed Secretary for Foreign Affairs when still under forty, now after three years in office he had seen his policy prevail. It was generally acknowledged that he was the ablest politician in the Conservative Party, and only the fact that his father was a peer, on whose death he would no longer be able to sit in the House of Commons, made it impossible for him to aim at the premiership. But if in these democratic times it is out of the question for a Prime Minister of England to be in the House of Lords, there was nothing to prevent Lord Mountdrago from continuing to be Secretary for Foreign Affairs in successive Conservative administrations and so for long directing the foreign policy of his country.

Lord Mountdrago had many good qualities. He had intelligence and industry. He was widely travelled and spoke several languages fluently. From early youth he had specialized in foreign affairs and had conscientiously made himself acquainted with the political and economic circumstances of other countries. He had courage, insight and determination. He was a good speaker, both on the platform and in the House, clear, precise and often witty. He was a brilliant debater and his gift of repartee was celebrated. He had a fine presence: he was a tall, handsome man, rather bald and somewhat too stout, but this gave him solidity and an air of maturity that were of service to him. As a young man he had been something of an athlete and had rowed in the Oxford boat, and he was known to be one of the best shots in Eng-

land. At twenty-four he had married a girl of eighteen whose father was a duke and her mother a great American heiress, so that she had both position and wealth, and by her he had had two sons. For several years they had lived privately apart, but in public united, so that appearances were saved, and no other attachment on either side had given the gossips occasion to whisper. Lord Mountdrago indeed was too ambitious, too hardworking, and it must be added too patriotic, to be tempted by any pleasures that might interfere with his career. He had in short a great deal to make him a popular and successful figure. He had unfortunately great defects.

He was a fearful snob. You would not have been surprised at this if his father had been the first holder of the title. That the son of an ennobled lawyer, manufacturer or distiller should attach an inordinate importance to his rank is understandable. The earldom held by Lord Mountdrago's father was created by Charles II, and the barony held by the first earl dated from the Wars of the Roses. For three hundred years the successive holders of the title had allied themselves with the noblest families of England. But Lord Mountdrago was as conscious of his birth as a nouveau riche is conscious of his money. He never missed an opportunity of impressing it upon others. He had beautiful manners when he chose to display them, but this he did only with people whom he regarded as his equals. He was coldly insolent to those whom he looked upon as his social inferiors. He was rude to his servants and insulting to his secretaries. The subordinate officials in the government offices to which he had been successively attached feared and hated him. His arrogance was horrible. He knew that he was a great deal cleverer than most of the persons he had to do with, and never hesitated to apprise them of the fact. He had no patience with the infirmities of human nature. He felt himself born to command and was irritated with people who expected him to listen to their arguments or wished to hear the reasons for his decisions. He was immeasurably selfish. He looked upon any service that was rendered him as a right due to his rank and intelligence and therefore deserving of no gratitude. It never entered his head that he was called upon to do anything for others. He had many enemies: he despised them. He knew no one who merited his assistance, his sympathy or his compassion. He had no friends. He was distrusted by his chiefs because they doubted his loyalty; he was unpopular with his party, because he was

overbearing and discourteous; and yet his merit was so great, his patriotism so evident, his intelligence so solid and his management of affairs so brilliant, that they had to put up with him. And what made it possible to do this was that on occasion he could be enchanting: when he was with persons whom he considered his equals, or whom he wished to captivate, in the company of foreign dignitaries or women of distinction, he could be gay, witty and debonair; his manners then reminded you that in his veins ran the same blood as had run in the veins of Lord Chesterfield; he could tell a story with point, he could be natural, sensible and even profound. You were surprised at the extent of his knowledge and the sensitiveness of his taste. You thought him the best company in the world; you forgot that he had insulted you the day before and was quite capable of cutting you dead the next.

Lord Mountdrago almost failed to become Doctor Audlin's patient. A secretary rang up the doctor and told him that his lordship, wishing to consult him, would be glad if he would come to his house at ten o'clock on the following morning. Doctor Audlin answered that he was unable to go to Lord Mountdrago's house, but would be pleased to give him an appointment at his consulting room at five o'clock on the next day but one. The secretary took the message and presently rang back to say that Lord Mountdrago insisted on seeing Doctor Audlin in his own house and the doctor could fix his own fee. Doctor Audlin replied that he saw patients only in his consulting room and expressed his regret that unless Lord Mountdrago was prepared to come to him he could not give him his attention. In a quarter of an hour a brief message was delivered to him that his lordship would come not next day but one, but next day, at five.

When Lord Mountdrago was then shown in he did not come forward, but stood at the door and insolently looked the doctor up and down. Doctor Audlin perceived that he was in a rage; he gazed at him, silently, with still eyes. He saw a big heavy man, with graying hair, receding on the forehead so that it gave nobility to his brow, a puffy face with bold regular features and an expression of haughtiness. He had somewhat the look of one of the Bourbon sovereigns of the eighteenth century.

"It seems that it is as difficult to see you as a Prime Minister, Doctor Audlin. I'm an extremely busy man."

"Won't you sit down?" said the doctor.

His face showed no sign that Lord Mountdrago's speech in any way affected him. Doctor Audlin sat in his chair at the desk. Lord Mountdrago still stood, and his frown darkened.

"I think I should tell you that I am His Majesty's Secretary for Foreign Affairs," he said acidly.

"Won't you sit down?" the doctor repeated.

Lord Mountdrago made a gesture, which might have suggested that he was about to turn on his heel and stalk out of the room; but if that was his intention he apparently thought better of it. He seated himself. Doctor Audlin opened a large book and took up his pen. He wrote without looking at his patient.

"How old are you?"

"Forty-two."

"Are you married?"

"Yes."

"How long have you been married?"

"Eighteen years."

"Have you any children?"

"I have two sons."

Doctor Audlin noted down the facts as Lord Mountdrago abruptly answered his questions. Then he leaned back in his chair and looked at him. He did not speak; he just looked, gravely, with pale eyes that did not move.

"Why have you come to see me?" he asked at length.

"I've heard about you. Lady Chanute is a patient of yours, I understand. She tells me you've done her a certain amount of good."

Doctor Audlin did not reply. His eyes remained fixed on the other's face, but they were so empty of expression that you might have thought he did not even see him.

"I can't do miracles," he said at length. Not a smile, but the shadow of a smile flickered in his eyes. "The Royal College of Physicians would not approve of it if I did."

Lord Mountdrago gave a brief chuckle. It seemed to lessen his hostility. He spoke more amiably.

"You have a very remarkable reputation. People seem to believe in you."

"Why have you come to me?" repeated Doctor Audlin. Now it was Lord Mountdrago's turn to be silent. It looked as though he found it

hard to answer. Doctor Audlin waited. At last Lord Mountdrago seemed to make an effort. He spoke.

"I'm in perfect health. Just as a matter of routine I had myself examined by my own doctor the other day, Sir Augustus Fitzherbert, I daresay you've heard of him, and he tells me I have the physique of a man of thirty. I work hard, but I'm never tired, and I enjoy my work. I smoke very little and I'm an extremely moderate drinker. I take a sufficiency of exercise and I lead a regular life. I am a perfectly sound, normal, healthy man. I quite expect you to think it very silly and childish of me to consult you."

Doctor Audlin saw that he must help him.

"I don't know if I can do anything to help you. I'll try. You're distressed?"

Lord Mountdrago frowned.

"The work that I'm engaged in is important. The decisions I am called upon to make can easily affect the welfare of the country and even the peace of the world. It is essential that my judgment should be balanced and my brain clear. I look upon it as my duty to eliminate any cause of worry that may interfere with my usefulness."

Doctor Audlin had never taken his eyes off him. He saw a great deal. He saw behind his patient's pompous manner and arrogant pride an anxiety that he could not dispel.

"I asked you to be good enough to come here because I know by experience that it's easier for some one to speak openly in the dingy surroundings of a doctor's consulting room than in his accustomed environment."

"They're certainly dingy," said Lord Mountdrago acidly. He paused. It was evident that this man who had so much self-assurance, so quick and decided a mind that he was never at a loss, at this moment was embarrassed. He smiled in order to show the doctor that he was at his ease, but his eyes betrayed his disquiet. When he spoke again it was with unnatural heartiness.

"The whole thing's so trivial that I can hardly bring myself to bother you with it. I'm afraid you'll just tell me not to be a fool and waste your valuable time."

"Even things that seem very trivial may have their importance. They can be a symptom of a deep-seated derangement. And my time is entirely at your disposal."

Doctor Audlin's voice was low and grave. The monotone in which he spoke was strangely soothing. Lord Mountdrago at length made up his mind to be frank.

"The fact is I've been having some very tiresome dreams lately. I know it's silly to pay any attention to them, but—well, the honest truth is that I'm afraid they've got on my nerves."

"Can you describe any of them to me?"

Lord Mountdrago smiled, but the smile that tried to be careless was only rueful.

"They're so idiotic, I can hardly bring myself to narrate them."

"Never mind."

"Well, the first I had was about a month ago. I dreamt that I was at a party at Connemara House. It was an official party. The King and Queen were to be there, and of course decorations were worn. I was wearing my ribbon and my star. I went into a sort of cloakroom they have to take off my coat. There was a little man there called Owen Griffiths, who's a Welsh member of Parliament, and to tell you the truth, I was surprised to see him. He's very common, and I said to myself: 'Really, Lydia Connemara is going too far, whom will she ask next?' I thought he looked at me rather curiously, but I didn't take any notice of him; in fact I cut the little bounder and walked upstairs. I suppose you've never been there?"

"Never."

"No, it's not the sort of house you'd ever be likely to go to. It's a rather vulgar house, but it's got a very fine marble staircase, and the Connemaras were at the top receiving their guests. Lady Connemara gave me a look of surprise when I shook hands with her, and began to giggle; I didn't pay much attention—she's a very silly, ill-bred woman, and her manners are no better than those of her ancestress whom King Charles II made a duchess. I must say the reception rooms at Connemara House are stately. I walked through, nodding to a number of people and shaking hands; then I saw the German Ambassador talking with one of the Austrian archdukes. I particularly wanted to have a word with him, so I went up and held out my hand. The moment the Archduke saw me he burst into a roar of laughter. I was deeply affronted. I looked him up and down sternly, but he only laughed the more. I was about to speak to him rather sharply, when there was a sudden hush, and I realized that the King and Queen had

come. Turning my back on the Archduke, I stepped forward, and then, quite suddenly, I noticed that I hadn't got any trousers on. I was in short silk drawers, and I wore scarlet sock suspenders. No wonder Lady Connemara had giggled; no wonder the Archduke had laughed! I can't tell you what that moment was. An agony of shame. I awoke in a cold sweat. Oh, you don't know the relief I felt to find it was only a dream."

"It's the kind of dream that's not so very uncommon," said Doctor Audlin.

"I daresay not. But an odd thing happened next day. I was in the lobby of the House of Commons, when that fellow Griffiths walked slowly past me. He deliberately looked down at my legs, and then he looked me full in the face, and I was almost certain he winked. A ridiculous thought came to me. He'd been there the night before and seen me make that ghastly exhibition of myself and was enjoying the joke. But of course I knew that was impossible because it was only a dream. I gave him an icy glare, and he walked on. But he was grinning his head off."

Lord Mountdrago took his handkerchief out of his pocket and wiped the palms of his hands. He was making no attempt now to conceal his perturbation. Doctor Audlin never took his eyes off him.

"Tell me another dream."

"It was the night after, and it was even more absurd than the first one. I dreamt that I was in the House. There was a debate on foreign affairs which not only the country, but the world, had been looking forward to with the gravest concern. The government had decided on a change in their policy which vitally affected the future of the Empire. The occasion was historic. Of course the House was crowded. All the ambassadors were there. The galleries were packed. It fell to me to make the important speech of the evening. I had prepared it carefully. A man like me has enemies—there are a lot of people who resent my having achieved the position I have at an age when even the cleverest men are content with situations of relative obscurity—and I was determined that my speech should not only be worthy of the occasion, but should silence my detractors. It excited me to think that the whole world was hanging on my lips. I rose to my feet. If you've ever been in the House you'll know how members chat to one another during a debate, rustle papers and turn over reports. The silence was the

silence of the grave when I began to speak. Suddenly I caught sight of that odious little bounder on one of the benches opposite, Griffiths, the Welsh member; he put out his tongue at me. I don't know if you've ever heard a vulgar music-hall song called 'A Bicycle Made For Two.' It was very popular a great many years ago. To show Griffiths how completely I despised him I began to sing it. I sang the first verse right through. There was a moment's surprise, and when I finished they cried 'Hear, hear,' on the opposite benches. I put up my hand to silence them and sang the second verse. The House listened to me in stony silence and I felt the song wasn't going down very well. I was vexed, for I have a good baritone voice, and I was determined that they should do me justice. When I started the third verse the members began to laugh; in an instant the laughter spread; the ambassadors, the strangers in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery, the ladies in the Ladies' Gallery, the reporters, they shook, they bellowed, they held their sides, they rolled in their seats; every one was overcome with laughter except the ministers on the Front Bench immediately behind me. In that incredible, in that unprecedented, uproar they sat petrified. I gave them a glance, and suddenly the enormity of what I had done fell upon me. I had made myself the laughingstock of the whole world. With misery I realized that I should have to resign. I woke and knew it was only a dream."

Lord Mountdrago's grand manner had deserted him as he narrated this, and now having finished he was pale and trembling. But with an effort he pulled himself together. He forced a laugh to his shaking lips.

"The whole thing was so fantastic that I couldn't help being amused. I didn't give it another thought, and when I went into the House on the following afternoon I was feeling in very good form. The debate was dull, but I had to be there, and I read some documents that required my attention. For some reason I chanced to look up, and I saw that Griffiths was speaking. He has an unpleasant Welsh accent and an unprepossessing appearance. I couldn't imagine that he had anything to say that it was worth my while to listen to, and I was about to return to my papers when he quoted two lines from 'A Bicycle Made For Two.' I couldn't help glancing at him, and I saw that his eyes were fixed on me with a grin of bitter mockery. I faintly shrugged my shoulders. It was comic that a scrubby little Welsh member should look at me like that. It was an odd coincidence that he should quote

two lines from that disastrous song that I'd sung all through in my dream. I began to read my papers again, but I don't mind telling you that I found it difficult to concentrate on them. I was a little puzzled. Owen Griffiths had been in my first dream, the one at Connemara House, and I'd received a very definite impression afterwards that he knew the sorry figure I'd cut. Was it a mere coincidence that he had just quoted those two lines? I asked myself if it was possible that he was dreaming the same dreams as I was. But of course the idea was preposterous, and I determined not to give it a second thought."

There was a silence. Doctor Audlin looked at Lord Mountdrago and Lord Mountdrago looked at Doctor Audlin.

"Other people's dreams are very boring. My wife used to dream occasionally and insist on telling me her dreams next day with circumstantial detail. I found it maddening."

Doctor Audlin faintly smiled.

"You're not boring me."

"I'll tell you one more dream I had a few days later. I dreamt that I went into a public house at Limehouse. I've never been to Limehouse in my life and I don't think I've ever been in a public house since I was at Oxford, and yet I saw the street and the place I went into as exactly as if I were at home there. I went into a room—I don't know whether they call it the saloon bar or the private bar; there was a fireplace and a large leather armchair on one side of it, and on the other a small sofa; a bar ran the whole length of the room, and over it you could see into the public bar. Near the door was a round marble-topped table and two armchairs beside it. It was a Saturday night, and the place was packed. It was brightly lit, but the smoke was so thick that it made my eyes smart. I was dressed like a rough, with a cap on my head and a handkerchief round my neck. It seemed to me that most of the people there were drunk. I thought it rather amusing. There was a gramophone going, or the radio, I don't know which, and in front of the fireplace two women were doing a grotesque dance. There was a little crowd round them, laughing, cheering and singing. I went up to have a look, and some man said to me: ''Ave a drink, Bill.' There were glasses on the table full of a dark liquid which I understand is called brown ale. He gave me a glass, and not wishing to be conspicuous I drank it. One of the women who were dancing broke away from the other and took hold of the glass.

"'Ere, what's the idea?' she said. 'That's my beer you're putting away.' 'Oh, I'm so sorry,' I said, 'this gentleman offered it me, and I very naturally thought it was his to offer.' 'All right, mate,' she said, 'I don't mind. You come an' 'ave a dance with me.' Before I could protest she'd caught hold of me and we were dancing together. And then I found myself sitting in the armchair with the woman on my lap and we were sharing a glass of beer. I should tell you that sex has never played any great part in my life. I married young because in my position it was desirable that I should marry, but also in order to settle once for all the question of sex. I had the two sons I had made up my mind to have, and then I put the whole matter on one side. I've always been too busy to give much thought to that kind of thing, and living so much in the public eye as I do, it would have been madness to do anything that might give rise to scandal. The greatest asset a politician can have is a blameless record as far as women are concerned. I have no patience with the men who smash up their careers for women. I only despise them. The woman I had on my knees was drunk; she wasn't pretty and she wasn't young: in fact, she was just a blowsy old prostitute. She filled me with disgust, and yet when she put her mouth to mine and kissed me, though her breath stank of beer and her teeth were decayed, though I loathed myself, I wanted her—I wanted her with all my soul. Suddenly I heard a voice: 'That's right, old boy, have a good time.' I looked up, and there was Owen Griffiths. I tried to spring out of the chair, but that horrible woman wouldn't let me. 'Don't you pay no attention to 'im,' she said, ' 'e's only one of them nosy parkers.' 'You go to it,' he said. 'I know Moll. She'll give you your money's worth all right.' You know, I wasn't so much annoyed at his seeing me in that absurd situation as angry that he should address me as old boy. I pushed the woman aside and stood up and faced him. 'I don't know you, and I don't want to know you,' I said. 'I know you all right,' he said. 'And my advice to you, Molly, is, see that you get your money, he'll bilk you if he can.' There was a bottle of beer standing on the table close by. Without a word I seized it by the neck and hit him over the head with it as hard as I could. I made such a violent gesture that it woke me up."

"A dream of that sort is not incomprehensible," said Doctor Audlin. "It is the revenge nature takes on persons of unimpeachable character."

"The story's idiotic. I haven't told it you for its own sake. I've told

it you for what happened next day. I wanted to look up something in a hurry, and I went into the library of the House. I got the book and began reading. I hadn't noticed when I sat down that Griffiths was sitting in a chair close by me. Another of the Labor Members came in and went up to him. 'Hullo, Owen,' he said to him, 'you're looking pretty dicky today.' 'I've got an awful headache,' he answered, 'I feel as if I'd been cracked over the head with a bottle.' "

Now Lord Mountdrago's face was gray with anguish.

"I knew then that the idea I'd had and dismissed as preposterous was true. I knew that Griffiths was dreaming my dreams and that he remembered them as well as I did."

"It may also have been a coincidence."

"When he spoke he didn't speak to his friend, he deliberately spoke to me. He looked at me with sullen resentment."

"Can you offer any suggestion why this same man should come into your dreams?"

"None."

Doctor Audlin's eyes had not left his patient's face and he saw that he lied. He had a pencil in his hand, and he drew a straggling line or two on his blotting paper. It often took a long time to get people to tell the truth, and yet they knew that unless they told it he could do nothing for them.

"The dream you've just described to me took place just over three weeks ago. Have you had any since?"

"Every night."

"And does this man Griffiths come into them all?"

"Yes."

The doctor drew more lines on his blotting paper. He wanted the silence, the drabness, the dull light of that little room to have its effect on Lord Mountdrago's sensibility. Lord Mountdrago threw himself back in his chair and turned his head away so that he should not see the other's grave eyes.

"Doctor Audlin, you must do something for me. I'm at the end of my tether. I shall go mad if this goes on. I'm afraid to go to sleep. Two or three nights I haven't. I've sat up reading and when I felt drowsy put on my coat and walked till I was exhausted. But I must have sleep. With all the work I have to do I must be at concert pitch; I must be in complete control of all my faculties. I need rest; sleep

brings me none. I no sooner fall asleep than my dreams begin, and he's always there, that vulgar little cad, grinning at me, mocking me, despising me. It's a monstrous persecution. I tell you, Doctor, I'm not the man of my dreams; it's not fair to judge me by them. Ask any one you like. I'm an honest, upright, decent man. No one can say anything against my moral character either private or public. My whole ambition is to serve my country and maintain its greatness. I have money, I have rank, I'm not exposed to many of the temptations of lesser men, so that it's no credit to me to be incorruptible; but this I can claim, that no honor, no personal advantage, no thought of self would induce me to swerve by a hairsbreadth from my duty. I've sacrificed everything to become the man I am. Greatness is my aim. Greatness is within my reach, and I'm losing my nerve. I'm not that mean, despicable, cowardly, lewd creature that horrible little man sees. I've told you three of my dreams; they're nothing; that man has seen me do things that are so beastly, so horrible, so shameful, that even if my life depended on it I wouldn't tell them. And he remembers them. I can hardly meet the derision and disgust I see in his eyes, and I even hesitate to speak because I know my words can seem to him nothing but utter humbug. He's seen me do things that no man with any self-respect would do, things for which men are driven out of the society of their fellows and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment; he's heard the foulness of my speech; he's seen me not only ridiculous, but revolting. He despises me and he no longer pretends to conceal it. I tell you that if you can't do something to help me I shall either kill myself or kill him."

"I wouldn't kill him if I were you," said Doctor Audlin coolly, in that soothing voice of his. "In this country the consequences of killing a fellow creature are awkward."

"I shouldn't be hanged for it, if that's what you mean. Who would know that I'd killed him? That dream of mine has shown me how. I told you, the day after I'd hit him over the head with a beer bottle he had such a headache that he couldn't see straight. He said so himself. That shows that he can feel with his waking body what happens to his body asleep. It's not with a bottle I shall hit him next time. One night, when I'm dreaming, I shall find myself with a knife in my hand or a revolver in my pocket—I must because I want to so intensely—and then I shall seize my opportunity. I'll stick him like a pig; I'll

shoot him like a dog. In the heart. And then I shall be free of this fiendish persecution."

Some people might have thought that Lord Mountdrago was mad; after all the years during which Doctor Audlin had been treating the diseased souls of men he knew how thin a line divides those whom we call sane from those whom we call insane. He knew how often in men who to all appearance were healthy and normal, who were seemingly devoid of imagination, and who fulfilled the duties of common life with credit to themselves and with benefit to their fellows, when you gained their confidence, when you tore away the mask they wore to the world, you found not only hideous abnormality, but kinks so strange, mental extravagances so fantastic, that in that respect you could only call them lunatic. If you put them in an asylum, not all the asylums in the world would be large enough. Anyhow, a man was not certifiable because he had strange dreams and they had shattered his nerve. The case was singular, but it was only an exaggeration of others that had come under Doctor Audlin's observation; he was doubtful, however, whether the methods of treatment that he had so often found efficacious would here avail.

"Have you consulted any other member of my profession?" he asked.

"Only Sir Augustus. I merely told him that I suffered from nightmares. He said I was overworked and recommended me to go for a cruise. That's absurd. I can't leave the Foreign Office just now when the international situation needs constant attention. I'm indispensable, and I know it. On my conduct at the present juncture my whole future depends. He gave me sedatives. They had no effect. He gave me tonics. They were worse than useless. He's an old fool."

"Can you give any reason why it should be this particular man who persists in coming into your dreams?"

"You asked me that question before. I answered it."

That was true. But Doctor Audlin had not been satisfied with the answer.

"Just now you talked of persecution. Why should Owen Griffiths want to persecute you?"

"I don't know."

Lord Mountdrago's eyes shifted a little. Doctor Audlin was sure that he was not speaking the truth.

"Have you ever done him an injury?"

"Never."

Lord Mountdrago made no movement, but Doctor Audlin had a queer feeling that he shrank into his skin. He saw before him a large, proud man who gave the impression that the questions put to him were an insolence, and yet for all that, behind the façade was something shifting and startled that made you think of a frightened animal in a trap. Doctor Audlin leaned forward and by the power of his eyes forced Lord Mountdrago to meet them.

"Are you quite sure?"

"Quite sure. You don't seem to understand that our ways lead along different paths. I don't wish to harp on it, but I must remind you that I am a Minister of the Crown and Griffiths is an obscure member of the Labor Party. Naturally there's no social connection between us; he's a man of very humble origin, he's not the sort of person I should be likely to meet at any of the houses I go to; and politically our respective stations are so far separated that we could not possibly have anything in common."

"I can do nothing for you unless you tell me the complete truth."

Lord Mountdrago raised his eyebrows. His voice was rasping.

"I'm not accustomed to having my word doubted, Doctor Audlin. If you're going to do that, I think to take up any more of your time can only be a waste of mine. If you will kindly let my secretary know what your fee is, he will see that a check is sent to you."

For all the expression that was to be seen on Doctor Audlin's face you might have thought that he simply had not heard what Lord Mountdrago said. He continued to look steadily into his eyes, and his voice was grave and low.

"Have you done anything to this man that he might look upon as an injury?"

Lord Mountdrago hesitated. He looked away, and then, as though there were in Doctor Audlin's eyes a compelling force that he could not resist, looked back. He answered sulkily:

"Only if he was a dirty, second-rate little cad."

"But that is exactly what you've described him to be."

Lord Mountdrago sighed. He was beaten. Doctor Audlin knew that the sigh meant he was going at last to say what he had till then

held back. Now he had no longer to insist. He dropped his eyes and began again drawing vague geometrical figures on his blotting paper. The silence lasted two or three minutes.

"I'm anxious to tell you everything that can be of any use to you. If I didn't mention this before, it's only because it was so unimportant that I didn't see how it could possibly have anything to do with the case. Griffiths won a seat at the last election, and he began to make a nuisance of himself almost at once. His father's a miner, and he worked in a mine himself when he was a boy; he's been a schoolmaster in the board schools and a journalist. He's that half-baked, conceited intellectual, with inadequate knowledge, ill-considered ideas and impractical plans, that compulsory education has brought forth from the working classes. He's a scrawny, gray-faced man who looks half starved, and he's always very slovenly in appearance; heaven knows members nowadays don't bother much about their dress, but his clothes are an outrage to the dignity of the House. They're ostentatiously shabby, his collar's never clean, and his tie's never tied properly; he looks as if he hadn't had a bath for a month, and his hands are filthy. The Labor Party have two or three fellows on the Front Bench who've got a certain ability, but the rest of them don't amount to much. In the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king: because Griffiths is glib and has a lot of superficial information on a number of subjects, the Whips on his side began to put him up to speak whenever there was a chance. It appeared that he fancied himself on foreign affairs, and he was continually asking me silly, tiresome questions. I don't mind telling you that I made a point of snubbing him as soundly as I thought he deserved. From the beginning I hated the way he talked, his whining voice and his vulgar accent; he had nervous mannerisms that intensely irritated me. He talked rather shyly, hesitatingly, as though it were torture to him to speak and yet he was forced to by some inner passion, and often he used to say some very disconcerting things. I'll admit that now and again he had a sort of tub-thumping eloquence. It had a certain influence over the ill-regulated minds of the members of his party. They were impressed by his earnestness, and they weren't, as I was, nauseated by his sentimentality. A certain sentimentality is the common coin of political debate. Nations are governed by self-interest, but they prefer to believe that their aims are altruistic, and the politician is justified if with fair words and fine phrases he can persuade the electorate that

the hard bargain he is driving for his country's advantage tends to the good of humanity. The mistake people like Griffiths make is to take these fair words and fine phrases at their face value. He's a crank, and a noxious crank. He calls himself an idealist. He has at his tongue's end all the tedious blather that the intelligentsia have been boring us with for years. Nonresistance. The brotherhood of man. You know the hopeless rubbish. The worst of it was that it impressed not only his own party, it even shook some of the sillier, more sloppy-minded members of ours. I heard rumors that Griffiths was likely to get office when a Labor Government came in; I even heard it suggested that he might get the Foreign Office. The notion was grotesque but not impossible. One day I had occasion to wind up a debate on foreign affairs which Griffiths had opened. He'd spoken for an hour. I thought it a very good opportunity to cook his goose, and by God, sir, I cooked it. I tore his speech to pieces. I pointed out the faultiness of his reasoning and emphasized the deficiency of his knowledge. In the House of Commons the most devastating weapon is ridicule: I mocked him; I bantered him; I was in good form that day and the House rocked with laughter. The Opposition sat glum and silent, but even some of them couldn't help laughing once or twice; it's not intolerable, you know, to see a colleague, perhaps a rival, made a fool of. And if ever a man was made a fool of, I made a fool of Griffiths. He shrank down in his seat; I saw his face go white, and presently he buried it in his hands. When I sat down I'd killed him. I'd destroyed his prestige forever; he had no more chance of getting office when a Labor Government came in than the policeman at the door. I heard afterwards that his father, the old miner, and his mother had come up from Wales, with various supporters of his in the constituency, to watch the triumph they expected him to have. They had seen only his utter humiliation. He'd won the constituency by the narrowest margin. An incident like that might very easily lose him his seat. But that was no business of mine."

"Should I be putting it too strongly if I said you had ruined his career?" asked Doctor Audlin.

"I don't suppose you would."

"That is a very serious injury you've done him."

"He brought it on himself."

"Have you never felt any qualms about it?"

"I think perhaps if I'd known that his father and mother were there I might have let him down a little more gently."

There was nothing further for Doctor Audlin to say, and he set about treating his patient in such a manner as he thought might avail. He sought by suggestion to make him forget his dreams when he awoke; he sought to make his sleep so deep that he would not dream. He found Lord Mountdrago's resistance impossible to break down. At the end of an hour he dismissed him.

Since then he had seen Lord Mountdrago half a dozen times. He had done him no good. The frightful dreams continued every night to harass the unfortunate man, and it was clear that his general condition was growing rapidly worse. He was worn out. His irritability was uncontrollable. Lord Mountdrago was angry because he received no benefit from his treatment, and yet continued it, not only because it seemed his only hope, but because it was a relief to him to have some one with whom he could talk openly. Doctor Audlin came to the conclusion at last that there was only one way in which Lord Mountdrago could achieve deliverance, but he knew him well enough to be assured that of his own free will he would never, never take it. If Lord Mountdrago was to be saved from the breakdown that was threatening, he must be induced to take a step that must be abhorrent to his pride of birth and his self-complacency. Doctor Audlin was convinced that to delay was impossible. He was treating his patient by suggestion, and after several visits found him more susceptible to it. At length he managed to get him into a condition of somnolence. With his low, soft, monotonous voice he soothed his tortured nerves. He repeated the same words over and over again. Lord Mountdrago lay quite still, his eyes closed; his breathing was regular, and his limbs were relaxed. Then Doctor Audlin in the same quiet tone spoke the words he had prepared.

"You will go to Owen Griffiths and say that you are sorry that you caused him that great injury. You will say that you will do whatever lies in your power to undo the harm that you have done him."

The words acted on Lord Mountdrago like the blow of a whip across his face. He shook himself out of his hypnotic state and sprang to his feet. His eyes blazed with passion, and he poured forth upon Doctor Audlin a stream of angry vituperation such as even he had never heard. He swore at him. He cursed him. He used language of such obscenity that Doctor Audlin, who had heard every sort of foul word,

sometimes from the lips of chaste and distinguished women, was surprised that he knew it.

"Apologize to that filthy little Welshman? I'd rather kill myself."

"I believe it to be the only way in which you can regain your balance."

Doctor Audlin had not often seen a man presumably sane in such a condition of uncontrollable fury. Lord Mountdrago grew red in the face, and his eyes bulged out of his head. He did really foam at the mouth. Doctor Audlin watched him coolly, waiting for the storm to wear itself out, and presently he saw that Lord Mountdrago, weakened by the strain to which he had been subjected for so many weeks, was exhausted.

"Sit down," he said then, sharply.

Lord Mountdrago crumpled up into a chair.

"Christ, I feel all in. I must rest a minute and then I'll go."

For five minutes perhaps they sat in complete silence. Lord Mountdrago was a gross, blustering bully, but he was also a gentleman. When he broke the silence he had recovered his self-control.

"I'm afraid I've been very rude to you. I'm ashamed of the things I've said to you, and I can only say you'd be justified if you refused to have anything more to do with me. I hope you won't do that. I feel that my visits to you do help me. I think you're my only chance."

"You mustn't give another thought to what you said. It was of no consequence."

"But there's one thing you mustn't ask me to do, and that is to make excuses to Griffiths."

"I've thought a great deal about your case. I don't pretend to understand it, but I believe that your only chance of release is to do what I proposed. I have a notion that we're none of us one self, but many, and one of the selves in you has risen up against the injury you did Griffiths and has taken on the form of Griffiths in your mind and is punishing you for what you cruelly did. If I were a priest I should tell you that it is your conscience that has adopted the shape and lineaments of this man to scourge you to repentance and persuade you to reparation."

"My conscience is clear. It's not my fault if I smashed the man's career. I crushed him like a slug in my garden. I regret nothing."

It was on these words that Lord Mountdrago had left him. Reading through his notes, while he waited, Doctor Audlin considered how

best he could bring his patient to the state of mind that, now that his usual methods of treatment had failed, he thought alone could help him. He glanced at his clock. It was six. It was strange that Lord Mountdrago did not come. He knew he had intended to because a secretary had rung up that morning to say that he would be with him at the usual hour. He must have been detained by pressing work. This notion gave Doctor Audlin something else to think of: Lord Mountdrago was quite unfit to work and in no condition to deal with important matters of state. Doctor Audlin wondered whether it behooved him to get in touch with some one in authority, the Prime Minister or the Permanent Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, and impart to him his conviction that Lord Mountdrago's mind was so unbalanced that it was dangerous to leave affairs of moment in his hands. It was a ticklish thing to do. He might cause needless trouble and get roundly snubbed for his pains. He shrugged his shoulders.

"After all," he reflected, "the politicians have made such a mess of the world during the last five-and-twenty years, I don't suppose it makes much odds if they're mad or sane."

He rang the bell.

"If Lord Mountdrago comes now, will you tell him that I have another appointment at six-fifteen and so I'm afraid I can't see him."

"Very good, sir."

"Has the evening paper come yet?"

"I'll go and see."

In a moment the servant brought it in. A huge headline ran across the front page: Tragic Death of Foreign Minister.

"My God!" cried Doctor Audlin.

For once he was wrenched out of his wonted calm. He was shocked, horribly shocked, and yet he was not altogether surprised. The possibility that Lord Mountdrago might commit suicide had occurred to him several times, for that it was suicide he could not doubt. The paper said that Lord Mountdrago had been waiting in a tube station, standing on the edge of the platform, and as the train came in was seen to fall on the rail. It was supposed that he had had a sudden attack of faintness. The paper went on to say that Lord Mountdrago had been suffering for some weeks from the effects of overwork, but had felt it impossible to absent himself while the foreign situation demanded his unremitting attention. Lord Mountdrago was another vic-

tim of the strain that modern politics placed upon those who played the more important parts in it. There was a neat little piece about the talents and industry, the patriotism and vision, of the deceased statesman, followed by various surmises upon the Prime Minister's choice of his successor. Doctor Audlin read all this. He had not liked Lord Mountdrago. The chief emotion that his death caused in him was dissatisfaction with himself because he had been able to do nothing for him.

Perhaps he had done wrong in not getting into touch with Lord Mountdrago's doctor. He was discouraged, as always when failure frustrated his conscientious efforts, and repulsion seized him for the theory and practice of this empiric doctrine by which he earned his living. He was dealing with dark and mysterious forces that were perhaps beyond the powers of the human mind to understand. He was like a man blindfolded trying to feel his way to he knew not whither. Listlessly he turned the pages of the paper. Suddenly he gave a great start, and an exclamation once more was forced from his lips. His eyes had fallen on a small paragraph near the bottom of a column. Sudden Death of an M.P., he read. Mr. Owen Griffiths, member for so-and-so, had been taken ill in Fleet Street that afternoon and when he was brought to Charing Cross Hospital life was found to be extinct. It was supposed that death was due to natural causes, but an inquest would be held. Doctor Audlin could hardly believe his eyes. Was it possible that the night before Lord Mountdrago had at last in his dream found himself possessed of the weapon, knife or gun, that he had wanted, and had killed his tormentor, and had that ghostly murder, in the same way as the blow with the bottle had given him a racking headache on the following day, taken effect a certain number of hours later on the waking man? Or was it, more mysterious and more frightful, that when Lord Mountdrago sought relief in death, the enemy he had so cruelly wronged, unappeased, escaping from his own mortality, had pursued him to some other sphere, there to torment him still? It was strange. The sensible thing was to look upon it merely as an odd coincidence. Doctor Audlin rang the bell.

"Tell Mrs. Milton that I'm sorry I can't see her this evening, I'm not well."

It was true; he shivered as though of an ague. With some kind of spiritual sense he seemed to envisage a bleak, a horrible void. The dark

night of the soul engulfed him, and he felt a strange, primeval terror of he knew not what.

Analysis

The bulk of W. Somerset Maugham's work is done in relatively light vein, most of it frankly commercial (with the exception of *Of Human Bondage*). (See pp. 109–110, Part I for Maugham's attitude toward his craft.) Maugham is a polished stylist addressing himself to a fashionably smart audience through the medium of plays, short stories, and novels, many of them, in part at least, autobiographical.

1. "Lord Mountdrago" borders on fantasy, a fairly common type of craft story not so popular now as in the past, in which natural and supernatural commingle, the supernatural so anchored to the natural that the story's solution may be explained in terms either of fantasy or of coincidence, as the reader cares to believe. Analyze the mixture here, particularly as it concerns Doctor Audlin himself and the denouement of the story.

2. Note the double character study, the shift of interest and point of view from Doctor Audlin, after several pages, to Lord Mountdrago. As this shift is undoubtedly an intentional violation of the usual technique, explain the purpose of the writer and the function of the shift.

3. Discuss the two long sketches at the beginning of the story and the flashback, occupying altogether approximately half the length of the tale. Technically this arrangement is very difficult to handle while maintaining interest. How are interest and suspense sustained?

4. Why was "Lord Mountdrago" classified as a craft story rather than as a quality story? In your answer consider the classification of "The Psychiatrist's Story" as a quality story.

5. In "The Psychiatrist's Story" nearly a year of daily visits passed before the patient would say a word to his doctor. With that fact in mind, how do you account for Lord Mountdrago's unburdening himself at his first interview? If this is a violation of medical experience, then is it justifiable for the sake of plot coherence and unity of action?

6. Does Doctor Audlin seem convincing in his role, or would you classify him as a stock character? What evidences do you find of Maugham's medical background?

7. What is the theme of the story? What purpose was served in placing Lord Mountdrago in a position of considerable importance? Note the numerous repetitions of his main characteristic. Point them out.

8. Observe the skill with which Maugham gives the reader an entirely different impression of Griffith from that held by Lord Mountdrago, yet Griffith is presented only through Lord Mountdrago's revelations. Demonstrate step by step exactly how this seeming paradox is accomplished.

W. Somerset Maugham

W. Somerset Maugham (1874–), son of a British lawyer, was born in Paris while his father was on embassy duty there. His education was cosmopolitan, first English public school, then the University of Heidelberg, finally medical training at St. Thomas Hospital in London. Although he completed his medical training, he never practiced, for meanwhile he had decided to become a writer. Both his knowledge of medicine and his considerable traveling in the out-of-the-way places of the world, especially in the Orient, have colored most of his writing. The latter part of his life until World War II he lived in France, was evacuated, came to America, and has now, since the close of the war, returned again to France.

His best-known works among a considerable production of novels, plays, and short stories are *Of Human Bondage, The Moon and Sixpence, Cakes and Ale,* and *The Mixture as Before,* from which "Lord Mountdrago" has been reprinted.

As to Maugham's own methods of composition, he is convinced that the subconscious mind does most of a writer's work, and therefore he sits and writes and lets the story pour out to the end, not interrupting to polish, even though he realizes that some parts are bad. Afterward comes the real conscious effort, the writing and rewriting, deleting and adding, until "even though you know it isn't right, it's the best you can do."

He believes technique to be much less important than people, the understanding of people whether you like them or not. He says of himself that he doesn't like people but is sure that he understands them.



THE TERRIBLE MISS DOVE

Frances Gray Patton

MISS DOVE was waiting for the sixth grade to file in for its geography lesson. She stood behind her desk, straight as the long map pointer in her hand. And suddenly she had the feeling of not being really alone. Someone or something was moving about the room. Over there, near the sand table where the first grade's herd of rickety clay caribou grazed at the edge of the second grade's plateau, it paused and looked at her. But even when the presence glided, like the shadow of a drifting cloud, along the wall behind her; even when she heard—or almost heard—a new stick of chalk squeaking on the blackboard, Miss Dove did not turn around. She knew, of course, that nobody was there. Her imagination was playing tricks on her again. It was something, she had to admit, humiliatingly close to nerves. Miss Dove did not believe in nerves.

Through the open door she watched the sixth graders come out of the music room down the hall. They came out with a rush, as if for two minutes of freedom between classroom and classroom they were borne along upon some mass exhilaration. They always left the music room in that fashion, but this morning they managed to be noisier than usual. It was the season, she supposed. The spring day was warm, and the children were restless as the weather. There was a sharp sound among them, as of a plump posterior being spanked with a book; there was a voice saying, "Double dare, Randy!"; there was a breathless giggling.

But as they approached Miss Dove's room their disorder began to vanish. They pulled their excitement in, like a proud but well-broken pony. One by one they stepped sedately across her doorsill. "Good morning, Miss Dove," they said, one by one, with the same proper lack of voice inflection, and went demurely to their places. At a nod from her they took their seats. Hands folded, eyes to the front, posture correct—they were ready for direction.

Jincey Webb, Miss Dove noticed without enthusiasm, had a permanent wave. Yesterday her carrot-colored mane had been neatly braided and pulled back from her serious, freckled face. Now it hung to her shoulders, a bushy mop of undulations and frizzy ringlets. It hung on

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her mind, too; that was plain to see. For Jincey's expression was one of utter and enviable complacency. It seemed doubtful that a long lifetime of repeated triumphs could again offer her an achievement so sublime with self-satisfaction.

Randy Baker, a pink boy of exceptional daring, wiggled his ears at Jincey. Miss Dove looked at him. Randy's pinkness paled. A glaze of innocence came over his round eyes. His ears grew very still.

Miss Dove kept looking at him, but she had stopped seeing him. Instead, she was seeing his brother Thomas, who had sat there at Randy's desk seven years before, with the same glaze over the mischief in his eyes. And then she saw Thomas on a raft in the Pacific. She did not see him as they had described him in the papers—skin and bones and haggard young face overgrown with a rough, wild beard. The Thomas she saw looked like Randy. He had braces on his teeth and a dimple in his chin. And he was all alone in the dismal gray mountains of the sea.

A wave of giddiness swept over her, but she did not sit down. It was nothing. It had been happening to her off and on all year, and it always passed. Miss Dove had a poor opinion of teachers who could not practice self-control.

For thirty years Miss Dove had taught geography in Cedar Grove Elementary School. She had been there before the brooding cedars had been chopped down by a city council that believed in progress and level playgrounds. She had seen principals and fads and theories come and go. But the school still squatted there, red brick, ugly, impervious. Inside it still smelled of wet raincoats and pickle sandwiches. Galahad still petted his charger on the left wall of the vestibule, and Washington still crossed the Delaware on the right. Every fall nervous six-year-olds had to be sent home in tears to put on dry drawers. Every spring there occurred the scandal of cigarette butts in the boys' basement. The same deplorable, old-fashioned words sprang up overnight like mushrooms on the cement walk. And now and then some hitherto graceless child could still surprise you with an act of loyalty or understanding. The school had not changed much. Neither had human nature. Neither had Miss Dove.

Each June some forty-odd little girls and boys—transformed by the magic of organdy ruffles and white duck pants into a group picture of

touching purity—were graduated from Cedar Grove. They went on to the wider world of junior high and, beyond that, to further realms of pleasure and pain. In the course of time they forgot much. They forgot dates and decimals and how to write business letters.

But they never forgot Miss Dove.

Years afterward the mention of the Euphrates River or the Arctic Circle or the Argentinian pampas would put them right back in the geography room. They would see again the big map with its flat blue ocean and its many-colored countries. (India was pink, they would recall, and China was orange, and the Italian boot was purple.) They would see Miss Dove lifting her long stick to point out the location of strange mountains and valleys. And they would feel again the wonder of a world far-flung and various and, like themselves, entirely under control. They would also feel a little thirsty.

"Remember Miss Dove?" they would smile.

But this green remembrance and the accident of her name's rhyming with a tender word should not deceive anybody about Miss Dove. She was no valentine. Miss Dove was a terror.

She had been young when she first started teaching. Her pupils would have hooted at the notion; they would have felt it more reasonable to believe Miss Dove had been born middle-aged with her mousy hair screwed into a knot at the back of her head and a white handkerchief pinned to her dark, bony bosom. Nevertheless, it is true. She had once been quite young.

Her father had died, leaving her little besides a library of travel books, an anemic violet-scented mother, and two young sisters yet in school. It had been up to Miss Dove. Older people had pitied her. She seemed too thin and pale and untried, they thought, to carry the burden alone. But Miss Dove never pitied herself. She loved responsibility.

The children of each grade came to her forty-five minutes a day, five days a week, six years of their lives. She saw them as a challenge. Their babyish shyness, their lisping pronunciation, their reckless forgetfulness—these evoked no compassion from Miss Dove. They were qualities to be nipped and pruned. Her classes were like a body of raw recruits that she was to toughen and charge with purpose. Miss Dove was the stuff that commanders are made of.

Other teachers had trouble keeping order, but not Miss Dove. Other teachers tried to make a game of their work—they played store and

pasted gold stars on foreheads. They threatened and cajoled. Miss Dove never raised her voice. She rarely smiled. She laid before the children the roster of her unalterable laws. And the laws were obeyed. Work was to be done on time. There was to be no whispering, no hair chewing, no wriggling. Coughing, if at all, was to be covered with a clean handkerchief. When one of these laws was chipped, Miss Dove merely looked at the offender. That was all. If a child felt obliged to disturb the class routine by leaving the room for a drink of water (Miss Dove loftily ignored any other necessity), he did so to the accompaniment of dead silence. The whole class would sit, idle and motionless, until he had returned. It was easier—even if you had eaten salt fish for breakfast—to remain and suffer.

Miss Dove managed to introduce a moral quality into the very subject she taught. The first graders, who studied the animals of different lands, repeated after her, "The yak is a very helpful animal." And they knew she expected them all to be yaks. Later they learned a more complicated sentence. "The camel," they recited in perfect unison, "is not a pretty beast, either in looks or disposition, but he is able to go many days without water." And they knew what was meant. "Above the fiftieth parallel," sixth graders wrote in their notebooks (keeping the margins even), "life requires hardihood."

Occasionally a group of progressive mothers would nearly rebel. "She's been teaching too long," they would cry. "Her pedagogy hasn't changed since we were in the third grade. She rules the children through fear." They would turn to the boldest one among them. "*You* go," they would say. "You go talk to her."

The bold one would go, but somehow she never did much talking. For under the level gaze of Miss Dove she would begin to feel—though she wore her handsomest tweeds and perhaps a gardenia for courage—that she was about ten years old and her petticoat was showing. Her throat would tickle. She would wonder desperately if she had a clean handkerchief to cough into.

And then there was the little matter of the state achievement tests. Cedar Grove always placed first in geography.

Occasionally, too, there would be an independent child who did not yield readily to group discipline. Miss Dove knew how to deal with him.

Once she had overheard two small boys talking about her at the

drinking fountain. (They had no business at the fountain; it was their library period. But the librarian was lax.)

"I bet Miss Dove could lick Joe Louis," one of them had said.

"Who? That ole stick?" the other one had jeered. "I could beat her with my little finger."

He had glanced up then to see Miss Dove looking down at him. She had looked at him for a long time. Her light gray eyes were expressionless. Her long nose was pink at the tip, but no pinker than usual. At last she had spoken.

"Thomas Baker," she had said in the tone of one making a pure observation, "you talk too much, don't you?"

"Yes, ma'am," Thomas had said in a tiny voice. He went off without getting any water. Seven years later he sweated when he thought of it. He could not know that Miss Dove also remembered. But she did.

Ever since Pearl Harbor Miss Dove had been troubled. She lived quite alone, for her sisters had married and her mother had departed for a place not on the map. (But decently, with every possible comfort. Miss Dove liked to remind herself of that.) And one evening while she was correcting papers she sensed, with that uncanny perception of the teacher, that something intruded upon her solitude. She turned quickly and looked about the room. A starched white curtain rustled in a puff of wind; her grandmother's rosewood whatnot cast a curious shadow on the polished floor; a finger of lamplight picked out the gilt titles of her father's old brown travel books. There was nothing else. But the red correction pencil was shaking in her fingers; for a moment her throat ached with a spasm of desolate, unaccountable grief, and —less familiar still—with a feeling of her own unworthiness. Miss Dove had never felt unworthy before in her life.

After that the thing happened frequently, until at last she saw who the intruders were. They were the children she had taught long ago.

War had scattered those children. There was a girl—a vain, silly little piece she had been—who was a nurse on Corregidor. At least, when last heard of she had been on Corregidor. One of the boys was dead in Tunisia. Others were on the Anzio beachhead, or in the jungles of New Guinea, or in the flak-brightened skies over Germany. But they came back to Miss Dove. She saw them as they had been at seven, at

ten, at twelve. Only they had a beauty she had never seen in them then. They lifted their faces like starry morning flowers. Their limbs quivered with the unreasonable joy of childhood. And as Miss Dove looked at them they grew still. Their faces paled. Their eyes stopped dancing. They folded their little hands. They faded and were gone.

The child who came oftenest was Thomas Baker. The town paper had been full of Thomas. His ship had been bombed, his officers killed, and Thomas had taken over. A hundred men owed their lives to his presence of mind. For days he had floated on a raft with no food and only the water in his canteen. When they picked him up his tongue had protruded from his mouth, black and swollen with thirst. That was what got Miss Dove—he had run out of water.

The Thomas who came to stand before her now was a sturdy boy in knickers. He held his chin at a cocky angle, but the dimple in it trembled. He ran the tip of his tongue over his lips. He looked thirsty.

But they came only at night. When daylight returned Miss Dove could believe she had been imagining things. She would eat her customary boiled egg and her whole-wheat toast; she would take an extra vitamin pill with her orange juice; she would walk forth at her usual measured pace and assume her usual role of unshakable authority. The children at the school would seem plain and ordinary. They would have little in common with those graceful and evanescent figures that haunted her. And no intruders dared come into the geography room. Or they never had until this morning.

A boy in the back row cleared his throat. One by the window followed suit. Soon the whole room was dotted with the sound, a rough "h-hrmph," like frogs in a distant marsh. Miss Dove knew what the sound meant. It was the school's traditional signal—a kind of dare. She had heard other teachers speak of it in exasperation. It had never happened in her room before.

Slowly Randy Baker raised his hand. The sounds stopped. Silence like a caught breath hung on the room. Miss Dove could see a fine dew pop out on Randy's brow; his open palm was damp and gleaming.

"Yes, Randolph?" she said.

Randy stood up. Miss Dove's pupils always stood when they addressed her. He smoothed his round stomach with his hand. "I got a letter from Tom yestiddy," he said.

"*Received,* Randolph," said Miss Dove. "You received a letter from your brother *yesterday*. That was nice."

"Yes, ma'am," said Randy. He paused. He was clearly floundering. "He sent me a dollar he won playing poker in the convalescent hospital."

"I am sorry to hear that Thomas gambles," said Miss Dove, "but we are all very proud of his war record. If you have nothing more interesting to tell us you may take your seat, Randolph."

"H-hr-rmph!" went the boy behind Randy.

"He's been decorated," said Randy, "for bravery beyond the call of duty." The high words seemed to inspirit him. "He sent a message to the class."

"Did you bring the letter?" asked Miss Dove. "If so, you may read that part aloud."

Randy took an air-mail envelope from his hip pocket. Miss Dove noticed that Thomas' handwriting was as sprawling and untidy as ever. Somehow the observation pleased her.

The class stirred. The ghost of a titter rippled the air.

"Attention, please," said Miss Dove.

Randy opened the letter. The paper was smudged and crumpled. Obviously it had suffered many readings and many hands. Randy cleared his throat. The sound was not a link in the chain signal. Miss Dove could tell the difference. "It's sort of long," Randy demurred hopefully.

Miss Dove knew there was naughtiness afoot. The frog noises as well as Randy's hesitation had told her that. But she did not believe in avoiding an issue. She made a practice of facing impudence in the open—and facing it down.

"We can spare the time," she said.

Randy began to read. His voice was high and clear; it had the girlish sweetness that comes just before the breaking point.

"The funny thing about the world," Randy read, "is that it looks just like you think it does. When they flew me back to Cal. in a hospital plane I looked down and, heck, I might as well have been looking at those diagrams on the geography board back in dear (ha, ha!) ole Cedar Grove. I spotted a peninsula just as plain. A body of land almost entirely surrounded by water. I saw some atolls too. And they really are made in rings like doughnuts, with palm trees sprouting

out of the cake part and blue water in the hole in the middle. The water is the color of that blue chalk I swiped once and drew the picture of Miss Dove on the sidewalk with. Remember?"

So it *was* Thomas who had drawn that caricature. She had always suspected him. "Proceed, Randolph," she said.

"You want to know if I was scared when the little yellow insects from"—Randy swallowed and went on—"from hell"—in his embarrassment he brought out the word with unnecessary force—"dive-bombed us. The answer is, you bet. But it came to me in a flash that I wasn't much scareder than I was that time ole lady Dove caught me bragging about how I could beat her up at the drinking fountain. 'I didn't run that time,' I told myself, 'so I won't run now.' Besides, there wasn't any place to run to."

The class laughed nervously.

"And later," read Randy, "when I was bobbing up and down like Crusoe on my raft, what do you guess I thought about? Well, it wasn't any pin-up girl. It was Miss Dove. I thought about that fishy stare she used to give us when we needed a drink of water. So to make my supply hold out I played I was back in the geography room. And even after the water was all gone I kept playing that. I'd think, 'The bell is bound to ring in a few minutes. You can last a little longer.' It took the same kind of guts in the Pacific it did in school. Tell that to the kids in Cedar Grove." Randy stopped abruptly.

"Is that the end?" asked Miss Dove.

Randy looked directly at her. For a fleeting moment she thought he was going to say yes. If he did, the incident would be closed, of course, for Miss Dove never questioned a child's word. That was why they generally told her the truth. He shook his head.

"No, ma'am," he said. "There's a little more." His face turned the color of a nearly ripe tomato. "He says here"—Randy gulped—"he says"—Randy took a deep breath—"he says: 'Give the terrible Miss Dove a kiss for me.'"

"Well, Randolph," said Miss Dove, "I am waiting."

There was an electric stillness that was followed, as the full meaning of her words penetrated the children's consciousness, by a gasp. Randy folded the letter and put it back into his pocket. Then he began to walk toward her. He walked with the deliberate stoicism of a martyr going to the chopping block. Miss Dove inclined her head and turned

her cheek in his direction. He did not come any closer than he had to. He leaned forward stiffly from the waist and placed his puckered lips against her cheek. (*He smells like a last year's bird's nest,* thought Miss Dove. It was strange. However frequently a twelve-year-old boy was washed, he always smelled like a bird's nest.) Randy smacked. His kiss resounded, a small explosion in the room.

"Thank you, Randolph," said Miss Dove. "You may give Thomas my regards." She straightened up and faced the class. To her surprise, nobody was grinning.

Jincey Webb spoke. She did not raise her hand first for permission. She just spoke out. "It's like a medal," said Jincey softly. "It's like he pinned a medal on Miss Dove."

For a moment a lamp seemed to burn behind her face. Then over the light swept a shadow, a look of awe. It was as if Jincey had glimpsed some universal beauty—of sorrow, perhaps, or of nobility—too poignant for her youth to bear. She began to cry. She flopped her head down on her desk with her red hair falling forward and spreading out like a crinkly fan.

All the other girls were weeping too. All the boys were trying not to.

For the first time in her teaching career Miss Dove was at a loss. She wanted to make a speech. She wanted to say something beautiful and grateful about what life really meant to her, about the overwhelming generosity of children. No, not generosity. It was something better than that, something much harder to come by. It was justice. And Miss Dove did not know how to say what she felt. She had never thought it dignified to express emotion.

But as she stood there waiting for the words to form in her mind, she realized that she was neglecting her duty. The first duty of a teacher was to preserve order.

She fished a piece of string from a receptacle on her desk. She walked down the aisle to Jincey Webb. She took Jincey's hair, that marvel of art and nature, and bunched it in her hand. She tied it securely at the nape of Jincey's neck with the little bit of grocery string.

"Now it will be out of your way," she said.

At the sound of her voice, cool, precise and natural, the children rallied. They sat erect. They blew their noses on clean handkerchiefs. They folded their hands on their desks.

"Get out your notebooks, class," she said.

A transient mist came over her eyes. Through it, as through a prism, the children glowed. Freckles, cowlicks, pinafores and polo shirts seemed bathed in a rainbow iridescence. Her love flowed out to her children—to those opening their notebooks before her, and to those in the far places she had once helped them locate on the map. It did not flow tenderly like a mother's coddling love. It flowed on a fierce rush of pride and hope, as an old general's heart might follow his men into battle.

She went to the blackboard and picked up a piece of chalk. "Above the fiftieth parallel—" wrote the terrible Miss Dove.

Analysis

Frances Gray Patton's story of a veteran schoolteacher is a skillfully constructed piece of commercial fiction. With dexterous handling, character and background are prepared to lead toward a very emotional climax. Additionally, this story concerning a schoolteacher deals with a timely subject for the year in which it was printed (1947).

In correspondence concerning "The Terrible Miss Dove" Hugh MacNair Kahler, fiction editor of *Ladies' Home Journal,* had this to say: ". . . I am constantly and violently declaring that there isn't any such thing as a 'typical woman's magazine story.' Certainly as far as the *Journal* is concerned, a story that could possibly be described by that phrase would have a dismal chance of acceptance. . . . 'The Terrible Miss Dove' would be a good story in any magazine." Hugh MacNair Kahler is himself a writer.

1. What elements of "The Terrible Miss Dove" are convincingly true to life? List them carefully. They are essential to a successful craft story or a successful motion picture.
2. What elements of the story seem dubiously true or untrue to life? Do they have fictional verity?
3. What is the traditional theme of the story? Does the treatment of this theme violate any generally accepted belief?
4. Show step by step the manner in which episode upon episode accumulates toward the emotional climax. This emotional quality is the essential ingredient in most successful commercial fiction. Carefully analyze exactly what it is.

Frances Gray Patton

Frances Gray Patton (1906–) was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, and was educated at Trinity College—now Duke University—and at the

University of North Carolina, where she was active in the Carolina Playmakers and for a time debated becoming a professional actress. In 1927 she was married to Lewis Patton, who teaches English at Duke University. They have three children. Her short stories have appeared in *The Kenyon Review, Harper's Magazine, Ladies' Home Journal, The New Yorker,* and other magazines.

For CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY Mrs. Patton writes: "I haven't too much to say about how I happened to write 'The Terrible Miss Dove.' It was just a story I thought up, and I wrote it! As for my struggles with writing, they are so omnipresent just now that it would be hard for me to speak objectively of them. . . . I have always been interested in writing, but I never went at it steadily until about three years ago."



I'LL BE WAITING

Raymond Chandler

AT ONE o'clock in the morning, Carl, the night porter, turned down the last of three table lamps in the main lobby of the Windermere Hotel. The blue carpet darkened a shade or two and the walls drew back into remoteness. The chairs filled with shadowy loungers. In the corners were memories like cobwebs.

Tony Reseck yawned. He put his head on one side and listened to the frail, twittery music from the radio room beyond a dim arch at the far side of the lobby. He frowned. That should be his radio room after one A.M. Nobody should be in it. That red-haired girl was spoiling his nights.

The frown passed and a miniature of a smile quirked at the corners of his lips. He sat relaxed, a short, pale, paunchy, middle-aged man with long, delicate fingers clasped on the elk's tooth on his watch chain; the long delicate fingers of a sleight-of-hand artist, fingers with shiny, molded nails and tapering first joints, fingers a little spatulate at the ends. Handsome fingers. Tony Reseck rubbed them gently together and there was peace in his quiet sea-gray eyes.

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The frown came back on his face. The music annoyed him. He got up with a curious litheness, all in one piece, without moving his clasped hands from the watch chain. At one moment he was leaning back relaxed, and the next he was standing balanced on his feet, perfectly still, so that the movement of rising seemed to be a thing imperfectly perceived, an error of vision.

He walked with small, polished shoes delicately across the blue carpet and under the arch. The music was louder. It contained the hot, acid blare, the frenetic, jittering runs of a jam session. It was too loud. The red-haired girl sat there and stared silently at the fretted part of the big radio cabinet as though she could see the band with its fixed professional grin and the sweat running down its back. She was curled up with her feet under her on a davenport which seemed to contain most of the cushions in the room. She was tucked among them carefully, like a corsage in the florist's tissue paper.

She didn't turn her head. She leaned there, one hand in a small fist on her peach-colored knee. She was wearing lounging pajamas of heavy ribbed silk embroidered with black lotus buds.

"You like Goodman, Miss Cressy?" Tony Reseck asked.

The girl moved her eyes slowly. The light in there was dim, but the violet of her eyes almost hurt. They were large, deep eyes without a trace of thought in them. Her face was classical and without expression.

She said nothing.

Tony smiled and moved his fingers at his sides, one by one, feeling them move. "You like Goodman, Miss Cressy?" he repeated gently.

"Not to cry over," the girl said tonelessly.

Tony rocked back on his heels and looked at her eyes. Large, deep, empty eyes. Or were they? He reached down and muted the radio.

"Don't get me wrong," the girl said. "Goodman makes money, and a lad that makes legitimate money these days is a lad you have to respect. But this jitterbug music gives me the backdrop of a beer flat. I like something with roses in it."

"Maybe you like Mozart," Tony said.

"Go on, kid me," the girl said.

"I wasn't kidding you, Miss Cressy. I think Mozart was the greatest man that ever lived—and Toscanini is his prophet."

"I thought you were the house dick." She put her head back on a

pillow and stared at him through her lashes. "Make me some of that Mozart," she added.

"It's too late," Tony sighed. "You can't get it now."

She gave him another long lucid glance. "Got the eye on me, haven't you, flat-foot?" She laughed a little, almost under her breath. "What did I do wrong?"

Tony smiled his toy smile. "Nothing, Miss Cressy. Nothing at all. But you need some fresh air. You've been five days in this hotel and you haven't been outdoors. And you have a tower room."

She laughed again. "Make me a story about it. I'm bored."

"There was a girl here once had your suite. She stayed in the hotel a whole week, like you. Without going out at all, I mean. She didn't speak to anybody hardly. What do you think she did then?"

The girl eyed him gravely. "She jumped her bill."

He put his long delicate hand out and turned it slowly, fluttering the fingers, with an effect almost like a lazy wave breaking. "Unh-uh. She sent down for her bill and paid it. Then she told the hop to be back in half an hour for her suitcases. Then she went out on her balcony."

The girl leaned forward a little, her eyes still grave, one hand capping her peach-colored knee. "What did you say your name was?"

"Tony Reseck."

"Sounds like a hunky."

"Yeah," Tony said. "Polish."

"Go on, Tony."

"All the tower suites have private balconies, Miss Cressy. The walls of them are too low, for fourteen stories above the street. It was a dark night, that night, high clouds." He dropped his hand with a final gesture, a farewell gesture. "Nobody saw her jump. But when she hit, it was like a big gun going off."

"You're making it up, Tony." Her voice was a clean dry whisper of sound.

He smiled his toy smile. His quiet sea-gray eyes seemed almost to be smoothing the long waves of her hair. "Eve Cressy," he said musingly. "A name waiting for lights to be in."

"Waiting for a tall dark guy that's no good, Tony. You wouldn't care why. I was married to him once. I might be married to him again. You can make a lot of mistakes in just one lifetime." The hand on her knee opened slowly until the fingers were strained back as far as they would

go. Then they closed quickly and tightly, and even in that dim light the knuckles shone like little polished bones. "I played him a low trick once. I put him in a bad place—without meaning to. You wouldn't care about that either. It's just that I owe him something."

He leaned over softly and turned the knob on the radio. A waltz formed itself dimly on the warm air. A tinsel waltz, but a waltz. He turned the volume up. The music gushed from the loud-speaker in a swirl of shadowed melody. Since Vienna died, all waltzes are shadowed.

The girl put her head on one side and hummed three or four bars and stopped with a sudden tightening of her mouth.

"Eve Cressy," she said. "It was in lights once. At a bum night club. A dive. They raided it and the lights went out."

He smiled at her almost mockingly. "It was no dive while you were there, Miss Cressy. . . . That's the waltz the orchestra always played when the old porter walked up and down in front of the hotel entrance, all swelled up with his medals on his chest. The Last Laugh. Emil Jannings. You wouldn't remember that one, Miss Cressy."

"Spring, Beautiful Spring," she said. "No, I never saw it."

He walked three steps away from her and turned. "I have to go upstairs and palm door-knobs. I hope I didn't bother you. You ought to go to bed now. It's pretty late."

The tinsel waltz stopped and a voice began to talk. The girl spoke through the voice, "You really thought something like that—about the balcony?"

He nodded. "I might have," he said softly. "I don't any more."

"No chance, Tony." Her smile was a dim lost leaf. "Come and talk to me some more. Redheads don't jump, Tony. They hang on—and wither."

He looked at her gravely for a moment and then moved away over the carpet. The porter was standing in the archway that led to the main lobby. Tony hadn't looked that way yet, but he knew somebody was there. He always knew if anybody was close to him. He could hear the grass grow, like the donkey in The Blue Bird.

The porter jerked his chin at him urgently. His broad face above the uniform collar looked sweaty and excited. Tony stepped up close to him and they went together through the arch and out to the middle of the dim lobby.

"Trouble?" Tony asked wearily.

"There's a guy outside to see you, Tony. He won't come in. I'm doing a wipe-off on the plate glass of the doors and he comes up beside me, a tall guy. 'Get Tony,' he says, out of the side of his mouth."

Tony said: "Uh-huh," and looked at the porter's pale blue eyes. "Who was it?"

"Al, he said to say he was."

Tony's face became as expressionless as dough. "Okey." He started to move off.

The porter caught his sleeve. "Listen, Tony. You got any enemies?"

Tony laughed politely, his face still like dough.

"Listen, Tony." The porter held his sleeve tightly. "There's a big black car down the block, the other way from the hacks. There's a guy standing beside it with his foot on the running board. This guy that spoke to me, he wears a dark-colored, wrap-around overcoat with a high collar turned up against his ears. His hat's way low. You can't hardly see his face. He says, 'Get Tony,' out of the side of his mouth. You ain't got any enemies, have you, Tony?"

"Only the finance company," Tony said. "Beat it."

He walked slowly and a little stiffly across the blue carpet, up the three shallow steps to the entrance lobby with the three elevators on one side and the desk on the other. Only one elevator was working. Beside the open doors, his arms folded, the night operator stood silent in a neat blue uniform with silver facings. A lean, dark Mexican named Gomez. A new boy, breaking in on the night shift.

The other side was the desk, rose marble, with the night clerk leaning on it delicately. A small neat man with a wispy reddish mustache and cheeks so rosy they looked rouged. He stared at Tony and poked a nail at his mustache.

Tony pointed a stiff index finger at him, folded the other three fingers tight to his palm, and flicked his thumb up and down on the stiff finger. The clerk touched the other side of his mustache and looked bored.

Tony went on past the closed and darkened newsstand and the side entrance to the drugstore, out to the brassbound plate-glass doors. He stopped just inside them and took a deep, hard breath. He squared his shoulders, pushed the doors open and stepped out into the cold, damp night air.

The street was dark, silent. The rumble of traffic on Wilshire, two

blocks away, had no body, no meaning. To the left were two taxis. Their drivers leaned against a fender, side by side, smoking. Tony walked the other way. The big dark car was a third of a block from the hotel entrance. Its lights were dimmed and it was only when he was almost up to it that he heard the gentle sound of its engine turning over.

A tall figure detached itself from the body of the car and strolled toward him, both hands in the pockets of the dark overcoat with the high collar. From the man's mouth a cigarette tip glowed faintly, a rusty pearl.

They stopped two feet from each other.

The tall man said: "Hi, Tony. Long time no see."

"Hello, Al. How's it going?"

"Can't complain." The tall man started to take his right hand out of his overcoat pocket, then stopped and laughed quietly. "I forgot. Guess you don't want to shake hands."

"That don't mean anything," Tony said. "Shaking hands. Monkeys can shake hands. What's on your mind, Al?"

"Still the funny little fat guy, eh, Tony?"

"I guess." Tony winked his eyes tight. His throat felt tight.

"You like your job back there?"

"It's a job."

Al laughed his quiet laugh again. "You take it slow, Tony. I'll take it fast. So it's a job and you want to hold it. Oke. There's a girl named Eve Cressy flopping in your quiet hotel. Get her out. Fast and right now."

"What's the trouble?"

The tall man looked up and down the street. A man behind in the car coughed lightly. "She's hooked with a wrong number. Nothing against her personal, but she'll lead trouble to you. Get her out, Tony. You got maybe an hour."

"Sure," Tony said aimlessly, without meaning.

Al took his hand out of his pocket and stretched it against Tony's chest. He gave him a light lazy push. "I wouldn't be telling you just for the hell of it, little fat brother. Get her out of there."

"Okey," Tony said, without any tone in his voice.

The tall man took back his hand and reached for the car door. He opened it and started to slip in like a lean black shadow.

Then he stopped and said something to the men in the car and got out again. He came back to where Tony stood silent, his pale eyes catching a little dim light from the street.

"Listen, Tony. You always kept your nose clean. You're a good brother, Tony."

Tony didn't speak.

Al leaned toward him, a long urgent shadow, the high collar almost touching his ears. "It's trouble business, Tony. The boys won't like it, but I'm telling you just the same. This Cressy was married to a lad named Johnny Ralls. Ralls is out of Quentin two, three days, or a week. He did a three-spot for manslaughter. The girl put him there. He ran down an old man one night when he was drunk, and she was with him. He wouldn't stop. She told him to go in and tell it, or else. He didn't go in. So the Johns come for him."

Tony said, "That's too bad."

"It's kosher, kid. It's my business to know. This Ralls flapped his mouth in stir about how the girl would be waiting for him when he got out, all set to forgive and forget, and he was going straight to her."

Tony said: "What's he to you?" His voice had a dry, stiff crackle, like thick paper.

Al laughed. "The trouble boys want to see him. He ran a table at a spot on the Strip and figured out a scheme. He and another guy took the house for fifty grand. The other lad coughed up, but we still need Johnny's twenty-five. The trouble boys don't get paid to forget."

Tony looked up and down the dark street. One of the taxi drivers flicked a cigarette stub in a long arc over the top of one of the cabs. Tony watched it fall and spark on the pavement. He listened to the quiet sound of the big car's motor.

"I don't want any part of it," he said. "I'll get her out."

Al backed away from him, nodding. "Wise kid. How's mom these days?"

"Okey," Tony said.

"Tell her I was asking for her."

"Asking for her isn't anything," Tony said.

Al turned quickly and got into the car. The car curved lazily in the middle of the block and drifted back toward the corner. Its lights went up and sprayed on a wall. It turned a corner and was gone. The lingering smell of its exhaust drifted past Tony's nose. He turned and

walked back to the hotel, and into it. He went along to the radio room.

The radio still muttered, but the girl was gone from the davenport in front of it. The pressed cushions were hollowed out by her body. Tony reached down and touched them. He thought they were still warm. He turned the radio off and stood there, turning a thumb slowly in front of his body, his hand flat against his stomach. Then he went back through the lobby toward the elevator bank and stood beside a majolica jar of white sand. The clerk fussed behind a pebbled-glass screen at one end of the desk. The air was dead.

The elevator bank was dark. Tony looked at the indicator of the middle car and saw that it was at 14.

"Gone to bed," he said under his breath.

The door of the porter's room beside the elevators opened and the little Mexican night operator came out in street clothes. He looked at Tony with a quiet sidewise look out of eyes the color of dried-out chestnuts.

"Good night, boss."

"Yeah," Tony said absently.

He took a thin dappled cigar out of his vest pocket and smelled it. He examined it slowly, turning it around in his neat fingers. There was a small tear along the side. He frowned at that and put the cigar away.

There was a distant sound and the hand on the indicator began to steal around the bronze dial. Light glittered up in the shaft and the straight line of the car floor dissolved the darkness below. The car stopped and the doors opened, and Carl came out of it.

His eyes caught Tony's with a kind of jump and he walked over to him, his head on one side, a thin shine along his pink upper lip.

"Listen, Tony."

Tony took his arm in a hard swift hand and turned him. He pushed him quickly, yet somehow casually, down the steps to the dim main lobby and steered him into a corner. He let go of the arm. His throat tightened again, for no reason he could think of.

"Well?" he said darkly. "Listen to what?"

The porter reached into a pocket and hauled out a dollar bill. "He gimme this," he said loosely. His glittering eyes looked past Tony's shoulder at nothing. They winked rapidly. "Ice and ginger ale."

"Don't stall," Tony growled.

"Guy in 14B," the porter said.

"Lemme smell your breath."

The porter leaned toward him obediently.

"Liquor," Tony said harshly.

"He gimme a drink."

Tony looked down at the dollar bill. "Nobody's in 14B. Not on my list," he said.

"Yeah. There is." The porter licked his lips and his eyes opened and shut several times. "Tall dark guy."

"All right," Tony said crossly. "All right. There's a tall dark guy in 14B and he gave you a buck and a drink. Then what?"

"Gat under his arm," Carl said, and blinked.

Tony smiled, but his eyes had taken on the lifeless glitter of thick ice. "You take Miss Cressy up to her room?"

Carl shook his head. "Gomez. I saw her go up."

"Get away from me," Tony said between his teeth. "And don't accept any more drinks from the guests."

He didn't move until Carl had gone back into his cubbyhole by the elevators and shut the door. Then he moved silently up the three steps and stood in front of the desk, looking at the veined rose marble, the onyx pen set, the fresh registration card in its leather frame. He lifted a hand and smacked it down hard on the marble. The clerk popped out from behind the glass screen like a chipmunk coming out of its hole.

Tony took a flimsy out of his breast pocket and spread it on the desk. "No 14B on this," he said in a bitter voice.

The clerk wisped politely at his mustache. "So sorry. You must have been out to supper when he checked in."

"Who?"

"Registered as James Watterson, San Diego." The clerk yawned.

"Ask for anybody?"

The clerk stopped in the middle of the yawn and looked at the top of Tony's head. "Why, yes. He asked for a swing band. Why?"

"Smart, fast and funny," Tony said. "If you like 'em that way." He wrote on his flimsy and stuffed it back into his pocket. "I'm going upstairs and palm doorknobs. There's four tower rooms you ain't rented yet. Get up on your toes, son. You're slipping."

"I make out," the clerk drawled, and completed his yawn. "Hurry back, pop. I don't know how I'll get through the time."

"You could shave that pink fuzz off your lip," Tony said, and went across to the elevators.

He opened up a dark one and lit the dome light and shot the car up to fourteen. He darkened it again, stepped out and closed the doors. This lobby was smaller than any other, except the one immediately below it. It had a single blue-paneled door in each of the walls other than the elevator wall. On each door was a gold number and letter with a gold wreath around it. Tony walked over to 14A and put his ear to the panel. He heard nothing. Eve Cressy might be in bed asleep, or in the bathroom, or out on the balcony. Or she might be sitting there in the room, a few feet from the door, looking at the wall. Well, he wouldn't expect to be able to hear her sit and look at the wall. He went over to 14B and put his ear to that panel. This was different. There was a sound in there. A man coughed. It sounded somehow like a solitary cough. There were no voices. Tony pressed the small nacre button beside the door.

Steps came without hurry. A thickened voice spoke through the panel. Tony made no answer, no sound. The thickened voice repeated the question. Lightly, maliciously, Tony pressed the bell again.

Mr. James Watterson, of San Diego, should now open the door, and give forth noise. He didn't. A silence fell beyond that door that was like the silence of a glacier. Once more Tony put his ear to the wood. Silence utterly.

He got out a master key on a chain and pushed it delicately into the lock of the door. He turned it, pushed the door inward three inches and withdrew the key. Then he waited.

"All right," the voice said harshly. "Come in and get it."

Tony pushed the door wide and stood there, framed against the light from the lobby. The man was tall, black-haired, angular and white-faced. He held a gun. He held it as though he knew about guns.

"Step right in," he drawled.

Tony went in through the door and pushed it shut with his shoulder. He kept his hands a little out from his sides, the clever fingers curled and slack. He smiled his quiet little smile.

"Mr. Watterson?"

"And after that what?"

"I'm the house detective here."

"It slays me."

The tall, white-faced, somehow handsome and somehow not handsome man backed slowly into the room. It was a large room with a low balcony around two sides of it. French doors opened out on the little, private, open-air balcony that each of the tower rooms had. There was a grate set for a log fire behind a paneled screen in front of a cheerful davenport. A tall misted glass stood on a hotel tray beside a deep, cozy chair. The man backed toward this and stood in front of it. The large, glistening gun drooped and pointed at the floor.

"It slays me," he said. "I'm in the dump an hour and the house copper gives me the buzz. Okey, sweetheart, look in the closet and bathroom. But she just left."

"You didn't see her yet," Tony said.

The man's bleached face filled with unexpected lines. His thickened voice edged toward a snarl. "Yeah? Who didn't I see yet?"

"A girl named Eve Cressy."

The man swallowed. He put his gun down on the table beside the tray. He let himself down into the chair backwards, stiffly, like a man with a touch of lumbago. Then he leaned forward and put his hands on his kneecaps and smiled brightly between his teeth. "So she got here, huh? I didn't ask about her yet. I'm a careful guy. I didn't ask yet."

"She's been here five days," Tony said. "Waiting for you. She hasn't left the hotel a minute."

The man's mouth worked a little. His smile had a knowing tilt to it. "I got delayed a little up north," he said smoothly. "You know how it is. Visiting old friends. You seem to know a lot about my business, copper."

"That's right, Mr. Ralls."

The man lunged to his feet and his hand snapped at the gun. He stood leaning over, holding it on the table, staring. "Dames talk too much," he said with a muffled sound in his voice, as though he held something soft between his teeth and talked through it.

"Not dames, Mr. Ralls."

"Huh?" The gun slithered on the hard wood of the table. "Talk it up, copper. My mind reader just quit."

"Not dames. Guys. Guys with guns."

The glacier silence fell between them again. The man straightened his body slowly. His face was washed clean of expression, but his eyes

were haunted. Tony leaned in front of him, a shortish plump man with a quiet, pale, friendly face and eyes as simple as forest water.

"They never run out of gas—those boys," Johnny Ralls said, and licked at his lip. "Early and late, they work. The old firm never sleeps."

"You know who they are?" Tony said softly.

"I could maybe give nine guesses. And twelve of them would be right."

"The trouble boys," Tony said, and smiled a brittle smile.

"Where is she?" Johnny Ralls asked harshly.

"Right next door to you."

The man walked to the wall and left his gun lying on the table. He stood in front of the wall, studying it. He reached up and gripped the grillwork of the balcony railing. When he dropped his hand and turned, his face had lost some of its lines. His eyes had a quieter glint. He moved back to Tony and stood over him.

"I've got a stake," he said. "Eve sent me some dough and I built it up with a touch I made up north. Case dough, what I mean. The trouble boys talk about twenty-five grand." He smiled crookedly. "Five C's I can count. I'd have a lot of fun making them believe that, I would."

"What did you do with it?" Tony asked indifferently.

"I never had it, copper. Leave that lay. I'm the only guy in the world that believes it. It was a little deal I got suckered on."

"I'll believe it," Tony said.

"They don't kill often. But they can be awful tough."

"Mugs," Tony said with a sudden bitter contempt. "Guys with guns. Just mugs."

Johnny Ralls reached for his glass and drained it empty. The ice cubes tinkled softly as he put it down. He picked his gun up, danced it on his palm, then tucked it, nose down, into an inner breast pocket. He stared at the carpet.

"How come you're telling me this, copper?"

"I thought maybe you'd give her a break."

"And if I wouldn't?"

"I kind of think you will," Tony said.

Johnny Ralls nodded quietly. "Can I get out of here?"

"You could take the service elevator to the garage. You could rent a car. I can give you a card to the garage-man."

"You're a funny little guy," Johnny Ralls said.

Tony took out a worn ostrich-skin billfold and scribbled on a printed card. Johnny Ralls read it, and stood holding it, tapping it against a thumbnail.

"I could take her with me," he said, his eyes narrow.

"You could take a ride in a basket too," Tony said. "She's been here five days, I told you. She's been spotted. A guy I know called me up and told me to get her out of here. Told me what it was all about. So I'm getting you out instead."

"They'll love that," Johnny Ralls said. "They'll send you violets."

"I'll weep about it on my day off."

Johnny Ralls turned his hand over and stared at the palm. "I could see her, anyway. Before I blow. Next door to here, you said?"

Tony turned on his heel and started for the door. He said over his shoulder, "Don't waste a lot of time, handsome. I might change my mind."

The man said, almost gently: "You might be spotting me right now, for all I know."

Tony didn't turn his head. "That's a chance you have to take."

He went on to the door and passed out of the room. He shut it carefully, silently, looked once at the door of 14A and got into his dark elevator. He rode it down to the linen-room floor and got out to remove the basket that held the service elevator open at that floor. The door slid quietly shut. He held it so that it made no noise. Down the corridor, light came from the open door of the housekeeper's office. Tony got back into his elevator and went on down to the lobby.

The little clerk was out of sight behind his pebbled-glass screen, auditing accounts. Tony went through the main lobby and turned into the radio room. The radio was on again, soft. She was there, curled on the davenport again. The speaker hummed to her, a vague sound so low that what it said was as wordless as the murmur of trees. She turned her head slowly and smiled at him.

"Finished palming doorknobs? I couldn't sleep worth a nickel. So I came down again. Okey?"

He smiled and nodded. He sat down in a green chair and patted the plump brocade arms of it. "Sure, Miss Cressy."

"Waiting is the hardest kind of work, isn't it? I wish you'd talk to that radio. It sounds like a pretzel being bent."

Tony fiddled with it, got nothing he liked, set it back where it had been.

"Beer-parlor drunks are all the customers now."

She smiled at him again.

"I don't bother you being here, Miss Cressy?"

"I like it. You're a sweet little guy, Tony."

He looked stiffly at the floor and a ripple touched his spine. He waited for it to go away. It went slowly. Then he sat back, relaxed again, his neat fingers clasped on his elk's tooth. He listened. Not to the radio—to far-off, uncertain things, menacing things. And perhaps to just the safe whir of wheels going away into a strange night.

"Nobody's all bad," he said out loud.

The girl looked at him lazily. "I've met two or three I was wrong on, then."

He nodded. "Yeah," he admitted judiciously. "I guess there's some that are."

The girl yawned and her deep violet eyes half closed. She nestled back into the cushions. "Sit there a while, Tony. Maybe I could nap."

"Sure. Not a thing for me to do. Don't know why they pay me."

She slept quickly and with complete stillness, like a child. Tony hardly breathed for ten minutes. He just watched her, his mouth a little open. There was a quiet fascination in his limpid eyes, as if he was looking at an altar.

Then he stood up with infinite care and padded away under the arch to the entrance lobby and the desk. He stood at the desk listening for a little while. He heard a pen rustling out of sight. He went around the corner to the row of house phones in little glass cubbyholes. He lifted one and asked the night operator for the garage.

It rang three or four times and then a boyish voice answered: "Windermere Hotel. Garage speaking."

"This is Tony Reseck. That guy Watterson I gave a card to. He leave?"

"Sure, Tony. Half an hour almost. Is it your charge?"

"Yeah," Tony said. "My party. Thanks. Be seein' you."

He hung up and scratched his neck. He went back to the desk and slapped a hand on it. The clerk wafted himself around the screen with his greeter's smile in place. It dropped when he saw Tony.

"Can't a guy catch up on his work?" he grumbled.

"What's the professional rate on 14B?"

The clerk stared morosely. "There's no professional rate in the tower."

"Make one. The fellow left already. Was there only an hour."

"Well, well," the clerk said airily. "So the personality didn't click tonight. We get a skip-out."

"Will five bucks satisfy you?"

"Friend of yours?"

"No. Just a drunk with delusions of grandeur and no dough."

"Guess we'll have to let it ride, Tony. How did he get out?"

"I took him down the service elevator. You was asleep. Will five bucks satisfy you?"

"Why?"

The worn ostrich-skin wallet came out and a weedy five slipped across the marble. "All I could shake him for," Tony said loosely.

The clerk took the five and looked puzzled. "You're the boss," he said, and shrugged. The phone shrilled on the desk and he reached for it. He listened and then pushed it toward Tony. "For you."

Tony took the phone and cuddled it close to his chest. He put his mouth close to the transmitter. The voice was strange to him. It had a metallic sound. Its syllables were meticulously anonymous.

"Tony? Tony Reseck?"

"Talking."

"A message from Al. Shoot?"

Tony looked at the clerk. "Be a pal," he said over the mouthpiece. The clerk flicked a narrow smile at him and went away. "Shoot," Tony said into the phone.

"We had a little business with a guy in your place. Picked him up scramming. Al had a hunch you'd run him out. Tailed him and took him to the curb. Not so good. Backfire."

Tony held the phone very tight and his temples chilled with the evaporation of moisture. "Go on," he said. "I guess there's more."

"A little. The guy stopped the big one. Cold. Al—Al said to tell you good-by."

Tony leaned hard against the desk. His mouth made a sound that was not speech.

"Get it?" The metallic voice sounded impatient, a little bored. "This guy had him a rod. He used it. Al won't be phoning anybody any more."

Tony lurched at the phone, and the base of it shook on the rose marble. His mouth was a hard dry knot.

The voice said: "That's as far as we go, bud. G'night." The phone clicked dryly, like a pebble hitting a wall.

Tony put the phone down in its cradle very carefully, so as not to make any sound. He looked at the clenched palm of his left hand. He took a handkerchief out and rubbed the palm softly and straightened the fingers out with his other hand. Then he wiped his forehead. The clerk came around the screen again and looked at him with glinting eyes.

"I'm off Friday. How about lending me that phone number?"

Tony nodded at the clerk and smiled a minute frail smile. He put his handkerchief away and patted the pocket he had put it in. He turned and walked away from the desk, across the entrance lobby, down the three shallow steps, along the shadowy reaches of the main lobby, and so in through the arch to the radio room once more. He walked softly, like a man moving in a room where somebody is very sick. He reached the chair he had sat in before and lowered himself into it inch by inch. The girl slept on, motionless, in that curled-up looseness achieved by some women and all cats. Her breath made no slightest sound against the vague murmur of the radio.

Tony Reseck leaned back in the chair and clasped his hands on his elk's tooth and quietly closed his eyes.

Analysis

In the past decade Raymond Chandler, along with such writers as Dashiell Hammett, has introduced and helped to make popular a new type of "detective" story. Here the emphasis is upon dramatic situation and the action of tough characters, usually of the underworld, rather than upon the solution of a "whodunit" tangle. While Chandler owes a good deal to Ernest Hemingway in evolving his technique, much of his technique is original. He has had many imitators. A number of his short stories and books have been in recent years adapted for motion-picture production. Both James M. Cain and Raymond Chandler are said to be constantly "flexing their biceps."

1. Much of the atmosphere of "I'll Be Waiting" is attained by its style. Point out specifically some unusual uses that Chandler makes of verbs and

adjectives, especially adjectives of color. Comment on his sentence structure. Does his style seem forced or natural?

2. Compare the technique here to that used by Ernest Hemingway, pointing out similarities and differences.

3. Does the dialogue seem natural for the types of people presented? Select examples of repartee that you regard as unusual, natural, unnatural, or especially American.

4. Explain what elements in this story make it the commercial type.

5. What is the significance of the ending? What has happened? Is the ending satisfactory or unsatisfactory? Is the detective, Tony Reseck, the crusty individual with the heart of gold? Why is his character developed so extensively?—is it his story, Eve Cressy's, or Johnny Ralls'? Explain why.

Raymond Chandler

Raymond Chandler (1888–) was born in Chicago, but studied abroad at Dulwich College in London, the same school that P. G. Wodehouse attended, and in private schools in France and Germany. From 1909 onward he wrote verse, essays, book reviews and special articles for London daily and weekly papers. During World War I he served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force and with the Royal Air Force. Returning to this country after the war he entered business, working as an executive in various oil companies. In 1933 he returned to his first love, writing fiction for various magazines, mostly at first in the pulp-paper field. His success came quickly. He is now living in California writing for the motion-picture industry. His best-known books are *The Big Sleep* (1939), *Farewell My Lovely* (1940), *The High Window* (1942).



CHANGE OF HEART

Anonymous

IT'S FUNNY the way the oddest things stick in your memory when they're connected with something that becomes important to you afterward. It was that way with me the first time I heard about the Alperts, even though I didn't know until long afterward how important a moment in my life it was.

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Only now, looking back, I can see the scene so vividly. Pat, stretched out the entire length of the couch, with her legs in the air. Madge, curled up on the mat in front of the fireplace, toasting marshmallows for the bunch of us. Babs, sticking curlers in her already-curly hair because she had a date that night. And me, putting a Nelson Eddy record on the phonograph.

That's the way we looked, gathered in the living-room of Babs' house the rainy summer afternoon when Dorrie Henderson burst in on us. She paused dramatically in the doorway to announce, "Oh, it's too simply sickening for words."

Pat sat up, Madge and I turned around, and Babs stopped work on her hair. We all looked at Dorrie expectantly.

"There's a new family moving into the Cramer house," she said.

We looked at each other and then burst into hysterical laughter.

"For Pete's sake, Dorrie," Pat giggled, "we've been dying for someone to move into the Cramer house for ages. This neighborhood hasn't been the same since they moved away."

Each one of us was remembering the time when the Cramer family was the moving spirit of our little community of summer cottages and cabins. Since they gave up their place, there hadn't been half as many picnics and dances. The Cramers were always planning gay doings for themselves and the rest of the young people who lived on Mill Pond Road. We'd all hoped for a long time that another family just like theirs would take over their house.

"You don't understand," Dorrie said impatiently. "The new family is named Alpert."

"So what?" I asked. "I'm named Knight."

We all started to make a game of it.

"We're named Greeley," Madge and Pat chanted.

"Little Miss Nelson, that's me," Babs chimed in.

"They're Jews," Dorrie interrupted flatly.

There was a short pause.

Babs broke it first. "They push in everywhere," she muttered resentfully.

"How loathsome." That was Pat.

"I don't know what this neighborhood is coming to, with all sorts of riffraff allowed in," Madge put in sharply, and Dorrie shrugged agreement.

"We don't have to have anything to do with them," I said.

"But they push in everywhere," Babs repeated. "You wait and see if we don't have trouble keeping them out of things. There was one at school with me once." A delicate shudder showed what she thought of "the one at school."

Dorrie said firmly, "We'll just have to make it plain to them how we feel. If we go about it in the right way, they'll get the idea."

"Dorrie's right," Pat told us, and then added ruefully, "Just the same, it makes me sick when I think of the Cramer place and all the fun we could have had if the right kind of people had bought it."

"For heaven's sake," Madge implored, "let's change the subject to something pleasant."

Babs promptly began discussing her date for the evening. And we listened with interest, anxious to shove the disagreeable Alperts out of our minds as determinedly as we meant to shut them out of our lives.

The Alpert family moved in about a week later. None of us saw any of them. The Cramer house was high up on the hill at the end of the road, a bit removed from the closer clumps of little cabins where families like the Greeleys, the Hendersons, and my own people lived every summer. But bits of information about them seeped through to us via the town grapevine.

Mrs. Nelson had it on the good authority of the butcher that there were seven Alperts, but Marily Jenkins from the village, who did washing for most of our families, was equally positive there were only six. There was an artist in the family, but no one knew whether it was a brother or a sister. One of the daughters was engaged, according to one rumor, while another rumor held that she was already married.

I guess there was just one idea about the Alperts that every one of us shared in common—that we weren't going to have anything to do with them.

They weren't invited to the Hendersons' clam bake or the Greeleys' picnic or my birthday party. We didn't even include them in the Fourth of July Barbecue or the Friday night dances, which were always attended by all fourteen families on the road.

And after a while, when we still hadn't been bothered by any neighborly advances from them, we told ourselves that the Alperts had realized they weren't welcome. And we rejoiced that we wouldn't have any trouble "keeping them out of things."

The summer rolled on like all the summers. Dad drove in to work daily and grumbled about all the little jobs that piled up for him to do on week ends. Mother played bridge between sessions of cooking and cleaning. For me, they were mostly lazy, pleasant days, each one much like the one before. Swimming and sunburns and small excitements like Skippy Moore's tumbling off the roof of his house and Mr. Groat's shooting the cat, thinking he heard a prowler in the dining-room. Or the time that clever Iris Knight—yes, that's me—started a brush fire in back of her house.

I was only trying to be helpful that Saturday afternoon when I offered to burn the garbage on the hillside. The Brat (otherwise known as Billy Knight, my kid brother), who usually did it, was out fishing. But before I got through I darn near burned the whole place down. I guess I might have succeeded in doing just that, if it hadn't been for Davey.

I was standing stock-still, staring in horror at the flames that had somehow jumped out of the open garbage pit in the ground and were now licking greedily at the wide stretches of grass. Then, what looked like a streak of lightning wearing blue jeans came bolting through the gate and tore up to me.

"Get pails of water and brooms and then phone for help," ordered the streak of lightning, turning out to be a man.

I obeyed instantly, running into the house, shrieking for my family to come out and help. Five minutes later we were all fighting the fire. We dipped brooms into the pails of water and beat at the edges of the blaze. Every minute or so we were joined by more volunteer firemen, who had seen the smoke and flames and hurried up to help.

The other women concentrated on keeping up the supply of water, but I plied a broom and leaped over barbed-wire fences along with all the men. I was to blame for the whole thing, wasn't I? So the least I could do was work as hard as the unknown young man in blue jeans who was so quietly and efficiently directing all the work of the amateur firemen's brigade.

After about half an hour, though the fire wasn't out yet, we were all able to breathe a lot easier because it was evident that we had it under control. That is, I would have been able to breathe a lot easier if it weren't for all the smoke I had swallowed. I was coughing and choking and practically bent double from a stitch in my side when the man

in jeans turned a pair of startlingly blue eyes on me and said, "You've done enough. Sit down and rest now. We don't need you any more."

I shook my head stubbornly. I was responsible and I wasn't giving up till the last spark was out!

"Do as you're told," he ordered.

I gave him one of my best haughty-duchess stares and went right on with what I was doing. Without another word, he lifted his broom and gave me a whack from behind, gentle but firm enough to send me sprawling in the grass.

"Stay there," he told me as I scrambled wrathfully into a sitting position. And something in his tone made me decide that perhaps I'd better.

Mother came running up, her big white apron billowing out in front of her, as soon as the fire was out.

"Come down and eat, everyone," she called out cheerfully.

There was a chorus of joyous whoops from the boys and pleased grunts from the older men. In a few minutes the blackened hillside was deserted by everyone. Everyone except The Man and me.

I sat there where he had pushed me and looked up at him and had no fault to find with what I saw. He was tall and well-built, and a square, firm jaw gave his face a look of strength. The sun had bleached his blond hair even blonder and given him a tan which made his deep blue eyes even bluer. He wasn't from our little colony of cabins, so he must, I decided, live somewhere in the village.

A sudden strange excitement churned inside me as I looked at him. I wanted to talk, but I didn't know what to say. Courtesy demanded that I thank him for what he had done. On the other hand, that might give him the impression that I wasn't properly angry at being smacked with a broom and ordered about by a stranger.

He saved me the trouble of a decision. "You," he announced, "are crazy. Anyone who doesn't know better than to burn garbage in an open pit. What do you think the can's for?"

"Oh," I said, suddenly enlightened. "You mean I'm supposed to burn it in the can first and then put it in the pit?"

"Yes," he said gently, in the voice of someone explaining that one and one are two, "that's the general idea."

"Well, next time I'll know."

"You're stubborn, too," he went on. And I asked sweetly, "Have you anything more to tell me about myself?"

"Yes," he grinned, "your face is dirty."

And then we both burst out laughing. He stretched out in the grass beside me and like two friends who had known each other for ages, we both talked a blue streak. An hour went by like five minutes, and when we heard Mother calling from the house, "Iris! Iris!", we looked at each other regretfully.

"Do you want to go?" he whispered, and "No," I whispered back. And we both jumped up and clambered over the barbed-wire fence into Farmer Mullens' corn field, running until we were too far from the house to be seen. Giggling like schoolkids breaking a rule, we made our way through the tall rows of corn until we reached another stretch of grass. Then we sprawled out again and went on from where Mother had interrupted us. We listened to stories of each other's childhood, marveling that we liked the same kind of music, getting a glad, comfortable feeling around our hearts because we felt the same about so many things.

And after a long while we stopped talking and sat there side by side, my hand warm in his, and the cozy silence between us as wonderful as the talking had been.

"I think," my conscience made me say towards the end of our third hour together, "I ought to go home."

His eyes smiled at me. "Do you want to go?"

I shook my head.

"Good. Neither do I." The smile spread down to his mouth. "Now that that's settled, let's go for a walk before we both fall asleep."

He reached for my hands and hauled me to my feet, and we walked through the fields, still not talking. Only now the silence wasn't cozy but full of a queer consciousness of each other. We passed the familiar landmarks I had known for years, and I tried not to admit to myself that I was letting him help me across fences and steer me around obstacles I'd managed alone since I was seven, only because I wanted him to touch me. And when I finally did admit it, I became angry at myself and insisted on getting across the next fence without any help.

Surprised, he let me have my way. Pride going before a fall, my foot caught in the wire and I toppled across, head down, legs up. I was blushing furiously when he turned me right side up. But when I saw the twinkle in his eyes, I couldn't help laughing.

"I think you're crazy," he said, and the way he said it was like someone else saying, "I think you're wonderful."

And then his hands closed around my throat, moving slowly upwards until they held my face, and he bent his head down so our lips could meet.

I had been kissed before, of course, but never by anyone who could make me want to kiss back as much. My arms went tremblingly around him, and I sank my fingers in his hair and gave him my heart along with my lips.

A little later, holding me close in his arms with my head on his shoulder, "There's just about one thing we didn't mention in all that talking." He laughed softly. "The name is Davey—David Alpert."

For a minute it didn't register. When it did, I jerked my head up sharply, pulled free of his arms.

"Alpert," I gasped. "You can't be."

He was amused. "Why can't I be?"

"Because—because—" I stared at his handsome blondeness—"you don't look—you don't act like one."

It was only when I saw his face harden that I realized what I was saying. And then it was too late.

"Like one what?" he demanded. And when I hung my head and didn't answer, he seized me by the shoulders and repeated his question.

The hands that had been so tender a few minutes before now dug cruelly into my flesh, forcing the answer out of me. "A Jew," I said faintly.

He let go of me, his hands dropped to his sides. If I had hurt him, he wasn't going to let me see it.

"And how does a Jew look and act?" he asked harshly.

"Davey, I didn't mean it," I said. "I—I like you. Haven't I shown that I do?"

"Sure, you showed it." His mouth twisted bitterly. "Until you realized I was Jewish."

"But I didn't mean—" I started to say again, only he interrupted shortly, "That's just the trouble, you did mean. Come on, I'll take you home."

He walked on ahead of me with such long, quick strides that I almost had to run to keep up with him. The sun went down, and I found myself shivering because it seemed almost symbolic of what was hap-

pening to us. The sun had gone down, too, on the most wonderful four hours in my life.

I wanted desperately to recapture the gaiety that had sent us scurrying through the corn fields, the mood that had kept our tongues going in a busy exchange of confidence, the feeling that had sent me headlong into his arms. But Davey's face was stern and set and I didn't know what to say to make it look as it had before.

And neither could I ignore the small voice that had been whispering inside me ever since I heard him say: "The name is Davey—David Alpert."

It's better this way. After all, he is one and nothing could ever come of it. Think what your family would say. Think how everyone would talk. Be smart. Let it end before it comes to mean anything important.

I remembered myself saying to Babs and Madge and Dorrie and Pat, "We don't have to have anything to do with them."

So, in the end, all I said to Davey when we got back to the burned hillside was "Goodbye."

He had only that "goodbye" to go on. He couldn't know that, alone in her bedroom that night, a confused and unhappy girl sobbed into her pillow long after everyone else in the house was asleep—crying for something sweet and fine that had come into her life and ended almost before it had begun.

It was a great embarrassment to my family to discover that the person mainly responsible for putting out our fire was one of the Alperts.

"He seemed a nice young man," Mother said doubtfully. "Do you suppose we have to invite him to dinner?"

"We'll have to thank him in some way," Dad said grudgingly. "It wouldn't look right not to."

I was taken by surprise at the raging fury that filled me to hear them discussing Davey in that patronizing, cold-blooded fashion. But I forced myself to say, in as indifferent a voice as I could manage so I wouldn't give myself away, "He's quite pleasant." I added, knowing Davey would never accept an invitation from the Knights, "But I thanked him already so I don't think we have to invite him here."

I could have kissed Billy when he looked up and said with sixteen-year-old frankness, "Aw, you all make me sick. He sounds like a regular guy, and it's thanks to him, not to Featherbrain here"—he stuck out his tongue at me—"that the house didn't burn down."

The Brat was more than a little mystified when I called him into my room a few minutes later and gave him a dollar and the bottom layer of a box of candy.

It was Billy, who, in his own quiet way, again focused our attention on the Alperts, and as publicly as if he had hired the village courthouse. We were having a wienie roast at the beach and everyone was around to hear when he calmly told Mother that he was spending the week end at the Alperts'.

"The Alperts'," Mother echoed. "Why, Billy, I didn't even know you knew them."

"Sure I do," he said sturdily. "I went down there the day after the fire. They're swell," he added defiantly, his glance daring anyone to contradict him. "They have more fun than anyone around here. They're having lots of people up from the city this week, and the boys are going to give their rooms to the company and pitch tents. I'm sharing Allan's tent. We're going to have a scavenger hunt."

"But, William," Mrs. Henderson, Dorrie's mother, broke the short pause that followed, "they're Jews."

Billy looked her square in the eye. "Sure they are, Mrs. Henderson," he said with exaggerated politeness. "And if they don't mind my being Christian, I don't see why I should mind their being Jewish."

Standing there, listening to him, I learned something I'd never known about my kid brother. I learned that he had twice the backbone and twice the sense of his older sister.

Everyone shifted a little uncomfortably and then they all began speaking at once of a dozen and one things—everything except the Alperts. But I'd known them all for years, and I could read their minds almost as clearly as though they were saying their thoughts aloud. The kids, who had just been aping their parents, were thinking of the tents and the scavenger hunt and wishing a little wistfully that we were as friendly with the Alperts as we had been with the Cramers. The girls in my set—girls like Dorrie and Babs and me—and fellows like Luke Sawyer and Gene Pulham, were thinking a little uncomfortably about the attitude we'd taken. And the adults were shamefacedly aware of the rebuke they had received from a sixteen-year-old boy.

But my heart was singing as I walked home that night, with my arm linked in Billy's in token of the new comradeship that had sprung up between us.

"You know, Iris," he told me earnestly, "Allan is my pal, and I like him fine. But gee"—his face lighted up with hero worship—"Gee, Davey's swell. Don't you think so?"

I told myself I was an idiot to let the sound of a name spoken aloud send the blood racing through my body and set my heart pumping so madly, but that's the way it affected me.

"Yes," I answered softly, "I think Davey's swell."

Oh, Davey, Davey, my heart cried, *I'm so mixed up. I'm so ashamed. If only I could see you, it might all come clear to me.*

But Davey was steering clear of Iris Knight. And, remembering the contempt in his eyes the last time he looked at me, I was afraid to go to him. Or maybe it wasn't so much fear of him as of myself. Could four hours of happiness really erase prejudices of a lifetime? Or maybe I just didn't have the courage it would take to buck the attitude of the neighborhood and face its disapproval.

I flung myself feverishly into the summer activities. I was trying to forget, trying to crowd out the unhappy thoughts, trying not to feel the doubts I had now about things I had always taken for granted. But there were always the nights—long, sleepless nights when I would lie awake seeing a pair of startlingly blue eyes in a tanned face and reliving the moment when Davey's arms had held me and his lips possessed mine.

A few days after the wienie roast, Madge and Babs and I went off by ourselves on a picnic. We headed for a grassy knoll surrounded by trees and overlooking the ocean, which was one of our favorite spots.

But someone else had gotten there before us. A tall, fair girl was standing in front of an easel, completely absorbed in the picture she was painting. As soon as she turned towards us, disturbed by the sound of our voices, I knew who she was. There was no mistaking the blue eyes so like Davey's.

Wanting to be sure, "You're one of the Alperts, aren't you?" I asked, and she nodded pleasantly, "Yes, I'm Claire."

"I'm Iris Knight," I said nervously, wondering if the name meant anything to her. But her expression didn't change, and I realized thankfully that Davey had been as quiet about me to his family as I had been to mine about him.

"We don't want to disturb you," I said awkwardly, glancing at her easel. "We can find another spot to picnic."

But Claire insisted that we wouldn't disturb her, and to prove it turned back to her painting. Babs promptly went to sleep and Madge and I played gin rummy.

Later on we invited Claire to eat with us. Smilingly she added her box of sandwiches, cake, and fruit to ours and stretched lazily alongside our tablecloth.

Babs jumped up and looked at the painting. "Golly, it's good," she said in a surprised voice. Madge and I took a look too, and added to Babs' praise.

"I hope you're right," Claire said cheerfully, taking a healthy bite of a cheese sandwich. "That's the way I earn my living."

The three of us looked at her with increased respect. We had never worked at anything harder than baby sitting.

We had a jolly lunch, and it was Claire who made it such fun. Not that there was anything life-of-the-party about her, but she did have a gaiety that was contagious and a way of making you feel it was good just to be alive.

Every once in a while Babs and Madge and I would glance at one another, our thoughts following the same path.

They push in everywhere.

We don't have to have anything to do with them.

Wait and see if we don't have trouble keeping them out of things.

And this friendly clever girl was one of the people we had been talking about when we spoke those cruel, careless words—those stupid, unthinking words.

A hot wave of shame swept over me, shame of my family and my friends, but most of all of myself. I was to blame for accepting, without any question as to whether they were right or wrong, ideas and prejudices that had been handed down to me. I was to blame for casting judgment on a set of people before I even knew them and joining in the petty persecutions against them.

There was nothing pleasant or soothing about my thoughts, and I tried to shake them off. I came back to earth just as Madge asked Claire which of her sisters was engaged.

A slight shadow crossed Claire's face. "I haven't any sister. The other three are all boys, Davey and Allan and Leonard." She held out her left hand so we could see the wedding band on her third finger.

"Does your husband come out from the city every day?" Babs inquired.

Claire's hands dug down into the ground on either side of her. She said, in a voice completely emptied of emotion, "Irv was killed on Okinawa." And then, out of kindness for our shocked embarrassment, she began to speak of something else. A few minutes later she went back to her easel, but I was watching her and I noticed that it was a long time before she started to paint again.

Claire Alpert's husband could die on Okinawa for a country made up of people like us, but Claire Alpert isn't good enough for our neighborhood.

The thought flashed across my brain and I could see that Madge and Babs must have been thinking the same thing. We three were pretty quiet when we started home with Claire, about an hour later.

We were halfway there when a car pulled up alongside us, and a familiar voice hailed Claire.

"Davey!" she exclaimed. "We're all tired to death. Will you give us a lift?"

"Hop in," he said, leaning forward to swing the doors open.

Claire introduced us, and, taking my cue from Davey, I had to pretend that we were only casual acquaintances who had met at a fire. But there was nothing casual about the way his nearness affected me. I was close to tears as we rode along, because Davey was laughing and joking with the other girls while I could only sit in miserable silence.

When I got home, I ran up to the hillside. The grass was rich and green again, with only a few blackened patches left as a memento of the fire. Here was the place where Davey had flung himself down beside me.

Suddenly I found myself scrambling across the fence we had climbed together, running through the rows of corn, now taller than my head, until I came to the spot where Davey's hand had first touched mine. I threw myself down on the ground, burying my face in the scratchy, sweet-smelling grass, sobbing aloud because I couldn't get away from Davey. I was haunted by the memory of his eyes and his hands and his mouth.

The next day I met Allan Alpert.

A gang of us was sipping lemonade on my front lawn when a dark-

haired boy came through the gate, trailing my best silk kerchief after him.

"Hi, Al," Billy shouted joyfully.

"H'lo, Bill. I brought back your sister's scarf. She dropped it in our car yesterday."

I felt a pang of hurt because Davey had sent his brother to bring back my scarf instead of snatching the excuse to come himself. Then I went over to thank Allan and offer him a glass of lemonade.

"Stay a while, now you're here," Billy urged. But Allan politely refused both our invitations, saying he had promised to get right back and rake the grass.

He and Billy walked towards the gate.

"Getting pretty friendly with the kikes, aren't you?" Luke Sawyer asked me.

To do him justice, he thought he was speaking too low to be heard. But Allan and Billy stopped short. Allan's back stiffened, and his hands clenched into angry fists. Then he started forward again, but Billy stopped him.

"I think you've got something to say to Al, haven't you, Luke?" Billy said. And I knew that he felt his friend's hurt as keenly as Allan did, as keenly as I did.

Red-faced, Luke stammered out an apologetic, "Sure, kid, I didn't mean it—nothing personal."

"That's okay," Allan said briefly, and turned to go again.

Babs called out after him—Babs who had feared we might have trouble "keeping them out of things"—"I'm having a barbecue next week, Allan, and I'd like your family to come. Will you tell your mother I'll call her?"

"Please tell Claire"—it was Madge speaking, Madge who had protested against letting all sorts of riffraff into the neighborhood—"to be sure and save next Wednesday for another painting picnic."

"Come again soon when you can stay longer," Billy told him.

As for me, I said nothing. I was too busy wondering why Luke's apology had struck such a familiar chord in my mind.

And then I remembered. "Sure, kid, I didn't mean it," he had said to Allen. "Davey, I didn't mean it," *I* had said.

Suddenly everything was clear in my mind. All the confusion was gone, and I knew that the key to the whole thing lay in those simple,

dangerous words: *I didn't mean it.* It wasn't only that we didn't mean it. We just didn't think.

Was Luke's insult to Allan any worse than mine to Davey, just because Luke had come out with a crude, ugly word while I had put mine in delicate hypocritical phrases? Was Luke's insult any worse than what the rest of us had said, in effect, to the Alperts: "As Jews, you are alien and unwanted, no matter how delightful you may be as persons."

Like Babs, who had judged all others by "the one at school," we had not given a thought to the Alperts as individuals, as people just like us. Davey, with his warmth and magnetism; Claire, carrying on with courage and gaiety in spite of the grave on Okinawa; Allan, who was just an average, every-day nice boy like my kid brother or any one else's kid brother. They had hearts and feelings and suffered pain the same as we did. How would we feel if they had pre-judged us?

Yes, all of a sudden I understood the tangled puzzle it had taken almost a whole summer to unknot in my own mind. And I knew that somehow, in some way, the Alperts must be made a living part of our little neighborhood. With Babs and Madge and Billy on my side, it wasn't impossible, even though it wouldn't be easy because of the blind prejudice we'd have to fight every step of the way.

But I guess the most important thing I knew was that liking the Alperts didn't necessarily mean I was going to like every single Jew I ever met. Any more than I liked every single Christian I met. Or every single person of any kind. You like or dislike people because of what they *are,* not because of the group they happen to belong to.

Even while I was figuring it all out, my feet were taking me out through the gate and down the road, faster and faster until I was running.

As though a kind fate had planned it that way, Davey was standing alone in front of the Alpert house when I got there. I looked at him, and the minute I did, the speech I had prepared skipped out of my brain and the words that had been in my heart so long slipped off my tongue: "I love you, Davey."

I came close to him and locked my fingers behind his neck and pulled his head down, and with a kind of half-groan he gave me his lips.

After the kiss, with his arms around me lending me strength, it

was easier somehow to falter out my shame and regret and promises for the future.

"I know it's hard for you to forgive me," I whispered against his chest. "I don't expect it to happen all at once. But I want you to know that when it does happen, I'll be waiting."

I left him after that and came back home. Nothing had been settled between us, and yet I was happy and at peace. I hoped that Davey, with so much of his wisdom acquired in a far harder school than any I had ever known, would judge me with the understanding and compassion that he had not been shown.

My heart told me he would not keep me waiting long.

The True Story and the Confession Story

A large group of magazines with wide circulation are known as "true story magazines" or "confession story magazines." At the foot of the table-of-contents page of *True Story,* from which "Change of Heart" is reprinted, is the following blurb: "*True Story* interprets the American scene, the American people, the American way of life, truthfully and honestly through these stories and articles. The names and places used in the stories are fictional."

True stories are always written in the first person. They are almost always published anonymously. They always contain some sort of rather obvious moral. In the past the true story usually dealt with the wronged young woman and her repentance. This plot pattern has now almost passed out of vogue. Typical problems are struggle with poverty, involvement in crime, complications of the young when confronted with scheming women, scheming men, or with drink, college and business problems, marriage problems, family problems.

In essence the true story is very similar to the run-of-the-mill slick-paper women's magazine stories except that the true story is easier to do, is much more obvious—lacking implication and any sort of subtlety—and is handled in the first person. For some aspiring writers who would like eventually to write for the slick-paper magazines, the true story is a good starting point, for it is probably the easiest market for the young woman writer to sell to. Some of these magazines require that the writer sign a statement that his story is based upon real-life episodes. This presents no complication because practically all stories of any sort are based on life.

"Change of Heart" is typical of the genre, yet a little better written than the average. In addition it skirts a very current and delicate problem, Jewish prejudice.



DYNAMITE

Walt Coburn

"MUD?" said Jerk Line Smith to the barflies in the Bloody Heart Saloon. "Mud? I'll tell a man we was in the mud. I'm haulin' grub, powder and licker to the camps at the Little Rockies—five wagons and the caboose, loaded a thousand pounds to the hoss, and workin' thirty-two o' the best hosses north o' hell. Bogged to the hubs. It's taken us twenty-one days and part o' that night to pull the Rocky Point Hill.

"Mud? Mister, them Montana badlands, comin' up from the Rocky Point crossin' on the Missouri, is eye deep to a tall camel. Ol' Hard Luck Jones laid over at the Point and goes on a big drunk. Turned his hosses loose fergittin' to tie up their tails. Tails gits balled with that gumbo till it weighed down them pore animals. Stretched their hides back. In a week every one o' them hosses was dead. Hide so tight they couldn't close their eyes. The pore things died from lack o' sleep."

"That was in '81," agreed Two Dog Moore, Jerk Line's swamper. "The summer o' the blue snow."

Whereupon fresh drinks were set up. Out on the street stood Jerk Line Smith's freight outfit. The two wagons and canvas-topped cart, or caboose. Eighteen horses standing at rest, the off-wheeler a bronc. A battered old saddle on the nigh wheeler; brass-knobbed hames; chain harness; the lead team decorated with double-rowed strings of bells strung on a hoop-shaped support fastened to the tops of the hames; check reins and bridles ornate with ivory rings of red, white and blue. The wagons heavily loaded with grub, dynamite and whisky billed to Zortman and Landusky in the Little Rockies.

Presently the tall, yellow-bearded freighter and his diminutive swamper would pull out of town, before they got too drunk. And Chinook would pause in its collective business or boredom to watch the long string team under Jerk Line's guidance turn the corner of the town business street and head for the open country. From the rear of the caboose to the ears of the lead team the distance was approximately half a block. Yet, drunk or sober, Jerk Line Smith would accomplish the impossible by rounding that corner with neat and pro-

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fane perfection. Astride his nigh-wheeler, guiding nine span of horses by means of a single line, he would swing around that corner and on to the straight road.

"Tighten up, thar! Blondy, Joe, Snowball, Buck! Ribs, you long-backed, cowhocked son of a cross between a bogged dogie and a wore-out winter! Ginger, Pete! Tighten up! Keno, you high-withered, cold-shouldered, hip-shot, ring-boned, box-ankled specimen o' humanity, tighten them thugs! You, Greyback! Born a-sleepin' an' never woke up! Louse! Injun! Tadpole! Roosevelt an' Bryan! Roulette an' Faro! Stand Up an' Lay Down! D.T. and Hangover! Whisky an' Chaser! Stumble an' Fall Down! Tighten up!"

Tugs tightened, and they were away.

Out onto the open road. Winter and summer. Bells chiming, wheels creaking, harness rattling. Jerk Line riding his nigh wheeler, Two Dog sitting on the plank known as the jockey bar, or walking alongside. Two Dog's business was setting and releasing the brakes, helping with the harnessing and hobbling of the teams, wrangling in the morning, cooking, fastening roughlocks on grades, blocking wheels on long climbs, watching the loads, greasing wheels, mending harness, jacking up wheels in the mud, nursing Jerk Line over periods of delirium tremens. In short, swamping.

Motor trucks have replaced the snail-like freight outfits. Fences criss-cross the old open range. That breed of frontiersman to which belonged Jerk Line Smith and Two Dog Moore is now extinct. Save in the memory of men who loved the old West, their names and deeds are forgotten. Yet the freighter filled his place in the building of an empire. When the West needed him, he served. Through heat and blizzard. Ragged, bearded, his blacksnake hung across his shoulders. Freezing, drinking, laboring, cursing. Broken wheels and empty bottles marking his passing.

Pride of their breed cropped out in their teams. Bells and colored rings. They boasted not of their own deeds, but of what their teams could do. The passing cowboys knew him and liked him. Trapper and sheepherder were ever welcome to a drink and a meal and the latest gossip of the towns.

It was said of Jerk Line Smith that he was the orneriest human north of the Pecos, save one. That one was hanged. Tall, with rawhide muscles, unwashed and unshaven, his roughhewn features red and

cracked from bad weather. And each spring, after the chinook wind had melted the winter snow, Two Dog brought the sheep shears from the jockey box and cut Jerk Line's matted yellow hair.

Two Dog had been a sheepherder, and as Jerk Line often said, "The damn' li'l cuss never got over it."

Small of stature, inoffensive, with watery eyes of mild blue, he did his work, swallowed his liquor as an obedient child takes medicine, and stoutly vouched for Jerk Line's stories.

"Yep. It happened back in '81, the summer o' the blue snow."

He had attached himself to the freight outfit in much the same manner that a stray dog picks up a master. Jerk Line claimed that Two Dog "musta been with him six months or so afore he sobered up an' found him one day jackin' up a bogged wheel with a case o' powder fer a jack-rest."

But the truth of that statement might be questioned, because Two Dog, above all the dangers that roam the earth, feared powder.

At some spot along the colorless career of little Two Dog Moore he had been a prospector and hard-rock miner. He had lost two fingers and all the toes of his right foot while thawing a stick of frozen dynamite in the oven.

His fear of powder became an obsession. Yet almost every freight load had its quota of dynamite and blasting powder. Jerk Line handled powder with a contemptuous nonchalance that drove the blood from Two Dog's face and sent the little swamper into a sweat-chilled fever.

"Gawd. Oh, Gawd!" he groaned in silent agony. "Someday it'll happen. Someday . . ."

And he would hobble back to the Bloody Heart and the bar bottle.

Yet even his terrible fear could not drive him away from the freight outfit. No more than beating can drive off the stray dog from the man he has chosen for master.

Perhaps Two Dog drew wages of some sort. Or it may have been that Jerk Line, in moments of drunken generosity, gave the little fellow money. For the harness-maker at Chinook could tell you that almost every trip to town Two Dog would shamble into the shop. Here he would spend an hour fondling the red, white and blue rings, brass buckles and bells. A folded bill would come from the pocket of his disreputable overalls in exchange for rings or buckles or a new bell.

He was never known to buy clothes of any sort. He wore what Jerk Line cast aside as being worn out. With harness thread and the sheep shears, he cut down and patched these abandoned garments until they hung to him somehow. His feet, when wrapped in gunny sacking, would fill the rusty shoes he picked up. Jerk Line fed him. He drank when called up to the bar.

He managed to keep those eighteen horses and the wrangling pony curried and brushed after a fashion. He spent hours trimming their tails. He filled them with grain, and if he put an extra hatful of oats in the nosebag, Jerk Line pretended not to notice.

A good hand around a horse, Two Dog. Even the broncs seemed to savvy that the little old fellow was harmless. Before Jerk Line gave the starting howl that put the long string team in motion, Two Dog went down the line with the blacksnake no man ever saw him use. Mumbling gentle profanity, prodding them with the wooden butt of his blacksnake, talking to those horses as if they were children. And when Jerk Line bawled forth his "Tighten up!" the tugs tightened along the line, lead bars and stretchers and chains lifted from the ground. Every horse in the string was giving the best that was in him. And deep down in his mule-skinner's heart, Jerk Line gave credit to little Two Dog. Two Dog, who had a way with hosses.

Evenings, when he had the time, the little swamper polished the brass buckles and bells until they glistened.

Their evenings, especially during mild weather, were usually visited by stray cowboys, an occasional trapper, or a sheepherder.

"I seen Jerk Line pullin' in onto Black Coulee this evenin'," word would pass along from camp to ranch and from ranch to camp.

Later in the day, after dusk had fallen, a hail would come out of the night.

"Hi, there, Jerk Line, you gone to bed?"

"Dunno who you are," would come the reply from within the lantern-lit caboose, "but light and rest your saddle."

If the man was a cowboy, or a trapper, he was welcome to imbibe freely of the liquor. But a sheepherder was limited to one or two "light 'uns."

Not that the freighter was snobbish, for the herder and his dog were ever welcome. But there was a large band of woolies in the herder's care, and despite the fact that Montana makes wanton desertion of

a band of sheep punishable by a term in prison, herders had been known to turn loose their sheep. Because most sheepherders were habitual drunkards, and because it took but a few drinks to set them on the trail for town, Jerk Line used caution in the passing of his jug.

Once a herder, goaded by the taste for Jerk Line's jug, quit his band, the freight outfit laid over and Two Dog herded the sheep until the camp tender discovered the absence of the herder and brought out a man to relieve Two Dog. That week's delay had cost money. Jerk Line had been duly cussed out for his tardiness. And from that time on, the jug was passed with due caution.

Jerk Line's jug was kinfolks to that fabled pitcher that never became empty. Care of this earthenware container fell to Two Dog. And its replenishing was as much a rite as was the polishing of the bells and care of the stock.

By holding the jug to his ear and gently shaking it, Two Dog could tell a man, almost never failing, the number of man-size drinks left in it. And when its contents was lowered to a certain amount, the swamper would set about refilling it.

Whisky was shipped in huge barrels. To tap this barrel en route from wholesaler to retailer was unlawful. For allowing for small natural shrinkage, the saloon man paid good cash for the net contents as listed on the bill of lading made out at the shipping point.

Now Jerk Line was a man of honest habits. He paid his bills. His word in money matters was as true and good as signed paper or Christian oath. Yet no whisky barrel ever landed at its final destination without being tapped.

Unlike the trained ear of Two Dog, the saloon man could not gauge the amount of liquor inside the fifty-gallon barrel or the hundred-gallon barrel. Furthermore, no naked eye could detect any sign of the barrel's having been tampered with. Yet, from that barrel had come a gallon, three, or perhaps five gallons of its original contents.

Barrel tapping, like safe cracking, is an art. Two Dog was the skilled artist.

From the jockey box would come a hammer, a strip of canvas, and a cold chisel with its edge filed round and smooth so that it made a dull sort of instrument. Selecting one of the hoops that bound the wooden staves of the barrel, the swamper became a barrel cooper. With hammer and chisel, the canvas as a buffer to prevent marking the hoop,

Two Dog would lift the hoop until it was an inch or so above its original place.

A gimlet and length of rubber tubing now came from the jockey box. A tiny hole was bored into a carefully selected spot somewhere along the rim marked by the hoop. The bit of tubing was inserted, its lower end vanishing into the neck of the jug. If necessary, a tiny air hole was made in the top of the barrel. This hole was made somewhere on the lettering of the marker that was customarily burned into the wood by a red hot stencil.

The siphoning was now under way. A slow process, for the air hole was small, as was the tube that led from the barrel to the jug. But Two Dog, from experience, could time the process with fair accuracy.

"Some barrels," he would tell Jerk Line, "gives down their licker faster'n others."

And when the jug was filled, tiny wooden pegs were driven into the gimlet holes and the white dots of the wooden pegs were seared into a blending charred color by means of a hot iron. The hoop was painstakingly driven back into place. No visible trace remained of the looting. Two Dog would step back, head on one side, surveying the barrel with the pleased eye of an artist who has put the final touches to a masterpiece.

Yet Jerk Line was an honest man. And Two Dog was of guileless bearing, meek as the man of the Scriptures.

"I reckon we earn that much, haulin' the stuff over this damn road. Anyhow I allers tell 'em."

Jerk Line, with a wink and a grin, would always boast that he had tapped the barrel.

"Show me whar we tapped 'er an' I'll pay fer the whole dang barrel," he'd tell Dutch John or Big Fred or Buster or Jew Jake or old Pike. "Ain't that right, Two Dog?"

"Rightern'n hell, Jerk Line," came prompt affirmation.

It was powder that severed a five-year partnership between the roughhewn Jerk Line and the timid Two Dog. Frozen dynamite.

Those of you who have never cursed and prayed and coaxed and wept your way with a freight outfit cannot quite appreciate the heart-breaking grief of the Red Lane in bad weather.

Five miles of red adobe gumbo flat. No road but the rutted strip

from the P outfit's horse corrals to the half-way house known as the Hog Ranch. Five miles of mud up to a horse's hocks. Mud that sticks in the spoke of the wide-tired freight wagon wheels. Wheels seven feet in diameter, sunk to the hubs. Five miles of cold, red, sticky, horse-killing hell. Horses floundering. Two Dog hacking away with an ax at the gumbo clogged between the spokes.

"Drop trail."

Caboose and rear wagon unhooked. Wallowing in mud up to their knees, the two freighters labored. Cold. Wet. Hungry. Sweat. Mud. Jerk Line too weary to curse, blood seaming the chapped cracks that filled his hands and red wrists. Two Dog whimpering with futile grief. His beloved horses and rings and buckles and bells caked with mud.

Mud that thawed at midday and froze to cement-like solidity at night. From daybreak till dark. Shivering through the brief night hours. Harness lying in the mud. Hobbles caked with the stuff. Broken fingernails. Freezing, sweating, sobbing, cursing across the Red Lane. Five days making five miles.

Perhaps it was too much liquor, or it might have been that Jerk Line needed more of the stuff that warmed the lining of a man's belly while his hide was plastered with half-frozen, sticky mud.

The trail wagon was down to the running gear in gumbo. The teams stood bogged with lowered heads and heaving flanks, sweat-smeared, steaming, spent, but waiting to give again the last ounce of strength in their loyal hearts. But no team that ever looked through collar could budge that mired load. Jerk Line, white with fatigue and red-eyed from loss of decent rest, was on top of the load, slashing at mud-caked ropes with his jackknife. Though it was past noon they had not eaten since four that morning. They had unloaded and reloaded that trail wagon three times since sun-up.

Two Dog, who had been untangling a swing team from a tangle of lead-bars and stretcher chains, was limping painfully back through the mud. His feet were twin balls of gumbo, leaden balls of weight. A cud of tobacco bulged his unshaven cheek. Suddenly he halted. His watery eyes widened. The cud dropped from his gaping mouth. In mud to his knees, he stood there petrified, breathless with terror.

For the mud-crazed Jerk Line was heaving off wooden boxes with insane abandon. Box after box, flung from the high-piled wagon out

into the congealing, freezing gumbo. One of the boxes broke, spilling forth its contents of dynamite sticks that looked like yellow candles.

Powder! Two Dog, sick with stark terror, let out a hoarse, croaking scream.

"Gawd! Gawd A'mighty, Smith! That's powder."

"What the hell of it?" bellowed the yellow-bearded giant, throwing another box out. "What the hell of it, hey? Lend a hand up here, damn your sniveling little heart!"

Two Dog stood there, sort of crumpled. In his scarecrow rags, his broken, bleeding mud-caked hands going out in a queer little gesture of supplication.

"Oh, Gawd, Jerk Line, don't! Don't, pardner. I'll unload 'er. Every damn case, Jerk Line. But don't—don't sling that stuff like that. She's powder, Jerk Line. Powder!"

But the yellow-haired, mud-fouled Jerk Line was like a man gone stark mad. His harsh voice roared forth a string of curses. He threw boxes of the frozen dynamite with a sort of giant petulance that was terrible in its blasphemous contempt for the wrath of God.

"Git!" he bellowed. "Git, you white-hearted, sheep-herdin' louse! Git, afore I brain you with the next box!"

Two Dog turned slowly, very slowly, like a man mortally sick. Like a stray dog being stoned by his man-god.

Shambling, stumbling, falling sometimes because he was weak and hurt and blind from the tears that coursed down his little old cheeks, Two Dog made his way along the Red Lane.

The weary horses eyed him with some sort of dumb understanding. But he did not look up. He could not look at them. For he was going away. He was quitting the only thing in the world that he had ever loved.

On down the Red Lane. And even after he had stumbled on for a mile and more, the silvery tinkle of his beloved bells filled his ears. When he reached the Hog Ranch, he crawled up into the hayloft and sobbed himself into the oblivion of exhausted slumber.

While back along the Red Lane, Jerk Line, his sudden burst of fury spent, worked in a brooding silence.

Already he was regretting his fit of anger. And he worked until darkness clogged his progress. Then he unhooked his team and turned them into the Hog Ranch pasture. Too weary and sick at heart to re-

turn to the caboose at the far end of the lane, Jerk Line lay down on the load and slept, too utterly tired to know that he was hungry.

He hired a passing traveler from the mines and put him to work in Two Dog's place. His anger had turned to guilt, then into a sort of shamed bitterness toward Two Dog. He lied himself into believing that the little swamper had deserted in an hour of dire need. And when the outfit had been dragged through the lane and Jerk Line laid over at the Hog Ranch to mend broken tugs and rebalance his freight, he got very drunk and sank into a sullen silence.

Two Dog, refreshed by sleep, had quit the barn. Avoiding the little log saloon and dining room that fed the stage passengers, he took to the road before Jerk Line pulled into the ranch.

Two Dog found a sheep camp and stayed with the herder. And two days later he hailed the passing stage and rode with the driver into the Little Rockies. But he did not go into the town of Zortman. He got off a mile this side of town and struck off for a sheep ranch.

A few days later Two Dog was back herding sheep. He wore real clothes. Thick, fleece-lined underwear, sox a quarter-inch thick, shoes, overshoes, blanket-lined canvas pants, a sheep-lined overcoat and heavy cap. His covered wagon held adequate bed and good grub. Two collie dogs for company.

The feed was good, there in the scrub pines of the foothills. There was water. A good shed for the sheep at night. And his band were stout wethers that needed little attention save doctoring them for sore mouth and foot rot. And each morning as they left the shed, Two Dog caught a few sheep and sheared away the overhanging wool that sometimes grows so thick as to make the sheep blind—wool blind.

But Two Dog was not happy. Well clothed, well fed, and an ideal winter camp. A veritable sheepherder's paradise. And Two Dog was a sheepherder, as good a sheepherder as ever cheated the wolves and blizzards. He tried to tell himself that he was happy, that freighting was a hell of a life. Here he was, warm, with good grub, top wages. This was the life.

But when the sheep bells, reminding him of other bells, tinkled, until the sound of them found their way into his little old heart, he would bury his frost-blackened face in the thick fur of the biggest collie and cry like a hurt child.

Sometimes, when the wind was right—for a herder feeds into the

wind in winter so that if a storm comes, he drifts with it back to camp —Two Dog's band went up the wind and across the stage road below town. And from some hiding place among the scrub pines, Two Dog's tear-dimmed eyes would watch Jerk Line's freight outfit crawl along the road. Wide steel tires creaking across the packed snow. Chains rattling. The silver-toned bells sending their siren song across the frozen world to where little Two Dog squatted in the pines.

Because he never went to town, because his camp tender was a Swede who spoke no English, and because some queer sort of pride pinched his heart, forbidding him to question men he met, Two Dog did not know how things were going with Jerk Line.

Jerk Line, never sober any more, whose brief stays in town were silent and ugly and sodden. He no longer held the barflies spellbound with fanciful tales of mud and snow and feats of expert hauling.

His horses sensed the change in the man. They no longer gave the best that was in them. Harness and animals alike took on a shabby, shiftless appearance. Uncurried, with burrs and witches' knots in their manes and tails, the eighteen horses, from prideful lead-team to the line-backed bronc on the off wheel, seemed to miss the unobtrusive care and companionship of little Two Dog. Even the bells, weather-tarnished and dull, had lost something of their gallant silvery tone. The caboose was a litter of cast-off clothing, dirty dishes and blackened pots and skillets. Man, horses, harness and wagons had a neglected appearance.

Nor was that all. There were complaints from Dutch John and Big Fred. And on one occasion when the outfit had been snowbound a week, and had taken three weeks to pull from the railroad into the twin towns of Zortman and Landusky, the saloon men, becoming wrathful at the light weight of a fifty-gallon barrel, checked up. The whiskey was siphoned into jugs. The barrel was twenty gallons short. And the gimlet marks were plain to be seen.

Dutch John accused Jerk Line there in the saloon, before a big crowd. Jerk Line knocked the old fellow through the front window and almost into the arms of the deputy sheriff who happened to be passing. Jerk Line was duly jailed, tried, and fined. And the final outcome of it all was this: the saloon men got together and bought a small freight outfit of their own. A six-horse outfit; a former stage driver for skinner. And when Jerk Line threatened to work over this six-

horse skinner with a stay chain, that gentleman borrowed Big Fred's sawed-off shotgun and sent word across the street where Jerk Line was doing his drinking.

"Tell that unwashed, louse-bound jasper to come on with his stay chain. This town needs a corpse about his size."

The skinner had been a shotgun messenger for Wells Fargo in Indian days and meant just about what he said. Jerk Line ignored the message and carried the bitterness of defeat into a sullen, sulking week of inebriation.

Jerk Line still hauled powder and grub for the two camps under an old contract. He still brought in an occasional barrel of whisky to Landusky, for Jew Jake and old Pike Landusky were too ornery to side in with the Zortman saloon men.

As the goose flies, Landusky is only about five miles or so across the mountain from its sister town of Zortman. But the wagon road, heading the coulees and canyons, is better than twelve miles. And there is the Grouse Gulch grade. A sharp pitch, twisting and narrow. The skinner of a jerk-line team must need know his business to avoid disaster on the Grouse Gulch hill. For if a wagon slipped off there, it dropped for a hundred feet.

"Haulin' powder down Grouse Gulch hill," agreed the muleskinner clan, "is like sittin' on the lid of hell."

But since the departure of Two Dog, Jerk Line displayed a blood-chilling contempt for powder that made even the hardened miners and "powder monkeys" shiver. For powder, as any man who handles it will tell you, is temperamental stuff. Freakish, sort of. And the tawny-bearded freighter handled it as if it were flour.

Perhaps, in his present unhealthy state of mind, Jerk Line blamed the stuff for his troubles. He hated powder as if the stuff were alive and understood. He cursed it as he would curse a man, in terms of the most terrible blasphemy. No swamper ever made a second trip with him.

The men at the powder house called him crazy. And perhaps they were right. No man now stayed at his roadside camps for a meal or a drinking bout; Jerk Line was likely to drive him off in a quick fit of anger. And when men began to shun his company, Jerk Line grew the more sullen and moody. Above the sound of bells and chains and creaking wheels could be heard his big voice as he rode the nigh wheeler or

walked alongside, talking to himself. Jerk Line Smith was no longer quite sane.

Men pitied him without knowing why they did so. Landusky and Zortman did not know that the bearded, rough-mouthed Jerk Line was grieving for the companionship of Two Dog. They did not know that he sometimes lay awake through the long night, calling in a broken, croaking whisper for his little partner. That in town or on the road his bloodshot eyes searched with restless stare for a glimpse of Two Dog Moore.

They did not know, because Jerk Line hid his grief, covering it with sulky brooding and fits of sudden anger.

Sometimes Jerk Line saw the band of wethers feeding up the wind among the scrub pines, a dirty gray blotch against the white snow. Once or twice he caught a brief glimpse of the dogs, as those sagacious animals trotted around the lead of the band to turn them back. But even though he stared until his eyes ached, he could catch no glimpse of Two Dog. He did not guess that the little fellow often crouched within a stone's throw of the road where it dropped off the Grouse Gulch hill.

Of the affairs of Jerk Line Smith, Two Dog knew only what his watery blue eyes told him. That was enough to upset the little fellow, so that he lay awake far into the night, smoking and thinking and trying to pray.

Two Dog saw the broken harness, the wheels that needed grease, the tarnished, blackened bells, the uncurried coats of the horses he loved. Jerk Line, his lanky frame bent across the hames of the nigh-wheeler, tossing rocks from the canvas nosebag hung to the saddlehorn. Jerk Line, bent over like an old man, his tawny hair and beard astonishingly gray. Mumbling like a man drunk or gone mad. The trail wagon piled high with powder.

A warning chinook wind had melted some of the snow, but before its task was completed the wind swung a few points north, and smoke-hued clouds shoved up across the skyline, spreading like a pall over the blue sky. Snow, fine and hard as specks of ice, filled the air. The mercury dropped to ten below zero.

The wether band fed into the wind for two hours, then balked. Humped up in the lee of the rocks, the sheep stood there in stupid, stubborn bunches. The dogs barked and snapped at their heels. Two Dog hobbled about, slapping his arms to keep warm. And when he

saw the futility of trying to make his sheep graze north, he gave it up and hobbled over toward the head of the Grouse Gulch hill. He had kept close tabs on Jerk Line's trips and he knew that the freight outfit was about due. He plodded over to watch.

When he reached the grade he stared in scowling silence at the frozen, ice-glazed ruts. Dangerous at any time, that road was little more than a devil's slide this morning. Icy, slippery, treacherous.

"Smith'll have to put rough locks on his wheels," he mused. "Them brakes o' his needs new shoes. Wore bad, last trip. Rough locks. Hug the bank clost. Take 'er slow, an' he'll make 'er. If them brakes slip on this hill, he'll . . ."

A shudder swept his little frame. He was thinking of that trail wagon, piled with powder cases.

Out of the gray morning came the distant sound of bells. Clear and sweet, like Christmas bells. To little Two Dog they were voices—voices "a-callin' fer him."

Two Dog scurried to a brush thicket beside the frozen road, ten feet above the road level, on the slope of the hill. He could lean over and spit down on the road.

Then, up over the brow of a low rise came the freight outfit. Black Jack and Monte, the two black leaders, leaning into their padded collars, their bells chiming. The other teams plodding behind. The high-boxed wagons lurching and swaying. The dingy tarp-covered caboose. Jerk Line walking alongside the lead wagon to keep warm. In grease-caked overalls and torn faded mackinaw, his blue flannel shirt open at the throat. Beating his chapped, gloveless hands across his barrel chest. His blacksnake hung across his shoulders, as if he carried a heavy pack, his bearded chin sunk on his chest. A little unsteady from too much whisky and too little decent grub. Mumbling into his matted beard.

Plodding along. The wide tires creaking dismally on the frozen snow. Coming on at a dogged, sullen pace, slantwise to the bitter wind. Without a swamper. The trail wagon loaded high with powder.

And when the swing teams were directly under Two Dog's hiding place, the wise leaders slacked to a halt. The other teams halted in unison and stood there. Jerk Line looked up as if waking from a dream, as if he did not quite realize where he was. He passed a reddened, calloused hand across his eyes, then reached into the jockey box.

"Reachin' fer his rough lock chains," nodded Two Dog.

But when the freighter's hand came out of the box, it held a jug. Uncorking the jug with his teeth, he spat out the cork and tipped up the jug. For the space of ten long seconds, Jerk Line let the whisky gurgle down his throat. When the jug came away from his bearded lips, he picked the cork out of the snow and with a sort of fumbling movement replaced the jug. Again his hand passed across his eyes, as if he tried to wipe away a curtain or film that clouded his vision. Then he stumbled with a faltering step back along the wagon.

The brake poles, made of seasoned birch, were equipped with ropes. To set the brakes you pulled the rope taut and tied it to a steel brace up forward. Jerk Line set the two brakes in a haphazard fashion. Instead of a bowline knot, he merely gave the ropes a couple of half hitches and a twist. Two Dog, watching every move, choked back a little groan. And when Jerk Line mounted his wheel horse, the little watcher clapped his mittened hand across his mouth to smother the cry that came to his throat.

"Tighten up, thar," roared Jerk Line.

Chains rattled taut. Brakes creaked. The wagons lurched forward.

Two Dog shivered in terror, a thin, whispering scream tearing from his tight throat. But Jerk Line did not hear. Two Dog saw the front brake rope give, slacking off under the strain. The second rope jerked loose. The heavy wagons rolled forward toward the brink of the hill. Jerk Line, loaded with powder, was starting down that pitch with no brakes!

Two Dog, pasty white, leaped like an animal, landing in a heap on the first wagon. Half crawling, he scrambled across the load to the brake rope, just as the wagon reached the pitch of the hill. The rear wagon, still on level ground, held it back. Two Dog reached for the rope as the wagon rolled against the wheel team. The horses, sensing danger, jumped a little, then leaned back against the breeching.

Jerk Line seemed to wake from a stupor. He stiffened in the saddle, cast a swift, furtive look back at the towering load that was not holding. Then he roared a hoarse, screaming shout at the horses. His blacksnake cracked like pistol shots. The long team, frightened at the terror in the man's voice, leaped forward.

In split-second movements, Two Dog swung his weight on the brake rope. The brake shoes smoked, screamed, then held the wide tires in a tight grip. Two Dog, with deft, swift hitches, made fast the rope

and knotted it. Then he leaped to the ground, was saved by a miracle from death under the wheels of the second wagon, and scrambled up over the end gate of the trail wagon, grasping at the dangling rope.

"Gawd! Gawd! Gawd!"

No prayer of man ever held more pitiful entreaty, more blind faith, more stark terror. And as if in answer to his screaming prayer, his hands found the rope.

The little fellow's weight was puny against the strain of the load that was rolling the huge wheels. He cast a panicky glance about for some object that was solid. Something to throw a hitch around and take up the slack. His eyes fell on a thick iron brace that spanned the sides of the wagon-box. Two Dog threw a hitch about it, then threw his weight against the rope, his feet braced, every muscle straining.

Jerk Line's blacksnake spat and popped. His hoarse screams goaded the terrified horses. They broke into a trot. Faster. Every second courting a pile-up. For if the long jointed bars that served as a wagon tongue ever slacked and a horse became tangled in the stretchers and lead bars, the whole outfit would pile up in a snarl of mangled flesh. Wagons, horses and men broken and smashed, jerked over the edge and down that hundred feet of boulders. And the trail wagon piled with high explosive powder.

Then with a horrible squeal, the brake blocks of the trail wagon took hold. The momentum of the loads slacked. And as the stridor of the brake shoes smothered to a low moan, Two Dog's voice traveled out of the rattling chains, along the line of fear-stricken horses.

"Steady, boys. Easy, babies. Whoa, babies. Whoa, now. Whoa!"

Crooning, calling, talking to them as a mother soothes the fright of her children.

Jerk Line heard it and thought that he had gone clear mad. But he felt the horses slacken to a walk. He knew that some miracle had checked the momentum of the wagons. His hand, shaking as if with palsy, made that queer brushing motion across his eyes. Then something inside him seemed to break and he swayed in his saddle, tears streaming down into his matted beard, sobs shaking his big frame. But the hands that handled the jerk line were mechanical, sure, skilled even after the man's brain had quit. And so Jerk Line Smith rode down the Grouse Gulch hill. And when the outfit was again on level ground and the horses stood quiet, he still sat in the saddle, sobbing and

laughing. Crazy. Crazy from pain and liquor and lack of decent grub. And blind! Snow blind since the day before yesterday.

But out of that babbling delirium and red black of snow blindness Jerk Line recognized Two Dog and clung to him, sobbing like a baby. While Two Dog, laughing through tears of sheer happiness, put his partner to bed in the caboose. Ten minutes after Two Dog had Jerk Line's clothes off and had put him to bed, the freighter dropped into a heavy sleep.

Two Dog unhooked the teams, chuckling and talking to each horse as he unbuckled their harness and fastened on nose bags and hobbles.

"Yep, by gravy, it's ol' Two Dog come back, babies. Damn your gosh-darned hungry hides. Know me, don't you? I'll tell a wet hen. Quit nibblin' at a man's duds. Here's grain till hell's no more. A extry hatful. An' I'm tellin' you ponies, tomorrow is gonna come Sunday. We're declarin' 'er a holiday. Gotta nuss ol' Jerk Line. He's got 'em shore bad this time. Loco as hell. Gotta lay over an' touch up this harness some. Looky at them bells! Gawsh a'mighty, what a mess! What a mess!"

When the camp tender came along, Two Dog turned over his sheep.

"Got a sick man in yonder caboose. I'm quittin'. Yep, goin' back to freightin'."

"What's them cases you're unloadin', Two Dog?" asked the camp tender who had replaced the Swede a few weeks ago.

"Powder," said Two Dog grimly, as he carefully carried a case away from the wagons and placed it gently on top of a pile fifty feet away.

"What's the idee in unloadin' it here?"

"Me'n Jerk Line has quit haulin' powder. I aim to tell him so when he comes outa it."

But it was none other than Jerk Line himself who grinned weakly out of his delirium and made the flat statement that he'd never haul another ounce of powder.

"F'thermore, Two Dog, I'm tyin' you up so's you can't quit me, never no more. I'm makin' you half owner. Half owner, hear that, you gosh darned li'l ol' son of a gun?"

Two weeks later the freight outfit was again in Chinook after a load. Dutch John and Big Fred and the others had held a conference. The six-horse outfit was taken off the road.

And the truth got out.

"All that was wrong with Jerk Line, he was just nacherally homesick fer Two Dog. Who'd uh guessed it? Homesick!"

Once more Jerk Line Smith addressed the crowded bar at the Bloody Heart Saloon, while outside the freight team, bells and buckles shining in the sun, waited lazily.

"Mud? I'll tell a stranger! I sees a hat a layin' on top o' the mud. Good hat. When I picks 'er up, danged if there ain't a man under it.

" 'Mister,' says I, 'I'll git my shovel an' dig you out.'

" 'You needn't bother,' " says he. 'I'll be out directly. I got a stout hoss under me!' "

Jerk Line turned to his swamper.

"Recollect that day?"

"I'll tell a man I do, Jerk Line. It was the summer of '81. The summer o' the blue snow."

Walt Coburn

Walt Coburn (1889–) was born in White Sulphur Springs, Montana. Unlike most writers of pulp-paper Western and adventure stories, Mr. Coburn actually lived the life he writes about, for his education was a mixture of occasional schooling and riding as a regular hand on his father's ranch in Montana, near the Canadian border, the Circle C, one of the earliest and largest of the Montana cattle ranches. He completed high school, attended one year of prep school, started at Stanford University, but, quickly tiring of Stanford, returned to the life of a cowboy. In 1910 he enlisted as a private in Villa's army, but in the Battle of Juarez he deserted, swam the Rio Grande, and returned to the United States. He fought in World War I as the pilot of a Flying Jenny, and was cracked up so badly that he was no longer able to perform the duties of cowhand, and after tries at several other kinds of work, decided to make a writer of himself. It took him several years of hard work, with numerous rejection slips, before he had finally trained himself to write the kind of yarn in which Walt Coburn is inimitable. It is interesting to note that during this period of apprenticeship O. Henry was his textbook, and all of his stories follow rather closely the O. Henry pattern of rapid action, atmosphere, climax, surprise ending, with almost invariably a sentimental appeal based on one of the traditional themes: love of man for his friend, goodness beneath the hard exterior of the outlaw, the saving of the beloved home range, and the like.

"Dynamite" is both typical of and superior to the average run of Westerns

being published in the current market. Its superiority is attained by both the skill of the writing and the authentic background.

Walt Coburn might well be called the dean of Western story writers. For more than twenty years he has received top word-rates for the some half million words a year that he produces. For more than ten years he has not received a single rejection. Because fewer plots are required, he now concentrates upon novelettes of 12,500 to 25,000 words. Five of his full-length Western novels have been published as books, while many of his tales have been sold to Hollywood for grade B motion pictures. How much does he sell them for? He doesn't know, he says, for he sells them in batches.

Regularly every day except Sunday he goes to his study and starts to work and stays there until one or two o'clock. Often, he says, he has not a single plot idea as he enters, but just goes in and sits and sweats it out.

Mr. Coburn has written for CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY the following advice for young writers who would like to try their hand at the pulps:

So you got the notion you want to write Westerns? Pulp Westerns. There at the newsstands you have seen a score or more of pulp Western magazines. It looks like a lucrative field for a new writer. Most of the writers in those magazines are new. Unknown. Perhaps in one or two of the magazines you might find a short blurb about this being the first story published by a brand new writer. Fine. There's your big field. The sky is the limit. Try your luck. Mail your manuscript with a prayer. But don't take it too hard if your story drops back in your lap with a printed rejection slip. You've had your first lesson in rejection slips. One editor's poison is the next editor's meat. Look it over for wear and tear, and send it out again. Have your list of markets handy. Send it down the line.

But don't sit back with that twice-said prayer. Get busy on your next story. You want to be a writer. Then write. Keep on writing. Regardless of rejection slips. That's your course of sprouts. Your school of rejection slips is not easy to take. You cuss the editors and publishers. You read the yarns they've published and a lot of those stories read to you like so much tripe. Those editors don't know what they want. They're playing favorites. They're buying from their relatives only. It's a heart-breaking game and it saps a lot of the high hopes you had when you sent out that first story. You knew it was a good yarn. Or you wouldn't have sent it. . . . And you sweat blood waiting for the verdict. And you try to grin it off when that manuscript comes back. But if you're going to be a writer, you keep on writing. And one day you get a check instead of a rejection slip. And your attitude changes. About face. You take a look at that first yarn you tried to peddle and you see where you didn't have a story. It wasn't what the editor of a pulp Western calls a

story that he figures will sell more copies of his magazine. The editor is working for wages. Chances are he's a writer. Mebbyso a disappointed writer. But he's paid to know the commercial end of this writing game. And it differs a lot from the point of view of the writer who has done the creative end of the job. . . . Nope, no editor can fill his magazine with stories he's bought from relatives and friends. Not if he hopes to hold his job as editor. . . . Your story dropped back in your lap with a rejection slip because it wasn't what the man wanted. So if you are going to be a writer you take your rejection slips in your stride. And you keep on writing. So much for that.

You want to write for the pulps. All right. Here are a few simple rules. The A.B.C.'s. . . . Plot. You want a tight, fast-moving plot. With ACTION. Action in your first sentence. Your first paragraph. Your first page. And don't slow up till your climax is hit and over with. Then tie your yarn up in as few words as possible. When your climax is done, your story is written. Action is your keynote. Keep it moving fast. No descriptions. Don't put in one sentence that has not a direct bearing on your plot. Don't ramble on about anything.

Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, former editor of the old *Adventure,* one of the old-time great editors who were tough to work for but you loved 'em like a daddy, has written a couple of books on short story writing. As I recall it, Hoffman put it something like this in regard to boiling down your story to its real meaty value: He said to take the first page of your manuscript and read it over. See if you can't cut that page down to one paragraph that will tell your reader what you've taken a whole page to tell. Then take that paragraph and boil it down into one sentence. Then take that one sentence and put it into as few words as possible. The fewer the better. . . .

The above is not an exact quote of Mr. Hoffman's idea. But it amounts to that. And he edited one of the best pulp magazines ever published. When you wrote for Arthur Sullivant Hoffman of *Adventure* you were writing slick-magazine yarns. Only they were, for the most part, better than slicks. Because you were putting in everything that goes to make for Adventure in a story. No love interest allowed. And usually you drew a map showing the locale of your story. There was a magazine that gave a writer a real bull's-eye to shoot at. Therefore I pass on to you beginners for what it may be worth, the same advice given me more than twenty years ago by Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, for whom I did a lot of work in the old days. When all the pulp Westerns on the stands could be counted on the fingers of one hand. When the great Bob Davis (who bought the first story I ever sold) edited *Argosy.* When F. E. Blackwell, another of the Great, was editor of *Western Story Magazine.* They were salty, tough editors. To work for them

was an education and an honor. Their red pencil was a surgeon's knife. Their rejection slips, their later criticisms, the only schooling I ever had in this great game of writing pulp fiction.

A few more bits of advice I got from those men and other editors who followed them:

Have your story dreamed out in your mind. Then sit down at your typewriter and tell it on paper. Choose the hours you figure are best. Four hours. Five hours. That's a day's work. When the dreams commence fading, quit for the day. Forget it. Until tomorrow.

Try to make your first draft the one and only copy of your yarn. You can't make a living rewriting. Pulps don't pay that kind of money. I never rewrite a story. I never make notes. Carry the story in my mind. Let the characters work it out for you. Make 'em live and move like real live men move. Picture your action. Tell it briefly, quickly. Suspense is one of the strong ingredients. Learn to use it. . . . Me, I never outline anything. But you might do well to draw up an outline of your plot. Nor have I read a Western story during the twenty-five years I've been writing. So I can't get the other man's work confused with mine. But when you're breaking in it might be a good idea to pick some writer who has made the grade and see how he handles his story. There are countless little tricks that you pick up as you go along. But don't try to copy any writer's style. Tell your story in your own way Develop your own style. Be your own craftsman. Keep writing. Practice makes for the knocking off the raw edges and you keep on whittling at those rough spots and you just keep at it and keep at it. If you've got it in you to write, you will write.

You want to write Westerns. Know your subject. The West I knew as a cowhand and cattleman is no more. The open range in Montana I rode as a kid is fenced in and plowed under. But it will be always alive and living in my memory. If you are of a younger generation, you never saw it. You must get it from books written by men who were there. And picture it in your mind. But the real cow country is gone. Its men are a fast-vanishing breed. Now it's rodeos. Those are a different breed from the forty-a-month cowhand who learned how to handle cattle on the big ranges. But they are colorful. Good story material. . . . And get what you want in the way of consolation from this. That there are mighty few men writing Westerns today who were working cowhands or owned their own iron in days before the barbed wire, and later on the trucks and automobiles changed it all and robbed the old West of its real color. Today's West is synthetic, modernized. Yodeled over the radio and made into moving pictures by men in fancy shirts and ten gallon hats. Dude wranglers whanging on guitars. Parade riders.

There are a few big cow outfits left. Both sides of the Mexican border. Fenced in, for the most part, on this side. But you seldom see their cowhands in town. You'll see the owners. Grizzled cowmen. Getting scarcer each winter. They'll all be gone before long.

Don't confuse what's left of the cow country with what it used to be. But when it did exist, it was a fabulous range. I quit punching cows twenty-five years ago to put it down on paper in pulp Western fiction. And I have to dream back to my early boyhood to get a lot of its color.

What I have learned about writing I pass along to you for what it may be worth. I had hoped to use the pulps as a stepping stone to something greater in the way of literary work. There are times when I am weighted down by a sort of disappointment, a kind of frustration, a sense of having failed to reach the goal I had set. But for the most part, I am content. When I get a letter from some old-time cowhand who knew me when I was one of his forty-a-month breed. Or from some bedridden invalid whose dreams of the Wild West are forever tied down there with him. Or a letter from a convict doing a long time stretch. From a fifteen-year-old boy in Donegal, Ireland, with cowboy dreams. From men in all walks of life. They have read a yarn of mine they liked and have written me a letter. . . . There is the real payoff when a man has spent the writing years of his life with Western pulps. . . . There, perhaps, is the real answer to the bit of a beginner's prayer that went out with that first manuscript. The one that came back with a printed rejection slip. . . . That is the real payoff.

So keep on writing. And good luck to you!



APPENDIXES

APPENDIXES

In the material that follows I am making no pretense at completeness. The lists are intended for the use of the beginning writer who wishes to try a sampling submission of several stories. More complete lists and instructions are obtainable from many other sources. Several magazines are published for the commercial writer. A number of books, readily obtainable, contain more complete lists.

The student who is interested should regard the information given here as only a starting point.

A

LITERARY AGENTS

(See p. 12) All addresses New York City

Ruth and Maxwell Aley, 342 Madison Avenue
Brandt & Brandt, 101 Park Avenue
George T. Bye & Co., 535 Fifth Avenue
Barthold Fles, 507 Fifth Avenue
Nannine Joseph, 200 West 54th Street
David Lloyd, 349 East 49th Street
Donald MacCampbell, 16 East 43rd Street
McIntosh and Otis, Inc., 18 East 41st Street
William Morris, Inc., 1270 Sixth Avenue
Harold Ober, 40 East 49th Street
Russell & Volkening, Inc., 522 Fifth Avenue
Constance Smith, 576 Fifth Avenue
Ann Watkins, Inc., 77 Park Avenue
Willis Wing, 522 Fifth Avenue
Harriet Wolf, 55 West 42nd Street

B

MAGAZINE MARKETS. QUALITY MAGAZINES

The first group in this category pays quite well for stories of the quality type. The second group pays either little or nothing, but the prestige attained by publication in the second group is sometimes considerable.

I

Atlantic Monthly, 8 Arlington Street, Boston
Esquire, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago
Harper's Magazine, 49 East 33rd Street, New York City
Mademoiselle, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City
New Yorker, 25 West 43rd Street, New York City

NOTE: Some of these magazines require a certain type of quality story. *Esquire* has a very special male slant, often with the cult-of-the-simple technique. *The New Yorker* makes use of the episodic type, about 2000 words in length. *The Atlantic Monthly* requires a very polished style. *Harper's* publishes very few stories and those, usually of high quality, are similar to *New Yorker* stories. *Mademoiselle* has a college contest each year for college women undergraduates.

II

Accent, Box 102 University Station, Urbana, Illinois
Arizona Quarterly, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona
Chimera, 265 West 11th Street, New York City
Kenyon Review, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio
Letter, 1401 East First Street, Tucson, Arizona
New Mexico Quarterly Review, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Partisan Review, 45 Astor Place, New York City
Quarterly Review of Literature, 1982 Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut
Sewanee Review, University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee
Southwest Review, University Press, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas
Story, 312 East 53rd Street, New York City
Virgina Quarterly Review, Charlottesville, Virginia
Western Review, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, Kansas

WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

In general, what has been said concerning the commercial story applies to the women's magazines listed below. Those in the first group pay very well indeed; those in the second group not so well, but they require more or less the same kind of story. The usual advice is repeated here: STUDY THE MAGAZINE BEFORE SUBMITTING A STORY.

I

Good Housekeeping, 57th Street and 8th Avenue, New York City
Ladies' Home Journal, Independence Square, Philadelphia

McCall's, 230 Park Avenue, New York City
Redbook, 230 Park Avenue, New York City
Today's Woman, 1501 Broadway, New York City
Woman's Home Companion, 250 Park Avenue, New York City

II

Everywoman's Magazine, 501 Madison Avenue, New York City
Family Circle Magazine, 400 Madison Avenue, New York City
Household Magazine, Topeka, Kansas
This Week, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York City
Woman's World, 22nd and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

GENERAL "SLICK" MAGAZINES

American Magazine, 250 Park Avenue, New York City
Collier's, 250 Park Avenue, New York City
Cosmopolitan, 57th Street and 8th Avenue, New York City
Liberty, 37 West 57th Street, New York City
Saturday Evening Post, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

NOTE: In their requirements some in this group come close to the women's magazines; an example is *Cosmopolitan,* which tends toward sophisticated love stories. The *Post, Liberty,* and *Collier's* seem to publish, in addition to stories "slanted" toward women, detective stories, stories of young love, occasional adventure and historical stories, humorous juveniles. STUDY THE MAGAZINE.

TRUE CONFESSION MAGAZINES

Magazines in the true confession group do not have regular contacts with literary agents and therefore furnish the beginner an easier outlet than some of the other groups. The true confession story is "true" only in that it should be based upon some real-life incident, but the incident, of course, may be manipulated as the writer sees fit. All of this type are written in the first person. In the past the plots dealt almost exclusively with the "wronged girl," with sexual sin and repentance, and contained some sort of definite moral. Now they tend more toward marriage and other "problem" situations, similar in many respects to the requirements of the commercial women's magazines. READ AT LEAST ONE TRUE STORY MAGAZINE BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO WRITE IN THIS FIELD.

Modern Romance, 149 Madison Avenue, New York City
Personal Romances, 295 Madison Avenue, New York City
Real Romances, 535 Fifth Avenue, New York City
True Confessions, 1501 Broadway, New York City
True Experience, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City
True Love and Romance, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City
True Romances, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City
True Story Magazine, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City

NOTE: Many magazines are produced by syndicates. In big commercial magazines, however, separate editorial boards in the same syndicate consider stories. In this group stories sent to one magazine are considered for the entire syndicate list, so that it is a waste of postage to send the story to another magazine at the same address. This statement generally applies also to the pulp-paper syndicates.

WESTERN AND ADVENTURE MAGAZINES

In the Western and adventure stories, style and smoothness of writing are not nearly so important as atmosphere, speed of action, and a very clever plot twist which usually gives some sort of surprise ending. The Western vernacular of the Western story is almost entirely artificial and may be acquired rather quickly by the study of a few stories and the jotting down of typical words and phrases. STUDY THE MAGAZINE.

Ace High Western, 205 East 42nd Street, New York City
Adventure, 205 East 42nd Street, New York City
Blue Book, 230 Park Avenue, New York City
Dime Western, 205 East 42nd Street, New York City
Lariat Story Magazine, 670 Fifth Avenue, New York City
Popular Western, 10 East 40th Street, New York City
Ranch Romances, 515 Madison Avenue, New York City
Star Western, 205 East 42nd Street, New York City
Thrilling Western, 10 East 40th Street, New York City
West, 10 East 40th Street, New York City
Western Story, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City
Western Trails, 23 West 47th Street, New York City

SWEETHEART STORY MAGAZINES

These stories deal in a light vein with young love and almost invariably have a happy ending. The plots are typically rather complicated.

All Story Love Tales, 205 East 42nd Street, New York City
Complete Love, 23 West 47th Street, New York City
Love Story Magazine, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City
Popular Love, 10 East 40th Street, New York City

DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINES

Black Mask, 205 East 42nd Street, New York City
Detective Story Magazine, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City
Dime Detective Magazine, 205 East 42nd Street, New York City
Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, 50 Lexington Avenue, New York City
Real Detective, 535 Fifth Avenue, New York City

JUVENILE MAGAZINES

The juvenile story market may furnish a pleasant outlet for the young writer. Not listed here are a great many Sunday school periodicals, which pay little but which are very receptive to new writers.

In general the juvenile short story follows pretty much the same pattern as the adult mystery or adventure story, with a good deal of action, with the villain-hero trap and complications, and often with a surprise ending. Although vocabulary may need to be somewhat adjusted for the lower age groups, the writer should remember that the cardinal sin in juvenile writing is attempting to write down to his audience. *Seventeen* and *Calling All Girls* are using at the present time (1948) youth-problem stories similar in many ways to those appearing in the better women's magazines. STUDY THE MARKET.

American Girl, 30 West 48th Street, New York City
Boy's Life, 2 Park Avenue, New York City
Calling All Boys, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York City
Calling All Girls, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York City
Child Life, 136 Federal Street, Boston
(for young children)
Jack and Jill, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
(for young children)
Open Road for Boys, 136 Federal Street, Boston
Seventeen, 11 West 42nd Street, New York City 18
Story Parade, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City

C

BOOK PUBLISHERS

For the convenience of those who have book-length manuscripts to submit, a list—far from complete—of the longer established general publishers is appended here.

D. Appleton-Century Company, 35 West 32nd Street, New York City
Coward-McCann, Inc., 2 West 45th Street, New York City
Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 432 Fourth Avenue, New York City
Dodd, Mead & Company, 432 Fourth Avenue, New York City
Doubleday & Company, Inc., 14 West 49th Street, New York City
Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., 270 Madison Avenue, New York City
E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 300 Fourth Avenue, New York City
Harcourt, Brace & Company, 383 Madison Avenue, New York City
Harper & Brothers, 49 East 33rd Street, New York City
Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park Street, Boston
Alfred A. Knopf, 501 Madison Avenue, New York City
J. B. Lippincott Company, East Washington Square, Philadelphia
Little, Brown and Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston
The Macmillan Company, 60 Fifth Avenue, New York City
G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2 West 45th Street, New York City
Random House, Inc., 457 Madison Avenue, New York City
Rinehart & Company, Inc., 232 Madison Avenue, New York City
Charles Scribner's Sons, 597 Fifth Avenue, New York City
Simon & Shuster, Inc., 1230 Sixth Avenue, New York City
The Viking Press, 18 East 48th Street, New York City
Whittlesey House, 330 West 42nd Street, New York City

D

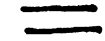
PROOFREADERS' MARKS

The following are the more common proofreaders' marks and symbols. As noted in Chapter VII, Part I, they are indicated in the margin of the proof; a caret (^) in the line shows where the change is to be made. If type matter is to be deleted it is scored through and the symbol *ℓ* entered in the margin opposite.

Stet Retain crossed-out word or letter; let it stand.

..... Retain words under which dots appear; write "Stet" in margin.

X Appears battered; examine.


Straighten lines.


Unevenly spaced; correct.


Take out matter crossed out; delete.


Take out character indicated and close up space.


Line drawn through a cap means lower case.

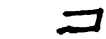

Upside down; reverse.


Close up; no space.


Insert a space here.


Push down this space.


Move this to the left.

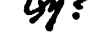

Move this to the right.


Raise to proper position.


Lower to proper position.

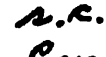

Wrong font; change to proper font.


Is this right?


Put in lower case (small letters).


Put in small capitals.

Put in capitals.


Put in caps and small caps.


Align; i.e., make lines even with other matter.


Make no break in the reading; no¶


No paragraph; sometimes written "run in."


Here is an omission; see copy.


Make a paragraph here.


Transpose words or letters as indicated.*


Change to roman.


Change to italic.


Under letter or word, means caps.

Under letter or word, means small caps.


Under letter or word, means italics.


Under letter or word means boldface.

Insert comma.

Insert semicolon.

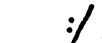
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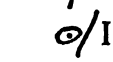

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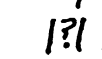
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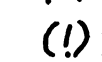

Insert exclamation mark.


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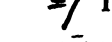

Insert apostrophe.


Insert double quotation marks.


Insert single quotation marks.


Insert brackets.


Insert parentheses.


One-em dash.


One-en dash.

* Indicated in a line of type by  or 

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