

Detroit the Day War Ends BY STANLEY YOUNG

For Your Holiday Entertainment

Hearst's International combined with

Cosmopolitan

Sinclair Lewis
Viña Delmar
Michael Foster
Kathleen Norris
Gladys Taber
Stephen Vincent Benét

JANUARY 35¢



Bronislava Nondz



Who might, come Christmas, have this good fortune:



**A SURPRISE GIFT OF
SCHENLEY ROYAL RESERVE**

 Someone thinks the world of you! These days, whiskey fine as SCHENLEY is precious stuff, indeed—for the rare whiskey in it comes from pre-war reserves. So—thank your lucky stars for a *real* friend—enjoy SCHENLEY Royal Reserve with *moderation*.

**FOR HOSPITALITY — SOME
SCHENLEY ROYAL RESERVE**

 War may have limited your SCHENLEY, but we're sure you still enjoy sharing such fine things with holiday guests. Our distilleries are 100% in war production, but we're doing our best to make SCHENLEY available from pre-war reserves.

**FOR YOUR OWN GIFTS —
SCHENLEY ROYAL RESERVE**

 Finest gift in all the world is a War Bond . . . and there's no scarcity of *them*! If, in addition, you want to say "Merry Christmas" to those special names on your list in the time-honored SCHENLEY way, there *is* enough SCHENLEY to give—in *moderation*!

There's still enough
to enjoy *in moderation!*



THERE IS NO FINER GIFT THAN A U. S. WAR BOND

BLENDED WHISKEY 86 proof • 60% neutral spirits distilled from fruit and grains • Schenley Distillers Corporation, New York City



"I see romance in your hand, Betty—but not in your smile!"



"The lines of your hand are an open book, Betty—you were meant to be lucky in love! But darling, your smile interferes with your fortune. Tender gums can be a handicap to a sparkling smile. 'Pink tooth brush' is a warning—better see your dentist!"



"Yes, Miss Chamberlain, sparkling teeth depend largely on healthy gums! Soft foods rob gums of work—often make them tender. I suggest gum massage." (Note: A survey shows dentists prefer Ipana 2 to 1 over any other dentifrice for personal use.)



"What a fool I was not to realize that gums, too, need care! From now on I'm using Ipana and massage to help keep my gums firmer. That stimulating tingle when I massage my gums seems to tell me they're improving. My teeth are brighter already!"



A Prediction Comes True! Betty, to herself: "That fortune teller said a man would cross my path. Well, he has—and he's wonderful! What a thrill to hear him say he fell in love with me the minute I smiled! I owe plenty of my good fortune to Ipana and massage and the way it has helped my smile."

Never ignore "pink tooth brush"—heed its warning!

IF YOU SEE "pink" on your tooth brush—see your dentist. His verdict may be that modern, soft foods have robbed your gums of the exercise they need. Like so many dentists, he may suggest "the helpful stimulation of Ipana and massage."

For Ipana is designed not only to clean teeth but, with massage, to help the gums. Each time you brush your teeth, massage a little Ipana onto your gums. Let Ipana and massage help you to firmer gums, brighter teeth—a lovelier smile!



Product of Bristol-Myers

Start Today—with Ipana and Massage

METRO-GOLDBWYN-MAYER'S
LION'S ROAR

Published in
this space
every month



The greatest
star of the
screen!

On all the Broadways of America, there's a milling to get into the most extravagant extravaganza in years entitled "Thousands Cheer".

It is "M-G-M's Thousands Cheer" if you please, for practically every big name on the big roster of that big studio is represented in the cast.

It is essentially a love story that revolves around Kathryn Grayson and Gene Kelly. But they are the baton wavers in a parade that brings out the exact and thoroughly demonstrated talents of—



Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, Red Skelton, Eleanor Powell, Ann Sothern, Lucille Ball, Virginia O'Brien, Frank Morgan, Lena Horne—Shall we go on?

Oh very well—Marsha Hunt, Marilyn Maxwell, Donna Reed, Margaret O'Brien, June Allyson, Gloria DeHaven, John Conte, Sara Haden—getting winded?

Well—Ben Blue, Frances Rafferty, Mary Elliott, Frank Jenks, Frank Sully, Dick Simmons, Ben Lessy, Don Loper and Maxine Barrat—whew!

Plus three great name bands—Kay Kyser and Orchestra, Bob Crosby and Orchestra, Benny Carter and Band.

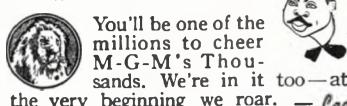
And lest we forget, the incomparable Jose Iturbi not only plays his immortal piano but acts like a Lunt.



This remarkable three-ringed show is photographed in Technicolor, directed by George Sidney and produced by the veteran Joseph Pasternak. It is an original screen play by Paul Jarrico and Richard Collins who dreamed up a dream of a story about Private Miss Jones.

It has the true Army flavor. That's why the most important letters in "Thousands Cheer" are U.S.A.

You'll be one of the millions to cheer M-G-M's Thousands. We're in it too—at the very beginning we roar. —Lea



Hearst International combined with

Cosmopolitan

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Frances Whiting • Editor

VOL. 116, NO. 1

January 1944

TWO NOVELETTES

Miracle Mountain	Vina Delmar	22
The Golden Land	Michael Foster	58

SEVEN SHORT STORIES

Moment in the Dark	Frederick Nebel	26
You Seem to Forget	Sinclair Lewis	30
Her Excellency II: In Love and War	Maude Parker	34
Enter Private O'Keefe	Kathleen Norris	38
Band Leader	Sallie Belle Cox	42
The Family on Maple Street V: Christmas Gift .	Gladys Taber	60
Suez Road	Lt. William H. Attwood	62

TWO SERIALS

Boardwalk Part III	Libbie Block	50
He Married a Doctor Conclusion	Faith Baldwin	66

SEVEN ARTICLES

The Cosmopolite of the Month: Col. Hall and the Focus Cats	Meyer Berger	8
What's New in New York	George Jean Nathan	21
What Will Happen in Detroit the Day War Is Over?	Stanley Young	28
Hell's Doorstep	Walter Taub	36
Kill or Be Killed	Webley Edwards	46
Let Nothing You Dismay	James Ramsey Ullman	56
Canteen Christmas	Bette Davis	64

TEN SPECIAL FEATURES

What's Going On	F. W.	4
Cosmopolitan's Clothes Horse	Hinda Gould	6
A Special Kiss for Christmas	Barbara Schwinn	10
To My Captain	Patricia Devell	14
The Cosmopolitan Family Quiz		16
The Distinguished Service Cross	Donald E. Keyhoe	19
Song About Children	Stephen Vincent Benet	44
Christmas Greetings to the Boys from Your Cosmopolitan Favorites		54
New Pictures You'll Want to See		134
Educational Guide		170

THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

The Yearbook	Lester Atwell	69
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COVER DESIGN, "HOLIDAY MOOD," BY BRADSHAW CRANDELL

Published monthly by

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Buy Bonds to Buy Bombs

OUR NO. 1 HEALTH PROBLEM

THE COMMON COLD

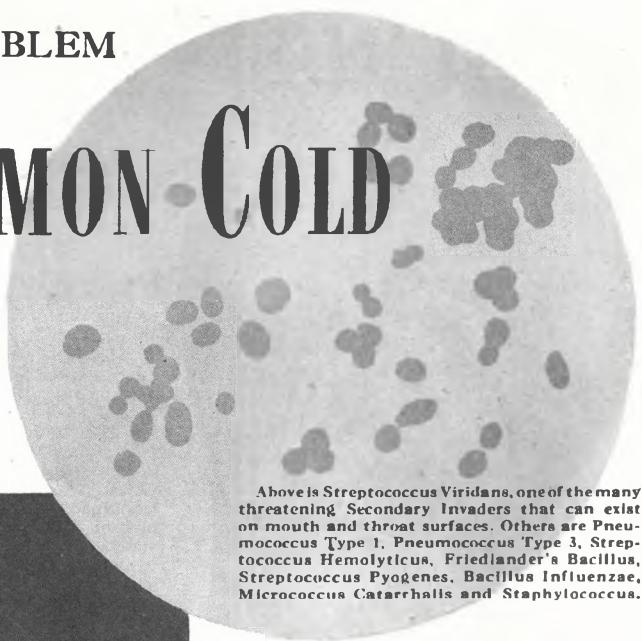
More than one great physician calls the Common Cold our biggest health problem. It affects 95% of our population, with children under 10 the most frequent victims; occurs about 250 million times a year, costs the country roughly 300 million dollars annually; and causes more absenteeism in war industry than all other things combined.



LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC

TRUSTWORTHY, RELIABLE, SAFE FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS

BECAUSE OF WARTIME restrictions you may not always be able to get Listerine Antiseptic in your favorite size. Most drug counters will, however, have it generally available in some size.



Above is Streptococcus Viridans, one of the many threatening Secondary Invaders that can exist on mouth and throat surfaces. Others are Pneumococcus Type 1, Pneumococcus Type 3, Streptococcus Hemolyticus, Friedlander's Bacillus, Streptococcus Pyogenes, Bacillus Influenzae, Micrococcus Catarrhalis and Staphylococcus.

WHAT do we know of this recurrent infection that dogs us from childhood through old age, exacting staggering tolls in money, health and time? Not a great deal . . . but more than we used to.

Late research has led many of the foremost medical men to concede the following theories about it:

1. *That some kind of virus, unseen, probably starts many colds.*
2. *That anything that lowers body resistance such as drafts, wet or cold feet, sudden temperature change, fatigue, encourages the condition to develop.*
3. *That a potentially troublesome group of bacteria, known as the Secondary Invaders, can take advantage of a below-par condition and stage a "mass invasion" of the mucous membrane to produce many of a cold's complications and much of its misery.*

Our own research results seem to indicate that the repeated use of Listerine Antiseptic, by killing huge numbers of these secondary invaders, helps nature to halt many a "mass invasion" and the resultant misery of the infection.

Significant Test Results

Over and over again test data has confirmed the ability of Listerine Antiseptic to accomplish bacterial reductions on mouth and throat surfaces ranging up to 96.7% fifteen minutes after a gargle; up to 80% one hour after.

Even more impressive is the data resulting from clinical tests conducted over a period of twelve years. In these tests those who gargled Listerine Antiseptic twice a day had fewer colds and milder colds, and fewer sore throats, than those who did not gargle with Listerine Antiseptic. We believe this was due largely to Listerine Antiseptic's ability to kill millions of germs on mouth and throat surfaces.

We would be the last to suggest that Listerine Antiseptic is a "specific" against cold infections. In view of its performance over such a long period, however, we do feel that it is a worthy first-aid.

LAMBERT PHARMACEUTICAL CO., St. Louis, Mo.

SIZZLING



Do I burn when my dealer's out of KLEENEX Tissues! But in spite of the war quota, I'm sure glad to hear you're not skimping on Kleenex Quality!

(from a letter by J. W. B., Ottawa, Ont.)



No Brush-Off!

I tuck KLEENEX around the neck of dark dresses to prevent those powder 'rims' KLEENEX catches the powder that won't brush off. Keeps down cleaning bills!

(from a letter by A. L., Springfield, Ill.)

Annie Isn't Absent Any More!



-SINCE HER PLANT PALS USE KLEENEX TO HELP KEEP COLDS FROM SPREADING. THEY USE A TISSUE ONCE-THEN DESTROY, GERMS AND ALL!

(from a letter by J. M. S., York, Pa.)

MIGHTY IMPORTANT! - for authorities say $\frac{1}{2}$ of all war-work time lost from illness is due to the common cold!

*T. M. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

What's Going On

PREVIEW OF A PREVIEW: It was a bright day for us when the long-looked-for *Helen MacInnes* novel arrived. Would it be as exciting as "Above Suspicion" and "Assignment in Brittany"? The answer is a loud yes. It's the story of Poland under siege and of an English girl playing a fantastic role in the Underground. It was such a grand job we just had to see the author—and what a treat! Gay, intelligent and really fun, this Scottish-born girl is one of the prettiest writers we have had the pleasure of meeting. A linguist herself, at twenty she married a young Scot, then a Don at Oxford in Latin and Greek. They have a young son Keith, now ten, who has been educated in America. Mr. Hight, now on leave of absence from Columbia University, is working for the British Government while his blue-eyed, attractive wife keeps house and dreams up new stories.



Helen MacInnes

ALL IN THE FAMILY: On your left you will find *Percy Waxman*, Associate Editor of *Cosmopolitan*, a man with much to boast about, but who does boast only of his country, the United States, and the land of his birth, Australia. His hobby of collecting islands has taken him all over the world and yielded dividends in books about two of them, "The Black Napoleon," life story of the Haitian liberator Toussaint L'Ouverture, and "What Price Mallorca." You've read his *Cosmopolites* of Wendell Willkie, P. K. Wrigley and Kathleen Norris in *Cosmopolitan*, and if you're a book collector perhaps you have a copy of "Versiflage," his volume of excellent verse. Percy concocts lyrics for quite a few Broadway revues and contributes regularly to the hilarious annual show of the celebrated Dutch Treat Club. Incidentally, Percy likes his name, but if you don't, you may call him "Butch."

He is intimately acquainted with more writers probably than any other living editor and he can make a fascinating fifteen-minute speech on any subject in the world including birds. On general information we'd match him against the Quiz Kids any day.

He edited *Pictorial Review* once upon a time and just before joining *Cosmopolitan*'s staff did an eight months' stretch as radio literary commentator.

He lives in New York with frequent forays to "the farm," and he and his beautiful wife Connie are the sort of folk on whom movie stars, generals and artists just "drop in for tea."

A WRITER TO REMEMBER: For years *Michael Foster* was what he calls a "wandering newspaperman," working on various papers the length and breadth of America. He finally wound up on the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, where he stayed for fifteen years. While a reporter there he finished "American Dream." His novelette, "The Golden Land," is in this issue. Michael Foster is a writer of true stature. Remember his name. You're going to meet him often in the pages of *Cosmopolitan*, I hope.

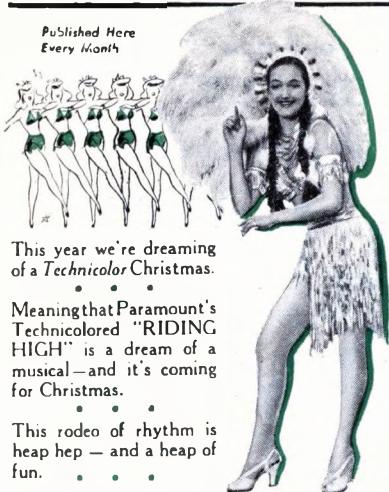


James Ramsey Ullman

CURRENT AND CHOICE: There's something so fine about the Christmas desert article, I'm sure you'll want to know what kind of man is *James Ramsey Ullman*. Best known, perhaps, as producer of "Men in White," he's been a reporter, playwright and author of books. But when war came, Mr. Ullman kissed his wife and two children good-by and enlisted as an ambulance driver with the American Field Service, where he served with the Eighth Army from El Alamein to Tunisia. There, under the desert skies, he wrote "Let Nothing You Dismay," which is sure to strike a warm spot in the hearts of readers whose boys may be observing this Christmas under the stars of some far-off land. F.W.

INSIDE Paramount

Published Here
Every Month



This year we're dreaming
of a *Technicolor* Christmas.

Meaning that Paramount's
Technicolored "RIDING HIGH" is a dream of a
musical—and it's coming
for Christmas.

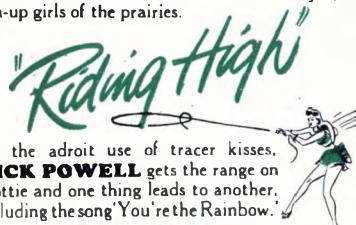
This rodeo of rhythm is
heap hep—and a heap of
fun.

Its seven song hits are hotter than shootin' irons.
When **DOROTHY LAMOUR** sings them
you get powder-burns.

When she dances, you don't feel the burns.

She is a sultry "Secretary to the Sultan." She
swing-sings solid in "Get Your Man."

And in "Injun Gal Heap Hep" she does some
very interesting Indian weaving. The sun-tanned
Pocahontases who assist her are definitely the
pin-up girls of the prairies.



By the adroit use of tracer kisses,
DICK POWELL gets the range on
Dottie and one thing leads to another,
including the song "You're the Rainbow."

VICTOR MOORE, as a bashful
counterfeiter, is the real thing in
comedy. Arguments will rage far
into the night as to whether he is funnier
in this than in "True to Life."

Something new in laughter are **GIL LAMB**, as
the pest of the west, and **CASS DALEY**, the
gal with the iron lungs. They more than live
up to their promising performances in "Star
Spangled Rhythm."

Something new in thrills is the big chuck wagon
race, with **Victor Moore** as a shanghaied jockey,
and **MILT BRITTON** and his band committing
hilarious musical homicide as **Cass Daley** sings
"He Loved Me Till The All-Clear Came" and
"Willie, The Wolf Of The West."

These and the rest of the score, including
the delightful "Whistling In The Light," are
the work of such masters of pow-wow boogie
as **Leo Robin**, **Ralph Rainger**, **Harold Arlen**,
Johnny Mercer and **Jos. J. Lilley**.

And **George Marshall**, as "social" director of
this dude ranch vacation, has made "RIDING
HIGH" a full, glamourous, carefree entertainment
to brighten what we hope will be a very
bright holiday for you and yours.

Paramount Pictures



IT WAS always said of him, that he knew
how to keep Christmas well." Okay, so we've
slashed our Xmas list to the bone, we're con-
centrating on bonds and service men's pack-
ages, but there is no need to lose sight of Mr.
Dickens' words. For this time every year, no
matter what we feel beneath our plush-colored
hearts, there is something of the spirit of the
times in which we are helplessly caught.

The shops are perhaps not so well stocked as
they have been in the past. It may take a little
hard searching to find just what you want for
Mrs. Jiggs and Li'l Abner. But don't let that
stop you! Make your gift count. Make it some-
thing gay or make it something practical, but
make it something! Don't let Xmas go un-
heralded!

Christmas Cover Thought: Bonnet and muff
by **Sally Victor**; pin-up girl, **Margaret Young**.

"My best wishes for your merry Christmases
and your happy New Years, your long lives and
your true prosperities."

a A bit o' whimsy about the waist
To hold you tight in the best of taste.

Bergdorf Goodman

b A "calling card bag" from grandma's days,
Going back to gracious ways.
Color beads and dainty scent
Always went where grandma went.

b

c Too much sparkle, too much glow
Isn't too smart, we'll have you know,
But this little nosegay is quite right
For your gala Xmas night.

Lord & Taylor

d An old Spanish custom, the matador shoe
With ribbons for laces, no coupons for you.

Bergdorf Goodman

e To wear on your shoulder, a smart boutonniere
Designed to speed victory and bring you good cheer.

e

f A wonderful scarf of pure silk crepe,
Easy to look at, and easy to drape.

f

g To put beneath the Christmas Tree,
A quilted coat just to the knee.
This year, to her you've had to yield
Your very manly chesterfield.

g

h Sleek black trousers, so neat and trim.
Looking like something you've swiped from Jim.

h

BY HINDA GOULD



Lord & Taylor



There's a Christmas rush on telephone wires, too

Help keep war-crowded
circuits clear on December 24,
25 and 26.

Please use Long Distance
only if it is vital.

War needs the wires—even
on holidays.

BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM



Colonel Hall and the Focus Cats



BY MEYER BERGER

LIEUTENANT
James Goodwin
Hall was warming

his Flying Coffin's motor on an American airfield near Toul just before midday November 11, 1918, with a mind to swelling his Fokker score—he had downed three and had the Croix de Guerre with palm and star—when they blew the whistle on him.

Twenty-five years later, still full-haired but silvery around the temples, he took up where he had left off. Startled RAF kids and baby-faced pilots of our own Eighth Air Force in England met him on operational flights in Lightnings doing better than 400 miles an hour. They couldn't understand it. By their age standards he was practically a gaffer.

Pretty soon, though, the kids were murmuring, "Extraordinary." Major Hall—he was Major then—was flying 1,600-mile missions into Germany for Photo Reconnaissance, the most fascinating but least-known unit in the combat zone, and had won the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster.

He is the oldest man to have flown a single-seat fighter in combat area in this war, and that takes in all fronts. He turned forty-seven in October. He's tall, quiet, and wears horn-rimmed specs, but only when he's scanning maps or reading. He has birdman's eyes, rather soft speech and a smile that dawns instead of breaking.

A few weeks ago General "Hap" Arnold ordered Colonel Hall home to take over as chief of Photo

Reconnaissance—PR for short—with offices in Army Air Force Headquarters, Washington. At that, they haven't glued the Colonel's britches to a Pentagon swivel chair. He still tests the latest in single-seaters to make certain they're fit for the tasks they must undertake.

It seems only right that the Air Force should have picked this incredible man for his incredible job. He established PR for the Eighth Air Force last spring, personally mapped a good part of what is to be the second front, flew routine Channel photo cover, and generally worked at picking the targets for tomorrow, which is the PR job.

His PR group is known generally as the Focus Cats. The name comes from the planes' insignia, a smirking Disney cat that looks like one of Felix Cat's offspring. The Focus Cat in the insignia is snapping a winged camera though barbed lightning bites at its tail.

When the Colonel was choosing kids for the PR unit last spring he found them inclined to be a bit unhappy about it. A PR pilot, he told them bluntly, must avoid combat and always fly around what the English call "disturbed areas." "Your job," the Colonel explained, "is to get in there, shoot your film, and then get the hell out of there."

Colonel Hall's PR group and their RAF buddies provide Allied commanders with more than seventy-five percent of all the information on which the commanders plot their bombing raids and

their ground attacks. Because the PR pilots use batteries of cameras in this work, they're called "the glass-eye Mata Hari." Earthbound PR interpreters who read the film are major wizards.

The PR kids keep a daily record of U-boat building by daily cover of enemy ports. Their routine Channel cover is a perfect check on movements of enemy shipping. PR files show the day-by-day whereabouts of virtually every Nazi fleet unit and commercial vessel. They cover enemy ship launchings, gun installations and pier building.

"If the Nazis build a ship of unusual size and it shows up in PR film," Colonel Hall explains, "we know just about where that ship will be moved when it's finished, because we know what docks can accommodate it."

PR has discovered more new-type Nazi tanks, landing barges, raiders, guns and planes than any ground source, and has brought home pictures of them before Der Fuehrer has had a chance to use them against the Allies. Incredible as it may seem, PR interpreters have determined the potentialities of new-type enemy aircraft before Allied fliers have met the new planes in combat.

Colonel Hall's first photographic assignment, he likes to recall, was undertaken when he was twelve years old in his native Atlanta, Georgia. "It was for some friends of Mother's," he'll relate. "I trudged ten miles to a hamlet outside Atlanta to snap some family history data—off tombstones."

This was a far cry from some of the assignments undertaken by the Colonel and his men over war-racked Europe. They and their RAF comrades provide most of the material for the relentless Fortress, Liberator and Lancaster attacks that are gradually reducing Nazi industry to so much brick dust.

Sometimes, Colonel Hall says, startling information may be the result of an accident. One of his favorite anecdotes concerns a PR pilot, returning from a flight over Germany, (Continued on page 12)



Col. Hall at PR headquarters in England which he named the "Texas Embassy."

Are You in the Know?



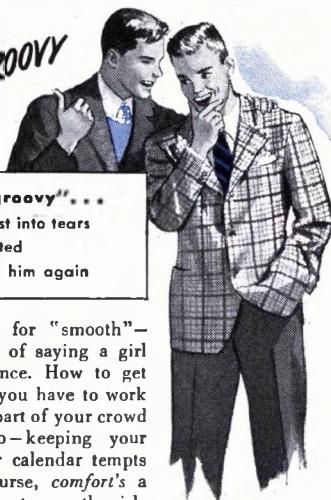
Copyright
Mayfair Music Corp.

The name of this song is . . .

- You'll Never Know
- Day in—Day Out
- Sunday, Monday, or Always

A tune they swoon to—when gals are crooned to—"Sunday, Monday, or Always". A good tune, too, for a juke session—and you're there forgetting you ever flirted with the thought of missing the fun (because of "that certain time"). You're *sure* of yourself, for you're sure of Kotex, with its special double-duty safety center that *really* protects you . . . sends doubt scurrying eight-to-the-bar!

SUE'S GROOVY



If he calls you "groovy" . . .

- Would you burst into tears
- Feel complimented
- Never speak to him again

"Groovy" is teen-talk for "smooth"—and that's another way of saying a girl has poise, self-confidence. How to get groovy? It's something you have to work at, full time. It's being part of your crowd—speaking their lingo—keeping your dates—even when your calendar tempts you to retreat. Of course, *comfort's* a wonderful ally. And most smooth girls know that Kotex is more comfortable.



Would you wear this number for

- School
- Dating
- Ping Pong Parties

Know what's what to wear for *when!* But *how* you wear your clothes is *vital*. For instance, with the proper posture: head up, chin in, shoulders flat, tummy pulled in. And, with that utterly-at-ease look . . . especially important on "those" days, when nagging little worries can change a girl from a *wow* to a *wall-flower*! Trust to Kotex sanitary napkins. Those flat, pressed ends of Kotex don't show. So relax in the *dating* number (above). No outlines need spoil your style.



Did this girl score . . .

- A hit
- An ace
- A strike

You're up on your pins if you got this one! You're in on America's No. 1 sport. And if you're a good sport, you'll bowl regularly, for that's what keeps your team scoring. It keeps you scoring for Uncle Sam, too, by helping you stay fit. So don't let down on trying days. Remember, Kotex stays soft while wearing . . . doesn't just feel soft at first touch. You'll get greater comfort, and you can rule chafing right out of your game. (We almost forgot—she scored a *strike*!)

Girls in the know choose KOTEX*

Yes, more girls choose KOTEX than all other brands of pads put together.

IT'S A WISE GIRL who knows that a *powder* deodorant is best for sanitary napkins. Quest Powder, the Kotex deodorant, was created expressly for this use. See how completely Quest *destroys* odors. It's unscented, safe, *sure* protection.



STOP GUESSING!

Check here if you're teen age and want free the newly edited booklet "As One Girl To Another". You'll learn do's and don'ts for difficult days . . . the lowdown on grooming, sports, social contacts.

If you're the mother or friend of a teenage girl and want the booklet "As One Girl To Another", please check here

Check here if you're a war worker and want free the new booklet "That Day Is Here Again". It tells how to stay on the job, even on problem days. Facts on diet, cramps, exercise, lifting.

Address: Post Office Box 3434
Dept. C-1, Chicago 54, Ill.

Name.

Address.

City. State.



if

you were teen-aged with your first girl
under the mistletoe, wouldn't you kiss her tenderly
and call it "life's brightest moment"?

if

you were newly wed with a surprise
for your starry-eyed bride, wouldn't you think
her thank-you kiss "the best in the world"?

if

you were engaged and could hold your sweetheart
in your arms on Christmas Day,
wouldn't you say that was your "Big Moment"?



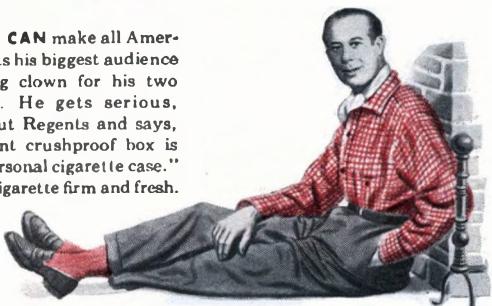
yes, everybody knows the best Christmas gift

is a kiss from the one you love. Is it any wonder, then, that Mother gets—

A SPECIAL KISS FOR CHRISTMAS

Things you don't know about Lahr... Gwynne... Carillo!

BERT, WHO CAN make all America laugh, gets his biggest audience thrill playing clown for his two youngsters. He gets serious, though, about Regents and says, "That Regent crushproof box is just like a personal cigarette case." Keeps each cigarette firm and fresh.



ROOTIN', SHOOTIN' ANNE, lissome, hard-ridin' heroine of Universal's "Frontier Badmen" is a pianist, violinist and ballet dancer. She likes Regents because "Regents are 20% longer, naturally mean more value."



CURLY HAIR LEO, featured in Universal's "Frontier Badmen," can "draw" laughs as readily with his cartoonist pencil as he does on stage and screen. Mr. Carrillo says that "drawing" on a mild cigarette is always a pleasure. "Regents," he points out, "are mild, *really* mild."



ALL THREE AGREE that Regents are milder, better tasting! Multiple Blending, an exclusive Regent process, is the reason. It makes Regents really mild, always so gentle to your throat. Next time, try Regents. They cost no more than other leading brands.



*Quality tobaccos... Multiple Blended
make REGENT*
*The milder, better tasting
cigarette!*

(Continued from page 8)
who decided to run off a bit of surplus footage, just for the hell of it, as he streaked over Hüls, in the Ruhr area.

The interpreters set up a whoop and holler at a large boiler house they discovered in the surplus film. They figured out from careful measurement on the film that the boiler could produce 13,000 pounds of steam pressure, and by their amazing talents also deduced that the factory of which it was part was using coal and oil.

"New Nazi synthetic rubber plant," they guessed—and it turned out their magic hadn't failed them.

Boeing Flying Fortresses, acting on PR information that the giant boiler was the heart of the plant, and its most vulnerable part, blew the boiler to flinders. Fortress crews reported that the Hüs boiler shot steam to 7,500 feet when hit. This confirmed the interpreters' estimate of the boiler's pressure capacity.

It was PR, too, that discovered the Nazi factory that was turning out the enemy's basket-type radio-detection finders. With these finders the Germans plot the course of attacking Allied bombers. Allied commanders were anxious to discover where they were turned out.

One morning a PR pilot came in with some shots of the old Zeppelin works in Friedrichshafen. Stretched out in rows in the old Zeppelin yard, the interpreters noticed some 250 interesting objects. It took a little time to figure out what they were, but the PR Merlins burned midnight oil over the pictures until they had the answer. You probably read, soon afterward, of the devastating raid on Friedrichshafen. Well, it wiped out at least one of the plants that were making Nazi radio-detection finders. Lancasters did the job in a night attack, working solely on PR dope.

You get some idea of PR doggedness in sticking to a potential target when Colonel Hall cites the case of the A-9. PR assigns a distinct code number to every enemy ship in its film dockets, and the files hold well over 600 such Nazi craft. Every ship moving in enemy waters is duly photographed, and notes are made of the place and time it is sighted, and its direction of movement.

Soon after Colonel Hall took over PR in England, one of the pilots snapped a 5,000-ton Nazi merchantman undergoing alterations at Rotterdam. The interpreters, working with magnifying glasses, decided she was a potential raider. She became the A-9 on the code list and hasn't been lost sight of since.

Pictures taken day after day on routine Channel cover indicated the A-9 was being fitted with six 5.9 guns, two Oerlikon-type guns, torpedo armament, radio direction-finders, cradles for motor torpedo boats and a mine-laying outfit; altogether, a potentially dangerous baby.

February 8, 1943, an RAF reconnaissance man spotted the A-9 moving south off the Dutch Coast at Bergen-aan-Zee, heavily protected by escort vessels. On February thirteenth she was photographed at Boulogne. An Allied bomber damaged her there. A second bombing caused further damage, but on February twenty-seventh the pictures caught her moving eastward off Cuxhaven, escorted by seven Nazi mine sweepers.

The game of hide-and-seek was still on in March, when a PR kid snapped the A-9 at Kiel, undergoing repairs. Subsequent photographs follow every shift she has made in Kiel Harbor. She was still at Kiel in September. If the PR had not spotted her in the first place she might have done untold harm to Allied North Atlantic shipping.

The same dogged tactics keep track of

the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. If they move from a given spot, PR's infallible camera eyes find them out. When you read of Allied attacks on certain railroad yards or highways, don't put it down to haphazard bombing. It means PR eyes have detected unusual activity in those places and don't like the looks of it.

PR doesn't stop there, of course. After a target has undergone attack, Colonel Hall's kids fly out again for what they call "strike shots." If the interpreters determine the target could stand another dose, it will get it. Hamburg, Hanover, Cologne and Essen were targets that needed better than a once-over, and heaven knows they got it.

Colonel Hall's most important operational missions when he flew for the PR in Europe were in the mapping of the second front that is to be. He and his kids have trained their lenses on every acre of the ground over which, eventually, Allied soldiers will crash toward Berlin. When the time comes, Allied troops entering the occupied countries—even Germany itself, if it comes to that—will be familiar with every foot of terrain that lies ahead.

Hour after hour, day after day, the PR kids swoop down to landings with long reels of film to add to the great library that provides the plot for "Target for Tomorrow." When a pilot gets back—if he does, for PR's losses are about the same as Bomber Command losses—he is interviewed at his plane for facts on weather over the target, altitude and time at which he made his shots, and this information goes on the film container.

The film is ready in about forty minutes, on routine stuff, though on vital missions it can be processed within three minutes, and interpreters set to work on wet prints. Films are put out in triplicate—one for interpreters to pore over for hidden stuff, one for plotters who have immediate need for it, one for the library, to be compared with previous shots of the same target.

Colonel Hall learned a good deal about PR from the RAF and then went on from there. He and his men have worked out a number of fascinating tricks on their own.

The PR kids know everything that bomber and fighter pilots do, and a lot more. They get special training in photography and in interpretation. PR fliers are lone wolves. They carry no guns and they sacrifice armor for speed.

Colonel Hall's greatest fear for his personnel is that, being at the impetuous age, they're apt to get careless on missions. He warns them this can be fatal. "Never forget to look upward, backward, right and left," he keeps repeating. He knows from experience that working your head on a swivel and keeping check on your cameras and flying instruments is a tiring business, but he keeps the kids at it until they act in the air as if they were fugitives from unseen hosts.

Youthful pilots new to PR get over their pets in a hurry, once they have done a turn or two at it. Flight Officer Malcolm D. Hughes, a tall, blond, blue-eyed kid, came back from one flight to apologize to Colonel Hall for ever having dreamed that the assignment might be soft. "Wouldn't trade it, now, for anything, sir," he said.

Young Hughes, it turned out, had the tail ripped out of his Lightning in a thunderhead line squall at somewhere around 35,000 feet, not far from Lille, and the ship screamed toward destruction at better than 450 miles an hour. The kid was jammed in the cockpit by this terrific centrifugal force, and his

(Continued on page 112)



PNEU-MO-COC-CUS

is a treacherous fellow

(... and this is his best hunting season!)

PNEUMOCOCCUS is the germ that causes most cases of pneumonia.

He is a skillful hunter, preferring the cold winter months when people are less able to ward off his attacks.

Sometimes Pneumococcus strikes people who are in excellent physical condition. But he really goes to work with glee on someone whose resistance has been weakened—perhaps through overwork, poor nutrition, or insufficient exercise.

He enjoys good hunting in stormy weather, stalking people who aren't dressed warmly, or whose clothing or shoes are soaked. Even better, he likes to shadow someone who has influenza, a severe cold, or a cold that hangs on. Such infections of the nose, throat, or lungs help him start a full-blown case of pneumonia.

Once you learn these wily habits of Pneumococcus, you can take the obvious steps to avoid his attack.

If, in spite of precautions, he should press home a successful attack, quick action is necessary! Any of the following signs of early pneumonia are an urgent warning to call the doctor immediately: A chill, followed by fever . . . coughing accompanied by pain in the side . . . thick, rust-colored sputum . . . rapid breathing.

In most cases of pneumonia, the doctor has a powerful weapon in the sulfa drugs. In some cases, serum is

still used effectively. The earlier treatment is started, the better are the chances of hastening recovery and of preventing serious consequences.

Sometimes when pneumonia strikes, Pneumococcus is not to blame. The cause may be a germ or a virus against which sulfa drugs and serums are not effective. *In such cases, prompt medical and nursing care are particularly important, for recovery depends upon general care.*

During the "pneumonia months" the wisest course is to keep fit . . . to avoid colds . . . to take care of a cold should one develop. If a cold is very severe or hangs on, go to bed . . . call the doctor!

For more information about pneumonia, send for Metropolitan's free booklet, "Respiratory Infections."

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1 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK 10, N.Y.



Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
1 Madison Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.

Please send me a copy of your booklet,
14-B, "Respiratory Infections."

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FUNNY-LOOKING gadget, that old-time radio set. Big, bulky horn... dials and more dials... squeaky and noisy as all get out. Not much like the radio now in your living-room or car. And yet the radio you buy not too long after the war may make your present-day set look and sound as antiquated as that early Electronic instrument looks now.

Your First Post-War Electronic
Purchase Should Be a
Motorola Radio

Motorola Engineers are making full use of the newest Electronic knowledge in the production and development of Radio Communications Equipment now being used by American fighting men on every battle front. Soon after Victory gives the green light to civilian production, the "know-how" of Motorola Engineers will be switched to the production of civilian radios for home and car with the same all-out efficiency and perfection. Expect the finest in Radio from Motorola.



Radio Communications Equipment for our armed forces, Motorola was awarded the Army-Navy "E" with added star for continued excellence of performance.

Take good care of your radio. It is a vital wartime necessity. For service, consult your local classified telephone directory for a nearby Motorola Dealer.



To My Captain

THE long cool shadows on the velvet fairway, the deep blue of the lake, the waving warmth of the sun touching my cheek all entered my thoughts as I lay on the grass. So many thoughts, each recalling a moment from the past.

The small white sail on the lake brought back the hours we spent together in the Star on Lake Erie; hours of happy discovery of each other as we tore along with a stiff lake breeze. And you were always laughing: laughing at fear, laughing at danger, laughing with the gods. Why not? The world was ours—youth, good health, understanding and love.

Remember the time in Nova Scotia when we drank champagne out of water glasses and roared at the book on the philosophy of love? Remember our wonderful little old house in Connecticut and the horses and dogs, the well and the fireplace, and the football games and apple brandy? And you came home evenings and rode Sally bareback and I came after you on King when dinner was ready, only by the time I found you dinner wasn't much good. Remember the winter nights we went skating and the dog's feet got so cold running on the ice? And the badminton games in the old yacht club?

And then you went to Oklahoma and there wasn't any place to live but we finally found a little white house. We sent for our furniture and it didn't come for six weeks. We borrowed a bed, ate out, and invited our new-found friends to come and sit on our newspapers with us. Remember the wonderful hunts and tearing over the range, dodging shell holes, galloping down through gorges, through prairie-dog villages in hot pursuit of coyotes? Some fell and faltered, but we always looked across the field of riders and smiled—we were all right and always would be! And the beautiful sterling mint-julep cups that we won in the hunter trials, you and I. And I won my hunt colors and you surprised me with the coat. Remember the Sunday morning I put the dog in bed with you? You thought it was I and threw your arms around her and kissed her. I laughed so hard, then you did too.

Then you went away and you wrote: "This separation is not a tragedy—it is merely an inconvenience." And again: "I could not stand this separation were it not for the fact that a lot of good can come out of this war, and should, for the price that is to be paid." Then one day you wrote me three letters. That was the last day of your life. In a very real way it was the last day of mine. You had so much of courage, understanding, kindness and tolerance. One of your officers wrote: "My Captain was killed the other day. He seemed invulnerable, always cheerful and he never knew fear. He was the spark plug of the whole outfit and one of the finest men I have ever known." Another said: "I couldn't feel worse if it had been my brother. He was the finest artilleryman I've ever seen." Yes, you were all that. You were so much more. You were my strength, my tolerance and my love. You were proud of me when I won prizes, when I rode difficult horses, when I got a job after you were gone. You will always be proud of me. You pledged your life to the cause of justice as you saw it. I pledge mine to the service of your name and what you stand for—decency, fairness, kindness and democracy. Keep smiling at me . . .

By Patricia Dewell



*"I was a
housewife
only
yesterday"*



A story typical of many

"My husband has been in the armed service for more than a year. He is a ground crew technician with the Air Corps. He may even have to repair one or more of the great bombers I have helped to make. I am living with my parents again and, in doing war-production work, I feel that I am in this war right along with my husband."

★ ★ ★

From almost every peacetime occupation have come the girls and women who are doing war production work

in Chrysler Corporation plants. Those without previous experience have gone directly into the Chrysler Corporation schools, where they have learned and practiced their manufacturing lessons before taking up their final duties on the war production lines.

The women in this picture are helping produce "bodies for bombers." They have been taught to use production tools like the pneumatic rivet-gun, the "bucking bar" and the drill and reamer in their preparatory training. Woman's natural skill and nimble fingers lend themselves readily to jobs of this type.

New women workers are enrolled every day for war production training in our schools. Already over 25,000 girls and women, from almost every walk of life, have helped to replace the men in Chrysler Corporation plants who have left to join all branches of the armed forces.

Many of these women have husbands, sons, brothers and sweethearts in the armed service and to them, especially, their job is a thing of pride and patriotic duty.

Tune in Major Bowes every Thursday, CBS, 9 P.M., E.W.T.

Chrysler Corporation
PLYMOUTH - DODGE - DE SOTO - CHRYSLER

*Women who live in or near these
cities where our plants are located are invited
to investigate the opportunities to engage in
essential war work with Chrysler Corporation*

*CHRYSLER CORPORATION PLANTS ARE LOCATED IN
DETROIT, MICH. - MARYVILLE, MISS. - CHICAGO, ILL. - JEROME, IDA.
HOUSTON, TEXAS - SAN ANTONIO, TEX. - EXCELSIOR, MINN.
KOKOMO, IND. - NEW CASTLE, IND. - HAMILTON, OHIO*

Back the Attack . . . With War Bonds

THE COSMOPOLITAN

Family Quiz



FATHER

5. Rounders was an early form of what U. S. sport?
6. How many teeth should a healthy dog have?
7. Name the first General commissioned in the U. S. Army.
8. Where is the greatest fish market in the world?
9. Why are U. S. battleships never built with a beam of 110 feet?
10. Is Winter Nelis a place, person, fruit or insect?
11. Who was the first President to be in a newsreel?
12. What is the Flag of the Americas and how did it originate?

(Answers on page 127)

1. "Big Red" is the nickname of what famous race horse?
2. What does the abbreviation "I. S." on legal documents signify?
3. How did shrapnel get its name?
4. What heavyweights were known as (a) the Boilermaker, (b) Giant of Potawatomie, (c) Manassa Mauler, (d) Garrulous Gob?



1. What is potluck?
2. Where is the "Country Without Women"?
3. About how much hair would you say the average American woman grows in a lifetime?
4. What is tampola?
5. When Lincoln ran for President in 1860 only two states west of the Rockies voted. What were their names?
6. What instrument does a concertmeister play?
7. Who was the wife of Hiawatha?
8. In what country did the "First Aid" movement begin?
9. According to the old saying, what can't you get from a turnip?
10. What is the name of the soup made from okra?
11. Which of these two is something to eat: Hopping Dick or Hopping John?
12. Pekoe tea gets its name because pekoe means: (a) flavor, (b) white hair, (c) delicious?

(Answers on page 106)



MOTHER



BROTHER

- these men do: (a) cooper, (b) calker, (c) collier?
6. What is a rubber cow?
7. How many knees has a horse?
8. How many seams are there in a regular baseball?
9. What well-known article of men's summer apparel is made from leaves of the jipijapa tree?
10. What disastrous event occurred in the U. S. on April 18, 1906?
11. What is a fuzz stick?
12. If you drive a nail into a tree trunk, how much higher from the ground will it be in five years?

(Answers on page 137)

1. What event is barred from athletic meets at Sing Sing?
2. What is a wadi, frequently mentioned in the news from North Africa?
3. What are the two pure forms of carbon?
4. Who is America's top-ranking soldier?
5. If a cobbler mends shoes, what do



1. What are clock flowers?
2. Name the two Presidents who were in the clothing trade before attaining office.
3. Which are the cardinal numbers and which the ordinal?
4. What apple has the same name as a Biblical character?
5. Piano is the abbreviation of what word?
6. Does the U. S. Government print money for any other country?
7. The names of which of our states contain girls' names?
8. Who was the first President to have a child's plaything named after him?
9. Why do the eyes of fowl and reptiles stare?
10. What is a crèche?
11. Samoyede is (a) a food, (b) a native of Samoa, (c) a tea urn, (d) a dog?
12. What part of the body is called the third lung?



SISTER

(Answers on page 110)

We will pay \$2 for each original question submitted which the Editors find acceptable. Please give the source or proof of your answer. All questions submitted will become the property of Cosmopolitan. Address FAMILY QUIZ, Cosmopolitan, 959—8th Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.



Remember?

IN CHRISTMASES gone by, people everywhere have followed the heart-warming custom of asking friends in to share a cheery cup of Four Roses Egg-Nog.

But this holiday season, for most of us, the traditional "Bowl of Merry Christmas" will be just a wistful memory — for cream and eggs and sugar, and even Four Roses itself, are not as easy to get as they have been in the past.

So, this wartime Christmas, for the first time in 8 years, we are not printing the Famous Four Roses Egg-Nog recipe.

Instead, we wish you'd join us over a mellow, flavorful Four Roses highball in a toast to *next* Christmas and the fervent wish that then, once again, good friends may gather around the time-honored Four Roses "Bowl of Merry Christmas"!

Four Roses is a blend of straight whiskies — 90 proof. Frankfort Distilleries, Inc., Louisville & Baltimore.



An explanation to our friends

We hope you will be patient if you sometimes find that your bar or package store is temporarily out of Four Roses. We are doing our best to apportion our prewar stocks of whiskies to assure you a continuing supply for the duration. Meanwhile, our distilleries are devoted to the production of alcohol for vital war needs.

Our prices have not been increased — except for Government taxes.

FOUR ROSES

GET THAT "Fresh up"!



★ You can see right here what a "fresh up" does for men and women, boys and girls. It makes 'em feel better, puts bright smiles on their faces.

To millions of people, "fresh up" means 7-Up, and 7-Up means "fresh up." Chilled, sparkling 7-Up has a fresh, clean flavor . . . that bubbles and dances on your taste buds . . . completely quenches your thirst.

That "fresh up" effect has made 7-Up known as America's "fresh up" drink. Look for the 7-Up signs outside and inside stores. In spite of limited wartime production, you'll find it available some place near you.



For your Christmas shopping list:

Give War Bonds and Stamps

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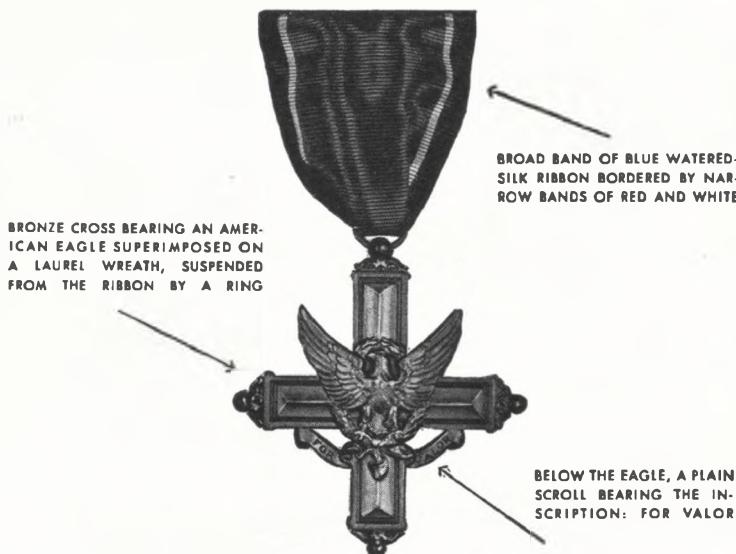


"fresh up"
with
Seven-Up

You like it . . .
it likes you



The Distinguished Service Cross



BY DONALD E. KEYHOE

FOR VALOR. Two simple words, engraved below the bronze eagle of the Distinguished Service Cross, but behind them lie unforgettable stories from two world wars. Second only to the Medal of Honor as an award for valorous conduct, the D.S.C. was established in 1918 to correspond with the British Military Cross and the French and Belgian Croix de Guerre.

First to receive the D.S.C. were Lieutenant J. N. Greene, Sixth Artillery, and Sergeants William M. Norton and Patrick Walsh of Company I, 18th Infantry—all three of the now famous First Division. During a raid Lieutenant Greene was attacked in a dugout by a large party of Germans. Although wounded by a grenade he refused to surrender, injuring several "Heinies" and driving off the rest. Sergeant Norton, also in a dugout battle, killed a number of Germans and helped put the others to flight. Sergeant Walsh volunteered to follow his company commander to the front line, through a heavy barrage. When the captain was killed he took command of a small force, attacked though greatly outnumbered, and inflicted severe losses on the enemy.

Under the Act, the D.S.C. can be awarded to "any person who, while serving in any capacity with the Army of the United States, shall distinguish himself or herself by individual acts of extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy." By this provision, the D.S.C. was awarded at least twice in World War I to American nurses in France. One of these was Jane Jeffrey, who remained at her hospital post, attending the wounded, although severely injured by a bomb.

The D.S.C. (shown above) is a cross of bronze. On the reverse side

the name of the recipient is engraved within a wreath. All crosses are serially numbered on the side.

More than 5,000 crosses and ninety-five oak-leaf clusters (for a second citation) were awarded during the First World War. One of the most unusual awards, made retroactively in 1922, dated back to the war with Spain when the D.S.C. was given to Lieutenant Andrew Rowan, the man who carried the "message to Garcia."

In World War II, the Distinguished Service Cross has been awarded for heroic conduct in every theater of war, including citations of Navy men by the Army. In one of these, Lieutenant Commander Frank W. Fenno, Jr., was given the D.S.C. for his daring exploit of removing Philippine gold by submarine from under the Japs' noses.

Every D.S.C. has its own story of unflinching devotion to duty. Sometimes it is a story of a gallant death that will long be remembered, like the last fight of Private First Class Sidney Rapeport, from Cleveland.

It was near the end of the Allied drive in Northern Tunisia, and Private Rapeport's company, reaching the steep slopes of Djebel Bou-ed-Deba, was under heavy machine-gun fire. Armed only with a carbine, Rapeport led several men in a charge on the nearest machine-gun nest. Its crew wiped out, he charged the next, a third and a fourth. His ammunition gone, his carbine broken from a blow on a German helmet, Private Rapeport led the attack on still another machine-gun nest. In this last charge, Rapeport fell, only a moment before the Nazi gun was silenced.

No one can say how many lives were saved by his magnificent courage, but there are soldiers alive today who will never forget the name of Private Sidney Rapeport, D.S.C.



Men were wildcatters
and fought like
wildcats for
LOVE and
POWER in the
roaring days of
Oklahoma's oil boom

Out of the vivid
romance...
spectacular drama...
and exciting boontown
atmosphere
of that fabulous
era, **REPUBLIC**
has created a
mighty motion picture

An unusual cast is
headed by

JOHN WAYNE
MARTHA SCOTT
AND ALBERT DEKKER
who are starred in

IN OLD OKLAHOMA

Based on Thomson Burtt's Story "War of the Wildcatters"

with

MARJORIE RAMBEAU
GEORGE "GABBY" HAYES
GRANT WITHERS

A REPUBLIC PICTURE

Next Month *Cosmopolitan* will describe the Silver Star

Doctors Prove 2 out of 3 Women can get More Beautiful Skin in 14 Days!

14-DAY PALMOLIVE PLAN TESTED ON 1285 WOMEN WITH ALL TYPES OF SKIN

READ THIS TRUE STORY of what the Proved 14-Day Palmolive Plan did for Pauline Young of Chicago, Illinois.



"My complexion had lost its lovely look. So I said 'yes' quick when invited to try the new 14-Day Palmolive Plan—along with 1284 other women! My group reported to a Chicago skin doctor. Some of us had dry skins; some oily; some 'average.' After a careful examination, we were given the plan to use at home for 14 days.

"Here's the proved Palmolive Plan: Wash your face 3 times a day with Palmolive Soap. Then—each time—massage your clean face with that lovely, soft Palmolive beauty-lather... just like a cream. Do this for a full 60 seconds. This massage extracts the full beautifying effect from Palmolive lather for your skin. Then just rinse and dry.

"After 14 days, I went back to my doctor. He confirmed what my mirror told me. My skin was fresher, smoother, cleaner! Later I learned many skin improvements had been observed by the 36 examining doctors. Actually 2 out of 3 of all the 1285 women got see-able, feel-able results. So the 14-Day Palmolive Plan is my beauty plan for life!"



YOU, TOO, may look for these skin improvements in only 14 Days!

- ★ Brighter, cleaner skin
- ★ Finer texture
- ★ Fewer blemishes
- ★ Less dryness
- ★ Less oiliness
- ★ Smoother skin
- ★ Better tone
- ★ Fresher, clearer color

This list comes right from the reports of the 36 examining doctors! Their records show that 2 out of 3 of all the 1285 women who tested the Palmolive Plan for you got many of these improvements in 14 days! Now it's your turn! Start this new proved way of using Palmolive tonight. In 14 days, look for fresher, clearer, lovelier skin!

HERE IS a fair creature in New York named Madeline Lee who is presently celebrating her sixteenth year in earning a pretty penny out of her ability to mimic the cries and voices of babies and slightly older children. The radio makes a steady call upon her peculiar services and the stage often finds her standing in the wings and gurgling, whining, bawling and slobbering in the interests of dramatic realism.

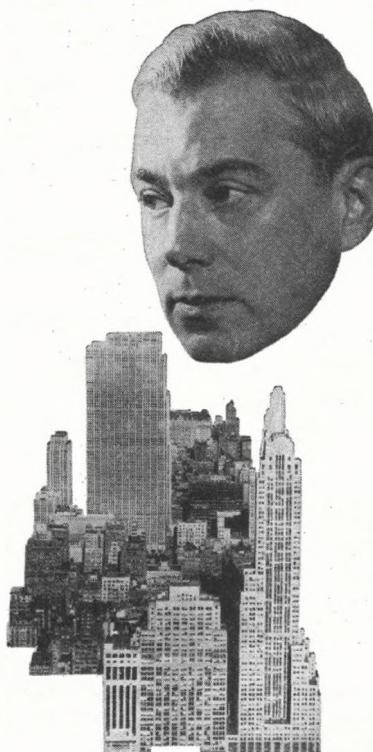
The famous Bowery of song and story, which has been out of the New York picture for many years, is coming back again as a tourists' curiosity mecca. One of the latest indications is the opening of a saloon offering an entertainment called "Sammy's Foolish Follies," with the male singers serving as waiters in the good old-time manner. It probably won't be long now before the old street will be swimming again in beer suds, red-eye, spectacular bums, burlesque shows and all the other quondam attributes which gave birth to the popular ditty named after it.

The buffet suppers served by the fashionable hostesses, even during the holiday season, are not, and for the last half-dozen years now have hardly been, the Lucullan feasts described by imaginative writers of fiction dealing with high-toned metropolitan life. The invariable menu is corned-beef hash, cold Virginia ham, spaghetti with tomato sauce, lettuce salad and some sort of cheese.

Thirty-seven years ago, the late Cleveland Moffett introduced a Sunday newspaper feature in the old James Gordon Bennett Herald called "Undiscovered Beauties of New York," in which one such beauty was weekly disclosed to enraptured Manhattanites. It proved more successful than any other feature in the paper. Reviving it for the moment, I give you these lulus, hitherto largely unheralded, whom my Columbus eye has fallen on during the past month: Betsy Battle, a dark, slim, sloe-eyed girl living out Kingsbridge way, who is taking up dancing with a view to a professional stage career; Regina Bulava, a Polish lass from Wheeling, West Virginia, who looks strangely like a blond, lovely Mexican and who is currently serving as a cigarette vendee in one of the East Side supper clubs; Audrey Weller, a slender brunette from West Orange, New Jersey, presently acting as a secretary for the USO; Eleanor Marcus, the younger sister of Mrs. William Saroyan, a slight, dark little thing with the manner of a warm electric fan, whose father is an official of the Bendix Aviation Corporation; Jane Ball, all apricots and whipped cream, who is soon to get her first hearing on the West Coast dramatic stage; and, finally, Dana Willis, a fair-haired peachcake who has served as an editorial secretary to one of the most popular women's fashion magazines.

A capital new Christmas toy for the amusement of your pet dog has appeared in the local shops. It is made of burlap in the shape of a rabbit's head and, when

What's New IN NEW YORK



BY
GEORGE JEAN
NATHAN

your pet pounces upon it and shakes it, gives out a series of highly realistic squeals. My wire-haired is engaging it in combat for hours at a stretch and apparently is having the time of his life.

If you are given to a relish of beer-weeping melodies, there's one I came across eight years ago which no one seems to have heard of and which is one of the most distilling of the lot. Its title: "Last Night I Dreamed of You."

Theatrical producers who are loudly lamenting the shortage of young actors because of the war might find some good available ones if they took the trouble to get out of their soft office chairs for a day or two and did a bit of scouting on the so-called subway circuit and else-

where. Looking over some productions in those and other more remote theaters I uncovered in Orin Jannings, for one example, a talented juvenile of the rough-diamond species; Hal Conklin and Arthur Cash, presentable leading men, for another; Thomas Rutherford, ditto, for still another; and Philip Kenneally, an amusing character actor, for yet another.

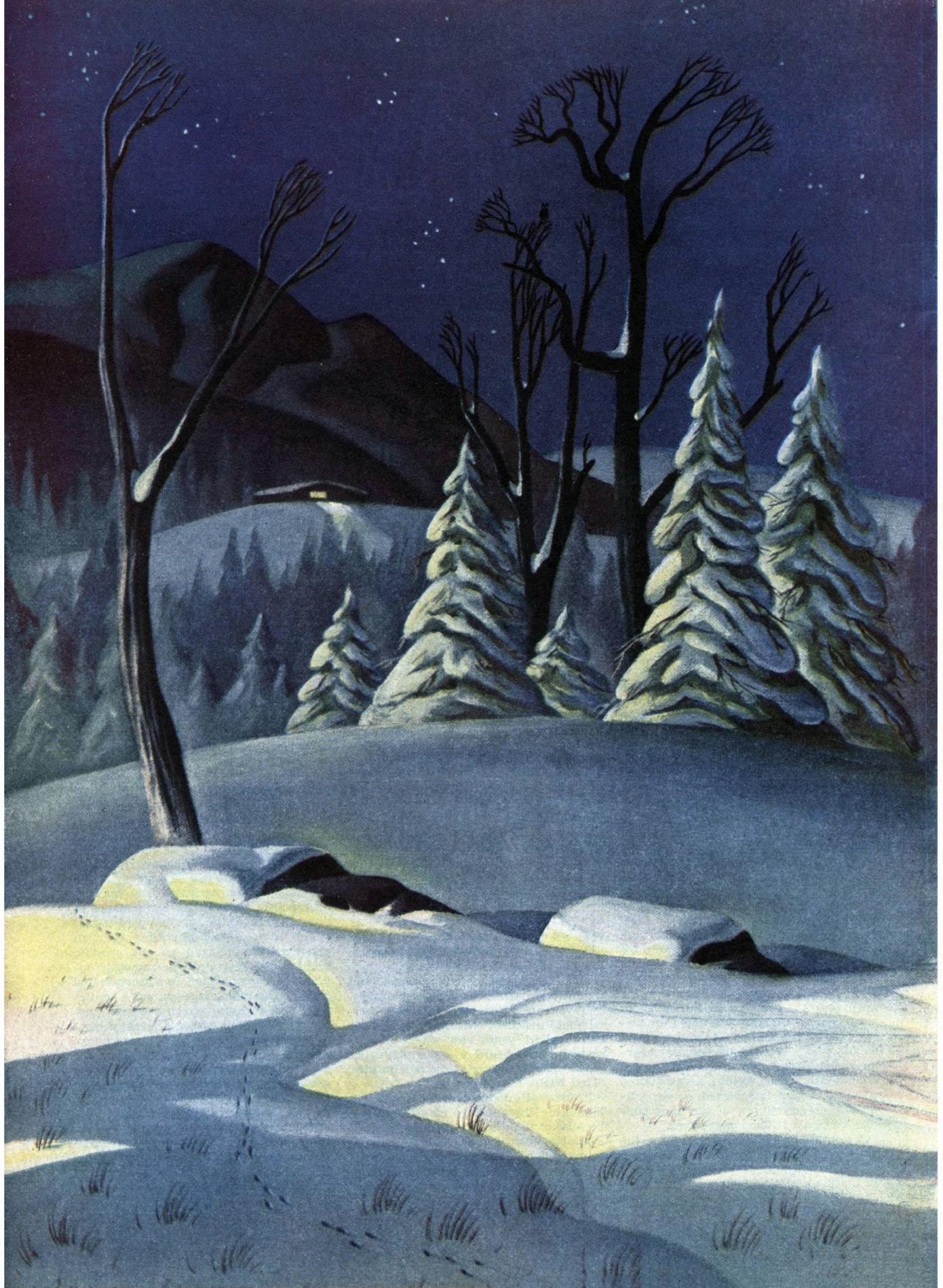
This is no time of the year to be talking about mint juleps, but when the time again comes around add a half-teaspoonful of honey to the tipple and then send in a letter effusively thanking me. Or rather send it to the Southern gentleman who presides over the alcoholic department of the Dixie Inn at Dobbs Ferry, New York, who thought of it first.

Lieutenant Sidney Kingsley, whose plays have won Drama Critics' Circle and Pulitzer prizes, hopes to include in his next one, he confides to me, a number of such grand scenic devices of our youth as the small train crawling all aight by night across the backdrop, the automobile seen approaching in the far distance and finally emerging life-size on the stage, and the illuminated ferryboat crossing the backdrop river. He also has in the back of his head an idea for a serious play dealing with a typical American university.

The out-of-towner who has been led to imagine from newspapers and magazines that the block between Fifth and Sixth avenues on Fifty-second Street, which they invariably designate as "Swing Street," is factually an unbroken succession of gay jazz night clubs is in for disillusion. In that block there are something like thirty small, musicless restaurants, bookstores, hairdressers, dress shops, rooming houses, Chinese laundries, newsstands, hot-dog eateries, liquor agencies and the like as against a mere seven or eight swing joints, and all but one of the seven or eight are on the miniature side.

The first really original yuletide street vendor in twenty years has recently appeared on Eighth Avenue. He attracts a crowd by doing card tricks and then, unlike all other street vendors who do card tricks to the same end, doesn't try to sell the assemblage neckties, belt buckles, shoe polish, resharpened razor blades or anything else of the sort, but card tricks!

The town is still chuckling over an episode that occurred on the opening night of the revival of the romantic operetta "Blossom Time." In a group seated in the right-hand stage box was a gentleman who, feeling somewhat warm, presently removed his coat and revealed himself in a blue shirt and red suspenders. Feeling that the spectacle was an intrusion upon the romantic air of the occasion, the house manager approached the offender, whispered politely in his ear, and returned to his post at the back of the house. No sooner had he got there than, to his horror, he observed the gentleman, whom he had seemingly somehow offended, slowly divesting himself of his trousers.



An appealing love story for those who believe in magic

† † † or faith † † † or whatever you may call it

Miracle Mountain

BY VINA DELMAR

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER BAUMHOFER

IT SEEMED odd, this business of being a woman in a mink coat walking along the quiet streets of a tiny Vermont town. It seemed odd that she should be Mrs. Eric Markwell and that she should be a grandmother. For this town was home, and in this town she had been Betsy Campbell and it was always as Betsy that she pictured herself when she thought of home. And when she thought of home she saw herself as a girl again, and she was saddened because she was forty.

"I would not care," she said to herself, "if I were forty and there were five of us living our lives together. I would feel young and happy then. But I am all alone."

And she thought of her daughter Sheilah, three thousand miles away in California, living near the base where Gerald was receiving his Army Air Force training. And she thought of the incredible fact that Sheilah, only nineteen herself, was a mother. And she thought of Eric, and she tried to stop thinking.

She fixed her eyes on the snow that was faintly pink in the sunset, and she remembered that as a girl she had loved this hour of the day. Now it had a tinge of melancholy about it, for she was old enough to consider the lonely blackness that followed the rosy sunset. When you're young you take it for

granted that the pink glow will never leave the sky.

There was someone coming toward her. A woman wrapped in a shabby coat. Betsy said, "Good evening," as they passed. This was certainly someone she had known all her life. There had not been a half-dozen newcomers to Parks Mill in fifty years. It was impossible to recognize the face or figure of a woman bundled into a shapeless old coat, but the woman would know her. Everyone knew Betsy Campbell, who had married and gone to New York City and had "got rich." Betsy Campbell, whose winter coat was mink, fitted skillfully to her tall figure. But the woman would not call her by name. Some of the townsfolk were uneasy with her now.

Over the years, each trip home had widened the breach between her and the people whose ancestors had been friends of Betsy's ancestors. That had been Eric's fault. It had been Eric who had remodeled and refurnished the house; who had driven glittering cars up Miracle Mountain, who had even brought a servant from New York to tend the tiny house. Had it been up to Betsy, the people of Parks Mill would never have known that New York and London and Hollywood had all been impressed by the name of Eric Markwell.

Of course there were those who still thought of

FULL COLOR PAINTING BY THE NOTED AMERICAN ARTIST DALE NICHOLS

Here was the mountain as the woman had remembered it—the sky darkening and a handful of stars glimmering upon the snow. Here was faith reaffirmed and true resurrection of the spirit.

her as Betsy Campbell. There were those who knew she had not changed. There was Joseph, for instance. She thought about Joseph and knew that today she would be a happier woman if she had married him. She would not be alone and lonely now. But she had really had no choice. She had loved Eric so deeply she could not have married another man. She sighed. You paid for everything you got in life. She was paying the price now for the wonderful years she had known with Eric. And perhaps it was a fair price, at that. She had known the kind of happiness that had made her heart sing, so why shouldn't the price be high?

She walked on down the street toward Joseph's general store. She could see the yellow light gleaming above the doorway. It was funny how often she thought of him. He would be surprised. In Hollywood society, where she had amazingly met distinguished foreign statesmen, in London, where she had slipped into a five-hundred-dollar dress; in New York, where she had been judged one of the ten most striking women in the country. These were a few of the times she had

thought of Joseph and had wondered at the strangeness of life. She could have been the wife of a man who ran the general store in Parks Mill, Vermont; but instead, she had become Mrs. Eric Markwell. And it was only further pranks on the part of a fantastic fate that had set her to wondering if her first offer hadn't been the better one.

Betsy opened the door of the general store and walked in. Joseph looked up from a ledger open before him in the cashier's booth.

"Hello, Betsy," he said. "So you're back again."

"Yes, for a little while. How are you, Joseph?"

"Fine."

"How's Emily and the children?"

"Boy's in the Army. Down South somewhere. Emily's fine. So are the girls." His eyes returned to the ledger.

Betsy watched him in silence. She liked the way he never showed any surprise when she appeared. She liked the way he had treated her since the day he had been accepted by Emily Springer. Joseph was a fine man. He had held his looks too. Better than Eric had, Betsy thought ruefully. Joseph hadn't cared about his looks, but he had had respect for his good health.

"Would it be possible to drive me up to the house, Joseph?"

"Sure. Not in the car, though. You know what the gas situation is. I'm using

a sleigh most of the time this winter."

"What fun!"

"It is, at that. I get a kick out of it." He walked to the back and called his clerk. "I'm taking Mrs. Markwell up the mountain, Gus. I'll be back soon." He turned to Betsy. "Sit down a minute till I get the horse ready."

Betsy sat down and looked about the store. Had she married Joseph, this would have been her husband's world, and at this hour she would be home preparing his dinner. Now she had no one for whom to prepare a dinner.

When they resumed the journey he asked, "How's your daughter?"

"She's well. Married, you know. She has a baby daughter of her own."

"I hadn't heard. Is she happy?"

"No. She has too much to be happy, Joseph. When you have nothing you don't have to worry about losing it."

"How's your husband?"

"He's well," she said. But she had paused too long before answering.

"What's the matter?"

"We're divorced."

"Oh. Another woman?"

"Yes, he married her."

"Too bad, Betsy. I'm sorry."

"Well, those things happen, I suppose, to lots of people."

"Really?" he asked. "They don't happen around Parks Mill."

"That remark's beneath your intelligence, Joseph. You know why there aren't divorces in Parks Mill. It's because everyone knows everyone else, and a man has seen every eligible girl before he makes his choice. You see, my husband hadn't seen every girl in New York and Hollywood before he chose me."

"Maybe the one he's got now wasn't born yet when he was looking around." She

was silent, and he asked, "Was that remark any closer to my intelligence?"

"Well," she admitted, "the new Mrs. Markwell's pretty young."

"Sure. I've run a store for a long time, Betsy, and I've never yet seen anyone with a pocketful of money ask for something that wasn't new and shiny bright. That's human nature, and the more I see of it the less I like it. Where have you been since last visit?"

"Lots of places. Mostly California with Sheila and Gerald, but I had to come home."

"You mean New York? Or do you still think of Vermont as your home?"

"Vermont, of course. Oh, Joseph, I hate New York."

"And California too, no doubt."

"Yes, California too."

Joseph shook his head. "You're not thinking straight, Betsy. You don't hate New York or California. You just hate Eric's new wife."

"Why, I don't know her."

"That's a mere technicality. Listen, Betsy, the world's getting pretty small with this war on. Don't you keep dash-ing from one place to another hating the new Mrs. Markwell. Pretty soon you'll have no place left to go."

She did not reply. The horse had begun the ascent up Miracle Mountain. Now she was really home. She raised her eyes to the white-topped peak. The sky was darkening, and a few pale stars glim-



After Eric wrote a play that was a hit, the months flew by full of gay people and gayer things to do.

The clerk came to the front of the store and grinned at her. "Hello, Mrs. Markwell. So you're back. Going up the mountain, eh? Is there anything to eat up there?"

She hadn't thought about that. "No, now that you mention it, I guess not." She opened her purse and took out her ration book. "Fix me up about two days' worth of supplies, Gus, will you? Go easy on the rationed things. I won't be staying long."

She heard the gay jingle of sleigh bells outside the store before Gus had assembled her purchases. Joseph came in and nodded approval at the things the clerk had selected.

"There's plenty of firewood, I suppose."

"There was," Betsy said. "Unless someone has used the house since I've been there."

"No," Joseph said. "No one. Where's your luggage?"

"I have nothing but an overnight case. I left it at the station, since we have to pass there anyway."

"All right. Let's go." Gus stowed the packages in the sleigh. Joseph helped Betsy in and tucked a blanket around her. "There we are."

The horse turned and began the trip. Betsy said, "This is grand, Joseph."

He nodded but said nothing. In fact, he did not speak at all till after he had stopped at the station for her case.

mered upon the snow. Nestling halfway up the mountainside, the house was waiting for her. The house where she had known so much happiness.

How she had dreamed of this. How she had yearned to get back to Miracle Mountain. She understood something now of the worship primitive people had given to mountains and trees and lakes. The mountain had never failed her. It had given her everything she had ever wanted. It had given her Eric and Sheilah. It wouldn't fail her now.

"I wonder how the mountain did get its name," Joseph said suddenly.

She glanced at him sharply. Had he been following her thoughts? Did he know that she and Eric had always had a superstitious faith in the mountain?

"I think some obscure miracle was actually performed here for the benefit of the early settlers, Joseph. I think some little man with a lot of faith climbed to the top after assuring the townsfolk that when he reached the peak rain would fall and save their thirsty crops."

"Seems my grandmother did tell me some such story. And wasn't the poor little guy killed on the way down?"

"I wouldn't know. *My* grandmother's stories always had happy endings."

Joseph smiled, but she didn't ask him what the smile meant. Joseph had a habit of making you wish you hadn't questioned him.

The horse's feet made crunchy noises in the snow as they climbed up the mountain road. The sky was black above the snowy peak, and the world was washed in starshine.

"Are you expecting someone at the house, Betsy?"

She did not answer, for she could not tell him yes, nor could she bear to say no.

"I only asked because you don't have a great deal of food, you know. I'll drive up tomorrow and look in on you. Would you like me to bring some extra supplies?"

"Were you coming anyway, Joseph?"

"Sure. I wouldn't leave you up here alone in the winter. Suppose you wanted to get out or were taken sick or something?"

"You're very kind to me."

"Why not? Haven't Emily and you and I all known each other since we were kids?"

"Yes, that's right. I'll tell you what, Joseph. You hear all the news in your store. If you hear that someone—anyone at all—has come to town to visit me, bring more food when you drive up here tomorrow. Otherwise, don't bother."

"All right, Betsy. We'll leave it that way."

It was terribly cold now. She could feel the winter nipping at her cheeks, leaving a tingling numbness.

The house wasn't far now. Soon she would be inside its well-loved walls. She would be home, and the spell of Miracle Mountain would start working for her. Everything would be right again. The mountain wouldn't fail her. Everything that was wrong would be forgiven and forgotten.

"Well, here we are," Joseph said. "No,

you stay there a minute. I'll have a look around first. Give me the key."

She passed it over, laughing. "Think there might be a few dead bodies strewn about the sitting room, Joseph?"

"No, I wouldn't expect that to scare you. I'm thinking about rats and mice."

"Oh. You go first by all means."

She watched him as he plowed through the snow bank that concealed the front steps. His flashlight made strange dazzling circles in the snow as he spattered the light about. Then the door was open, and a moment later the windows sprang into gay yellow squares of beckoning brilliance.

Betsy leaped from the sleigh and ran

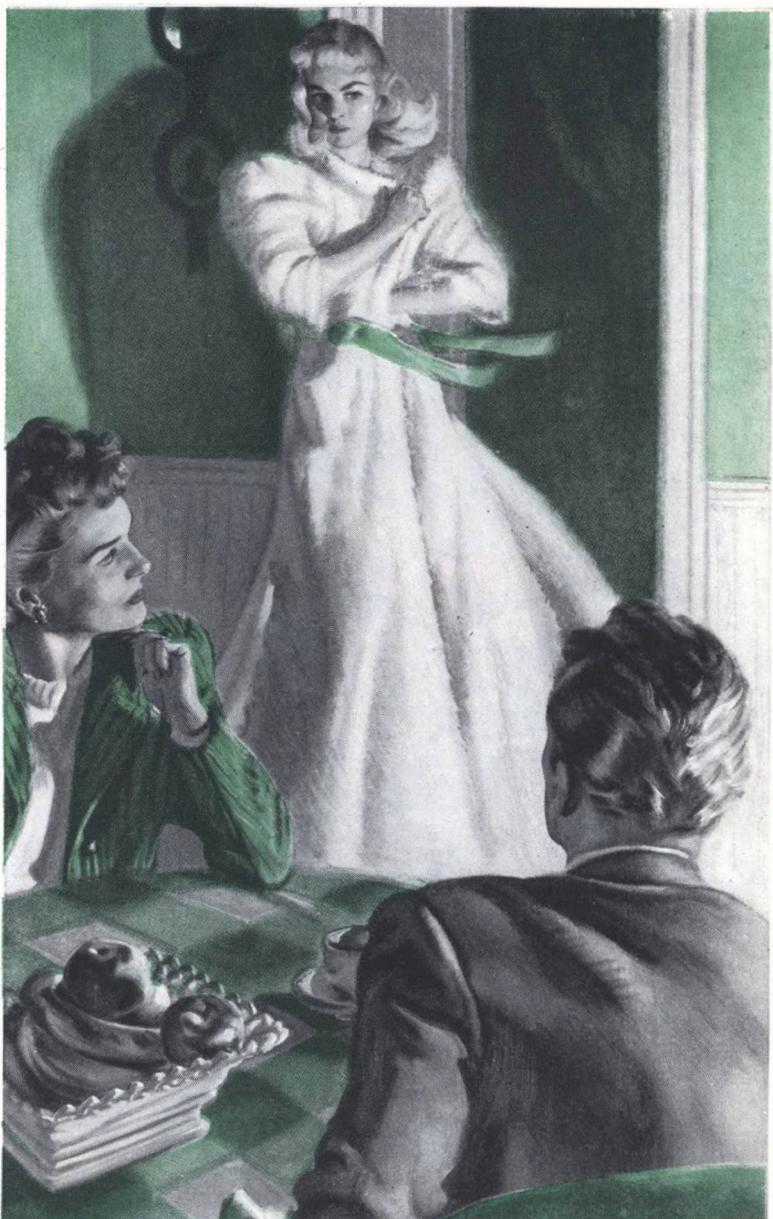
into the house. "Oh, Joseph, it's good to be here. Isn't it beautiful?"

"It's dirty," he said, looking about. "Why don't you stay with us tonight and send Mrs. Linz up to clean it tomorrow?"

"I want to stay here, Joseph. I've come all the way across the continent to stay here."

"All right. I'll build some fires for you."

She went out to the sleigh and carried in her bag and the food supplies while Joseph busied himself with the fires. Then she walked about touching the furniture, the walls, the things that had really belonged to Eric and her. The apartment in (Continued on page 122)



Eric's wife swept into the room swathed in a white fur dressing gown. "Are you going to stay up all night?" she demanded.



This was it, this wordlessness,
this fullness, this immense
tenderness that no word, no
act, could adequately express.



Moment IN the Dark

Floyd knew nothing about her—who she was, where she lived.

But six months ago she had kissed him

and somehow he did not believe that was the end of the story

BY FREDERICK NEBEL

ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL

HE HAD wondered, any number of times, what her town would be like, her folks, the house she lived in. Maybe by this time she was engaged. Or married, even. Or maybe she didn't live here any more.

When the bus turned into Main Street round the granite obelisk he peered anxiously from left to right. The plows had been through. The houses stood well back on spacious grounds, most of them frame, white, built large and square and solid against the New England winter. He swallowed. He hoped, almost despairingly, that none of them was hers.

Make it a small house, Don't make her rich. Make it a little easy for me. It's bad enough as it is. Don't put too many obstacles in my way. I'm probably out of my mind for coming here.

He stood up and put on his blue pea jacket, his flat-topped blue hat, and carried his small bag to the front of the bus. The bus dipped downgrade into the village center. When it stopped he got off. The cold wind twisted his trousers round his legs. He pressed back against a building, out of the wind, and looked about for a place to stay.

A man told him the hotel was down the street, and he found it easily, two blocks down, a three-storied frame structure with a hip roof and a veranda with

a plate-glass window half the length of it. The price was a little more than he had planned to pay, but he wanted a nice place to stay, and he would do without something else. He signed his name, Floyd Turner, and noted the telephone booth in the corner of the lobby. But he put off telephoning. It was lunchtime, and he might disturb her.

The room they gave him was bright with winter sunlight. The cheerfulness of it touched him all over, entered his body, flowed magically along with his blood. He took off his jacket and his round flat-topped hat and lay down on the bed, crosswise, with his hands behind his head. Tugging inside him, insistently, as vital as hunger or thirst, was the desire to see her again.

Madeline. Madeline. Thinking her name was like saying it, like hearing it. And hearing it over and over in his mind gave substance and reality to his dream.

But it wasn't a dream. It was all built on a day in his life—an afternoon and an evening. And they had crowded so much into it: nonsense and laughter and good companionship; rides on the roller coaster, the merry-go-round, the Ferris wheel; dancing; fried clams and thick mugs of coffee. And a moment's rapture to end it all. And even laughter in that—excited and almost panicky, almost blinding, and certainly breathless. In the

shadow of the shed where you waited for the trolley to take you back to the ship. With the trolley—the one you absolutely had to take—already in sight, clangingly. Holding her as it came up and knowing you could say nothing, not a single word, because it was so much more important, in that moment, to hold her.

He sat up and then he stood up, grinning, feeling sure of himself. Whenever he thought of that last moment, concentrated on it, there was no room left for doubt and indecision. She belonged to him. She was his girl. It was right; it was the way it had to happen. From the moment he first laid eyes on her, the two of them gathering sea shells up at the lonely end of the beach, to the moment he said good-by to her in the shadow of the trolley shed. No, he hadn't said good-by. There hadn't been time. He had had to run to catch the trolley. Shouting back, "Tomorrow—same place!"

He washed his hands and face in the basin in the corner and took everything out of his bag. By distributing his things in or upon the bureau, and putting the bag away in the closet, he felt that some measure of permanency was attained. He was not by nature foot-loose, and he had a feeling for possessions, for familiar things. He had been torn between coming up here and making the long trip West to see his (*Continued on page 167*)

What will happen in Detroit the day WAR is over?

BY STANLEY YOUNG



IF, IN the back of your mind, you are already planning your postwar vacation, don't plan it in the postwar dream car. In spite of all glowing prophecies, V-Day is not going to bring you a plastic teardrop model with a Flying Fortress motor, all for \$500 f.o.b. Detroit. Nor will your postwar car be able, when the driver dozes, to skip cross country like a jeep, take to the air at high speed, or sail the water when the highway bridge is out. In fact, don't be surprised if the first new car you see looks just like an automobile.

Even if the dream car were technically realizable, which it is not, there are solemn pocketbook reasons why you wouldn't want to wait for it. The two years it would take to design, make and market a radically new car would stalemate industry so long there might not be any jobs or money left to buy the car. That is why, at present, the know-how and know-why executives of our greatest industry are not thinking about what is going to be above the wheels on tomorrow's

row's automobile. They are thinking about whether or not there are going to be any wheels, and, if so, when. One thing is certain, the car you get will be a 1942 model—when you get it. And it will be a good car, so if you've been worrying, don't.

Worry, rather, about what worries industry: Are there going to be postwar jobs? How many, and when? Trying to answer these basic questions has brought

Which is more important—

that new V-Day dream car or

keeping men at work?

That's Detroit's problem

and here's what industry is planning

some tough problems to war-burdened industry and government. But they are questions which must be raised and answered now, in mid-war, if industry is to reconvert to peace without major economic heartbreak.

Fortunately, the automobile industry, the key industry in our national economy, is fully aware of this. As the government has not yet directly proposed any solutions, industry has recently

grabbed the ball, tucked it under its arm and started on a long open-field run to Washington. Busy industrialists have been staying up nights trying to arrive at answers that will keep business out of a V-Day tangle that can cost millions of Americans their jobs plus their savings, and leave them, and their returning loved ones, with the bitter sense of having won a war for no better purpose than to live in peace on the dole. Industry is making a major effort to avoid postwar breadlines in the sound belief that it is as patriotic to plan for peace as to fight for victory.

This does not mean that the automobile industry is not 100 percent at war. It is more completely recast and retooled for war production than any other industry. And it will continue to be until hostilities end. But its forward-looking

belts start going, and how will they be kept going? If you direct these questions point-blank at a thoughtful executive he will probably ask you what you are doing for the week end. He may even send you to Washington, with expenses paid.

The problems around reconversion are admittedly complex. And the answers are surrounded with "ifs," "ands" and "buts." As George Romney, managing director of the Automotive Council for War Production—an organization set up by industry to expedite output of armaments—said publicly in Detroit: "Personally, I think that if we all admit we are like a near-sighted man in a dark room with a pair of boxing gloves on trying to measure a jellyfish with rubber calipers, we will get a lot further along in handling what we consider some of our postwar problems."

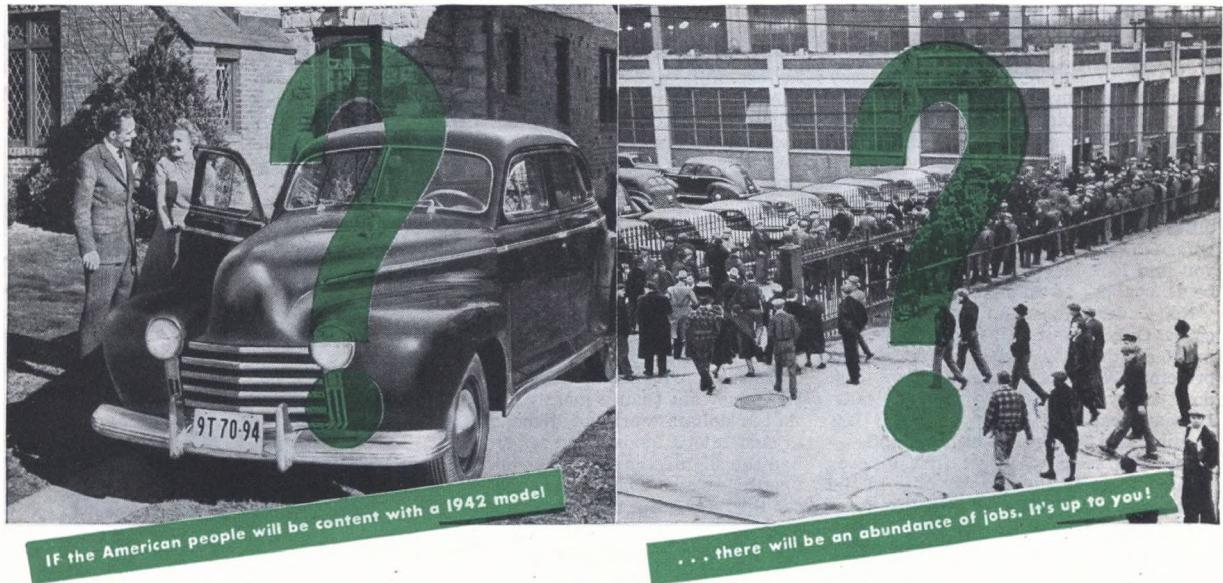
That's a pretty good picture of the

work? Business is trying to find out now so that the time lag can be cut to a minimum; so that delays and mistakes will not keep a returning soldier or a war worker from peacetime employment; so that the 10 percent plus which has been put into war bonds will not have to be cashed in immediately for rent and groceries.

Thomas P. Archer, the gray-haired, dynamic vice-president in charge of manufacturing at General Motors—where the pay roll is \$3,000,000 a day—puts it this way: "The automotive industry is so big it's impossible to make a little mistake. Too many people are involved!"

Accordingly, the Automotive Council for War Production, through its Contract Termination Committee, has prepared a comprehensive, if tentative, program for the full-scale, prompt and orderly demobilization of war industry. They are

Erving Galloway



leaders are alive to the facts behind a highly complex manufacturing operation, whether for peace or war. They know that a realistic estimate of postwar production does not allow the creative businessman to accept the current slogan, "Let's get on with the war," to the exclusion of every other consideration.

An industry 100 percent converted to war knows it must virtually start from scratch to get back to a civilian economy. It knows, also, that such a reconversion, to function, requires some fancy footwork and roadwork in advance. It requires paperwork, planning, ground rules, and co-operation through the whole walky-talky jungle of governmental regulations. Don't forget that the car you were driving when Pearl Harbor was attacked was down on paper in 1939. Even in peace-time, under the best conditions, a year and a half at a minimum is needed to roll off a new car.

What, then, will roll off the conveyor belts in Detroit the day war is over? Probably nothing. Then when will these

situation. But the point to remember is, industry has taken the initiative in handling the calipers and in wearing the boxing gloves. It is a healthy sign for at least two reasons: the automobile business knows its own problems better than anybody else; and it shows itself advanced enough to recognize that what happens to its employees is indissolubly tied up with what happens to the country at large.

An executive of one of the largest automobile companies predicts a 150 percent increase in production, above pre-war figures, after this war. But whether this will show in six months or two years is the pressing question. If, say, 25 percent of the 743,000 workers now engaged in the 1,038 automotive plants manufacturing war products, plus a similar percentage of the 500,000 workers employed in other industries directly affiliated with the automotive industry, can be retained the day war ends to start the physical job of reconversion, how long will it take to put the rest of the employees back to

urging responsible agencies of government to join now in the development of its fundamental principles.

The automobile industry is in no sense warring with the government about a constructive demobilization program. In some quarters in Washington they have already found sympathetic ears. Detroit's manufacturers have evolved a plan out of experience on the firing line of production; they are putting their cards on the table now, asking government to look at them and to show its hand. The stakes are high and it is a very curious game any way you look at it. Why? Because, in terms of the American way of life, when both hands are flat on the table everybody wins or everybody loses.

For a productive and rapid return to a peacetime economy, industry suggests, first, that the huge task of releasing business from its war commitments requires the creation of a governmental organization with full power to effect prompt and final settlements. At present the automobile industry (*Continued on page 139*)

You seem to forget

A man may claim he doesn't understand a woman—
but she'd be surprised how much he learns—
when she talks too much

I HATE to talk at breakfast this way about what occurred last evening. What? Oh, there was plenty occurred, plenty! I know you won't pay one single bit of attention to me, with your mind fixed on your law business and your silly digestion, and of course it doesn't make any difference what happens merely to your wife. Oh, no, she has to be devoted to you and look out for your interests and be as loyal as—as an ole sweater, and—

No, I don't want any more griddle cakes. Only yesterday I told you I'm going to cut down on carbohydrates, or is it proteins? Well, then, just one more. You don't always have to take me so literally. I guess I can stand two; everybody last evening said I looked so slender, and—

And you seem to forget that I never wanted to go to the country club in the first place. Oh, I did kind of think about it at first—I love to do anything to help out the lady secretary, the darling, what an old hag she's getting to be! But then when you flared up and said you'd see me and the secretary in—you said you positively simply would not go, under any circumstances whatever, and so I said, "All right—all right!" I said. "If you positively won't go under any circumstances whatever, we won't go," I said, and—

And then you sneaking and snooking around all week and claiming I'd go on being sore and not even kiss you good night if we didn't go, and so you'd descend and go, and as I told you, by this time I'd put the whole business out of my mind, and I simply didn't care to discuss it and demean myself by going against your wishes—wishes! Orders, that's what they are!

And so if you'll only just try and stop and think and recall and remember how it was and do me a little justice, thank you very much, it was you that finally hollered and insisted that we go. So I said, if you'd condescended to at last make up your mind what you wanted to do, of course I'd be willing to accompany you to the dance at the club, and—

And so, if you'll try and think and see things clearly my way, anything that happened afterwards was your fault from

the beginning and came from my blindly following and fulfilling your every wish and desire, like I always do, and—

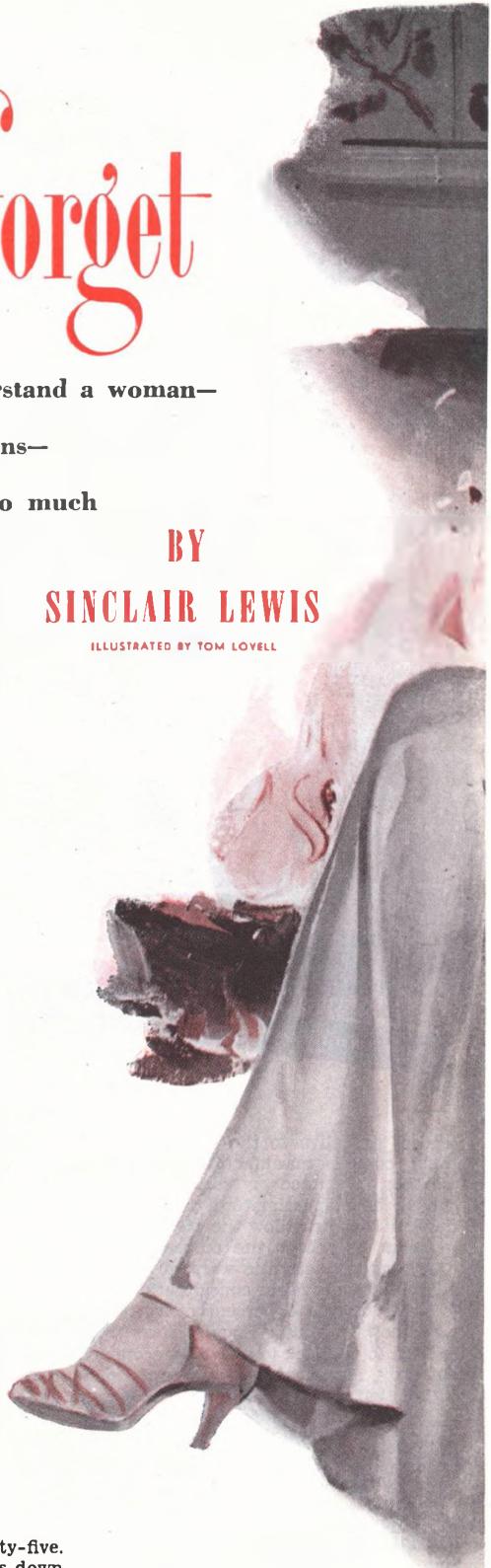
But oh, the masculine blindness of you male husbands, the way you seem to forget that a wife is a woman and that she has a heart to think and a mind to suffer, or however it goes, and positively, upon my word, I do believe that you believe that the slights you put upon me and the way I was insulted and jibbed—or jilted, or whatever it is—were less important than a measly little ten dollars' worth of damage to that idiot's fender, and if you had the slightest gumption or influence, we'd be able to get a new car this year, even if there is this ole war on. My cousin knows a man whose brother-in-law got one, and he only lives in a suburb.

But let's not go off on that. I do like people who can stick to the subject. I'm trying to clarify and make you understand the significance of everything. And it all comes down to the fact that I didn't really want to drive, in the first place.

I'd much rather have you drive. Good heavens, do be reasonable for once and try and show a little sense. Don't you suppose I'd prefer to have a husband who could take the wheel and put on some speed and show up the other drivers, instead of being such a coward and pontoon? You won't drive one inch over sixty-five miles an hour nowadays, and merely because there's some silly law—and heaven knows, I had nothing to do with making it—that says you can't drive over thirty-five. If you only knew how that weighs down a young heart, pretty young, that longs to have a husband she can worship and respect. Like Humphrey Bogart. So naturally, I had to drive! Now have I made that perfectly clear? But personally, you

BY
SINCLAIR LEWIS

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM LOVELL



During the dance she slipped away with the count to his home near the country club.





"Practically, you might say, that farmer ran into me, and besides, where did he have to go, anyway?"

understand, I've entirely forgiven you.

But one thing I can't forgive, and I want to tell you right here and now that I'm sick and tired of having you repeat and reiterate that I was on the wrong side of that miserable dirt road and that hideous ignorant farmer was 'way over where he belonged. If you can't think of anything more than that to say about the accident, if you can really call it an accident, then I think you'd better not go on talking about it.

There we were on that scandalous road, and of course I was going *fairly* fast. I had to, we were late, and the way you claim and contend that it was because I took so much time making-up, what's that got to do with it? The fact is, we were late.

And there was that farmer, with his beastly little jalopy, and even if he was on his own side, like you claim, still, why, may I venture to ask you, should he not be, may I ask? With a piece of junk like his car, he ought to of been driving 'way over in the ditch, and practically, you might say, he ran into me, and besides, where did he have to go to, anyway? What difference did it make whether he ever got anywhere? I don't suppose you'd compare his going up to the store, by heck, with me driving to the country

club with an orchid, wouldn't you, I mean would you?

And I just barely grazed his fender, anyway. I'm perfectly certain it was all crumpled up before, and besides, if you will insist on talking about justice and all that nonsense—I do think it's so tiresome of you lawyers to bring all that shop talk home—why, his entire car wouldn't cost as much as one of our tires and why you won't get some new ones, when you know that *everybody* deals with the black market now, it's the smart thing to do—but why must we drag that in? And then—

Oh, the shame of it! Yes, go on, snicker with that sickly snicker of yours, but let me tell you, I have never been so humiliated in my entire life.

You up and coming right out and volunteering and telling him it was all my fault, and then giving him that ten dollars—and I won't even go into the fact that if you have so much money to throw away, which isn't at all the account of your income that you come home and tell me, why, you might for once think of giving some of it to your wife occasionally, instead of to every shabby tramp

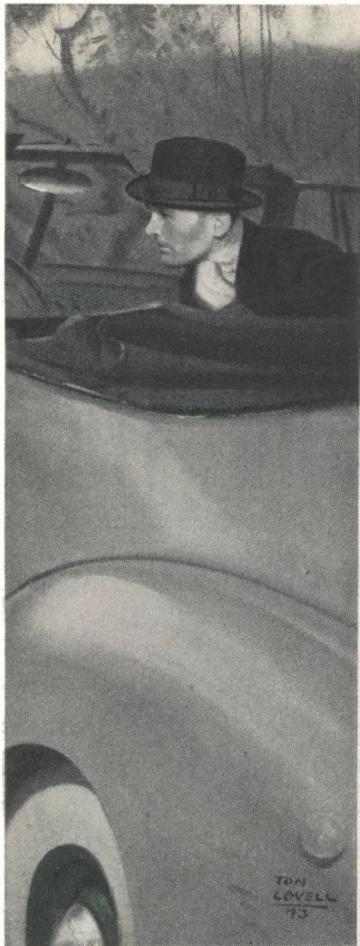
of a farmer that happens to run into us on the road!

But that isn't the cruce or crux or whatever you want to call it of the matter at all. It was your speaking up and taking his side, against me—to say nothing of the legal aspect of it—and you call yourself a lawyer!

And the farmer proved that he knew he was in the wrong by never saying one mean word till after you'd encouraged him. On his own side of the road indeed! Why, he belonged 'way out in the middle of the fields, or else nowhere at all, if there, and you keep saying he was going for a doctor. Stuff and nonsense

If he'd wanted a doctor, he'd of telephoned, wouldn't he? Trying to work on your sympathy! And when I think of what I could of done with that ten dollars, it makes me sick, and I suppose you just long to see me in rags, with a shawl over my head, and serve you right, if I did!

And hats costing what they do today—why, they have the nerve to ask twenty-eight bucks for a lid that used to cost eleven—it's the war, that's what it is, but I did see a darling little crimson hat with



a black buckle, but do let's stick to our subject, do you mind?

And so I'm willing to forgive and forget all about that ignominious grasping farmer, because the really awful thing last evening was the way that Red Cross female talk-talk-talked until I thought I'd go mad and start screaming and—

What? She did so! She talked all the time! I ought to know!

So here I come into the country club in the best of tempers, forgetting all about how the farmer ran into me and not wanting to blame the poor fellow, and then, in the ladies' dressing room, when I wanted to tell the girls about how that rat ran into me and almost killed me, they simply wouldn't shut up. Chatter-chatter-chatter, all about nothing. What I always say is, if you haven't got anything to say, shut up and don't say it!

And then when I got away from 'em, Mrs. Maggs comes bustling up to me, the old crow, and she yelled at me, "Betz, I want you to meet the Red Cross worker who is going to say a few words to us all tonight," and oh, look what the cat brought in, she presents this young female in uniform.

Oh, that was good, that was! A few words! And then the Red Crosser talk-

ing to all and sundry till maybe two A.M., without a stop! I do hate these women with runs in their stockings and runs in their conversation. What? How do you know she didn't have a run in her stockings? You certainly gave yourself away that time, young man, and anyway, I don't need your protestations to tell me that you fell for her. You always fall for every slick-chick that's highbrow.

Why, I could see afterwards, from the way you talked to her, that you thought the Red Cross girl was something out of this world. Honest, I'm sorry for men, they're so ignorant. You even thought she was pretty, but I'll just let you in on one of these feminine mysteries that you read about. That gal was ugly as mud, with mean eyes and the drabbest complexion you ever saw, and so sawed-off and squatly—simply awful.

It was her uniform that made you think she was good-looking. You know how strong I am for the war and all, but let me tell you there's a lot of us girls are getting pretty fed up with some of these Wacs and Waves and so on, that take advantage and parade their uniforms. Once this tiresome war business is over, believe me, we sensible women, that sacrifice our chances of doing a little flirting ourselves by staying home and taking care of you men—well, we'll show 'em where they belong. Aah!

So Miss Red Cross says to me, making like she was so shy and all that guff, she says, "I don't know what to say tonight. I thought you all might like to hear about what the Red Cross does not only in war, but in floods and fires and famine and so on. Don't you think they would?"

"Sure, we'd all just love to hear that!" I told her, and do you know, she was so unsuperably dumb that she didn't even know I was being satiric or sardonic or whatever it is—you know, like Robert Jean Nathan.

What I wanted to say to her was, "Oh, you bet, toots, that's what I came to this dance for, and risked my life getting run down by a crazy drunken farmer: just to hear about a lot of perfect strangers suffering from plague and starvation! And of course, sister, I don't know a thing about the Red Cross. Oh, no, indeed! Maybe that wasn't the Red Cross where I sewed on layettes both those dreary afternoons last winter! Oh, no! I guess it was Mike's Bar!"

Yes, I did feel like laying her out, but I thought it was a waste of breath with a dumb cluck like that. And then you actually falling for her and believing she was only twenty-seven-eight! Listen, toots, that pill will never see thirty again, and I do mean never, and not only that but—

And then, of course, she completely gave herself away—at least to women like me, that weren't born in Selah Crossing, like you were. When she'd finished her lecture—and was that a pain in the neck, the way she kept referring to money instead of keeping it all on a high humanitarian plane—and then she acted like she'd taken off her uniform and started dancing like she was nothing

but an ordinary well-bred woman like the rest of us—and dancing with you too, of all men!

I guess that showed she was completely phony, and hadn't meant one thing she'd said. And then you said she was such a good dancer!

And how you'd know is beyond me! I'd like to have you tell me, just tell me, that's all, how you got to be a judge of dancing! Of all the six-footed unrhythematical furniture movers that I ever danced with, you're the worst. Oh, please understand me, dear, I'm not criticizing you. I don't mean that in any invidious way. But you'll be the first to admit that you're the worst dancer in the club . . . Oh, you won't? Then let me tell you—Oh, never mind; what's the use of discussing that again?

And I hadn't meant to bring this up—you always get so jealous and go and make scenes on me and talk-talk-talk about it till I go wild—but since it's entirely your fault—

What's your fault? I'll tell you what was your fault if you'll just have the civility to listen for one moment and give me the chance to tell you! That's what I was trying to do!

It was all because you started flirting so with the Red Cross girl. Oh, yes, you were too! Listen! I could hear the two of you. She was talking about nothing but field hospitals, and you made out like you were eating up every word she said, and since you couldn't possibly of been interested, why, you were trying to make a hit with her, and if that isn't flirting, then I don't know what flirting is, and I guess I know what flirting is if anybody knows what flirting is!

So I said to myself, "All right," I said. "I think it's just about time I learned that man a lesson. I'll show him some real flirting!"

And when I start out like that—

You that think you're so observant and bully witnesses, poor things, and think you can size up a jury so, and—And you don't really know one single thing about even poor little me! No idea what-all other men can see in me! Why, there's twenty men in this city, all good-looking and not one that isn't a man of intellect and social position—over fifteen thousand a year, I mean—and that would come flying like a bat out of the naughty place if I so much as crooked my little finger at 'em.

Let me tell you that if you go on talking about field hospitals to female uplifters and running like a scared cat to bring her fruit punch, you can expect to see my name mixed up in the biggest society scandal you ever read of, if it wasn't that I scorn all such cheap publicity like that, and I mean it, lawyer or no lawyer!

So I looked around the dance floor and who was there, with his eyes fixed on me like a pelican, or whatever the darn bird is, but this Count Pungo, that's a European count.

Now you needn't to make a face like that! The count is a real brilliant man. What if he doesn't go to an office every day, like all you dollar-chasing American men! And he is too a real European count! He (Continued on page 132)



Secret papers, priceless rubies,
a lovely American Contessa and her American sweetheart
fighting a deadly game of international intrigue
with a gorgeous Fascist—
these are the ingredients of this exciting melodrama

In Love and War

BY MAUDE PARKER

ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREW LOOMIS

HER EXCELLENCY II

AGAIN HE had dreamed of her, been wakened by his own groan of helplessness. His eyes turned toward the east, toward the Atlantic which separated them.

Suddenly in the dark sky twin lights appeared; closer, closer, until John Lawrence half believed the plane was heading straight for his high hospital window. Instead it circled, headed for La Guardia Field . . . An omen. Pointing the way.

He turned on the bedside lamp. Nearly midnight. He would call the senior partner of his banking firm and inform him that he was departing at once for Europe on strictly personal business. Even at the price of resignation.

Only a physical disability prevented his instant dialing. His left arm was tightly strapped, useless. Perforce he rang the bell to summon aid.

The night supervisor answered. "Personally, I don't think you're well enough to talk to anyone." She cranked up the bed, scarcely

long enough for his six feet two inches. "But there's a call from Washington you were supposed to take over your private wire if you woke up before one o'clock."

"Oh, God!" John Lawrence said.

The supervisor looked up, surprised and worried. The younger nurses talked about Lawrence's good looks; and he was extraordinarily good-looking. Not handsome; something better. There was strength as well as sensitiveness in his face. But in her experienced eyes, his dark hair and sharply defined features distinguished him less than the stoicism he had shown during these grueling weeks. Never had he uttered a word of complaint. Only in his troubled sleep one name. Incessantly one name.

A lucky girl, she thought, putting the telephone into his hand, closing the door as she went out.

"How are you, John?" The famous voice was warmly friendly.

"Fine, thank you, sir," Lawrence answered without regard for literalness. "That's good news on several counts. How soon will you be able to travel again?"

"Tomorrow."

"Then there will be a place for you tomorrow on the Clipper for Lisbon. From Lisbon, you will proceed at once to Istanbul."

"No!" John Lawrence said. "I've got to have a few days in Rome before I can do anything."

His listener's audible intake of breath recalled him to reality. He had no right to make conditions, question this man's orders.

Perspiration broke out on his forehead when he heard the quiet words which meant reprieve: "You're entitled to a holiday anywhere on the globe. But unfortunately, it can't be more than a few days, John."

As before, Lawrence was to proceed ostensibly on routine banking business. Further instructions would be given him when he arrived in Turkey.

"Which must be not later than ten days from now. At all costs."

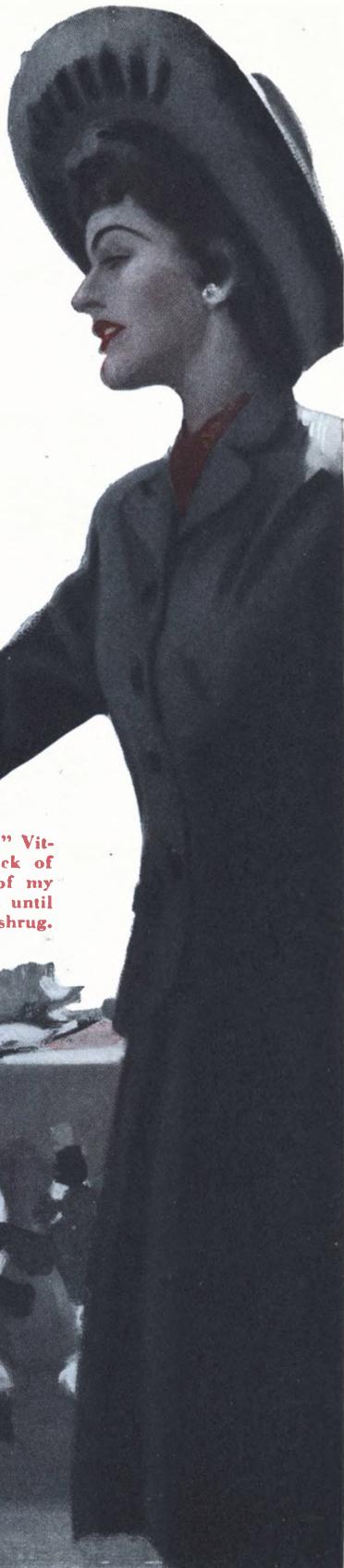
"At all costs," John Lawrence repeated the next morning, feeling like an army of new men after his first sound sleep during the two months since he had seen Elaine. The bodily pain caused by the shrapnel wound received inadvertently as an aftermath of that meeting had been as nothing compared with his anguish of spirit, knowing she might be in danger, being powerless at this distance to help her.

Even after he was in Rome it would not be easy. But the prospect of obstacles to be overcome merely increased the light of determination in his gray-green eyes. Not daring to communicate directly with Elaine, he sent a discreet cable in code to a young American diplomat over there; he spent the day in practical pursuits.

But when night came and he boarded the giant transatlantic plane he allowed his imagination to have sway. This was a magic winged steed, carrying him to the rescue of a lovely lady.

Elaine the fair, Elaine the loveable.

He pictured her in the medieval palace near the Tiber which he had seen only from the outside. Nothing would have induced him to enter its iron gates while her husband was alive. Indeed until their (Continued on page 147)



"What in the world is all that?" Vittoria gestured toward the stack of yellowed diaries. "Mementos of my past." Elaine scarcely breathed until she saw her visitor's amused shrug.



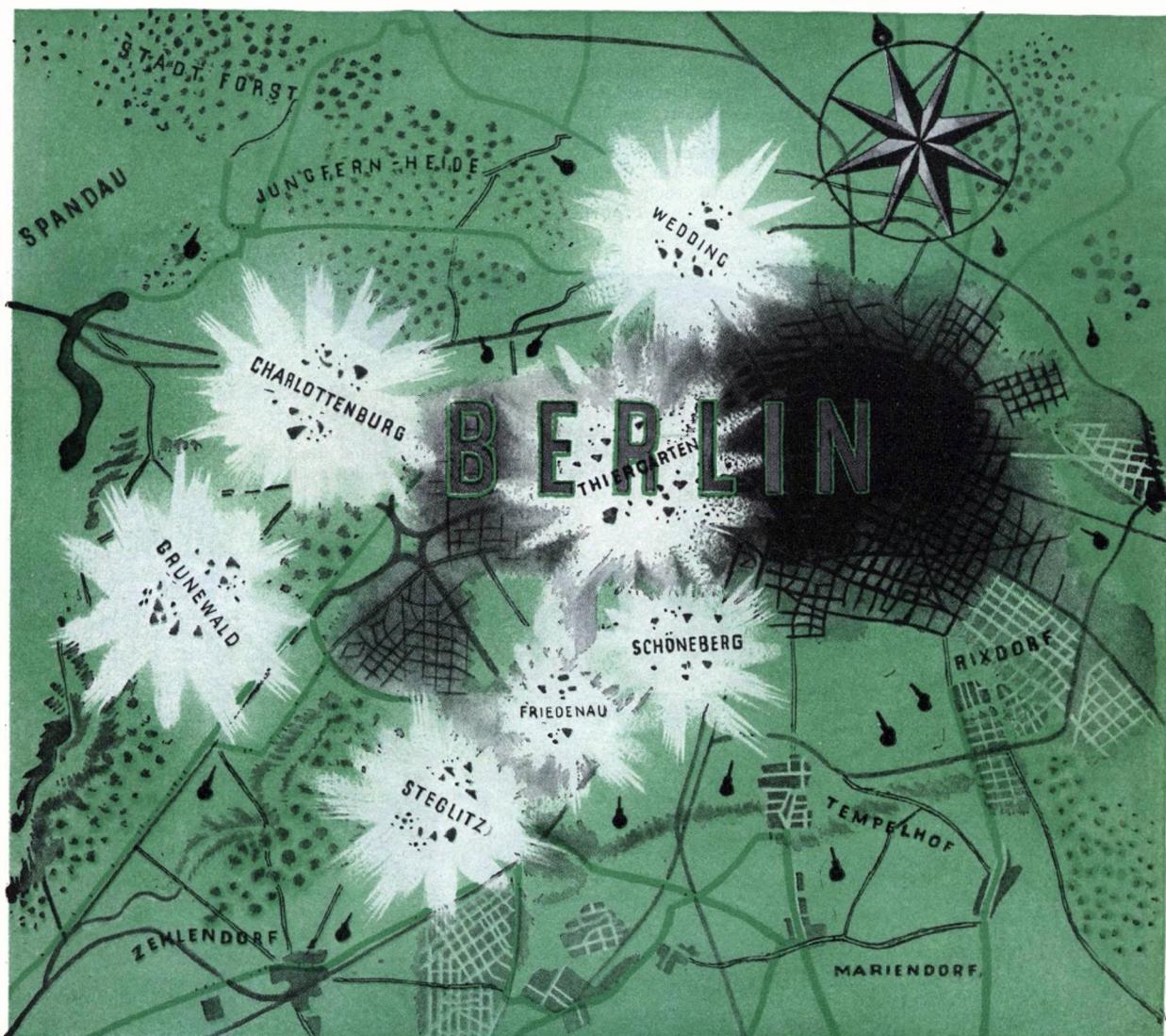
HELL'S DOORSTEP

Here for the first time eyewitnesses describe
what happened in Berlin when American and British bombers
brought home to Hitler the horrors of Rotterdam and Coventry



SCALE:

1 INCH REPRESENTS APPROXIMATELY 2 MILES.



MAP OF BERLIN AND ENVIRONS, SHOWING DEVASTATED AREAS DESCRIBED
BY EYEWITNESSES OF BOMBINGS NOT YET OFFICIALLY CHECKED.





BY
WALTER TAUB

BY CABLE FROM STOCKHOLM

THIS IS the inside story of the bombings of Berlin—a city of four million men, women and children trembling on Hell's Doorstep.

I can tell this story because, as a correspondent, I have many sources of information within the Reich and here, on neutral ground, have obtained the first-hand narratives of dozens of eyewitnesses, Germans and Swedes, who fled the horrors.

My story has a proper beginning early last August when a German confidant, in Stockholm on business, said to me:

"Since the Allied eradication of Hamburg the shadow of those shambles hangs over Berlin like a pall. It never lifts because we Berliners know we are the next customers for a combination haircut and shave by the Yankees and the Tommies. And, may I tell you, it is not pleasant to sit in Hell's waiting room."

What began to happen on August ninth, 1943—and what continues to happens proves my friend was absolutely right!

I mention August 9, 1943, for it is a date that will be remembered in Germany for generations. The horrors of that Monday, and the horrors and terrors of following days, can best be told in a quoted composite of the accounts of more than a score of eyewitnesses, related to me at first hand:

"We were traveling from the smoking ruins of Hamburg to Berlin on August ninth. The train, unusually long, was packed with refugees ordered to move to the Reich capital. We could not imagine what all we unfortunates on this and scores of other trains would do upon our arrival in Berlin.

"On this same day, as we neared the capital, we learned that Goebbels had exhorted the population of Berlin: 'Everyone not working in Berlin must leave town immediately.' Chaos had been organized with Prussian thoroughness, for when we survivors of Hamburg reached Berlin, expecting to find rest, peace and shelter, we were confronted by terrifying

scenes. The capital was in an uproar! Frightened masses of the population were moving through the streets toward the railway stations—the Görlitzer Bahnhof, the Stettiner Bahnhof, the Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse. Crowds, nearing mob hysteria, were pushing prams loaded with babies and personal possessions; men, women and children were carrying suitcases, trunks, baskets and bundles; others, unmindful of belongings, dragged children by their hands. All were driven by one thought: Escape from the wrath of the block-busters!"

According to what my informants told me, as the refugee trains from Hamburg, and all other inbound trains, steamed into Berlin depots, mobs of outbound Berlin evacuees stormed the cars before the Berlin-bound passengers and their luggage could be unloaded. Berlin mothers, carrying babies, swung themselves up onto the steps of moving cars or caught onto open windows and, after tossing their babies into a coach, crawled through. Inbound and outbound passengers quickly realized their luggage was a hindrance and abandoned it. In their mad fear people were transformed into beasts and used fists, elbows, teeth, nails, feet and small baggage with which to fight for or defend a seat, or any space, in the outward-bound cars. The battle to get off or on the coaches was a fight to the finish. During the melee more than three hundred men, women and children were trampled or squashed to death and other hundreds were seriously injured. Many who had escaped death in the Hamburg bombings died underfoot in the Berlin stations!

To add to the chaos, soon after the outbound trains had pulled out of the Berlin stations, Himmler intervened and countermanded Goebbels' evacuation order with four words and an exclamation point: "Stop the evacuation immediately!" This was followed by another Himmler order: "All trains stop and stay where they are. Everybody leave trains." Indescribable confusion ensued, but the order was obeyed and countless thousands of Berlin evacuees were stranded miles from home. In Berlin, unexampled chaos continued. Citizens who had remained were ordered to dig trenches in all the public parks and when a stunned citizenry merely stood and stared, Himmler's *Schutzstaffel* troopers stimulated them to the use of spades and shovels.

It was during this period that The Great Rumor started. Someone had said, "The war will be over in November." It spread with the fury of an epidemic. Himmler's men, *agents provocateurs*, were stationed in shops and markets, in restaurants and at bus stops in an effort to learn who started the rumor. Thousands were arrested and other thousands were questioned; then the investigation came to a sudden end, for the skies above Berlin were raining English and American block-busters. It was then that all hell broke loose.

That was August twenty-third. A Finn who experienced both the London and Berlin raids told me: "They were the same, but nevertheless vastly different. In Berlin, as in London, people went to the shelters with suitcases, clothes, alarm

clocks and food. Children, English and German, cried and played. Men, English and German, usually sat quietly; women, alike, talked nervously. I cannot say the Berliners lacked courage, but the controlled quiet characteristic of the Londoners in 1941 was lacking in the Berliners in 1943."

Doubtless the knowledge that Berlin's shelters were far from satisfactory, that there was too little sand and a shortage of buckets and that roofs were weak, contributed to the nervousness of the Berliners. From eyewitness accounts I can paint a picture of that night in the shelters.

They sit, expecting the worst. Commencement of the antiaircraft batteries gives a temporary feeling of security, but now the batteries are silent. Enemy aircraft can be heard roaring and diving above. Then an appalling crash as a block-buster does its work. They cringe and crouch in the shelters as though that could help. Children whine and cry. Silence. Another crash, near by this time. Thank God, we're still alive—elsewhere men, women and children are dead, maimed or dying.

Again and again comes the roar of aircraft, the crash and roar of bombs, the thunder of collapsing buildings. Can they do this to us? Can't we stop them? Are we helpless? Someone starts scolding, blaming the lack of antiaircraft defense, Göring, the system. "Shut up, Herr Schoen," a crouching neighbor warns. But Herr Schoen continues and the next night Schoen is absent from the shelter, for the Gestapo silences the complainers.

This picture of the morning after is pieced together from eyewitness accounts and from confidential advices. As weary, bleary-eyed Berliners crept from the shallow shelters at dawn they saw trees standing leafless and entirely new perspectives opened up. Churches which formerly were hidden by other buildings were now visible; the concealing buildings had been razed by the block-busters. The blackened facades of houses and the burned-out skeletons of apartments and office buildings were grim evidences of the hail of incendiaries. The whole scene resembled a painting of a landscape after a flood. Corpses, some hastily covered with sheets, were everywhere. In the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche an old man wandered among the bodies, lifting the sheets, looking, crying and asking for "Oscar, Oscar."

In what remained of the railway stations hundreds and thousands huddled on platforms and in the debris. Grunewald, in the southwestern corner of Berlin, was a camping place. Thousands of tents had been pitched by citizens who felt safer out in the open than in the shelters. Bombs had fallen throughout the night, and it was here that fifty-year-old August Neumann denounced Hitler as being to blame for the war, which was now lost, and asserted the people now had only one duty—to save their own lives. He was promptly arrested and executed.

Neumann was not the only one to cry out. Open revolt broke out in Wedding, the old socialistic and communistic workers' stronghold (Continued on page 166)

If Mother works the swing shift, who cooks Christmas dinner?

Yet what the young marine longed for was a touch of home

Enter Private O'Keefe

BY KATHLEEN NORRIS

ILLUSTRATED BY R. G. HARRIS

"SUSAN!" her mother called from upstairs. "Did you get a few soldiers?"

"I got a marine!" Susan screamed back. There was a silence. Then Mrs. Furlong, who had come out from the bathroom to lean over the banisters, addressed her elder daughter again.

"One!" she exclaimed, in incredulous disappointment.

"A marine about this tall." Susan, wearily climbing the stairs, indicated with her hand a spot about five feet above the worn carpet.

"But we asked for four, and we said we could take six!" said Mrs. Furlong. She was fresh from a bath; her short graying curly hair was damp on her temples, her rosy face still pink and moist. Her only garment was a bathrobe.

Susan passed her mother and went toward the door of her own room as she explained. "There aren't four hundred of them; there are only a hundred and something. The Forresters got there early, of course, and they have all the officers. The Wilkinses are taking thirty, and they're going on to the country club afterward to dance. Mrs. Wilkins was so sweet," Susan said, with sarcastic emphasis. "She told me that she didn't think she was going to need any more girls, but if she did she would let Betsy and me know!"

"Thirty!" Mrs. Furlong murmured, impressed. "You're tired, you poor child," she added sympathetically. "You'd like a hot bath, wouldn't you? Got a date tonight?"

"No, I haven't a date!" Susan said, her voice rising. "And I'm tired and I'm mad, and I think it's the limit the way people

with money like the Wilkins girls and the Forresters can bag anyone they like and hire a band for the club and give a swell dance—the Forresters are going over to the club too. And here we are, with grandfather the finest physician this town ever had, and your mother founding a girls' college, and all we get is a marine who called me 'ma'am.'"

"Oh, you met him, did you?" Betsy Furlong asked, coming in from the next room and flinging herself across the bed. "Well, you're engaged. You should worry about what he looks like," she added. "I'll bet Quent would like that!"

"It has nothing to do with Quent," Susan answered coldly. "But since next week is Christmas," she went on, "and since everybody's taking in a few soldiers or sailors, and since grandpa is sending us a turkey, I had hoped we might have some fun. But it's plain now that we're not going to be asked to the dance and that we are going to have to entertain Private James O'Keefe."

"It's a beautiful and unusual name, anyway," Betsy said, with a giggle. Betsy was the baby of the family, eighteen and lovely, with round long-lashed eyes and a mane of silky, taffy-colored hair that curled up at the ends. Susan was eight years older, and pretty too, in a quieter way. Susan had been office nurse in a clinic for four years; Betsy had left high school a year earlier to take a job in a munitions plant. Susan wore the white office uniform of the nurse; Betsy was more excitingly clad in a denim overall that was spotted with machine oil.

"Well, whoever he is, he's a boy

in the service, and it might be our Joe," Mrs. Furlong said. "I'll bet he gets a better dinner right here than they have at the Forresters'. It'll kind of help us through the day, not having Joe home, to have some other boy we can do something for."

"I could kill Mrs. Giddings," Susan said darkly. "She came over to me with this Jim O'Keefe. 'Here's a young man I think would very much like a piece of your mother's mince pie a week from tomorrow,' she said. There were the most fascinating-looking men talking to a bunch of girls on the other side of the hall. But she wouldn't bring them up—oh, no! Of course I said Mother'd be delighted, but that we'd hoped for four at least. 'Oh,' she said, 'we can't be that generous! Mr. O'Keefe,' she said to my little robot, 'you'll have to represent the service at Mrs. Furlong's hospitable home.' I could have killed her!"

"Well, we'll have it just as nice as we can," the mother said consolingly. "And maybe Quent will get leave too."

"You'll be home, Mother?" Susan asked.

"Oh, yes; I told them so at the plant. I told O'Connor. He knows it's coming to me." Kate Furlong rose from her chair; she was a strong, squarely built woman who looked not much older than her daughters. "I didn't take any time off when we were so short back in October."

At long last everything was ready. And when Kate brought in the turkey . . . Well, it was worth waiting for.



"And did you say you weren't coming back after New Year's?" Betsy demanded.

"I told him I didn't think I could. I said we were four in family and Susan was busy all day and you working eight hours a day and we were all buying bonds and helping drives and giving two nights each a week to the canteen. And I said Daddy was block warden and on the rationing board and carrying on in a shoe store that was short eleven men, and I was needed at home. After all, you can go just so far on scrambled eggs and bakery cookies," Mrs. Furlong went on, "and then you've got to have real meals. Christmas, I'm going to have all the fixings—lots of dressing and gravy and pies, and maybe a boiled pudding. It'll be a real luxury to have the house cleaned from top to bottom and get back to pot-roasts and biscuits and housekeeping again, I have to go back tonight, by the way," she added from the doorway. "I think I heard Dad come in, so we can have dinner any time. I put some potatoes in to bake when I got in, and there's cabbage to heat up and the chipped beef."

"Mother, why do you go back to that roaring hell tonight?" Susan said appealingly, following her mother into the big front bedroom. The room had not been dusted; the bedcover had been flung over the foot of the bed; garments were dropped here and there. The older woman stepped briskly into her factory wear: a blue jumper, slacks, a black sweater. She made a slight effort toward reducing the room to order.

"This is dreadful," she murmured absently. "But getting Dad off in time for the seven thirty-five and packing three lunches—well, that'll have to do. Come on down, dear; we'll put dinner on the table. I have to go back, Sue," she went on when they were in the kitchen. "We're shorthanded, and the work is there right before your eyes, and you simply have to get through it. We're going to be up to schedule this month or die!"

"But lots of women who could be spared from home much better than you can are just sitting around doing nothing," Susan protested.

"Yes, I know. And there are lots of young fellows who could be where my Joe is," Kate Furlong said, "but they aren't. They're here at home, doing safe easy work and talking a lot."

"Dining room or kitchen?" Betsy asked, her hands full of knives, forks and napkins.

"Oh, let's have it out here. So much easier. I've got to go at quarter to seven."

"I wish I could get a job that let me get home earlier," Susan said, "but the way things are piling up at the clinic I'll never be any earlier than this. Nine to six—and sometimes seven or eight—without one minute's break, and now they tell us Dr. Partridge is going! I don't know what we'll do."

"You aren't going back, are you, Mommie?" asked the man of the house, coming out to the kitchen, the evening paper dangling from his hand.

"Have to, Paul. He made a special point of it."

"Well, now, looky here, looky here,"

Paul Furlong said in mild protest. "That's the third time this week. You tell 'em I've got a wife, and I love my home."

"Paul, I'm stopping after this week," Kate said. "I told them so today. This sort of thing can't go on. Laundry not put away; things spoiling in the icebox; nobody here to answer the telephone—it's just too much!"

"Good girl!" Paul Furlong sat down at the kitchen table; one daughter put a plate of cut bread before him; the other was at the stove, busy with the teapot. "This way nobody's comfortable, Mommie," he said. "The sidewalk's a disgrace; I swept it last Sunday, but—"

"And my waist didn't come home," Betsy said. "The cleaner said no one was here when he came, and he didn't like to leave it on the porch."

"There was a telegram from grandpa, too. It gave me a real scare, just getting the notice," Kate Furlong said, serving creamed chipped beef. "Yes, it's not satisfactory; every family needs one person at home. I can trust the market with our points; I go over that with Chris, the grocer, on Thursdays. But I hate not being home on Sundays, and feeling ready to drop into bed the minute dinner's over every night."

"Darn it, it seems as if home life had gone into the discard for the duration!" said the man of the house. "Anything wrong at the farm, Mommie?"

"No; I got grandpa on the telephone finally; I couldn't get any satisfaction from the telegraph people—all new girls there. No; there was nothing the matter. But Pa said he was coming in for Christmas, and the turkey weighed twenty-four pounds, and he was bringing a lot of potatoes and onions and I don't know what, and probably bringing Mary's boys; it seems little Lou has something, and they think it may be measles."

"Private O'Keefe, Bruce and Kenneth, grandpa, and we four," Susan said. "And I had dreams of handsome lieutenant colonels and Navy captains—ah, well! War is hell. You know what Bruce and Kenneth will do to this house, Mom. You know what they did last time."

"They may not come," Mrs. Furlong said unconvincingly.

"They'll come, and they'll strew comic sections all over everything and break the radio again," Betsy said darkly. "Let's hope it doesn't rain; then we can send them to the playground. But you'll be here, Mother," she concluded, with emphasis on every word.

"I'll be here, dear, and I'll attend to everything. I'll have from Monday on—five days to get ready. I'll stuff the turkey—I could get some chestnuts, I think, and I'll get the boys two of those airplanes that you have to cut out and glue together. They can have the laundry."

"And a tree, Mother?"

"Oh, yes. And that's something you could do, Daddy. Get those two big cardboard boxes of trimmings in from the garage. Could you do that on Sunday? I thought Monday night I'd wrap all my presents," Kate went on. "Stale bread, cranberries, candy canes," she murmured. And then, with a smile, she added, "I declare, it'll be fun to be a lady of leisure again!"

"I'm going to ask for two weeks in January, and during that time I'm going to look around for an easier job," Susan said. "After all, if I'm going to be married in April—"

"I'm going on until someone else comes in, and then I'm going to quit!" Betsy added unexpectedly. Betsy had been very proud of her job; the family had supposed that she was jealously loyal to it. Now she showed a pair of small, rough, calloused palms. "Nobody wants to hold these in the moonlight," she stated firmly. "I've oiled 'em and creamed 'em, and nothing's any good; they feel like horn! Patriotism doesn't mean I have to turn myself into tortoise-shell. I'm going to investigate the Waves and the Waes and see if there isn't something a girl can do that's becoming."

"The Furlong family goes on strike," Paul said.

"No strike at all, Dad," Kate answered, buttoning herself into a shabby coat. "It's just that it's part of common sense to find out what you best can do and do it, and if a family is uncomfortable, there's neither sense nor economy in it."

"And you'll be here Christmas Day to take the brunt of Private O'Keefe and see that the dinner's fit to eat and manage things, just in case Quent gets leave." Susan summarized it, still uneasy.

"I'll be here. But I'm late now!" Kate exclaimed, departing.



When she had gone, there was a silence. Then Betsy, scraping her plate, said somberly:

"I hate war, and I hate everything about war. I don't see why people can't act like human beings, just because there's a war! Mom never here any more; Joe off with the Navy getting killed; Sue tired out all the time; Dad wondering if he can get shoes to sell, even if people ever want to buy them; everybody talking about rubber and tin and grease and scrap and points and the darnedest things; no more steaks; no more gum!

I'm sick of it! What do you do when you get sick of a war, Dad?"

"You might write someone in England," said Susan, "and find out."

"What would happen, Dad, if we all moved to Mexico? They're not at war."

"You'd get so homesick every time you saw an American flag you'd burst out crying," Paul Furlong said. "Well," he added, "Mommie'll be home on Monday, and everything will be all right again!"

"This isn't Christmas Eve," Kate Furlong said to herself. "I don't know what

it is, but it can't be Christmas Eve, not so soon!"

To be sure, the shop windows in the neighborhood of Oakland's Fourteenth Street and Broadway were packed with evidences of Christmas. The air was wild and wet outside the stores, thick and odorous inside; counters were crowded three deep with buyers; saleswomen appeared dazed. But still it didn't seem like Christmas!

Kate's chances of buying presents were poor; she could not find anything imaginative for Susan and Betsy and their father, much less for other relatives. She could get Bruce a box containing an un-assembled airplane, but that was no use unless she could get another for Kenneth. The salesgirl said vaguely she didn't think there was another. For half an hour Kate held in her hands a peasant blouse that looked like Betsy, but no clerk came near enough to encourage her to attempt to buy it. For fifteen minutes she clung to a set of small tables—Susan had often lamented their lack in the sitting room. Kate said, "I want these," to all the women who tried to wrest them from her, but in the end it was no use.

She turned to the escalator with a panicky feeling; here it was Christmas Eve and she had nothing—nothing! Never in her life had Christmas Eve found her in this situation before. And there was the tree at home, still untrimmed.

Untrimmed! It wasn't even set up yet. And there was the mammoth turkey still in its gunny sacking; and all the onions from the farm to peel, turnips to scrape, potatoes to mash. And the two loaves of stale bread were still in their cellophane, the chestnuts still in their shells! Ribbons and fancy papers were on her dusty desk; but not a card was written and not a present selected.

She went into a hotel and up to the newsstand; even here, she had to stand in line. But she finally managed to secure eleven magazine subscriptions and, emboldened by success, went back to the department store for money orders; they weren't like thrilling presents, of course, but the envelopes looked attractive. She gave a wistful glance at a small smart suitcase; Susan would love that. But there were twenty importunate last-minute buyers waiting; she had not another second to lose.

As it was, she was late to dinner; it was dark and wet when she got off a bus at her corner and splashed home. Her feet were icy; this might mean lobar pneumonia, of course, for a woman of forty-seven. But it would be restful. Kate Furlong thought, entering the kitchen.

The room was hot, but her reception was frigid. Her daughters and husband were at the table; dinner had been cooked by Betsy, who was neither experienced nor interested in cooking. Susan had got in just ahead of her mother; she was wearing a wrapper and warm slippers. Kate shivered with the delicious reaction the rush of warmth brought her.

"Better take off your shoes," Paul said, tackling a veal cutlet from which the breading was slipping in chunks.

"I'm going to bed early, dear. I'm quite all right." Her (Continued on page 114)



"You write down how to address letters, and you'll have one every day," Kate told Jim O'Keefe.



Band Leader

All the girls were mad about Sonny Wylie,
that smoothest of all band leaders,
but Cubbie loved him so much that
she would even give him up to her rival

BY SALLIE BELLE COX

ILLUSTRATED BY EARL CORDRAY

TWICE IN her life Cubbie went to New York to meet her father at the Plaza, and each time was a momentous occasion because of the two other people she met who changed everything. In very different ways, of course.

This was the second time, and as she walked quickly across the esplanade under the little sycamore trees, she kept remembering the first time and she smiled to remember how different everything had been. This time the men looked at her instead of *through* her, or right over her head. This time she didn't bulge—except in the right places, of course. And her feet were now things which took her places, instead of constantly double-crossing her and going their way while she went hers—stumbling and crashing around like a tank in the underbrush.

Again Cubbie smiled to herself. That was it. That was what she had felt like that awful *last* time. Like a baby tank; like an overgrown Teddy bear; like a little girl who grew and grew and grew and just never seemed to *stop* growing.

"Here is someone I want you to meet," he had said that other time. "This is my little girl, Cubbie." There was something in his voice that hit her hard like a soccer ball and made her want to run away fast—before she found out what it was that made her feel so terrified.

"Hello, Cubbie." It was a silvery voice, and the words tinkled daintily like a pair of delicate demitasse spoons.

Cubbie's throat felt dry. She saw the small gloved hand that was being held out to her, and awkwardly, uncertainly, she stuck out her own, which suddenly seemed to have turned into a bear's paw in its big fuzzy mitten. As she lifted startled eyes to the source of the silvery voice, she saw what she had feared and known she would see. It was a girl, only she wasn't young enough to make everything all right, and she was so pretty that it hurt to look at her. Maybe pretty wasn't the right word; it wasn't expensive enough. She was *exquisite* or something like that. She had pale gold hair like a princess in a fairy tale, and her eyes were as blue as moonstones. Her mouth was as neat as a rosebud, and her skin was pink and white. She wore a little halo of a hat of palest blue with a misty cloud of a veil, and her suit was the same soft blue; even her gloves and shoes were blue. On her shoulder was pinned a mauve orchid, and that was what made Cubbie realize what she was like. That was it—an orchid; one of those delicate baby ones. She was the loveliest thing Cubbie had ever seen, and she hated her more than she had ever hated anyone in her life. This terrified her and she suddenly wanted to run



away, far away, where she could cry and kick and scream.

What was her father saying? "This is Natica, Cubbie." And there was that terrible something in his voice again. Natica was smiling her sweet doll's smile, and Cubbie tried to answer, but she could feel the smile on her lips frozen and white like something borrowed from a minstrel show.

Now Natica was speaking, or chiming like a silver French clock. "You're not a bit like I thought you would be," she was saying. "I expected a Cubbie to be a little roly-poly!" Laughter rippled through her voice and down Cubbie's back like ice-cold raindrops. Natica was looking at Father now, and Cubbie was glad, for she knew her face was a relief map of misery and surprise. Surprise because of the discovery that when the thing happens that you always feared might happen, you don't fall dead, faint or even burst into tears. You simply stand there staring at the sort of girl your father falls in love with and probably marries, when he's still young and handsome and a famous band leader.

Then they were in the Persian Room, seated at a table by the window, and several waiters were hovering solicitously over them, because this was the place where Daddy's band played every night, and it was the smartest and most pop-

A break came in the music, and Sonny Wylie announced: "Now we will play a special number for a very special person—'Tea for Two' for a girl named Cubbie!"

ular place in town because Daddy's band was just about the best band around and Daddy was the handsomest band leader in circulation. All the columns said so, and they called him a glamour boy because all the debs and subdebs went dreamy when he played the piano. Cubbie's friends at school thought her the luckiest girl in the world to have Sonny Wylie for a father. Cubbie thought so too, and sometimes when the kids at school were playing his records and going all to pieces over them, it seemed as though she'd just burst with pride.

She looked at him and swallowed hard, because he was so beautiful and so wonderful and she loved him so much. Suddenly his dark twinkling eyes met hers, and he winked solemnly at her. Cubbie wrinkled her nose at him and grinned impishly, then looked away and pretended to be giving the room a nonchalant once-over. After all, you didn't let your father know what you were thinking about him, did you? Especially if it happened to be something like the fact that his thin, sensitive face, dark wavy hair and beautiful broad shoulders

made you think of Ray Milland, Jimmy Stewart and Walter Pidgeon all rolled into one.

She was suddenly aware that one of the waiters was patiently waiting for her to take off her coat, and she began to squirm out of it, being careful of the lining, which had had a long, hard winter. The waiter gave a helpful tug and after a brief struggle between him, Cubbie and the coat, there was a ripping noise, and the lining gave up the ghost.

Cubbie, coloring painfully, looked at her father and Natica and gave a sick little smile. "That's my lining," she explained needlessly. "It's torn."

"So we hear," said her father, laughing, and he turned to the waiter. "This is my daughter, Carlo," he explained, "and I want you to take better care of her than that."

Carlo looked at Cubbie, his eyes big with surprise. Then he smiled fatuously. "That is a fine big girl, Mr. Wylie!"

Cubbie smiled self-consciously, and the color deepened in her face. A fine big girl! As big as a dirigible, or one of those prize pumpkins at a country fair. But before Carlo could repeat the horrible words, a squat, dark man in a loud sports jacket came up to the table, clapped her father on the shoulder and bellowed, "Hiya, Sonny, ol' boy!" Then he grinned at Natica, with a (Continued on page 153)

Song about



I have had enough of the old and dry,
The cold speech and the lidded eye,
The body that knows its enemy.

I will make a song about children, now.

First for you of the kitten's brow,
The long legs and the pointed chin
And the flesh too slow for the life within,
Although that flesh is a running wind,
Although that flesh leaves fire behind.

Thistle of Scotland, dipped in France,
Your back is straight as a trooper's lance,
Your eyes are your mother's, blue and clear,
Your mouth has tasted the Northern year
Between the rock and the fairy-ring.
And found the stubborn and trusty thing.
I am not of that North—it was not my men
Who tracked the sun to the ice-bear's den,
And slew his foe with the axemen's stroke
And made him a coat from Winter's hide,
Slippers of snow and a wreath of pine,
And dragged him home in a golden yoke
To sit at ease in their chimneyside,
Nodding his head in the fire-shine,
Nodding his head in the April rain
While the world and the heart grow young again,
Bound with green withies, a nodding chief—
But I have eaten the magic leaf,
My heart is red with the maple-leaf,
My heart has been cooled in the drifted snow—
So go the ways that you choose to go,
Rosemary's daughter, Rachel's seed,
Stormy in little but good at need!
You are ours awhile, for loving and giving,
But that is only the half of living.
The farmer's corn is the farmer's corn
And you were your own when you were born,
Separate, distinct, an entity,
From the first sharp glance of the irate eye
That looked at me from the blanket-fold
With a look that was neither young nor old
And had no traffic with grief or mirth—
Armed life, rising out of the earth,
The maiden essence, the untouched blade . . .

Tam glad you are made as you are made.
I think no cowards are so designed.
I think no coward would have the mind
To drive ahead the work of the hand
That molds the cup from the running sand
In spite of all the sand's complaint.
This is no hand of sleeper or saint,
But a sure tool set on a ready wrist,
The fist is the arrowmaker's fist.
It can give but it will resist.
Life must give it a skein to twist.
Your brother is browner, your brother is younger.
He has just got up from sleep and hunger.
His eyes are grey as the Norman cloud.
He shouts his words when he talks aloud.
His head is round and his hands are small
And he is an actor first of all.
He plays to himself as you do not play.
It is not by force that he gets his way.
He opens his hand and the thing is given
And he is delighted with Earth and Heaven.
He opens his hand, and the thing denied
Makes Earth and Heaven a desert wide.
— Yet let him alone and his wounded smile
Will draw it to him after a while.
He will charm the bird from Broceliande
And let the net slip out of his hand.
With a grin as wide as a stable-door,
He will eat the apple and leave the core.
He will pick and choose, he will take and leave,
He will wear his heart on his outer sleeve,
But his tongue, meanwhile, may be in his cheek,
For though he is pleasant, he is not meek.

Brown child, born with a certain look
I know so well on faces I know,
There are witches and kings in the picture-book
But no one will have to tell you so.
You will know the color the brush must take
For the hoofed stag or the striking snake.
I do not know what you will make.
Your hand is sensitive in my hand . . .

What more is there to be said of you?
You dance, at times, in a fairy's shoe.
Your young hair is more tightly curled
Than all the vine leaves in the world.



Children

There is a pool in the wood somewhere
Where the late sun shifts through the chestnut tree
On the broken comb of the honeybee,
Where the young fawns come with the big-eyed doe,
And the brown trout sleeps by the brown stone,
Lost in the forest, all alone,
Lost in the brown October air,
Lost where the amber half-lights go.
That is the color of your hair.

Northron and Southron, speed you well!
We were in love when you were planned,
We see you and love you and let you go.
Brother and sisters, try your hand,
Take your pittance of fire and snow,
Strike the hammer against the bell,
(I have been digging in dusty years,
Forgetting life was so young and fierce,
Forgetting life was a sword to pierce)
I cross your palms with the silver now,
But the fortune in them is yours to tell
And the fortunes in them are far apart
(We see you and love you and let you go)
You were not sprung from a barren bough.
Dip your hands in the wishing well
And, whatever arises, hold it fast,
That is all we ask of you, first and last,
For each has a different rune to spell,
And each, I think, has a steadfast heart.

And now, to you, whose care and ruth
Befriend these children in their youth,
But do not, for that reason, shame
The first love in the last love's name
Or deny the winged earth
Since your body gave such birth;
You who have been to heart and mind
So many things, and all so kind,
Elf and buckler, sword and fleece
And the body of this peace,
The friend to match, the trust to hold,
The cloak to share against the cold,
The water from the mountain-stream
And the dream within the dream,
The blade destructions could not tire
And the good child beside the fire.

We have beheld them, you and I,
This body and its enemy,
Nor reached this day without a scar—
But still my heart has this to say,
I would have you as you are,
Do not change yourself today.

So I make my children's verse,
Now before it's Christmas time,
And I shut it in a purse
And I tie it with a rhyme.

Tie it up and seal it well
With a toy of cockleshell.

If you ever look inside,
You will see a certain bride
And a hot, bewildered boy—
I have sealed it with a toy,
I have sealed it with a sky
Blue with dusk above a river,
With a town of building-blocks,
With burnt coffee and the docks
Where the liners lie at last.
I have sealed it very fast
With a rummer and a dram
With a hearthstone and fire,
With the winters and the springs,
With the love we had entire,
With our blood and with our jest,
With the grief of our unrest,
With an arrow that is love,
With the figure of a dove,
With the figure of a lamb
And a lion, couched together,
With a tress of sunny weather,
With two cities and a sea,
With a thousand tiny things.
I have sealed it up forever.
I have locked it with a key.

Let it lie upon your breast,
Now and ever.

BY STEPHEN VINCENT BENET

Drawn by Valerie Vitale



Photographs by
U. S. Army
Signal Corps

In this war the test for survival is KILL OR BE KILLED.

Out in Hawaii is the toughest school in the world.

If any man can survive the rigors of Lt. Col. D'Elisçu's training
he has a pretty good chance of coming home



KILL OR BE KILLED

BY WEBLEY EDWARDS

Foreign Correspondent

IF YOU'VE ever seen a United States Ranger training camp, you know what toughness really is.

This is the story of one of the toughest of them—the Ranger Training and Combat Instructor School in Hawaii, where men are schooled in eight-week courses in ruthless and cold-blooded killing.

Their school motto—and they hear it day in and day out—is: "Kill or be killed."

They are told, quite simply, that there must be no mercy in jungle fighting against the cruel Jap. Either you kill him, or he will kill you. The Jap is a savage fighter, devilishly cunning, and absolutely devoid of what we know as sportsmanship. He must be met with his own methods and bested.

Now, the way of a soldier with his enemy has never been a gentle one. The idea of warfare has always been to kill or maim the other guy if you can.

Some fiendish devices and methods for killing men have been thought up through the centuries. Put them all together, add a few new wrinkles, and you have the kind of fighting going on down in the Pacific island jungles. The Japs started it, but the Americans learned fast and went on to lick the Jap at his own game. But lots of fine American boys died before they learned.

The United States Command in the Pacific is now saving lives by training men in every conceivable method of jungle fighting.

You approach the entrance to the Hawaiian Department's Ranger Combat School by way of a narrow curving roadway that winds from Schofield Barracks down into a bowl-like canyon. There are jungle streams through it and rough hills on beyond.

A sign stands at the entrance. On it are the famous words of Lieutenant General Lesley James McNair, Commanding General of the Army Ground Forces:

"Our soldiers must have the fighting spirit. If you call that hating our enemies, then we must hate with every fiber in our being. We must lust for battle . . . our object in life must be to kill . . . Since killing is the object of our efforts, the sooner we get in the killing mood, the better and more skillful we shall be when the real test comes. The test for survival is KILL OR BE KILLED."

Below that, in large capital letters, is added on this sign:

WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE KILLED
Lt. Col. François D'Elisçu, Commandant

Right away you get the idea that this is no pink tea party, but even so you are hardly prepared for the first impact of this Ranger camp. Stretching before you, over what its students call "fourteen acres of jungle, desert, water, dust and hell," are open-air classrooms. Instructors and men are going through courses of training in systematic mayhem that even in practice make you wonder how the human body can hang together.

Then you meet Colonel D'Elisçu, the Commandant. That is, if you can catch up with him. He is a pint-sized bundle of nerve and muscle who walks like a panther about to spring. He ranges the fourteen acres tirelessly, watching classes. If you're the shortwinded type, he'll have you exhausted in no time just following him around.

Colonel D'Elisçu's classroom voice is a modified shout. He shouts and growls alternately the entire day, urging, always urging, that everything be done better, faster and tougher.

His intimates call him "D'Eli," which sounds like Delly, and most of his men refer to him among themselves as "that tireless so-and-so." He drives them so hard they think they cannot endure him any longer. But when they are graduated they come to say good-by with glistening eyes and many of them ask for his autographed picture.

D'Elisçu admits his school is grim and grueling. If you remind him that visiting brass hats have called it the most rugged of the Ranger training courses, he will agree.

"It's got to be that way," he says. "The man who knows how to kill has the best defense against being killed. Men who go out from this school are potential leaders who will have men under them looking for guidance, inspiration and the protection of their very lives."

So for the full fourteen hours of his working day, seven days a week, he tries to find ways to make his courses stiffer, his men harder.

When a new class is assembled for induction, each neophyte, no matter what his former rank, lines up in plain dungarees facing the Commandant and his instructors.

Without any mincing of words they are told they will often sleep anywhere, with any other man, at any time; that race or previous rank means nothing in the face of death, therefore will not be considered in the training school; that if anybody wants to drop out, now's the time to do it; and that if anybody thinks he's pretty tough, let him step forward.

Usually nobody leaves or steps forward. But once a lad stepped forth and allowed that he was fairly tough. Under the code of the school, an instructor immediately challenged

him to a rough-and-tumble fight, no holds barred, and they went to it in the dust before the silent assembly.

The neophyte proceeded to give the instructor an artistic mauling, whereupon the instructor got to his feet, rubbed the dust from his eyes, and said with classic brevity, "He's tough, all right." The class howled.

The point is that the instructor did not "lose face" by being beaten up. The men liked him better for it.

Do they get hurt in this literal school for hard knocks? They do, by the dozens. They receive excellent medical attention in a small field hospital at once. But they get no pampering.

The men acquire a physical hardness that comes so gradually they do not always realize how they have hardened. For example, from a training plateau above the assembly ground is a tall bluff of some 70 degrees descent. Two men were at the top when the noon bugle sounded. Without hesitation they plunged feet first in a slide down the bluff rather than take the much longer trail down. Halfway down one man lost balance and somersaulted, helmet over rifle, to the bottom.

In the ordinary camp there would have been a rush to the scene. Here only a few glanced up momentarily. The victim of the fall got up, looked at his rifle and jogged over into the lineup. If he was hurt he didn't show it. Probably he was not, for these fellows are trained in how to fall.

"A Ranger," Colonel D'Elisçu will tell you, "must have physical and mental confidence in his abilities. He must overcome any idea of fear. He must learn to discount minor injuries, and even when hurt he must be able to fight with everything he can lay his hands on, by every method of fighting ever thought of."

"He must be able to fire and to understand the parts and operation of every kind of weapon, not only of every branch of our own services but of the enemy's as well.

"He must master the bayonet, which is still one of the greatest weapons in the world. He must also know how to use many kinds of knives for jungle fighting, and defenses for enemy bayonet and knife fighting."

What about jujitsu or judo? he was asked.

"American hand-to-hand fighting is a combination of all their arts," he answered. "Judo may work if your opponent will stand still for you, but they don't do that in warfare. We teach rough-and-tumble, hand-to-hand fighting, which is superior to any other type."

In a distant part of the training area is a little village with houses and stores. We asked about it.

"Our Rangers must know all about sabotage and raiding," explained D'Elisçu. "Up there they learn street-to-street fighting, with buildings burning and land mines exploding about them as realistically as on a battle front. They have to learn how to attack the village and to defend it. We make the noise as nearly like real battle as possible. After this training, real battle doesn't bother them so much."

These Rangers learn all about booby traps—how to find them and how to make their own.

Part of a creek running through the training area has been converted into a jungle river, and another part into a medium-sized jungle stream. Here the men learn to construct their own bridges, of many types, and how to use them for transporting arms, supplies, equipment and wounded men. At one part of the river is a bamboo bridge that is constantly built and rebuilt. A rope suspension is another "classroom." Likewise a pontoon crossing. Elsewhere is a "breeches buoy" device for getting wounded across rivers.

At one side of the river where the water is still is a tower with various levels up to forty-five feet. At the other side is a forty-five-foot structure like the side of a ship, with hanging cargo rope work and ladders up the side. Men start by climbing these, jumping off at the lower levels until finally

they are leaping fearlessly from the highest point through smoke and fire, unable to see the water below. Then they work up the same course with packs and full equipment.

D'Elisçu thinks of everything. A man ought to know about burning oil on water, he reasons. Men have had to face it in the South Pacific. So he pours oil on the water, sets it on fire, and shows the men how to leap into it from a height with the greatest degree of safety.

He will not let the Rangers do anything he himself does not do first. His body is forever scratched and bruised and burned. He is forty-seven years old, but his skin is like tanned leather and he has that lean and wiry look.

He leads his men in the conditioning portion of each school term, starting with short runs and wind-sprints like a football squad getting into condition. The going gets harder as the men are brought along. They run a mile, then two miles, then six miles in G. I. shoes at the rate of seven minutes per mile.

They hike regularly over all kinds of trails and through every kind of tangled jungle or dusty plainland. They hike twenty-four miles in the dead of night, muffling all sound, and dig nine foxholes, silently, at the end. They sleep there, and are awakened at dawn with a gas attack of real tear gas! This leads up to the main event in hiking. With one canteen of water per man, helmet, rifle and some equipment, they must hike forty-two miles in one day, blisters or no blisters, fatigue or no fatigue.

Combining a conditioning process with a possible phase of fighting, the Rangers must run an obstacle course that they swear was devised by a fiendish mind.

D'Elisçu smilingly admits his was the fiendish mind. The course is his pride and joy, and he runs it with the men, firing a .45 automatic now and then to remind them what live ammunition sounds like when it is whizzing about their ears—not too close, but close enough to keep them alert and moving!

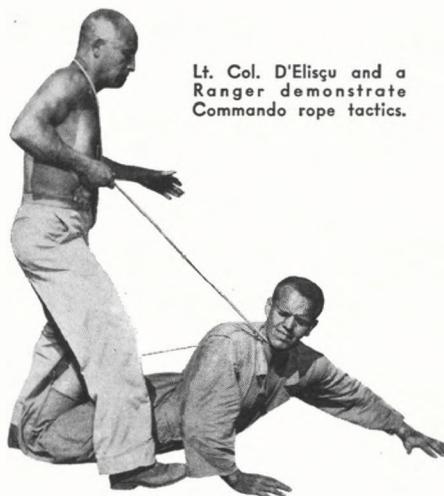
That obstacle course would be a challenge to any soldier in the world. To begin with, it is six and a half miles along. Just to run that distance is something, but this one has scarcely a level stretch in it—mostly it's up and down hills and cliffs. It has seventy obstacles—walls to scale, ropes to traverse hand-over-hand across a river; something at the top and bottom of every hill or cliff and halfway up to boot. One obstacle is a ten-foot barbed-wire barrier which must be climbed with bare hands.

Land mines explode along the course. Rifle and machine-gun fire, with live ammunition kicks up dust close by the obstacle trail. Along the course are Colonel D'Elisçu's assistants, shouting derisively at the runners, calling them names, or trying to scare the pants off them with sudden yowling as they come around some corner. Dead and decaying animals are strewn along the course. At one point animal blood is doused on the men.

All of this has a real purpose toward giving the Rangers toughness, poise and guts.

Other gentle practices are cooked up for D'Elisçu's lads. Each Ranger must climb a high tree, tie himself in, and stay there for a full twenty-four hours without coming down or being seen. Camouflage is an important phase of the training. At certain times during this ordeal the Ranger is required to maintain stiff silence. From time to time, somebody shoots live ammunition into the

Rough-and-tumble classroom—no holds barred.





Fighting face to face! Note that the dummy has a real bayonet.

went to New Guinea and watched the Japs at first hand in actual combat. He was a captain in the first World War and has had, through the National Guard, some seventeen and a half years of military experience.

D'Elisçu trained the 1928 American Olympic swimming team. He has spent many years teaching physical education, notably at Columbia University, and his ability at fencing has given him a catlike quality of action and the wary eye that is stock in trade to the trained Ranger.

At Lae and Wau in New Guinea, his trained eye picked up many pointers. From Guadalcanal he brought back practical installations and experiences so that his men would be trained from actual knowledge of Jap fighting methods.

D'Elisçu is a great one for realistic training. One of his classes requires the Rangers to charge up a 45-degree hillside, dotted with foxholes and sniper nests. Helmeted dummies with fixed bayonets represent the enemy. The men must bayonet each dummy, "wipe out" the foxholes and nests, and keep on up the hill with land mines exploding about them.

The colonel requires training for every possibility. A squad of men must roll, carry and lift a field gun up a long and very steep embankment. Somewhere he found some large logs of tropical wood with weight almost of iron. Squads of six and later only four men must carry them overhead, then by whatever means they can devise, up a cliff and down again.

D'Elisçu carries training with live ammunition to great lengths because he believes that the whine of bullets, heard for the first time, is unnerving. He uses the common method of firing over the men's heads as they traverse a training area on their bellies. One of the most grueling tests is to crawl under barbed wire 150 yards, directly toward sputtering machine guns, shooting live bullets less than two feet overhead.

He fills a long slit trench with men and sets machine gunners off at a distance to dig up the parapet above the trench and kick dirt and rubble in on the crouching men. He shows them what would happen if they should let their heads get above the trench. They stay there in a cramped position for one hour.

He goes beyond bullets. One stage of training requires all men to lie flat while trained flamethrowers set fire to the grass and brush across a ravine—the flame going above the prostrate men.

Every devilish device the Jap has ever used is given to the men. They are exposed to traps and tricks, taught how to watch for them and how to outdo the enemy at them.

The pièce de résistance is one for the book. All men must go through it. (Cont. on page 152)

tree trunk below him or tosses a hand grenade, just to let him know he is being observed.

This sort of training is invaluable to men who must fight Japs in jungle warfare. They never know when they must live for twenty-four hours or longer up in a tree in actual combat. It also reminds them that if they can live in a tree and be quiet about it for a day and a night, a Jap sniper can too. Thus they learn that every jungle tree may house an enemy sniper.

Colonel D'Elisçu devised his Ranger school with the idea of combining the best of the rough-and-ready, or "dirty fighting," schools now training Allied raiders. He



No easy fighting for D'Elisçu's classes! Here they find the enemy entrenched on a rugged hillside.



Charging barbed-wire barrier on the six-and-a-half-mile course which has 70 obstacles.



You're either balanced on a rope bridge—or you're off!



A temporary dressing station on the course—and the men need it!





Boardwalk

To see Pancho just once more—that was all Gillian asked!
Then Atlantic City played a strange trick
on a boy and girl who met almost too late

THE STORY SO FAR: Back in 1923, Fern and Francey Ohmeny—billed as “dancing twins,” although Fern was five years older than her sister—had come to Atlantic City for the first time. Francey, a cute little flapper of nineteen, had hay fever and Fern said, “Something will help you, baby. Don’t ask me what. I just know.”

That had been a magic phrase between them: “Don’t ask me what—or how—or why. I just know.”

But Fern had used it once too often when she had referred to her sister’s marriage to Carl Drigo, the handsome assistant manager of the fashionable hotel where both girls found jobs so they could stay in Atlantic City—which had cured Francey’s hay fever.

“You’ll be miserable, Francey,” Fern had said. “Don’t ask me why. I just know.”

Forever after Francey insisted that Fern had put a curse on her marriage. But really the curse, if there was one, lay in Carl’s weakness for women. Even on the night their baby, Gillian, had been born, Carl had been carrying on an affair with one of the hotel guests.

Concealment of that ugly truth was the second thing Francey held against her sister—for, of course, it came out later. And when, as might have been expected, Carl finally left his wife and child for another woman Francey justly blamed Fern for that too.

During the years of their estrangement Fern’s husband, Matt Dowell, died at their home in Maryland and she had returned to Atlantic City where she became the owner of the quiet well-man-

aged hotel, the Sea Drift. She had kept in touch with her niece, Gillian, in spite of Francey’s objections, and when the girl, at nineteen, found her mother’s hardness and bitterness too much to bear, she came to her aunt for comfort.

It was the bitterness in Francey, now the owner of the expensive Café Drigo, which made her seek out Mary Lee Quean, who having come from Texas to visit her fiancé, Private Philip (Pancho) Pine, was staying at the Sea Drift.

“If you want to keep your fiancé,” she said, “I suggest you stop being so stupid as to have my daughter around all the time. She is madly in love with him, though I’m not sure she realizes it yet.”

But Gillian did realize it. She had even admitted it—to herself and to a friendly white-haired stranger who frequently spoke to her on the beach or along the boardwalk.

Francey Drigo would have been more bitter than ever had she known that this stranger, the long-vanished Carl Drigo, was taking every opportunity to become acquainted with his daughter.

“YOU COULD give a man a night of ecstasy.” Last night Pancho had said that to Gillian; it was the first thing she thought of, awakening this early summer Sunday morning. When words are true they ring bells and leave echoes. So that’s the kind of girl I am, Gillian thought, surprised; neither pleased nor displeased.

Only I can’t and I mustn’t and I shouldn’t have Pancho. She admonished herself thus, diminuendo. He belongs to

Mary Lee. Oh, but it would be nice if there were two Panchos. No, then I would want them both!

To answer the telephone in the living room, she left her bed. It was Mary Lee, the soft Southern voice of conscience. Nervously Gillian rubbed one pajamaed leg against the other. “How are you this morning, Mary Lee?” She knew that Mary Lee would wish to plan for the day: for their swim together, their arrangements with the boys tonight. I mustn’t be quivery, Gillian thought; I’ve done nothing wrong—yet.

Well, but Mary Lee didn’t want to swim today. “I’m tired, and my head has hammers in it.”

“I’ll come over and keep you company,” Gillian said.

There was a pause. “I’ve got some things to think about, Gillie, and I need to be in solitary confinement.”

“Be all well by tonight, so we can have some fun.”

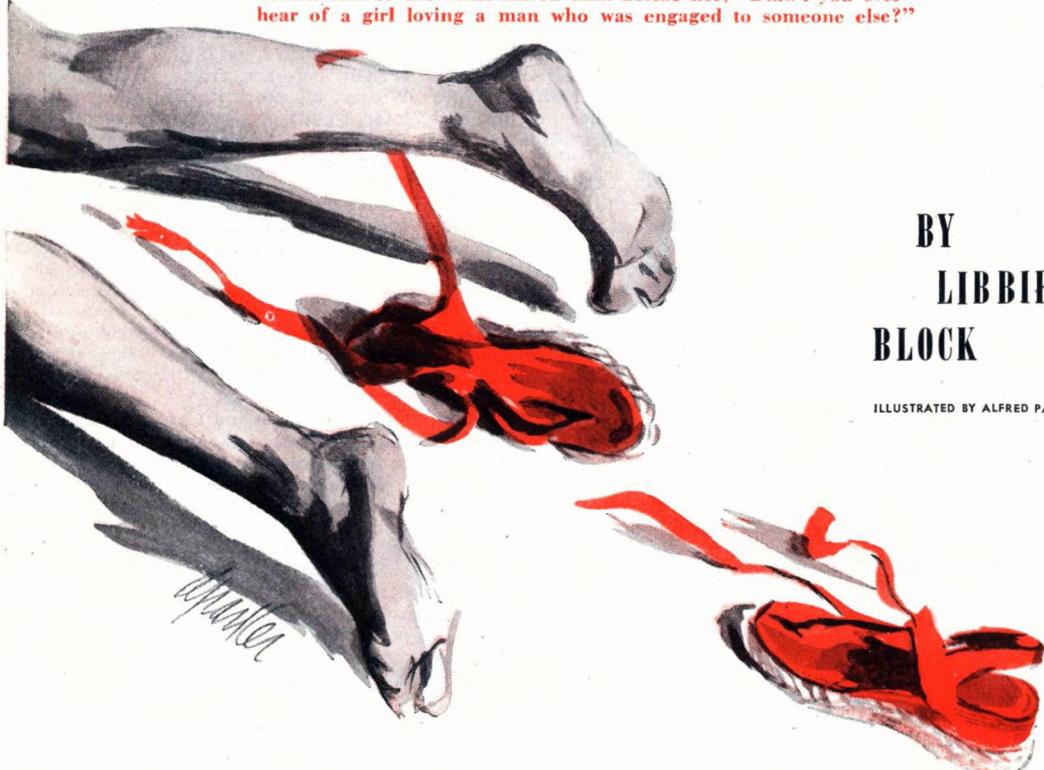
Almost apologetically, Mary Lee said, “You know, I thought Pancho and I would spend tonight alone together. I’ll just be here another week, and we’ve got so much talkin’ to do.” This would appear to be the reason for her call, yet she seemed to want to say something else.

Gillian said too quickly, “Swell idea. I’ll call you tomorrow.”

“I’ll phone you,” Mary Lee said. Whether she would phone tomorrow she did not indicate.

So this is how a glass feels when it is dropped and broken. Gillian hung on to the phone, stupid and deaf. It took her a long time to hear the real reason for Mary Lee’s call. She wished to speak with

Gillian said to the white-haired man beside her, “Didn’t you ever hear of a girl loving a man who was engaged to someone else?”



BY
LIBBIE
BLOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED PARKER

Gillian's mother. "Oh. Oh, yes, I'll call her." Gillian set down the receiver, went into Francy's room and said, "Mary Lee wants to talk to you, I didn't know you knew her." But Gillian did not even notice there was no answer as her mother swept by in a turquoise satin robe. She was thinking: I won't see Pancho tonight. I won't see Pancho tonight.

Francy's conversation with Mary Lee consisted of long listening and one comment: "Yes, I know how you feel, but this is much the best way. Good-by."

Breakfast came up to the Drigos from the Drigo Café downstairs—little tray tables set up before armchairs. The mother and daughter sat facing each other across the room.

"What did Mary Lee say to you?" Gillian asked.

"She wanted us to cater a dinner for her, and then she changed her mind." This fib was acceptable. "What did she say to you, Gillian?"

"Oh, just that we won't be together tonight. She and Pancho want to be alone." Flushing, Gillian went on, "It's only right too. Mary Lee didn't come all the way from Texas just to be with me or Luke Winward."

"That's the way to take it," Francy said. "He's not yours. Hands off. Get over it."

Gillian drank her orange juice. "I don't want any more breakfast. I'm going to take a long walk. Don't expect me back for ages."

The rhythm of walking calmed her, and the large horizontal of the sea made a table for her to spread her thoughts upon. Gillian was frightened at the violence of her urge to see Pancho. I was harmless as long as I thought I could look at him every day, even knowing he was Mary Lee's. But now I'm bad medicine. I could break things to get to him. I don't dare be like this. I never was before.

She tried to wear herself out by putting one white-wedge oxford in front of the other. Her slender brown legs were like pistons under the white jumper. Along the boardwalk, far to the southwest Gillian walked, trying physically to exorcise the ruthless woman who had come to live in her.

Wearily, in the late afternoon, she came back to the Sea Drift Hotel. That she was there indicated the battle had been at least partially lost. Pancho would come to the Sea Drift to call for Mary Lee, and Gillian knew she should not trust herself even to be under the same roof with him.

She told herself that she had come to see her aunt Fern, but it was rationalization and she knew it. But I won't sit in the lobby, where I might see him. She went directly to her aunt's apartment and, Mrs. Dowell being out, closed herself in alone. If he comes up to Mary Lee's room next door I can hear the sound of his footsteps, maybe his voice through the wall. But I won't see him; he won't see me. It was a shabby triumph over herself.

War time made the days long; the light seemed weary as it faded at last. Gillian sat in Aunt Fern's sitting room loathing herself for listening, but listen-

ing just the same. And hearing nothing.

Not even Pancho's footstep. She said, "Come in," to the knock at the door, and there he was.

"Oh, hello, Gillie. I'm in the way while Mary Lee dresses, so I came to bother your aunt." Gillian did not move; did not invite him to come in. He came in anyway, puzzled. "Anything the matter?"

"Aunt Fern isn't here." Her gesture indicating this was small and tight.

"I'm sorry we're not going to be a gang tonight. Mary Lee and I need to have a board meeting." The fine light color of his summer G.I.'s set off his sun-tan. He was nervous; if women are the first to have feelings and intuitions, men are the first to be oppressed by them. He smiled down at Gillian.

She thought it would break her heart that he was kind. "Oh, Pancho, you must be with Mary Lee. You must."

This seemed to have a meaning beyond the face value of the words. He pondered and could make nothing of it, but his ease was further impaired. "I came to ask your aunt what she thought of the rumor that we're going to move out of here. Give the town back to the civilians."

At first it sounded just like any other sentence. Then Gillian translated the sounds into words and meanings, stood shivering. "You mean they might move you before you finish basic?"

No; maybe we'd finish up here and they just wouldn't send in the next outfit. Rumors, that's all so far. Anyway, one way or the other, I'll be out of here in a few weeks."

Knowing and realizing are different things. This was the first time she had realized that he wouldn't be here for always. In the shock of it, she stepped close to him and then away, wordless.

"Gillian, what's the matter?"

There was no air in her with which to make sounds. She opened her lips, and her hands made small explanatory gestures.

"Aren't you feeling well? Gillian!" He put his hands on her to support her, and irresistibly she moved into his arms, put her head aga'inst his shoulder. He caught her around the shoulders and the contact was complete. Electrified, not comfortable, they stood together.

"O-oh," she said, a shuddering down-draft of a word, a sound of exquisite relief. They did not even need to kiss.

Pancho said roughly, "I've got to go. She must be dressed by now." That he had called Mary Lee "she" made Gillian and him conspirators.

"I know, darling." But she did not move, nor did he.

He held her, swaying, as though he would lull her to sleep. "I can't seem to leave you."

"Meet me later," she said.

"Gillie, maybe it would be better if I didn't." But he held her closer.

"Meet me later," she said, "in that beer place, the Half-Moon, on the boardwalk. Just for a minute. Pancho, we can't leave us like this." Save for the clear blond sun-tan, her face was colorless as she turned it up to him; her lips were pale,

more desirable and intimate than when she wore lipstick.

Pancho kissed her as though he had thrown everything away. "I'll meet you," he said, "a couple of minutes before lights out."

"Yes. Now, please go. While I can stand it."

They broke apart. "Oh, Gillian, why did this have to happen?" he said. Then he walked out.

Gillian put her palms flat against her cheeks. She was splitting inside with tears, but they would not come out. She was like a faucet which cannot turn itself. Then Aunt Fern came in.

"Hello, sweetie," she said. "I just met Pancho and Mary Lee, on their way out. Aren't you going with them tonight?" She had removed her white gloves before she saw the storm. "Gillian, are you crying?"

"I deserve to cry," Gillian said. "I'm so ashamed of myself."

"I'm sure you're a great sinner. What can you have done?"

"Aunt Fern"—it had to come out—"Aunt Fern, I love him. I can't help it. And I know he belongs to Mary Lee and I like her so much, but I could kill her for owning him."

"I gather the popular young man is Pancho," Fern said lightly. "I wouldn't take it too seriously. Every girl falls slightly in love with somebody else's beau sometime or other. Every girl gets over it."

"I won't get over it," Gillian said. "I'm like my father."

Fern felt the broken beat of her unpredictable heart. "What do you know about your father?"

"Well, he left my mother and me for another woman, didn't he? I'm like that. I could do anything to be with Pancho."

"Who told you that about your father?"

"Once when I was little, I heard Mother tell her—her friend, Little Willie Weaver, all about it. My father was a louse, I guess, but he gave up everything for love, and that's something."

Fern leaned against the back of a chair. "Gillian, has there been any communication from your father? Has he brought himself to your attention?"

"You mean, has he written or anything? Gosh, no." Gillian shook her head. "I don't think he remembers we're living."

Carefully Fern closed the subject, as though something might escape if she kept it open longer. "Now, what is this drama about Pancho?"

"I love him so and I know I shouldn't, but I can't help it. And I'm not going to try any more to help it."

With every fiber, Fern objected to Gillian's infatuation—surely it was no more than that—for young Pine. There was no abstract morality in her; no feeling against triangular love affairs. Her concern was for the girl. Pancho was a good lad, but he had been claimed. Love was better, firmer, when it was uncomplicated. Gillian was young; she would meet a man who could deed himself freely to her.

Fern had learned some things from life: to keep a human fenced for his own good, the human himself had to

help build the fence. Deliberately she turned on the conversation she had shut off. "So you want to be like your father and give up everything for love? You know, though, Carl gave up everything for love once a week, if there was any call for it."

"What a thing to say!"

"What a way to be! He walked in and out of love as easily as you walk in and out of your shower. Indeed, he did not give up all for love; he broke off crumbs and threw them around."

"But that—woman he took to South America. He must have loved her, really loved her!"

Fern laughed. "Certainly he loved her madly—for a week. After that I'm sure he began to notice what beautiful black eyes the Brazilian girls have. Then there began to be one particular Brazilian girl,

and bingo, he had given up everything for love all over again."

The girl said, "Aunt Fern, do you know that for sure?"

"No. I lost track of him. But people are like jigsaw puzzles: when the pattern has been developed so far, there's no doubt about what the complete picture will be. Carl will be—what do you children call it?—a wolf till he dies."

"And you think I could be like him?—a wolfess because I'm in love with Pancho?"

Shrewdly and gently Fern drove the peg home. "Well, there is this about it. Carl liked difficult love; when there were complications he fell most easily. And you must admit that Mary Lee is a complication."

"Aunt Fern!" Gillian said, stung. Then, restlessly: "I'm not like that. I'm not!

I'd fall in love with Pancho if he weren't engaged." But she did not sound very sure.

Swiftly Fern said, "But still, on the chance, it wouldn't be fair to come between Mary Lee and Pancho, would it? Look, lamb, you're young. Why not resist this *difficult* love and see if you can find yours without bringing pain to someone?"

Drawn taut, Gillian said, "Aunt Fern, do I look like my father?"

"Why," Fern said, "you could pass Carl on the street and never recognize him."

It seemed odd for them to be alone together. For a while Pancho and Mary Lee concentrated on the menus, reading carefully about Hackney's purified lobsters. Hackney's is an enormous old-fashioned place. It had a whiff of that old Atlantic City which fascinated Pancho wherever he met it.

Mary Lee lowered her menu. "Darin," she said, "we've got to talk about some stuff."

"Take a good aim and fire," he said. For the first time in his life he was not quite easy with Mary Lee. It was because of Gillian, and he was not fond of himself. Mary Lee's eyes were blue; her hair was smooth and sunny. For years, Pancho had been calling her his best girl.

"Pancho," she said, "you wanted to marry me before you left Texas. I'm ready to now."

A starched waitress came then with a pencil. When she had departed, Pancho said, "I thought you wanted to wait till after the war."

"Let's live now, while we can. Only dopes wait for everything to be perfect before they marry."

"You'll have all the worries of a married woman and none of the fun—no house, no husband, no dates." It made Pancho dizzy: she was using his arguments of a few months past; he was using hers.

Mary Lee was watching him. "Then I'd be yours. Really, truly yours," she whispered.

This was what he wanted. This was what he had always wanted. But he couldn't say it. Mary Lee and he looked at each other, and down the long tunnel of their glance, she met and considered him.

"Do you love me?" she asked.

For a moment he was angered. If we're in the Army, they ought to put us where women and woman-problems can't get at us, seeing that we can't cope with them anyway. Then he said, "I've always loved you, Mary Lee." And it was true.

"Well, that's that, then." With a puzzled air, she studied her glass of water. "I wonder—if we were meeting for the first (Continued on page 106)



Gillian, in her doorway, thought: I've seen what I came for. Pancho did come! He cares enough for me to wait for me.

Christmas Greetings to the Boys

You are praying that next Christmas will
see you home. Mary Roberts Prinehart

Many Christmas to you all from the
Arctic to the Equator. That's about all
a fellow as home can say to the fellows
who are doing your job - Many Christmas and
all the best luck in the world
Sonic Brownfield

Miss you stop hunting have stop
stop. . . run across Hitler said
Eddie Cantor

Many Christmas Bro
Dad we're always free
You guys stick to
the plan - we're all
We're always going to be free



from Your

Cosmopolitan Favorites

Merry Christmas
Put Hitler and
Go on the tree and
hurry home! *Bobbie*

To Each of You May Christmas Bring
Hope to Victory! *Frank Paolino*

A MERRY CHRISTMAS EXTERMINATING HITLER AND A JAPPY
NEW YEAR ERADICATING TOJO
BOB CONSIDINE

Christmas Love, from a Grateful Frank
To Every Warrior, of Every Race
Frank Sullivan

On Christmas morning hope
you find Hitler hanging up
from your chimney. *Jimmy Durante*

Christmas greetings, Japs tough, and
American boys tough, and
rougher. *W.C. Fields*

You soldiers would
choose us if you knew how
tiny we are. Hope you
still like us! *Frederick Lewis*



Let nothing you dismay



BY JAMES RAMSEY ULLMAN

DRAWING BY AUSTIN BRIGGS

"God rest ye merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ, our Savior,
Was born upon this day . . ."

THE voices were loud and soft. They were rich and full and they were as grating as tanks on a gravel road. They were Cockney and Lancashire and Yorkshire and Clydeside, and two or three were good flat American. Every man in the tent was singing. Men who had never sung a note in their lives were singing that night.

They called the tent the orderly room, but the "room" part was just one of those army misnomers. There were dun canvas walls and the inevitable sand-and-pebble

floor and a forest of warped poles festooned with kerosene lamps. There were a few upended packing cases for tables and a dozen empty petrol tins for chairs. But the orderly room was nevertheless the largest and most luxurious enclosed space that the company boasted, and to it, that night, had come every single man in camp who was not on guard duty: rankers, noncoms, officers and, in a far shadowed corner, the handful of American ambulance drivers who were attached to the unit.

The singing was led by two padres (in the British Army all chaplains are padres)—one Catholic and one Church of England. The accompaniment was

furnished by two Tommies with harmonicas, a staff sergeant with a flute and a second lieutenant with bagpipes. On a packing box between the two padres stood the Christmas tree, an outsize clump of camel's-thorn hung with red ribbons and captured German and Italian medals.

We finished "Merry Gentlemen" and went into "Good King Wenceslaus." Then came "The Boar's Head" and a wassail song and "Deck the Hall." The bagpipes made everything sound like "The Campbells Are Coming," but no one seemed to be bothered by it. Finally we sang "Silent Night," and then the colonel spoke to us. There would be no fighting the next day,

**It was the desert and there was the Star,
and tomorrow would be Christmas. A moving account
of how one American boy spent Christmas on the battle front**



he announced, according to orders that had come up from G.H.Q. None at all, except—he referred to a typed paper in his hand—"in the event of necessary defensive action." This sounded pretty good to everybody, because the Eighth Army wasn't doing much defending those days.

The colonel briefly sketched the program for the day. Then he read Montgomery's Christmas message to his men. The General thanked them for the work and the victories that lay ahead; he wished us, if not precisely a merry Christmas, then at least a Christmas of faith and hope. "God bless us all," the message concluded, "each and every one of us."

The lamps were put out before the tent flap was opened, and the men filed out into the night.

"Proper good show, eh, chum?" a Tommy commented.

I agreed.

"That Monty now. What a bloke!"

"They don't come any better."

The soldier nodded thoughtfully. "Them was carols we was singin'," he volunteered presently. "Christmas carols."

"Yes, I know."

"You've heard 'em before, then?" My companion looked at me curiously. "You don't have Christmas in the States, do you?"

"Oh, yes," I assured him. "We have lots of Christmas."

First he looked surprised. Then he looked pleased. "Good," he said at last. "Then you know how all us blokes feel tonight."

After the crowded yellow warmth of the tent the desert night seemed to envelop us with unimaginable loneliness and desolation. The moon had not yet risen, but the stars hung big and bright as diamonds, and the level sand stretched away beneath them into cold, silver miles. Round about us in the middle distance loomed the still, dim shapes of lorries and armored cars. Beyond them was silence and space. There was no wind, but a great tide of cool air seemed to be creeping across the desert from the north and east, pressing gently against our faces and our clothing.

We had blacked out one of the ambulances, and inside it were things that neither God nor man had ever intended for the middle of the Libyan Desert. There were raisins and walnuts and beer, which had been issued at the mess. There were fruit cakes and candy bars from American Field Service headquarters in Cairo. There were plum puddings and boned chicken and deviled ham and red caviar and Corona Coronas from the fabulous assortment of packages we had received from home. There were three bottles of Gordon's Gin and one bottle of Canadian Club. And there was a runty British corporal in a white Santa Claus

beard which he swore he had picked up off the desert a few days before—"just like it was a bloody cactus or something."

First we ate; then we ate and drank; then we drank. Presently we were singing carols again, but this time with the benefit of close harmony. Then "Good King Wenceslaus" somehow got mixed up with "The Bastard King of England," and the repertory proceeded to undergo a rather startling change in subject matter. "Stop me if you've heard this one," someone soon announced, and thereafter nobody stopped anybody for the next three hours.

It was after two when we emerged from the littered, smoke-choked ambulance into the desert night. Singly and in pairs our guests drifted away toward the dim distant shadows that were their tents and cars. The three or four of us who were left sat on the running boards or in the sand with our backs against the wheels. Once again, after the warmth and animation of a closed-in, lighted place, the night seemed supernaturally void and still. The moon had come up now and was suspended over the eastern horizon like an enormous silver shield. The desert gleamed like a field of snow.

We did not talk now. I sat and looked out across the empty land and picked up handfuls of sand and let them run out, cool and soft, between my fingers. There were no gun-flashes on the horizon, no hint of moving shadows against the distant sky. Beyond the horizon that night were only more desert, more moonlight, more horizons, and the small hunched shapes of guns and vehicles and the small scattered breathing of sleeping men; and still further beyond, the Coast Road, glistening black and pocked with bomb craters, and the African coastal towns sprawling white and gutted under the moon; and beyond them the Mediterranean, not blue tonight, but blacker than the sky.

And beyond the Mediterranean, Europe. What opera, I wondered, had they played that night at La Scala in Milan? Had the bells rung in the towers of Notre Dame and Sacré Coeur? Did good little Nazis go up to bed singing "Stille Nacht" or the Horst Wessel Song? Then, suddenly, I was not thinking of Europe any more, nor of the war, nor of the desert. I was thinking of the shop windows along Fifth Avenue, and the snow on the rhododendron bushes in Central Park, and teetering on a stepladder beside the tree in a living room on East Ninety-second Street. There was a scuffle of bare feet in the hall and the sound of a door softly closing . . .

On the other side of the car someone had begun reciting:

" 'Twas the night before Christmas,
And from Sirte to Fuka
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a Stuka."

After a while we got our sleeping bags

and lay down beside our slit trenches. For a long time I lay staring at the desert and the sky. It was not, I thought, like any Christmas Eve I could ever have imagined. It was not, please God, like any I would ever know again. And yet it was Christmas Eve; there was no mistaking it. Wide and still and—well, holy. Any moment now the three old men on their camels might come riding by on their way to Bethlehem.

What the dawn was like that morning no one except a few unlucky sentries ever knew. It was almost ten when we awoke, and the sun was high and bright in the sky, and I lay there luxuriously, half expecting Margaret to come in with the orange juice and the Times. Margaret, unfortunately, did not materialize, but three fairly acceptable substitutes did. Sitting up at last, I saw that a trio of Arabs were squatting on the sand near by, waiting patiently for us to exhibit signs of life. They approached me, each of them holding two eggs in his outstretched hands.

"Eggs," they chanted. "Stuka meester—eggs."

Where the ubiquitous desert Arabs and their "eggs" came from—and how they got there and where they went afterward—remained one of the great unsolved mysteries of the African campaign. A popular Eighth Army theory was that the eggs grew on a special sort of cactus scrub that was invisible to white men, and that the Arabs were ancient mummies buried beside them, who came to life on supernatural instructions whenever a potential customer came along.

In any case, they mysteriously and inevitably made their appearance—in the loneliest desert leaguers, in the midst of furious battles, practically under the tracks of the rolling tanks and guns. And there they were this Christmas morning, and presently we were sitting down to a holiday breakfast of scrambled eggs, powdered coffee and a jar of pickled herring that had been overlooked the night before.

Breakfast was a major event, but feeling the sun warm and gentle against our faces, we decided that a still greater one would follow. Accordingly, each man contributed two cupfuls of water to a common pool. Then we perforated the bottom of a petrol tin with tiny holes and secured the tin to the outside of one of the ambulances. Then we stripped to the skin. And finally, to a frantic accompaniment of slapping and vocalizing, we reveled in the first over-all bath any of us had had since leaving Cairo exactly three months before. Two cupfuls of water per shower would probably not have seemed a very generous ration at other times and places. That Christmas morning in the Libyan Desert they were a torrent and a flood. (Cont. on page 137)

The Golden Land

Here is a tender,

sensitive story of a small boy's worship of an idol
with feet of clay, and of the idol's payment
for that worship in blood and violence

BY MICHAEL FOSTER

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE HUGHES

IN THE starlight, the deep snows stretched away into loneliness, into the wilderness. From somewhere miles away, a thin wild music, like hunger, like desolation given a voice—the eerie cadences of a running wolf pack—came across the bitterly cold, the utterly still air. After a while even that distant sound died

As Chisholm passed with his unconscious burden a startled voice yelled, "There's the fellow that killed the gambler!"



A COSMOPOLITAN NOVELETTE

away in whispers of echoes among the canyons, and the deep-drifted forest stood in silence. And the peaks of the High Sierra blocked out with the hard dim paleness of their snow fields parts of rising constellations halfway up the sky.

The half-buried cabins on the river flat slept in silence, too. Lost in the immensities of the Western night, they lay in a straggling scatter along the bottom of the canyon, along the banks of the South Fork, like flotsam marking the farthest wash into this wilderness of the turbulence, the grubbing industry, the hope, of the hell-roaring gold creeks below. Only an occasional living window in a log wall, casting a length of dying firelight on the snow, showed that a few people were wintering here, this bitter January of 1853. Only a few. From the poverty of these upper gravel bars, high under the peaks, this camp was called Chinaman's Wages.

In the smallest cabin, so small that it was sheltered under the immense snow-laden sweep of a Sierra pine bough, a little boy was lying awake in the firelight. Snuggled under the blankets and the soft deerskins on his bunk, he was thinking about all the snug things of the

forest—of the bears, whose long slow dreams of summer's honey trees were not disturbed by the wolves' harsh voice of famine; of the gray squirrels, asleep in their nests of pale gold summer grasses in the knotholes of trees; of the deer mice, who came out from their buried runways, full-fed from their little granaries of seeds, to weave their delicate traceries of play upon a sloping snow field under the moon. Warm, and a little drowsy, he thought of these, that his friend had told him of. His friend, Chisholm, who had books in his cabin, and the most beautiful pair of pistols, mounted in engraved silver; and who gave him to think—about heroes like Ulysses and Lord Nelson, and about wonders like the moons of Jupiter.

Gravely, staring at the ebbing firelight on the roof beams, he considered the moons of Jupiter: that, he thought, would be a remarkable planet to live upon. He had mentioned this to his friend, and Chisholm had nodded courteously, but replied, "This one too; this planet must be remarkable to you who haven't been here very long. In fact, we're all still just looking around." And then he told about the Andes; and about strange coasts of Africa; and about the cities of

the world, and the ports and the palaces and the slums of men.

And the little boy could see the lean and somehow deadly figure of his friend swinging broad-caped shoulders through strange crowded streets, and hear the scornful decisive ring of his boot heels upon pavements in the rain and the sun of the other side of the world. And Chisholm, in his courteous voice, with one thin-scarred eyebrow cocked higher than the other one, peopled these coasts and these cities of a planet for his lately arrived friend with conquistadores and painted emperors; with slave traders and black princesses who wept; and with the crowds, the eternally gabbling crowds of men and women who huddled, who pushed, who schemed, who died in final loneliness. "And very much the same, son," Chisholm said, "in a water-front dive or in the bed of your ancestors, and either place remembering maybe the chamber music of Mozart and a girl who looked at you over the top of her fan."

And a child in this wilderness, whose father, a gambler, had been murdered among the huddled shacks of a richer gold camp, could be silent, not understanding. But he could remember his father, in dim patches of memory: the

lift of the black mustaches, the white thin fingers that had touched his cheek once when he was sick, the chain of nuggets and of diamonds across a checkered waistcoat, and the way his mother used to cry at night.

To be with Chisholm was to feel like a grownup in grave and thoughtful talk—no greater and no more just courtesy can be accorded to the mind of a child. But of all the places and of all the people that Chisholm talked about, he never mentioned where he came from, he never spoke of his home, and he never told about himself. Except maybe that bit about chamber music—violins playing, he had said, in candlelight—and some girl with a fan. But they talked. They talked together, and the little boy at night thought about the wonders he had heard of. But mostly he thought about his friend.

His friend slept under a grizzly bearskin at night in his cabin upriver, and his silver-mounted pistols were kept in a rosewood box on a shelf above his bunk. The little boy had made a path between the two cabins, but only his own short footprints were in that snow. He didn't know why his friend never came along that path to visit him, but perhaps it was something about the ways of grownups, mysterious large people given to strange volubilities and even stranger silences, which he could never hope to . . .

Out of the moving shadows of the firelight, a woman came and bent over the deerskins on his bunk. She too was tall, but her fingers had a small touch, very friendly upon his cheek as she said. "Not asleep yet, Barney?"

"No'm. But nearly, Mother," he said. "It's a (Continued on page 140)





To Alix and Jim came the lifted voices of carolers singing,
"God rest you merry, gentlemen."

THE FAMILY ON MAPLE STREET V

IT HAD snowed all night. It was the first heavy blizzard, tangling up traffic, making the trains late, upsetting the mails. The snowplows were out, fanning great wings of snow along the curb on Main Street.

"Looks like an old-fashioned Christmas," said Mr. Marshall, the butcher.

Alix Carrington handed her ration book over. "You just count for me," she said. "You know how I am about adding. Jim gave me one of those I.Q. tests once and said I had the arithmetic ability of a fourth-grade child."

"I don't believe in those tests so much," he said. "I saved a bone for the little dog, and the trimmings from Mrs. Watkins' lamb. I can't send her anything but the main part or she thinks I'm cheating her."

"Oh, dear, how confusing," said Alix. "Her being suspicious really does good! It ought not to work out that way, ought it? What do I get today?"

"Well"—Mr. Marshall rubbed his shining steel knife on the old wooden chopping block—"it all depends. You can save up all the points for you and Pen and Tommy for a small roast for Christmas, or I can cut you some lamb shoulder now."

"We won't need the meat for Christmas," said Alix. "We're going to eat at the Valley Inn."

He dropped the knife. "At the ho—tel?"

Alix nodded, swallowing hard. Lumps in the throat made your voice sound as if you had been gargling for a cold.

"Jim sent a special check," she said, keeping her voice light, "for us to blow on a Christmas dinner and a movie. So we decided, the

children and I, that we would make this Christmas entirely different from any other, because it—because it is so different for us anyway."

"Good idea," said Mr. Marshall heartily. "Lots of folks are going to kind of go past Christmas like a greased sled runner this year. What's Pen hear from her young man?"

"The last she heard was from Sicily," said Alix.

She went out, carrying her packages and bending her head to the snow. She wondered if it were snowing where Jim was, and she wondered where Pen's John Westcott was. You thought of Italy and Greece and Sicily as storybook countries with olive trees and white marble columns and statues scattered like leaves in everybody's garden. You might dig up a Venus when you planted roses any time. That was what you used to think.

Now you tried to think of slit trenches and barrages and screaming shells and waves of attacking parties, and it seemed absolutely mad and crazy. "As indeed it is," said Alix, dodging two sleds going amok down the hill. The children on the sleds squealed and laughed and called, "Commando raid!"

She came up Maple Street. Snow was almost hiding the comfortable houses. The hedges and evergreen bushes were deep with it, bending over. The lawns were already drifted in long dunelike mounds.

A white Christmas, sure enough. Christmas came around, thought Alix, no matter what people did. When you were in school you read little books about this time: "Christmas in Other Lands," with pictures. Little wooden shoes for gifts in Holland; big clay jars (Cont. on p. 118)

There's magic and mistletoe,
much love and a little laughter
in the unexpected Christmas celebration
at the Carringtons' on Maple Street

Christmas Gift

BY GLADYS TABER

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY ANDERSON

Suez Road

**He thought he was on the road to Suez
but he really was on the road to romance**

BY LT. WILLIAM H. ATTWOOD

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN CONTENT

IT WAS almost dark. I'd been standing by the side of the road for about half an hour waiting for a truck to come along, but there wasn't much traffic going towards Suez that night because it was Christmas Eve and most of the Quartermaster outfits were giving their drivers the night off.

Every so often a light would glimmer far down the road where it branches off from the highway and winds away into the desert. I'd watch the glow get bigger, then flicker and disappear as some truck turned off. It was getting cold and I was beginning to think of going over to the motor pool and asking for a jeep, but when you are just a second lieutenant you find that jeeps are hard to get. Especially when you're going to Suez for no particular reason—just that you want to get away from the noise and crowds of Cairo during Christmas week. I'd been in Egypt long enough to know that hitching a ride is your best bet if you want to go somewhere.

Finally there was a glimmer down the road that got bigger and didn't disappear, and pretty soon I could see one of those big ten-ton British trucks lumbering towards me. I stepped into the glare of the headlights and waved my arms. The truck rumbled to a halt, and the driver stuck his head out of the window. I could tell from his fatigue clothes that he was American. "Get in on the other side, buddy," he yelled above the noise of the motor. "This is a right-hand drive."

I walked around the truck, clambered up on the seat beside him, and we started off. I pulled out a pack of cigarettes and offered him one.

"Thanks, pal."

He didn't know I was an officer. I was wearing a Mackinaw without insignia and he couldn't see the gold

bar on the left side of my garrison cap. It was just as well. We could be more sociable this way.

As he lighted up his face was outlined in the glow of the match. It was a tough-looking, weather-beaten face with a strong chin and a pug nose.

"What were you doing before?" I said by way of starting a conversation.

He laughed. "Same as I am now," he said. "Trucking."

We rode along in silence for a while. The road was bumpy and we were bouncing on the seats.

"Yeah," he said, "I used to drive freight from El Paso to L.A. Now I'm driving it from Cairo to Suez."

"I bet you miss that smooth concrete," I said as we hit a deep rut in the asphalt. "And that white stripe down the middle of the road."

He chuckled again. "Yeah, that stripe. And the joints where we used to stop for coffee along the highway."

I knew those joints sprung along our big highways back home. I remembered them full of big-shouldered lusty drivers, gulping their java and wisecracking with the counter girls, and I felt a little homesick.

"It's a tough break having to drive Christmas Eve," I said. "You must be in the doghouse with your top kick."

This time the big guy beside me laughed loudly.

"That's a long story, pal," he said.

"Well, we've got a long ride," I answered, partly because I knew he wanted to tell his story, but mostly because I wanted to hear him talk.

I settled back in the seat as best I could with the thing bouncing up and down like a circus net and waited for him to begin. We met a convoy of trucks going the other way and he didn't start talking until the last one had roared by.

"Well," he said, "the story starts back in the States a couple of years ago. Like I told you I'm a truck driver before the war, on the El Paso-L.A. run. And like I told you I stop every couple of hours for some coffee and a smoke in some roadside joint. Kind of breaks up the trip and gets the kinks out of your muscles."

"I know what you mean," I said.

"Well, there's one of these joints about thirty miles out of L.A. and working the counter in this joint is a girl named Penny. She's small and slim with a mop of soft golden hair and a nose that turns up, like mine. Most of the guys are crazy about her, but she doesn't give anybody a tumble. She's quieter than most of the dames who work in those places, and polite and—well, the guys watch their language when they go there."

"I get in the habit of dropping in there whenever I'm going by, which is about twice a week. I usually sit down at one end of the counter and she comes down to talk to me and pretty soon I find out she only works here to make some extra dough to send her kid brother through college. Part of the time she works in a hospital in L.A. Hopes to be a nurse."

"Quite a gal," I said.

"Yeah, quite a gal is right. In fact, pretty soon I realize I'm falling for her. Which is okay, only there's another guy that claims he feels the same way. He's a big lug by the name of Mike Kruglak who drives the same road I do. Sometimes we both hit this joint the same night, but not often, which is lucky, as there might be trouble. I find out about him from Penny, who likes him about as much as I do. I tell her to let me know any time this guy Kruglak tries to make a pass at her."

"One night a little over a year ago I come into Penny's place for my coffee but I don't see her behind the counter. I ask the chap who runs the joint where she is and he tells me that just before I come in she had a phone call from L.A. saying that her kid brother is in the hospital down there with appendicitis. So he gives her the night off to go and see him. I ask him how can she get there at this time of night, and he says one of the truck drivers took her in. I ask which driver and he says Kruglak."

"Was he the only driver in the place at the time?" I asked.

"Yeah. So I finish my coffee and get back in my truck and start off towards L.A. Maybe I'm driving a little faster than usual. Anyway about five miles down the road I see a big truck and trailer parked in a lane off the highway. I pull up behind it and walk up to the truck."

"Kruglak?"

"Who's telling this story? Yeah, it was Kruglak and Penny. Only she was putting up a hell of a fight. When Kruglak heard me coming he turned around, and that's when I let him have it. I left him there and drove Penny

into L.A. in my truck. She got there in time to see her kid brother come through the operation all right."

"So you married the girl and lived happily ever after?" I said.

"No, I never went back to her place. You see, pal, I was drafted that week."

"Well," I said, "it's a good story, but what's it got to do with your driving a truck to Suez on Christmas Eve?"

"I'm coming to that. Tonight I had a date with one of the nurses over here at the army dispensary. Christmas means a lot to her, just like it does to me, and we wanted to spend it together. I figured—".

"Is this nurse's name Penny?"

He looked at me with a funny expression on his face.

"Say, you're pretty smart for a soldier," he said, and grinned. "But you ain't heard nothing yet. This afternoon my top kick gets wind of my date with Penny and comes over to my barracks. 'You got a job to do tonight,' he said and tells me to take this truck to Suez and pick up some equipment. I know about that equipment. It's stuff we don't need right now, stuff I could pick up in the morning. But the sergeant—".

"Sergeant Kruglak?"

"Brother," he said, "you ought to be in the intelligence. You're smart." And he laughed again, but there wasn't much mirth in the laugh. "Yeah," he added, "Sergeant Kruglak."

The moon was rising over the dunes on the right, and the winding road ahead stretched out like a dark ribbon in the white sand. The truck was lurching and clattering, and the seat I was on was bouncing so that I had to brace myself against the door.

"Look," I said, "what time is your date?"

"My date was for nine o'clock," he answered. "That's when she goes off duty."

"Turn the truck around," I said.

He laughed that queer loud laugh again. "Are you kidding?" he said.

I took off my cap and showed him the gold bar pinned to the flap.

"That's an order," I said.

"Yes, sir." He braked the truck slowly, turned and backed it carefully so as not to get the rear wheels stuck in the sand, and we started back up the road in the opposite direction.

After a while I said, "You'd better step on it. It's eight-thirty now."

Instead of speeding up he slowed down almost to a stop. I knew he was looking at me but I kept staring out through the windshield.

"Listen, Lieutenant, I don't get this. What's the big idea?"

Then I looked at him and grinned.

"Why, you big jerk," I said, "I'm the guy you drove Penny in to see that night. I'm the kid brother. Now step on it!"

I stepped into the glare of the truck's headlights and waved my arms.





*A cheerful note from one of Hollywood's
what is being done for some of the boys who*

LAST CHRISTMAS . . .

They'd asked me to greet the boys as the clock struck twelve, ushering in Christmas Day. As I looked down at the upturned faces, words stuck in my throat. Christmas Day. Peace on earth, good will to men. And they were here because there was no peace on earth; because bad will to men had set the earth ablaze.

What could I say that wouldn't make me sound like a hypocrite? Pooh, their faces would say, and I'd be saying it with them. Merry Christmas? What was so merry about it?

Suddenly I remembered a boy at the Snack Bar earlier that evening.

"There must be lots of better places you could be tonight than here at the Canteen with us."

I told him the truth. "There's no place I'd rather be."

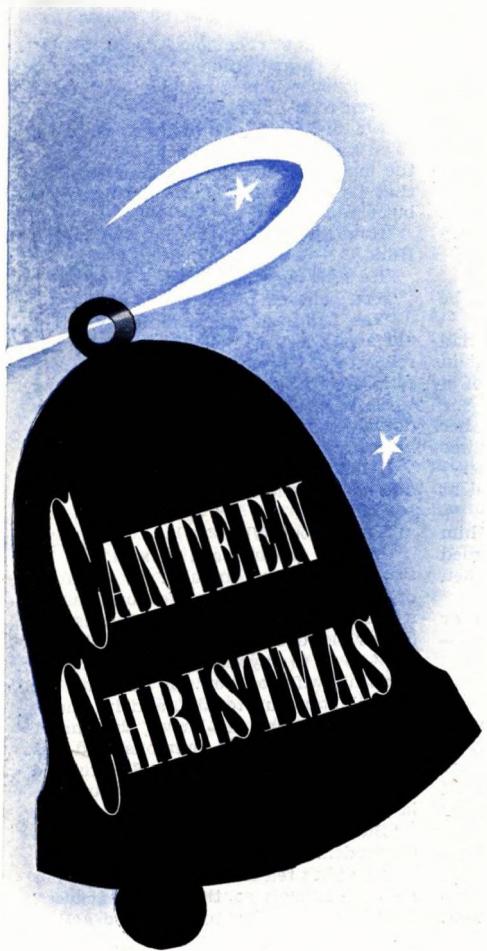
He gave me one of those are-you-kidding? grins. "I'd rather be home," he said. "So would most of the guys—those that have real homes. So would you, I guess."

Remembering, I knew what I wanted to say: "Things being as they are, we're happy to have you with us this Christmas Day. Next Christmas we hope you'll be where you want to be—back at home with your wives and families and best girls, celebrating victory."

Now it's next Christmas. Victory's closer, but not close enough to have made the wish come true. There'll be music and food and a tree at the Canteen again this Christmas, and hundreds of boys. Their uniforms will look the same, but the faces above them will all be different faces.

You can't help wondering about those that looked up at you last year, about what these twelve months have brought them, about where they are now . . .

We're hoping for another difference this year. I for one have my fingers crossed and propose to keep them that way till December twenty-seventh. Los



brightest stars who tells
can't get home for *Christmas*

Angeles, as you may have heard, boasts remarkable weather. Last December proved it.

Clear and cool all month, not a cloud in the lovely blue sky, not even a high fog (it's high fog to the true Angeleno; an Eastern friend of mine called it "just a plain drizzle").

Then at six in the evening on December twenty-fourth, the rains came—and how they came! No gentle warning patter, no time to prepare—the heavens simply opened and gave all they had.

We were frantic. We knew the boys would be coming in droves that night. Fire laws forbid admission of more than

a certain number, so we often have to have an hourly turnover. Which meant that on this particular night those waiting outside would be drenched.

We started phoning all over town, racing to the door between calls to look hopefully up at the sky, whence came no help. Via the phone, though, we finally located an awning, had it brought down and stretched like a tent over the front patio. But three patios wouldn't have held the boys that night. They spilled from under the awning into the street, around the corner and halfway down the block, and just stood there in the pelting rain, waiting to get in.

Every now and then we'd send someone out to give them an idea of how long it would be—keep them from getting too downhearted, we thought. From what we heard, they weren't too downhearted. "Quit worryin'," one marine yelled to our scout. "This ain't no foxhole, and you ain't no blank of a Jap sniper." Which brought cheers from the rest of them.

Just the same they looked pretty bedraggled, once they did get in. How I wished for a few roaring fireplaces and a punch bowl, at least slightly spiked. Eggnog, after all, is part of our Christmas tradition. But Army regulations said no, so we served the coffee and milk as usual and sternly controlled our impulse to apologize.

What really broke us up was the turnover. It's bad enough on ordinary nights, when they sometimes come too thick and fast to be accommodated and have to be entertained in shifts. But on Christmas Eve! And in the rain! To see those backs moving quietly toward the door, feet shuffling a little because the crowd was dense and they

had to go slowly. It was like putting a guest out before the party was over, like rebuffing a child. And what made it worse was the way they took it. Not a scowl, not a beef. "Your buddies are waiting," they were told, and that seemed to be enough.

Maybe I'm being oversentimental, but I can only describe the thing as it hit me. Nor do I mean to imply that uniforms turn all men into saints and angels, heaven forbid. What I do believe is that in all the world there are no better sports than our American boys.

The best we could give them was a makeshift. There is no real Christmas

except among your own. But we tried to make our makeshift as festive as possible. Holiday decorations all over the place. Roast ham and fixings instead of the everyday sandwiches. A big tree. Under it, sacks of gifts donated by guilds and unions and individuals. Eddie Cantor, our emceeing Santa Claus. Before each change of shift, the boys would come up front to receive their gifts from Eddie, Johnny Garfield and me. Some were shy—stuffed the packages into their pockets or tunics, to be opened later. Some were like kids—couldn't wait to tear them open. Eager or bashful, not one forgot to say thank you. For what? I felt like asking.

There were two bands to play carols, and Art Baker to lead them. I was on my way back from the kitchen when the singing stopped me. For want of chairs, most of them had dropped to the floor. Young faces uplifted, they'd just broken into the first bars of "Noel, Noel."

I turned to my companion, whose eyes were as suddenly damp as my own. "Sissy!" I gulped.

There was a queer expression on her face. "Don't look now," she said, "but maybe we're not such sissies, after all." I looked, anyway. Over against the door leaned one of our toughest M.P.'s, arms crossed, a large fat tear ambling needed down his military cheek.

We had some wounded last year. Not many. We'll have more this year. Boxes are reserved for them on either side of the main dance floor, so they can see the show. Quentin Reynolds was right: the wounded don't cry and, more than anything else, they loathe being cried over. That's easy to understand. Sympathy's cheap—too cheap for what they've given.

What they want is to look and listen—more particularly, to feast their eyes on the girls. In varying words, they all say the same thing. Quietly but fervently. "You can't imagine what it's like to be here. Nobody can imagine who hasn't come back from there. Read every report, every book, hear every broadcast, look at all the pictures—you still can't imagine. We sit here and don't believe this is real—a room like this, music and food like this, guys laughing, gals in pretty clothes. We used to take it for granted. Now it's like coming to paradise after hell."

Then they grin, and ask you to autograph the casts on their legs or shoulders.

I spend most of my evening behind the Snack Bar, serving and autographing. They're always ready to forget food for an autograph—why, I'll never know. You say Merry Christmas. The first time you say it, you cringe a little and wait for someone to wax ironical. Nobody does. Whatever you may be feeling for them, these men aren't feeling sorry for themselves. They're taking the moment. They seem to be having a whale of a good time.

This one smiles "Merry Christmas" and goes on. That one stops to talk—if there's time to talk. Another waits for time. He'll lend you his pen or pencil. "Hang on to it for a while, I'll stick around." You know he'll want to talk about one of (Continued on page 138)

CONCLUSION: Carey looked at his wife as if he could not credit his hearing. He demanded violently, "Have you lost your mind?"

Hilda said, "No, I don't think so, but I'm pretty confused, Carey. At first I thought: It's the drug speaking, so she is telling the truth. Then I realized that if she were telling the truth, it was of her own volition. She wanted me to think that she spoke without knowing what she said, yet she knew."

He said angrily, "What difference does it make what she said or why, whether drugged or in full possession of her senses? The important thing is—that you can believe it. I can't credit that, Hilda. What have I done that you could believe it even for a moment?" He paused, looking for words. "Hilda, why?"

She answered, "I don't know why, Carey, except that there must be something—something between you. No woman would say what Maida said to me unless there were."

All right. He could tell her. He could say, "Look here, when I went there tonight she said she loved me; she said she would divorce Franz; even demanded that I ask you for a divorce. And when I set her straight, she threatened to kill herself."

How would it sound? It would sound fantastic. Yet even if it appeared sane and logical, he could not say it. He was a violent man at times, and a stubborn one always. So he rose and looked down at Hilda.

"I won't defend myself," he said. "I've told you there's no truth in your accusation, for what you said to me just now amounts to that. If you do not love me or trust me enough to believe me—"

"I do love you," said Hilda. "You know that."

"So little that you'd believe this of me?" he asked incredulously. "Then it isn't enough; it isn't nearly enough." He went to his own room and closed the door between them. He closed it softly, but the effect was that of a slam.

Hilda thought, in wonder: I'm not crying. I should be, but I'm not. I can't.

She did believe him, she told herself, yet why hadn't he explained? Why hadn't he taken her in his arms and told her over and over again: "This foolish woman is nothing to me, nothing! No one means anything to me but you." Why?

Could she possibly believe him? She slept suddenly and profoundly, as people sleep who have been through a depleting emotional experience, until she was awakened by the sound of her telephone.

Eunice Richey was on the other end of the wire. She said, "Doctor? Mrs. von Kunst is awake and has asked to see you."

A faint amusement stirred in Hilda. Good practical Eunice, with her New England disregard for fancy titles. "What is her condition?" she asked.

"Very good," said Eunice.

Hilda said, "Then there appears to be no necessity for my coming. I shall try to reach Dr. Spence."

"Mrs. von Kunst is very insistent."

"Very well," said Hilda wearily. "I'll be there later in the day."

She bathed and dressed. Her sleep had not refreshed her. Her eyes felt tight in her head, but she was possessed of a nervous, almost feverish energy. She called Roger Spence before she left her room. He was not at home; neither was Mrs. Spence. The doctor, said the servant who answered, could be reached at his New York office.

She called him there and told him what had happened. She was rewarded by a moment of appalled silence. Then Roger said, "Good God! But why?"

"I've told you why," Hilda said, "as far as I know. I don't think she intended—to be frank, I believe she knew she was in no particular danger if a physician were called at once."

"I see," said Roger. He added, "See her again today like a good girl, will you, Hilda? I can't get up till later."

She went downstairs and was informed by Karl that Mr. Dennis had had his breakfast and left for New York.

Hilda went to the office. She had no time for conversation with Jenny before the first patient arrived, and only at luncheon was she alone with her aunt.

Jenny commented frankly, "Hilda, you look dreadful."

"I'm tired," Hilda said, forcing a smile. "I went out last night—or rather, this morning."

"Who?" asked Jenny briskly.

Hilda answered, "Maida von Kunst. She was—nervously upset. Her husband has been picked up by the FBI and is being detained at Ellis Island."

Hilda lifted her mouth to Carey's. "I've been so—ashamed," she said. "But I was jealous." "I too," he admitted.

"But that's ridiculous," said Jenny.

"Why?" asked Hilda. "I mean, why is it ridiculous—if he's really a Nazi agent or even Nazi-minded?"

"But he isn't," said Jenny irritably. "You knew that, didn't you? I don't like the man, but that doesn't alter the fact that he isn't working for the Germans but *against* them."

"How can you know that?" inquired Hilda.

"He told me, that's how I know."

"You believed him?"

"Yes, I did and do," said Jenny tartly. "I haven't lost my judgment yet. He has relatives in Germany of whom he is very fond. He isn't running around spreading word about his activities; he certainly doesn't want it to get out, there would be instant reprisals. But we've had several talks. At your house, for instance, and one afternoon when he stopped in to see me."

"To see you? Why?"

"He was driving past, he said, and he stopped in on an impulse. As a matter of fact, it was partly professional, as he asked me to check his blood pressure. Seems he doesn't like Spence, doesn't want to go to anyone strange, and didn't want his wife to know. He likes me because I stand up to him, and he knows I don't like him. He knows also that I respect his political opinions and his courage, for he has courage. His pressure wasn't too high," she added, "but he's been living at quite a pace."

"But what has he been doing?" Hilda demanded.

"He didn't tell me," said her aunt, "but he said enough so that I could guess. He's been financing underground activities in Germany—through Switzerland, I suppose."

"Why can't he prove it, then?" asked Hilda.

"His wife knows about it," said Jenny. "She should have no trouble getting him released. She was the one person in his full confidence. She gave him a good deal of the money."

Hilda cried, "But that can't be!"

He married a DOCTOR

BY FAITH BALDWIN
ILLUSTRATED BY PRUETT CARTER



"And why can't it?" asked Jenny. Hilda pushed her plate away and rose. "Got to be off," she said.

"Let me know how von Kunst comes out," said Jenny. "Has Carey's commission come through yet?"

"No," said Hilda, "not that I know of. I didn't see him this morning. He went off early, and I overslept."

There was something in her tone that Jenny didn't like. She looked sharply at her niece. Peaked, she thought, and holding herself in. What is wrong with the child? She asked, because she was not one to leave things unsaid, "Have you and Carey had a quarrel?"

Hilda forced a smile. "What sharp eyes you have, grandma! Well, a misunderstanding. It—it isn't serious."

Jenny said gravely, "You can't go through marriage without misunderstandings. I expect it isn't the first."

"No," said Hilda.

"It won't be the last," prophesied Jenny. "But don't let it drag on. Fight it out; come to some conclusion. You're a stubborn piece, and Carey's a stubborn man. You both have more pride than you need. You'll have to learn to meet each other halfway, and to be generous. It isn't an easy lesson."

After Hilda had gone, Jenny thought: I don't like it. The girl's an idiot, and Carey too. She frowned, feeling disturbed, and knowing that she must not permit herself to feel disturbed. But Hilda was all she had, and Carey was part of Hilda. If they were seriously at odds? But they mustn't be! They had so much, and it would be insanity to throw it away. I know, she told herself; none better.

It was late in the afternoon when Hilda's car stopped at Maida's door. She was admitted and informed that the baroness had been expecting her. When she knocked at the bedroom door, Maida called, "Come in."

Hilda went in. Eunice wasn't to be seen. She asked, "Isn't Miss Richey here?"

Maida smiled. "I let her go. I didn't need her, Hilda. I'm all right."

She looked pale and drawn, lying back against her pillows, but her lipstick was bravely in evidence and the brilliant eyes under heavy lids were watchful and cautious.

She said, as Hilda put her hand on her pulse, "You needn't bother. I've quite recovered."

"If you have," said Hilda, "then you don't need me, Maida. And a good many other people do."

"Wait a moment. There is something I want to say to you."

Hilda stood waiting. She asked gravely, "Well?"

"I think I've already said something," Maida told her. "I mean, I have a dim recollection. You must understand," she went on, "I was nervously upset, and perhaps I didn't know what—"

"You were quite conscious," Hilda coolly interrupted, "and you knew what you were saying."

"I don't altogether remember, yet I have a feeling it was something I should not have said."

"Not at all," Hilda told her, "if it was the truth. Was it? You said you were divorcing Franz, and that Carey would ask me for a divorce, as you loved each other. But that you couldn't bear to do such a thing, to me; hence the overdose of sleeping medicine. A very unlikely story," said Hilda, flushed, "as you can hardly expect any sane person to believe that you would try to kill yourself for my sake, Maida. And as a matter of fact, I doubt that you tried. You knew the dosage; you knew how much would put you to sleep temporarily; how much would put you to sleep for good and how much would merely make you very ill."

She was sure of her ground here after her telephone conversation with Roger.

"That's not so!" cried Maida angrily. "I didn't want to live. I wish to God you hadn't forced me back."

"I doubt that too," said Hilda, "as I had a word with your maid before I left. She said she couldn't arouse you, but your address book lay open on the bed at Dr. Spence's name, which told her clearly: 'Call a doctor.'"

"I DON'T know what you mean," said Maida sullenly, and Hilda thought: I suppose I've lost the girl her job.

"You know," she said.

Maida said, "Roger wouldn't believe you. He'll think that it was because of Franz."

"Why?" said Hilda. "I imagine he knows the terms on which you live with Franz."

"What if he does? No one would blame me—especially now."

"You are optimistic," said Hilda, "if you think Roger or anyone else would believe that you tried to kill yourself because Franz has been taken into custody, or if you think I could believe that you tried to kill yourself because of your love for Carey and his for you—as a sacrifice on the altar of feminine friendship. It won't wash, Maida."

"I don't care what you believe," said Maida angrily.

"That's good." Hilda picked up her bag. "Carey, by the way, has denied all this."

Maida smiled. "He would, wouldn't he?"

Hilda looked at her steadily. "I have reason to believe that Franz is not engaged in subversive activities. I have reason to believe that he has, on the contrary, been helping the German underground, and that he did so with your full knowledge, Maida. If this is so, then you can clear him; you can produce the proof, and he will be released at once."

Maida's eyes narrowed. "I don't know what you're talking about. If there were any proof, don't you think I would have produced it immediately, no matter how I felt about Franz?"

"No," said Hilda, "I don't. I think you would suppress it. They have only his word. I've no doubt he asked them to question you, believing that you would instantly make things clear. Perhaps they have already questioned you, and you have repudiated any knowledge of his claims. Yes, that must be so," she added, convinced from Maida's expres-

sion that she was right. "You could have helped him, but you preferred to railroad him into custody for the duration by keeping silent, so you could enact the touching role of devoted wife stricken by her husband's disloyalty to her country; and of course, the rôle of patriot! I have no words for the contempt I feel for you, Maida."

Hilda went out of the room and downstairs. She was shaking with horror. There was proof; there must be. Franz was too clever a man not to have evidence of some sort—enough to convince the authorities. He had entrusted it to Maida; for if it were at his bank in a safe-deposit box he would have told those who questioned him. Maida had it. Maida knew. And she was not divulging her knowledge.

Hilda had reached the hall door when the bell rang. The manservant opened the door and Roger came in. He said, in surprise, "Hello, Hilda. How lucky to find you here."

"I was just going," she said.

"Wait a minute." He drew her into the library off the hall. "You can't dismiss me like this. Tell me what you know, what you think, how you found our patient."

"I did all that over the telephone. I came to see Maida again just now as you asked me to. She is all right; naturally, she will feel the effects for a few days. But there's nothing wrong."

He asked, "What's the matter with you? You look like hell."

"I haven't had much sleep."

"Come back upstairs with me and—"

"No," she said firmly, "I have an appointment. I'm off the case. It's your responsibility now."

She started toward the door, but he caught her shoulders. "Hilda, is something wrong?"

"Everything's wrong," she said wildly, "and with the entire world, as far as I can see. Please let me go, Roger."

He released her and walked with her to the door. He said, "Look, we have to have a talk, you and I."

"What about?" she asked.

The door closed, and he found himself staring at the butler, who stood there impassive but all ears. Roger said brusquely, "Will you have someone announce me to the baroness?"

He was preoccupied with Hilda, entering Maida's room. He said the usual things; delivered the routine scolding.

He said also, sitting beside Maida's bed, "You did a damn-fool thing."

"I was so tired of not sleeping," she said plaintively. "I haven't slept in weeks. I thought if I took a big dose—"

"That's a different story from the one I've heard," said Roger. "Hilda called me this morning in New York; and I just met her as she was leaving. Maida, be frank with me. Why did you do this?"

"To sleep," she repeated. "Well, it's Franz, of course. You know how miserable I have been with him, Roger, for a long time. And now, this—the disgrace; the publicity. I couldn't sleep. How could I?"

He said, "At least you aren't trying to tell me that you tried to kill yourself because Franz is (Continued on page 159)



THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH

NOVEL

Women found Professor Elgar a fascinating man.

In fact, too fascinating, his wife thought.

When he was murdered excitement at the college boiled over.

The police were baffled by the absence of any clue

when all the time a certain signature

in the professor's yearbook

would have cleared up the mystery in five minutes



"Elgar had been drinking. He put his arm around me. I tried to get away, but he kept coming after me."

Often in looking back, Roger Smith realized the story of that summer began when the three of them were talking idly on the path outside the Senior Building. It was not that he had any premonition at the moment; it was just that the three of them were together, and Professor Elgar's name drifted into the conversation, and the story of the murders began.

"No, I don't agree with you at all," Connie Bayless was saying, in contradiction of something Mary Alexander had just said. "I think it's the greatest mistake in the world for anyone to come back to a place where he was once happy. I know that I . . ." Her words spun out, and that recurring sense of unreality came over Roger Smith again.

The two girls continued to talk. For Roger, it was still strange to be back in civilian clothes, in peaceful surroundings. At any moment he expected to wake up with a sharp jolt and find himself back in Tunisia. Often in the midst of a lecture, he looked out at the blank blue sky and suddenly everything tightened within him, sweat burst out, and he clenched his jaws to keep from shouting.

"You're daydreaming again," Connie was speaking to him. "In my presence, all men—"

"I'm sorry." He came back slowly. "What were you saying?"

"Nothing, really. I only said they were moving Professor Elgar's things into your building; then that vague look came over your face, and I knew you weren't paying attention."

"It's so strange to be back here, sometimes I— It's like a dream. A beautiful, beautiful dream."

"Good Lord!" Connie said explosively. "You just haven't

been back long enough. It's like a nightmare to me, and I hate and loathe every moment—" She caught herself. "Well, I said it anyway. I hate it here. I hate all the professors' wives and the faculty teas, and I don't know how I'm going to face another term of it."

They smiled at her. No one took Connie's exaggerations seriously, though she herself was serious this time, frowning in the sunlight. Her mouth was wide, liberally painted. She was a tall girl with dark gold hair, brown eyes, a creamy skin.

They watched Professor Elgar's clothing and golf clubs being carried over by the porters into the building where Roger stayed. Elgar's cottage was being redecorated, Constance explained, and she had helped him decide on the colors. He was a new instructor who had arrived during Roger's absence.

"He's one of the most fascinating men I've ever met," she added. "There's many a gal who'd give her right arm to be where you are, Rog, up on the same floor with him."

"I can stand company," he said. "There's no one on the floor but me at one end and that big Pole Janek on the other."

"Oo!" Connie cried. "I forgot about that! There'll be war. They hate each other, those two."

"They don't get along very well in class," Mary said. She was always temperate, careful in talking about people.

"Look," said Connie, "here comes the Itch." Assistant Dean Wilkenson's wife came along the path, a large busy woman with a reddish face. Seeing Mary Alexander, she stopped to talk.

"Now, Miss Alexander, I'm going to pin you down. When are you going to give us that talk on Australia?"

Mary said, "I don't know. I'm not good at giving talks."

"But we're all anxious to hear about Australia, about the colleges there, and—" Mrs. Wilkenson noticed a porter carrying more of Elgar's things into the Elgar moving today, Constance?"

Senior Building. "Professor

"You know as much about it as I do," Connie said.

Mrs. Wilkenson smiled at the rebuff. "Roger, what have the doctors told you? Anything new?"

"No. Just to take things easy and—"

"Will you be able to go back in the fall, flying?"

"They didn't hold out much hope."

"What do they call it—what you have?"

"Air fatigue."

"Well, I do hope you'll get over it. I don't suppose anyone has seen my Jackie around?"

No one had seen the little boy.

"I'm counting on you, Miss Alexander, for Thursday afternoon . . ."

"She's the one who should have air fatigue," Connie said when the woman left. "She shoots questions at you like a machine gun; always wants to know everyone's business. The nerve of her, asking me about Elgar! She puts such a nasty inference on it. She saw us once having a soda together, and another time we went for a ride, and as we went through Medbury, there she was in the bus looking out at us. I'm sure she thinks I'm always slipping into his cottage."

"I hope she doesn't keep after me about my three years in Australia," said Mary.

"Was it as dull there as it is here?"

Mary laughed. "Well, I didn't know many people. My father's sister had lived there after she married." She had told Roger about it before. She had gone to visit there with her father one summer; he had dropped dead of heart disease, and Mary

had stayed on till her aunt's death the previous spring. "It wasn't so very different, being in a girls' school there."

"Roger said you had a terrible trip back, with submarines and everything."

"Yes; it was frightening."

Roger smiled. There was a reserve about Mary Alexander. She hadn't Connie's gift of self-dramatization. She was composed, cool, civilized. She had a delicate beauty. He stood thinking how unlike they were: the girl he had first wanted to marry, whose refusal had sent him off to war, and the new girl in his life.

"Roger, I must go," Mary said. "I have a lot of work to do."

"We'll have dinner together? About seven?"

"Yes. You'll call for me?" Her light aquamarine eyes smiled at him; then she said good-by and walked down the path.

"She's got the best clothes of anyone for miles around here," Connie said. "She must be lousy with money."

"I imagine she was left pretty well off."

"M'm. Well, that's the difference between us. I was left a poor orphan, and she was left a rich one. Rog, if everything was as it was before you went to war—I mean, if Mary and I were both unmarried, which of us would you have picked?"

"I don't know." He smiled.

"Oh, you dog! You could have said me. It wouldn't have made any difference except—except to my feelings."

"All right; I would have picked you."

"Yeah, you go to hell." She laughed ruefully. Now that Mary had gone, Connie seemed attractive again. There was something indolent and amusing about her, and she was easy to talk to; she was familiar. He had known her so long.

He had been shocked to come back and find her married to one of the new young professors. Though he didn't like to admit it, she was one of the main reasons why he had returned to the college when he had been invalided home. She had always lived in town and had been, in his time, the belle at college dances. He had been sure he would find her still living in the shabby frame house. But to find her married, and married unhappily, chafing under the restrictions imposed on her as the wife of a professor, refusing to assume her responsibilities . . . She seemed to dislike the red brick cottage with the white porch.

You saw her sitting for hours in the Sweet Shop, as she had before her marriage, talking to the students, smoking. The only time Roger had been in her house, her husband went about gathering up old newspapers, dumping ash trays. "Constance is a sketchy housekeeper," Edward Bayless had remarked. "I guess you remember—from the days when you used to call on her?" Roger had not gone back again.

He was about to leave her when a taxi came up the path. It stopped beside him, and a pale, dark-haired woman in the back opened the door. "Can you tell me where to find Professor Hubert Elgar?"

"No, I'm sorry. I can't. Do you know, Connie?" he asked.

"I saw him driving down the road about a half-hour ago."

"Can you tell me where he—where his rooms are?"

"He's moving temporarily to those rooms up there," Connie pointed. "Where those windows are, on the second floor. Would you like to leave a message? I'm Mrs. Bayless. Professor Bayless' wife."

"No, there's no message." The woman did not introduce herself. "I was passing, and I—" She sat back, looking paler than before. "Thank you." She closed the door. The cab rolled on around the semi-circular drive.

"Now, who could that be? She looked like death, didn't she? It's probably just another one of his harem." Connie seemed excited. "I suppose I ought to buy something for dinner,

but it's awfully hot. Maybe we'll eat out. Do you want to come with us, you and Mary?"

"I don't think so, Connie. Thanks, but—"

"No one ever wants to do anything! I never saw such a place as this. I could go mad!"

When Roger went up to his room, he glanced out the window. Connie was teetering on the curb, looking around for someone to talk to. She appeared lonesome. It's not my business, he thought, turning from the window and unbuttoning his shirt. I can't help it.

He sat down to prepare a

theme. The blank paper stared up at him. "A mistake to come back to a place where you were once happy." He sat there dully, wishing he hadn't been sent back.

He got up, took off his shoes, stretched on the bed. A bird burst into song in the tree outside, as shrill, as insistent as a riveter. In his mind, a professor's voice buzzed; the squadron leader was talking to him; then the woman in the taxi was again asking for Professor Elgar. Shortly after the dream began again. The flight alarm went off, and they were running out of the hut pulling on their helmets; it was his last flight, and in a moment he was falling again, twisting and falling with the plane. He knew it was a

dream, but he was powerless to stop it . . .

He awoke with a start. The room was hot and dark. Outside, the sun was dying in ribbons of dark red fire. He got up and lighted the light. It was eight-thirty. His clothes were rumpled, and he shed them. He started to walk down the dark hall to the showers at the opposite end, but he saw light streaming from an open doorway. Elgar, he thought, coming to a halt; perhaps the woman in the cab. He went back, took his striped robe from the closet, put it on. He went out again and started to walk past Elgar's door.

Elgar looked up from the flat-topped desk facing the open doorway. An electric fan whirred on a chair close by. "Hail the conquering hero," Elgar said. "Come in! Have a drink?" He indicated the bottle of Scotch, the soda water. "Sorry there's no ice. Damned inconvenient, all this moving about."

Elgar was a tall man with hair prematurely gray. He was dressed in flannel slacks and a green shirt. His arms were long; the hands had heavy veins. His eyes were dark, his voice liquid and deep. Perhaps that was what the girls taking summer courses found so attractive, Roger thought. Perhaps his face; I don't know. I only know I don't like it. Supercilious. Sneering. "Hail the conquering hero!"

Roger stepped into the room and sat down. Mary had probably gone to dinner long ago. "So they've put you up here for a while," he said.

"Yes! I have to refugee here till the painters get finished with my place." Elgar poured a generous quantity of Scotch. "The windows seem to be hermetically sealed. I have to keep the fan going till the porter comes back with a crowbar." He gave Roger the drink, lifted his own. "Here's to our conquering hero."

Roger looked over his glass in surprise. It suddenly occurred to him that the man had been drinking: his smile was twisted, a bit silly. "You must be a welcome sight to all the little girls taking courses this summer, having nothing but a few 4-F men to pick from."

As they drank the Scotch, Elgar talked. He spoke mostly about the girls. The crop was poor this summer. Mentally and physically unattractive; repressed neurotics. Roger heard him in wonder. Could this be Elgar's usual line?

Roger finished the drink and set the glass down. "I'll have to get a move on. I've slept through dinnertime."

As he stood up to leave, he remembered the woman in the taxi and was about to mention the incident, when Elgar said suddenly, "I understand you were once a great friend of Mrs. Bayless'. In fact, one of her admirers—a particular admirer."

"Yes. What of it?"

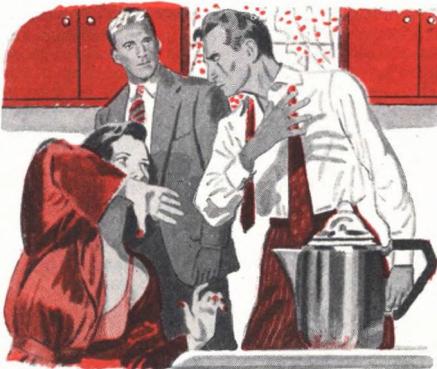
"Nothing." Elgar smiled. "Nothing at all." He laughed without out reason. "Well, back to work. I'll see you again."

Feeling disgusted, Roger went on to the shower room. Janek was about to leave. He was a thick-set, unfriendly young man, with a blond crew cut and a broad peasant face.

"I see we have company in the hall," Roger said. "Elgar's moved up for a couple of days."



Did this spray of white flowers under Elgar's door mean that Connie Bayless had been in his room? Roger didn't know.



Ed smashed Connie across the face. "You've got to do that," he said. Roger could hardly keep from striking him down.

"He is, hey?" A stream of profanity emerged from Janek—the same curses students had called down upon teachers through all time.

Roger smiled and walked toward the showers. He hung up his robe and stepped into the first stall, turned on the water; he thought as he always did now of the crude showers they had rigged up in the jungle. He wondered about his friends who were still there, and if he'd ever get back. When after a long while he stepped out, he was surprised to see that Janek was still there.

"You know what that guy did to me? He flunked me both halves of last year so I couldn't graduate this June. He tells me he's going to flunk me again this summer course."

"Why? Don't you know your stuff?" asked Roger.

"Why? Because for some reason he hates me. I'm crude, he says. 'Crude!'" Janek's full, pale lips curled in an imitation of Elgar's, repeating the word. "I study the lousy stuff!" he burst out. "I know it cold! I ask him to let me see my paper when he flunks me—and he takes off for punctuation, spelling, neatness, every damn thing. Even when I get the answer straight, he says, 'Now, really, Mr. Janek, don't you think you could have couched that in better English?' 'I got it right, didn't I?' I says, and he says, 'The content, yes, but not the manner. Manner is everything.' The louse! And I—" A slow tide of color turned Janek's face red. "I didn't know it, but my old lady comes all the way up here to see him, to beg him to let me graduate, and he treated her like dirt. Like dirt! 'Crude'—I'll show that punk what crude is someday!" The door slammed behind Janek as he went out.

It was after nine before Roger was dressed. He walked to town and called at the house where Mary Alexander was staying. The white-haired, deaf woman who owned the house said that Mary had come back from dinner and waited awhile for him. Then she had left for the movies with two other girls.

The Campus Inn was closed. That left the drugstore, the Blue Plate, or the Riviera. Roger chose the Riviera, though it was late for dining there and the place was crowded with dancers. He sat down and ordered his dinner. The orchestra was playing.

"Lookin' for a girl?" Connie Bayless smiled down at him. She had changed her dress and put white imitation flowers in her hair. She slipped into the seat beside him. "Ed's over there; we've just had a ghastly argument." Roger looked across the room and saw Connie's husband sitting alone. The waiter was giving him the bill. "You know who else is here? The woman who wanted to see Elgar—remember? She's found a boy friend, and they're sitting over in the second booth."

Roger followed her gaze. The woman and a man in a light gray suit were talking earnestly.

"Con," Roger said, "your husband's leaving."

"Let him go." She pretended to yawn.

"For God's sake, go with him. Don't stay here with me."

"I remember the day when you begged me—But all right." She left the table. From opposite directions, she and her husband made for the doorway. They passed beyond Roger's field of vision.

Connie came back almost immediately. "He didn't want me to go home with him." She was unperturbed. "He said to stay with you or any damned fool who'd be bothered with me." She sat down. "You know what he's so furious about? He says I'm starting an affair with Elgar."

"Aren't you?"

"Well," she said excusingly, "you know how it is. We're going into the opening stages of one."

"If I were Ed, I'd horsewhip you."

"If you were Ed, you wouldn't have to!" She added, "Let's have a drink. I want a Tom Collins."

Roger gave the order for her and said, "I finally met Elgar and had a long

conversation with him. I mean, I was on the receiving end."

"Isn't he marvelous?"

"He's the worst damned fool I ever listened to. I don't know how you can waste your time like that. You're behaving badly, Con. You don't seem like yourself at all."

"I'm so unhappy! Honestly, Roger, I'm—I can't stay here any longer. I just can't stand it."

"I'm not going to ask you about it. I don't want to know."

"I know. I made my bed . . ." She drew a large capital C on the tablecloth with the blue glass stirrer. "You get into such awful messes," she said. "Awful, awful, awful!"

The orchestra was playing a song from a few seasons back, and Roger remembered a dark-haired girl he had brought to a dance. It seemed as if it had happened to someone else in another lifetime. All the while he had been with the other girl he had watched Connie—Connie dancing starry-eyed in Jack Holloway's arms. Toward the end of the evening, during the only dance he had had with her, she said, "Darling, in a wonderful way I feel a little sad. Wish me luck. Jack and I are going to be married." But she and Jack had never been married. Jack Holloway had been killed on Guadalcanal.

The tune tinkled on, badly played: "You are the promised kiss of springtime . . ."

"Remember this?" she asked now, with a smile. "From the days of my heyday. Before I hit the skids. Casualties of the war, you with your air fatigue, and me with—what? You'll

get out of it, though, won't you? You'll probably go back flying, and when it's all over you'll marry Mary and have a perfect wife, a whole perfect life in front of you."

"It sounds good."

"Darling, I hope you'll have it. You won't stay here after this summer is over, will you?"

"No, but I don't know what I'm going to do. Everything's so mixed up. I wish you were straightened out, happier."

"Oh, I'm getting out of here too. I've made plans."

Some friends of Connie's came along at that moment. They sat down at the table at Connie's invitation, and Roger remained with them for an hour or so. Then he asked Connie if she were ready to leave.

"I don't think so, thanks. Someone will take me home. It's all right." She was enjoying herself.

He left her there and walked back to the campus alone. Passing Mary's place on the way, he saw that her windows were still dark. He went back to his room. A strip of light shone under Elgar's door.

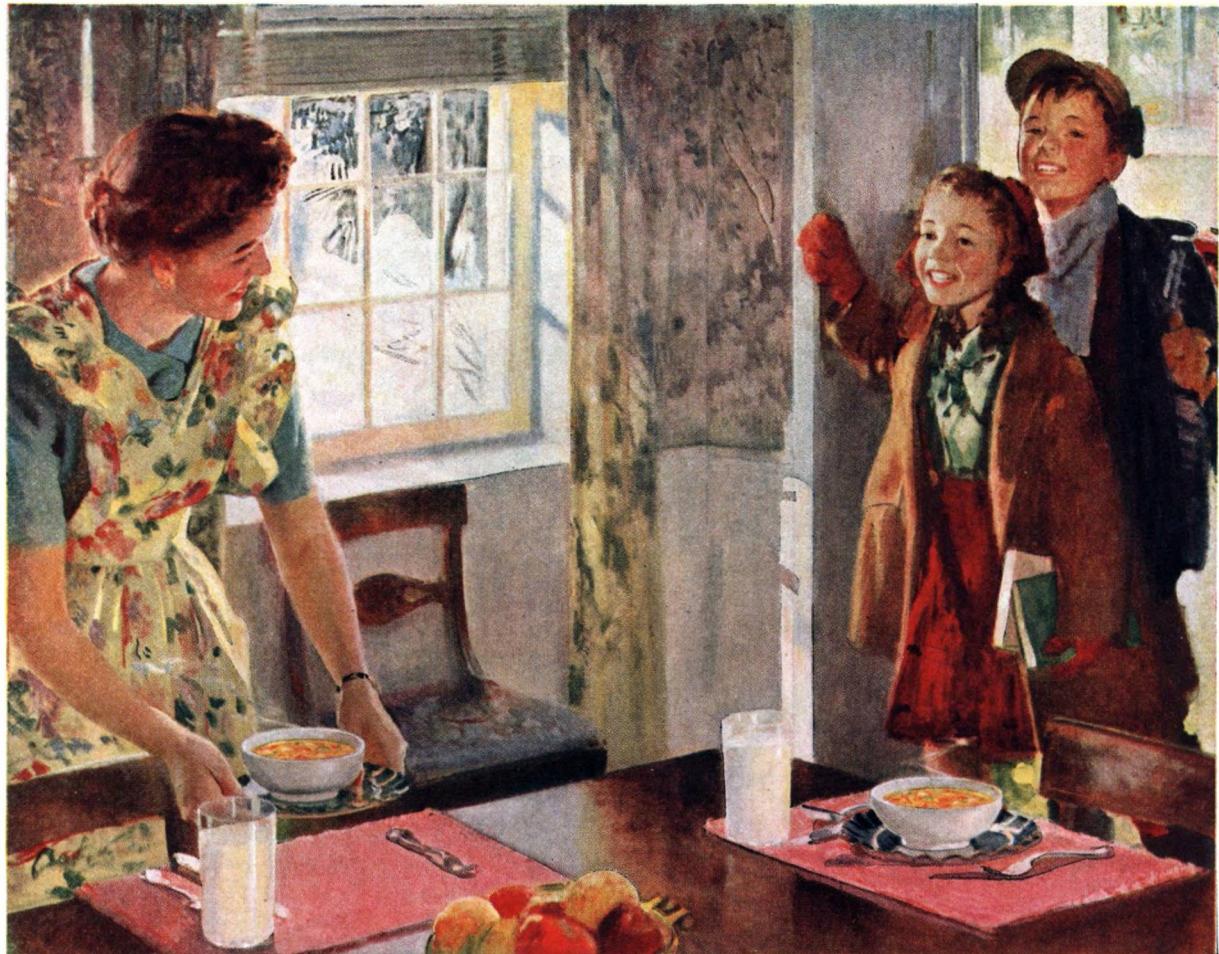
Roger had slept too long in the afternoon, and now he could sleep only fitfully. Once, waking up, he heard voices: a man's voice and a woman's.

It seemed only a few moments later that he heard a sound as if a chair had fallen over and he jumped up to a sitting position. Then he heard a door close. Footsteps went softly toward the stairs. When they struck the slate stair landing, the heels clicked once or twice—a woman's high-heeled shoes.

That woman who was looking for Elgar, he thought fogily, and he sat listening for any sounds from Elgar's room. A few minutes later he heard a man's voice whisper some-



"Look, Con, I found this, stuck in the typewriter." Roger showed her the words on the torn yellow paper: "I was sure then that my wife had . . ."



WARM THEM UP WITH GOOD HOT SOUP

Youngsters love Campbell's Vegetable Soup—

Mother relies on its rich beef stock and 15 garden vegetables

When the children rush in, cold, hungry and in a hurry, that's the time for big, steaming bowls of their favorite soup. Not just because it "tastes good" and they eat up every spoonful—but also because of the many good things that make it nourishing.

The stock, you see, is simmered from fine beef, till it's rich, hearty and full-flavored. And the vegetables are bright and tender—just the sort you would buy for your own soup kettle—only where you might

use just a handful, Campbell's use fifteen different kinds. Luscious, red-ripe tomatoes, tender peas, green lima beans, sweet golden corn and many more—ready and waiting to delight cold weather appetites.

Especially now, when serving nourishing meals is more of a problem than ever, you'll want to build lunch or supper often round big bowls of Campbell's Vegetable Soup. As mothers who know will tell you, it's so soundly nourishing, it's "almost a meal in itself".



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thing from beneath his own window, as if in warning. Roger stepped out of bed and walked over to the window. There was no sound now in the darkness, no movement. The moon sailed slowly from behind a bank of clouds, silvering the lawn, the walks. In some places the shadows were like velvet. Had he imagined the whispered voice?

The breeze sighed, and all the shadows danced. Then the stillness returned. The whispered voice came again, sharp, distinct. "Constance!" it said. "Come out!" A man stepped from the shadows, crossed a path of silver. As Roger watched, he moved away, a man wearing a dark coat over a light suit.

Roger stood at the window, bothered, indecisive, remembering tags of advice: "Don't get mixed up in other people's affairs." "Take it easy. Complete mental and physical rest. Don't worry about anything, and maybe the next time we examine you . . ." He returned to bed, but did not sleep again until near dawn.

He left the room with his shaving kit and started toward the shower room. Thinking of last night—the footsteps along the hall; the whisper outside in the dark—he glanced at Elgar's closed door. As he drew abreast of it, he saw that it wasn't entirely closed. On the sill, wedged under the door, lay a few white flowers. Immediately there sprang to his mind the picture of Connie in the Riviera last night with the white flowers in her hair.

A shock ran through him. He bent and tried to pull the flowers loose. They didn't give at first; finally he freed them and rose silently. Just as silently the door began to swing inward. Roger crammed the flowers into the pocket of his robe, expecting to find Elgar facing him with a request for Connie's flowers. What he saw instead left him stunned, incredulous.

Elgar was lying on the floor in a pool of thick blood. The lamp was still lighted on the desk; the windows were still closed; the chair and the electric fan were overturned. Elgar's upflung arm was slashed from just above the wrist to the elbow, and that sight first brought the thought of suicide to Roger's mind, but the cut was hardly more than a scratch. Most of the blood came from the body itself. The green shirt was stained brown; where the open collar fell away there was a deep wound on the side of the neck. A fly buzzed and bumped against the window.

Roger's stomach suddenly turned. He moved down the dim hall. Call everybody, notify the police; don't touch anything. At that moment his hand came in contact with the white flowers in his pocket. He struggled for breath. Tell Constance first, he thought, and he was amazed at the rest of the thought: prepare her; help her if necessary.

He was standing outside Janek's room. He turned the knob, pushed open the door. Janek rolled over in the bed.

"What's the idea?" he grumbled. "Saturday. No classes."

"Listen," Roger said. "Elgar—Elgar's been—It looks as though he's been killed."

"What?" Janek sat up. "Where? What'd you say?"

"I said Elgar's dead. He—he's in his room."

"How do you know he's dead?"

"I could see. For God's sake, get up!"

Janek threw back the sheet. "How'd it happen?"

"I don't know. It looks as though he'd been stabbed."

Roger led the way down the hall; he paused at the open doorway. Janek looked into the room.

"Someone did a damn good job on him, all right," he said in a whisper. "When did you find—"

"Just before I woke you up. The door was open."

"Wasn't open around—around seven when I went to the can."

"It was open as I came past," Roger said; his heart jumped.

"What're we going to do?"

"I'll get dressed and notify the police. You'd better stay here. Don't go into the room." As soon as Roger spoke, he wished the arrangement had been reversed. If anything else belonging to Connie were in there—anything he could have removed . . .

He went down the hall again, brushed his teeth and dashed cold water into his face. When he came out of the shower room, Janek was lying on his bed smiling to himself. While Roger dressed hurriedly, he kept thinking it was a mistake to leave Janek behind.

When Roger walked into the Administration Building he asked to see Assistant Dean Wilkenson.

"Professor Elgar's been murdered," he said, once he was inside the dean's office. "You'd better phone the police."

Wilkenson, who was a small nervous man, implored Roger

to telephone for him. The connection came through, and Roger gave the message calmly, but when he put down the phone, he was shaking. Now the machinery would start!

Wilkenson had gone to pieces. He couldn't even recall the address of Dean Cotten's summer place so they could notify him. "I'll have to call Myra," he said. Myra was Mrs. Wilkenson.

"Well, I'll go back and wait," Roger said. He walked out of the office and stood on the white steps of the building.

The campus was deserted that Saturday morning except for two girls in short white dresses on their way to the tennis courts. He started down the path toward Connie's house. Passing his own building, he thought of Elgar's body and the fly bumping against the pane . . . And he thought of Janek, smiling secretly. If only Janek did it, I'd be relieved, he thought. *Anyone* as long as it wasn't Connie!

He went to her cottage and rang the bell. The shades were drawn. He peered through the glass-paned door and saw Connie descending the stairs. She opened the door; her dark gold hair was tumbled on her shoulders. She wore a navy blue dressing gown.

"Happy New Year," she said. "Come in. Ed isn't up yet. Sit down and—"

"I have bad news about—about Elgar."

"Yes?" she said mechanically. "What about him?"

"Well, he's—he's dead."

"Dead?" A parrot might have said it.

"Yes; I've just notified the police. I found him." She stared at him, unmoving. "What'd you notify them for?"

"He was murdered."

"Oh, my God!" she whispered. She began to tremble violently.

"I had to see you. I found—"

"Wait a minute." She went across the room to the door leading to her husband's study. She tried the door, but it was locked. "Ed," she said against the panels, "Ed, open the door. Let me in. It's important. Quick!"

The key turned, and the door was flung open. Roger caught a glimpse of Ed Bayless in green-striped pajamas, his hair tousled, and behind him two chairs made up as a bed. Connie entered the room and shut the door behind her.

Roger sat down unexpectedly on the chintz-covered sofa. There were old newspapers all about him; ash trays were crowded. He could hear their voices whispering urgently.

"I swear!" Connie's voice said. "I never did. You were—"

"Sh!" her husband's voice replied. "Now, get this and get it straight—" Their voices dropped, but rose again in anger.

"No!" Connie cried. "I won't! I'm going to tell—"

"If you do," he said, "they'll find—I tell you the best thing both of us can do . . ." His voice dropped.

The door burst open suddenly and Bayless came out.

"Forgive my appearance," he said. "Is this true, what Constance's been telling me about—"

"Yes." Roger had risen to his feet. Connie had followed her husband. Her face was white, her eyes frightened.

"Constance," said Ed Bayless sharply, "suppose you go out and make some coffee." He stood there, dark, sallow, unshaven. He had a narrow despotical mouth. "Does everyone on the campus know about this—murder?"

"No. No one knows it but Wilkenson."

"Why'd you come rushing over here?" Bayless demanded angrily.

Roger felt the blood come up to his face. "Well, I don't know. I guess because there was no one else I knew to tell."

"Were you awake last night? Your room was next to his. Did you hear or notice anything?"

"No!" Roger had been thinking only of Constance and her white flowers; of the click of a girl's heels on the stair landing. A split second later he remembered the man below his window. His mind floundered in confusion. Afraid of not seeing all the angles, afraid of giving Constance away, he repeated, "No, I—I didn't hear a thing."

"I'm going up to dress," Ed Bayless said abruptly. He picked up a dark topcoat that had been flung over a chair and went up the stairs.

The coat! Roger thought. The dark coat; the light suit. The dark topcoat over striped pajamas! With the hope that Connie would say something to clear up the tangle, Roger crossed the dining room and knocked on the swinging door that led to the kitchen.

"Yes?" Connie said. She was sitting at the kitchen table;



All Roger's expectations returned in a rush when he opened the 1939 yearbook in the dark, silent house.

ILLUSTRATED BY B. K. PRINS

THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

she had been crying. "It's awful, isn't it? I mean, to think of anyone—" She shuddered and stood up. Roger snapped the shade up; the sunlight blinded them. "That's better," she said. "I'll make some coffee. Did you have any breakfast?"

"No." He had been staring out into the hedge-enclosed garden. Now he turned. She was watching him. "Con, last night, didn't you—" She motioned for him to be quiet. There was a back staircase leading from the kitchen to the second floor. The hall door upstairs had opened. Ed Bayless was listening.

"He was an awfully nice fellow," she said, a little too loudly. "I can't imagine who'd want to murder him. A thief, maybe. He had quite a lot of money."

"Constance! Isn't that coffee ready?" Ed Bayless called.

"No, not yet." It was not a question Bayless had asked. It was a command to his wife not to say anything. She started to dump stale coffee grounds from the percolator.

Police sirens could be heard whining from a distance, then growing louder, shrilling past the house. The percolator clattered out of Connie's hands into the sink.

"Oh!" she gasped. "I think I'm going to be awfully sick. Roger!" Her face went gray. Roger caught her as she almost fell, lowered her into a chair. Her hands clung to one of his. A moment later her head dropped forward heavily. Her eyes closed, and tears poured from them.

"Hey!" Roger called. "Ed, come down here! Connie's—" Ed came on a run. He was half dressed. "What's the matter?" he cried. "What's she done? Has she told you anything?"

"No." Connie burst into loud weeping. "Oh, I can't stand it! I wish I was dead!"

Ed Bayless looked down at his wife. The tears kept coming from between her thick, wet lashes. Ed smacked her across the face.

"You've got to do that," he said.

"But not that hard." Roger could hardly keep from striking him down. A satisfied smile played about Bayless' mouth. He was still looking at Constance. You hate her, Roger thought. He got her a glass of water.

She drank the water; looked at her husband, apologetic and afraid. "It was the sound of those sirens coming up the drive. They seemed to go right through me."

"You won't have to wait any longer," Bayless told Roger.

"Will you be all right?" Roger asked Connie.

"I'm here! I'll look after her," Bayless said sharply.

"Yes, maybe you'd better go, Roger," she said.

When he was almost at the front door, she ran after him.

"Roger!" She caught his arm. "Darling, you can see we're a little upset here. It's nothing, but there's no use telling anyone about it—the police or the detectives or anyone. They're apt to get the wrong impression entirely! You know how it is."

"Con." He looked down at her. "It's all right. I'm not going to say anything. You can trust me." At a sound, he turned and found Bayless' gray eyes boring into him. The sensation was unpleasant.

"And now you could do me a favor." Bayless' mouth was tight. "Leave us entirely alone!"

Connie released her grasp on Roger's arm. There was a moment of awkward silence, and then Roger left their house.

Except for the police cars and two other cars lined up before the Administration Building, the campus was quiet and peaceful when Roger started toward town. He passed the cottage

Elgar had vacated the day before; it was identical with the Baylesses' and the Wilkensons', separated from Connie's by a driveway.

If only I knew, Roger thought, what Connie was going to say! And her husband too. He thought of her flowers wedged under the door; her husband calling to her in that muffled whisper; Janek cursing Elgar in the shower room; the sick-looking woman who had wanted to see Elgar, who had sat in the Riviera later, talking so earnestly to her companion. Had she returned to the campus to see Elgar? Was it her voice, and Elgar's, that he had heard while half awake that first time? I could say I heard them, and it wouldn't implicate Connie. I only hope and pray it was not Connie!

He was brought up short, shocked at the depth of feeling he still had for her.

He walked into the Campus Inn to have his breakfast. He gave his order at the counter, turned and saw Mary Alexander and Marcia, a stout dark-haired friend of hers, sitting at a table. He joined them. They had just finished their breakfasts.

"I heard you finally called for me last night." Mary smiled up at him.

He explained that he had overslept, and she told him that she had gone to the movies with Marcia and Veronica, another friend. He stood looking down at her. She looked tired; there were circles under her eyes. She studies too hard, he thought: she's too conscientious. "What's the matter?" she asked. "Why don't you sit down? You look rather strange."

"No wonder," said Marcia, with a laugh. "He has that five-o'clock shadow at ten in the morning."

"Yes, I forgot to shave." He sat down. "I suppose I can tell you. I stumbled into something pretty nasty this morning. It's about Elgar. Someone bumped him off."

Mary's face stiffened with shock. Marcia let out a little scream. "What? Bumped him—How? What do you mean?"

"Last night, or early this morning. It looks as though someone stabbed him to death. Up on the floor with me," said Roger. "The police have just come," he added. "I ducked out to get some coffee before they start shooting questions at me."

Mary was deathly pale. "Horrible!" she whispered.

Roger's breakfast arrived, and he began to eat.

"Mary! Come on, let's hurry up there and see what we can find out." Marcia had started up from her chair.

"No, I'm not going." Mary didn't look at her friend.

"Well, let's hurry back and tell Ronnie at least!"

Mary stood up as if she were unaware of the other girl's excitement; as if she were alone, un hurried, moving in a dream.

"Mary, I'll come down for you some time today," Roger called.

"Oh, yes! Yes, do that, Roger." She was looking at him as if he were a stranger.

"And don't forget to tell us *everything*!" Marcia reminded him. "Hurry up, Mary." They paid their checks and went out.

Roger hurried through his breakfast and left the Campus Inn. He was nervous, faintly sick, constantly about to yawn. He crossed the highway and started up the college path, wondering whether to mention Connie's flowers or not. I'll say one thing, and she'll probably say another. I'd better not say anything at all. If Janek says the door was closed at seven, and I claim I found it open when I went past . . . He passed

BEGINNING NEXT MONTH . . .



The Real Thing

BY PEARL S. BUCK

and

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BY MARGARET WEYMOUTH JACKSON



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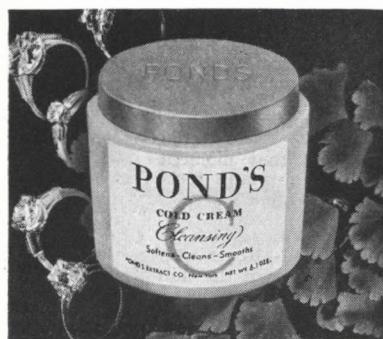
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LOVELY !**

to soften and release dirt and make-up. Tissues off. *She "rinses"* with more Pond's, swirling her white-coated fingers around in little spirals. Tissues off again. Her face feels "perfectly lovely" she says, "so extra clean, so nice to touch."

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THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

the Gothic Library, and came to the Administration Building. Myra Wilkenson almost ran him down as he reached the top step. Her eyes were blaz'ng with excitement.

"Good morning," Roger said, stepping aside.

"Oh, good morning!" She ran past him down the steps, anxious, Roger thought, to spread the news.

"I'd like to meet the person in charge here," Roger said to a policeman at the switchboard just inside the door.

The policeman led him to the dean's office. "In there," he said, and left Roger at the open doorway.

In the room were two policemen and several men standing about; behind them, Acting Dean Wilkenson's face emerged rabbitlike and frightened. His desk was occupied by a tall, thin man with a death's-head topped by almost white hair. Grayness was the first impression Roger received. Sunken gray face; flat gray hair growing in a thin V on a bulging forehead. A gray gabardine suit. A gray-blue checked tie. Then he became aware of two dark eyes looking at him—intent, mournful eyes.

"I'm Roger Smith," he began. "I—"

"I'm O'Mara."

"I'M THE one who found Elgar's body," Roger said. "I thought maybe I ought to report to you."

"You didn't feel there was any rush, I hope!"

"I came as soon as I had my breakfast."

"Takes you an hour and a half for that?"

Roger swallowed. "Well, no. I stopped to tell the Baylesses what had happened, and then I met a—some friends."

O'Mara nodded at a seat opposite him, and Roger lowered himself gingerly into it. He heard himself saying that he was twenty-four; he had interrupted his course here to become a flir; he had been invalided home. Yes, he found the body around eight-thirty and phoned the police.

O'Mara asked questions. Had Roger known Elgar well? Had he seen him last night? Had a drink with him? When? Early in the evening? How'd he seem—nervous? Gradually Roger's heartbeat slowed down. O'Mara seemed reasonable, not abnormally smart or shrewd.

"Anyhow, let's have another look at the room. Doesn't seem as though any clue is going to drop down on us here." Roger smiled in answer to O'Mara's twisted smile, and they walked to the Senior Building—Roger, O'Mara, and the two detectives, Klegg and Anderson. "What's the line on the Polish kid who rooms up there with you?" O'Mara asked. "Was he one of this guy Elgar's students?"

"Yes."

"And you weren't. Did they get along well?"

"Not too well." Roger found that he could not build up a case against Janek; he could not repeat what Janek had said in the shower room. "But I don't know much about either of them. They weren't here in my time; I've only been back a month, and I didn't get to know them."

They walked into the Senior Building. On entering, an identical doorway faced them across the hall, framing the sun-drenched lawn and trees in the back.

"Are either of these doors locked at night?"

"No; I never found them locked."

"How many of you were staying in the building?"

"Well, last night, just the three of us. There are a bunch of fellows up on the third floor, but they all cleared out yesterday afternoon for the week end."

They went up the stairs and into the room where Elgar's body lay. The fly still buzzed against the windowpane. Two men were searching the room. Another detective was measuring with a metal tape. O'Mara spoke to a man who was working in the connecting bedroom. The place smelled of exploded flashlight bulbs.

"Not many prints, chief," one of the men said. "Desk, bottles, glasses, doorknobs—all been wiped off."

Roger felt O'Mara's glance upon him. At that moment another detective walked in; Roger realized the man's footsteps had come from the direction of his own room.

"You search all the rooms? Upstairs too?" O'Mara asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, let's see what's down here." They moved—Roger with them—toward his room. The doors on both sides of the hall stood open. In the unused rooms, the windows were closed, locked. There were three empty rooms between Roger's room and the two rooms Elgar had occupied. The little delegation moved into Roger's room. "This your place?" O'Mara inquired.

"Yes, sir." Roger hadn't meant to say "sir," but his heart suddenly rose up in his throat. His closet door stood open, and on the hook hung his robe, and in one of its pockets were Connie's white flowers. He had to wrench his eyes away. O'Mara was looking at him carelessly. He walked to the window and looked out.

"Well, all right, come on; let's get out of here."

They started down the hall. At the other end, Janek was standing in his doorway. "Can I go out and get something to eat?" he asked. His broad face was sullen.

"Sure," O'Mara said. He turned to one of his men. "You want to take these boys' prints while they're here?"

They went into Janek's room, where their fingers were rolled on the damp pad, pressed on the block of paper. Janek appeared to resent the process, but he said nothing.

"While you were alone here, where'd you stay?" O'Mara asked.

"Here."

"You didn't leave at all?"

"No. I didn't go out till I heard one of the detectives; then I only went as far as the landing."

"All right; go out and eat." When he left, O'Mara stood looking around the small room. There was a framed photograph on the dresser showing a middle-aged broad-faced woman in a farmyard.

Roger remembered Janek's words: "He used her like dirt!"

"Well, all right, fellas; get to work." O'Mara consulted a card and turned to Roger. "I'd like to go over and see these friends of yours—Edward and Constance Bayless?"

"Oh! Yes."

O'Mara placed his Panama hat on his head, toppling it forward over his eyes, and they went out with the big detective Anderson.

They went up the steps of Connie's house and rang the bell. Near the building they had just left, two of the detectives were examining the shrubbery under Elgar's window. Ed Bayless unhooked the screen door.

Roger swallowed. "This is Detective O'Mara and Detective Anderson. They asked me to come over with them."

"Come in, gentlemen!"

They moved into the living room, which had been cleaned and straightened. Constance was on the sofa reading a book, or pretending to, and she glanced up with an artificial look of surprise. She had combed the tawny hair, powdered her face, put on a pink linen dress, brown-and-white shoes. She smiled at O'Mara.

His smile was not as friendly as hers. "Hello, Mrs. Bayless. How're you? This is Detective Anderson. Can we sit down?"

"Surely! I haven't seen you in a long while." Roger gathered that, living in town, she had known him slightly.

"No, I—you know about the murder, of course."

"Yes," Bayless replied. "We were sorry to hear it."

"You were very good friends of Elgar's?"

Connie was about to answer, but Ed carried the ball. "We were friends. I wouldn't say 'very good.' We didn't know him well. We lived next door to each other."

O'Mara asked when they had last seen him. It was yesterday afternoon in the instructor's room, Bayless said; they had had a routine conversation about a student's transfer card. Elgar was acting as assistant dean for the summer. Constance said she last saw Elgar driving up the road in his car, and they had waved to each other.

She sat forward. Her brown eyes were large and innocent. "Perhaps I ought to tell you this: while I was talking to Roger yesterday, a woman drove up in a taxi. She was looking for Professor Elgar. I'd say she was about thirty-four; pale; black-haired. She wore a small white hat and a black-and-white suit. And then afterwards—after dinner—I saw her with a man at the Riviera. They were waiting to see Professor Elgar. At least the woman was, and she was begging the man to go home. She wanted to see Elgar alone. She was afraid the man would get into a fight with Elgar and—and kill him."

"How did you know that?" O'Mara asked.

"Well, just after Roger left, I went over to talk to some friends who were sitting in the next booth to this man and woman, and I overheard what they said. By accident, I mean. She was saying, 'I asked you not to come here, and you promised you wouldn't. I can handle this situation perfectly.' Then she said something about 'go on home before you get into trouble and kill him.' When I got up to leave," she continued, "I took a good look at the man." She described him in detail. A tall man with crinkled blond hair, about thirty-seven, sunburned, wearing a gray glen plaid suit, black shoes. A white shirt, green tie, and a scar on the back of his neck—"as if he'd been operated on for a carbuncle."

"What did you do, Mrs. Bayless, when you left the Riviera?"

"Me? Oh, I came home, and Ed and I talked for a while; we had a glass of milk and some crackers. Then we went up to bed. That was around a quarter of twelve. We didn't know anything, of course, till Roger told us this morning. We felt awful."

"There's nothing you'd like to add to that?" O'Mara asked.

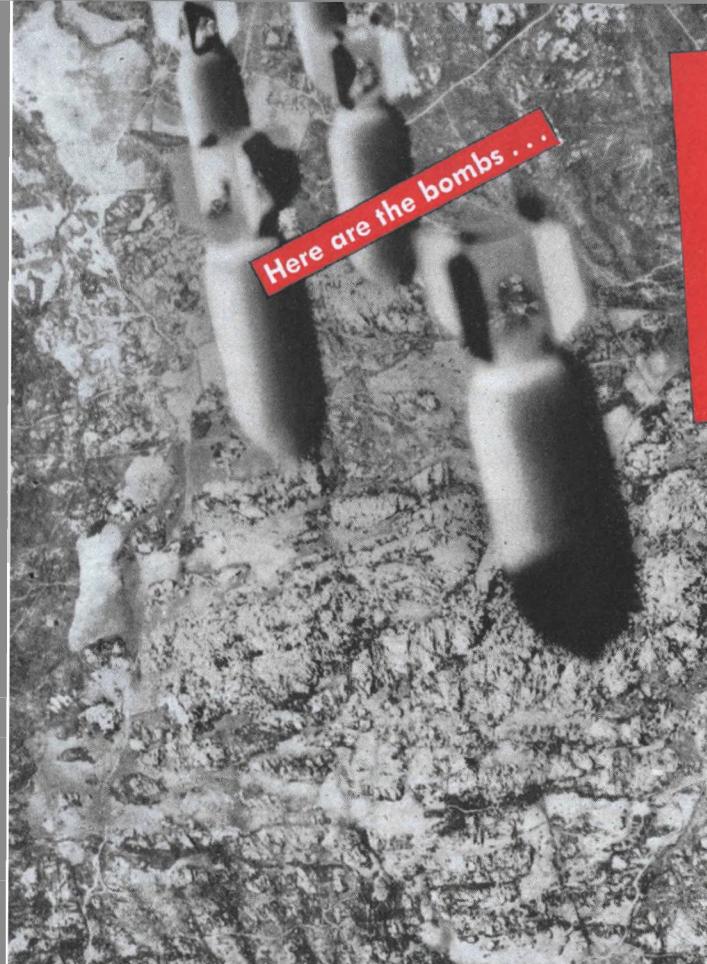
She reflected, frowning in concentration. "No-o. That's all I know. I was just trying to recall if there was anything else that man and woman said."

"I meant was there anything else you'd like to add about your own actions."

"No." Her eyes were round, guileless.

"That's the story, then, just as it happened. You came home, had some crackers and milk; the two of you went to bed and didn't wake up till this morning."

There was a pause. "Yes," she said, "that's—"



ON TARGET

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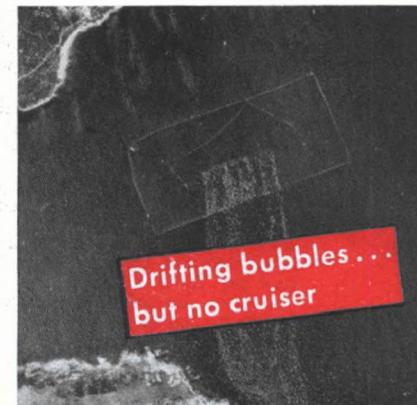
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"safe" behind her torpedo net . . .



THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

"Why are you asking all this?" Ed Bayless demanded. "Because that ain't how I heered it," O'Mara replied, and in the ensuing silence, Roger was aware of a chilling of his blood. Connie's eyes were on the tan rug, but she was breathless. Ed Bayless' face was tight, unreadable. "Mrs. Wilkenson had a different story to tell." O'Mara reached for Anderson's shorthand pad. "Fortunately," he went on, "Mrs. Wilkenson had insomnia last night. Couldn't get to sleep, and she finally came out and sat on her porch." He turned back the pages. "First she says a lot about not wanting to incriminate anyone . . . Well, here; we'll start here with Mrs. Wilkenson.

"I was sitting on my porch last night when Constance came home, alone, around eleven-thirty. Almost at once she and Edward started to argue about her staying out——"

"It wasn't really an argument!" Constance broke in.

O'Mara went on reading. "From that they went on to argue about Constance paying too much attention to Roger Smith." Roger's head shot up. "Edward said he knew she had always been in love with him, and she said—please not to start in on that again, she couldn't stand it. 'I suppose you saw your other boy friend too,' he said, and she said, 'Oh, go to hell!' Then they put the lights out and went upstairs. After a little while their bedroom light went out, but about ten minutes later the argument started all over again about Roger Smith and Hubert Elgar. Edward accused her of flirting and—and carrying on in general. She came right back at him. She said she hated him and wished he was dead. So he told her to get out, to go to her lover. And she did. I mean, she did go out. She came downstairs, went down the path and started to walk along on the grass in front of my house. She went up toward the Senior Building—in that direction." O'Mara looked up. "How's that sound to you, Mrs. Bayless?"

Constance was about to speak, but Ed Bayless cut in. "Don't say anything! Until we get a lawyer——"

"If you don't mind, I'll go on," O'Mara said. "About ten or fifteen minutes later Edward came down with a topcoat over his pajamas, and he left the house and walked toward the Senior Building too. About fifteen minutes after that he came back alone and went into the house. I didn't see Constance come back at all. That's about the end of the testimony. Feel like adding anything now?"

Constance looked to her husband for guidance. He sat silent, his hands tightly locked.

"Yes, I—I'll tell you what happened," Connie said. "I—we—well, naturally we didn't want to tell you any of this because it doesn't concern the murder at all." She was going carefully, thinking ahead. "It just concerns the two of us. I can tell you exactly what I did. I did leave the house as Myra Wilkenson said. And I did go up toward the Senior Building, but I didn't go inside. I only wanted to see if Elgar's lights were lighted; to see if that woman was there. The lights were lighted, but the shades were pulled down. I turned around then and came home along the back path. I came past the Library and the Wilkensons' back yard into ours, and I sat in the swing and smoked a few more cigarettes. And that's all I did."

O'Mara's smile was tired. "You sat there all night?"

"No, I came in the kitchen way as soon as I heard Ed come back." She caught herself. Something like fright came into her face. She hadn't intended to mention him.

"What'd you say to each other?"

"Nothing. I went up to my room and went to sleep."

"And you, Mr. Bayless?"

Slowly, guardedly, Ed Bayless began to speak. "As my wife told you, I left the house. I regretted the—the argument we had had. It wasn't nearly as bad as Myra Wilkenson would lead you to believe. Still, as I say, I regretted it. I went out to find my wife and tell her so. I walked as far as the Library, and that's as far as I went. There's a stone bench there, and I sat down to cool off, think things over. I never went near the Senior Building."

Roger stared at him. He saw again the figure in the dark coat beneath his window. He heard the sharp whisper: "Constance!" He recalled the click of high heels on the stairs . . . My God, how they can lie! he thought.

"While you were sitting there, you didn't see your wife?"

"No. As she told you, she'd gone home by the back path."

"And neither of you was inside that building?" They both said they were not. "And neither of you saw anyone else around? One of you was sitting near the front path and one at the back——"

Roger couldn't tell whether O'Mara believed them or not, but he made them sound ridiculous.

"No," they said, and Constance added. "I thought someone went past me while I was sitting in the swing, but the hedge is so high and thick I wasn't sure. It might have been a cat or a dog. I didn't pay much attention."

O'Mara checked back on their stories. It was three o'clock before he got up to leave.

Shortly before dinner that night O'Mara walked into Roger's

room and sat down on the bed. "Got any idea where your pal Janek is?" he asked.

"Maybe gone out to eat," Roger said.

"He told me Elgar's door was closed when he got up this morning, yet when you went down the hall it was open."

"Th—that's right." Roger swallowed.

"They fix the time of the murder between midnight and one. The murderer—or maybe someone else—wipes away all the fingerprints—I think with the damp towel we found in the washbasin in the bedroom. Whoever it was cleans up, goes out—and if we can believe Janek—closes the door. An hour and a half later you find the door open. You're sure, pal, you didn't go in there and clean up?"

"Of course not! What would I be—would I wipe off the bottle and glasses he and I used?"

"Would you?" O'Mara smiled. "I don't know, but that's what I'm going to find out. It's too bad you didn't have an attack of insomnia too last night, like old lady Wilkenson. You might have seen and heard a lot."

I saw Connie's flowers; heard her footprint; heard Ed call to her . . .

"Boss, you want to see that big Pole?" Anderson stuck his head in the door.

"Yeah." Janek came resentfully into the room. "What were you doing in Elgar's room this morning, Janek?" asked O'Mara.

"Wasn't in there," he said stolidly. "I was in my own room."

"I wonder how you can explain this, Janek: your examination paper is missing from that pack that was on Elgar's desk. Wilkenson took them over to Bayless to have him finish correcting them, and yours was gone."

"I took the exam. That's all I know. I took the exam."

"And maybe you took the exam paper and about five others from the stack and tore them up."

C'lor suffused Janek's face. "No."

"You know what mark you got in that exam? You got a fifty-six. There was a list Elgar made up of the papers he had corrected, and yours was there. Fifty-six."

"I didn't touch it." Janek persisted.

"I've been thinking over something you said. You said you were in your room, and you heard the sirens."

"Well, no. I was in the can when I heard the sirens."

"Oh. How long had you been in there?"

"Bout four, five minutes. Then I heard the sirens, and I came right out. I saw the detective leaving Elgar's——" A slow flush turned his face red. He looked bewildered. "Wait, that's not how it was."

"Let me tell you how I think it was," O'Mara said. "You were alone on the floor with Elgar's body, and you got to thinking about your examination paper. So you walked into the room and went through the papers. You saw the fifty-six on yours and got the bright idea of destroying it. You took five of them, because to take one might look funny. And while you're there, you hear the sirens and start tearing the papers up."

"No!" He stood there, bull-necked, obstinate.

"Now, look, Janek: I don't give a damn about examinations. If that's all you had to do with this, say so. Don't have me chasing down stuff that has nothing to do with this murder."

"Swear to God!" The words burst out of Janek. "I took the papers. I tore them up. I swear that's all I did."

"You didn't touch anything else? Didn't remove any fingerprints?"

"No. Nothing. That's all I did. I threw the papers down the toilet. First I didn't know what to do with them. Then I started to tear them up, small as I could, and I carried them across the hall and threw them down the toilet. I heard the sirens coming up the path. I flushed the toilet and ran out and saw the detective coming out of Elgar's room." Again there came that look of stunned amazement.

O'Mara got up and grabbed him by the front of the shirt. "Which detective? You're lying! Which detective?"

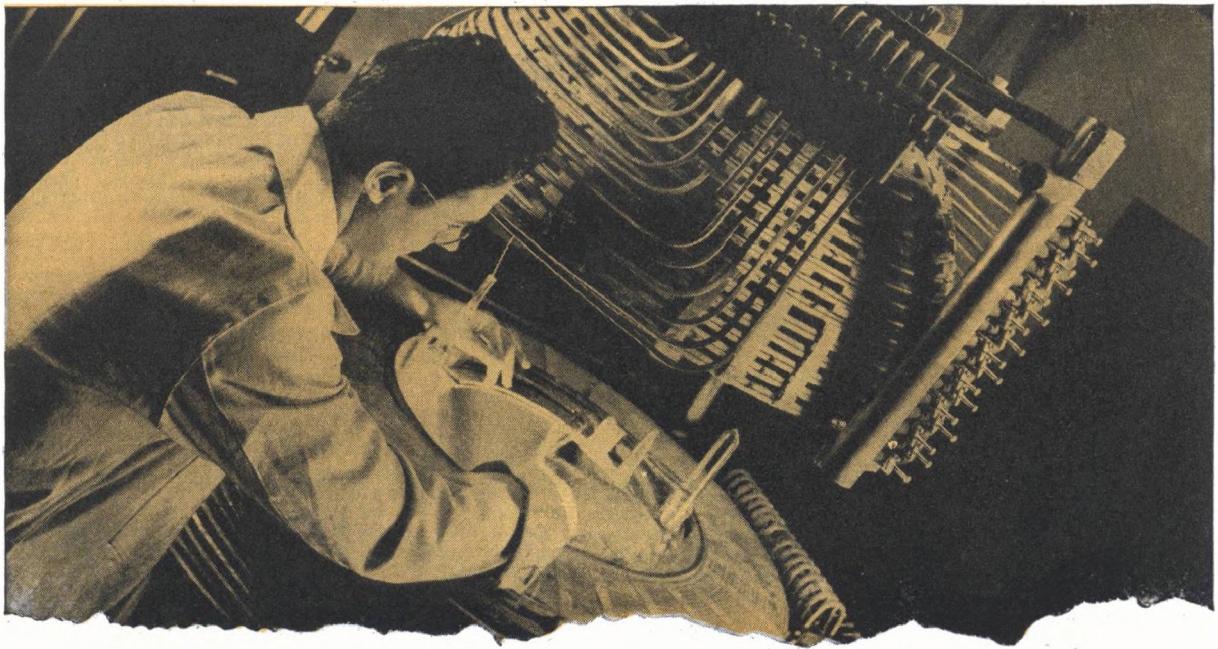
"The one in—the one who was up here!" Janek repeated, though he must have known then that he was wrong. His voice had gone high. "The one in the light gray hat and the gray-checked suit."

"You fool!" O'Mara cried. "Why didn't you say so this morning?"

"You mean no detective was here that soon?" Roger asked.

"That's what I mean." O'Mara said in disgust. Then he asked Janek to describe exactly what he had seen. Janek described his own excitement on hearing the sirens. Rushing out of the shower room, he couldn't tell whether he had heard or seen the man leaving Elgar's room, but he was positive the man had come from there. The only thought in his excited and guilty mind was that the man must have been a detective. The man was starting down the stairs when Janek got his first good look at him.

A tall man, maybe six feet two. Good build. Sunburned. Wearing a gray felt hat, light gray-checked or plaid suit, a white shirt. No, Janek didn't notice any scar on his neck. The



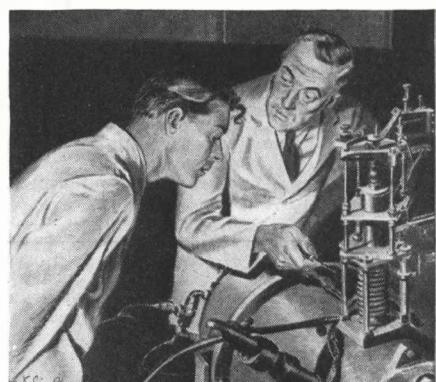
Helping the tire maker: Pictured here is a laboratory model of the new Westinghouse-developed "mass spectrometer," an adaptation of which analyzes gases with incredible swiftness and accuracy. Right now, one of the most important of its many uses is speeding up tremendously a step in the making of synthetic rubber.

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THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

man, he thought, was putting a handkerchief in his hip pocket as he went hurriedly down the stairs. "I said, 'Hey, d'you find out anything?'" Janek reported. "He didn't answer. He kept right on going."

"Right on going," O'Mara repeated, "and he's had a full day to go in, whoever the hell he is." He looked at Roger. "And while all this was going on you were visiting the Baylesses and having breakfast with your girl! Incidentally, either of you boys been entertaining your girl friends up here recently?"

"Me?" Janek said. "No."

Roger shook his head. "Why?" he asked.

"Because one of my men picked this up." From a small envelope he took out a single white imitation flower and held it on the palm of his hand. It looked like the individual bell of a hyacinth. In the throat it was pale blue. "Could either of you identify it?"

"Nope," said Janek promptly. "Never saw it before."

"Neither did I," Roger said, his voice sounding false to his own ears.

"Well, that's all I wanted to know," O'Mara stood up and put the blossom back into the envelope. "I'll be seeing you." He went out and down the hall.

When Janek left a few minutes later, Roger went over and leaned on the window sill, struggling against a leaden depression. Why? he wondered. Because Constance had been in Elgar's room last night and was now lying about it? She couldn't have done it, he kept insisting; it must have been the man in the gray suit or Ed—Ed Bayless. But those white flowers, and the high heels clicking . . . Even so, he thought, whether she had done it or not, he would not want her to suffer for it.

Crossing to the bureau, he took the white flowers which he had hidden under some shirts. A faint smell of perfume clung to them. He examined the blossoms; each was like the bell of a hyacinth. The door swung suddenly open behind him.

"Hey, how about having dinner with me?" O'Mara asked.

Roger gave a convulsive start. He had never come so close to panic in his life. He kept his back turned.

"I've already made a date." He thought surely O'Mara must hear the loud, swift beating of his heart. Keeping the flowers hidden from view, he stepped into the closet. He was shaking. There was no place to hide the flowers! He crammed them into his pocket, put on a jacket and stepped out, red-faced, perspiring. "I have a date to take a girl out to dinner," he told O'Mara. "Otherwise, I'd——"

"Okay." O'Mara smiled and closed the door.

Roger sat down on the bed, mopped his face. O'Mara must have noticed something was wrong! He couldn't be that unobservant. He wasn't; that was the whole answer. It suited his purpose to see some things and not to notice others. O'Mara wasn't as friendly as he pretended to be; Roger was sure of that now. Then he suspects me of some complicity, he thought: he's playing me for a fool. I'll play his game-friendliness—but if Connie is guilty, I won't be the one who gives her away.

He went downstairs and out into the summer twilight. It still seemed incongruous, almost impossible that an awful act of violence had been perpetrated in such a peaceful quiet backwater by anyone he knew.

The house where Mary Alexander was staying was opposite the smaller gate of the college. As Roger went up the path Mary was sitting on the veranda in a white dress talking to the deaf woman, who did not ordinarily rent her rooms to students. Roger suspected she charged Mary heavily for them.

Mary stood up and came down the steps, giving Roger her hand. They said good-by to the woman on the veranda.

"Where would you like to go for dinner?" Roger asked.

"I don't know." Across the highway, the high entrance posts of the college loomed up. "From my windows, I've seen all kinds of activity going on. Police cars coming and going, and—detectives, I guess. Darling, tell me everything that's happened. Who was questioned, and what did they say, and what was found out?"

"Well, for one, I was questioned, but I didn't know very much—not anything, in fact. I was—asleep. Then Connie and her husband were questioned, and it seems Wilkenson's wife testified against them. They weren't going to say anything, but they had a hell of a fight last night, and Connie cleared out. Then he followed her. They were both out about the time Elgar was killed, though they—though Connie didn't have anything to do with it, of course. Then they had Janek on the mat." He described the scene.

"And they still don't know who the woman is or the man in the gray suit?"

"I don't know whether O'Mara knows or not."

They had arrived at the Riviera. Roger opened the door, and they went in.

"Do you know?" Mary said as they sat down. "I didn't believe you when you said you didn't know much—not any-

thing, in fact. You're not a convincing liar, are you? You didn't tell the detective all you knew!"

"No. I didn't want——"

"Are you going to tell me all you know?" She smiled.

"Mary, I don't want to implicate someone I know is innocent."

The smile faded from her lips. "Well, anyway, I know now whom you're trying to protect. It wouldn't be anyone but——" She didn't say Constance's name, but added, "I can't blame you. You're fond of her."

"I'm sorry for her," he said. "She may have done something stupid; probably has, but you know her too. You know she couldn't do anything like that."

The waiter came and took their order. When he had gone, Mary closed the menu.

"Roger, how far would you go in shielding her?"

"As far as I could."

"No matter what?"

He looked down. "Yes. No matter what."

"You were once in love with her, weren't you?"

"Yes, I was." He looked up. "Don't you think I'm in love with you now?"

"Are you? I don't know. Something like this comes along, and I——" She turned her head. "Here's Marcia. And Ronnie."

The two girls stopped at the table on their way out. Ronnie was small and forward and mistakenly cute. Her hair was red and frizzy. She started asking Roger about the murder. He stood up.

"Can I bust in here a minute?" They turned, and there was O'Mara, tall, thin, skeletal. Roger introduced him to the girls, and Marcia and Ronnie began to ply him with excited questions.

"Marcia and I spent all afternoon fixing up each other's alibis," Ronnie said. "You'll never be able to trap us."

"Seriously," Marcia said. "we were just trying—you know, in case we ever had to account for our time. And it was surprising. We came home from the movies with Mary around eleven-thirty; we walked home from her place, and we didn't see one living soul! We'd just have to depend on each other."

"And how about you?" O'Mara asked Mary Alexander. He was smiling. "How's your alibi for last night?"

"My alibi? I hadn't even thought of one."

O'Mara was studying her face. "You were one of Elgar's students, weren't you?"

"Oh, the three of us were!" Ronnie cried, but O'Mara's attention was not distracted.

"I'd like to talk to you," he said to Mary, "to get a line on what Elgar was like. In the classroom, I mean."

"Of course," she said. "I'd be glad to tell you."

O'Mara turned to Roger and asked which table or booth the unknown man and woman had occupied the night before. Roger pointed it out, and O'Mara walked over, spoke to the headwaiter. O'Mara sat in the booth, and the small, middle-aged Italian waiter hurried over. They began a conversation. The waiter screwed his face up, trying to remember something. In a moment he was talking rapidly, gesticulating.

"Oh, he's marvelous!" Ronnie said of O'Mara, and then, with a shiver: "But I'm glad he's not on my trail."

"You'd love it, and you know it," Marcia said. "Come on and leave the love birds alone."

The two girls left, and the waiter brought the dinners. Roger noticed that Mary could scarcely eat.

"You're not sick, are you?" he asked.

"No. I'm—I guess I'm upset about the murder. It's such a horrible thing! The thought that whoever did it is still walking around!"

"You shouldn't let things unnerve you so."

"I can't help it." Then she smiled. "I'm really all right. It's silly of me. Let's talk about something else. Tomorrow's what? Sunday. Could we take a drive—maybe to the shore?"

"I'd have to ask O'Mara if I'm free to leave here."

"He seems rather decent. Friendly."

"I'm afraid he only seems that way. I think he's trying to find out what I——" Roger stopped.

"What you still haven't told. Won't you tell me what it is?"

"No," he said, laughing. "I don't want you thinking about it. It has a bad effect on your nerves. Shall we dance?"

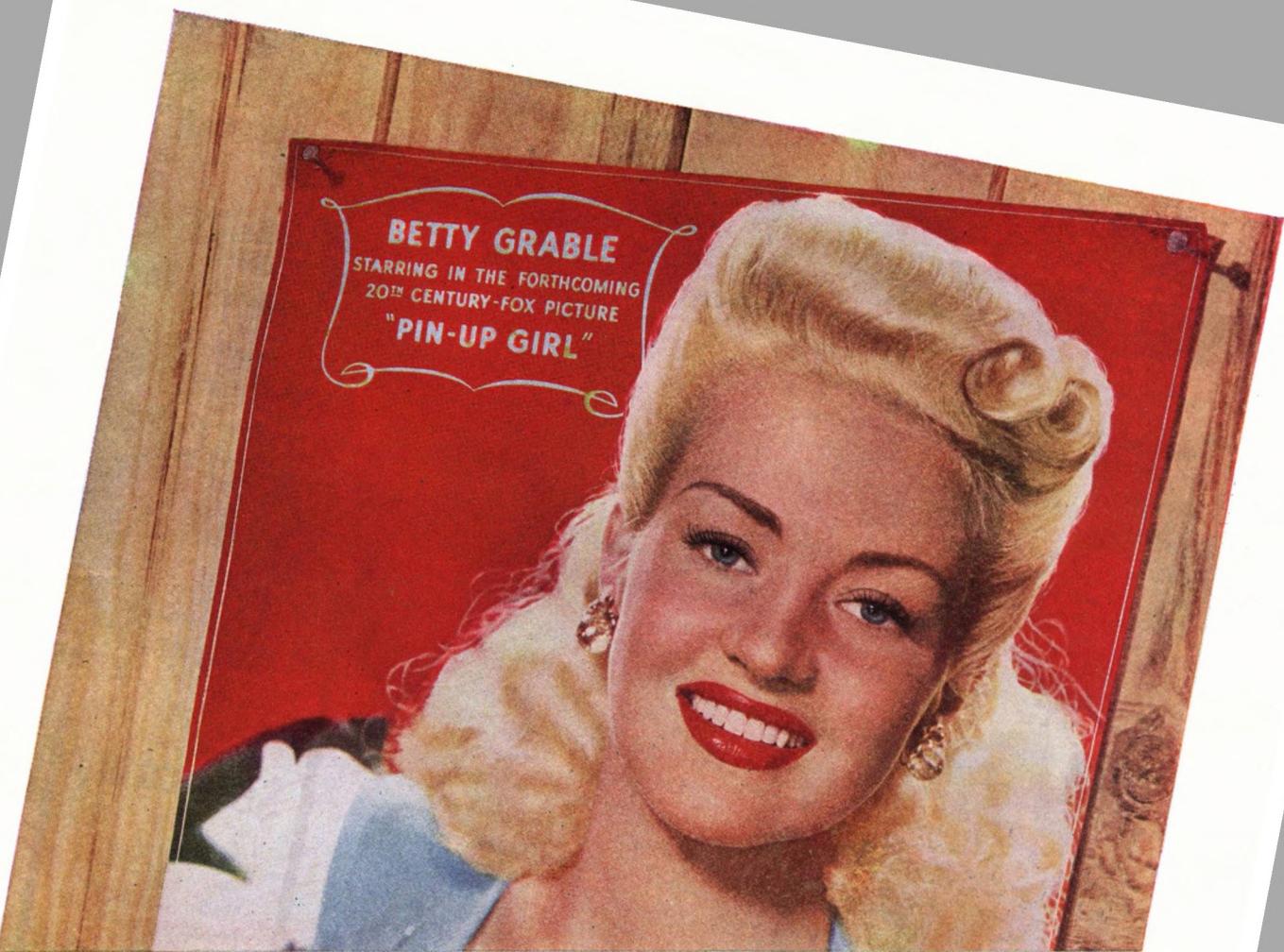
He called for her the next afternoon to say that they couldn't go for a drive. O'Mara had told him to stay in the vicinity.

"That's too bad," Mary said. "But we'll go for a walk in back of the college where the stream is. Is it very hot?"

"Roasting."

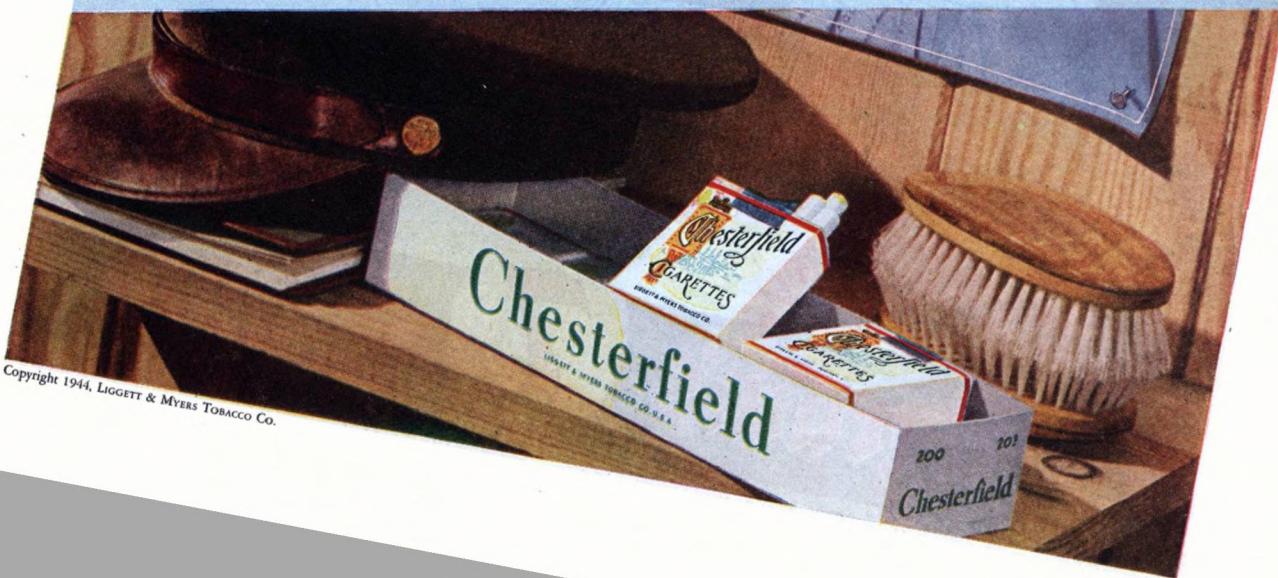
"Then I'd better change my dress. I won't be a minute."

He sat on the veranda to wait. In the large house next door a radio was tuned in on the ball game; there came the murmur of voices at dinner, the smell of roast beef and the nearer spicy scent of flowers. Bees droned and buzzed. Summertime, he thought. And a man stabbed to death. And Constance lying, afraid, yet going along with her husband, the two of them distrusting each other, and in it up to their necks.



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To A Man Amongst Men

I never could express in words
how much I think of Bob,
But Christmas Eve I handed him
a gift that did the job...
For when he stripped the wrappings off
and saw that "Seven" blend,
He grinned and said, "You always were
an understanding friend!"

We didn't speak again until,
with brimming glasses raised,
We stood before the fireplace
where Christmas welcome blazed...
"You know," said I, "This Seven Crown
sure has a taste that's rare"—
Said Bob, "They blend their savory best
for pals like us to share!"



Old friendships are mellowed with a Yuletide gift of this
savory Seagram's "7." Richly satisfying . . . a blend of
Seagram's noblest reserves — smoothed and taste-toned with
soft-stilled, grain neutral spirits. So that none who wish it
may go without, won't you ration your purchases, please!

MOST PLEASING *Today*
MOST PLEASING *Tomorrow*

Seagram's 7 Crown

Seagram's 7 Crown Blended Whiskey. 65% grain neutral spirits. 86.8 Proof. Seagram-Distillers Corporation, Chrysler Building, New York

Mary came out on the porch in a fresh, cool-looking dress. He got to his feet, and they stepped down into the sunlight.

On their way up the main path, they saw Constance leave her cottage in Anderson's custody. She was carrying something dark blue over her arm. They walked toward the Administration Building.

"More questioning," Roger said. Ed Bayless had come out on the porch. His thin face was bitter. Seeing Roger and Mary, he nodded and went inside.

"He looks angry about something."

"Yes." Roger was watching Connie's figure far ahead. Myra Wilkenson was also watching from a deck chair on her side lawn; her face was righteous above the Sunday paper. Roger and Mary passed the Library and turned off at the path to the Senior Building. A group of townspeople were standing there looking up at the closed windows of the second floor. Roger took Mary's arm and they skirted the building; walked down the winding path behind it. They came to the end of the college grounds; to the rusty iron gate set in the side brick wall. They opened it, stepped through.

"Out of bounds," Mary said as the gate clicked behind them. "I feel better already. What makes you so quiet?"

"I've been trying to puzzle something out. It's been bothering me." Roger was thinking of Connie's white flowers which he had found under Elgar's door. "Mary," he said, "I want to ask you something." He waited till he had guided her across to a clearing under the trees. A shallow brook rippled past under a rustic bridge. "It's—well, it's about Connie."

"I knew you were thinking of her." She sank down on the grass. "You're still in love with her, and you think she's committed a murder."

He was surprised at the trembling that seized him. "I don't think that at all!" He dropped down beside Mary. "And don't keep saying I love her. It's not true!" But at the moment he couldn't tell whether it was true or not.

"What was it you wanted to ask me?"

"It's not fair to drag you into this, and once you know . . . her life might depend on it, and if it does, you've got to promise not to say anything."

"I wouldn't say anything."

"Well, here's what I want to ask you: If a girl were undressing to go to bed, wouldn't she remove any flowers from her hair first?"

Mary looked at him. The light coming through the trees turned her pale skin green. "Wouldn't she remove—? Yes," she said mechanically. "Yes."

"I mean, she wouldn't go to sleep with flowers in her hair." Mary was listening. Her face looked peculiar in the green light. "Well, old lady Wilkenson said Connie had gone up to bed, and about ten minutes after the bedroom light went out, she and Bayless started to fight again. She said Connie left the house, wearing a dressing gown. She wouldn't be wearing flowers with that, would she?"

"Not ordinarily," Mary said.

"Well, I found some flowers of hers wedged under Elgar's door. That's how I came to open the door and find him—I was trying to get her flowers loose. I put them in my pocket, and I haven't said anything about it to O'Mara—or to anyone but you. I know they were hers. She was wearing them the night before, when I saw her at the Riviera. If she wasn't wearing them when she left the house, someone—her husband—must have planted the damned things! He's the only one who could have found them, and he left them there just to throw suspicion on her. Luckily, I found them first, but O'Mara or one of his men picked up a single flower somewhere." He took the crushed spray out of his pocket; he could see where the flower had come loose from the stem. "Connie hasn't said anything about losing them, and I haven't had a chance to return them to her, but O'Mara's going to find out she was wearing them."

"Wait!" Mary cried faintly. "Don't say anything about—the flowers. They belong to me. They're not Connie's." She buried her face in her hands. "I stabbed him, and I—"

Roger reached over and caught her hands. She clung to him. He could feel the sobs shaking her slender body. Flares seemed to be going off in his mind, blinding all thought.

"They were my flowers," she said. "I must have dropped them in his room. I didn't know where I had lost them, and when I got back to my room I—I nearly went mad. I wanted to tell you—to tell someone. I've been almost out of my mind since it happened."

"Did you murder him?" cried Roger.

"No! I don't know. I don't know what I did."

"Easy, darling. From the beginning. How did you come to—"

"I'll tell you. I came home from the movies that Friday night with Marcia and Ronnie, and the house was all dark. Mrs. Gardiner had gone to stay with her niece. I went in and lighted the hall light, and on the floor—slipped under the door—was a note from Professor Elgar." Her mouth trembled. "It was just in an envelope with my name on it. I thought at first it was from you, saying why you hadn't

come. I didn't open it till I got upstairs. He said he wanted to see me about my examination—the examination I took that day. 'It's very important I see you tonight about your examination' or something like that, it said. It was late then, and I didn't know what to do.

"I telephoned his cottage, and then I remembered he had moved into your building. I thought I wouldn't pay any attention to the note, but I became worried, and I thought I'd go over and ask Ronnie and Marcia what they'd do. By the time I got there, their lights were out. I decided to go home and forget about it. But on the way, I passed the main gate, and the moon was so bright it was light, and I thought there was nothing to be afraid of.

"Someone was walking up the path, and as long as someone else was around, I decided I'd go up too. It was awfully dark under the trees, and the boy or whoever it was turned off somewhere. I had passed the Library then; there wasn't a soul around. I was going to turn back and go home, but he was standing there smoking a cigarette in the doorway.

"I WALKED UP and said, 'You wanted to see me?' He said yes, it was about my examination, but it wasn't as important as all that—I mean, that I had to come up so late. As long as I was there, though, he said he could settle it. And he asked me if I'd come up a minute. I went in with him and up the stairs. I was embarrassed being there, and I asked him about my examination.

"He had been drinking. I didn't know it at first, but he kept up a rambling talk. I had to ask him again what he wanted to see me about, and he said he had found a complete crib in the back of my examination book. I was stunned. I said it was impossible. He said it didn't matter whether I had cribbed or not, and he put his arm around me. I tried to get away, but—"

"Why didn't you call me?" Roger asked.

"Oh, I don't know why I didn't!" She began to cry again. "I nearly died of fright. He was so loathsome. He kept kissing me, and he had me bent back over the desk. I picked up a knife—a letter opener—and I told him I'd stab him. I was only trying to frighten him, and he knew it. He laughed at me. I broke away, and he lunged at me. I wasn't trying to stab him at all, and I don't know how it happened, but I cut him—I cut his arm. The blood burst out." She stopped. Her breathing was shallow, fast. "He swung away, holding his arm and cursing, and the blood kept spurting all over. I said, 'Oh, get a doctor, quickly!' He was standing there holding his arm and cursing me, telling me to get out, and I—I always become sick when I see blood, so I rushed out, down the stairs—"

"You only stabbed him or cut him once on the arm?"

"Yes! But if he died from loss of blood—"

"But he was stabbed three or four times."

"I know it," she said, swallowing with difficulty. "After I left that time I—I nearly fainted. I had come out the back way, and I held onto a tree. I don't know how long I stayed there—maybe ten minutes, but it might have been longer." Dully, she told Roger the rest of it. She had gone back to Elgar's room, hoping and praying he had gone to see a doctor. She was afraid, however, that he might have lost consciousness, and it was that thought that forced her up the stairs again. The lights in his room were still lighted, but the door was closed. She knocked softly. There was no answer, but she heard a sound as if someone were moving. The sound stopped. She knocked again, and finally opened the door. Elgar was lying on the floor with blood all around him.

Thinking that he had fainted from the loss of blood, she bent over him and saw that he had been stabbed in the chest and in the neck. The room was spinning, and she nearly lost consciousness. His blood was over her dress. She was weak with nausea. As she was about to cry out for Roger, she realized she was not alone in Elgar's rooms; that whoever had murdered Elgar was in the bedroom behind her.

"I don't know how I first knew it. It dawned on me. And then there was a sound as if someone's foot had struck the baseboard of the wall. I know whoever it was saw me, was watching me. It was horrible, that feeling of someone's eyes boring into my back. I was paralyzed, waiting for someone to come out of that dark room. I couldn't force a sound to come out of my throat. All I remember after that was moving toward the door. When I got to the stairs, I ran. I felt if I could only get back to my room I'd be safe."

"Do you know who was in the other room?"

"No," she wept.

"You must have some idea! Was it a man or a woman?" "I don't know! Oh, Roger, what's going to happen to me? They're going to say I killed him! Roger, I'm so afraid. That detective is going to find out I was there."

"No," Roger said against her hair. "No, he's not. He won't find out. No one knows anything. Nothing's going to happen to you." But he thought of O'Mara showing him the single blossom torn from the white flowers. "How did it happen that

THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

you and Connie had exactly the same flowers?" he asked.

"Everyone has them," she answered. "Marcia too."

"Would Connie know you had them?"

"Yes, I think she would. She admired them one day and asked me if I cared if she bought some too."

"Where'd you get them? Here in town?"

"Yes. In the Sweater Shop. I bought two sprays. I couldn't find the first ones I bought—I thought I must have thrown them out—and I bought another bunch, and then I found the first ones. They were in the compartment of the car."

"Oh, well, then, you're all right. You're out of it!" Relief swept over him. "If he comes after you, just show him the spray that's undamaged. Are they exactly the same?"

"I think so. Yes, they must be."

"Well, we'll get rid of these. I'll make a fire and chuck them in."

He found a piece of newspaper and ignited it. The flowers caught fire and burned with a smell of dye. When the tiny blaze died down, he scattered the ashes.

"Roger," Mary said in a faint voice, "I still have my dress and shoes all stained with blood."

"My God!" he said. "Where?"

"In my room. I tried to wash them."

His brain reeled. Bloodstains! He recalled reading how difficult it was to wash out such stains. "Is it a white dress?"

"No. Black linen. I thought of throwing it away. The shoes too."

"Would anyone notice you're not wearing them?"

"I don't know." Mary seemed exhausted. "Ronnie asked me if she could borrow the dress. She has a date. I forgot when." Tears started to her eyes again.

"Don't worry!" he cried. "Please, darling, don't worry. Let me think." He closed his eyes, tried to clear his mind. What, he thought, could O'Mara possibly know about Mary? How could he connect her with the crime? "Were you wearing the flowers when you went to the movies?"

"Yes."

"So that if Ronnie and Marcia were asked, and they remembered . . . Well, that's all right. You have the other set." The dress, though, and Ronnie wanting to borrow it . . . What if Mrs. Wilkenson had seen Mary going up the path; had told O'Mara? "Mary, Ed Bayless was outside the building Friday night. I saw him under my window. I heard a sound and got out of bed. Did you hear him or see him?"

No, but—but you might have seen me! Roger, what sort of sound did you hear?"

"I don't know. I heard a door closing quietly, and someone going downstairs. It might have been you."

"I don't remember closing the door," she said. "In fact, I'm sure I didn't."

Roger remembered hearing a woman's脚步, and later Ed Bayless' voice whispering, "Constance!" As if he had seen her. Still, he thought, I might have been wrong about that脚步; it might have been a man's heel clicking. Three or four minutes elapsed between the time I heard the door close and the time I heard Bayless outside. He could have come out of the building. Perhaps he saw Connie going in and didn't want her to find Elgar's body.

"We ought to be starting back," Mary said suddenly. "They may be looking for you." He stood up, gave her his hand. She leaned against him. "It's horrible, isn't it?"

"Don't think about it. Don't worry, please. It'll be over soon. We can go away and—" And what? Get married? I have about two thousand dollars; I haven't a job; I'm not even in good health. It was the first time since the murder that he had thought of his physical condition; the first time he had thought of any future save flying.

They had a light supper at the Campus Inn, then walked back to Mary's house.

"I'll see you in the morning," said Roger. "Try to get some sleep." Mary went into the house.

He crossed the highway and walked up the side path, used mainly by tradesmen and delivery boys. Privet hedges had grown wild on each side. Around the professors' cottages, the hedges were kept clipped the height of the garages. Passing Connie's house, he saw a flicker of yellow through the hedge.

He turned down the path that ran beside the garage and came into Connie's garden. She was lounging in a green glider. "Have you seen Ed anywhere? He hasn't been in for supper. I've had a shattering day with O'Mara."

"What'd he want?" Roger sat down beside her.

"Oh, he wanted to see those damned white flowers of mine. And of course they were falling apart, so one could easily have dropped out. He kept insisting I was on that floor, and I kept insisting I wasn't." She lowered her voice. "Roger, I'm worried about Ed."

"How? You mean because he didn't come home for supper?"

"No, because of the funny way he's acting. Suddenly he turned on me. He—uh—he thinks I killed Elgar. And he's going to prove it. I mean, try to prove it. It's an act. But

Roger, I'm afraid of him. He's—no one knows what he's like underneath. He's cruel and mean and—and tricky."

"He can't do anything." Roger felt that Connie's fear was exaggerated, pretended.

"He's preparing some long typewritten thing he's going to turn over to O'Mara. The full case against me."

"Well, what can he know about you that would—"

"It's not what he knows; it's what he *suspects*—rather, what he makes up. I told O'Mara to watch out for him."

Roger had the impression she had told O'Mara much more than that. "What'd O'Mara say?"

"He didn't pay any attention. He was more interested in the flowers. I told him if any flower of mine was found there, then someone *put* it there. He made me bring over my robe to see if there were any bloodstains on it. And of course there weren't, so I said that ought to let me out. He said, 'It might if we could be sure you had kept it on.' I could have smacked him! Then he sent that big flatfoot over to get Ed's topcoat and pajamas—and oddly enough, there was no blood on them either."

"I'm supposed to come back with, 'Why do you say oddly enough?'" She didn't answer. "You're trying your best to tell me you think Ed killed Elgar, aren't you?"

"Someone killed him, and it wasn't me. That's all I know."

"I don't think it is, Con. Just between us—you were in the building, weren't you?"

"No, I wasn't!" Her brown eyes widened. "You don't believe me either!"

He smiled. "About the flowers, Connie. Were yours exactly the same as the one O'Mara had?"

"Yes. But I told O'Mara that didn't prove anything. I told him lots of girls had them. When he asked me who, all I could think of was Mary and that big pal of hers—Marcia."

Roger felt a chill pass over him. "What'd he say to that?"

"He said he'd look into it. Do you want to come in and make a Tom Collins? I can't stand being alone inside, with Elgar's house empty next door, and Ed acting so strange."

"I promised Mary I'd drop around to see her."

"Give her my love," Connie said acidly.

Mary had been lying down. Fright leaped into her eyes when Roger came into her sitting room. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing, really," he lied. "I just thought I'd come down for a minute. I—Mary, I think we'd better get rid of that dress you wore."

"Why? Something's happened, hasn't it?"

"No. Only O'Mara's looking for bloodstained clothes."

"Why would he come here?" She was almost breathless.

"Well, that white flower he found. He asked Connie who else had white flowers, and she mentioned you. Just say you never had more than one bunch. Can you manage it?"

"I've got to!"

But don't shake so, he wanted to say; don't look so wild.

"We'll get rid of the dress right away and the shoes too."

"How? And what shall I say if he asks me for them?"

"I don't know yet. Just give them to me. Say they're at the cleaner's—anything. He probably won't come here at all, but just in case . . ." Mary went swiftly to the closet in her bedroom and returned with the black dress. "The shoes," he reminded her, "and wrapping paper and some string."

"Would a box be all right?" she asked.

"Yes. Hurry!"

She got the things, and Roger rolled the dress around the black linen sandals and put them in the box.

"Wait. Did you take the labels out?"

"No."

"Quick. Get them out!" He started to unwrap the package. At the same time there was a knock at the door. His heart leaped. Mary grasped the back of a chair.

"Can I come in?" The door opened and Ronnie walked in, smiling. "Oh, I thought you were alone!"

"We didn't hear you come up the stairs." Mary's voice shook.

"No. Listen! The most exciting thing's happened. We're in the *murder*. You too! The detective—O'Mara, and the other one—was just down to see us. He wanted to look at the imitation flowers that Marcia and I have."

"Really?" Mary moistened her lips. She had gone white. "Did he ask you anything?"

"No. Just for the flowers. He'll be over here to look at yours. He wants anyone who has white flowers."

"Is he coming right over?" Mary inquired.

"I imagine so. He went in the drugstore to phone. I came over to borrow that black linen dress of yours."

"Oh, I couldn't lend you that dress. Ronnie. I spilled nail-polish remover on it, and it took the color out. I had to throw it away."

"I'll be running along," Roger said. "I want to get back."

"What's in the package?" Ronnie inquired idly.

He stared at her, hating her and her inquisitiveness. "This? Oh. It's some shirts I bought the other day that I left here by mistake. Well, so long for a while."

He closed the door behind him, drew a deep breath and



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THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

started down the stairs. He had gone but two steps when a door opened below, and O'Mara and Anderson came in.

"Hello." O'Mara tipped up his head. "Mary Alexander in?"

"Yes." The two men were coming up the stairs. "This room here," Roger said loudly enough to warn Mary. "I was just leaving." Whether it was intentional or not, he found himself being backed to Mary's door. He knocked, opened it. "Back again"—he attempted to smile—"with some visitors."

"Come in!" Mary cried.

"This is Detective Anderson, Miss Alexander. We're making a routine checkup," O'Mara explained. "It was a question of some imitation white flowers."

"Yes; Ronnie was telling me!" Mary's aquamarine eyes were brilliant. "Do you want to see mine?"

"If you don't mind."

"Excuse me a moment." She walked into her bedroom. O'Mara threw his hat onto the table. "Nice room," he said.

"Yes; she was lucky to get it," Ronnie replied. "She's practically on the campus. The side gate is right across the street."

What a help you are! Roger thought bitterly. He sat down on the love seat, put the package beside him, moving a pillow so that it was partly covered.

MARY RETURNED with four or five different kinds of imitation flowers and placed them on the table. O'Mara picked up the spray of white flowers, studied them closely. This puts Connie right back into it, Roger thought. And it's unjust; it wasn't her flower.

O'Mara dropped the spray on the table. "Okay, Miss Alexander. That's all."

"Didn't you have two bunches of these?" Ronnie asked negligently. O'Mara's head swung around.

"No," Mary said evenly, "I didn't; I had two bunches of daisies, but I haven't got them any more."

O'Mara turned to leave. "You coming?" he asked Roger.

"Yes." Roger said good night to Mary and Ronnie and left with the two detectives. He was halfway down the stairs and congratulating himself when the door of Mary's room opened, and Ronnie called, "Oh, Roger, you forgot your shirts."

"Oh." He went back up the stairs. "Almost forgot them again!" He smiled, cursing the girl to himself, accepted the package and started down again.

O'Mara said something to Anderson as they went out the door ahead of him. They paused on the sidewalk.

"Well, that's that," O'Mara said. "Now, back to work." He glanced at Roger. "You coming back?"

"No, not right away. I thought I'd take a walk first."

"Certainly is a swell night. Feel like taking a walk, Andy?" O'Mara's tone was suspiciously casual.

"If you do, boss." Anderson's small eyes looked at O'Mara.

"All right. Which way were you going?" he asked Roger.

"Me? I usually just walk up far's the monument."

"You don't mind us tagging along?"

"No, not at all! I'm glad of the company." He was walking between them, the package under his arm.

"Been shopping today?" O'Mara asked.

"These? Oh, I bought these a couple of days ago in Dillard's." He could check up on me, Roger thought a moment later.

O'Mara's silence was as disconcerting as his questions. Passing the darkened post office, Roger wondered about sending the package to some checkroom. But in a small town where the post office clerks knew him . . . The silence of his two companions made his nerves jangle.

The Civil War monument was set in a small triangular park. There were stone benches beneath the trees. Roger sat down; Anderson sat beside him. O'Mara remained standing.

"Smith, there're one or two things I'd like to say to you. You were a good flier, and I realize you're invalided home and all that, but you're getting in my way, and I don't like it."

"What?" he heard himself saying stupidly.

"I want to know exactly what you're holding back."

"But I—"

"Just one thing: I asked you yesterday did you ever see this flower before, and you said no, yet you had the bunch of them in your bathrobe pocket when your room was first searched. You gave them back to Connie Bayless, didn't you?"

"No! I swear—"

"Then where are they? What'd you do with them?"

"I never saw any flowers! They weren't in my robe when I put it on last night."

"You're going to give me that, hey? All right, Smith, play it out your way. I only want you to know that I know a hell of a lot more than you think I know. If you get ready to play ball with me, come around; I'll listen to you."

Roger picked up the package containing Mary's bloodstained dress, and they started back to the college.

"I wonder if you know this, Smith. Your old girl friend, Mrs. Bayless, was planning to run away with Elgar."

"Run away with El—" Roger was shocked, incredulous.

"Sure. You're trying to help someone who doesn't need a damn bit of help. One of the best liars I've ever come up against. She was going to hop off with him."

"I don't believe it!" Roger's voice was angry. "Did her husband tell you that? He's a liar! He's trying to cover himself up! He was lying when he said he never came near the—"

"Near the—?" O'Mara prompted.

"Near the Senior Building Friday night. I saw him from my window." And why, O'Mara wanted to know, hadn't Roger said so before? Because he wasn't sure, and he didn't like to involve anyone? "Then what makes you so sure now?"

"I don't know, but I am sure! He was wearing a topcoat over his pajamas. He was standing under my window."

"What were you doing awake? I understood you to say—"

"Well, I—I just woke up. I don't sleep well, and I got up to have a cigarette, and he was down there."

"Doing what?"

"Just standing there."

"Hardly the action of a murderer."

"I don't care," Roger persisted. "He's a liar if he says Connie was planning on going away with Elgar."

"Did I say Bayless said so?" O'Mara smiled.

"Anyway, if Connie were running away with Elgar, she'd be the last one to murder him, wouldn't she?"

"Maybe not. Not if she found out he was stringing her along. If she found out, for instance, that he was already married and had no intention of getting a divorce to marry her."

"He was already married?" Roger's head swung around sharply.

"And if he was enjoying certain liberties—premarital favors with the restless Mrs. B. on the strength of his promises to marry her and take her away—"

"It's a lie," Roger said thickly. "Don't believe any of it!" But the world seemed tarnished. There was an ache in his throat. They had come to the Administration Building, where O'Mara had a temporary office on the second floor.

"Don't get too upset over your old girl friend," O'Mara turned on the steps. "Think about those flowers again. The ones you had in your bathrobe wouldn't be the second set this girl Ronnie thought Mary Alexander owned, would they?" The detective didn't wait for an answer. He left Roger standing open-mouthed on the path.

Roger went up to his room, closed the door and sat down at his desk. His temples were throbbing. What a fool he had been leaving the flowers in the pocket of his robe! O'Mara or one of his men saw them, and then all they had to do was wait and see which girl or girls he was interested in. First thinking he had returned them to Connie; then wondering if they could have been Mary's. Now, O'Mara would question Mary about the clothing she had worn on Friday night, and the excuse that got by Ronnie might not pass O'Mara so easily. But now that Ronnie had been told the dress had been ruined and thrown away, they were committed to the lie. The bloodstained clothing would have to be disposed of somehow.

Roger thought about Connie planning to run off with Elgar, and Elgar already married. If that were true . . .

He wondered about going to O'Mara with Mary, making her confess everything. But O'Mara might bring proof to show that Mary's wound had caused Elgar's death. Even if it were inflicted in self-defense, she would stand trial. And even if she were acquitted, all the rest of her life that notoriety would follow her.

He unwrapped the package, cut the label out of the dress, broke the high heels off the sandals, made a small tight roll of the clothing, retied it. He turned out the light and walked to the window. Across the campus he saw lights burning in O'Mara's office.

About a half-hour later the lights blinked out, and soon O'Mara's car drove away. Roger waited a few minutes. Then he went down the stairs and out, using the rear door.

He followed the path he had taken that afternoon with Mary. He went on to the wall that marked the end of the college property. The rusty gate rasped as he opened it.

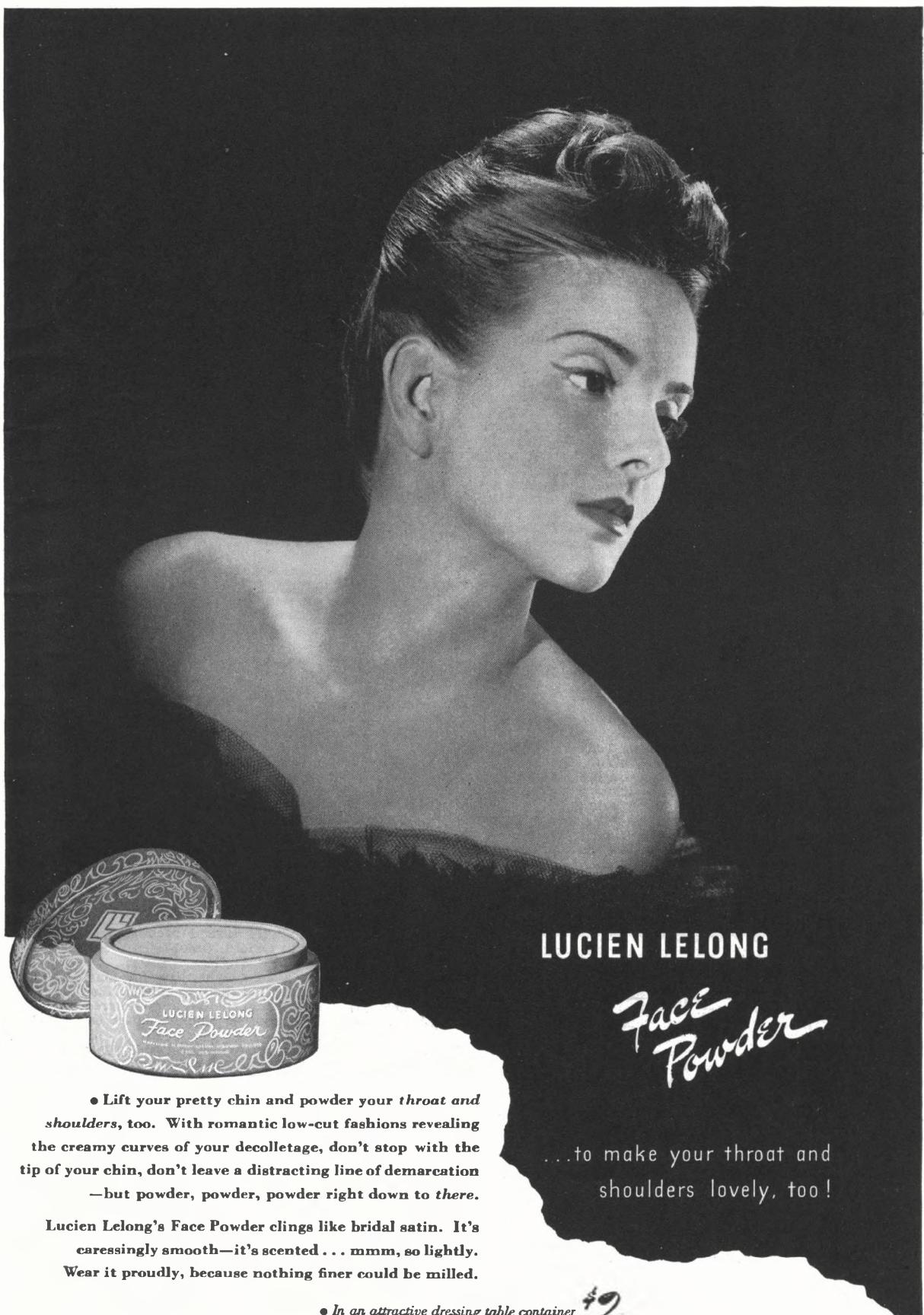
In the shadows on the other side of the rustic bridge, he paused to look back. His heart was beating quickly. He had intended to bury the dress, but he had brought no implement for digging, and the grass was thick, tall, growing in coarse tussocks. The brook, he thought; its bed was deep with ooze. He found two heavy rocks. He made a sack out of the dress, put in the shoes, the rocks, tied it securely with the cord and tossed the bundle into the stream.

He crossed the bridge in the moonlight and stepped into the shadows on the opposite bank. As he did so, a voice startled him nearly out of his wits.

"What did you throw into the stream?" Roger wheeled to confront Ed Bayless. "Why are you helping my wife?"

"You're crazy! I'm not helping anyone!"

"You disposed of something in the stream. What was it?"



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THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

A sickness came over Roger. He could hear Ed Bayless telling O'Mara; he could see the stream being dredged, the dress and shoes being recovered. A strong smell of liquor came from Ed Bayless. I could kill him, Roger thought, throw him in the stream; make it look like a suicide.

"You knew my wife was in Elgar's room, didn't you? Was she in your room too? Did both of you go to Elgar?"

Roger's fist smashed forward and knocked Ed Bayless down against the supports of the bridge. His head struck with a sickening sound. Blood began to trickle from the corner of his mouth. In the moonlight it looked black, like oil.

"I'm going to find out what you've buried," Ed Bayless said. He did not try to get up. "There's no use killing me. You couldn't get away with it. I've left behind too much evidence against you and my wife."

"Get up," Roger said in disgust.

So you can knock me down again? No. I'll win in the end. By the time I find out what you've thrown in here, the case will be complete against you."

Roger walked away. I've done it now, he thought. He had played straight into Bayless' hands. The suspicion leaped at him that Ed Bayless had murdered Elgar, had seen Mary's flowers in the room and wedged them under the door, thinking they were Connie's and hoping they'd be found. And he suspected that Roger picked them up and returned them to Connie. That was probably the case he was writing up to show O'Mara, and now in adding that Roger had disposed of something in the stream, Mary's dress and shoes would be found.

Roger saw there was only one thing to do: he and Mary would have to go to O'Mara with the whole story. And not be believed, he thought. There was the chance! The notoriety to be faced. Mary impaled and terrified.

Lying on his bed in the hot darkness, he could visualize the trial. He could hear her light voice trying to answer. A smart district attorney could tear her to pieces, Roger thought. The woman who came to see Elgar. The man in the gray summer suit. Was he the one Janek saw or claimed to have seen? And then Connie, planning to run off with Elgar. And Elgar married, perhaps to that white-faced woman with the black hair! And finally Ed Bayless, devious and crafty, playing a game, pretending to be searching for the murderer . . .

By the next morning, Monday, the students had returned from their week ends, and the nine-o'clock class was restless with excitement and conjecture. Professor Bayless took over Elgar's first lecture. He was pale, and there were dark puffs under his eyes. He looked strangely unkempt for one ordinarily so neat. His suit was rumpled, he hadn't shaved, and there was a cut in the corner of his mouth.

At twelve-thirty, Roger found Mary having lunch in the drugstore with Ronnie and Marcia. Students filled the place.

"Are you going back to class?" Roger asked her.

"I suppose so." She was drinking black coffee. The two other girls began talking about O'Mara's visit the night before.

"Oh, and listen! Didn't you think Mary had two sets of those white flowers?" Ronnie asked Marcia.

"I don't know." She looked at Mary. "Did you?"

"No," Mary answered. "Ronnie thought I did, but I didn't."

"You're wrong," Ronnie said. "I remember distinctly! You lost the first ones and bought another set."

"Did I? I'd forgotten." Mary seemed exhausted.

"Mary, why don't you cut class?" Roger suggested.

She said she might; she was almost dead with the heat. Ronnie and Marcia left. The students were all clearing out to make the one-o'clock class.

"What did you want to tell me?" Mary asked when they were alone.

"I got rid of your things last night. I weighted them and tossed them into the stream. I—" When he came to it, he couldn't tell her about Bayless. "They'll sink into that ooze—never show up."

Tears reddened her eyes. "You're awfully good," she said. "I can't thank you properly." She drew a breath. "If only the whole thing were over! I can't stand much more of it."

Coming out into the street was like stepping into an oven. When they came to the corner opposite the main gates of the college, Mary suddenly remembered she had left her books in the drugstore. Roger went back for them.

When he returned she was not there. His glance flickered across the street. He saw Ed Bayless coming down the steps of the Parker Hotel, accompanied by a tall, black-haired woman; in the sunlight, she had a peculiar dead pallor. It was the woman who had asked for Professor Elgar the evening he was murdered. Ed Bayless seemed to be reassuring her, but her face remained grave. A large black car was waiting, and the woman stepped into it.

Mary came out of the cigar store. "I didn't know you'd be here so soon," she said. "I—"

"Do you see?" he cried excitedly. He pointed, but a red moving van had turned the corner, blocking his view. "Ed Bayless is across the street with that woman I told you about—the one who wanted to see Elgar! Wait here. I'm going across."

Someone from behind grabbed his arms and held him in an iron grip. It was Janek. Across the street Roger heard the car start. Janek released him.

"What the hell's the matter with you?" Roger demanded angrily. The red moving van rumbled on slowly. Ed Bayless had disappeared. Unless, Roger thought, he had gone in the car with the woman.

"Didn't mean to frighten you." Janek appeared now embarrassed by his impulsive act. But that was intentional. Roger thought; he didn't want me to go near Bayless or that woman. Or am I going crazy and imagining things?

Bewildered, he crossed the highway with Mary and Janek. Connie was at the gates with a parcel of groceries.

"Which of you nice big boys is going to help grandma carry her packages? Here!" She dumped them into Roger's arms. "There are bottles of soda in there, and they weigh a ton." Roger could feel them, cool through the heavy paper. "Isn't this the most frightful day?" They started up the path. "And we have to go to that inquest at four o'clock. I wonder what it'll be like."

"It's mostly just the coroner, and whoever found the body." Janek said. Roger was surprised that he was walking along with them. "Nothing much to an inquest."

"Were you ever to one before?" Connie asked.

"I—couple of years ago I was a witness. Workman on a farm next to ours was found dead."

"How?" Roger heard himself asking.

"He was stuck with a pitchfork—through the neck."

Despite the heat, a chill passed over Roger. They halted at the path leading to Connie's house.

"Didn't they ever find out who did it?" Mary's eyes were wide.

"No."

The three of them looked stunned. Stuck through the neck! Elgar had been stabbed in the neck.

Connie gave a nervous laugh. "Then you're used to all this! Sort of an old hand!"

"An old hand at what?" a new voice asked. Roger jumped. Ed Bayless had come up quietly behind them.

"Oh!" Connie cried. "I didn't know you— Did you have lunch out? I waited, but—"

He was smiling in a crooked way because of the cut in the corner of his mouth. His clothes were rumpled, and his shoes were dusty, the soles caked with grayish mud. The brook, Roger thought, and he saw that Bayless had followed his gaze and was smiling in a satisfied way.

"Absenting yourself from class, I see." He bowed toward Mary and Janek. Roger caught a strong smell of liquor.

"Yes, it's so close and hot," Mary was saying.

"Has anyone seen the brilliant detective O'Mara about?" Bayless smiled. "I flatter myself that I'll have a few surprises for him by the time the inquest starts."

"Will they be good or bad?" Janek asked. "The surprises."

"That depends, my dear Janek, entirely on who receives them." Bayless was enjoying himself, feeling important. "By the way"—for the first time he addressed Constance—"when you were traveling with your father—My wife's father was a traveling man," he explained to the others. "She often made trips with him." He turned back to her. "Did you ever spend any time in Oxford, Ohio?"

"Yes," Constance said. "Why?"

"Because Professor Elgar taught there for some time, and I wondered if perhaps you hadn't known him before he came here." He shambled up the path and entered the house.

They looked at one another blankly. Janek excused himself and walked away.

"Ed's acting like a nut," Constance said. "This thing has unhinged his mind. I'm afraid I— Hold your hats, boys; here I go again." Anderson was coming toward them.

"Smith!" the detective called. "O'Mara wants to see you."

Roger gave Connie the package of groceries and walked up toward the Administration Building with Anderson. If he wants to see me about Mary's clothes, Roger decided, the only thing to do is to tell him. At the steps of the building, he saw Professor Harrison, a brusque, middle-aged man, stocky, red-faced, blue-eyed; with a stiff sandy mustache.

"Smith, could I speak to you a second?" he asked. Roger looked to Anderson for permission.

"Make it snappy," the detective said, and Roger walked over to Professor Harrison.

"Uh—Smith, what sort of man is this O'Mara? I want to see him, and I"—he took a breath of air—"I always like to get a picture of my man first."

"He's all right," Roger said tepidly. "I'm going up to see him now. Would you like to come along?"

They started to walk up the stairs at Anderson's heels.

O'Mara, in his shirt sleeves, was sitting at a roll-top desk.

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STUNNING CHRISTMAS CARTONS . . . IVORY TIPS—PLAIN ENDS—BEAUTY TIPS (red)

Buy Bonds to Buy Bombs

THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

He looked across his shoulder as they came into the room. "This is Professor Harrison," Roger said.

"What I have to say to you," Harrison announced abruptly, "I prefer to say in confidence."

O'Mara glanced at Roger. "Smith, you can wait outside."

Thankful for the temporary reprieve, Roger walked out of the room and sat on the stone staircase. The voices of the two men inside carried to him clearly.

Harrison began by saying that he was Professor of Economics here. With his wife and their two children, he had planned to go away Friday at four o'clock for the week end. He had papers to correct, however, so his wife and children went ahead to their summer place by bus; he was to drive up in the car when he was finished. He did not complete the examination papers until after twelve, and by then the Administration Building was darkened, closed and locked. He saw a light in Elgar's room and thought of asking him to turn in the papers for him in the morning.

"Ascending the stairs, I heard Elgar and a woman talking. The door was closed, but the conversation led me to realize it was his wife. I am not an eavesdropper, sir. They were in the midst of an argument. Their tones were—ah—heated."

From what Professor Harrison gathered, Mrs. Elgar had been ill with a nervous breakdown and in a convalescent home for two years. At the time of entering, she had evidently turned her money—a comfortable sum which her father had left her in his will—over to her husband, out of which he had paid her medical expenses. She had come to ask him to refund what was left of the money. She told him she wanted to divorce him and marry someone else. Elgar seemed to be shocked; he said he loved her and had been waiting for the day when they could take up their lives together.

The woman accused him of having been cruel and unfaithful to her in the past; she claimed it was he who was responsible for her breakdown. He told her she was still suffering from a persecution complex, that she was still unwell, that she should go back to the rest home, but she repeated her decision to divorce him and remarry at once. Elgar said he would contest the divorce.

PROFESSOR HARRISON said, "I left then. I didn't want to be caught listening in on an intimate conversation. I went to the porter's lodge, woke the man and asked him to turn in my papers in the morning."

Professor Harrison had not learned of the murder till he saw the papers Sunday; he had discussed the matter with his wife. They thought he had better tell what he had heard, even though it placed him in an awkward position.

"Well, thanks," O'Mara said.

Roger gathered that the professor's story did not come as a complete surprise to O'Mara. Harrison went swiftly down the stairs to the lower hall.

"All right, Smith!" Anderson called down.

"Smith, ever see this woman before?" O'Mara showed Roger a snapshot of a woman sitting in a wheel chair in a garden. Her hair was like black water.

"Yes," Roger said. "She was the one who came looking for Elgar. Connie and I saw her at the Riviera."

"That's Dorothy Elgar," O'Mara put the snapshot away. "I suppose you listened in on Harrison's story." Roger grinned. "There wasn't much to it that I didn't already know. She got back to the hotel around twelve-thirty."

"Did Mrs. Wilkenson see her come or go?"

"No, she didn't. She went inside once for a drink, and another time to look at her kid. Dorothy Elgar might have passed at those times, or she might have used the back way."

Myra Wilkenson's absences from the porch could have accounted for the fact that Mary went by without being seen. That had been bothering Roger.

"Anyway, when Mrs. Elgar got back to the hotel, she wasn't alone. A man came in with her, and they stood talking in the lounge. It was dark there. The night clerk didn't get a good look at the guy, but when he left, she came over to get her key. She had been crying, the clerk says. She checked out the next morning around nine-thirty. Whether it was the boyfriend—guy named Kirk, John Kirk, she talked to there, we don't know. And we don't know whether she went away with him or not that morning."

"Janek saw him—that man—coming out of Elgar's room around ten, just as you got here!"

"So Janek says. No one has seen either of them since."

"I just saw the woman, Mrs. Elgar, talking to Ed Bayless."

"Holy Pete!" O'Mara leaped out of his chair. "Why didn't you say so? Is she still there?"

"That was about a half-hour ago. Maybe more. Bayless was helping her into a car. The car drove away."

"Bayless went with her?"

"No. He's down at his house."

"Come on! Andy, hop down to the hotel; find out where Mrs. Elgar went." O'Mara and Roger started down the stairs. "What'd Bayless say about seeing the woman?"

"He didn't mention her. He seemed to be going batty. He keeps talking about solving the case himself."

"I ought to run in the whole damn bunch of you." O'Mara blinked angrily in the sunlight. They walked down the path swiftly, in silence. At the Baylesses' house, O'Mara pressed the bell. They waited. O'Mara rang again.

"Anyone home?" he called through the screen door. There was no answer, and they walked in. "Anyone home up there?" The house was silent, neat, empty. A luncheon place had been laid at the dining-room table. It was unused. "Where the hell could they be?" O'Mara suddenly bounded up the stairs, and when Roger followed, the detective was opening the closet door in the front bedroom. "Their clothes are here, but that doesn't mean a damned thing." He looked worried.

"You don't think they'd run away together, do you?"

"Hell knows what they'd do. They cooked something up in the beginning to cover each other. Then he intimates she's guilty, and she comes around hinting he's guilty and is trying to frame her, and she's afraid. They can both lie like troopers. Let's get out of here."

As they were leaving the house, they saw Myra Wilkenson.

"Seen anything of the Baylesses?" O'Mara asked her. Mrs. Wilkenson said she hadn't seen them recently—not since they were talking with Roger, Mary Alexander and that Polish boy. "Where'd they all go?" he asked.

"Well, Edward went into the house, and then you went away," she said to Roger, "and the Polish boy went away." She was wrong there, Roger thought, for Janek left before Anderson summoned him, but he said nothing. "Mary Alexander went into the Library, and Constance walked back into the house. I was leaving then to look for Jackie."

"Well, thanks; we'll try the Library," O'Mara said.

Roger led him to the side door of the Library, which was nearest the Wilkensons' cottage. The librarian told them that Mary Alexander had gone upstairs to one of the study rooms. They went up the enclosed Gothic staircase. On the landing, Roger glanced out the open pointed window. Myra Wilkenson was on her back porch, hauling in a dress from the clothesline.

Mary was in the first sitting room they came to; she was writing. There was a reference book beside her. Another girl and a redhead young man sat far down at the opposite side of the table, studying.

"Any idea where I can find Ed Bayless?" O'Mara asked.

"No, I haven't." Mary rose. "Have you tried his house?" They went out to converse in the hall.

"He's not here. Smith saw him downtown with Mrs. Elgar about a half-hour ago. Here's her picture." O'Mara gave the snapshot to Mary. "Ever see her anywhere?"

Mary looked, then shook her head. "Is she an invalid?"

"She was, but she's suddenly become pretty active."

Marcia and Ronnie came up the stairs looking for Mary, and O'Mara showed them the snapshot also.

"And you know, I've seen her recently," Marcia decided. "I— it sounds silly, but I connect her with a crowd at a doorway and a flower-trimmed hat."

O'Mara asked what kind of flowers were on the hat. They were small white flowers, Marcia replied.

"They would be!" O'Mara's smile was disgusted. He asked if they had seen Bayless recently, and they said they hadn't seen him since the close of the ten-o'clock class. "Well, if any of you run into him, tell him I'd like to see him before the inquest. And keep your eyes peeled for that woman."

Ronnie asked if they could go to the inquest, and O'Mara said they might. When he left, the girls persuaded Mary to accompany them to the inquest. Then they separated. Marcia and Ronnie rushed to their room to change their clothes. Roger walked with Mary to her house.

"Look," he said, on the way, "something unpleasant might come up at this inquest. I didn't want to worry you, but last night, when I was getting rid of your clothes, Ed Bayless followed me. I don't know whether he saw me throw them in the stream or whether he just heard the splash. But if he comes out with anything startling, stick to the story you told Ronnie. You ruined your dress and threw it away."

"But maybe he's dug up the dress, and he'll bring it to the inquest." Mary's voice shook.

They paused before her house. "Darling," said Roger, "we've got to take our chances. Maybe Bayless believed me when I said it was only a rock I threw in the stream."

"And if he didn't?"

"Then we've simply got to confess the whole damned mixup."

"It might be better if we did." Tears flooded her eyes.

"Mary, if we do, have you still got that note Elgar left for you, asking you to come and see him that night?"

"Yes, I—I think it's still upstairs in my desk."

"Then you'd better give it to me to keep."

She went into the house.

The blue had faded from the sky. Thunder rumbled.

In the rising wind, Mary came out and down the steps, holding the letter. "Here," she said, avoiding Roger's eyes.

He took the note and opened it. It was brief and appeared to have been written in haste on a sheet of paper that had



Season's closed, mister!

This is an outlawed way of getting up a dinner—fair enough, perhaps, in normal times, but forbidden now.

For needed things are scarce and needers are many. No one can be permitted to pounce—to have a lot while someone else has too little. Vital things must be rationed in fairness to all.

But there are many things that are not so vitally needed—things that are less essential, less restricted—and

they're scarce too. Let your sense of fairness govern these as well.

Buy them sparingly. Buy only what you need—and stretch what you buy.

Fairness is the reason behind the limit that has been placed on your purchases of IMPERIAL—a limit of one bottle at a time to each customer. And certainly a one-to-all policy is a lot more fair than an all-to-one.

Blended whiskey. 86 proof. 70% grain neutral spirits. Hiram Walker & Sons Inc., Peoria, Ill.

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Gather loved ones around your table in this year of war. Let moderate glasses of wine come to such meals as a congenial heartening friend



For extra delicacy of flavor, baste the bird with wine! Use warmed table wine mixed with oil or margarine — about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup wine to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil. Either California Burgundy or Sauterne is excellent. And serve the same wine at table, the Sauterne well chilled, the Burgundy at room temperature



WINE brings holiday dinners a kindly good cheer

THIS YEAR, good cheer means more than ever before. So gather those near to you around your table. And as you share good talk and food, enjoy the friendliness of wine.

When the turkey comes to table, serve moderate glasses of good red Burgundy or golden Sauterne. It's a warm kind of hospitality.

To bring out the fullest savor in your main dish cook it with wine. For

wine complements food naturally, in the dish as well as with it. That's worth remembering these days of wartime menus.

We wine growers will be glad to send you, free, our newest booklet of wine cooking recipes. And selected menus that will help conserve your precious ration points. Write to Wine Advisory Board, 85 Second Street, San Francisco, California.

If your wine merchant or restaurateur hasn't your favorite wine type, let him suggest another California wine... it's your opportunity to become acquainted with our other excellent table and dessert wines



been torn across the top. "My dear Miss Alexander," it said, "I must see you at once about your recent paper." The name Hubert Elgar was scrawled at the bottom. The first drop of rain struck the signature and rolled down the page.

"Roger, I can't go to that inquest," she said. "I couldn't bear it. I couldn't sit through it, watching Professor Bayless, waiting for him to—to spring his surprise on us."

But Ed Bayless did not make an appearance at the inquest at all. His name was called out, and there was a craning of heads, a whispering. O'Mara said something to Anderson, and Anderson left the courtroom. An hour passed, and the jury returned with the verdict, and the inquest was over.

"Murder by person or persons unknown," said Constance, coming out with the crowd. "Now, that's what I call *getting* some place! Say, isn't it funny Ed didn't show up?"

"When did you last see him, Mrs. Bayless?" O'Mara stepped out into the hall behind her.

"Why, it was after lunch. Roger, you were there. I didn't go upstairs to see, but I imagined he was lying down. I suppose he slept right through."

"He wasn't asleep, Mrs. Bayless; we came down looking for him. You were out too."

"Oh." Her face was framed by her straw hat. "Mary told me Charles Boyer was at the Apollo, and I tore down to see him."

"Well, the minute you see your husband, tell him I want to talk to him. No matter how late it is."

Ed Bayless was still missing at two the following afternoon. "Not a sign of him all night *long!*" Connie said to Roger. "He's been gone twenty-four hours." The sky was still gray after the rain; the sidewalks were wet. Connie wore a trench coat over her shoulders. She had just come back from speaking to O'Mara. "It looks bad for him, doesn't it? I have a feeling that when they find that Elgar woman, little Edward's going to be with her. They're together in this."

"They were certainly together yesterday," Roger said. He backed away from Jackie Wilkenson, who was trying to ride through him on his bicycle.

"I know where Uncle Ed is," Jackie said. "He's in there." He pointed at the cottage Elgar had vacated so that the painters might come in. By the time the painters arrived, however, O'Mara's men had searched the place, and the cottage had been locked up ever since, its shades lowered.

"Jackie, you're kidding us," Roger said. But Jackie knew what he knew. He told them that he saw Uncle Ed come out his back door, cross over to Elgar's yard, take the key from the nail, enter the house and close the door. "When was this, pal?" Roger asked.

"It was last week," Jackie said. "Yesterday. Last year. Sixteen." He pointed up to the sky and made ack-ack sounds.

Connie and Roger stared at each other. "Do you want to come in with me?" he asked her.

"No." Her eyes were sick-looking. She went into her house.

ROGER went up the gray wooden steps of Elgar's cottage and found the key. He opened the door, replacing the key. He entered a kitchen. The white blind was drawn tight; that, combined with the grayness of the day, made the room dim. He walked into the darkened dining room.

"Elgar!" he said, and his voice sounded loud and strange. "Elgar, are you in here?" There were portieres between the dining room and living room, and they brushed delaying against him; draperies had been pulled closed at the windows.

He took a step, and his foot crushed down on something at once soft and hard. In horror, a cry struggled from his throat. He had stepped on Ed Bayless' outflung dead hand.

His brain reeled, and his stomach rose up inside him. He stared at the body of Ed Bayless lying near the flat-topped desk by an overturned chair. There was a ragged bullet-hole through the forehead; a small amount of blood had poured out on the carpet.

It was impossible to move or look away. Then a queer feeling of pity touched him—pity for that embittered life snuffed out so violently. The eyes stared at Roger in shocked surprise; the mouth was open as if in the act of crying out.

On the typewriter roll, a jagged scrap of paper remained wedged in by the leathern clamp; the rest appeared to have been ripped out. Roger forced himself to step across the body. There were a few lines typed on the yellow paper.

"I was sure then that my wife had . . ." The words ended and began on the line below: "from what Mrs. Elgar told me today . . ." On the next line: "All along I had suspected . . ." On the last line: "once I saw that name auto . . ."

Roger took out a handkerchief, and shielding his finger tips, turned the roller. The paper came free. Nothing else was on it.

He swallowed, put his handkerchief away, stepped back. The blood was drumming in his ears as he stared at the desk. Projecting beyond the edges of a blue leather book, he saw more of the yellow paper. He opened the book and took out a sheaf of pages. They were held with a paper clip.

"Notes," he read, and then, with a start: "Myra Wilkenson.

Politician, determined at all costs to advance her husband; hated Elgar; was afraid he would supersede her husband as assist. dean during fall term. Claimed she never left her porch that night; could be lying."

On the second page he read: "Stephen Janek. Violent temper. Fact he admitted tearing up exam no proof he did not commit murder. Had opportunity. Had motive. Investigate past connection with farm murder two or three years ago."

Roger turned the page, and his own name jumped up at him. "Roger Smith: Emotionally unstable, result of flying illness. Motive—jealous of Constance and Elgar? Perhaps saw her leaving Elgar's room and killed him? Had opportunity. Liar. Came immediately to see Constance; believe he returned to her the white flowers she had been wearing Friday night. Still in love with Constance; is shielding her somehow. See further notes on Constance." There was a space, and the typewriting began again: "Tonight followed Smith and saw him throw dark bundle into stream. See Mary Alexander."

Roger's heart gave an unpleasant leap. He turned the page.

"Mary Alexander: Motive—none, yet believe it was she who left Senior Building Friday night. Girl wore dark dress, white bracelet. Passed behind me in dark, crying. Perfume same, distinctive. Wears white jade bracelet. Understood to be exceptional student, yet, correcting exams, could not give her more than 72. Generous. Why? Smith's clothing not blood-stained. Nor Constance's. Could bundle Smith threw in stream be dress, etc., worn by Mary Alexander Friday night?"

Good Lord! Roger thought. He turned the page swiftly to see what Bayless had written about Constance. The last few pages were blank. He picked up the blue leather yearbook again and searched through it. There were no further notes. He folded the yellow pages and put them in his pocket. Where were the notes on Constance? And wouldn't there be any on Dorothy Elgar? Hurriedly his glance went about the room. Then he heard a faint chitter of birds outside. In panic, he picked up the scrap of paper that had been caught in the typewriter and left the house.

The damp air was fresh, revivifying. The scene inside remained in his mind's eye. The body shot through the forehead; the shocked expression on the face. He tried to brace his shaking knees. "I was sure then that my wife had . . ." Who had ripped that page from the typewriter?

Roger crossed to Connie's house and opened the screen door. She was lying face down on the sofa in the living room. "Connie," he said, "he—he's in there." She didn't move. "He's dead. He's been shot. I'll have to tell O'Mara."

"I knew it," she said into the pillow. She was crying.

"Con, before I tell O'Mara . . . you didn't kill him, did you? You can tell me. I'll help you all I can." The typewritten words sprang up: "Still in love with Constance."

"Tell O'Mara to come," she said. "Begin the whole damned thing."

"Why'd you say you knew it when I told you?"

"I don't know why. Did I say that?" She started to cry again. "I'm so sorry for him. I was mean to him, often. And in the beginning he was kind to me; when Papa died and I was all alone here. I should have overlooked everything."

She should not have married him in the first place, Roger thought. She hadn't been herself at the time. She had got word of Holloway's crash two days before her father died.

"Con, before I call O'Mara, have you got your story straight? Were you in there at all?" She looked at him dully. "I found this in there, stuck in the typewriter." He showed her the torn yellow paper.

"He thought I killed Elgar." Constance shook her head. "What's this about 'once I saw that name auto—'?"

"Do you know?"

"No. It might be 'once I saw that same auto'—like automobile. See, it might read like this: 'I was sure then that my wife had killed Elgar, but from what Mrs. Elgar told me today . . . I know I was wrong. All along I had suspected Mrs. Elgar, and once I saw that same automobile she drove off in . . .' How does that sound?"

"It doesn't matter how it sounds to me; it's how it's going to sound to O'Mara."

"Are you going to show this to O'Mara?" she asked.

"Not if you don't want me to."

"Do what you like," she said.

He took the paper from her, lighted the edge of it. He carried it to the fireplace and dropped it in the grate on top of the crisp, delicate ashes of a stack of pages. He felt he had made a fatal error of judgment. Some of the pages were not thoroughly burned; he read: "See further notes on Constance . . ." And there had been no notes on Constance at all! Suspicion grew stronger that the typewritten notes on Constance, that the page ripped from the typewriter on Elgar's desk were here before him, burned in this grate. He took up the poker and beat at the ashes.

"Thank you," Constance said, behind him.

His throat was dry. "While you were at it," he said, "you could have done a better job of burning these papers."

They looked at each other. Constance's face didn't change.

THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

"I never burned any papers," she said softly. "Ed burned them himself late Sunday night." But Ed was not here now to say whether he had or not. "Roger, you've got to believe me. I didn't do this; I have no part in it at all."

He put the poker back in its place, picked up the phone and called O'Mara.

From Connie's front windows, Roger saw O'Mara and Anderson coming down the path. He stepped out on the porch.

O'Mara was unpleasantly surprised to find him coming out of Connie's house. "Spreading the news again, I see. How'd you come to go into Elgar's house in the first place?"

Roger explained about Jackie, and he led them to the back of the cottage, took the key from the nail. He had no desire to enter the place again, but O'Mara ordered him in.

"It's—he's in the living room," Roger said, pausing in the kitchen.

"Go on in! Afraid he'll get up and say something?" O'Mara's eyes glittered with anger.

Roger preceded them into the front room. He forced his gaze to keep away from the body on the floor.

"I'm going to catch hell for this," O'Mara said after a long while. "Shot through the head as he jumped up from the chair. Bullet landed here; fired probably from there. Nothing in the typewriter. Hadn't started to work, or someone walked off with whatever he was working on. Dead about—Smith, you didn't touch this plug to the electric clock?"

"I didn't touch anything." Roger saw now that the leg of the overturned chair had pulled the plug from the socket; the desk clock had stopped at ten minutes after two.

Roger wondered whether it had stopped at ten after two in the afternoon. Could someone have shot Bayless here, fifteen minutes after he walked past them into his cottage? If so, how was it Connie hadn't heard the shot? She was only a stone's throw away. Where were we all? he wondered. Janek had walked off some place, and Mrs. Wilkenson said Connie turned back into the house as Mary went into the Library. Mrs. Wilkenson was on her way then to look for little Jackie, and the two-o'clock class bells were ringing. Ten minutes later Ed Bayless was shot through the head.

"You didn't disturb anything, didn't touch anything, Smith?"

"No, I came out as soon as I could."

"Didn't touch anything but the key, the two doors—the desk, maybe?" O'Mara's dark eyes seemed to penetrate.

"I didn't go near the desk." The words were no sooner out of his mouth than he saw the blue yearbook. He realized that his fingerprints would be all over it, inside and out. He was about to say, "I might have touched that book," but O'Mara would want to know why, and at the moment Roger couldn't think of a good excuse.

Some time later a car stopped outside; its doors slammed.

"Here's the vultures," Anderson said.

"Do you want me to stay?" Roger asked.

"Yes. I want to keep my eye on you. You can take a book and go sit in the dining room."

O'Mara was on his knees, examining the body. Roger picked up the yearbook from the desk and carried it with him to the dining room. His knees were trembling violently. He sat down at the dining-room table. I'm safe, he told himself: my fingerprints will be explained. He waited for his breathing to become regular. He recalled the doctor's advice: Take it easy; relax; no undue excitement.

At last he opened the yearbook. "Jefferson College, 1939. The Blue Book. Foreword: We Have Attempted . . . Portraying Jefferson College as We Have Known It. In Reverence . . ." He turned the pages. Scenes of the campus of Jefferson College. Professors' portraits. He found he was staring down at Elgar's face. "Hubert A. Elgar, M.A., Professor of Freshman English."

Roger turned the page, wondering why this book had been on the desk. Had Elgar been glancing through it, or had Bayless taken it to search for something in it? He had placed his notes in it toward the back of the book, Roger recalled.

In the living room the men from headquarters had arrived and the first flashlight went off. Roger skimmed through the book, but discovered nothing. He turned back to the index. "Senior Class. Organization. Activities. Junior Class. Sophomore . . . Freshman . . . Athletics. Autographs." His glance went back. Autographs. "Saw that name auto . . ." Excitement fizzed up in him. "Autographs, Page 208." He leafed through the book rapidly.

O'Mara's sudden roar vibrated on his eardrums. "What the hell! Didn't you take that book off the desk?"

It was not necessary to pretend surprise. Roger jumped. "I—yes. You—you told me to take a book, and—"

"But dammit, not that one! You know better than that."

"I didn't think. I'm sorry."

"Put it back where you found it, as near as possible. Joe, this dope has loused up the prints on the book. Artie, you want to take another shot of the desk with this book on it? It was right—yeah, right about there."

Roger put down the book, went back into the dining room.

It could not be that Bayless had suspected Mrs. Elgar. No, the key to the murderer—the murderer's own autograph was written on page 208 of the yearbook.

Roger heard O'Mara's voice: "I'll leave you boys to finish up here. I'll be in the Administration Building for the next hour or so, hearing confessions. Come on, you!" he called to Roger.

They went out and down the front steps. Roger looked at his wrist watch; it was only three o'clock.

"I want to stop here a minute and pay my respects to the widow," O'Mara said.

Constance was still sitting on the sofa. Her hair was combed, and her face freshly powdered. O'Mara told her that he was sorry about her husband's death, and she thanked him.

"I'm sorry too, Mrs. Bayless, that I'll have to bother you with a few questions. We have a pretty good idea your husband was killed around ten after two yesterday afternoon. Were you home at the time?"

She thought for a while. Then she said she didn't think so. The last she had seen her husband was when he walked past them—past Mary, Roger and Janek—to enter the house.

"Roger went away with that big detective, and then Janek drifted off some place. Mary and I stood talking about a Charles Boyer picture that was playing at the Apollo, and when Mary went to the Library, I went back in the house. I thought Ed was upstairs, and I picked up my hat and bag and left." She had wanted to see the picture, she said, "to sort of get my mind off all my—all the trouble." As she went down the path, the two-o'clock class bell was just ringing. She had walked to the Apollo, and once inside, kept watch of the time; at a quarter of four she left and went to the inquest.

"You didn't drop into Elgar's house for a couple of minutes on your way to the Apollo?"

"No," she answered. Then she said, "How about that man Kirk? Couldn't he have been around here yesterday?"

"We picked up John Kirk late last night in Medbury."

"You did?" She was startled. "Was Mrs. Elgar with him?"

"No." O'Mara smiled wryly. "She was not. He was alone on the street. He was knocked down by a taxi trying to get away from one of my men. He's in the hospital, badly hurt."

Connie was watching him. "Did you find a gun on him?"

"No, and we didn't expect to. The Italian waiter at the Riviera saw him give Mrs. Elgar a gun last Friday night."

Connie brightened. "Then maybe he came up later and had a fight with Elgar and stabbed him—because he didn't have his gun; and maybe he got the gun from her and shot—or she could have shot Ed. Maybe she only drove around the block in the car and—"

"I'll take care of all that, Mrs. Bayless. In the meantime, we'll check up on your alibi. Andy, tell one of the boys to hop down to the Apollo and find out how many people saw Mrs. Bayless go in around—say, ten after two, Mrs. Bayless?"

"Around then," she replied with admirable control.

"All right, Smith; come along."

"She might be right, you know," Roger said as he walked with O'Mara to the Administration Building. "Maybe that guy Kirk or Mrs. Elgar did—"

"Whenever I question her, she always tries to ring in someone else. It would have tickled her to know that Kirk confessed this morning to the slaying of Hubert Elgar."

Roger stopped short. "He confessed? Did he confess to shooting Bayless too?"

"He never heard of Ed Bayless."

Roger felt deflated. "Don't you believe him?"

"Do you?" O'Mara smiled. "Kirk claims he fought with Elgar late Friday night—about Mrs. Elgar's money, and about Elgar's contesting a divorce; says he lost his head and stabbed him. He says he left the knife on the floor—which is the bunk—and he returned the next morning to get it, and while he was there he cleaned up all his fingerprints. Then he hears us coming and scurries. He says someone spoke to him on his way out, but he kept on going. Claims he threw the knife in the river when he crossed the bridge in his car."

"That sounds good to me."

"Sure, but when we asked him about the knife, he couldn't describe it. He had never seen it. He was never there Friday night. He came up there the first time Saturday morning, found the guy murdered, thought his future wife had done it, and cleaned up after her. The confession was full of holes."

"Well, if that lets him out—" Roger began.

"And Bayless is out," O'Mara finished the thought for him. "It begins to narrow down." They had arrived at the Administration Building. "Maybe after we get finished here, it will narrow down still further. We'll see who has and who hasn't got an alibi for ten after two yesterday afternoon."

By five o'clock that evening many people had racked their brains in an attempt to recall where they had been at ten after two the previous afternoon. O'Mara heard their stories separately, then compared them. Back in Mary's sitting room after dinner, Roger tried to piece out the various alibis on



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THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

paper, while Mary sat reading Ed Bayless' typewritten notes. "If O'Mara had ever found this," she said, "I'd probably be in jail by now, wouldn't I?"

He looked up and smiled. "I'd be with you."

"I keep wondering if it wasn't left there on purpose so that O'Mara would find it."

"You mean left there by Ed Bayless?"

"No, I mean the murderer probably left it there because it would implicate me. Or the others mentioned."

"I think the murderer just didn't see it."

Roger wrote a few more words and stopped. The yellow paper had showed outside the yearbook. "See further notes on Constance . . ." And those pages concerning her had been missing! He forced himself to continue writing.

"Well, here it is," he said finally. "We'll take the two easy ones first." He smiled. "At ten after two I was sitting on the stairs while Harrison was talking to O'Mara. My proof: I could repeat what they were talking about.

"Then you. You were in the Library, thank God for that. Mrs. Wilkenson saw you go in a few minutes before two. The librarian got you a reference book. That girl with the eyeglasses and the redheaded kid were in the study room when you went up a little later."

"Yes, but mine isn't a cast-iron alibi. The boy said I came in right after two, but the girl thought it was a quarter after."

"She was a dope, and O'Mara proved it." Questioned longer, the girl hadn't been able to say exactly when she herself arrived at the Library or what time Roger and O'Mara entered the study room. "Mrs. Wilkenson comes next. Says she left her house at two and spent about fifteen minutes looking for Jackie. She saw no one but the men working on the grounds, and none of them remembered seeing her. Then Janek claims he 'moseyed over' to his room and took a nap till time to go to the inquest."

"You left us, you know, about a minute after Stephen Janek —do you remember? Bayless had just gone in the house, and the detectives came for you."

"And I swear I didn't see Janek 'moseying along.' Now for Dorothy Elgar. Whereabouts unknown. She seems to have vanished after leaving the Parker around twenty of two. O'Mara says she was in a hired car. They're checking the garages now. There was no trace of her in the town where they picked up John Kirk. Incidentally, he spent the afternoon in a furnished room there, so he's out of it. And finally we come to Connie. I'm afraid she's in a pretty tight spot."

The sixteen-year-old usherette, a high-school girl working for the summer, said she saw Mrs. Bayless in the Apollo on Monday afternoon. Mrs. Bayless was coming down the aisle as the girl went up with her flashlight. The newsreel had been shown, and the feature picture had been on about twenty-five minutes. The entire performance, the girl said, began at two, so that when she saw Mrs. Bayless, it could not have been earlier than two-thirty.

Connie had been sent for, and at first she did not see the girl in the black skirt and the tight gray jacket. In reply to O'Mara's question, Connie stated that she entered the Apollo just as the feature picture began. The usherette jumped up.

"No, that's wrong! I was coming up the aisle, and I passed you! The picture was on!"

Connie said, "I was changing my seat. I wanted to sit farther down front, but I had been in for the beginning."

"Wasn't the theater fairly empty?" O'Mara asked. "Why didn't you sit down front when the picture began?" There was no special reason, Connie replied.

"There's this I didn't tell you," Roger said to Mary. "I found a scrap of paper in the typewriter in Elgar's living room, and it mentioned Connie, and—I burned it."

Her eyes widened. "Why? What did the paper say?"

"It was part of a page Ed Bayless had been typing, and it said something about suspecting Connie, and it said Mrs. Elgar had told him something, and then I think the words were: 'Once I saw that name auto . . .' It meant autograph, and the book those pages were in was a yearbook from the college where Elgar had taught. I didn't have time to look up the autograph page because O'Mara came charging down on me." He described the incident. "I think I ought to get hold of that book again and find out whose name was signed."

"He'll leave detectives there. You'd walk into a trap!"

"Yes, but supposing it isn't Connie's name! It might be someone we never dreamed of. It would tell us who Ed Bayless—"

"Supposing it is Connie's name! What would you do? Destroy that too?"

"I destroyed something we thought would implicate you," he reminded her.

"But there's a difference! You and I are—I can't understand you! Even if you knew she was a murderer, would you help her?"

"Don't," he said. "I feel too rotten." He turned away.

Mary came closer. Her voice shook. "Do you really care so much for her that it wouldn't matter what she had done?"

"She must have had a reason," he said doggedly.

"To murder two men? Do you mean you could still forgive her after that?"

Connie's face rose up, brown-eyed, rich-mouthed. "I wouldn't want to see anything happen to her, no matter what she's done."

Mary gasped. She moved away. She was crying.

"Mary, don't," he said. "I can't help how I feel about her. You can't help those things."

It's all over, he thought dully; this is the end between us. I'm sorry, but I can't help it. If it came to a choice . . . He remembered Connie asking him that.

"You see, I can't desert her," he said. He stood up to leave, feeling guilty about Mary. "I'll take them with me." He gathered up the yellow typewritten pages.

She stood up, "Roger, for your own sake, please don't go near that awful house. It's too dangerous. I know you don't care for me"—tears sprang from her eyes—"but promise me."

"I do care for you, Mary. I promise I'll be careful." He closed the door, knowing the parting was decisive.

Hubert Elgar's cottage was totally dark as he passed it on the opposite side of the path. In five minutes, Roger thought, I could be in there; I could look at page 208 in the book. I'd only have to strike a single match. He crossed the road. A dim lamp burned in Connie's front room, but the Wilkensons' house was brightly lighted.

Their porch light snapped on, and Wilkenson came out to put his car away. He saw Roger, and they spoke. Wilkenson got into the car, turned its headlights on, and Roger found that he was shaking.

He went to his own room and closed the door. In taking Bayless' notes from his pocket, he saw that Mary had disarranged them; and on the back of one of the pages, up near the corner, written in light pencil, were the words: "Mrs. E. Holm's Farm. Route 7, East Fenton." Mrs. E.—Mrs. Elgar! East Fenton was a rural community twenty-odd miles across country. Roger memorized the address and tore up the yellow pages. If Holm's farm had a telephone, he thought, and I called now . . . No. She might run into hiding again. But if I could only find out what she told Ed Bayless!

First, though, I've got to see that yearbook. His nerves were twitching. Don't get excited; it's easy, he kept telling himself. Just walk in there and open the book. You'll know the whole thing. He searched his desk for some implement to take with him and could find nothing more helpful than a small flashlight. He put it in his pocket and left the room.

THE Wilkensons' house was dark now, and from the back, Connie's house was also dark. She was probably still at the funeral parlor where they had taken Bayless' body. Roger stepped onto the cement walk that led into Elgar's garden.

He went up the three wooden steps of the back porch and reached for the key. He was not surprised to find it gone; he waited a moment, frowning. Then he put his hand on the doorknob and turned it. The door opened.

Five wide steps on tiptoe carried him across the kitchen. He should have been at the dining-room doorway, but he was not. He took a step, put out his hand. Nothing!

Before panic could assail him, he fumbled for the searchlight, turned it on. Its beam was weak, and he remembered he had intended to buy a new battery. He saw the doorway a few feet ahead. He turned off the flashlight and walked through to the dining room.

Such impenetrable darkness! Not a glint of light anywhere. He started to feel his way past the first dining-room chair and blundered against a small serving table. He used the flashlight again, and by its pale glow advanced toward the black opening between the portieres.

Boards creaked under the carpet. His foot struck the base of the desk with a loud sound and sent his heart rocketing upward. His hand, wet with sweat, came in contact with the leather book. He was about to sit down when a sight across the living room almost choked a cry from his throat. A man was watching him. He saw the face only, eerily lighted: a moment later he realized he had caught his own reflection in an oblong mirror. His hand trembled as he drew the book toward him. Turning the flashlight down on it, he leafed through with clumsy haste. Page 206; 207; 208. A feeling of astonishment struck him.

There were no autographs on page 208; he was looking down at a photograph of a Junior Promenade. He turned back to the Index, his glance hurrying down the list. "Autographs, Page 239." Something's damned wrong with me, he thought, searching through the pages again. Page 239, headed "Autographs," was blank. He stared at it, incredulous.

For a few moments he sat there. "Once I saw that name auto . . ." Was there another explanation to those words? And why had he thought autographs should be on page 208?

The book was the same. Or was it? he wondered. He turned the waning flashlight on the cover. "The Jefferson Blue Book, 1937." A different book! The one he had seen that afternoon was dated 1939. Steeling himself, he crossed to the bookcase.



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THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

On the bottom shelf, he saw a row of blue leather books. Going down on his knees he picked out the 1939 yearbook, laid it on the floor and leafed through it swiftly. He came upon Page 206, and opposite it saw Page 209. Page 208 had been removed! The flashlight started to fade, and he turned it off. As he was about to get up, a sound held him there, listening. All the strength seemed to ebb from him.

Distinctly he heard a careful step halfway down the stairs that led into the dining room, not five feet away from him. And another soft careful step. Oh, my God! he thought.

He tried to make himself believe it was O'Mara or one of his detectives, but that hope was blotted out by another thought that made his hair rise. This was the murderer advancing toward him in stealth!

An eternity of waiting silence passed. Then a floorboard creaked just the other side of the portieres. Silence again! The flashlight in his hand was slippery with sweat. If only I had *something*, he thought wildly: something good and heavy! The portieres rustled as a hand pushed them aside.

"Professor Bayless?" a voice cried.

"No!" he heard himself gasp. He turned the flashlight on.

"Drop that before I shoot you!" cried the voice, and just before the flashlight fell from his hand, he saw in its weak glow the white face and staring eyes of Dorothy Elgar. The flashlight falling from his grasp left them in darkness, but the picture of the woman remained in his mind. Mrs. Elgar had been holding a revolver pointed directly at him.

He waited tensely for the explosion that would blow him out of existence. His mind tried to tell him something was awry: the woman was terrified; she held the revolver inexorably, in a hand that trembled; fright was in her voice when she cried, "Professor Bayless?" Yet he was afraid to move.

The strain of waiting was almost unendurable. There was a rustling as of material, and a floorboard creaked. The woman had moved, whether toward him or away from him, he could not tell, and he gathered himself, ready to spring at her. A moment later he heard a heavy thud and then her footsteps running across the kitchen. The outer door slammed.

He started after her. Before reaching the door, he crashed over a fallen chair. He felt a sharp pain in his ribs, and his forehead cracked against something so hard that constellations burst before his eyes. He started up, dashed out into the kitchen and wrenched the door open.

Someone was running on the path behind the garden hedges, and he took off in that direction. The woman swerved at the first intersection in the hedge.

As the distance between them grew less, he saw that something was horribly wrong. The figure he was pursuing had changed in some nightmare way. She fell to her knees and as he grabbed her, he realized that he was holding Connie.

Someone else—O'Mara—had run up the Baylesses' drive—from the front path—and the three of them had come together in the garden. Constance was screaming hysterically. "She got away!" Roger gasped. "The woman got away!"

They half carried her to the back steps of her house.

"Now, what the hell was going on here?" O'Mara demanded.

It was some time before Roger could speak, and even then he felt he was gibbering. "Well, I was in Elgar's house, and Mrs. Elgar was in there, and she ducked out. I ran after her."

"What were you doing there?"

"Well, I—" Roger racked his brain for a plausible excuse. "I thought I saw a light like a flashlight moving around."

"What were you doing around there?" O'Mara asked Connie.

It was difficult for her to speak. "I came back from the—funeral place." Roger saw that she was dressed in black. "And I heard someone crashing around in Elgar's house." Me and the chair, Roger thought. Connie had crossed into Elgar's yard, and when someone came dashing out—looking, she said, ten feet high—she took to her heels.

"What was the woman doing in the house?" O'Mara asked.

"I don't know," Roger said. "She came down from upstairs. She had a gun in her hand."

"Come with me. You too, Mrs. Bayless." They walked into the kitchen of Elgar's cottage. "Where the hell's the light?"

"Here," Connie quavered, and she reached past Roger.

The light snapped on. The kitchen sprang at them, and Constance let out a piercing scream. Myra Wilkenson, in a dressing gown, was lying on the floor near the stove. Blood was coming from her mouth. Roger stared aghast. I must have gone right past her, he thought.

O'Mara bent over the prostrate figure. "Call a doctor and an ambulance, quick! She's still alive," he said.

Roger started to obey, and Constance toppled over in a faint.

Wilkenson went to pieces on hearing of the attack upon his wife. Connie was on the sofa in Elgar's living room.

A little before the ambulance came clanging up the path, Mrs. Wilkenson showed signs of regaining consciousness. Roger left Connie and hurried out to the kitchen.

"Mrs. Wilkenson, who hit you?" O'Mara was asking.

Her eyes fluttered open. "Head hurts," she murmured plain-

tively. "Fields of daisies. Floating." She drifted off to unconsciousness again.

When Roger went back to the living room, Connie looked up from the sofa. "Has she said anything?"

"Not a thing."

She turned her face toward the back of the sofa. He smoothed over the footmarks on the carpet near the bookcase. The yearbook with the missing page he had put back on the shelf, and he stood trying to arrange the story he would tell O'Mara: "I saw a light in a crack through the draperies. I found the back door open, and then as soon as I came in, I heard someone on the stairs." Yes, that's all right. The rest of it just as it happened.

Connie remained motionless on the sofa, her face turned from him. In the silence, he heard again the frightened voice of Dorothy Elgar inquiring, "Professor Bayless?" He puzzled over that. If Mrs. Elgar expected to see Professor Bayless, then of course she did not know about his death, and if she did not know about it, she had not caused it.

"It begins to narrow down." It narrows down too closely, he thought, looking at Constance.

AT EIGHT-THIRTY the next morning Roger was dressing at his open window when he saw Anderson approaching, something grim and purposeful in his stride. An instinct warned Roger. He grabbed up his tie and jacket and entered one of the empty rooms across the hall. He flattened himself behind the open door and waited.

Anderson passed him, knocked on the door of his room. Finding it empty, he woke Janek, demanding to know if he had seen Roger. Janek suggested that Roger might be at breakfast. Anderson told Janek that there was a warrant out for Roger's arrest. Anderson left the building.

Roger waited a few minutes, then started down the stairs. A policeman stood in the doorway of the building. Roger turned and tried the rear entrance. It was unguarded, and he went down the path behind the three cottages.

Roger crossed the highway, went up the path to Mary's house. He called her name beneath her window. "Mary, come around the back and let me in."

They went up a narrow back stairs, along the hall and into Mary's sitting room.

"Mary, I've got to borrow your car," he said. "O'Mara has a warrant out for my arrest. He thinks I smacked Mrs. Wilkenson down last night with a blunt instrument."

"Mrs. Wilkenson?" Mary cried. "Wh—what's happened?"

He told her. "And she's dying?" Mary asked, horrified.

"I think so. I've got to see Elgar's wife. I know where she's staying. Could I have your car?" He was standing at the window, looking across the campus.

"Yes, but it's too dangerous. Don't go to see her alone!"

"I've got to! I'm sure she knows. My God, there's O'Mara! He's coming here. Quick—give me the car keys."

She ran into her bedroom. In panic, he watched O'Mara's tall thin figure approaching. "I have them!" she called. "Here. Oh, Roger, he'll see you leave the garage!"

"Come with me. I'll hide in the car; you back it out. If he asks you where you're going, tell him anything." He dragged her down the kitchen stairs, pushed her out the screen door.

Mary had the garage open. The front doorbell rang as Roger crossed quickly to the garage. Mary was sitting behind the wheel, her face like wax. He opened the back door of the car, got in and bent over on the floor. The car started to back out of the driveway.

"Hey, where's your boy friend?" O'Mara called from the veranda. "Seen him around this morning?"

"N-no! No, I haven't!"

"If you run into him," O'Mara called, "tell him I have some important news for him, will you?"

"Yes, I certainly will!" Mary turned toward town.

"Darling," Roger said, keeping his head low, "stop when we get past the monument. You can get out there."

"No, I'm going with you. We'll go together."

He heard brakes screaming to a stop behind them, and someone called out. He heard Mary cry, "Watch out!" and the next moment there was a deafening smash. The car twisted, crashed. Glass was splintering. His teeth cut his lips.

There was a minute of complete confusion. There were shouts, and cars all around came to sudden halts.

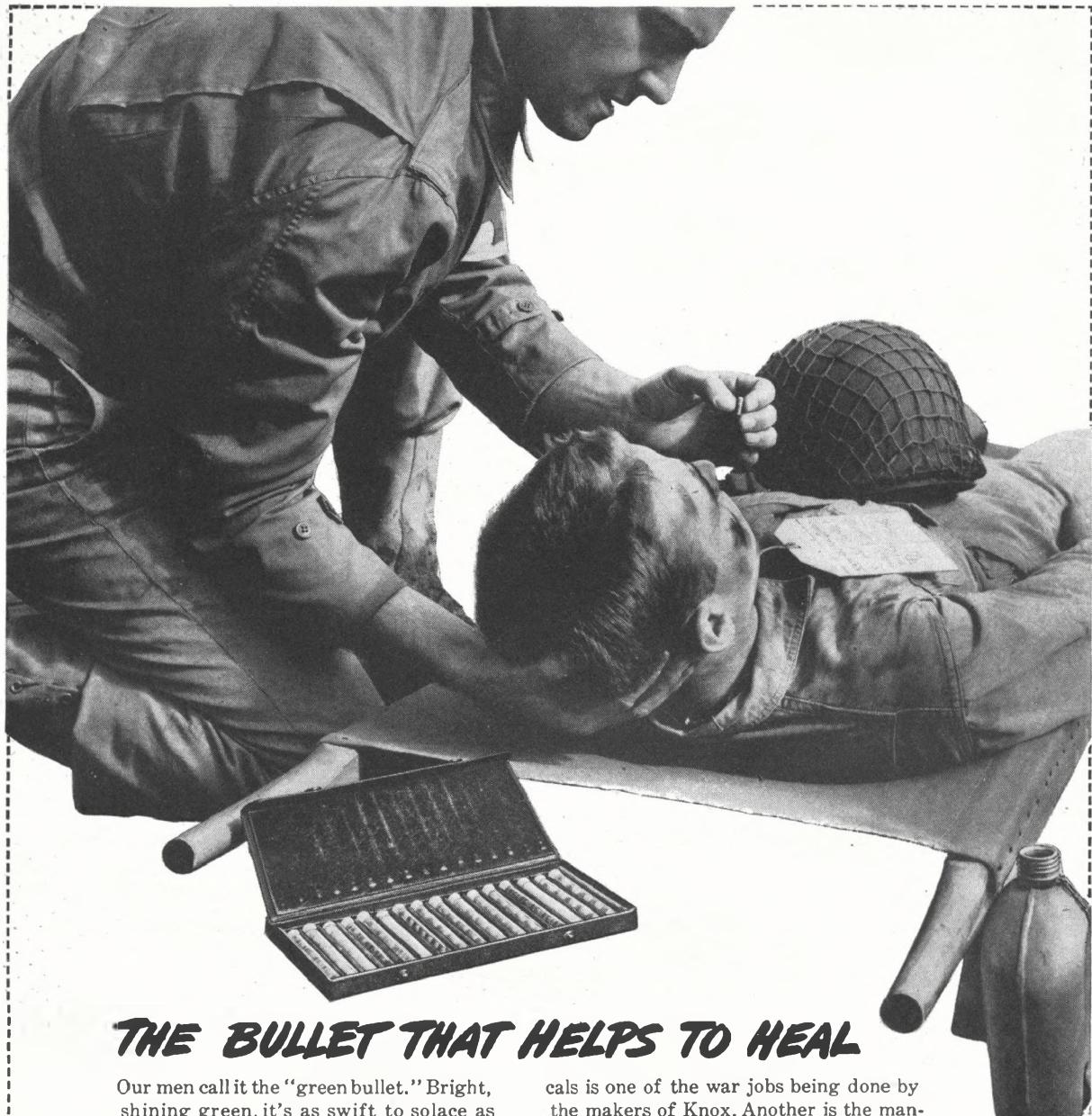
"Are you all right?" he cried. "Mary! Mary, are you—?"

"Yes, I'm all right," she answered faintly. She slid from under the wheel and stepped out. Roger managed to open the back door. He stepped down into a mob of people. The truck driver was shouting, trying to tell what had happened, Mary was deathly pale. Traffic was tied up; horns squawked.

A policeman pushed through the crowd. "Stand back there!"

Roger looked down and saw blood on his hand. He realized it was coming from his lip.

He saw the red face of Detective Anderson in the throng. His head ached as if someone were beating it with hammers. The world seemed to grow dusty; to darken . . . A few mo-



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THE COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

ments later he was standing on the curb, leaning against a pole, some distance from the accident.

A car drew up before him, and the driver, a boy with a blond crew cut, jumped out. The keys remained in the ignition. Roger saw the crew cut disappear in the throng. Almost automatically he opened the car door, got in, turned the key. He drove off, leaving the accident behind him.

He drove in beside a roadside stand, got out and ordered a cup of coffee and a package of cigarettes. He asked, "Do I pick up the road to East Fenton down here?"

"Bout five miles down. Turn into Route 7." A motorcycle policeman had volunteered the information.

"Oh," Roger said, "thanks." He got back into the car.

He found it impossible to think in a concentrated fashion. If John Kirk had been in the hospital since Monday night, then he couldn't have struck Myra Wilkenson down. Who could have entered Elgar's cottage; removed the page from the yearbook; attacked Mrs. Wilkenson? And what was she doing there in the first place? Had she seen the murderer entering the cottage, followed, and been attacked as he escaped?

An alternative presented itself. A sickening thought, a picture leaped forward, and he saw again the hot room at midnight with the windows locked and the shades pulled down, an electric fan whirling. A man in a green shirt looked up as an unexpected visitor stepped into the room. Roger's mind speeded over the few minutes that followed, and then the man in the green shirt was being stabbed repeatedly, and Roger saw the scene clearly, exactly as it must have happened. He saw the assailant wild with frenzy; he saw Ed Bayless, seated similarly at a desk, looking up startled, as the murderer walked quietly in between those heavy portieres.

Constance! he thought.

"I was sure then that my wife . . ." "Once I saw that name auto . . ."

"Maybe it means, 'Once I saw that same auto—'"

But she had known all the while. And she had come back, ripped that page out of the yearbook. Myra Wilkenson had followed her and had been struck down. Connie had fainted when she learned Mrs. Wilkenson was still alive!

He came to the outskirts of East Fenton. A boy in blue jeans directed him down a side road. "The third house down there," the boy said. "You'll see the sign."

The sign, "Holm's Farm, Guests," swung from a large tree bordering the road. Another sign read: "Eggs. Honey." Roger parked the car and started up the path. When he was halfway to the house, the screen door opened and Dorothy Elgar stepped onto the porch with a traveling bag in her hand. She was followed by a thin, middle-aged woman. "I hope you'll be feeling much better soon," the woman was saying. "You sit down here and wait till your friend comes al—Yes?"

"I'd like to speak to—" Roger nodded toward Dorothy Elgar. He imagined she had not used her correct name at the farmhouse.

She stepped down off the porch. "Is your name Anderson?" she asked. "Mr. O'Mara said he was sending a detective named Anderson."

"Oh. Oh, well, yes! Yes, I'm Anderson. O'Mara told me—" She stared. "But that first day I saw you. You're a student, aren't you, at the college?"

"Well, you see, I'm helping O'Mara on this case, and . . ." He went on talking automatically, listening to the sound of a motorcycle speeding along the main road. "Let me take your bag." But she was suspicious. If she phones O'Mara, I'm sunk, he thought.

"Wait here," she said. "I'm going inside to—"

"I was at the hospital this morning," he said simultaneously. "I saw John Kirk. He's quite well."

"You saw him? You were speaking to him?"

"Yes." Roger took the bag from her and started toward the car. "He was asking for you. The doctors think he's getting along wonderfully." He opened the car door for her, ran around and climbed in the opposite side.

Without turning the car, Roger drove along the narrow lane. He could feel the woman staring at him.

"We're not going in the right direction." There was a white pocketbook on Mrs. Elgar's lap, and suddenly she opened it, put her hand inside. He thought: She's got the revolver. "You're not Anderson, are you? You lied to me. Who are you? Stop the car this minute, or I'll—" Her voice shook.

"Put that damned gun down. You couldn't use it last night." She gasped. "Unless you used it to smash Mrs. Wilkenson over the head with."

"What do you—how? Who's Mrs. Wilk—"

"Mrs. Wilkenson was found with her skull fractured about two minutes after you ducked out of your husband's cottage."

"I didn't have anything to do with it. I didn't!"

"All right," he said. "I know you didn't." The lane started to swing back into the main highway. At the intersection, there was a roadhouse called the Rustic Inn. "Do you mind coming in? We'll talk this thing over while I get some coffee."

She got out of the car and went into the inn. Roger drove the car into a large barn and closed the doors.

Mrs. Elgar was sitting alone in the dining room of the inn. She asked for a cup of black coffee.

Her hands were large, and she kept them locked tightly about the coffee cup as she told her story. She had come to see her husband on Friday afternoon and found that he was out. She returned to the Parker Hotel, where she saw John Kirk. He had followed her against her wishes; at dinner that night in the Riviera, she discovered that he had his revolver with him. She made him give it to her; made him promise not to see her husband at all, to go home.

"At eleven-thirty that night I went to see my husband, alone. I had told John that I wouldn't go until the morning, but I wanted to get the whole thing over. I saw Hubert and accomplished nothing."

When she returned to the hotel, John Kirk was waiting for her in the dark lounge; he had phoned her room and found she had gone out. She told him what had happened, and he wanted to see Elgar at once. Again she dissuaded him and retired to her room. She had decided to see a lawyer.

The next morning she checked out of the hotel and found there was an hour's wait before her train arrived. She went to a small restaurant to have some coffee. As she was about to enter, two girls were coming out; they met a third girl and started to tell her about the murder of Elgar the night before.

"That was how I learned of it," Dorothy Elgar said. "One of the girls was fair, slender, very pretty, and the other was tall, heavyset." Mary and Marcia, Roger thought. And that was where Marcia had seen Mrs. Elgar in a doorway.

Fearing that John Kirk had killed her husband, Mrs. Elgar turned away from the Campus Inn in a panic. "I lost my head," she admitted. "I saw a bus coming, and I jumped on it."

She had alighted at East Fenton and put up at Holm's Farm, using her maiden name, then went to bed ill. That was on Saturday. On Sunday, Mrs. Holm brought her the papers, and she read that the police expected to arrest Kirk.

On Monday morning, no longer able to stand the anxiety, she decided to give herself up. She went to the college, stopped a man at the entrance gates and asked where she could find Detective O'Mara. The man she had stopped was Ed Bayless, and he recognized her from seeing her in the Riviera; she had been pointed out by his wife.

He asked her to speak to him before going to the police, and they went to the hotel. She told him what she was now telling Roger. In return, he told her he was positive John Kirk had not murdered her husband. He asked her to hold off a little longer. He made an appointment to meet her in her husband's cottage at nine-thirty the following night.

"He would bring the detective there to meet me, and by then his case would be solved. He sounded so convincing—"

"Whom did he suspect?" Roger asked.

"He didn't tell me. He wouldn't. I went up the back path Tuesday night—that's last night—and let myself in." Not knowing that Bayless had been murdered shortly after leaving her on Monday, she had waited for him in the dark living room. She began to think it was a trap. She had John Kirk's gun, but she knew nothing about shooting it. She was standing at the window with one slat of the blind raised when she saw a woman's shadow come down the driveway.

Dorothy Elgar went up the staircase. The woman entered the kitchen and went into the living room. Perhaps two or three minutes later Dorothy heard a cry in the kitchen; then footsteps retreated and there was silence. "I thought whoever had come in had hurt herself, bumped into something, and then had gone out. I waited perhaps ten or fifteen minutes longer. Then I came down very quietly, and—and suddenly I had the feeling I wasn't alone."

Roger smiled. "I was there. You scared the wits out of me."

"Well, I didn't know who it was! The flashlight went on, and I ran. I ran down that back path and just got on the bus as it was about to start. A newspaper had been left on the seat beside me. I looked at it. It said that John had been picked up by the police; that he was in the hospital and had confessed to killing my husband. I saw then that Professor Bayless had been murdered too."

On getting back to the farm, she had been too shaken and sick to phone O'Mara. She had waited till morning.

"Mrs. Elgar, what was it you told Bayless that made him think he could produce the murderer?" Roger told her about finding the scrap of paper in the typewriter.

"Something I told him? I couldn't have! I didn't know anything except what I've told you."

"You don't know anything about an autograph in a yearbook?"

"No, I don't." The yearbook meant nothing to her.

"Did Bayless tell you if he suspected—his wife?"

"No. He didn't tell me anything, and I didn't tell him—"

"Would you tell me word for word what the two of you talked about? Please."

Roger listened carefully as she recalled their conversation. He could find in it no clue at all. "Wasn't there *anything* else?"



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And Remember—Nothing takes the place of War Bonds

"Not that I remem— Yes, we talked a little about the college where my husband had taught. I told him I had been born there, and my father taught there. And that I had become ill with a nervous breakdown after I—when I found out my husband had been unfaithful to me repeatedly."

"How'd you find out? I mean, who was—"

"My father followed my husband one night. I don't know what made him suspicious, but he was."

"Did he know who it was?"

"Yes, but he wouldn't tell me anything about it." And now her father was dead.

Roger sat looking at an imaginary stone wall. Mrs. Elgar's last sentence reverberated in his brain. The stone wall suddenly crumbled, and behind it he saw what Ed Bayless had seen. The murderer stood revealed!

It was early in the afternoon when they left the Rustic Inn. Roger had telephoned O'Mara and requested two hours of liberty before returning to town with Mrs. Elgar. A jubilant O'Mara had agreed. He felt that his case was solved even without Roger's information.

They drove back to the college in silence. Mrs. Elgar sat limp, almost asleep. Roger's head ached, but his mind worked steadily, showing him the whole background of the murders.

He drove into town. As he went past the hospital, he saw a figure in black running up the white steps. He jammed on the brakes. Mrs. Elgar woke up.

"I'll be back in a few minutes," he said.

At the hospital desk, he heard Connie asking urgently to see Mrs. Wilkenson. "Please," she was saying, "I'm a good friend of hers. It's absolutely necessary that I—" She wheeled on Roger. "What are you doing here?"

"I saw you coming in. You were running."

"You bet I'm running. I'm running so damned fast and so far that no one's going to—"

"Why do you want to see Mrs. Wilkenson?" he asked.

"Well, I want to ask her something, and I don't want you to be there while I'm asking it. Don't come up."

"Let her alone," he said. He felt like crying. "It's all over, Connie. O'Mara knows—and so do I."

"I'm sorry," said the nurse behind the desk, "but no one may see Mrs. Wilkenson."

Connie turned away from the desk. Anderson walked in at that moment and grabbed her arm. "O'Mara told you to stay in your house." He glared at Roger. "You're under arrest."

"I still have an hour of liberty," Roger told him. "Mrs. Elgar's sitting outside in a car that doesn't belong to me. I'll put them both in your care. At the end of an hour you can come and shoot me for a complete damned fool."

He walked to Mary's house. The white-haired woman told him to go right up. Mary put her book down and smiled. She had never looked more beautiful to him.

"You look awfully tired," she said softly. "Sit down."

"They know who's committed the murders," he said. She sat opposite him. "I'm sorry I found out."

"Of course you are," she said. "Poor Roger. But you must have suspected—just a little."

"I'm pretty dumb," he said. "It took me till today to figure it out. Mrs. Wilkenson, of course, was the easiest one. I mean, I knew how that happened. She saw the murderer going into Elgar's cottage to get that page out of the yearbook; she went in to investigate, got as far as the kitchen, and the murderer smashed her on the head and left her there to die."

Mary's aquamarine eyes were fixed on him.

"As far as Ed Bayless was concerned, he was too smart, yet not smart enough. You remember that day when he asked Connie if she ever knew Elgar before, some years ago? He couldn't keep from showing off. And that was his undoing. From that moment on, he was living on borrowed time. We all separated—you remember?—and our murderer watched Ed Bayless slipping into Elgar's cottage and knew what he was searching for: some confirmation—letters, perhaps; a snapshot; something like that. That was a murder committed with calculation, in cold blood, whereas Elgar's was an act of violence, committed on the spur of the moment."

"Roger, don't talk about them. I—do you recall that I asked you if you loved Constance so much you could forgive her even though she—"

"Yes, I remember." He looked away from Mary.

"Could you still forgive everything—even now?"

He wanted to say yes, but he could not.

"Does—does O'Mara know?"

"Yes. By now he knows. Dorothy Elgar is talking to him. In the stillness, he sat envisioning the murder of Hubert Elgar. The murderer, surprised by Professor Harrison's arrival, slipping into the empty room across the hall, listening to Elgar telling his wife he did not want a divorce and thereby sealing his death. For now the murderer knew that he had lied: that he didn't want to be free of his wife; that it suited his philanderer's rôle to be unhappily married to an invalid."

Mary stood up. "Roger," she said, "don't mind! I don't."

"But I do." He turned his face away, closed his eyes.

After a moment he heard the door click as she went into her bedroom. Then there came the sound he had almost been waiting for. A shot rang out in the bedroom.

For Mary was the murderer. It was she who had signed her professor's yearbook, "With love," in a June four years past.

Two weeks later Roger got off the train and walked up the path to the college. The summer course had ended; there were no students anywhere. He went to Connie's house and found her in the garden having lunch. The table was set for two.

"Hello!" she said, smiling. "You're just in time."

"Were you expecting someone for lunch?"

"You. I know your train got in at noon. Sit down. Roger—quick. I can't wait any longer. What did they tell you?"

"To report back for active duty the end of this week."

"Never!" She stared at him in astonishment. "I don't know whether to be glad or sorry. Glad, I guess. Oh, that's wonderful for you, Rog. It's what you wanted. I'm so—"

"So glad you're crying?"

"Don't be silly! How did they ever come to—"

"They congratulated me on my recovery. They said I must have spent a very restful summer." He laughed with her. "I told them it wasn't so restful, and they said whatever it was, it had fixed me up fine. Got my mind off myself."

"Did you tell them it took two and a half murders to do that?"

He was silent, and she bit her lip. "Roger, is it always going to be between us?" she asked.

"No," he said, "of course not, but I'll be glad to get away for a while. I don't mean from you; I mean from here." Her eyes were still on him. "It's all right, Con. I don't mind talking about the—the mess. Have you seen O'Mara?"

"He was here this morning, trying to make amends."

"Is he still sore at me for all the interfering?"

"No." She smiled. "He tried to tell me that he could have solved it without your help, but he was working it from a different angle, and honestly he almost would have. Well, I mean Mary's"—the name fell strangely between them—"Mary's school records had just come in from Australia, and they proved that she and Elgar must have known each other before; that she was one of his students. Do you think Ed knew that when he asked me if I had known Elgar before?"

"He suspected it; he was watching Mary to see how she'd react."

"She reacted, all right. That sounds cruel, but I mean—"

Roger thought of Mary going up the Library stairs with her reference book, glancing out the window and seeing Ed Bayless slipping into Elgar's cottage; she saw Connie leaving for the movies; saw Mrs. Wilkenson starting out in search of Jackie. The coast was clear. He thought of Mary leaving the Library, hurrying down behind the hedge . . .

Connie's voice brought him back. "O'Mara said her records here showed no connection at all between her and Elgar. But O'Mara thinks she came here to continue the affair they had had, and that Elgar kept promising he'd marry her as soon as his wife's health was better. But actually he had grown tired of her. She knew it, and she was wild. That night she came up the back path to his room . . ."

Elgar had not sent for her, Roger realized. The note she showed him was an old one, probably four years old, and she had torn the date from the top of the page. That night when she came to Elgar's room she was prepared for a showdown, and then she heard him refusing to consent to a divorce. Professor Harrison's arrival sent her into one of the dark empty rooms.

Harrison left, and the moment Mrs. Elgar went out, Mary rushed into the room and charged Elgar with the lie. Possibly he laughed at her, and in her fury, she seized the paperknife and stabbed him. The first blow ripped his arm, and as he bent over, holding it, cursing her, she threw herself upon him, stabbing him again and again.

It was Mary whom Roger had heard closing the door softly, creeping down the hall. It was her heel that had clicked on the landing. Ed Bayless had been moving about on the path, and Mary, hearing him, must have stood frozen on the dark staircase. Bayless had heard the door closing too.

"Constance! Come out!" Bayless had whispered. Finally he had walked away, and Mary, coming out the back of the building, went past him in the darkness.

Constance and Roger finished lunch. "Have you decided where you're going," he asked, "or what you're going to do?"

"No, except that I'm going to leave here and get a job." She laughed. "Releasing some man who probably doesn't want to be released. And I'll hold it until he comes back."

"Till who comes back?"

"Whoever he is! I don't know."

"But you will be waiting for someone to come back? You will, won't you, Con?"

Her eyes laughed at him. "You old darling," she said. "Of course I will."

THE END

time, would we fall in love, or are we just used to each other?"

He did not want to play I-Wonder games. His world had changed, so much that he wanted what was left in it to remain strong and familiar. He said hotly, "That's a damn silly idea! We can't pretend we're just meeting. We've known each other since we were ten. We've loved each other since we were fifteen."

"Well, then," Mary Lee said, "now that we're grown-up and know what we want, we might as well be married right away."

If I marry Mary Lee now, Pancho thought, that'll settle everything. I'll get over Gillian. Say it out loud, you oaf; say, "Let's get married," and say it with feeling. But nothing stirred in the mechanism with which he made voice.

"Oh-oh," Mary Lee said at last, softly, as though she had been looking for something and had found it. "So it's hard to say yes, is it, Pancho da-lin'?"

"Knock knock," Luke Winward said. "It is my intention to intrude. Take warning."

Long-armed, his head tilted at Mary Lee, Luke stood above them. He was very welcome; the other two had been afraid to continue their conversation.

"How are you bipeds?" Luke asked. "Love of my life, how are you?" That was for Mary Lee; part of a long-drawn-out gag that he was mad for Pancho's girl. Tonight Pancho didn't laugh. He was thinking that as long as their privacy had been spoiled by Luke, Gillian could have come too.

Two soldiers, a pretty girl and lobster to eat. The world scored that as a large evening. But for Pancho, everything was off-tick. Nothing was as real to him as the memory of a girl saying, "Meet me. We can't leave us like this."

It was close to bedtime for soldiers. On the boardwalk the soft thudding of footsteps had lightened. Some sailors went by, six abreast, chesty because they were on leave and could stay out if they wanted to. They made casual cooing noises at a girl in a white jumper and a short red jacket. Nothing serious; more for gallantry than desire.

The girl ducked into a dark doorway, like a three-sided cage; tile below, the glass door behind her, empty glass showcases on each side. Till the Army came, this had been an antique store specializing in such goods as Staffordshire figurines and old glass bottles. Now it was dead, and the shop next it too. But the third door down belonged to the Half-Moon, and though its light was dimmed with orange cellophane, it was alive. The girl in the doorway of the deserted antique shop hid and watched the entrance to the Half-Moon.

There were banners of fog under the half-blacked street lights. Below the boardwalk, the ocean creamed, unseeable. I wish I were invisible too, Gillian thought. Oh, fog, maybe you can drape me quick. Because there he is.

You would have to love him to recognize the dim soldier shape down there as Pancho Pine. You would have to know him in gestures you had never seen: how he looked when he was worried, maybe, or impatient. He was impatient now; worried too. Gillian could tell. Once, when the door was opened, she saw him peer down at his watch face.

Why don't I creep away now under the fog and go home? I've seen what I came for. He did come! He's here! He cares enough for me to wait for me. Or, the gremlin thought attacked her, wouldn't it be more sensible to go to Pancho and

explain to him that we mustn't have anything more to do with each other because I don't know for sure what kind of girl I am? Take out my good resolutions in talk. Why not do it and let him persuade me that I'm a wonderful girl with emotions solid as stone, and that of course we can be together?

A dim strolling shape passed the Half-Moon, paused to look at the impatient soldier and came along to Gillian's doorway. It stopped, and she gasped in panic.

"Hello, Gillian."

It was a civilian, and she knew the voice. "Oh, it's you," she said to the white-haired man. She whispered so that he would take the hint and whisper too.

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Family Quiz Answers

MOTHER

(Questions on page 16)

1. An ordinary informal meal.
2. Mt. Athos on the Aegean Sea. It is a monastic colony.
3. 38 yards.
4. It is a new leafy vegetable from Asia comparable to spinach, but more delicate in flavor.
5. California and Oregon.
6. First violin.
7. Minnehaha.
8. In England in 1877—the St. John's Ambulance Association.
9. Blood.
10. Gumbo.
11. Hopping John is bacon and peas stewed, sometimes with rice, and seasoned with red pepper. Hopping Dick is a West Indian thrush.
12. Pekoe is Chinese for white hair. The tea leaves are picked in April when there is a white down on them.

Questions accepted from Margaret Kew, Scranton, Pa.; Maude G. Mitchell, Los Angeles, Calif.; Mrs. George R. Hill, Greenfield, Mass.; Mrs. Mark Collins, Washington, D. C.; Mrs. Julia M. Martin, Springfield, Mass.; Charles S. Samarjan, Detroit, Mich.; Russell K. James, Columbus, O.; Judith Kay Murphy, Augusta, Kan.; Gilbert Potts, Portland, Ore.; Faye L. Mitchell, Allyn, Wash.

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He did lower his voice. "I think you've made a mistake. Your soldier is waiting for you down there."

"S-sh."

"Oh, it's a game." He stepped inside the doorway. "Are you playing hide and seek? Do you want me to give him a hint?"

"No. Please."

"Perhaps he's waiting for another girl and you're jealous? Please don't be ashamed to be jealous in front of me."

Distraught, she turned to him. "Please go away."

"No," he said. "It's not safe for you to be alone in dark doorways." He leaned against the glass window. "You know, if that's the young man you're in love with—I believe you did tell me you were in love?—I approve your taste. I could even, if it came to that, give my consent."

She sighed, deeply, unconsciously. A sigh is the most lonely sound in the world and the most indicative; it is the breeze of grief.

The white-haired man said, "See there, my dear, you don't have to suffer any more, watching him. He's gone in to have a beer."

It was true, Gillian saw, squinting through the fog. What she said was

childlike, and her voice was very small. "I guess I've got to go home."

Pancho walked past the long bar, past the booths crowded with uniformed men, breaking it up now, rising to leave. He found the telephone booth and telephoned Mary Lee at the Sea Drift Hotel.

"I've been thinking," he said. "You know what we were talking about at dinner tonight? Well, I'm for it. I'll make arrangements; we'll get a license and sew us together as fast as we can. Maybe I can get a few days now or later for a honeymoon."

"Oh," Mary Lee said, and she lifted the sound into a half question. After a pause filled with the hollow sub-hum of silence on a telephone wire she said again, "Oh." This time, on a descending inflection it was a settled thing. "All right, darlin'. That'll be best."

He hung up feeling, like a strained muscle, his changed state. He was no longer an engaged man, but a man who had set his wedding date. Outside, in the fog, he turned toward his hotel. For the life of him, he could not help looking just once more to see whether Gillian had come. Then slowly, as though giving her just this last scrap of time, he walked away past the empty shops.

He went past the sentry into his hotel, down the stripped corridors, past the room where they had been issued bedding, past the tiered benches with the signs, "Shoe Repair—Incoming—Outgoing," up three flights of stairs and past the squadron room to his own, which he shared with Luke, with a peppery and profane little guy named Jerry and three other good guys.

Everyone was asleep but Luke, washing up in the yellow and gray tiled bathroom which gave them such a laugh.

"You've been all this time with Mary Lee?" Luke asked. "I envy you heartily."

Pancho skipped that. There wasn't any way to tell Luke that he'd been waiting in front of a beer joint for half an hour—not waiting for Mary Lee, either. It made him feel damn guilty now. He took a breath and spoke carefully. "Mary Lee and I are going to be married. Pronto."

Luke's neck and face were deeply tanned. He couldn't go pale. "On the unexpected side, isn't it?"

"When people are engaged, aren't they expected to marry?"

Luke was very busy with the towel. With it over his face, he said, "Well, I don't know exactly what to say. For once, I'm wordless."

Pancho began to peel out of his clothes. "The customary thing to say is congratulations."

"Congratulations," Luke said. Then: "So that's why Mary Lee asked me to join you at Hackney's—to celebrate? Why didn't you say so?"

After a minute Pancho said, "Umm," noncommittally. Then: "I guess you'll have to be my best man, you old horse thief."

The boy from New England looked at the boy from Texas. "On the sadistic side, aren't you, chum, making me watch while you take Mary Lee?" It was, of course, just a gag. He smiled and stuck out his hand. "Thanks, Pancho. You're a great guy, and you deserve the best. And since I'm the best, the very best, you deserve me as a best man." He headed toward his bunk. "You know, Gillian's got a sort of bend toward you. She'll weep at the wedding on my shoulder, and I'll weep on hers."

Pancho should have let it ride. But he

couldn't. "Gillian won't be anywhere around," he said shortly.

In the dark, when the dimout curtains had been raised in what had once been a thirty-dollar-a-day room, Pancho lay listening to the ocean. Now, why had Mary Lee asked Luke to meet them, when she'd been so anxious that she and Pancho be alone together?

He didn't stay with the question long. Drifting into sleep, unbidden, the feeling of Gillian came back to him. The slenderness and fragility of her back . . . Remembrance ran along his hands; his chest felt the heaviness of her head. Ever since he'd met her, he'd been scared of hurting her; she seemed so gentle and unequipped to take the world as it is. Poor little Gillian. Poor little me! he thought fiercely, rolling over. I'll get her out of my mind if I have to beat my head. "Stay out of my dreams," he told Gillian, and she did.

During the dinner hour at the Café Drigo, in the absence of Miss Gillian, the gentle old Negro waiter Marcel had been acting as maître d'hôtel.

He approached the middle-aged woman, elegantly dressed in black and white. "One, madam?" he asked.

"No, I won't have dinner, thank you. Is—is Mrs. Drigo here?" She seemed pitifully embarrassed. "I'm her sister, Mrs. Dowell."

Yes, Marcel had seen this lady before, years ago when Miss Gillian had been a little girl. She looked like Mrs. Drigo right enough, the same blue-green eyes, the same straight way of holding her neck. "I'll see if Mrs. Drigo is in her office," he said, and made his way to an unidentifiable section of the pastel-painted wall. At his brief knock, a door opened and Francey looked out.

It had been so long since Fern had seen Francey in evening clothes that her heart leaped. She's still lovely, my little sister; quite, quite beautiful. At this distance her figure was perfect, her face mercifully young. Then Fern moved quickly before Francey could close herself away again.

"I've got to talk to you. About Gillian."

"Come inside." Francey stood back against the doorway so that Fern might enter the office. There was nothing gracious about the gesture; it was merely that she wished to have no scenes in her restaurant. When the door was closed she said to Fern, "I don't want to discuss Gillian with you. When will you learn to butt out of my business?"

"Well, then, I'll leave," Fern said. "I thought this might be important to you, since it concerns both Gillian and Carl."

"What about them?"

"I'd like to sit down." In times of emotion, Fern now tired quickly.

"Sit down, then. Tell me, is Carl still here?"

"Yes."

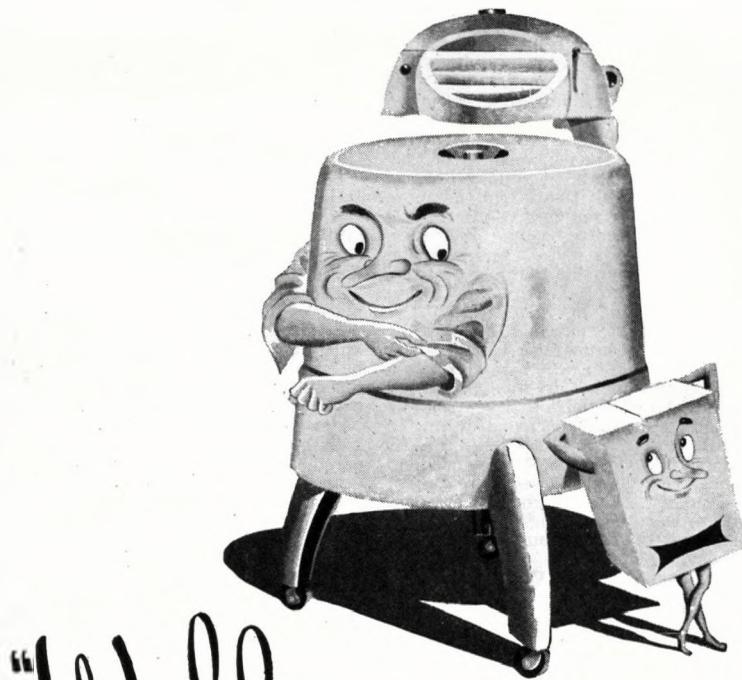
"I haven't seen him." Francey's tone almost said, "I've been looking for him, and I haven't seen him."

Fern wanted to help her; without effort, she could have resumed the rôle, half mother, half twin, which she used to play with Francey. But she kept her voice quiet. "I think you ought to let me take Gillian away."

"So that's what it is! Another trick to take her from me! My God, haven't you learned yet it won't work?"

"The child has fallen in love with that young soldier you put out of here one night."

"My dear wise sister, who loves to play God, I knew that before you did. Nothing will come of it." Sly and proud, Francey looked. "He'll marry his fiancee, and Gillian will recover."



"Well—

what are we waiting for?"

Washing Machine— "Why don't they bring me some wash? I'm good and tired of sitting here doing nothing. And by the way, Shorty, where have *you* been?"

Fels-Naptha— "Take it easy, Old-Timer. Don't forget that I'm a very popular lad just now. Your Missus waited three days for me this week."

Washing Machine— "She must be losing her mind. What have you got that other soaps haven't got?"

Fels-Naptha— "Brother, I've got NAPTHA! And do the smart gals go for that. If it wasn't for me, you'd be in the Home for Worn-Out Washers right now."

Washing Machine— "Is that so! Why you little . . ."

Fels-Naptha— "Jiggers! Here she comes. And look at that wash. Lift your lid, Pal, this is a job for Fels-Naptha—and I do mean NAPTHA!"



FELS-NAPTHA SOAP—banishes "Tattle-Tale Gray"

That had been Fern's wish too; after all these years, about some matters their reactions were still amazingly twinlike. "Something will come of the fact that Carl is following Gillian all over town," Fern said.

"Following her!" This was so convincing and unexpected that Francey whitened. "What do you mean, he follows her?"

"Twice last week I saw him not more than a few feet from her. Both times I thought it might have been a coincidence. But tonight I took a walk and saw him follow her through the fog. I knew then, of course, that he had identified Gillian and was following her deliberately."

"Why?" Francey asked. "Why does he do it? Does she know who he is?"

"I don't think so. She's as clear as a mirror. If she knew Carl was her father, then we'd know it too."

"I don't want him to have anything to do with Gillian." Francey held a glass paperweight as though it were a hand grenade. "He doesn't deserve to look at her! And if he hangs around her, she's bound to learn something."

"That's why I want you to let me take her away."

"You take her? Hell, I'll take her myself."

"How can you leave the restaurant?"

"I'll sell it, close it up."

Fern's great need for her family made the conversation deceptive. Almost, it was as though she and Francey were making plans together. Fern let down her guard. "Perhaps I'll go with you."

Francey stood, laughed the laugh she had learned in the nineteen-thirties from Little Willie Weaver and the gangster politicians. "I guess you won't go any place with us. Not till you're invited, Mrs. Dowell."

The next morning was Monday—Monday of a new week, of a new world. Francey and Gillian sat over their separate breakfast-tray tables; there were things they must say to each other, and surely there would be a battle. They girded themselves with thin toast and black coffee. It was so quiet in the room that the voice of a sergeant training a green crew could be heard from the street below: "To the left OELIQUE—oo—ea—or . . ." It sounded funny, as though he said, "To the left of black."

Everything reminded Gillian of Pancho. He's going away. Pancho's going away. They don't let soldiers stay any place too long, but a girl can follow a man to the water's edge—if he's her man. Mary Lee can follow Pancho.

"Mother," she said, aloud, "I want to leave Atlantic City."

Francey held a corner of toast, her hand tense. "That's funny. I've been wondering how to tell you I'm closing up the place. I thought we'd take a vacation; maybe spend next winter in New York." Then, suspiciously: "Why do you want to leave Atlantic City, Gillian?"

"Why do you, Mother?" The girl wore a bathing suit with navy slacks and bolero. Her figure was both full and slender; both taut and graceful. She smiled because even when she and her mother wanted the same thing at the same time it was easier to argue than to rejoice.

"I should have left this town long ago," Francey said, looking out the window as though having it out with the city. "This place is a hellhole."

Gillian said softly, "I love it. It's never had a chance to be just ocean and sky and people enjoying themselves. Just as though Atlantic City were alive, I feel sorry for it."

"How soon will your pity let you leave? You go today, and as soon as I've got

things cleaned up here I'll follow you." "Not today," Gillian said; "not quite yet."

One last meeting, like one last word, a woman needs. Except that the men they wanted to see had different names, both Francey and Gillian were thinking the same thing.

Gillian knew that Pancho bought his Dallas newspaper from the fat lady who ran the little bookstore and newsstand on the boardwalk. Shamelessly, therefore, she spent the day on the beach, where she could command a view of the shop.

Because she was so soon to leave this place of her birth, familiar things looked very strange today. Girls in bathing suits knitting olive-drab sweaters which would be worn in far, cold places; soldiers doing calisthenics on the sands—how like beautiful machines they looked. At the water-line, three sailors rode horseback. Is it like this everywhere? Gillian wondered. Do odd things seem normal in other towns? The boardwalk, like a moving belt carrying soldiers and visitors; the hotels like elephants rearing. It is all so strange that it must have a very deep meaning.

She lay in her deck chair thinking hard about things so she would not think about herself.

After noon mess she saw Pancho walk into the bookstore. Calmly she rose and went up the steps to the boardwalk.

He had the paper under his arm; he was paying the fat lady when Gillian blocked the sunlight in the doorway of the bookshop.

LIKE LIFE-SIZED cardboard figures sometimes shown in front of moving-picture theaters, the soldier and the girl faced each other.

Gillian saw that Pancho would not even say hello, so she spoke first. "I'm sorry about last night. About not meeting you when I said I would."

"Skip it. I only waited a minute or two." But his tone neither accepted nor forgave.

She smiled, remembering his patient vigil. "That's good," she said, looking at his lean burnt face.

He said, breaking out. "Well, why didn't you meet me? It was your idea, wasn't it? Why didn't you show?"

"It sounds like corn to say it. But the reason I didn't come was for your good."

"Nice of you to decide what's for my good. What do you mean, or do you know?"

She stood silent, exasperated by language. There were no words to tell him how Aunt Fern had scared her by making her think she might be breaking up a lifelong romance between Mary Lee and Pancho without knowing whether her own emotions were stable enough to take the consequences. Maybe it was true that she was like her father and only fell in love when difficulties spiced romance—how could she say that aloud? "It's too hard to explain," she said. "I just wanted to say good-bye. I'm leaving town."

"What happened after yesterday evening in your aunt's place?"

"It's much better for you to be with Mary Lee."

He had little time, too much to cope with. "What do you mean, you're leaving town?"

"It seems like the best thing to do."

"Yesterday it seemed like the best thing to do was for us to meet. Today you say you didn't meet me for my own good, and now the best thing is for you to leave town." He took an angry breath. "You know what, Gillian? I reckon you're right. It's for my own good not

to see you any more. You don't know what o'clock it is."

She flinched, because that was how she felt about herself. "Well, remember this, Pancho. I—want everything wonderful to happen for you."

She was so pitiful and so pretty she got to him. It made him angrier. "Thanks, little chum. I think you can stop worrying over me. Mary Lee and I are going to be married Saturday, and from now on I'll be what I've been all my life—Mary Lee's headache."

"That's good," she said sternly. "My congratulations and best wishes." She stood so rigid that her muscles trembled, but she got her hand out to shake his.

The bookstore woman came waddling toward them. "Now, be fair, kids," she said. "You're blocking the doorway. How could a customer come in, if I ever got another customer? Come back on the shop, sit down and fight in comfort."

The handclasp broke. They flew apart as though they had been waiting an outside word to set them free.

Going north, Pancho thought: Well, that's that. Something of no importance. He was sore as hell.

Going across the boardwalk blindly and down the wooden steps to the sand, Gillian thought: Why did I believe that just talking to him once more would settle things?

She blew her nose, hoping the dim figures on the beach would think she suffered from a summer cold. Then she stripped off her slacks and bolero and trotted down to the water to let her salt tears mingle with the large salt body.

She tried not to pay too much attention to the splashing in the surf so close to her, but when she turned, it was the white-haired man, very tanned in bathing trunks, his eyes sky-blue.

Gillian plunged under a swell just before it broke and, stroking easily, drew herself away from him. She didn't want to talk to anyone, least of all to an old friend of her mother's.

But the man swam too. Not the Australian crawl—instead, a neat overstroke which made good time. "I've been wanting to swim with you," he said. "You're not bad at all."

She breathed through her mouth, put her face into the water, making herself unavailable to conversation. When she turned over to float, the white-haired man came up beside her.

"Are you happy?" he asked.

He had asked this before. Gillian was amused to hear it asked again with the peculiar hollow pressure which water gives the voice. "Am I happy? That's the sixty-four-dollar question," she said.

"You cry too much," he said disapprovingly. "I saw you crying on your way to the water. No man will love you if you cry all the time."

"Look, I can't swim and talk at the same time." With a dolphin splash, she went under the green breakers, coming out in the surfless depths. Parallel to the beach she swam, and she saw, cruelly, that he was a little too old to swim as well as she. When she stopped to tread water he had returned to the dry sands.

But she had not escaped him. He had taken a position as guardian to her slacks and bolero.

She couldn't stay in the water forever, and presently she came up the beach.

"Want my towel?" He held it up.

She lacked one, but she said, "No thanks," preferring to wait until her suit dried. At a deliberate distance she stretched out, face down, the sun like a metal shield over her back. PRIVATE, KEEP OUT, she indicated with every muscle.

But the man came over, sat, and be-

gan to talk to the side of Gillian's head. "As I was saying. Love should have at least some happiness in it. Do you think poets would write sonnets to nothing but tears, tears all the time?" Severely he said, "You confessed that you love someone; I judge it's the young soldier you disappointed last night. If you love him, why does your face get longer each day?"

Her face still turned away, she said, " Didn't you ever hear of a girl loving a man who was engaged to someone else?"

"Oh, that. Well, how lucky you found out you love each other now. Might be awkward if he were already married."

Under her, she could feel the sand, wet from her bathing suit, caking into rigidity. It was solid; that was good. "They're being married Saturday."

"Couldn't you have prevented things going this far?"

Slowly she said, "I think I could have." She must have known this all the time—that she could have had Pancho if she had met him last night. The intuition came from some deep female crypt within her; she wouldn't have said it aloud to anyone but this stranger. Strangers hear things and go away; they are the priests of the troubled.

"Well, I don't know what's wrong with you," the stranger said. "You love the man, and you let him get away. You ought to be a better female than that."

"Maybe I'd be better with men if my father hadn't been so handy with women."

The sands make a quiet carpet, and when he did not speak for such a long time, she thought he might have gone away. For the first time she turned her head. He was still there.

"As it happens," he said, "I know your father."

"You said you knew my mother. I didn't know you knew—him." She sat up. "You know my name. What's yours?"

"Mr. Pater," he said. He looked at her quickly, as though the name might make her laugh.

But it was good to be thinking about someone besides Pancho. "What was my father like? Where is he?"

"Do you really want to know? I—I thought the way you spoke of him was rather unfriendly."

"How can I be unfriendly to a man I can't remember?"

"Well, then, what did you mean? If my father hadn't been so handy with women."

Impatiently she said, "Well, if you know my father you know he deserted my mother for another woman. And then he deserted that woman for a black-eyed Brazilian and I don't know how many more women. My father was *littered* with women. And I'm scared to be like him. So I'll break no engagements for other people; break up no marriages. There, Mr. Pater, you know everything. Now, tell me. Where is my father?"

"Supposed to be in South America." He had been so talkative; now he didn't seem to wish to say much.

"Please," Gillian said, "you don't know what you're doing for me, just talking about him. Tell me—is he well?"

"Better than he deserves, I guess."

"And who's his sweetheart now? Or is he too old for them?"

"Too old? You don't know much about men." He seemed annoyed. "You don't know much about your father, either. Who told you he left Verna—that is, the woman he took to South America—for a black-eyed Brazilian?"

"My aunt, Mrs. Dowell. She said—"

"Fern always did try to put two and two together!"

"Oh, you know my aunt too?"

"Well, let me tell you this. Your father



You were coming home, dear

Your first leave! And I wondered, dear, if you'd still find me charming.

You used to love my hands. And—now—well everyone says that war work like mine takes the beautifying moisture from hand-skin.

I'd have hated, dear, to meet you with rough hands. I'm glad I didn't have to. One of the girls I work with told me about Jergens Lotion and I used Jergens faithfully, thinking of you. I saw my hands get softer and smoother.

I'm so happy—and grateful to Jergens. You still do love my hands.



Charming young wives of men in the Service use Jergens Lotion, nearly 3 to 1. Like professional hand care! Contains 2 ingredients many doctors use to help coarsened skin become nice and soft again. So easy to use; no sticky feeling. Always use Jergens Lotion.

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loved women as painters paint, as writers write—as an artist. And Verna White was his crowning achievement. Forget those Brazilian girls. He didn't look at them."

Gillian leaned forward on her braced arms. "You mean it was a great love affair, truly?"

"He loved her," said Mr. Pater reverently, "till she died."

Gillian's lips were sensitive framing the question. "There wasn't anything—cheap about it?"

"Cheap is a hell of a word to use in connection with Carl Drigo!" Mr. Pater exploded.

Gillian relaxed, her eyes ardent. "He loved her till she died." As a gesture of friendliness, she reached over for Mr. Pater's towel, put her head on it and turned, face up, to the sky. She was seeing her father in South America, so deeply in love that he had defied all conventions, nursing the delicate beauty he had brought with him to the strange land of Brazil. Of course it had been tough on Mother, but true love was like a tank: it covered the ground irresistibly; things in its way got hurt. That's how I love Pancho, but now it doesn't matter how much I care for him. He hates me. "Oh, I wish I'd met you yesterday," she said. "I could have been what you said—a better female."

"You're not bad the way you are," Mr. Pater said gruffly.

She watched a cloud take gold from the sun. "If you ever see my father again, Mr. Pater, I want you to tell him something from me. Tell him I understand how you can love someone enough to leave your wife and child for her. Tell him I'm sorry she—died."

Mr. Pater said, "He missed you quite a lot, Gillian. I happen to know that."

That was pleasant, but it was not the important thing. Her father had not traded her mother and her for something shoddy, valueless. That was what mattered. Though Pancho now disliked her, though he would marry Mary Lee on Saturday, it justified the way Gillian loved him.

The sands chilled; it was almost sunset. Taps would sound soon from the rifle range; from the drill field at Brigantine the dusty men marched back, still hoarsely singing, "Up we go—into the wild blue yonder," and the pigeons swooped, trying to be dive bombers. Mr. Pater and Gillian were friends.

Too many things had happened; emotionally, she was reeling. In her room in the apartment above the café, Gillian kept going up and down inside, like a rubber ball bounced hard and then let alone. The quarrel with Pancho; the news of his wedding; the revelations of Mr. Pater—these things had been too much for her. She couldn't bear to be alone; she didn't want to see her mother, and so, before dinner, Gillian dressed and went off to Aunt Fern.

She wore her best black dress and the little calotte with the veil. If the end of the world had come, she wanted to be pretty for it.

As she went into the lobby of the Sea Drift, Gillian heard voices in the game-room. The rumble of a man's voice and, festooning it, the higher, clearer tones of a girl. A Texas voice—Mary Lee's. Then Pancho must be with her. Gillian stood irresolute. I ought to wish them happiness. Loving Pancho is nothing to be ashamed of. I've said good-by to him with my voice and in my heart. And Mary Lee means more to me than any girl I've ever known.

She knocked at the door, and when Mary Lee opened it, Gillian was so over-

come by emotion that she began to speak at once. "I just wanted to wish you and Pancho the best of everything. There aren't any two people in the world more deserving of happiness."

"Come in, Gillie," Mary Lee said, stepping aside. She put her arm through Gillian's. They were still friends, though the phone conversation yesterday had been so oddly unpleasant.

Just as on that night when Gillian had first met Pancho, the small game table near the window had been set up and then not used. There was a soldier sitting at the table too. He rose, and Gillian looked at him. This time it wasn't Pancho. It was Luke.

Gillian didn't know exactly why, but she was embarrassed.

In her warm voice, Mary Lee said,

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Family Quiz Answers SISTER

(Questions on page 16)

1. Flowers which open and close at certain hours during the day, such as the four o'clock, wild chicory, etc.
2. Millard Fillmore, who was apprenticed to a clothier, and Andrew Johnson, a tailor.
3. Cardinal numbers: 1, 2, 3, etc. Ordinal numbers: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.
4. Jonathan.
5. Pianoforte.
6. Yes, it prints money for Cuba.
7. Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia.
8. Theodore Roosevelt. "Teddy bear."
9. Because they have no movable eye-lids.
10. A representation of the crib of the Christ-child.
11. A white dog of the Eskimo type, native of Siberia.
12. The skin.

Questions accepted from H. M. Mooney, Columbus, O.; Alexander May, Philadelphia, Pa.; Harriet M. Mooney, Columbus, O.; Mrs. R. Mander, Le May, Mo.; Sam Palumbo, Birmingham, Ala.; Mrtle Odland, Clarion, Ia.; Norma D'Angelo, New Haven, Conn.; Mrs. Arthur B. Ward, Glenville, Ga.; R. C. Grigsby, Petersburg, Ind.; Mrs. Otto A. Lee, Sioux Falls, S. D.; Mrs. E. Artzberger, Pittsburgh, Pa.

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"Gillie came over to congratulate Pancho and me. Tell me, how'd you know we were being married Saturday?"

"Pancho told me. I—happened to run into him in a shop on the boardwalk."

"Oh, I see," Mary Lee said, and she sounded as though she did see, right to the core of it. From Pancho's waiting for Gillian last night to Gillian's watching for Pancho today.

These last days, everything had seemed to go wrong. Even this generous and sincere gesture. Valiantly Gillian tried to recover her bearing. "This might be the last time I'll see you, Mary Lee, and I wanted you to know I'll never forget you. I'm leaving Atlantic City tomorrow." It came out just like that, and the date for her departure was set.

Mary Lee seemed distressed. "Gillie, you did one of the sweetest and bravest things I've ever seen, wishing Pancho and me your best. But you mustn't leave Atlantic City tomorrow."

After the first casual, "Hello, Gillian," Luke had stood idly beside the game table, tossing a couple of checker disks. But now he stood very still. "What do you mean, Mary Lee?"

With a queer gesture, Mary Lee said, "I don't know yet. I just don't know what to do."

Luke was a New Englander, and he could be very quiet and speak distinctly, so you knew what he said was important. "I know what to do," he said.

Everyone acted so queerly. Gillian had lost the ability to comprehend humans. "Well, if you'll just tell Pancho my message to you both," she said.

"He has guard duty tonight," Mary Lee said, "but I'll certainly tell him." Her eyes were on Luke.

"Good-by," Gillian said softly. She walked out of the gameroom and into the elevator. No one stopped her.

Fern had been resting. These days even her simple executive duties wearied her. She thought of herself as a small factory, rods plunging and wheels turning imperceptibly slower each day. The machinery was wearing out. Odd—at such an early age. One day the works would falter and stop. Then the factory would be quiet. She was neither frightened nor sad. Probably she wouldn't be joined to Matt in heaven; life in the hereafter was hard to picture. But at least she and Matt would be in the same state of non-existence; there was togetherness in that.

When she heard the knock at her bedroom door she hoped it would be Gillian. Perhaps she had been a little hard on the girl yesterday, but she had been frightened. Young lives can take a wrong turn; forever lose the path. "Come in. I'm in my bedroom," she called, and Gillian came through the sitting room into the French chamber where Fern lay upon the powder-blue chaise. "How pretty you look today, Gillian," she smiled, leaning up to receive a kiss.

No doubt of it, black was for the very young. Gillian's face came out of the shadow of it, pure-skinned and perfect; under the black veiling of her calotte, her hair shimmered in a dozen tints of bronze and gold.

"Aren't you feeling well?" Gillian found room at the foot of the chaise.

"Why, of course. This is my beauty rest." Gillian clasped her hands together so tightly that the skin color changed. Fern asked, "What's the matter, dear?"

"Nothing. I'm going away tomorrow."

Trying to be casual, Fern said, "You are? Where?"

"New York, I guess."

"Aren't you excited?"

"Yes," Gillian said automatically. Then, quickly: "No, no, no! Pancho and Mary Lee are going to be married Saturday." She let the connection between these statements be understood without explanation.

Poor child, Fern thought. She would not belittle Gillian's grief by offering a cheerful, conventional response, so she was quiet.

Gillian was traveling a mental route which only became audible as though at station stops. "Aunt Fern, I met a man who knows my father."

"Loads of people around Atlantic City remember Carl Drigo."

"But this man knew him in South America. Knew him and her. And Aunt Fern, I think maybe you and I owe Father an apology." Graciously, Gillian took part of the blame on herself. "He did not leave that girl. He loved her—always. She died, Aunt Fern. It was a beautiful love story, and even if Mother can't forgive him, I do."

"Well, darling," Fern said, "it's all past and gone. It doesn't matter any more."

"It matters to me. I feel as though people can never get away from what their parents were. Now that I know my father could be faithful, it sort of gives me the right to be faithful to Pancho forever."

"Even though he's married to another

girl? Even though you never see him again?"

"Even though," Gillian said sternly.

Fern thought, terrified: In a sense she is like Carl, dedicated forever to the romantic. Only he was carefree about it, superficial, while Gillian is sincere and conscious of her responsibility to other people. Carl hurt others; Gillian, unless she is lucky beyond reasonableness, will hurt herself.

Fern's mind drifted to Carl and his Verna White—Miss Schoonville, 1925. How strange and childish the 'twenties had been; in less than two-score years, the country had grown a hundred years older. In those days, even the older people were wild and foolish; now, even the young were steady, aware. Verna White probably could not get into one of the current Miss America contests; now, the girls were rated on health and talent as well as beauty. Poor Miss Schoonville, 1925, her talents had been limited to legs, breasts and a sulky mouth. Yet Carl had been faithful to her.

"This man who told you about your father, Gillian, who was he?"

"Oh, he knows you too. His name is Mr. Pater."

"Pater? Pater?" The name knocked emptily on the doors of her memory. Then she said the name with a different, startled intonation. "Pater. What does he look like?"

"Oh, sort of middle-aged. He has lots of white hair."

"I see. Oh, yes, I know Mr. Pater." Fern lay quiet, restraining her laughter. Whenever life was most serious, it had to have its little joke. "He's an old friend. How did you happen to meet him?"

"He's always around, and we just started to talk."

"I see, quite accidental." In the effort not to laugh, Fern buried her face against the lace pillows of the chaise.

"I've tired you out," Gillian said. "I'll let you rest now, Aunt Fern. I'll come tomorrow to say good-by."

Watching her go, Fern thought: It's outrageous how young people suffer. I'm glad I'm old.

Then she rose from the chaise wearily, to dress for the street. Considering that the life of a human is so short, she thought, there's an awful lot of repetition in it. Or is it that each person has a little rôle which he must play again and again under varying conditions? It seems always to be my task to go wandering out to search for people and tell them things they'd rather not hear. Maybe I'm a busybody, as Francy claims, and certainly I've never done much good with my pilgrimages; but it is always as though I'm the only person in view of the dam when it springs a leak; in view of the train when the tracks are broken. How can I stand by and do nothing?

She adjusted her hat and chose a purse. Yes, I do go in search of people. Most always, it seems, of Carl Drigo.

It was just past seven; somewhere in this town, Carl Drigo would be dining. Presumably at a fine restaurant, though she knew nothing of his financial condition. Fern tried to be logical about it as they were in detective stories. He must have some money or he couldn't be lingering around Atlantic City doing nothing. And since he didn't drink and didn't gamble, he would spend his money on clothes and in eating places. Fortunately, the hotel dining rooms could be excluded; they now served only to patrons in khaki, with tin trays in their hands.

Bitterly amused she thought: There's another place I needn't look for him—the Café Drigo.

Weapons win battles—War Bonds buy weapons

111

She checked off in her mind all the likely places, as she had done when she searched for Carl the night Gillian was born. Tonight, she was as she had been that night long ago, merely lucky.

She found him at the Knife and Fork, the first restaurant at which she had the taxi stop. It is a famous steak house, far south, a block from the beach. Carl had a small table close to the fireplace, which was not now in use, and when he saw Fern, he smiled and rose.

"Hello, Fern," he said. "You're very short of breath." After all these years, this was his greeting.

She allowed him to seat her and leaned back until she should be able to breathe enough to speak easily. "Hello, Mr. Pater," she said.

"Oh, so Gillian told you and you figured it out. And found me so quickly. You know, I always said you should have been a house detective." His eyes were unsullied blue. "I like your clothes. You always had good taste, Fern."

The same old Carl, forever interested in women and their appurtenances. Time fell away like an ugly sheath. If he had only been a friend of the family's instead of Francey's husband, how fond we all could have been of him! "You're looking very well," she said sincerely.

"Considering my misspent life, you mean? Fern, have you had dinner? Well, permit me to order for you." He summoned a waiter and ordered clams, lobster, salad. Amazing, how he remembered her preferred foods.

Fern said, "I've seen you on the boardwalk, and I know you've seen me. Why didn't you get in touch with me?"

"I was afraid you'd tell me to get the hell away." His frankness was still disarming. "Say, how'd you like my assumed name—Pater? Good, isn't it?"

"I didn't know you knew Latin, Carl. If Gillian hadn't had her mind on other things, she'd have realized immediately that *Pater* means Father. I'm pleased that you didn't tell her, but why did you conceal from her that you were her father?"

"Why," he said, "I didn't know for sure whether I'd like her." At Fern's gasp, he said, "But I do. She's a beautiful girl, fine hair, wonderful eyes."

"Don't be silly!" Fern gave each clam its allotment of lemon juice. "She's more than lovely; she's good, trusting, kind."

"The Puritan virtues. You've always believed in them, Fern. If I were a woman I'd rather be gorgeous."

There was no changing him. Instead, sighing, she changed the subject. "Why did you come back?"

"I thought maybe I could get into the service. But I'm pretty old, and nobody wants me. I'm going to take a defense job, but first I came here to see what Atlantic City looks like."

There was lobster before Fern now. "Carl, haven't you ever been sorry?"

"I'd like to oblige you, Fern, and say yes. But it wouldn't be true."

"But Francey. Carl, you cared about Francey, didn't you?" Rarely does one have a chance to ask questions which have for years disturbed the peace. Fern leaned forward.

"Of course I did. Wonderful energy; lots of fire. Something of her in Gillian; something of you too, only the girl's better than either of you." He mused objectively, "Francey couldn't hold me. That was all there was to it."

The young Fern of years ago would have been furious. The older Fern sat passive, not liking it, but realizing that he spoke what was, for him, the simple truth. "But that girl, that Verna—she held you?"

Carl looked uncomfortable; then he grinned. "Now, Fern, you didn't take that seriously—the stuff I told Gillian?"

"You mean that beautiful South American love lyric was untrue?"

"Well, it seems it upset Gillian, thinking her father was a chaser. I don't get it exactly, but my bad reputation is somehow putting a crimp in her romance with that young private. I had to fix that up."

"So you know about Pancho Pine too?"

"Is that his name? Well, yes, I think

she ought to have him. Maybe it will help if she thinks of her father as Romeo, instead of Don Juan."

Fern's curiosity was thorny. She said, "And how long did it last, with Verna?"

"A couple of months. She came back to the States and married a leading garageman in Schoonville." Seriously he said, "She's quite happy, I believe."

"And your lifelong ambition to fall in love for keeps? What happened to that?"

"How many young singers realize their ambition to sing at the Metropolitan?" he said. "It was like that."

"So I was right. One black-eyed Brazilian after another?" He winked and nodded, and she had to laugh.

Carl said to the waiter, "Bring Mrs. Dowell some raspberry ice. Fern, I'm sorry I have an appointment. I must leave soon."

"Carl," Fern said, settling down to her business, "Gillian's leaving town tomorrow. She's going away to forget the young private who's going to be married on Saturday. Don't see her again."

"Mr. Pater won't hurt her. He's trying to get her young man for her."

"Carl, stay out of it. You don't deserve to take a place in Gillian's life."

"Ouch! You hit hard."

"Gillian belongs to Francey now, not to you. Do this one thing for Francey: leave Gillian alone."

Uncomfortably he looked at his wrist watch. "I'm already late for my appointment. And Fern, you might as well know it—the appointment's with Gillian."

Fern put down her spoon. They rose together. "Don't go. Let her go away; let her get over the Pine boy without seeing you again. You're so—unsettling."

He put his hand under her arm. "Most people need more unsettling than they get." Leading her toward the door of the restaurant, he went on, "I wouldn't consider missing my appointment with my daughter. I'd ask you to join us, but it's to be rather a special occasion." His voice was merry and a little awed. "Gillian has asked me to re-meet my old friend—her mother."

In the concluding installment—Gillian comes face to face with great sorrow—and great joy

Colonel Hall and the Focus Cats (Continued from page 13)

nose bled as airspeed mounted. Hughes finally strained himself out of the cockpit by holding onto his rear-vision mirror. The squall ripped the mask from his face, tore him off the wing, and carried him almost horizontally for a considerable distance in the clouds.

"I felt some stinging sensation on my face, sir," he told the Colonel, "and I didn't break through the clouds until I got down to around five thousand. When I jerked the rip cord [he had dropped almost six miles before the chute opened] my left leg caught in the shrouds and I hung head downward. I righted myself and landed in a beet field."

This was the first sight he'd had of Mother Earth since his take-off. He didn't know where he was. He hid until he heard voices, then breathed easier. The speakers were English girls.

The "stinging sensation" Hughes mentioned was hail. It drove thirty distinct pits and welts into his face, some that required stitching, and puffed his eyes as if he'd been in a bare-knuckle fight.

Colonel Hall isn't just a top-rank flier and executive officer. In 1931 he bought a seat on the Stock Exchange. He wrote pieces for the Cattleman, was president of the American Quarter Horse Race

Meeting Association and official photographer for the same outfit. He was an ardent rider to hounds, a member of the Explorers Club, a big-game hunter, and a member of the Cruising Club of America which goes in for ocean yacht racing. He dropped all this extracurricular activity to throw himself full-heartedly into the PR job.

The Colonel's father, Captain James Gustin Hall, D.S.C., an Army surgeon, was pretty much the same stripe. The Colonel's mother, Mrs. Annie Virgin Hall, an Agnes Scott graduate, still lives in Macon. The Colonel is her only son, now. Claude, her youngest, died in an Army plane crash in Panama after Pearl Harbor.

The Colonel's father wanted James G. to be an engineer, but after a half-turn at Georgia Tech young Hall decided to prepare for West Point. The first World War broke then and he got over to France in 1916. His father won his D.S.C. in France. Colonel Hall flew in combat with the 111th Escadrille after only forty hours' training, and started collecting burned Fokkers. Later he joined the regular American Army and flew with the Second Dav Bombardment Group as flight commander.

After Colonel—then First Lieutenant—Hall got back to the United States he went out to the Philippines with the Army Air Force and did reconnaissance work there. He returned home to work for the Curtiss Airplane Corporation and got into airplane financing.

He broke record after record in the early thirties, flying his own ships and competing against men like Frank Hawks and Roscoe Turner. He used his Lockheed "Crusader" in the fight against the Volstead Act. The Lockheed bore the legend: "Help End Prohibition."

The Colonel's only serious accident happened in September, 1931. He was only a few minutes out of Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn on a flight to the American Legion Convention in Detroit, when he ran into fog and dived, out of control, into a house on Staten Island. Peter J. Brady, a well-known banker who was his passenger, died in the rear cockpit of the ship and an old woman in the house was killed, but Colonel Hall bounced out. His parachute opened and he landed on electric-light wires several hundred feet away. This earned him membership in the Caterpillar Club, and so far as he knows he still holds the record for the shortest parachute jump.



You call it Bread . . . your ancestors would have called it Cake

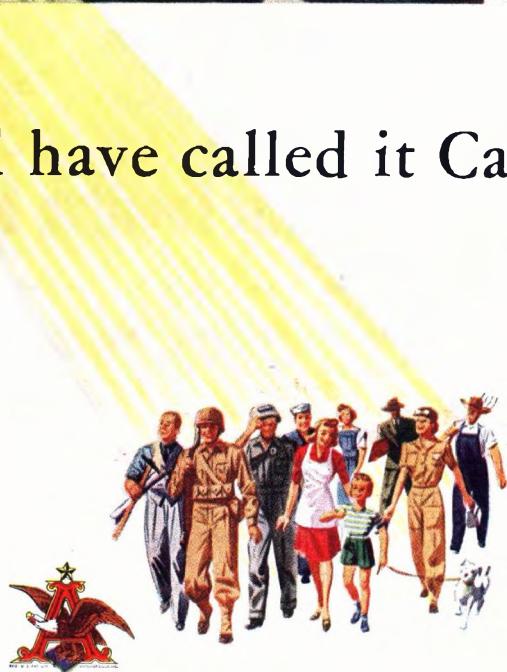
Your daily bread is nutrition in one of its finest and most appetizing forms—and today it saves ration points. We Americans can be grateful that our country produces an abundance of this perfect 'staff of life'.

We can be grateful, too, to science for the greatly improved quality of our daily bread. It has been tremendously enriched. Its texture is finer, its appearance and flavor more inviting.

Did you ever wonder how many millions of pounds of yeast are required each year to leaven the nation's bread? Did you know that yeast must be absolutely fresh when it reaches the baker? Thanks to a network of specialized delivery services plus modern refrigeration, bakers in even remote parts of America get their yeast fresh and on time.

* * * *

The Baker's Yeast Division of Anheuser-Busch supplies bakers with yeast for a large part of the nation's bread. Now nearly 15 percent of our entire output goes to the Army. This service to civilian bakers and our armed forces resulted from applying to food the knowledge gained from years of laboratory work in producing the world-famous Budweiser.



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Budweiser

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A N H E U S E R - B U S C H . . . S A I N T L O U I S

teeth chattered, and she began to cry. Christmas Eve!

Then, angry at herself, she took off her wet shoes, slipped her feet into the slippers Betsy brought down, dried her eyes, laughed and, gathering the pinkish cutlets together, put them back into the oven.

There was a lull while she ate fresh bread and drank scalding tea, and they all told her that she was an absolute fool but they loved her. Wasn't she ashamed of herself, saying she was stopping on Monday and then taking the swing shift? Saying she was through on Wednesday, and sneaking off to the graveyard shift? Kate laughed with tears in her eyes and said that nobody would have cared except that it was Christmas week.

Paul said that if the meat really had to cook another hour he would go in and get a special radio program. Betsy was called to the telephone. Kate gathered together the bread and the turkey, hot water, seasoning, chestnuts, butter, needle and thread. She couldn't do *ten* women couldn't do what ought to be done in this house tonight, but she could start.

"Dad set up the tree?"

"Oh, yes." Susan planted her elbows on the table and gripped her temples with her hands.

"You're tired, darling." Kate's experienced fingers were drawing the loose skin of the turkey firmly over the bulging stuffing. She forced the long slippery needle firmly to and fro. Presently the turkey was placed in the big roaster, covered with a towel. The cutlets were brown and crisp outside now, and creamy white within; the family gathered again

for supper as the clock struck eight. Kate ate with her free hand pressed hard against the small of her back.

Well, it simply could not be done. The Christmas-tree ornaments were too much for her. Betsy, deliciously fresh and powdered and brushed, was not any help, for she had a date.

"Mother, if we stop at church first do you care if we go to a movie?"

"No, darling, of course not." When Betsy had gone, Kate said, "She's just as sweet and good as she was when she was a baby. Most girls aren't stopping at church these days."

"Nor asking their mothers' permission." Paul was awkwardly assisting with the dishwashing.

Kate wondered how long a man had to live in a house before he learned where the plates went on the shelves. Susan wiped the table; brushed up crumbs. Presently she brought out a bag of cranberries; her mother joined her with a pan of potatoes.

"Tomorrow we can clean up everything," she said, busily peeling.

"Tomorrow I ought to go back until noon, anyway," Susan said reluctantly. "It's simply awful in the wards in the morning."

"I think you should," her mother said.

Susan remembered the surprisingly sympathetic attitude the next day, when she arrived home at one o'clock to find the Christmas confusion in full swing and her mother not yet returned from the machine shop.

"She went, then?" Susan asked Betsy.

"Yep. Gone when I came in," Betsy said briefly. Betsy worked from midnight until eight o'clock and returned usually to a silent house, ate the supper her

mother left for her on the kitchen table and slept until three or four o'clock.

"You get any sleep?" Susan said.

"In this house? I lay down—yes, I guess I slept an hour." Betsy sounded bitter and resentful. "But with the way things were here, I couldn't sleep. I got up and made beds and helped Dad trim the tree—it looks perfectly awful because he would put everything on one side. And I was going to clear up and dust when grandpa had to arrive with the boys; he's settled down in Dad's chair in there, reading the papers. He said he thought dinner'd be at one o'clock; says grandma always had it at one. I told him two. And it is measles, so Aunt Mary can't come and help, and there's the table to set—we'll be eight, I count it."

"Seven," Susan said.

"Eight. Don't forget Private O'Keefe." They were in a disorderly cold kitchen now.

Susan stood still in dismay. "Oh, Lord, I had forgotten that little pest. Oh, dear! Making talk with grandpa and Private O'Keefe! All right. Let's do what we can. Do you put sugar into cranberries now or after they're cooked?"

"I'll do them." This was Kate, windblown, cold, bringing a draft of wild air into the kitchen. She gave Betsy her coat and hat; tied on a limp blue apron. "Oh, it can't be after twelve!" she said. "Where's Daddy? I see grandpa's here, and the boys are up on the roof of the shed. They ought to come down; they've got their best shoes on. Aunt Mary upstairs?"

"She can't come. Measles," Susan said. She had intended not to speak to her mother at all; now that the ice was broken, she could not resist rushing on

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impulsively. "Mom, why did you have to go back to welding on Christmas Day, after you said you'd be home all this week?"

"I suppose for the same reason you had to go back to the hospital, Sue. This oven is stone-cold," Kate said, puzzled. "We should have lighted it to get the turkey started."

"The electricity went off all over the house about fifteen minutes ago. This wind, I guess. It'll be on again."

"Well, it *better* be on again!" Kate said. "Get any trimming on the tree? I thought this house felt cold; furnace off too, of course. Well, we'll get Daddy to light a good fire in the living room."

"Dad and I got some big balls on the tree; the little strings of balls are all tangled up. But Bruce and Ken and the cat smashed about twenty, not that it matters," Susan said loftily. "It's so common," she went on, her mouth trembling. "Dust and disorder and rush and scramble; doing everything the last minute; Dad having breakfast alone Christmas morning."

Tears stood in her eyes. Kate paid no attention to them; she was out in the cold laundry now, kindling a fire in the little stove that long ago had been used for steaming washboilers and hot irons. Her hands felt stiff and sore, and her back was apparently going to unhinge itself. No matter; she must keep going. Her thoughts spun. They spun a wild web of unaddressed Christmas cards, unpolished silver, unset table. Well, they'd live through today, perhaps, and tomorrow Christmas would be over, and everyone wouldn't be sentimentally opposed to everything that was practical.

"But if it was only tomorrow!" Kate said, half aloud. Then, in a tone of consternation: "That roaster will never go into this oven!" She straightened her aching back. "How do you do?" she said, in response to a polite "Merry Christmas, ma'am!" from the doorway.

"I'm Jim O'Keefe," the man said, with a boy's half-bold, half-diffident smile.

"Well, I'm sure I—oh, Private O'Keefe! Oh, how do you do? My daughters . . ." Kate talked on vaguely, interrupting herself once to call "Susan!" and thinking fast. What on earth brings him here before two o'clock, when I know Susan must have said two, and we can't possibly sit down until three! "This is the daughter you met the other day," Kate said graciously, as Susan came out from the kitchen. "There's a big smooth on your nose, dear. And this is my younger daughter Betsy, Mr. O'Keefe."

"Lights out all over the block, Mom," Betsy reported, "and a man came and said they're working on it."

"I was just thinking my turkey better be started out here," Kate explained to the visitor, indicating the stark, cold, cream-colored bird in the big blue granite pan. "But I'm afraid the roaster is too big for this oven."

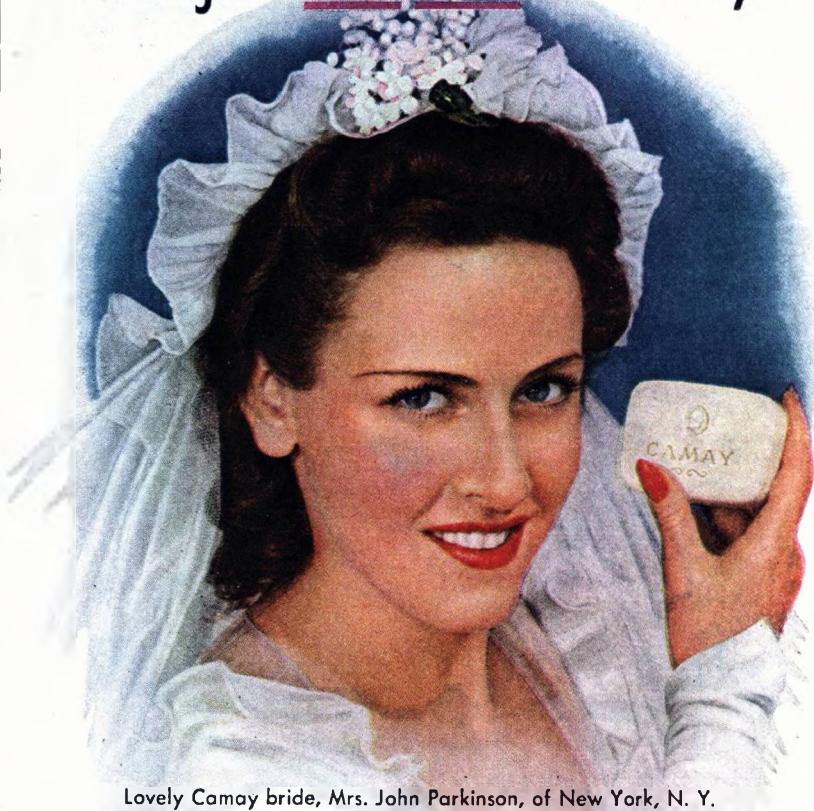
"Say, I thought he'd be about cooked!" Jim O'Keefe remarked in elaborately comic disappointment. "I walked here from camp to get up an appetite."

"You'll have an appetite by the time you taste that bird," Betsy assured him.

He took one good look at Betsy and then offered to get the stove going; he removed his coat and tied a piece of sacking about his waist. They found an old square pan in which paint had been mixed, cleaned it out, fitted the turkey into it in a somewhat upright position, and shoved the pan into the oven without an inch to spare. Then Jim went with Betsy into the living room to hang Christmas wreaths with the small boys' noisy assistance, and Betsy set the table. Suddenly lights, radio, heat were in evi-

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gence again; the temperature of the house, between the two fires and the reviving furnace, became bland, and the attention of everyone could be concentrated upon preparations for dinner, which moved with maddening slowness.

The table was set, potatoes and turnips were mashed, and the sizzling mince pie was placed in the warming oven. Plates were heated; cranberry sauce was poured into a blue dish. Paul and grandpa hovered about. The clock struck two; struck half past two. The little boys ate buns dripping peanut butter. Kate, turning her eyes away from this insult offered to her table, would yield no inch.

"A turkey dinner is too good to be spoiled," she said. "He'll be done in another half-hour."

Well, it was worth it. Everyone was so hungry at ten minutes past three that it was with filled mouths that the meal was praised. It was perfect, simply perfect! Nobody could say more for a turkey or for a meal! The small boys gorged, goggled, scattered spots over the cloth; it did not matter. Private O'Keefe turned out to be the dullest, mildest, most silent of guests; but it was only for this once that the family need endure him, and it would soon be over. It did not feel like Christmas, somehow, but on the whole the occasion was going off well.

Betsy, wondering if it would be decent to leave after a while and go over to Jean's, had long lost interest in Private O'Keefe. But to the rest of the family, he revealed his simple history without embarrassment. It was not calculated to increase Betsy's esteem. To Kate, whose face had lost all its weariness and whose eyes were shining like those of a radiant girl, all boys in uniform were dear, and the older men joined her in making much of the guest.

For just before dinner Kate had had a telephone call from New Jersey. Across three thousand miles a voice had spoken to her—the voice of an unremarkable boy of twenty-three. It had said nothing extraordinary. "Sure, we're ashore, Mom. Landed yesterday . . . Fine. Fine . . . Oh, gosh, no; getting fat . . . You bet your life I do, and that goes for the old man and the girls too . . . Swell. Swell . . . Nope, both ways as smooth as a pond . . . Sure. And me too, Mom, you bet your life . . . Yep, you bet. Merry Christmas, Mom, and to all the folks too."

Yet these commonplaces had brought a commonplace woman back to a commonplace dinner table in a state of such breathless ecstasy that if all the silenced bells of that Christmas night had been ringing together and all the dimmed-out lights had blazed up to their full power, they would have seemed too little to express what she was feeling.

She listened to grandpa, and to Paul being hospitably talkative, and to Private O'Keefe. But she heard only one voice, and that was three thousand miles away.

"That was our son," she said to Jim O'Keefe. "That was Joe." There were no dishes and no dust in sight; no packages to open; no Christmas rubbish to be carted away. There were no ashes in the fireplace and no undistributed laundry packages on the stairs; her eyes and her back were not tired; her hands were not stiff and sore. Oh, Christmas was wonderful, wonderful, wonderful!

"My uncle has been for forty-one years with this chain grocery, see? Except that he was in the last war. I worked with him until I joined the Marines," Jim was saying. "He and my aunt took me when my father married again after Mama died." Joe went on. "They were swell to me. We lived on Long Island."

"That's not far from New Jersey, where Joe is," Kate said.

"Now, let me tell you about this feller Aguinaldo." Grandpa was back in the Spanish-American trouble.

"Kin we open that box of candy, Sue? Lissen," Ken and Bruce said together, "kin we have three pieces apiece?"

"Three," Susan agreed. The card that had come with the candy, all the way from Florida, was what made it present, and that card she had safe.

"Four?" Ken and Bruce chorused.

"Now, listen, or you can't have any!" Susan got up to see to the distribution, and there may have been those at the table who hoped this would be a signal for the boys to depart, but they returned to sit chewing and staring solemnly at Jim O'Keefe, as before.

"I have to be back at five," Jim said, and the younger women at least felt their hearts lift with relief. The rest of the fast-darkening day would presently be theirs! "We're probably pulling out any time now."

"Back to the South Pacific?" Paul asked respectfully.

"Yip," the marine answered briefly, stowing away a second wedge of pie.

"Ah, you must dread it, after what you boys did at Bataan," Kate said, tenderness making her voice rich.

"No, ma'am; I sure want to get back," Jim said in surprise. "We got home under our own steam," he added proudly, "and we're all in shape again. But we certainly took it!" He chuckled. "And I'll certainly tell 'em about you having me to Christmas dinner," he went on politely.

"It seems to me," Susan said in the amused drawl that meant she was in her happiest humor and ready to be kind to everyone—"it seems to me that the less you tell anyone about your Christmas dinner with the Furlongs in California, the sooner we'll win the war."

"What was the matter with it?" he demanded, almost truculently.

"Everything," Betsy told him. "House cold, dirty and upset. Tree not trimmed. Mom coming in late with no time to change her working clothes. Susan on the ward all morning. Kids. Aguinaldo. Me having no sleep since yesterday morning and looking like the last run of shad. Don't tell them that's the way Christmas is in America now!"

"My sister's thinking you might have been with the Forrester party," Susan elaborated it. "They have the biggest house in town. And they've hired an orchestra, and they're going to dance tonight at the country club."

"Maybe they are and maybe they aren't," Jim O'Keefe said. "There's been a lot of leave canceled in the last forty-eight hours."

"Oh, no!" Betsy said, enraptured at the thought.

"I could of gone to that. This Mrs. What's-her-name—Giddings asked me. I didn't want to go to any country club. I says I'd like to go to some family. 'Well,' she says, 'I'll send you to the Furlongs.' So I can go back and say that I came here. And I guess you don't know what it means," he ended.

"You see," he recommenced in a dead silence, "the only thing that matters to you out there is that you can go on. That the ships will go on coming in, get me?" he asked, turning to Kate. "That's the life line, see? The fellers all know it; they all know when the line is steadily coming in, ships and ships and ships—over the ocean, get me?"

"I—get you," Kate Furlong said, clearing her throat.

"The ocean is a damn big place, if you'll excuse my French," Jim said seriously. "Gosh, there's a lot of it! You work around, day after day, and you're always in the middle of it. Ocean. Ocean.

Some of the fellers get sort of—well, scared of it. Too much of it."

"I know how you feel," Paul said.

"Well, you get onto an island somewhere, and it's all cuckoo until you get your bearings. Hot!" the narrator went on. "Red Cross hospital tent; nurses coming and going. That's thanks to you," he said to Susan. Susan flushed rose-color, and her head went up a little, but she did not speak. "Those nurses look good," Jim added. "They look as if they weren't scared; as if you all belonged there. Then you see the munition dumps, and the chow—cases of chow built up as big as houses, and more coming. More of everything you need—plenty of it. The cook with plenty to work with; the planes going out loaded; the ships coming along. You come in pretty well loused up—" He stopped for an apologetic glance, went on again.

"You feel all in," he substituted, "but there's your hot coffee that the folks at home have sent to you—to you, mind you, right into your tin cup. There's a big fat sandwich with eggs and bacon dangling out of it. Here's a girl bandaging your finger and an orderly yelling your name—letters for you. I haven't got any mother or any girl to write me," Jim diverged to say with a grin, "but I've always got something from someone. Chocolate and cigarettes, and those magazines the girls are pasting up. Somebody says, 'Them guns are here.' Somebody else says, 'This bunch got through without a scratch. It makes you feel good,'" he finished, with a bashful smile.

"I shouldn't wonder if it did, Jim," Kate Furlong said, very low.

"You tell 'em we're going to keep it up," Susan said. "I'm getting married in April, but I'll be back on the ward that day week."

"We kid a lot about it, but we get it done," Betsy said soberly.

"I'll tell 'em that I had dinner with a family that couldn't even stop for Christmas Day," Jim O'Keefe said. "I'll tell 'em the old man," he went on with a glance at Paul that was more respectful than his words, "was running a shoe store that didn't do any black-marketing, and he was block warden and chairman of the Red Cross Drive. And I'll tell 'em that one of the girls was working eight and ten hours a day as a nurse's aide, and that—that the one that was the mother—" He hesitated over the awkwardness of the phrase, looking at Kate, and Kate, her face glowing, nodded back encouragement.

"I'll say that the one that was the mother didn't have time for any fussing or cooking or cleaning because she was working all day long welding—that's what she does! Christmas Day and every other day. And even the kid sister," Jim O'Keefe added, his twenty-four years benignantly indulgent to Betsy's eighteen, "even the kid gets up in the middle of the night and goes off in her coveralls and does a man's job. And I suppose the kids are helping you with vegetables and so on?" he asked the old farmer.

"And raisin' chickens and squabs and berries, ain't we, daughter?" Martin Hodgins said. "Yes; these fellers work—when they feel like it," he added slightly of Ken and Bruce.

Ken and Bruce, eight and six years old, put in that they were going to be Scouts and later join the flying forces.

"When the ships come in, and we know we're all right—that food's there, and the tanks and planes and guns are coming along, stringing down across the ocean, straight from all the million hands that are getting them together and sending them—I'll think about you," Jim O'Keefe said.

When he had to go, they all walked with him to the door. Grandpa Hodgins and the boys were going too and would take the marine on a part of his way.

"You write how to address letters, and you'll have one every mail," Kate said. Jim scribbled on a card, and when he straightened up she kissed him good-by. "I hope your wedding goes off all right," he said to Susan.

"And I hope you come back, Jim," she said, with all her heart.

"I'm going to ride with them as far as the library," Betsy said. She got into the back seat with Jim and slid her firm, brown hand into his.

When she came back ten minutes later

the others were still sitting at the littered table. A beautiful peace had fallen on the world and on their hearts.

"What price the country club now, Bets?" Sue said.

"Don't!" said Betsy. "You'll start me crying. That little runt!" she added affectionately. "Did he make you feel kind of funny about it all?"

"Yes," said her mother, staring into space.

"Now, I tell you," Paul Furlong said, "that boy made me feel important. He made me feel—"

"Yes, I know exactly what you mean," Kate agreed, in a thickened voice.

"Mommie," her husband said, "I'm go-

ing to get into this thing. Help you girls clean up, I mean. Do some of the marketing for you. I'm among the shops all day. I've been letting you down."

"We can systematize this," Susan put in. "The trouble is, we've been trying to live the old way under the new conditions. We'll have dinner at nine o'clock in the evening or three o'clock in the afternoon, but we'll work it out."

"Well, what with one thing and another, this was a happy Christmas," Kate said, wiping her eyes. "Now, let's clear up and open our presents and light the tree. And then," she added, "I believe I'll go to bed. I want to be on time at the works in the morning."

Christmas Gift (Continued from page 61)

filled with presents in Spain, and you broke the jar and the gifts tumbled out. Little pink porcelain German children dancing around fat evergreen trees, singing, "O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum, wie treu sind deine Blätter." And "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht." You had learned to sing those songs too, in seventh grade.

"I must stop this flitting about in my mind," said Alix. "It butters no bread."

The Carrington house, at the end of the street, looked shadowy. Tommy was standing on the top step with the shovel.

"Hey, Mom," he said, "you're supposed to advance under enemy fire."

There was a narrow hole dug in the snow on the walk, then a drift came, then another hole.

Alix said, "Tommy, why didn't you shovel the walk?"

"I did. I only did it in slit trenches. You go from trench to trench."

"You come right down and shovel the rest of the walk," said Alix. "I can't bound around foxholes with all the groceries. I'll break my neck."

"You get some red meat?" he inquired.

Alix waited while he shoveled rapidly toward her.

"Got lamb," she said. "To curry or not?"

"Curry, definitely," he said.

Priscilla, the golden cocker, came around the corner of the house. Her puppies were due around New Year's, and she moved with matronly dignity. Her ears were white with snow, and there was snow on her long golden eyelashes. Her bright soft eyes were eager. She went into the house with Alix and followed to the kitchen to see what was for supper.

First she got in her whelping box and made it all over according to some new plan. She dug up all the soft pieces of flannel, whacked out the lining of the box, scattered the bedding all over the kitchen, and then stood looking thoughtfully at the mess. She came over to Alix and put a paw on her hand.

Alix got out the bone, a lovely little number with marrow sweet in the center.

"There, you work on it," she said.

Then Alix put everything back in the box and fixed the nice soft nest again. Pris looked pleased, eying her over the bone. Pretty soon she would tear it all to pieces again, and Alix would fix it back.

Pen came in with her best friend Marcy. "We're doing our papers on how to reconstruct the world after the war," she said, "so Marcy's going to stay for supper. It will take us an hour to do them."

"You mean you two can reconstruct the world in an hour?" asked Alix.

"Ch, we've already made our outlines," said Pen.

"All right," said Alix, "if you'll spare ten minutes from the world to pare the

potatoes. I'm late. I got held up at the blood-donor station."

When they went upstairs Alix browned the lamb in drippings. Well, she thought, if they think they can reconstruct the world in an hour . . .

She tried to remember back to the time when you knew all the answers. The older you grew, the more you wondered whether there was any stock answer to anything. You just went along and did your best, and it seemed as if every problem had to have its own solution dressmaker. No size fourteen, sixteen, eighteen about it. Tailored to order.

When dinner was cooking, she went upstairs to start her letter to Jim. She kept a letter going always, putting in about Pen's new dress and Tommy being in the church play and Pris' puppies.

Today she sat at the desk and looked at the framed picture of Jim in his uniform. His brown eyes were smiling; his mouth was steady and his chin very firm over the uniform collar. Had he changed? What did he think of, leading a new strange life?

She got up and went to the mirror. Have I changed too? She brushed her coppery hair back and looked at her face as if it were a picture too. Her gray eyes looked back at her curiously; her mouth, which was always ready to smile, looked tighter somehow. Her face was thinner. But her dark dress certainly did not hang loose on her. All those macaroni loaves, she thought mournfully.

Oh, Jim darling, she thought, every day I miss you so. And now there's Christmas. Since the first, we've always had Christmas!

That first Christmas when he got home from France, so lean, so worn, so intense. He had come in Christmas Eve, snow on his khaki, his boots wet.

She had worn a long delphinium-blue dress, and her hair was in a bun at the back. The applewood fire smelled sweet, and the room was glowing with firelight. Her heart was going off like an alarm clock.

"Darling, darling," Jim had said, "tell me it's true!"

"It's true," she said, and went into his arms.

Alix Carrington was back there now, and the world was beautiful as a dream. It was a dream. She shook herself back to reality. She wasn't a girl with a lover come home; she was the mother of two extremely active children; she had a house and a cocker and a husband in another war.

And Christmas an ache in the breast.

You pushed it away, and then there it was. The day before Christmas. The blizzard had stopped and the sky was clear. The sun came out and glittered on the town.

Alix hadn't slept very well, but she

got up early to help Tommy with his costume for the church play. Tommy was allergic to plays, or "being in things," but Kathy, his girl, had sold him the idea of doing his duty. Kathy said, "You want to be a coward? That's no way. What's taking a part in a little old Christmas pageant? Nothing. I'll prompt you if you forget."

Kathy was staying on for the winter with her cousin Joe, and ole Joe was in the play too. He was the Third Wise Man. Joe's mother always directed the play, which was a traditional affair. Tommy had been sort of sucked in, he said, on account of ole Joe and his mother and Kathy. He was the First King.

"At my age," he said bitterly, "I should go stomping around in a ole bathrobe spouting poetry."

"At the church," said Alix, "they want the same program for the Sunday-school children they have always had. You're just doing a service for the community. Just as much as wearing your helmet and tooting your whistle on air raids."

"That's a man's job," said Tommy, "n' this isn't."

The church dramatics properties came out every year: the wooden cradle with the light bulb in the straw; the false beards, the crowns made of gilt paper. Old couch covers that doubled as robes.

But Tommy was too tall for the cambric shift that usually adorned the First King.

So Alix spent a frenzied morning cutting holes in a striped bedspread. "Why you waited until the last day to tell me you had nothing to wear," she said, in exasperation, "I wouldn't know."

"I just never got around to trying anything on," he said. "I was too busy to go to dress rehearsal."

"Well, it's a good thing we are eating at the hotel," she said, "with no cooking to do. And no fussing over a tree."

The house seemed very quiet and empty with no Christmas trappings. The gifts were laid away—war stamps and bonds, and a few practical articles.

Though how we can even open them! thought Alix, for once feeling defeated.

The church program was in the afternoon, because so many had trees to trim at night, and some benighted souls even looked at their presents Christmas Eve.

Alix and Pen sat in the family pew, and Pen said, "I hope Tommy doesn't disgrace the family. I'll never be able to hold my head up again. Look at all the Navy here! And three marines!"

Alix looked. Some of the boys who were at the college as a naval unit were sitting in the back row. They had nowhere else to go in this little town the day before Christmas.

The organist was pulling out the vox humana on "We Three Kings of Orient Are." The church was jammed; the smell

of evergreen was spicy and strong; the homemade gray curtains over the improvised stage rolled back—jerkily, it is true, but they rolled—and the Sunday-school chorus, in white cheesecloth robes with silver paper crowns, lifted thin reedy voices in what was faintly like "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

Two discouraged cedar trees leaned at each side of the rostrum. They had been cut too early. The carpet was covered with wisps of hay from a farmer's stack, and there was Kathy, leaning over the light bulb in the wooden cradle. She had a white pillowcase cut in two and folded over her head. The rest of her costume was blue cambric.

The youngest shepherd, who was six-year-old Donnie Marshall, carried the same toy lamb, a little the worse for wear. The eldest shepherd tripped over his sofa cover as he walked.

When the Kings came in, the First King was holding on to his beard, which jiggled dangerously. His feet, in leather bedroom slippers, stuck out larger than life under his robe. The Second King tittered and the Third King must have pinched him, for there was a slight commotion as the Kings came up to bear their gifts, singing in hoarse adolescent voices, "We Three Kings of Orient—tar."

"Oh, my," said Pen. "Mamma, look at Tommy! He's losing his costume too!"

The First King gave a hitch to his robe as he knelt.

Tommy carried a silver cigarette box, supposed to be a precious casket. He held it out shakily, and the cover fell off. The littlest shepherd retrieved it, saying audibly, "You dropped it, Tommy!"

Finally they were all arranged around the cradle and the extension cord was successfully plugged in offstage to throw a nice soft light on them. Childish voices rose a little shakily: "O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant."

Kathy's eyes were very blue. She looked at Tommy and sang: "Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels."

The congregation joined in. "O come, let us adore Him—O come, let us adore Him—O come, let us adore Him—Christ the Lord."

And suddenly Alix felt tears in her eyes. It was more than a childish pageant; this was something significant, important. In the little church, the children were reaffirming something—something profound. Pen's lifted face was grave too; she was thinking of John Westcott.

There was the garageman, whose boy was reported missing. And the Beemis family whose son had died in a Japanese prison. And Louella White, whose baby would be born while its father was in Iceland.

And all the rest, singing, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

Alix said, as the stir of gathering gloves and purses and coats began, "Pen, I'm dashing home. You tell the minister that any of the Navy and Army boys who have no place to go can come to our house. You wait and see how many, and phone me."

"Why, Mamma, what's come over you?"

Alix laughed. "Christmas, I guess. The idea of not doing anything for Christmas, I must have been out of my senses!"

She raced home and put a smock over her good dress. Took one glance at Jim. "Our son did all right," she said. "Oh, Jim, I nearly let us down. But you'll see!"

When Pen called, the kitchen was simmering with activity. "Mamma, there are nine of them," said Pen.

"All right. Stop at the store on your way home and bring a tree and ten quarts of milk," said Alix.

Tommy and Kathy came in, bringing tons of snow on their feet. Alix said,

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"You were both wonderful. It was the loveliest pageant. It meant more than you'll ever know."

Tommy said, "Mom, I was terrible. My beard—" His nose lifted. "You cooking something?"

"We're having lots of company," she said. "You and Kathy run up to the attic and find the Christmas-tree ornaments in the big carton marked Summer Dresses. Pen and some Navy men are bringing a tree. You and Kathy can trim it while supper finishes cooking."

"What we gonna eat?"

"Everything in the house," said Alix.

She had carried the dishpan to the cellar. She took five quart jars of chicken, the last of the summer's canning. The jelly was pale gold and beautiful through the glass and the meat was packed tightly. She had canned new potatoes when they were first dug; she took four jars of those, and three of golden baby carrots. The onions were in orange mesh bags hanging from the beam. She had two jars of mushrooms.

"And while the chicken pie is baking," she said, talking to herself as she always did, "you can run in extra biscuits. The fruit cake for dessert—let's see, some currant jelly and some bread-and-butter pickles and a big bowl of pickled beets. Milk and coffee." She had three cans of baked beans, saved for an emergency. This was it! She piled all the things in the dishpan and staggered up to the kitchen.

The house began to buzz. Hammering from the living room, where Tommy and two Navy boys made a standard for the tree. The radio going full blast. Clatter of silver while Pen and an aviator set the table.

The back door slammed as the next-door neighbor came in carrying a platter. "I hear you're feeding the masses," she said, "so I sliced up tomorrow's ham. We're having duck anyway."

At eight o'clock they trooped into the dining room. The table was spread with the lemon-yellow hand-woven cloth; the candles were soft gray-green bayberry. The chicken pies, in two big pottery casseroles, simmered and bubbled under their flaky tender crusts.

There was the willow platter with thin red slices of ham, edged with spicy, sugary fat, garnished with rose-delicate rounds of pickled red beets. Then there was the beanpot, rich with extra molasses and English mustard and brown sugar.

The biscuits were little and light and golden-brown on the top. The currant jelly quivered in a majolica dish; the crisp bread-and-butter pickles were beside it. And the fruit cake, last year's, smelled of raisins and currants and spice.

One tall boy gave a long sigh. "This," he said, "looks like food, period."

"Help yourself," said Alix.

They did. The Assyrians never came down more like a wolf than they.

The food just seemed to dissolve, Alix thought. It was like one of those old card tricks when the ace vanished. Pen was serving coffee. She was laughing; her dark eyes shone. She had found a boy who had met John somewhere.

Tommy and Kathy were on the front stairs, trays on their laps. They were on their third helping of chicken pie and baked beans and biscuits and jelly.

"But you take his backhand," Tommy said, "it can't compare. He's logy."

"He's an ace at serving." Kathy spooned more golden rich gravy over a split biscuit. "I'm going to serve that way."

"Next summer," said Tommy.

They were looking ahead. They were young. They could.

Alix went to the living room and took a look at the tree. All the old ornaments were on it. The angel with the silver

wings, a little tarnished, at the top. The blue glass balls. The silver icicles. The Santa with the sled drawn by celluloid reindeer that Pen had chewed one leg from when she was three. The tinsel star with the blue heart. The room smelled of pine. The light was soft and warm.

They were singing in the dining room, beating time with their spoons. "Sunday—Monday, or always," they sang.

Alix heard somebody running up the porch steps. Her heart gave that thick terrible beat it always gave now. It could always be bad news. She clenched her hands tight and moved forward.

Then the door burst open, letting in cold snowy air.

And Jim.

"Alix!" he said. "I made it!"

His cold frosty face was pressed against her flushed hot cheek. His arms were around her, tighter than tight.

"Oh, Jim!" she said, in that silly way one always did.

"It's Pops!" Tommy yelled.

Pen was there, squealing, and Pris bouncing and bouncing, frantic with joy.

"I had no idea I'd get it, but I got two days," said Jim. "So I thought, having no place to go, I'd fly up here. Some guy had to give up his seat in the plane, but I sort of thought I better—" His voice was a little hoarse.

And then Jim was meeting the crowd and having the last of the chicken pie and fresh coffee and everything was dizzy and out of focus for Alix.

Afterward the boys cleared away and stepped on one another's feet in the kitchen and dropped things and wiped dishes. Tommy and Kathy went out to slide down Poverty Hill.

Jim walked through the living room, Pris at his heels, Alix holding his hand. He looked at the tree. "Gosh," he said, "the reindeer is still there. I wondered if he'd hold out."

They went upstairs, and Alix got out his dressing gown and slippers. "You may as well be comfortable," she said.

Jim said, "Tommy has grown so. I hardly knew him. Is that the Kathy you wrote me about?"

"Yes."

"She's a pretty little girl."

"Nice, too."

Pen called upstairs, "Moth, we're going to the community sing. Okay?"

"Fine," Alix called back.

She unpacked Jim's small bag, feeling the dear familiar pajama tops, the socks.

Jim said, "When I thought I wasn't coming, I just kept trying to see you all, and the tree, and smell the Christmas smells and everything. And it was just the way I dreamed, when I did come."

"Yes," said Alix.

Suppose the house had been dark and silent, she and the children at the inn!

"Tell you what," said Jim, puffing happily at his pipe, "it does a man good to know things at home don't change. It makes the going worth while, somehow. Silly, I suppose."

"No," said Alix, "no, Jim. It's not silly. I knew all about it this afternoon at the church, at the children's pageant. It came to me suddenly. I can't explain it." She went over and held him in her arms. "Oh, Jim, you came home."

He took her hand and kissed the palm. All the words they never would say were there, not really needing to be said. Maybe when you were in love after so many years the words were too little, too finite.

"I better take a look at the furnace," said Jim.

Alix undressed and put on her warm bathrobe and brushed her hair and put a blue ribbon around it.

She and Jim would have a little time together. Two days? No use looking ahead; take what gift you were given and enjoy it to the fullest. Then you could remember happiness, not anxiety. I won't spoil a minute, she thought, by looking ahead.

"Hey, Alix!" Jim was calling. "Come down to the kitchen right away. Hurry!" She ran.

Jim was on his knees by Pris' box. Pris was in it, and as Alix reached the door, Jim said, "Get the hot-water bottle. Pris has a nice fresh puppy."

Alix flew over and knelt beside him. There was a small round wriggling object as big as a spool of thread. A faint, imperative squeak came from it, arrogant, demanding. Alix picked it up.

The puppy was black, like a piece of black silk, but much softer. A pink tongue showed. Four paws like wild strawberries, pink and padded, thrashed the air wildly.

Pris looked at Alix with a dark proud gaze. You see! she said.

"Oh, Pris, you're wonderful," breathed Alix. "And on Christmas Eve too."

"I thought you wrote me they were going to arrive at New Year's," said Jim.

"Well, you know I'm not very good at figures," said Alix.

She laid the puppy back, and Pris began to wash her thoroughly, scrub, scrub. Alix got the hot-water bottle and filled it and wrapped a baby blanket over it.

Jim said, "Guess we better stick with her. How about some coffee and a sandwich, if the locusts left anything?"

"We still have eggs," said Alix.

She moved quietly about the kitchen, fixing his favorite night snack of scrambled eggs and toast and coffee. Pris went on pushing the puppy around, and the faint squeaks rose and diminished.

"I hope she only has four," Jim got up and came to the table. "That's enough for a girl her size." Then he said, "I forgot the furnace—just got this far. Be with you in a jiffy."

Alix heard the clank of the furnace door; the scrape of the shovel. She heard Jim's feet on the cement cellar floor.

Outside, she heard another sound. Voices. It was time for the carolers. They were going around this year just as they always had. Alix went over and picked up the puppy and felt its warm breath in her neck. "Squeak," it said.

Life beginning all over again; life going on. Puppies being born, as beautiful and perfect as ever.

"Pris," she said, "that is the Christmas gift. Belief in life. You know, don't you?"

Pris lifted dark wise eyes; her tall moved faintly. Alix laid the puppy back, went to the kitchen door and opened it.

All the stars were out, and the snow was white and deep and soft on the lawn. The snow was on the rooftops all over the little town, and the branches of the trees were white with it against the dark blue sky. The snow had its own luminous glow, and the air smelled cold and clean.

Along Maple Street the Christmas lights were on, candles on the window sills to light the Christ child in.

The carolers walked under the snowy trees, singing the old familiar carols.

"God rest you merry, gentlemen," they sang.

The sound was sweet in the still winter night, the lifted voices clear and sure.

Jim came and stood beside her at the open door, looking out. His arm went around her, and she leaned against him.

"Let nothing you dismay," sang the carolers. "For Jesus Christ, our Savior, was born on Christmas Day."

They went on down the street, swinging their lanterns.

"Let nothing you dismay," said Alix.

"Let nothing you dismay," repeated Jim.

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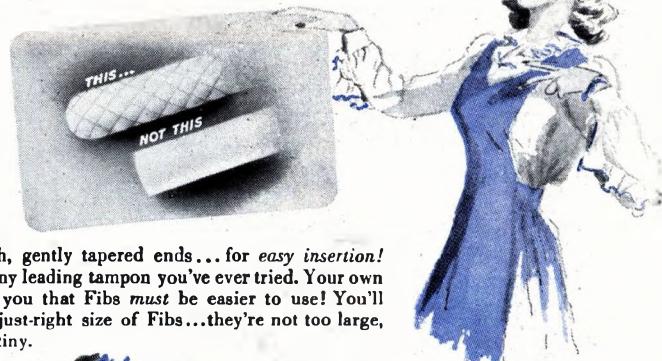
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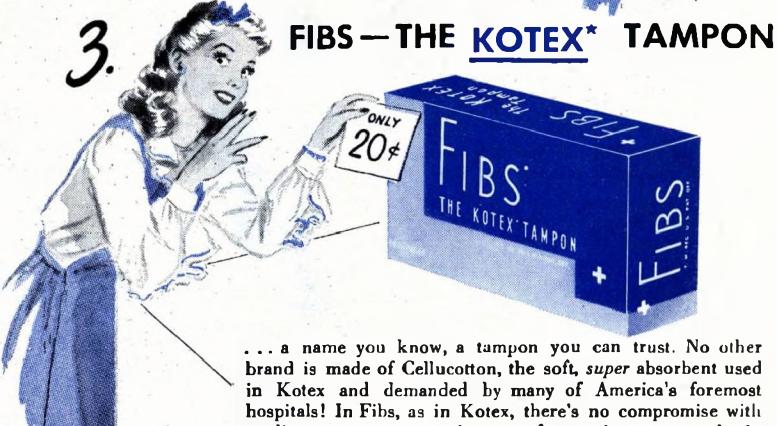


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New York, the house in California, the fabulous home they had owned on the Riviera, none of these had ever been really theirs as was the little house on Miracle Mountain.

She went to the linen closet and opened the doors. The fragrance of lavender rushed out at her. She selected sheets, pillow slips, blankets and spreads.

Joseph said, "You won't reconsider about staying with us tonight?"

"No, really I want to be here."

"All right, Betsy. I'll be on my way."

She walked to the door with him and waved as he disappeared from view. She was glad he was gone. She wanted to be left alone to wait for the miracle. She ran through the house, dusting swiftly. Then she made the beds. The big one in the room that had been hers and Eric's. The single one in the room off the kitchen. She hated to take time away from the window. Her miracle would come driving up the road. She wanted to watch for it. The mountain mustn't fall her. It must bring Eric back. Just one more miracle. Just one more.

During the summer that Betsy Campbell was seventeen her mother found a tenant for the little house on Miracle Mountain. The widow Campbell felt it was something of a miracle in itself, this windfall of finding a tenant. Her husband had built the house with his own hands because he loved the mountain, and he was fond of saying that he and his wife would spend their old age in it after Betsy had a home of her own. But he had died while still quite young and the house on Miracle Mountain was almost all that he left his widow. Nobody wanted to buy the house.

"You can rent it," people said, but no one in Parks Mill ever rented a house.

Then one day a very young man walked into the general store. He came in a shabby, tattered-looking car, but there was something impressive in the way he held himself. It was as though the shabby car and the rumpled clothes he wore were some sort of disguise. He had yellow hair. It had been tumbled into a wild, streaming mass by the ride in the topless car, and young Joseph, the son of the man who owned the general store, felt suddenly ashamed of his neat haircut. "I like your town," the young man said. "Is there somewhere I could stay? I want to spend the summer here."

"You do!" Young Joseph was excited and jubilant. "You'd want a small place, wouldn't you, and you wouldn't mind if it was off the beaten path?"

The young man looked out the door at Parks Mill's very quiet, very dusty Main Street and laughed. "Oh, I'd definitely want it off the beaten path," he said. "Away from all this mad hurly-burly."

"Wait here while I get Mrs. Campbell."

Joseph was back in no time. "She'll be right over. The house is halfway up Miracle Mountain. You'll like it."

"Miracle Mountain? I like the name," the young man said. "That's what I need. A miracle."

"Here's Mrs. Campbell now," Joseph said. "What's your name, so I can introduce you?"

"Eric Markwell."

Mrs. Campbell and Eric Markwell made a deal. He had very little money, but she desperately needed a tenant. She even agreed to clean for him.

"But how will you get up and down the mountain?" Joseph asked.

Mrs. Campbell looked questioningly at Eric Markwell. "I'll drive you," he said.

Joseph had a further worry. "How're you going to take care of Dr. Thompson's house on the days you're up on the mountain?"

"It'll only take a few hours to clean the little house, and Doc knows I need extra money. He always told me not to let his place stand in the way of my earning a few more dollars."

So Eric Markwell moved into the little house. Mrs. Campbell went with him and made the place livable for the night.

"Tomorrow I'll give it a good cleaning," she promised. "But I guess you can put your things around all right."

She was surprised to see that his things consisted of a typewriter, a box of books, a package of blank sheets of paper and only enough clothes to fill half a bureau drawer and two closet hooks.

The widow Campbell's heart was touched. She did not understand the typewriter or the books, but she understood the emptiness of the closet. "You didn't buy any groceries," she said.

"Oh, I had a large lunch. I won't want anything more to eat tonight."

"But you'll want breakfast. You'll have to lay some supplies in."

"I'll pick up a few things tomorrow when I'm down in town."

She opened her purse and put thirty dollars on the table. "You didn't have to pay me for the entire four months," she said. "Half now and half some time later will be all right."

He shook his head and handed back the money. "You keep it," he said. "Then I'll know I'm safe for all of June, July, August and September. Boy, what a feeling that will be!"

"You could wait till August to give me this."

"No, I couldn't. There's no more coming in. Now my rent's paid, and tomorrow I'll buy some canned goods and cigarettes, and I'll have four months of quiet in which to shape my destiny."

The widow Campbell carried the discussion no further. The young man wasn't like anyone she had ever known before, but she was certain that in one particular he was no different. He would have to eat. So when he drove her home she said, "Come in and have supper with us." He came without again mentioning that he had had a large lunch.

Betsy Campbell stared at their guest throughout the meal. He had been an actor, but he was not going to be an actor any more. He was, instead, going to write a play. He had written two or three before. One had been actually performed, but the world was so full of stupid people that his play had perished for lack of appreciation. The one he would write this summer would not perish. It would be tailored to fit the mind of the average man.

The widow Campbell and her daughter did not understand most of the things he said, but the widow understood the things he did not say. When he left she gave him coffee, bread and eggs.

"Breakfast," she explained.

"I never eat breakfast."

She smiled. "Try doing it. You could use twenty pounds."

When he had gone Betsy's eyes had a new gleam in them. "Isn't he fascinating, Mother? Do you like him?"

"Of course I do, child."

"I'm glad," Betsy breathed. "Because I like him very much. He is underfed, isn't he? I think I'll bake a chocolate cake and take it up the mountain to him. Would that be all right, Mother?"

"Yes, Betsy; except that if you ever

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go up the mountain with or without a chocolate cake I'll beat you."

"Mother! You said you liked him."

"I do. I like the doctor's dog too, but I never leave him alone with something he shouldn't have."

"I think that's an awful thing to say. Mr. Markwell's a nice young man, and besides, the stage is so fascinating."

Mrs. Campbell nodded. "When a young man looks like Mr. Markwell he could be in the gravel-and-sand business and still be fascinating. Never mind the dishes. Joseph is waiting to take you for a walk."

When Betsy came back from her walk with Joseph her mother was still awake. That was unusual. Betsy was accustomed to finding her dozing in the maple rocker.

"Did you have a pleasant time, Betsy?"

"Oh, I suppose so. Joseph's very nice. Mother, you were joking about—"

"I was not joking, Betsy. You're not to go up the mountain under any circumstances, and there are to be no secret meetings with Mr. Markwell."

"As though he'd want a secret meeting with me!"

Mrs. Campbell's eyes traveled over the tall, slim body of her daughter and up to the cherry-red lips and smoky black hair. "Well," she said drily, "just in case the thought should enter his mind, I'm warning you to refuse him."

After that Betsy Campbell dreamed continually of going up the mountain. I wish, she often thought, that something would happen so I could go up to the little house and watch him while he writes.

And one day as she thought this oft-recurring thought it came to her that after all the mountain must have been named for some reason. Half ashamed and half hopeful, she began to concentrate on the mountain, asking it to please work a miracle for her, to get her up to see Eric Markwell.

She told her friend, Emily Springer, about the experiment. She hadn't wanted to tell Emily, but they had promised never to keep anything from each other.

"Why, Betsy Campbell, what would Joseph think if you went up there!"

"I don't care what Joseph thinks."

"Aren't you in love with him, Betsy?"

"No. He annoys me. He keeps telling me he loves me till I could scream."

Emily Springer dropped her arm from around Betsy's waist. "That's a horrid thing to say, Betsy. You should never tell anyone what Joseph says to you in private. That's—that's sacred, Betsy."

"But didn't you and I swear we'd tell each other everything always?"

"Yes, but—but not about Joseph. I don't want to hear what he says to you."

"Suppose I should have something to tell you that Mr. Markwell said?"

"That would be different."

"Why would it be different, Emily?"

"Oh, I don't know. It would just be different. Do you think the mountain will really work a miracle for you?"

"I don't know. It's worth trying, isn't it? It just kills me to hear Mr. Markwell honk his horn in front of our house and see my mother drive off with him. If the mountain doesn't do something, I think I'll just jump out of my skin."

The girls laughed, but their faces were very sober and full of awe when the message came for Mrs. Campbell.

"Emily, it is a miracle. Just think of it. My mother has never been sent for by anybody, and now all of a sudden my aunt and my two cousins are all sick in bed and my uncle can't manage alone. my mother's going to Montpelier tonight. Emily, do you think the mountain—"

It didn't much matter whether it was the mountain or not. It was Betsy who ran out of the cottage next morning when Mr. Markwell honked. "Mother's

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been called away. I'm to take her place while she's gone."

"Oh." He did not seem pleased. As a matter of fact, he was deeply disappointed. Mrs. Campbell brought him little delicacies from Dr. Thompson's pantry, but Betsy didn't know that. She only knew her presence didn't thrill him.

When they got to the house he went at once to his typewriter. Dismally she walked into the kitchen. She noticed that her hero never washed any dishes. He left them for her mother. So that was the way the mountain worked miracles!

She cleaned the kitchen first and walked into the sitting room. He was at the typewriter, a deep frown between his eyebrows. Not a key had been struck.

"What's the matter?" she asked. "You look so troubled. Is it the play?"

"Yes." He jumped up and began pacing the room. "I don't seem to be getting anywhere. I'm a flop."

"I think you're wonderful, Mr. Markwell."

He looked at her and believed her. It was impossible to doubt the sincerity in her voice, the frank worship in her eyes.

"You're sweet, Betsy." He took a step toward her and paused. She had not moved. She was waiting for him to kiss her. He was only twenty-four, but he had seen a lot of life. He knew Betsy Campbell was a nice girl, but her emotions and impulses would sell her out to him. And somehow he kept remembering that the widow Campbell had invited him into her home and fed him and introduced him to her daughter.

"I can't write unless I'm alone," he said. "Come on."

And he drove her back to her own home. It was quite a while before she realized that the mountain sometimes worked a miracle it had thought up all by itself.

Betsy confessed to Emily Springer that she was sure Eric Markwell didn't love her. "And there's nothing a girl can do if a man doesn't love her."

"You might try the mountain again," Emily suggested. "Maybe it could make him love you."

Betsy reflected. "That seems awfully dangerous. Suppose the love wasn't real? Suppose it was just some magic trick that didn't last? Would you ask the mountain to make a man love you, Emily?"

Emily looked away from Betsy. "Yes," she said, "I would."

"Maybe I'll try it then, Emily. It's kind of fun to see what happens."

When Eric Markwell took sick up there in the little house there was nothing for the widow Campbell to do but bring him down to her cottage in Parks Mill.

"Betsy," she said, "I never meant you and that young man to have more than a speaking acquaintance, but things happen sometimes that nobody bargained for. I have to take care of Dr. Thompson's house, but that boy's sick. You'll have to stick pretty close to home and sort of watch him."

Betsy stuck close to home and watched Eric Markwell. She fed him and read to him and made notes for him on ideas that popped into his head.

"I've never been able to talk to anyone before the way I can talk to you, Betsy," he said. "You're a good listener. You've helped a lot."

"How? I don't know anything about plays."

"You will. You'll know a lot about them."

Her heart thumped. What did he mean by that? She dared not hope he meant to make her part of his life. It was the first remark of that kind he had made, and it set her to wondering. But later she knew that, without a proposal or a

declaration of love, he had taken it for granted they belonged together.

A few days before he went back to the house on the mountain he had a talk with Betsy's mother. To her, he said the things he had not said to Betsy.

The widow Campbell said, "Maybe you only think you love her. You've been sick, and she's the one who's nursed you. When you're sick you're not in the right frame of mind to judge what's undying love and what's only a comfortable way your pillows have been fixed."

"I love her, Mrs. Campbell."

"Well, there's a fine boy in town who loves her too. And he can support her."

"Someday I'll buy her a ten-thousand-dollar automobile, Mrs. Campbell. What do you think of that?"

"You ask me when you buy it, boy."

When Eric Markwell moved back to the little house halfway up the mountain Betsy went with him. They had been quietly married that morning, with only Mrs. Campbell, Dr. Thompson and Emily Springer present at the ceremony.

"Do you think the mountain did it?"

Emily found time to whisper.

"Why, Emily, you silly child," Betsy said. "How can you believe in such tripe?"

"Tripe?" Emily was baffled. There were a lot of words creeping into Betsy's vocabulary that Emily had not heard before.

Eric finished his play by the end of the summer. He sold his car and his typewriter to Joseph in order to get train fare to New York for Betsy and himself.

"How will you live when you get there?"

Mrs. Campbell asked.

"I'll get an advance on my play."

"You mean you just go up and say, 'Here's my play. Give me some money?'"

"Um—well—"

THAT'S what I thought. Winter's coming, boy. You don't have enough money to come through till warm weather, you know. Betsy's got a winter coat. What about you?"

"I have one in my wallet."

"What?"

"Sure. It's a magical coat. In summer it turns into a small ticket. Easy to carry. No storage, no moths, no annoying bulk."

The Campbells had never before seen a pawn ticket. Betsy was to become well acquainted with them. She never forgot that winter in New York. The dirty, squalid room in which they lived; the dreadful, greasy lunchroom where the dreadful, greasy proprietress let them charge their food because she had a crush on Eric. Glamorous Broadway, where Eric knew a hundred people, all of them hungry, shabby and penniless.

"I have faith in the play," Eric often said. "I don't care how many people turn it down. It's a good play."

They did not always talk about the play or worry about rent and meals. They were very young and very much in love. They laughed a lot, and Betsy knew that it was better to be hungry with Eric than safe and snug and well-fed with any other man alive.

"Why don't you go back to acting for a while?" she asked. "You could always write again when the play's accepted."

He laughed. "Me? I'm the world's worst actor. Fired from every show I was ever in, usually during rehearsals. Don't let that shake your faith in me. I can write."

By summer the play had been returned by every prominent producer. They owed a lot of room rent, a large bill at the greasy lunchroom, and winter was waiting to leap at them again. Betsy had to take things into her own hands.

"What do you want out of life, Eric?"

"You. You know that. I've told you so a million times."

"All right, then. We don't want anything except each other, so let's have each other in peace and cleanliness and decency. Let's quit chasing around to theatrical offices, getting insulted by office boys flipping your play back at you. Let's quit running up bills and haunting pawnshops and borrowing money."

"I like your platform. You're elected. How do we go about all this?"

"We go back to Miracle Mountain."

"What?"

"Yes. We can have the little house for nothing, and you can get a job. The general store or the garage would pay you enough so that we could eat."

"Nice idea, honey. But it isn't exactly thrilling, is it?"

"Must it be thrilling? Can't we be simple people? Do we have to live in filth and dream of fortunes? Can't we live in cleanliness and accept the fact that we're not going to be millionaires? Isn't it enough to have each other, Eric?"

"Of course it is, darling, but we're going to be millionaires too. And while on the sordid subject of money, we couldn't retire to our mountain estate while owing everybody and his brother."

She said no more. She wrote to her uncle in Montpelier and borrowed three hundred dollars from him. Her mother had never asked a favor of her more prosperous relatives, but Betsy had learned a lot. She knew now that pride was a great deal like a tight girdle. A woman should have sense enough to take it off when it begins to interfere with her comfort.

Betsy paid the landlady, the lunchroom proprietress and Eric's friends who had contributed a dollar here and there. Then she said, "Let's go back to Miracle Mountain, Eric."

He went, but he was not glad to go. He could not resist leaving the play behind him, on the desk of a small producer whose name Eric and his starving friends always mentioned with scorn.

Eric got a job at the general store, for Joseph was leaving town. It surprised everyone that Joseph would want to try his luck in Boston. He had never seemed the adventurous type. Betsy went to work for the minister's wife who was sickly. Nine dollars a week to take care of the two children and the cleaning. And she sent the nine dollars every week to her uncle.

It was a good life, she thought. Not easy, to be sure. But it was good in the way decent, wholesome things are good. But Eric never laughed any more, and he took no interest in his work.

And Betsy came to know that she had chosen wrong for him. Eric wanted to live where people talked of the stage and uttered magic names.

She thought miserably: I wish I could get him back to New York, and though she had grown up considerably, her mind turned to the mountain.

It was Emily Springer who brought the letter to Betsy at the minister's house. "I was at the post office and there was a letter for Eric, so I brought it to you."

"Why didn't you drop it at the store?"

"Oh, I hate to go into the store, Betsy."

Emily looked thin and unhappy, Betsy thought. Love troubles, probably. But Betsy didn't have time to find out who could possibly be on Emily's mind. Emily had never been interested in boys.

Betsy glanced at Eric's letter, and her heart missed a beat. It was from that scorned small producer with whom Eric had left his play.

Betsy dropped the broom and ran to the general store with Emily at her heels.

"Open it quickly!" she cried, flinging the letter on the counter.

Eric didn't waste a second. "He's going



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HOST: Join me in a tall Kinsey and let's drink to an idea I have for making this a great holiday season.

GUEST: If your idea is half as good as this Kinsey it'll be heard around the world. Let's have it.

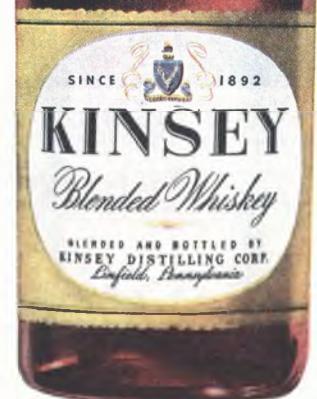
HOST: Just this. I'm buying an extra war bond for every boy I know who's away this year. It'll mean extra weapons to fight with.

GUEST: Great. I'll join you in that if you join me in giving blood to the Red Cross.

NOW THE MAN IN THE BACKGROUND SPEAKS:

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to do it. He's going to produce my play!"

Betsy walked to the door and glanced up at Miracle Mountain.

"Five hundred dollars advance!" Eric was saying.

"Does that mean you and Betsy will leave Parks Mill?" Emily asked.

"Oh, boy, does it! We'll be out of here before you can count twenty by twos."

Betsy was surprised to find Emily also staring wonderingly at the mountain.

The five hundred dollars made it possible for the Markwells to move into comfortable, tidy rooms when they returned to New York. It was smooth sailing after that. Eric had a hit that season, and they moved to a smart apartment house and Betsy had a fur coat and a maid and a diamond ring. Eric laughed a great deal and she began to see why he had thought the squalor worth living through.

The play sold in Hollywood and was made into a motion picture, but Eric wasn't terribly interested, for he had ideas for a dozen more.

The months flew by full of gay and exciting people and gayer, more exciting things to do. Betsy met celebrities and thought them nice and unfrightening. And then one day she was brought to a dead stop with the realization that she was going to have a baby.

Eric was happy about it. She had not expected that.

"You know babies cry, Eric," she ventured timidly.

"They carry on like little hellions, Betsy. Won't it be wonderful?"

"But your work?"

"I'll work when the baby's sleeping. I'll meet the child halfway. I'll say, 'Look here, I won't interfere with your sleeping, and don't you interfere with my work.' I'm sure a sensible arrangement can be made if I talk convincingly."

Eric consulted everyone he knew and finally decided on an obstetrician for Betsy. It had to be someone expensive and famous. Betsy was relieved to find the doctor was also warm and kindly. After he had examined her he said, "Now you go out to the reception room, young lady, and find a magazine. I want to talk to your husband. After all, he's the one who will suffer the most."

The doctor may have fooled many a Park Avenue wife with his mild witticisms, but Betsy knew an alarm when she heard one.

Going home in the taxicab, she asked Eric abruptly, "How tough did he say it was going to be?"

"What do you mean, honey? He didn't say it was going to be tough. He just wanted to talk financial arrangements over privately, so you wouldn't be frightened by such big figures."

"How tough did he say it was going to be?"

"Oh, darling, can't you believe me? Sure, it's tough having a baby, but—"

"But what's extra tough about this baby, Eric?"

"Well, damn it, Betsy, I don't know what to say. I don't want to worry you, but you know there's something up. So I guess I might as well tell you. It isn't you, Betsy. You'll be all right. But he isn't sure there'll be a baby."

"You mean I was mistaken about—"

"No, darling. You were right, but there's big question about keeping the baby till the proper time."

"Oh."

"You see, I shouldn't have told you."

She patted his hand. "It's all right. In fact, I think it was the thing to do."

She didn't sleep that night. But by morning she knew what she had to do.

"Eric, I'm going home today," she said.

"Home? What do you mean, darling?"

"I'm going to live in the house on

Miracle Mountain till the baby's born."

He stared at her. "Oh, Betsy, you can't. You have to stay close to Dr. Kirkland. Darling, nothing would be worse for you than to leave here."

"I have to go, Eric. I have to."

"But why, Betsy?"

"I want Dr. Thompson to take care of me."

"We can get him down here to consult with Dr. Kirkland. Would that make you feel better?"

"No, I have to go to Miracle Mountain."

He was so uncomprehending of her need to go home that finally she had to tell him about the mountain. She told him how she had used it to win his love and to have his play accepted. She felt foolish as she spoke, but it was the only way she knew to gain his permission for the trip. He was very tender, and he did not laugh or mock her.

"I see, dear," he said gravely.

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Family Quiz Answers

FATHER

(Questions on page 16)

1. *Man o' War.*
2. "*Locus sigilli*," meaning "the place of seal" in Latin.
3. Its inventor was General Henry Shrapnel of the British Army.
4. James J. Jeffries, Jess Willard, Jack Dempsey, Jack Sharkey.
5. *Baseball.*
6. *42.*
7. *Ulysses S. Grant.*
8. Boston, Mass.—the Boston Fish Pier.
9. Because the width of the Panama Canal lock chambers is 110 feet.
10. The Winter Nellis is a variety of winter-ripening pear.
11. President McKinley.
12. The Flag of the Americas was adopted at the 7th International Conference of American States at Montevideo in 1933. It is white to symbolize peace and bears three purple pattice crosses representing the three vessels of Columbus. Behind the central cross is a golden rising sun of the Incas, commemorating all the native Indian races of the Western Hemisphere.

Questions accepted from Delbert D. Neiswander, Clayton, Mo.; Margaret Faith, Camden, N. J.; Mrs. C. D. Beck, Dubois, Pa.; Harry Topp, Denver, Colo.; Viola Flowers, Edwardsburg, Mich.; Marie Breuer, Berwyn, Ill.; Joseph C. Martin, Baltimore, Md.; Mrs. Taylor Merry, Boston, Mass.; Mrs. Mildred M. Moyes, Ogden, Utah; J. W. Huff, Burbank, Calif.; Mrs. C. H. Wright, Watertown, N. Y.; Mrs. G. L. Miller, Ft. Worth, Tex.; F. T. Gross, N. Y. C.

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"Then may I go, Eric?"

"Certainly, I'll go with you."

"But you hate it up there, and your work is here."

"I won't hate it when I don't have to live in the general store, and I'll take my work with me, Betsy."

"You won't tell Dr. Kirkland the real reason I went, will you? He'll have me shut up in an insane asylum."

"Don't you believe it. Every doctor in the world knows the power of faith."

They packed that day and moved back to Miracle Mountain. Joseph had returned to Parks Mill and married Emily Springer. Betsy was surprised. It had never occurred to her that Emily had been interested in Joseph.

Dr. Thompson came regularly and seemed unimpressed by Betsy's condition. "Sure, she's a mite different maybe from some women, but babies are pretty stubborn, my boy. They want to get born."

God knows why. They do enough complaining about it once they can talk."

"But a doctor in New York, a good doctor too, told me that Betsy's chances of having a baby were slight."

"Did he? Well, maybe he knows things I don't know. People get awfully smart living in big cities. Only two things I know about babies, my boy. One is how to tell if a woman's going to have one, and the other is how to get it born. Never knew there was any more than that."

Eric was infuriated by the old man's words. He'd get no reassurance from Dr. Thompson. Perhaps it would be a good idea for him to begin pinning his faith on the mountain.

Eric watched his wife as the months went by. She wanted the baby, and there would be nothing he could do or say to ease the ache in her heart if the child were lost to her. Sometimes she would wander away while he was at work and he would find her walking in the wind, her eyes fixed upon the peak of Miracle Mountain.

"Betsy darling, come home and rest now. Everything is going to be all right."

"Oh, I know that, Eric."

He wished he could believe as she seemed to believe that the mountain would see her through and somehow put a smiling, healthy baby at her breast.

But when the night came for Betsy's great hour, Eric did not think of Miracle Mountain. He went into the little bedroom off the kitchen and fell upon his knees and prayed for Betsy and the child.

Doc Thompson found him there as the sky was paling into dawn.

"Well, you have a daughter."

Eric rose stiffly. "Is the baby alive? Is she all right? Is Betsy all right?"

The doctor eyed Eric coldly. "The baby's perfectly normal and pretty as a picture. Betsy's exhausted, but in good shape. You know what you can do now?"

"What?"

"You can go down to Parks Mill and tell that fancy doctor you've had sitting on his dignity for three days at Mrs. Campbell's house that he can go home."

Eric flushed. "I hope you won't tell Betsy that I sent for him."

"No. I wouldn't dream of letting a young mother know that the baby's father is a fool. Don't you suppose I can recognize another doctor when I see one? Thought I'd laugh right in your face when you said he was a writer friend."

"Dr. Thompson, was it awful for Betsy?"

"It wasn't bad because she wasn't frightened. She was sure everything would be all right, but I'll be damned if I know what made her so sure. You see, I wouldn't have given a plugged nickel for the baby's chances."

"Why, you told me—"

"Sure. I tell fathers a lot of things. What's the good of them worrying? Poor devils have worries enough."

Betsy's recovery was uneventful. When the baby was six weeks old the Markwells returned to New York. But the house on Miracle Mountain had become a part now of the fabric of their lives. Mrs. Campbell wouldn't sell it to Eric, so he paid a monthly rental for it, so that he might feel free to use it when he chose. Sometimes he ran up to work on a scene that wouldn't come right.

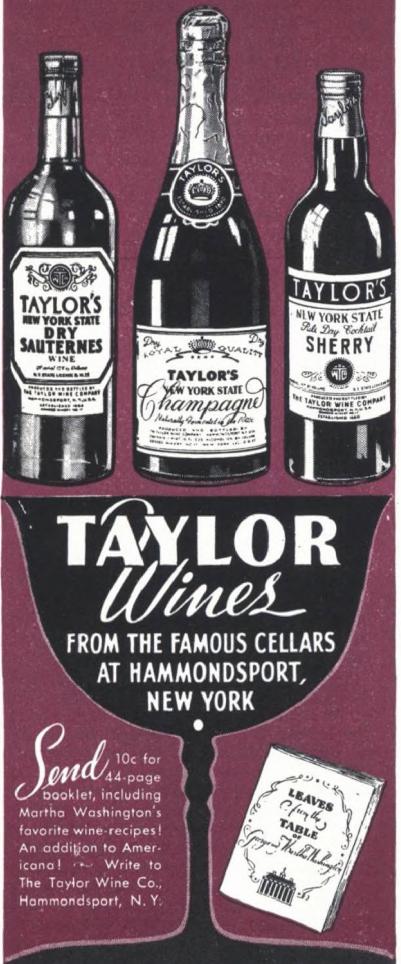
"It's quiet on the mountain. No distractions," he would explain to Betsy.

She would nod and smile. He'd never admit he had come to believe that the mountain would help him write a play.

Betsy herself used the house frequently. She had taken Sheilah there every time the child fell ill. She had gone herself when trouble of any kind threatened her little family.

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Only the last time she had not known there was any trouble. Eric had simply said, "I've met a girl named Gillie Faulkner. I have to have a divorce, Betsy. I want to marry Gillie."

Betsy peered into the blackness that pressed against the windowpane. There was no sound on the road outside. Perhaps there wouldn't be tonight. Tomorrow? She had not stressed the thought that she must have a miracle tonight. Tomorrow would do as well. She thought of Sheilah and wondered if Gerald were with her tonight. She hoped so. Poor children, so much in love, so harassed by the demands of a war-torn world. Betsy's mind turned to her mother resting beneath the maples in the churchyard. There would never be any more loneliness for the widow Campbell. She lay beside her husband world without end, and no war would take him from her and no younger, prettier woman call him away.

There was a pack of cards on the bookshelf. Betsy took them to the table and laid them out for a game of Patience. She thought about the food in the kitchen, but she was not hungry. She would not admit that she was waiting to eat. Waiting—for she might not eat alone.

A dozen times she ran through the cards, missing plays. After a time she sat there shuffling them, lost in thought.

Outside on the mountain road there was a sound. Did she imagine it or—She dropped the cards and ran to the window. A car was stopping at the door. She held fast to the window sill in an effort to withstand the trembling dizziness that was sweeping over her.

She could not be mistaken. That was Eric getting out of the car. She saw him glance in surprise at the lighted windows of the house, and then she saw him helping someone from the car—a slight figure bundled in fur. And Betsy knew that Eric had come back to Miracle Mountain and had brought the new Mrs. Markwell with him.

The furry figure stood in the snowy road while Eric bounded to the door. Betsy had it open, "Come in," she said.

"Hello, Betsy. How are you? Look, I had no idea you were here. It's a little awkward now, since there's no hotel and no more trains tonight and—"

"Of course, I told you to come in."

Eric got the luggage, dismissed the car and helped his wife up the steps. Betsy heard her remonstrating in low tones, but Eric had no chance to answer.

"It's good to see a fire," he said loudly. They took off their coats and raced toward the fireplace.

"Gillie, this is Betsy."

The two women murmured greetings and looked at each other with interest. Betsy remembered what Joseph had said about every prosperous customer wanting something new and shiny bright. Everything about Gillie was shiny bright. Her hair gleamed, and her eyes glittered. Even the lipstick she used was the shiny kind. Even the emerald Eric had given her was more brilliant than any emerald Betsy had ever seen before.

"Betsy, I'm sorry about popping in on you like this," Eric said. "It's time I realized this house is yours and not mine."

"That's all right. You're welcome."

"You're very kind, but it's an imposition when you're resting here."

"Of course it is," Gillie agreed. "We'll leave in the morning. We can, can't we, Eric?"

"Yes, certainly." His eyes turned toward his typewriter. "I had hoped—"

"Well, there are other quiet places. I told you there were any number of places we could go, instead of knocking

ourselves out getting to the end of the world just to—"

Eric interrupted her by turning to Betsy and asking, "How did you leave Sheilah?"

"She was well."

"That's good. How are her husband and the baby?"

"Fine." It was strange to hear Eric inquiring for Sheilah's husband and Sheilah's child as though he were a mere acquaintance. How far they had veered from the road they had meant to travel! They were miles off their course when Eric had a son-in-law and a grandchild neither of whom he had ever seen.

"What kind of chap did she marry? Do you like him, Betsy?"

"He's a fine boy. I love him dearly."

"Good. Good. That's splendid."

"Perhaps you'll go to Hollywood to work while they're still out there, Eric."

"No, I don't think so. But of course I'd like to see Sheilah."

"She'd like to see you." That was a polite lie and Betsy hated polite lies, but there was a stranger in the room. She was Eric's wife, but she was a stranger. How could you let a stranger guess that Sheilah was disgusted with her father?

Gillie picked up a suitcase. "I could be getting a few things unpacked if you'll tell me where we're going to sleep."

Eric looked at Betsy.

"I'll take the room off the kitchen," she said. "You two use the larger one. It's right there—the door ahead of you."

After Gillie had closed the bedroom door Betsy found it easy to talk to him about Sheilah, to imagine they were alone and it was the old days again.

Gillie stayed away for an hour. When she came out Eric was sitting in the kitchen and Betsy was preparing food.

"Are you going to eat?" Gillie asked.

"Sure, I'm going to eat."

"Then what was all that sales talk you gave me about its being foolish to bother bringing food up here tonight?"

"Well, the store was closed. Since we couldn't buy anything, it was only sense to pretend we didn't need anything."

"Oh, well, as it happens I don't want anything and I feel as though I have a cold coming on. I'm going to bed."

"Would you like some hot coffee brought to you?" Betsy asked.

"No, thank you. Good night." Gillie paused in the doorway and turned toward them. "I suppose this is a ridiculous question, but I've never been in a place like this before. What about the fire?"

"What about it?" Eric asked.

"Does it keep on throwing blasts of heat at you all night, or is there some way to turn it off? The room's stifling."

"All the way up here you kept predicting you'd freeze to death. I should think you'd be pleasantly surprised."

Gillie flounced off without a word. Betsy held her tongue. She had learned to keep silent when Sheilah and Gerald had their small disagreements. It amused her to think that the rules a sensible mother-in-law observed would also apply in the case of a woman who found herself closed up with her ex-husband and his second wife.

Betsy set the table in the big room, and she and Eric sat down to eat. There was something more unbearable than pain, more intoxicating than joy in looking across a table and finding him there again. In sickness and in health, in wealth and in poverty, they had looked across a table in this room and had been able to smile at each other. He was smiling now.

"You're looking very well, Betsy."

"I've been feeling well." She looked at him. He had aged, she thought. Was he happy? No, of course he wasn't. He had been too anxious to talk to her, to hear

news of Sheilah; too satisfied with Gillie's taking herself off to bed. Gillie wasn't comfortable for him to be with. How had he ever thought she would be? How can a man convince himself a girl Gillie's age would fit into a pattern he'd been forming for twenty-five years?

"Have you seen the new play?" he asked.

"Yes. Wednesday night."

"What did you think of it? Truth or consequences."

"It would be a mediocre play, I think, Eric, except that it has those well-known Markwell touches. The character of the old woman is wonderful and the second-act curtain is exciting and the dialogue is you at your best."

"I don't like it. Wish I could write one like the first one I wrote here. That play, Betsy, was the best I ever wrote."

She smiled. "It was a good one, Eric."

"I have one now that'll be a honey if I can ever get it set. I thought if I could get to some quiet place—"

"You thought if you could get to Miracle Mountain, Eric."

He shrugged. "Sure. I thought if I could get to Miracle Mountain."

"Well, you're here and I think Gillie would stay if I left. I'll go in the morning."

"You'll do nothing of the sort. This is your house, and if you felt the need to be here, I'm not going to chase you. What the hell does it matter about my play? I've written so many of them that it doesn't matter if I never work this one out. You stay right where you are."

"I wasn't intending to stay long anyway, Eric."

"Are you going back to California?"

"I haven't decided. My plans will unfold, I guess, with Gerald's orders."

The door of the bedroom flew open and Gillie swept into the room swathed in a white fur dressing gown. "Are you going to stay up all night?" she demanded.

Eric glanced at his watch. "It's only a few minutes after ten," he said. "When I'm a good boy I'm usually allowed to stay up much later than this."

"Well, I thought you'd come to bed because I told you I wasn't feeling well."

"Would you like coffee?" Betsy asked.

"No, thank you. I'd like a train to New York if you have one handy."

Betsy cleared the table and lingered in the kitchen over the washing of the few dishes. When she went back to the sitting room Gillie had once more shut herself in the bedroom. Eric was alone.

He was embarrassed. "We don't always get along like this," he said.

"I imagine she's tired," Betsy said, "and with a cold coming on—"

"Oh, that's just an idea of hers. She isn't catching cold. She'll be over it the minute she's headed back to New York."

"I take it she never wanted to come here."

"No, she didn't." He sighed. "You can take it that she never wants to do anything I want to do."

"That's something you shouldn't have said. Let's pretend you didn't say it."

"All right, Betsy." He got to his feet. "I guess I'll turn in."

She waited till the bedroom door had closed behind him; then she turned out the lights in the sitting room and went to the little room just off the kitchen. She found the evening had saddened her immeasurably. It was not only for herself that she was saddened. It was for Eric. There was something heartbreaking about a man who had robbed himself of all the rewards middle age should bring. The peaceful, comfortable relationship with a woman who had loved him for years; the respectful admiration of a son-in-law; the happiness of hav-

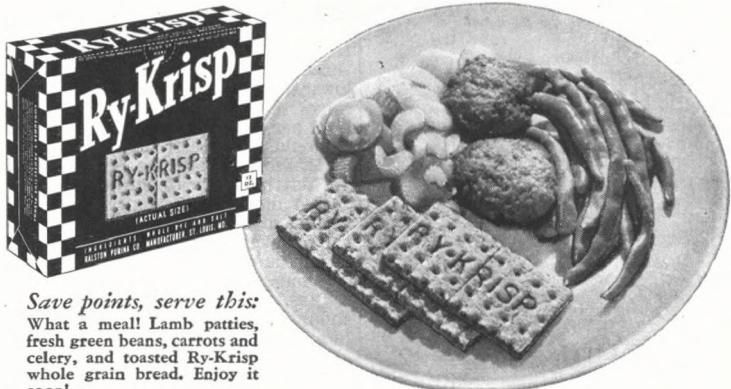


Helen E. Halcinian

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ing a grandchild—these things Eric had lightly tossed away. And what did he have in return? Certainly nothing that repaid him for the things he had lost.

Well, she had willed him back to Miracle Mountain. He had come, and now she was sorry. There was no revengeful streak in her. She was not glad to see that his bright and shiny wife did not make him happy. When at last she slept she dreamed that she and Eric were young again and that his first play was yet to be produced. The pillow was wet with tears when she awoke, for all through the dream she had known that it was but a dream and that Eric was a success and belonged to another woman.

In the morning when Betsy walked out to straighten the sitting room she was startled to find Gillie sitting by the window staring out into the snow. The girl was dressed for traveling and even had her suitcase beside her. So despite Eric's unhappiness he was still sleeping soundly, Betsy thought, and she remembered how she had always been able to dress without awakening him. It seemed indelicate to know so much about another woman's husband.

"Good morning," she said. "I'm going to make some coffee. You'll have some, won't you?"

"Yes, thank you. I was sitting here wondering how I get to the train."

"Oh, Well, if you're determined to go, Eric will make the arrangements when he awakens. The owner of the general store will be along shortly and—"

"And will he take me to a train?"

Betsy faced Eric's wife. "I'm sorry it's upset you to find me here. I will gladly leave the house to you and Eric."

"I don't want the house. I don't want any part of this godforsaken wilderness."

"That may be true, but Eric loves it."

"He can stay. It's not my intention to force him to leave. I intend to go alone."

Betsy sat down. "May I speak to you a moment?"

Gillie raised her eyebrows. "What about?"

"About getting along with the man you've married."

"Is that your business?"

"I think so. Eric was my husband for many years. He is the father of my child; the man whom I spent a lifetime looking after and loving. You came along and gaily, dishonestly, took him away from me. I know that women who do those things have a philosophy that allows them to go on living with themselves. They say, 'Well, if she couldn't hold her man,' and, 'If it hadn't been me it would have been someone else.'"

"Please come to the point."

"It's this: Eric is my business. I invested more than twenty years in him, and a divorce decree doesn't wipe out the fact that I consider him my business by virtue of our years together."

"That's one way of looking at it."

"Yes, it's one way, and I think you should make every effort to bring him happiness. You broke up a family, you know. That isn't a misdemeanor. In my books it's a crime of major proportions. Since you've hurt me deeply and shattered his daughter's faith in him and dragged him away from a life that enriched and strengthened him, I believe you owe him a large piece of happiness."

"Doesn't he owe me anything?"

"Yes, indeed. Has he failed you?" Betsy saw Gillie's glittering eyes rest upon the emerald, and she knew that to the girl it was a symbol of Eric's prosperity.

"I didn't want to come up here, and he knew I didn't want to come."

"That's a small thing, Gillie. If your marriage is to be a happy one, you must do many things you don't want to do.

Again and again you will have to pretend that what he has suggested is the very thing you've been dying to do."

"And when does he let me have my way? It should be fifty-fifty, shouldn't it?"

Betsy smiled. "In theory. In practice, if you can't get fifty-fifty, you try seventy-five-twenty-five, and in the end you accept ninetynine-five-five and pretend that's what you wanted all along."

"Thanks for the advice, but that isn't for me."

"It's for every woman who wants a happy marriage. You get the best terms you can and accept them gracefully."

Betsy started toward the kitchen. She was embarrassed now by the way she had spoken to Gillie. It was a ridiculous thing to have done. Nobody, and certainly not Eric's young wife, could understand how truly anxious she was for him to be happy. But her bright ideas couldn't possibly help the relationship between Eric and Gillie. No advice on marriage could be more valueless than that which came from a woman whose husband had left her for someone else.

"There's just one thing I'd like you to know," Gillie said.

Betsy paused in the kitchen doorway.

"Eric and I have had plenty of fun together. He has nothing to complain about. I suppose he told you I'm always as nasty as I was last night. Well, I'm not. First of all, it gave me quite a turn to find you here."

"I can understand that."

"And I loathe and detest dear little cottages in the mountains. On top of that, I haven't had a civil word out of him in a month, and I swear I haven't deserved the way he's treated me."

"All men have moods."

"Moods! I still think this is none of your business, but since you've stuck your nose into it you might as well know I told him to come up here alone. I told him it would give both of us a chance to think things over and decide what to do, but he insisted that I come along."

"And now you're going to leave?"

"Yes. I weighed it all in my mind last night. I didn't sleep a wink thinking about it, but he had no trouble pounding his ear. Anybody who thinks it's a pleasure having him around is crazy. But of course I'm wasting my breath. I'm the one who's wrong. I'm the one who's mistreated the poor little man. I'm just a she-devil. I can see it in your eyes."

Betsy looked away. Was she really that transparent? The music of sleigh bells sounded on the mountain road. "That's Joseph," she said.

"My taxi, you mean? Well, I'll say good-by, then."

"There's no hurry. Joseph is an old friend. He'll come in and have coffee, and Eric'll want to talk to him too."

Betsy opened the door for Joseph. He came in after stamping the snow off his boots, and Betsy made the introductions. "I'm just about to put the coffee on," she said. "Go wake Eric, will you, Joseph?"

Joseph grinned. "I haven't done it since he's a celebrity. Do you still throw cold water on him if you get worried?"

"I do," Gillie said grimly.

Betsy went to make the coffee. She felt suddenly lighthearted. The mountain had given Eric back to her. And so sweetly, so beautifully, with no one left to weep. The girl did not love him or want him. And he did not want Gillie. Or did he?

How would she ever know the answer to that question? Suppose he did want Gillie, but was unable to hold her? Eric would rather die than let any woman know he had tried and failed. He would allow Gillie to go her way, and pretend he had not really wanted her.

Joseph came into the kitchen. "They want to be alone," he said. "Betsy, they're having trouble. She wants me to take her to the train. He doesn't seem anxious to keep her here."

"I'm sorry for them, Joseph."

He smiled. "You wouldn't be Betsy if you weren't." He stood looking at her. Then: "Are you going to take him back?"

"Yes. If that's what he wants. I'm not sure it is, you know. But I've never stopped wanting him."

So Eric and Betsy had their coffee alone. They sat at breakfast as they had sat so many times before, smiling when their eyes met.

"Betsy, I've been an awful fool. Can you forgive me?"

She nodded.

"And take me back?"

She nodded again.

"Betsy, you're an angel."

"Well, maybe in a small way."

"I'll go right back to New York today and start my lawyer on—"

"No, you mustn't go back to New York yet. I'll go stay with Joseph and Emily, and you live here till you've worked out the play."

"What play?"

"The one you came here to work on."

"Oh." He looked sheepish. "Betsy, there's no play. That was a stall. I had to have some reason to come up here, and that seemed a good one."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you know how we've always felt about the mountain, Betsy."

"I seem to recall something about it."

"I thought maybe . . . You see, Gillie and I have been getting along very badly, Betsy. We grate on each other. I think she's stupid, and she thinks I'm a stuffy bore. We didn't know those things in time. I was too busy noticing how beautiful she was, and she was too busy being impressed with the fact that I was Eric Markwell. Well, when we had time to look each other over, we were both disappointed. It's an awful way to live, Betsy. I mean, with someone who'll say, 'It's a nice day,' and you immediately want to give them an argument."

"I can imagine, Eric."

"It was just as tough for Gillie. She can't help getting on my nerves and finding me damn poor company. But I thought if we could get to Miracle Mountain we'd find a way to work things out so we could get along better together. In short, I'll admit I'm as superstitious as the guy who walked with a Zombie. I thought the mountain would fix things up so Gillie and I would stop flying at each other's throats."

"Oh," Betsy said. "That's odd, isn't it?"

"What's odd?"

"The mountain didn't produce the miracle you wanted. In the past, it's always given us what we asked for. This time it was away off, wasn't it?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, you wanted it to arrange a peaceful life for you and Gillie. Instead, I was here and that irritated Gillie so much that things came to a head, and now it's a divorce for you two. I don't understand the mountain filling an order so wrong. Do you suppose it's getting senile? Or have we just used the poor thing up?"

Eric shook his head. "The mountain's still doing business in the same reliable way, Betsy. You see, I didn't ask it to patch up my differences with Gillie. I only asked it to let me be happy again."

"Oh," Betsy said, "I see. And Eric, that's a load off my mind."

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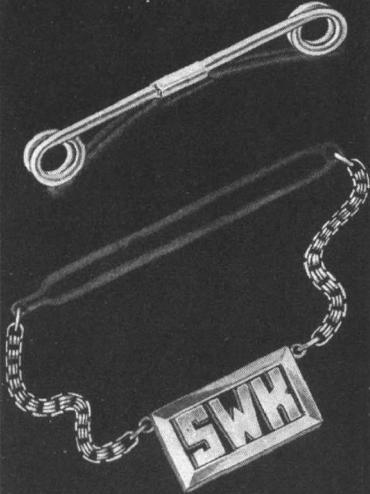
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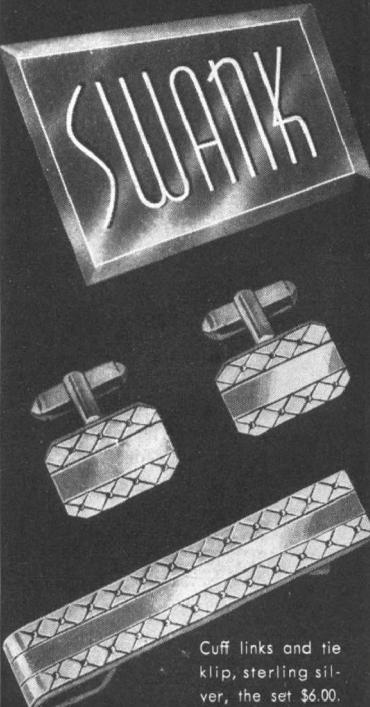
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You Seem to Forget (Continued from page 33)

showed me his family tree, and his coat of arms, so pretty, hand-painted on a china cigarette box—

Where was this? Why, at his house, of course. That's what I'm coming to!

And zizesaying, he's the most distinguished man this ole city ever saw, so aristocratic, those dark eyes and his lovely long thin nose, like all the peerage, and what if he does look like a buzzard! Lots of the higher nobility do. Sometimes that's the only way you can tell them, though with Auggie Pungo, you can tell it by his thin hands. You can see that he's always had intellectual jobs, like customers' man at a broker's, and never demeaned his hands by any common labor, not for ten generations, and—

And anyway, the count came up and asked me to dance, I mean to say.

Of course I said yes. And right away I could see he was crazy about me.

In fact, he said, "Lez go out on the terrace." I knew you'd be furious, that's really why I did it—you and your field hospitals; she looks kind of like a hospital tent, at that—and so I just looked the count right in the eyes, my, they're deep and exciting—and I made out like I'd kind of fallen for him but I was mighty reserved, and I hesitated, and then I sort of whispered, "Okay."

Well, we went out there, and honestly, I was a little surprised, even though so many men do fall for me. When nobody was looking, sudden, quick like a rabbit, he kissed my hand, right there in the dark, behind that third orange tree in the yellow jar with the busted rim, and oh, boy, was that a kiss! I could see he was just completely smitten. Honest, I didn't know I had so much viv!

I told myself, "You be careful now, Betzikins, or you'll be getting in trouble. His countship's really nuts about you!"

Course there were a lot of people coming and going and looking for some place to pet, a lot of young people, disgusting, no home rearing, and so the count says to me, "Let's skip over to my house. Over across the golf course. I got a lil pied à tête over there."

Imagine! Did you ever hear such a thing in your life? A guy, even if he is a high count, inviting a respectable young married lady to his private home!

"Certainly not!" I said. "My gracious!"

"Ah, come on," he begs. "Honest, I just want to sit and talk quiet with you. Cross my heart," he says, and gee, he did look so cute and high-class and noble. "We'll just have one drink," he says; "some refined liquor I import from my family estate," he says, "and then we'll duck back and nobody'll be wise."

If you hand-ball boys could pull a line like that, we American ladies wouldn't be so bored. The American dame certainly gets a lousy deal from her men-folks intellectually! Course, though, I had to show the count I'm respectable, and so I said, "Rully! I'm not accustomed to going to bachelor diggings!" You know. Like in an English novel.

He looked so melancholy, poor dear, and then he sighed. "No wonder I am so lone-ely in these strange land," he says. "Just for five minutes," he begs.

So I thought it over and finally I says, but just as refined as I could make it, "Well, okay."

Well, his house wasn't really so much. It just looked like any other suburban dump—the table behind the davenport. But he explained that he rented it furnished, and someday he'd show me a photograph of his castle, back home. And then he brought out some imported liquor—gee, the sweetest lil bottle striped

with gold, and he poured me out about an eydropperful in a bitzy glass, and he said, "Let's drink to our spiritual friendship!" Class? Say, I felt like I was in a Noel Coward play, but I better think fast, or I'd find myself in the second act. But he acted real gentlemanly.

"Your husband's the lawyer, isn't he?" he says.

"Why, sure," I says—surprised. You can imagine! At a time like that! "Why, sure he's a lawyer. Why?" I said.

Then he explains. "It's just because I'm glad he's handling the Juniper divorce case. Mr. Juniper is a friend of mine," he explains, "and I'm so glad a gentleman like your hubby is handling the case against him, and everything will be on a high-class refined level and they won't go and dig up a lot of dirt on Juniper. Isn't it dandy?" he says.

"Why, yes, I suppose it is," I says, though I must say, this dumb legal shop talk wasn't what I'd been expecting.

Naturally, he sees I'm kind of disappointed, and so he apologizes, "But I can see you're the cultured and musical kind of dame," he says, "and I bet you never even heard of the Juniper case."

"I bet I have!" I says.

"Well, I bet you don't know what your husband's line of attack is going to be," he says.

Well, I just looked at that fellow, count or not. I was thinking how a lawyer's wife has got to be like Caesar's wife—keep her trap shut, no matter what. So then he goes on: "No, I wouldn't expect a beautiful cutie like you to be able to understand a big deep legal question. I don't care if you're a dumb bunny."

Well, I let out a yell. "I am not a dumb bunny, I'll have you to understand," I yells, "and I know all about the Juniper case! I guess I can hear, when my husband talks it over with his partner. I'm right on the inside!"

"Like fun you are!" he says—you know, kind of tantalizing—those dangerous foreign eyes—my!

"And what would you think, Mr. Count?" I says, "if I was to tell you my husband ain't going to sue for divorce at all," I says. You know. Triumphant.

"Of course he is, silly," he says.

"He is not," I says. "He's going to show where Mr. Juniper, the old goat, never did really get divorced correct and proper from his ex, and then we'll ask for an annulment—"

What? What?

I will not have you talk to me like that! I just happened to see a letter on your desk. How did I happen to see it? When I was dusting, of course.

That's not true, and you know it. I do too dust your desk—often. I guess I'm about the most loyal wife there is, and whenever any of the girls have made jokes and things about law being such a tricky business, I've always bawled the dickens out of 'em, but it begins to look like they were right, you sneaking and trying to put one over on that poor Juniper man, just because some folks thought his divorce wasn't regular. Was that his fault? He didn't start any courts!

As soon as I told the count about the annulment, he just forgot about it—naturally he would, him and me sitting there all alone. I could see that he was so ardent he just couldn't trust himself. He jumped up and went and stood at the window and looked out. I could see he was struggling to keep his feelings down, and when I said, "Maybe it would be safer—maybe we ought to be getting back," he said right away, "Yes, maybe we had," and on the way back, he didn't

even dare to try to kiss me. So you see! Now you needn't to sit there looking so stunned, like you didn't understand me. I've always told you, you weren't the only man that's interested in me. Did I ever tell you about the Hollywood executive that I could of married and he would of put me in the movies and— Oh, did I? Well, that just goes to show! And you needn't to look so bad-tempered about it. I hate these breakfast-table scenes.

Peace at any price, that's what I always say, and no wonder you feel shaky this morning, the way you were drinking last night and carrying on. Women in uniform indeed! And after all, it was me that had to suffer last evening, literally just one thing after another. I think it's about time to try and make you see that you have got to try and stop and think and understand our relationship, and all I've given up for you—everybody says I could of been the highest-paid actress in America, to say nothing of my ice skating. You seem to find it very convenient to forget all that!

You expect me to live just to serve you, and I'm perfectly willing to do it, only I do think I have the right to ask what even the slaves used to get—some magnolias and dancing and the ole massa singing "Ole Man River"—and not this sour look that you always give me at breakfast whenever I dare to say one word about how I feel about things. You may be able to analyze and trick all these big corporations and poor Mr. Juniper and all like that, but when you try to make yourself ridiculous by trying to understand the heart of a woman, why, you show how crude and commercial you are, just like Count Pungo said, and—

And I almost forgot to tell you. Just before his countship and I beat it back to the club, he said he had to telephone. Well, I didn't exactly sneak over and listen—the phone was out in a hall—but naturally, I was curious as to who he could be calling up that time of night so—

Well, he seemed to be talking to Mr. Juniper himself. He seemed to be saying something about how this court where Mr. Juniper got his divorce was a crooked outfit and they could get the record fixed or bribe some witnesses so you could never prove the divorce was invalid.

And then the count said something about trying to get you—

Tell me, were you in some kind of a mixup in some gas-fixture case, and some people claimed you were a little too smart? Because the count was saying something about maybe they could get you disbarred—would that be the word?

Heavens and earth, you don't have to bellow like that! I was just asking! If you don't want to be disbarred, whatever that means, why, don't be. In fact, I'm almost sorry now that—

The count asked me if he came here for tea today, would I try and find some papers about that gas-fixture business that maybe you keep in the safe—I'd told him how you always forget to lock it—but if you really feel that way about being disbarred, why, I'll telephone the count not to come—not this afternoon, anyway.

Go and lock up your ole safe. There's a lot of letters about that gas-fixture stuff right on top of a pile. What? Oh, I just happened to glance into the safe this morning—I was wondering if you had any stamps there.

And I wasn't really going to show the papers to the count. Naturally, I was just going to tease him with them. The trouble with you is, you have no sense of humor. Oh, I meant to ask you. Look. Have you seen the compact I had with me last evening—the blue enamel one? Well, answer me, can't you? What are you standing there so dumb for?

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NEW Pictures

YOU'LL WANT TO SEE

Cosmopolitan lists a few of the many fine pictures now in production in Hollywood. Release dates are approximate, but they will probably be shown at your neighborhood movie during the next few weeks. Titles are subject to last-minute change.

COL.—COLUMBIA

UNIV.—UNIVERSAL

M-G-M—METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

RKO—RKO RADIO PICTURES INC.

PAR.—PARAMOUNT

20TH—20TH CENTURY-FOX

WB—WARNER BROS.

REP.—REPUBLIC PICTURES CORP.

TITLE AND COMPANY	TYPE	STARS	WHAT IT'S ABOUT
Pin-Up Girl	20th	<i>Comedy</i>	<i>Betty Grable</i> <i>John Harvey</i> <i>Joe E. Brown</i> <i>Martha Raye</i> A gay yarn about America's No. 1 Pin-Up who learns that popularity can be a menace to a real romance.
The Iron Major	RKO	<i>Drama</i>	<i>Pat O'Brien</i> <i>Ruth Warrick</i> <i>Leon Ames</i> The story of Frank Cavanaugh, a great American football coach, is packed with drama, humor and sports thrills.
Whistling in Brooklyn	M-G-M	<i>Comedy</i>	<i>Red Skelton</i> <i>Ann Rutherford</i> <i>Rags Ragland</i> Here's another of Red's adventures in crime involving grisly murder—and the Brooklyn Dodgers.
In Old Oklahoma	Rep.	<i>Drama</i>	<i>John Wayne</i> <i>Martha Scott</i> <i>Albert Dekker</i> A two-fisted story of rivalry between two men for a rich oil lease and a girl. Oklahoma, 1906.
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves	Univ.	<i>Fantasy</i>	<i>Jon Hall</i> <i>Maria Montez</i> <i>Andy Devine</i> Ali Baba and his men step out of fable onto the screen in a colorful tale of skulduggery in Bagdad. Technicolor.
Northern Pursuit	WB	<i>Drama</i>	<i>Errol Flynn</i> <i>Julie Bishop</i> <i>Helmut Dantine</i> Canada's Welland Canal is the target for Nazi saboteurs but Royal Canadian Mounted Police get them first. Action-packed.
Riding High	Par.	<i>Comedy</i>	<i>Dorothy Lamour</i> <i>Dick Powell</i> <i>Victor Moore</i> One jump ahead of the sheriff, a counterfeiter plays Cupid to a mining engineer and an ex-burlesque queen out Arizona way.
Cry "Havoc"	M-G-M	<i>Drama</i>	<i>Margaret Sullavan</i> <i>Ann Sothern</i> <i>Joan Blondell</i> <i>Fay Bainter</i> Faced with the choice of evacuation or annihilation, thirteen women at an isolated Bataan hospital choose to carry on.
Tropicana	Col.	<i>Comedy</i>	<i>Mae West</i> <i>William Castle</i> <i>Victor Moore</i> A comedy of cross-purposes in which a strait-laced morals committee is tricked into sponsoring a Broadway revue.

★ ★ ★ Three Good Bets ★ ★ ★



MADAME CURIE (M-G-M). A laboratory phenomenon and two scientists who had to find its meaning gave radium to the world. The phenomenon concerned pitchblende, a photographic plate and a key. The scientists were Marie Curie (Greer Garson) and Pierre Curie (Walter Pidgeon), devoted to each other and their work. Despite skepticism and appalling working conditions their faith bore fruit after months of effort.

A classic story of achievement, from Eve Curie's biography of her mother.



HAPPY LAND (20th Century-Fox) presents Don Ameche and Frances Dee in a moving story of America today. Lew Marsh (Don Ameche), proprietor of Hartfield's drugstore, is a happy man until his son (Richard Crane) is killed in action. Filled with bitterness, Lew's need to understand what Richard died for is so great that Gramps Marsh (Harry Carey) returns from Beyond to show him, in flashback, what three generations of American boys have been willing to give their lives for.



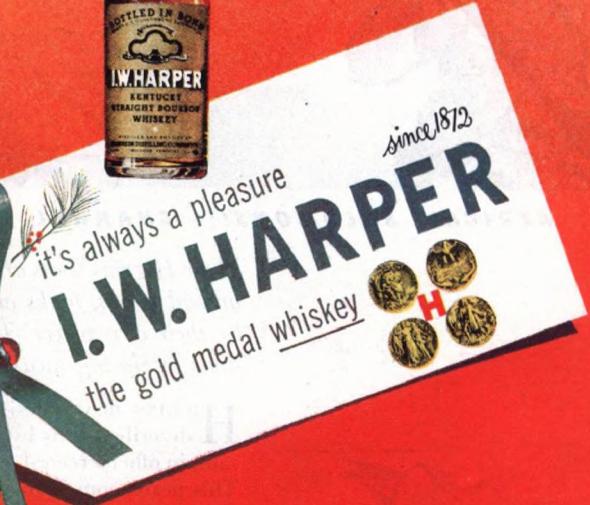
JACK LONDON (United Artists), co-starring Michael O'Shea and Susan Hayward, traces the career of the noted author. From the biography by his wife. Jack London's stories were not flights of imagination. A passion for adventure took him to the sea, to Yukon's gold fields, to Russia as a correspondent during the Russo-Japanese War. Out of his experiences he wrote the fiction which won him fame. A wanderer at heart, he was steadfast in two things—love for his wife, and the truth.

our distilleries are devoted to the production of alcohol for war use only



...may I suggest the best gift
of all—U. S. War Bonds.

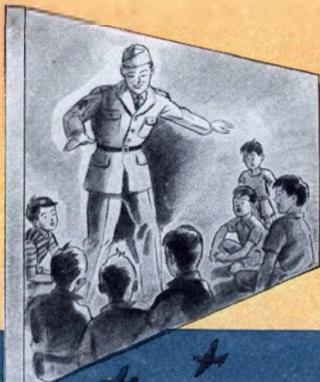
I.W.Harper



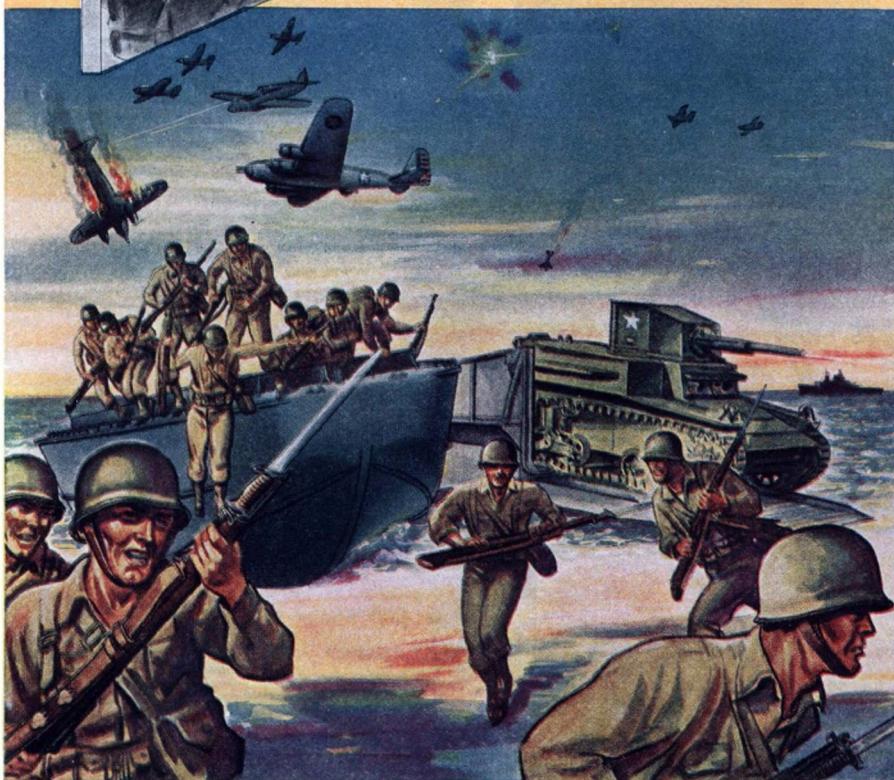
Distilled in peace time and Bottled in Bond
under the supervision of the U. S. Government.

Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Bottled in Bond, 100 Proof. Bernheim Distilling Co., Inc., Louisville, Kentucky.

Tune in Schenley's Cresta Blanca Wine Carnival Every Wednesday Evening C. B. S.



"We took the Beaches with Higgins Boats"



AFRICA! SOLOMONS!! CHANNEL RAIDS!!! ATTU!!!! ITALY!!!!

"Without the boats that Higgins is manufacturing the Combined Operations Command could not exist."

—LORD
MOUNTBATTEN



"These Higgins boats are so tough they land directly on rocky beaches, unload troops, tanks and equipment dry-shod, retrieving themselves by their own power. They're plenty fast in assault, can turn on a dime to zig-zag away from trouble, and I never saw one capsize."

HIGGINS BOATS designed and built for the United Nations were described thus by veterans of Guadalcanal and Africa, who also said, in official records, that these boats were the "Best in the World." This praise comes from men who manned them under fire—from men whose lives often depended upon these boats' unusual maneuverability, stamina and trouble-free operation.

Today Higgins plants are engaged the clock around in manufacturing boats, planes and other products to meet the swiftly changing needs of nations at war. It is this ability to change—to pioneer—to anticipate tomorrow's needs—that makes "Higgins" a name to watch.

Higgins
INDUSTRIES INCORPORATED
ARMY E NAVY
NEW ORLEANS
HUB OF THE AMERICAS



BOATS • ENGINES • AIRPLANES • WOOD ALLOYS

Dressing was a solemn and impressive ritual. Clean drawers, clean shirts, clean socks, redolent of gasoline, to be sure (for gas was far easier to come by in the desert than soap and water), but still incredibly and sensationally immaculate. Freshly shined boots. Khaki-drill slacks that in months past had been lovingly cherished in the bottom of duffel bags for some such portentous occasion as this.

At 11:30 there was a brisk rolling of drums and tooting of bugles, and the troops fell in for church parade. The service was brief and simple, with none of the elaborateness that one usually associates with the Anglican ritual. Even to those of us whose formal churchgoing had stopped with second-year Sunday school it seemed natural to pray on that day, in that place.

Afterward, we lounged about in the languid sunshine. Some wrote letters. Some talked and munched raisins, or cracked walnuts. Someone unearthed a handful of bleached snail shells and we passed them from hand to hand, examining their minute and perfect tracery. Then a pale cadaverous scorpion emerged from the sand and we followed him on hands and knees as he began a laborious, skittering journey among the gravel mountain ranges. It was not until he had long since disappeared that it occurred to us we had forgotten to kill him.

A group of Tommies wandered over to us, their faces pink and shining and clean-shaven as only a Tommy's can be. They produced toffee and nougat from their pockets, and we produced chewing gum and candy bars from ours.

"Double rum ration with the eats, blokes," one of them announced. This meant that it was to be really an all-out Christmas. The quartermaster was chary enough with his single rum rations, but a double was dispensed only for triumphs or holocausts of the first magnitude.

When the first group of Tommies had left, more came, and when they left we made the rounds ourselves. We sang "Here We Come A-Wassailing." We handed out the last of our Corona Coronas and felt like minor saints. We wangled six bottles of beer out of the supply sergeant, who was a notoriously tough customer, and felt less like saints, but very good nevertheless. Soon we were feeling so good we began giving one another flashlights and razor blades as presents.

It was much more of a Christmas than we had ever imagined we would have—that strange, still morning in the Libyan Desert. But one thing was missing and finally someone said it.

"Kids. It's not the real thing without kids."

At two o'clock a bugle sounded again, accompanied this time by a vigorous banging of pots and pans. Instantly the desert was alive with men converging on the open-air kitchen, and five minutes later the entire manpower of the company had transformed itself into a two-hundred-yard queue of sniffing nostrils and clanking mess tins. It is an ancient British Army tradition that on Christmas Day the men of all units shall have their dinner served to them by their officers. Accordingly, the cooks and their helpers were with the others in the queue, and their usual places behind the stoves and hayboxes were occupied by the toffs, from colonel to subaltern, grinning sweatily and striving with earnest concentration to ladle the food onto the outstretched mess tins rather than onto

their own trousers. Happily for everyone, tradition called upon them only to serve the meal, not to cook it.

The Eighth Army did right by its troops on that fabulous afternoon in the desert. There was vegetable soup; there were roast turkey with stuffing and roast ham with raisins; there were gravy and potatoes and vegetables and plum duff and fruit cake and cheese; there was the double rum ration and a bottle of beer per man; and, most sensational of all, there was a small urn of coffee, conjured out of nowhere for the exclusive delectation of "you Yanks." The Englishman's conception of coffee-making is a wondrous and terrifying thing, but we drained the witches' brew to the dregs and came back for more.

Perhaps this bill of fare does not seem,

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Family Quiz Answers

BROTHER

(Questions on page 16)

1. Pole vault.
2. The bed of a water course which is dry except in the rainy season.
3. Diamonds and graphite.
4. Gen. George C. Marshall, U. S. Army Chief of Staff.
5. (a) makes barrels, (b) seals seams of boats, (c) mines coal.
6. A barrage balloon.
7. Two.
8. One.
9. Panama hat.
10. The San Francisco Earthquake.
11. The small stick a Boy Scout feathers at the end with his Scout knife for fire making.
12. It will be at the same height, because a tree grows from the top.

Questions accepted from Mrs. Andy Murphy, Augusta, Kan.; Marie Brewer, Berwyn, Ill.; Teno Katner, Wichita, Kan.; Celia Dickason, Glendale, Calif.; Edna May Ewart, Idaho Falls, Idaho; Mrs. Clair L. Pettit, Roseburg, Ore.; Ronald Eyrich, Milwaukee, Wis.; Mrs. Daisy Skillman, Louisville, Ky.; Janet R. Boatrick, N. Y. C.; Hazel S. Krumm, Columbus, O.

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on the face of it, to be anything very special, even for an army in the field. Remember where we were, though, that Christmas Day. The nearest place that could conceivably be called a supply base was a full thousand miles away. Every turkey, potato, head of cabbage had to be transported to us over endless stretches of desert, and every pound they weighed or cubic foot they occupied meant a pound or a cubic foot less of shells and machine-gun bullets, gasoline and engine parts. There was not a man among us who had tasted fresh meat or fresh vegetables for months; and there was not a man who did not realize what bringing these things to us had meant—in time, in planning and labor, above all in spirit. The chewed-up old British lion had done itself proud that day.

After dinner the sands around the camp were strewn with bodies, like a battlefield. But these particular bodies were engaged in strictly non-battlefield activities. We lay on our backs and stared at the flawless blue dome of the sky. We dozed. We belched gently and luxuriously. We played mumblety-peg and found we were no longer the virtuosos we had been at ten or twelve.

At four most of the company congregated at the wireless truck and sat on the sand listening to the radio. It was not war news for once, but BBC's Christmas program, pieced together from all over the world. There were flashes from London, Glasgow, Johannesburg, Sydney, Auckland, Bombay, Jerusalem, Reykjavik. There was a darts game in a Cardiff pub, and chanteys from a mine sweeper in the North Atlantic, and a male chorus bellowing "Jingle Bells" from Rockefeller Plaza. There were Christmas greetings in every language of Europe and Asia. There was "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and "Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Silent Night." There was the King of England, speaking briefly and simply to his troops across the seas. And finally, in the place of honor, there were a group of schoolchildren in Malta singing the old English carols in piping Italian voices.

Suddenly I was looking at my watch and doing the familiar necessary arithmetic. It came out to a quarter of eleven. Margaret was bending red-faced over the oven, basting the turkey. The living room was a shambles of tissue paper and stepped-on toys . . .

No—the Eighth Army had done for us what it could. We had done for ourselves what we could. But it wasn't the real thing without kids.

We walked back to our ambulances in the glow of the setting sun. The sergeant major had announced at the conclusion of the broadcast that taps that night would be two hours earlier than usual. Reveille would be at four in the morning. At five we would move forward. Silently we set about the work of getting ready. It had been a fine holiday at that, and next Christmas, we told ourselves, next Christmas . . .

But that Christmas Day was not quite over yet.

Just as the sun was touching the horizon we saw a plume of swirling sand in the distance, and presently an ambulance ground out of the desert and pulled up beside us. It was one of our own Field Service ambulances from a near-by unit, and the driver's face showed it was not a holiday call.

"Where's the surgery?" he asked.

"Over there," we pointed. "We'll show you. How about a drink?"

"Don't mind if I do," the driver said. He took a quick one and looked as if he were going to throw it up, but didn't. Two or three of us piled into the ambulance, and he drove off in the direction we indicated.

"British or Jerry?" I asked.

"Neither," the driver said.

Then we looked into the back of the ambulance. The two top stretchers were not slung, but in the lower ones, side by side on the floor, were two small, very shriveled-looking human beings. One was an Arab boy of nine or ten. Where his hands should have been were two ragged stumps of bone, and a red wad of bandage was almost lost in a hole in his throat. But he was still conscious, and as we bent over him his dark eyes opened and he tried to smile. The other was a girl, perhaps six years old. Her body and the loose Bedouin robe that covered it were untouched, but she did not smile at us, because she had no face left to smile with.

There was no need to ask questions. I could see them as clearly as if I'd been there, bending delightedly over the bright new toy they had just found in the sand.

"Well, now we've got the kids," someone said.

three things, or all of them. Where he comes from—especially if it's from your part of the country. The pictures he's seen and liked you in. (You're left in no doubt about those he hasn't liked by the way he buries them deep in silence, bless him.) Finally, his girl. He tells you her name, pulls out the wallet with her picture, maybe shows you the Christmas gift she sent him. You think: What a pity the girl's not around to see the look on his face. It's all the Christmas gift she'd need.

Standing there listening, you get the curious sense of curtains lifted on swift glimpses of the lives being lived behind them. Then the curtain drops, but what you've seen stays sharp and forever in your memory.

There was the boy who told me about his parents on a North Dakota farm.

"It's okay for me. I'm having fun. Only I get lonely, thinking how lonely they are on Christmas Eve."

"Don't they have anyone but you?"

"Not now, they don't. Not since my brother's ship got hit at Pearl Harbor."

Then there was Applecheeks. It happened that I'd been signing for a number of Army boys.

"Hey, what's the matter with the Marines?" he said.

He was probably seventeen, chunky and rosy, with a highly infectious grin and not a care in the world. He gave me a girl's picture to be autographed.

"My kid sister. She's wacky. Nuts about movie stars. Blew my dough and couldn't send her a present. This'll make up for it."

Every once in a while, you catch sight of a face that hits you. It may be a particularly sensitive face. Or that of a boy who looks about prep-school age. Sometimes it's one of the older men. They're quieter. Their eyes hold a kind of knowledge you never see among the boys who haven't been overseas. You wonder what's going on behind those eyes. Occasionally you find out.

During a moment's lull at the counter, I noticed one such older man standing a couple of feet away. There was a kind of detachment about him—of loneliness almost. He was like a solitary watcher, looking on at something he didn't quite understand.

I spoke to him. They hardly ever speak first, the older ones. It turned out that he'd spent the Christmas of '41 in England; that he'd been through the London blitz.

"Our people don't know," he said. "America will never know as Europe knows. Sometimes you say thank God, and sometimes you wonder. Because it was what they went through that made the British understand, and turned them into a wall of steel. We've got to be steel too, not only for the fighting—I'm not so worried about that—but for a new world after the fighting's done, else our kids'll be doing it all over again. People have to see that, and they don't see it clear till they see the danger clear."

He gave a wry smile. "I'd hate to see

bombs dropped on America, but I'd sure like to find a painless substitute for pain."

"Have you kids?" I couldn't help asking, and I'll never forget how grim his face went.

"No," he answered, "but I helped pull a few out from under what the Fascists left behind 'em—damn their souls to eternity."

There didn't seem much to be said after that.

He was the exception. As I've already said, most of them seemed to be making the most of the moment. I caught this priceless scrap from two sailors going by with their trays:

"Last year I worked Christmas Eve—handin' out java in a Second Avenue joint. So what happens this Christmas?

years. There in the midst of the Canteen hubbub, we went homesick together over good old Christmas in New England. The cold, and the snow crackling, and the ice-hung trees looking like something out of a fairy tale—and coasting before dinner and coming in red-nosed at dusk to fire-light and fire-warmth and the smell of roast turkey.

I asked him what he wanted most this Christmas that I would be able to do for him.

"Write and tell my mother that you saw me," he said, "and that I'm feeling swell."

It was past midnight. I'd made my little speech; I felt a little tired, a little sad, a little futile. Whatever you do is nothing compared with what they do. Buy bonds, give blood, pay taxes—your life is still your own. Their lives aren't. Even those who come back safe and whole will have given years out of their lives—the young, happy years.

The Canteen was still teeming. I slipped out the back door and around the corner. I wanted to see for myself how long the line was, how many were still waiting. As I turned the corner, I heard a heart-lifting sound.

There they stood in the rain—five hundred or more—singing carols. People had parked at the curb to listen. Some were singing with the boys.

"We Three Kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts, we travel far,
Field and fountain, moor
and mountain,
Following yonder star."

It made me go hot and cold. I forgot to be tired, I forgot to be sad. I wanted to laugh and cry and shout and throw my arms around them.

I compromised by adding my voice to theirs. I thought of the son of a friend, interned with other Americans in a German prison camp. A letter had come from him, by some miracle uncensored. Uncle Sam's nephews had made up their minds to celebrate the Fourth of July if it killed them. Since they couldn't have fireworks, they concentrated on noise.

"The Britishers joined us," he'd written, "and we whacked away at tin pans all day long."

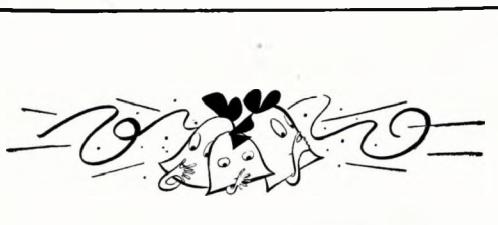
Hearing that letter read aloud, I'd felt the same thrill of exultation, the same swelling pride in our boys as I felt now.

Laughter and pluck in a Nazi prison camp. Patience and comradeship and the spirit of Christmas under a slashing downpour on Sunset Boulevard.

It was the last shift. They went in, still singing.

"Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star."

Childishly, maybe, I clutched it to my heart as an omen. That we would follow yonder star to victory, and beyond. To peace on earth, and beyond. To the deepest meaning of that star of Bethlehem. To the brotherhood of man.



YOUR Christmas present
to your country can be pure gold!

It won't cost you a penny.
SILENCE IS GOLDEN.

At this time when lots of boys are home on holiday furlough, ring out the bells but watch your conversation.

Three easy ways
to wrap up a package for Uncle Sam:

- 1 Don't talk about troop movements.
- 2 Don't mention news not in the papers yet.
- 3 Keep mum on war production you know about.

There isn't a spy lurking behind every bush BUT you will give your soldier a safer Christmas if you don't talk!

Rita Hayworth's handin' out the java to me!"

"Yeah," sighed the other. "Ain't that America for ya?"

Now and then a boy comes along who brings with him the memory of things past.

"Merry Christmas, Mrs. Farnsworth."

I looked up, startled. So few of them call me that.

"How's your husband? Still like to ride horseback?"

He fed me a few more clues, but I was stupid. At last he told me.

"I'm the guy who saddled your horses at the Dart Ranch where you were on your honeymoon."

And another boy whom I recognized at once.

"Not little David! Not in uniform! Now I know I'm getting old."

He'd been ten when I last saw him in Lowell. Our families had been friends for

What Will Happen in Detroit?

(Continued from page 29)

is dealing principally with five different agencies: the Army, Navy, Air Corps, Maritime Commission, and the Defense Plan Corporation which handles the financing. The contract with each agency is variable. Industry is asking for a unified policy so that all agencies concerned in procurement, accounting and fiscal matters will speak the same language.

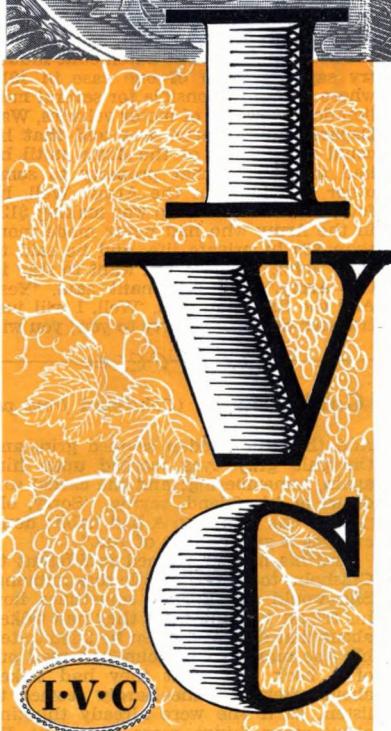
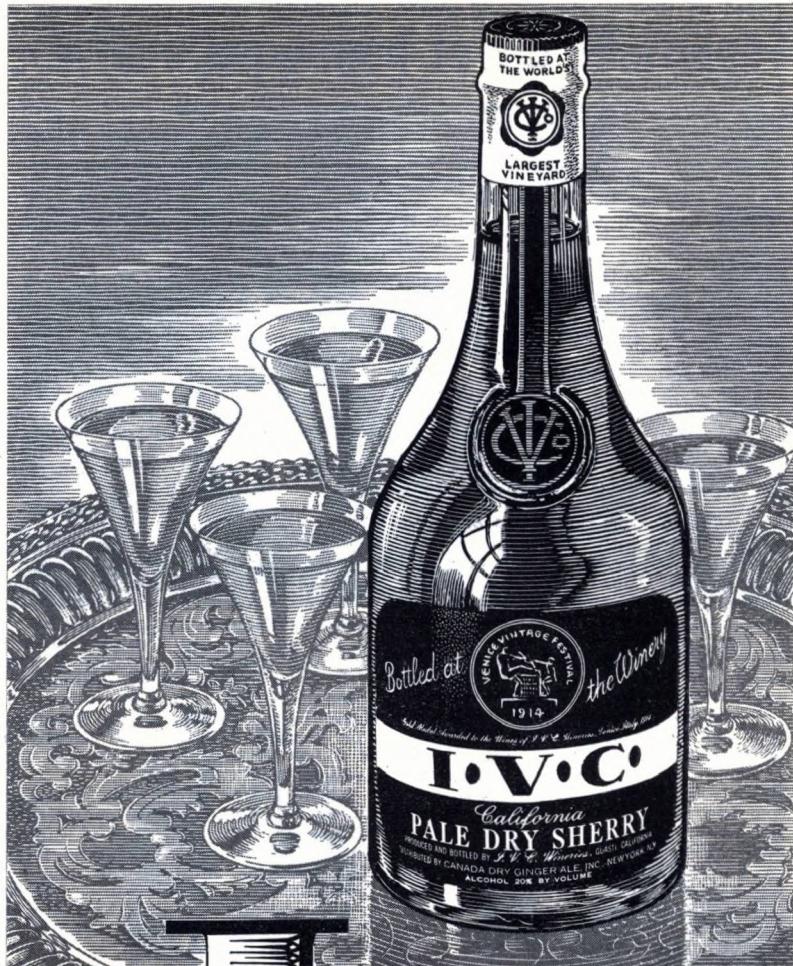
The second postwar need for manufacturers of war products is prompt payment. In raising this question, industry is not talking about the problem of profits. That relates to the fields of renegotiation and tax policies which even the people who laid them out can't explain. Industry, no matter when the war ends, will have most of its money tied up in completed parts, semi-completed parts on hand, machinery and general inventories—tied up, that is, in physical things as a result of being overextended for war production. Industry will need to get the money out of these things so that it can be used as working capital. The speed with which this money settlement is made by the government will largely determine the speed with which new jobs will be provided. Such a payment plan should be worked out now, inasmuch as records show that, already, the war is over every day for someone in industry.

For one reason or another, the government right now is terminating war contracts at the rate of one thousand a month. As against \$3,000,000,000 worth of canceled contracts at the end of the last war, \$5,000,000,000 worth have, to date, been canceled in this war. For example, only a short while ago the Hudson Naval Arsenal was switched over to the Westinghouse Company. How was this huge contract terminated? In the same week a Michigan small manufacturer, employing fifty-four people, found his war contract canceled. This manufacturer, before the war, supplied welding parts to the automobile industry. At the time his war contract ended he was turning out landing mats for planes. What will he do now? And what will his employees do while questions pertaining to the termination of war contracts remain unanswered? No wonder industry is urgent. It remembers that, when World War II began, a bureau in Washington was still trying to clean up all the hang-over contracts from World War I.

Modern industry will never be able to stand this kind of delay again. Mob production, instead of mass production, is what results when the delicate timing mechanism of streamlined industry is not technically correct. When the conveyor belt starts for mass production every part must work. It provides a money incentive and a time incentive for the men who run it. Any other kind of production is wasteful. But the conveyor belt can only run when industry knows where it is going—and why.

This brings industry to its third big question: What happens on V-Day to the billions of dollars' worth of equipment now in private plants but owned by the government departments? What happens to government-owned buildings and sites? How will they be disposed of? To whom? When? And at what price?

A sound liquidation program must be evolved which will be fair both to the taxpaying public and to the private industrialists. When war struck, getting things done quickly was the all-important consideration. The emphasis was all upon time, and no questions asked. The automobile companies and many others



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—naturally!

"DRY" grapes from non-irrigated vineyards give I.V.C. wines that extra delicious flavor.

Naturally, these non-irrigated "DRY" grapes of ours grow smaller, but the precious juices are more luscious...just naturally richer.



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BUY UNITED STATES WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

ripped up their machinery and moved it out into the snow—anywhere, just to convert speedily to war production.

The story has gone around about a touring government official who walked over the grounds of one of our great automobile plants with a private executive. The official pointed to piles of tarpaulin-covered machinery. "What's all that?" he asked. The executive answered casually, "Why, that's our former business."

Right now industry wants to know if, after the war, it will be allowed to push the government's machinery out under the tarpaulins so that private plants can as speedily meet the emergency of peacetime employment. If not, how long is it going to take the government to move? Industry is keeping, in a day-to-day changing scene, as accurate and detailed records of its own inventories as possible. Industry asks the same of government. It asks that plans be made now to authorize prompt disposal of government equipment the day peace comes. If this is not done, millions will be out of work longer than necessary.

An equally important unsolved problem has to do with subcontractors. Any sound postwar program must take into consideration the thousands of small companies which supply necessary parts to big industry. The prime contractors, or big industry, realize that the great wheel of modern production cannot turn any faster than its cogs allow. The cogs are the subcontractors. Inability to get the hundred and one parts subcontractors supply can stop the whole process of reconversion. The recent cancellation of some four hundred prime war contracts with big business involved nearly four thousand subcontractors and a billion dollars of capital.

The subcontractors are as much in need of prompt and equitable settlements as is large industry. Many small companies would be made bankrupt if there were much delay. Still others would be injured competitively by inability to finance reconversion plans.

Is your head beginning to ache? Well, these are merely the high spots of the vast job of reconversion in an industry that since January 1, 1941, has handled over \$28,000,000,000 of war orders. The full scope of the reconversion job goes well beyond a few enumerated principles. Take the problem of postwar materials alone. What raw materials will be on hand for domestic manufacture when the war ends? We have synthetic rubber. But it is a known quantity only as a substitute product for tires. The auto industry normally uses rubber for inside doors,

windshields, rubber mountings for engines, floor mats and starter pedals. How about tin? Will it be available for bearings or must industry find another material? What kind of aluminum will we have for pistons? Can industry get zinc for grills or must it redesign with steel?

At this moment materials are granted only for research relating to war manufacturers. Yet industry maintains it should have some material allocated now for experiments in future domestic manufacturing. Labor would present no barrier, inasmuch as only a handful of research men would be needed. An industry so vast that it consumed before Pearl Harbor four-fifths of American rubber imports, three-fifths of the plate glass, three-fifths of the upholstery leather, one-fifth of the lead, one-fifth of the tin, one-seventh of the finished rolled steel, one-eighth of the copper, and three-tenths of the nickel used in the country, not to estimate the tremendous quantities of textiles, paints and petroleum products, certainly needs to know in advance what materials it can use.

The President's estimate of war production has been an imaginary and challenging goal. The Army's estimate has reflected a need. Industry's estimate, based on a knowledge of materials actually available, has shown the reality. At present, industry is within 10 or 15 percent of production capacity in terms of its own original known estimate and schedule. Dream schedules interest industry no more than does the dream car. The conveyor belt moves to the rhythm of things as they are, not as men want them to be.

One of the primary things urging industry into an immediate consideration of postwar problems is that it wants to deal with men who understand industry's problems. Most of the men who have gone from industry to service are going to be anxious to get back into industry. What happens then if industry's problems are not solved?

One executive in the automobile industry says, "I know of one case in 1918 where a man responsible for several million dollars' worth of motor vehicles, War Department property, was told that he could not get out of the Army until he had transferred that property to some other individual in the Army. Well, he found a lieutenant who was making \$120 in the Army who had never made more than \$80 in private life, and he said to him, 'John, I believe you want to stay in the Army.' The lieutenant said, 'Yes.' And the first man said, 'Well, I will just transfer all this property to you; you will

be responsible for the disposition of it, so you have a job in the Army.'" Industry is afraid such things might happen again unless better arrangements are made in advance.

Right now industry wants to talk things over in Washington. Industry has shown a vast amount of good faith in the war effort. With nothing more than a letter of intent from the government, which allows industry to place orders for priority materials, industry has put itself and its capital out on a limb time and again. Without discussing profit, and before any contracts have been signed, industry has gone ahead to get the job done and discuss the details later.

The best example of the automobile industry's objectives and intentions is reflected in the statement of Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., chairman of General Motors, and Charles E. Wilson, president, in addressing their stockholders, March 25, 1943. In part, the statement reads:

The winning of the war does not necessarily mean victory. Winning the war is not the end objective. It is merely a means to the end. Victory embraces a solution to the great problems of postwar organization and reconstruction. What is to be the position of American industry in the future scheme of things? Will it be encouraged as a matter of public policy? Will it be recognized that only through the creators of enterprise and production will it be possible to provide more things for more people in more places?

All too frequently over the years, artificial restrictions and politically inspired attacks have operated to retard business expansion. There has resulted in certain quarters a loss of confidence in the future of enterprise itself. Perhaps the record of American industry in the war may bring about a wider recognition of all that industry can offer in promoting the pursuits of peace desired by all. Perhaps it will help to bring a better understanding of the contributions to the economy that must inevitably come through the creation rather than the restriction of individual initiative.

This is the statement of men who still believe in themselves, and the future of free enterprise, not in the robber-baron tradition of the past but in the direct social terms of the present. More business, more opportunity, more initiative, more jobs. If these men can sit down with government now, we won't get lost on the dole in Detroit the day war is over. That is the answer of our largest industry to one of the major questions we face at the end of the present crisis.

The Golden Land (Continued from page 59)

lovely night out. Barney. Pretty soon the moon will rise."

"Yes'm."

Watching the way the firelight shone through her loose soft hair and seeing the quirks of laughter at the corners of her shadowed mouth, he made a deep breath of peace and closed his eyes.

His mother was so beautiful, and so quiet—he wondered why his friend seemed not to see her, really. Bowing coldly, with perfect courtesy, and then looking away when they passed upon the common trail along the river bank. But Chisholm was an odd man, and very secret. Nobody knew anything about him except himself, Barney; and he had seen a look upon his friend's gaunt face, in silence, that had sent him sidling away from the roughhewn table with a book spread open upon it, glad to look out at friendly winter sunlight on the snow.

And then the sudden seamed grin, and the pale gray eyes focused upon him again, remembering; and the casual soft drawl of his friend, saying, "Sorry, old man. I was thinking. A bad habit; don't ever let it get the best of you."

And his mother seemed indifferent to Chisholm too; even a little disapproving. She would ask Barney sometimes how his friend was and what they had talked about that day. And when he tried to tell her the marvels Chisholm had read out of a book and what they had talked about afterward, she hardly seemed to listen, as if she were already thinking about other things, more important. He knew her worries: their worn leather gold-dust poke, too shriveled and lean, even after all their summer afternoons of toil upon their gravel bar, to keep them for the winter in a town; and he knew of her grief. He knew when she

was lying awake at night, very still, with her fingers, roughened by pick-and-shovel labor, folded on her breast.

Under his grizzly bear hide, Chisholm too was thinking about his little friend. He would miss the child when he went away in the springtime. He wasn't used to missing anyone, though he was thoroughly accustomed to going away from places where he had stopped for a little while upon his restless faring. His whole life was one of casual departures, without much baggage and with no regrets, and of silent arrivals in odd corners of the earth, in one of which somewhere, someday, he might find—what? Fortune, perhaps, though it didn't matter much; some wide new land where he might possibly be at home, without memories, without backward shadows under a strong new sun. But more likely, he thought, a

lonely and probably violent end among strangers; a final obscure brawl with life which would not surprise his family, even if they ever heard about it.

Staring at his fire, he raised one eyebrow indifferently. He didn't care very much. Without especial pride he knew himself to be an aristocrat; where a peasant will scheme with an intent greediness for another piece of gold, an aristocrat accepts fortune with a shrug; and where a peasant would bellow with outraged lamentations at the loss of a cow, an aristocrat could lose his lands, his name, and quite often his life, with the stoical courtesy which he owed to himself, if not to the world.

And in his little friend—in this ragged boy whose father was a murdered gambler, in this waif of the California gold creeks—Chisholm detected something of that stoicism. Barney would be a good man when he grew up. The first time he had ever seen him—a bright day in the High Sierra autumn, and Chisholm, weary from the trail, had swung off his pack and set it down on the pine needles beside the river path—the little boy had been toiling on a gravel bar with the woman, his mother. The small figure, earnestly hurrying, and the woman with the sunlight burning on her hair, doing a man's work. Chisholm had heard of this remote, this hopeless camp; it had sounded like a good place in which to hole in for the winter, buried in the deep snows from the murderous toughs who were out to get him because of that killing in Hangtown. Until the coming of spring, he thought, he would be safe here; isolated from the world of Sacramento and San Francisco where they would be looking for him; cut off from the big gold camps of the lower hills where he would be discovered.

With the melting of the snows, strang-

ers would be drifting in from the trail, and it would be time for him to leave. He would go over the Pass and down the other side and across the desert. New horizons to cross, leaving behind him on still another coast the casual wreckage of a ne'er-do-well's nights, an evil name as a silent cold-eyed brawler—and one friend, a little boy who might wonder for a while what had become of the man who had read to him of Ulysses and the moons of Jupiter. Coldly, Chisholm turned his mind away from that idea and thought instead about the high mountain meadows he would cross in the spring, and the gray desert beyond, where, traveling alone and fast, he would pass the first of that year's immigrant trains creaking toward California.

And he—he would be heading for the Rockies. He had heard of remote lost valleys to the north, where a man with a handy gun could find sanctuary out of the world. Having made the toughest camps of California too hot to hold him, he had been thinking lately that sometime he would like to see Oregon: the rainy woods, and the trading posts at the mouth of the great river, where northern furs came downriver through the mighty gorges of the Columbia in the *voyageur's* canoes. From mountains in the sun, from Canadian wildernesses with names that had the western wind in them—the Peace River country, the Kootenais, Saskatchewan. The world ahead was open: only the long roads behind were closed to him. And he had done that himself, had closed all roads that could lead back—in bitter carelessness; in frustration turned coldly murderous; in a profound inward failure that took the outward form of walking away, whistling tunelessly between his teeth.

As casually as a chuck-a-luck cage under the hand of a bored dealer, his mind

turned over again and the aimless dice of thought fell into another combination: he remembered the time-haunted house on a South Carolina river, and the curving drive under the dark trees, and his father. That brandy-veined booted old aristocrat (who had been a famous bucko and duelist in his day), roaring wide-legged in candlelight:

"I can't make you out, boy. Locked up all day with a lot of dusty books like a damned pale poet, and coming out at night to go a-taverning and a-brawling like the devil was in you. Gambling debts you can't pay; poems—hell's afire!—that you can't write; breaking the neck of the best lightweight hunter, by God, that was ever foaled on my plantation by putting him at a five-barred gate in pitch-black night, coming back drunk from a cross-roads tavern . . . Pay attention to me, boy!"

"Yes, seh."

"In my time, a man carried his liquor without bellowing poetry and rode his horses without crackbrained folly, without trying to fly them as if they had wings, like a silly Pegasus; and he settled his quarrels with pistols and seconds and the rules of gentlemen, not slugging the ears off some common ruffian in a tavern, like a hedgerow ballad singer a-quarreling. Bah! . . . I have to tell you, boy, that I have advised my friend Judge Semmes to—mmmpf!—forbid you his house in future. His daughter is one of the finest and the sweetest young ladies in the South, seh, and I'll have no renegade son of mine compromising her future by his attentions!"

"You'll say no more about my affairs."

"I'll say what I damned please. I'm still a better man than you, my cockerel!"

And maybe he was. Maybe that was the trouble, Chisholm thought savagely, with his whole life. And perhaps Miss

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Fanny Semmes was, sure enough, one of the finest and sweetest ladies in the South. Anyway, his father, who had never had an idea in his head beyond horses and hunting, dueling pistols and a decanter of brandy, had married her a month after Chisholm had walked out. By that time Chisholm was in London, with his passage booked for the west coast of Africa. And one thing sure: he had never tried to write any poetry since.

He never expected to hear from his father again. The last letter, which had caught up with him on the Ivory Coast, had not been a pleasant one:

... yr. shameless & disgracefull vagabonding, word of which has reach'd me. It is a matter of vast concern with me that you continue to use my family name, with which you were honour'd at birth. I suppose it is too much to expect that you will ever see fit to live as a Gentleman, in the manner of yr. forebears. You seem to be hounding yr. self from point to point to escape the consequences of yr. Follies, and that a gentleman does not do . . .

The spluttering quill also informed him that to his father and Miss Fanny a son had been born, the baby and the mother being in perfect health. Sourly, Chisholm hoped the new son would prove to be sufficiently stupid and insensitive, and only conventionally murderous, to please the aging duelist and three-bottle man, their mutual father. As for the child's mother—Chisholm made a sound. It was a snarling grunt, deep in his chest.

Deliberately, he refused to think any more about those people. Instead, he summoned up remembrance of his friend, the only friend he had, and smiled to think how Barney, in his swaggering moments of acting like a grownup, tried to talk as a dead gambler had talked.

It was morning, and leaning in the open door of his cabin, Chisholm was looking at the piny cliffs across the winter-locked green rapids of the river. They were in shadow, the cliffs, patched with snow which was blue with the morning; but halfway up the sky, the bare ridge, a great outcrop of solid stone slab above timberline, was warm with the color of the early sun opposite Chinaman's Wages. Chisholm watched Barney coming up the river trail: a valiant dot of red—his mother had cut down a miner's woolen skirt for him—against the snow.

Thoughtfully Chisholm considered that perhaps it was time—before he left—to introduce the boy to the Elizabethans, that great roaring company in their draggled finery who saw such shining new horizons, such brave new worlds across their flagons' lips; those ruffed poets of our tongue, our English, who made such songs as men could still remember. Yes, he thought, since he had to leave, he could leave his little friend in no better company than those poets of a shining morning of the human mind.

He crossed the cabin and took down from the homemade shelf a book. From the doorway again, he glanced toward the river trail, where Barney was romping along, leaving the path sometimes to flounder in powdery experiments through deep snow, to examine the urchin-writing that rabbits had made in the night among the thickets.

And suddenly the river trail was empty. A falling fan of snow, glittering without sunlight; a red willow twig still whipping upright from a falling, clutching hand—and a long humorous yell from Barney suddenly turning into the astonished soprano of fear. The boy had floundered too near the edge of—

Throwing the book aside, Chisholm with long-reaching boots was running

down the path from his door to the river—down the path made only by little feet. Barney's voice was not uplifted again.

Peering over the edge of the bank, Chisholm saw the boy face down and oddly twisted among the tumbled rocks below. In his fall he had struck upon an enormous boulder, and his sliding body had scraped a path clean of snow down one side of it. Looking very tiny, he was lying at its foot, the vivid crumpled center of a small disturbance of snow in an area of blank whiteness. Sliding over the edge of the bank, Chisholm dropped and landed on sure feet, like a great cat.

Barney was unconscious, his face buried in snow. Kneeling beside him, Chisholm scooped a little cavern under his face so that he could breathe, and then felt with cautiously exploring fingers for broken bones. There was a fracture of a leg, compound, because he could feel the bones under the stiff wet wool of the child's trousers; and there was something that scared him in a queer unnatural angle of the backbone at the waist. Chisholm shot a quick look around for anything that would make a stretcher, and then glanced up.

The top of the bank was lined with the people of Chinaman's Wages, who had crept out of their winter-bound cabins to see what had happened. They stood there against the pure blue of the sky, soiling it with their dirt and their rags. There was old Blaumin, with whiskers like a dirty explosion of hair, and the yellow skull-like face of Wingip shadowed under his huge homemade hat of bearskin, and the bulbous sentimental eyes of Madame McCarthy, otherwise Tia Dolores; and there was Panama, who had been a dance-hall pianist until rheumatism twisted his fingers into tree-root gnarls and who now saw naked mice, strings of them, hairless and bluish-pink with cold, twining across the snow in the moonlight; and Wispard, who put on a dinner coat at night and sat staring at nothing across his dirty unwashed dishes, nibbling his fingernails; and O'Reilly, the Brooklyn teamster who believed in strange omens he alone saw; and all the others—the grotesques, the failures in a land of loose gold, the weirds.

Chisholm snarled, "All right. Let's get started: Blaumin, and you, Wispard—cut me a couple of pine poles, and—Just a minute." A movement, a quick and vulture-alert turning of heads in that ragged line, and a woman suddenly appeared. Her hair was pale and cold and somehow filled with light. The boy's mother—Chisholm remembered out of nowhere that Barney had mentioned her name, Meg. "It's all right, ma'am. Just be easy," he said. "We'll get him up and see—Get me those pine poles, you. And I want two coats—you, Panama and O'Reilly. Throw them down."

There was gawky motion in the crowd, and the two heavy coats came down, one after the other, like big filthy birds settling upon the snow. Meg had vanished, and when Chisholm looked up again she was hurrying toward them through the deep snow along the river level. She must have found a path down. And behind her came Blaumin and Wispard, each carrying a pine pole hastily hacked off. With murmurs, a straggle of poverty advancing, the people of Chinaman's Wages came tramping through the snow like neighbors at a country funeral.

The pine poles through the sleeves of the two coats made a stretcher; Chisholm and Meg slipped it under Barney after scooping away the snow with their hands. Then Blaumin and O'Reilly lifted it and they started, Chisholm walking beside the small inert body, steadying it with both hands underneath, against the jolt-

ing of the slow walk. Meg had not uttered a sound all this time. Her face was white as a piece of paper, margined by that incredible, light-filled hair; Chisholm noticed suddenly that there were about eleven freckles across that whiteness, like delicate and secretly funny punctuation points subtly making delightful a text which no man could read any more. With a jerk of his head, to clear it of such hazy nonsense, Chisholm growled, "Take it easy going uphill."

And in the cabin, with Barney lying on the leerskins of his bunk, Chisholm cut away the trouser leg from the broken bones. The child's blue lips parted once, and he made a little bewildered sound. Chisholm said, "You, Panama, bring me a bottle of brandy."

He had heard somewhere that doctors, when they had to work on children, dulled them with alcohol. So when Panama came hurrying back with a trembling bottle in his hand, Chisholm and Meg, with a silver spoon forced between his clenched teeth, fed the child brandy until his pain-starred eyes went out of focus. Then Chisholm went to work.

When he had done all he could, he straightened up, and looked around, knowing that the child had to be taken down to Hangtown where there was a doctor. It was a long and almost impossible trip, down enormous canyons, through deep snows, carrying the boy. He wasn't sure it could be done, but if someone didn't do it, Barney would die.

As Chisholm looked at them with narrowed thoughtful eyes, there was again a movement among the morbidly crowding faces of Chinaman's Wages in that cabin, and they stared back at him with blank, guarded eyes. Some of them must have guessed what he was thinking about, because after a minute Panama took a step backward toward the open door; Wingip sniffed and turned his yellow eyes away, stroking with skeleton fingers the fur of his bearskin hat; O'Reilly stared back at him with little piggy eyes gone murky and obstinate.

And Chisholm realized that if anyone carried the boy down to Hangtown, it would have to be himself. For that matter, looking at those shuffling grotesques of Chinaman's Wages, he thought it likely that of them all, only he himself had the strength and fortitude to make that trip. And for him to appear in Hangtown now meant death as surely as to jump into a pit of wolves.

If he didn't do it, Barney would die. It was up to him. Quite simply, he would be trading his life for the boy's. Or—he realized with an even uglier shock—if they stayed here, the other way around: he would be buying his own life at the price of Barney's.

Still staring at them all, but not really seeing them any more—for he was looking at death, not in the heat of fighting anger, but for the first time in his life with a clear and fully realizing scrutiny—he was filled with bitter resentment that stupid accidental circumstances could have crowded him into this corner just when he was safe, putting it up to him to give his life away deliberately, or to make another choice and . . .

There was a sound in the room. The ghost of a small voice, trying to speak like a gambler—a dead gambler. "I expect we have to deal them off the bottom of the deck now, Chisholm," Barney said, "to get out of this one."

And all at once Chisholm was quiet again, quieter than he ever remembered being in his whole life. He nodded curtly to the boy's mother.

"Let me have your ironing board," he said. "And gather up all the belts and leather straps you can find. We'd better

tear blankets into strips for padding."

It didn't take long, and they didn't have to say much to each other. As they started off together down the river trail on their snowshoes, Chisholm carrying the boy strapped like a mummy, immovable and rigid on the ironing board, and the woman walking ahead breaking the path, the people of Chinaman's Wages set up a feeble cheer. It was unexpected, and it sounded meaningless under the vast blue hardness of the sky. Chisholm's lips twitched at the irony of that frail acclaim, giving him a send-off upon the one road which he had never taken in his life, which he had never planned to take—the road which led back.

Sometimes they could travel for quite a long way at a fairly good walk. Then they would come to some down timber and would have to balance the ironing board across a fallen tree trunk, the woman steadyng it, while Chisholm climbed over. When he was ready, she would slide it down into his waiting hands. Barney's face was beginning to look pinched and drawn. Most of the time he seemed to be asleep.

Two hours from the camp, on a heavily timbered slope, the going became too heavy for her and she stumbled in the snow. Chisholm cut around her to lead the way, breaking the trail, and nodding humbly, she fell in behind. After that they seemed to make better time.

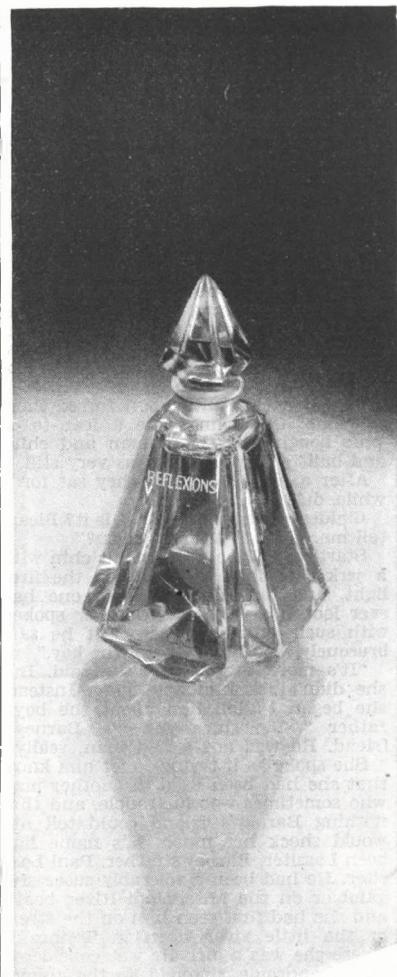
They traveled in shadow most of the day, because as they went on this canyon deepened and became so mighty that only for a little while at midday could the sun touch the river at the bottom. Trudging carefully, Chisholm tried not to think too much about what was waiting for him in Hangtown. His reckoning for that stupid killing last September. Yet it had been so pointless, that event of violence which now was pretty certain to mean the end of his life—a shapeless happening, confused and noisy.

A stranger in the place, he had been standing quietly at the end of a bar having a drink when a fight started somewhere along the bar to his right. It had been going on for a moment or two, an aimless drunken scuffle, before he paid much attention to it, and then he only moved his glass a little and stood out of the way. But the fight spread, and in a minute or two the whole bar was in uproar and a heavy body, hurtling backward out of the bawling trampling mess of men, barged into him, knocking him off balance and spilling his drink.

Whirling in fury, Chisholm grabbed the man's thick shoulder, spun him around and slugged him on the point of the chin. He went down, but a couple of other men lurched clear of the general fight and came at Chisholm. The whole thing was completely aimless, a whirling confusion of figures without identities, whose faces he hardly had time to see—as for their names, at the time and even now, he didn't know them and didn't care. He met the first one with a short vicious swing of a pistol butt. The man staggered, fell forward and, slowly rolling over, lay still. And the next minute Chisholm was backing out the front door, a leveled pistol in each hand, staring coldly at the suddenly hushed crowd.

"My name's Chisholm," he said. "I plan to be around here quite a while."

But the next morning he heard that some man had died. Further, that the man's friends intended to lynch the stranger, Chisholm, that night. And they could do it; there was nothing to stop them. So Chisholm slung his pack again and mentioned that perhaps, after all, he would winter in San Francisco. But a few miles out, he struck off the main trail



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and headed into the back country . . .

And now here he was, returning.

In the middle of the afternoon he made a fire and boiled some tea, while Meg sank down exhausted beside the little boy in the snow. Chisholm glanced at her sharply, then pulled the brandy bottle out of his pack. He poured a little into each of their steaming mugs, and it seemed to revive Meg. She smiled faintly at him. His arms were so cramped and aching from carrying the ironing board that he spilled his scalding tea-and-brandy when he tried to drink it.

After a while, he became aware that Meg was watching him with gentle anxiety, as if she divined that he was in desperate, secret trouble. Gulping the rest of his tea, he got to his feet. She arose too, and they went on again.

They traveled until night forced them to camp. Chisholm made a lean-to of pine boughs for the woman and child, and built a fire. Barney was very still.

After a meager supper, they sat for a while, dull with exhaustion.

Suddenly Meg said, "What is it? Please tell me. What is troubling you?"

Startled, Chisholm lifted his chin with a jerk. Her face was quiet in the firelight, and infinitely kind. No one had ever looked at him like that, or spoken with such gentle concern. But he said brusquely, "Nothing. Except the boy."

"It's more than that," she said. But she didn't ask him any more. Instead, she began to tell him about the boy's father ". . . since you are Barney's friend. He was not a bad man, really."

She spoke as if trying to let him know that she had been used to another man who sometimes was in trouble, and that nothing Barney's friend could tell her would shock her much. His name had been Lassiter, Barney's father. Paul Lassiter. He had been a tolerably successful gambler on the Mississippi River boats, and she had first seen him on the street of the little river town in Tennessee where she was a girl. He was considered quite handsome, she said, in those days, and he came of a good Alabama family, but there had been some trouble . . . Her father was a minister and was horrified that a river gambler had met his daughter. But she used to slip away at night and walk with Lassiter in the starlight.

It sounded like a strange courtship to Chisholm, lonely and a little pitiful. If Lassiter had been the son of a local family, if he could have called on her in her mother's parlor, she probably would not have been interested in him enough to marry him. "I felt sorry for him," she said. "I always did, I guess. As long as we—as long as I knew him. There was always that. To the very end."

And so, after a family scene of tears and shouts, she had simply gone away with him. Downriver, on a steamboat which passed the little town at night. Listening drowsily, Chisholm had a curious glimpse of that forlorn girl waiting with her hastily crammed carpetbag on a splintery wharf while the lights of the steamboat swam nearer, and of the man who sauntered out of the darkness to join her: an indistinct face, and the gleam of a diamond on his cravat . . .

Downriver, she said, to New Orleans. In their wanderings, they were even precariously happy at times, when her husband had had a successful season. He made his great mistake, she said, when he caught the excitement of the gold rush to California, and had enough money to buy their passage on a packet ship. The voyage around the Horn was terrible, she said simply: quite a number of the people died. And among the gold creeks, there was nothing but squalor for them, and degradation.

"Paul couldn't stand failure," she said. "He called it hard luck. He said he had lost his touch. I don't know. He got to drinking more than ever. I used to pity him so terribly. It became impossible."

Chisholm nodded, thinking of Barney. His father had lost his luck and his gambler's touch, and after a while this woman who pitied him had reason to believe that he had helped in the robbing of two or three men, drunken miners down from the creeks with their pokes of gold. So it became impossible.

Then she and the little boy staked a claim at Chinaman's Wages, because she could never go home to Tennessee. They had been on that gravel bar for a long time, toiling alone, when they heard that Paul had been killed, somewhere among the camps.

"You reach a point finally where you know that you can still keep on if there's just one thing that's left you, one last thing that isn't taken away. I suppose that to each one it's something different. With me, it was Barney," she said. "We could have kept on. I could have managed somehow. If only Barney——"

"He hasn't been taken away," Chisholm said. "You'll have him back."

With a startled breath, Meg looked at him. "If I—if Barney is given back to me, it will be you who did it," she said slowly.

ABRUPTLY he got up. "There's a long way to go tomorrow," he said.

After the woman had crept away to rest, Chisholm remained staring at the firelight which leaped in perpetual contest with shadows up the gray wall of a boulder above the snow. This, he thought, was his last night to see such lovely and familiar things of earth; only the condemned can know the preciousness of usual things, the infinite grace of drawing breath. Standing there with empty hands, at this bitter end, he thought of the careless swashbuckling mess he had made of all his days; and sadly, without bitterness any more, he thought of Miss Fanny, lying warm tonight in a rich safe bed. And he . . .

He lifted his face and looked at the path of stars the canyon's narrowness left across the sky. Some of them he recognized; he had seen them sultry and sullen over strange coasts on the other side of the world; in desolation of mind he had watched them setting upon empty sea rims astern. Among music and bawdy shouting, they had been blurred and reeling to his uncertain eyes; but now, on this last night, they burned cold and still above the snows, and he looked at them as simply as a child. Gazing at infinity, without turgid associations of past misery. He had lived so long with pain, that dark mistress of lonely men, that now he could be indifferent.

The little boy, strapped to his board, was lying half in firelight under the lean-to of boughs. Chisholm went over and, kneeling in the snow, put his head down to listen to the faint, regular breathing. In the darkness beyond, Meg made a little sad sound in a dream.

He called them at dawn, and they went on. Hour after hour, with toil, they followed the canyon downward. By noon, the snow was appreciably less deep on the trail. As they hurried on with the afternoon, the canyon began widening; the snow dwindled underfoot with the trail's descent through lower altitudes. Midafternoon, and the sky was overcast with hazy gray which deepened into clouds rolling in from the west, from the distant coast. In the lower reaches of the canyon they were walking through a thick drizzle, half snow and half rain,

and they could see the trail. Then there were boot marks on it, and after another while they passed a place on the river where four rain-sodden men were working on a gravel bar. A half-mile farther on, they left the river and took the broad common trail across a rolling country of pines. Barney was either unconscious or asleep. And so they came to Hangtown.

The shacks along the trampled street of mud sagged in odd-angled rows, and their bare frame fronts were streaked and dark with rain. And like a tattered pageantry of squalor, of lusty toughness, of dirt, of feverish hope, the crowds of El Dorado clotted and broke and swirled in swaggering idleness across that raw background. Miners in weather-faded shirts who had been on the creeks since '49; whiskey drunks in clay-caked rags, and slouching booted men whose pistol pockets bulged; narrow-footed gamblers in Sacramento finery; and a few women—pushing in and out of saloons whose swinging doors emitted vast hiccupps of tinny music and warm billowy smells of liquor, turning to stare at the man and woman who trudged through mud carrying a child strapped to a board.

Meg walked ahead, murmuring, "Pardon me . . . Please let us pass . . . Where is the doctor's office?" to lurching men who hurriedly made way, gawking.

Chisholm came behind her, carrying Barney. A few idlers, then more and more, began to follow them, until behind them there was a questioning, excited babble. Halfway through the town, they passed under the big oak tree where men had spun slowly in the wind to give Hangtown its name. Chisholm looked up. The heavy branches were misshapen and evil and black against the gray sky.

A dozen hands pointed the way to the doctor's, and the confusion of voices was growing so that people were beginning to come out of the saloons to see the curious procession. The street was even more crowded here; the lamps were just being lighted in the saloons, and as they passed, a startled whisky-curdled voice yelled, "Hey! There's the fellow that killed Paul Lassiter!"

In midstep Chisholm stopped, his legs almost buckling under him. The woman had stopped too, and for the space of a breath stood utterly still. Then she turned around, and they stared into each other's eyes incredulously. The crowd surrounded them, murmuring with new curiosity; that one hoarse shout, that drunken voice of an obscenely ironic fate, apparently had not been understood. In the confusion, no one connected it with them. They wondered why this man and woman had stopped to stare at each other with such awful faces. A man said, "Is the kid dead?" and an uncertain growl of voices answered him.

Chisholm and the woman did not hear. Enormous and gray, Meg's eyes were dancing back and forth between Chisholm's eyes in an agony of questioning. Chisholm felt his jaw sag in incredulous horror, yet he knew, as surely as if he had heard the man's name at the time, that it was true. This final and most bitter joke completed the grotesque pattern of his life. He closed his teeth with a snap. Slowly, slowly, one of Meg's hands crept toward her throat.

After a while Chisholm glanced at Barney's face. The child was unconscious. He had not heard.

Meg had not uttered a sound. Perhaps she had seen in Chisholm's eyes that he had never known the name of the man he had killed. Anyway, there was nothing to say. When Chisholm looked up again, she was walking on, stumbling a little.

The doctor was a bald, round-faced

man with broken spectacles who kept making nervous clucking noises with his tongue. "Just bring the boy in here in the back room. We get lots of bad cases here, but not often children," he said.

Chisholm laid the boy, board and all, on a wooden table. Then he slung his pack to the floor and helped the doctor unbuckle the straps.

"No, no. Go away," the doctor said. "Wait in the other room. You're in the way, both of you."

So they both went out, and Meg sat down on a chair, her hands folded tightly on the lap of her shabby skirt. Chisholm prowled restlessly. They could hear sounds in the back room, and then the smell of chloroform seeped out to them.

Abruptly, a loud flat sound, Chisholm said, "I—I never knew his name."

"I know," Meg said in a low voice.

He asked harshly, "Do you want me to tell you how it happened?"

"No," she said.

The man and the woman did not say anything else. They waited a long time. They could hear water dripping from the eaves of the shack. That sound went on and on and on, like the ticking of a crazy clock.

There was a homemade bookshelf beside the doctor's desk, with a row of worn medical books on it. Chisholm started to take down one of the books, but stopped. This was not the time to look into a medical book, not a time to read curiously about the shattering agonies of the human body; not in view of what shortly was going to happen to his body. He would as soon not see diagrams of bones and flesh which could be mutilated, of nerves which could shriek before they twitched into the last unconsciousness. No. He let the book fall back upon the shelf and lighted his pipe.

The smoke had a lovely bite and fragrance. It was one of the minor pleasantnesses of life which he had enjoyed. Outside, now, it was dark. From up the street he heard drunken shouts and an octave of hoarse song, abruptly stopped. It was a long time after that before the doctor came out. His round face was sweating, and he peered earnestly through his broken spectacles.

"It's all right, ma'am, compose yourself," he said. "Fracture, of course, set at home, always a mistake, but under the circumstances I can see nothing else that could have been done. Slight limp, perhaps, which may disappear in time. It's all right. Matter of the spine, difficult to say. No romping for a long time, poor little chap. But probably all right. Difficult to say. Rest and patience. Rest and . . ."

He kept on talking, peering earnestly down at Meg, and Chisholm left them and went into the back room. The air was dizzyingly heavy with chloroform. Barney was lying on the table, his little figure stiff with splints and bandages. His eyes were closed. His eyelashes made curved dark smudges on transparent cheeks, Chisholm only stayed for a minute, looking down at the face of his little friend—who was going to live.

Then he went to the corner of the room and, kneeling beside his pack, got out the rosewood box, opened it and took the heavy silver-mounted pistols. As he stood up again, the drowsy voice of Barney said, "Hello, Chisholm."

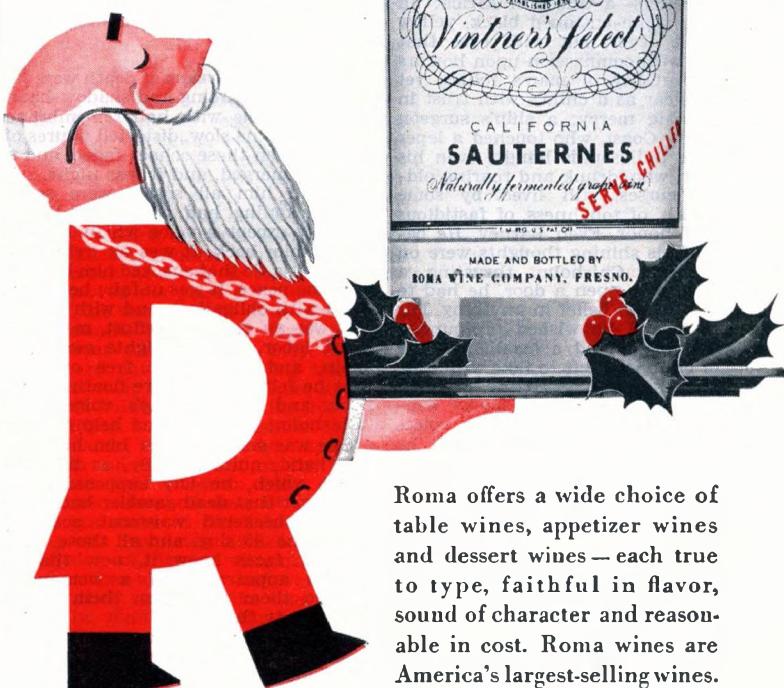
Startled, Chisholm stood frozen. He hadn't realized . . . the boy hadn't made a sound all the time the doctor was working. With a deep breath, Chisholm relaxed the knotted muscles of his jaws and turned with a grin.

"Hello, old man," he said. "You've been traveling."

Barney's eyes were open, watching him.

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"Yes," he said. "I thought I was dreaming. But you were there."

Chisholm stood looking down at him. Trying not to think, not too much.

"Where are you going?" Barney said.

"Oh, I've—got an errand down the street," Chisholm said.

"Oh," Barney said. "Don't be gone long. And take care of yourself."

Chisholm turned on his heel—and found himself staring haggardly into Meg's gray eyes. How long she had been standing there, he didn't know. But there they were. Simply: two mortals, composite of frailties and of nerves and of time, looking at each other almost with shy curiosity on the crumbling edge of darkness and of infinity. She knew where he was going, and she turned away.

Chisholm walked out.

There were only four or five curious loafers left outside, and they followed him up the street. As he walked, Chisholm tried to empty his mind. It was his last defense. He might as well—for all the elaborate sophistries, the intricate and sometimes poetical workings of his mind, the articulated armor of thought, failed him now. They were of no help, these sophistications by which he had lived his days. You need more than their bright solace on the night you die.

So as he came to the doors of the saloon where he had killed Paul Lassiter, the father of his little friend—the saloon from which that drunken voice had yelled the final irony—he was wishing that he had a belief, any belief, by which to die. He saw the doors ahead of him, and striding steadily toward them, he thought of people he had known who had had beliefs—a priest in Africa: an old man in close-buttoned black, yellow with jungle fever, but with eyes that had gazed with compassion upon horrors and the brutality of man's follies, yet were still clear as a child's with trust in an everlasting mercy; a ship's surgeon on the Ivory Coast, who touched a leper with gentle philosophic hands; even his own father, who, drunk and roaring old-fashioned curses, still lived by some strange faith, of toughness, of fastidious murder, of honor. Even Barney. He believed, and his shining thoughts were on his face. But Chisholm, thrusting a pistoled hand to open a door, he had to go alone. Without belief in anything. For just one second he wished profoundly, humbly, that he had a small, if timid surely of childhood left to take with him.

And then he had pushed the swinging doors and walked into a smoky confusion of lights and loud hoarse voices shouting. With a pistol in each hand, he stood there quietly. "Is anyone here looking for me?" he asked.

The shouting stopped; the noise from the gambling tables died away, and all the faces in the place were turned toward him under the flaring lights.

It lasted only a split second, that moment of silence, of transfixion. Then someone snarled, and hands moved; a pistol glittered over a card-littered table and stabbed flame that was pale under the lamps, and an enormous hand slapped Chisholm's left shoulder—he could feel the lead slug shattering bone, but it didn't hurt very much. As his left arm jerked and the fingers sagged open so that one pistol dropped, he took a snap shot with his right hand; the jolting crack jarred his elbow. He saw the glittering pistol go spinning and the man pitch forward, upsetting the table and spraying the loose cards. Then Chisholm shot again, twice, as they came at him; but the last shot went wild, exploding a lamp overhead in a sheet of flame because they were on him in a sweaty avalanche of trampling weight—sledging

into him, whirling him sidewise and down with big thick hands clawing at him, and he couldn't use his left arm at all, and that shoulder hurt hideously as he hit the floor, twisting under the smelling woolen weights piling upon him, but with the fingers of his right hand locked and twisting in a bearded throat.

From that throat, hauled close to his own face for protection, he heard a dreadful choked attempt at breath, and somewhere beyond the dog-snarlings uproar above him he heard a shrill yell, "Git a rope! Git a rope! A rope!" It went on and on, that dancing, piping yell, and other voices took it up, and in a minute the whole pain-shot whirling darkness was filled with it like an obscene chant. Chisholm twisted one more time, hard around, with iron fingers in that bearded throat and the man moaned in his ear. Horrible weights kept falling upon him, and the floor was hard and comforting and solid under his shoulder blades. And then the uproar, and all the voices and all the agony, merged into a swimming descent into chaos, and the lights turned brown and then faded. Feeling nothing any more, going alone, he went down into the dully roaring caverns of death. And as he went, with one amused and bitter thought, with a final lift of a pulped eyebrow, Chisholm realized the difference between swash-buckling, brawling, drunken courage, such as he had always had, and the courage to die without hope, without belief, for the sake of someone else. And at the very last he knew that such precarious way as mortal man has made for his children has always been purchased with courage: lonely, unapplauded, always obscure, usually not understood.

THE CAVERNS of death were long and strange, echoing and shadow-haunted for a while with half-remembrances of life, like the slow, distorted figures of a dream. Then those echoes faded, and the shadows merged, and it was night.

Behind him all scores were settled. The reckoning had been met. Nothing was left except a voice which he knew, calling him back. It was an irritation, a hampering tie that checked him in his descending peace. It was unfair; he had finished with obligations and with thought.

It was an enormous effort, making his heart labor, but the lights swam back again, and he was so free of weight that he felt as if he were floating on the floor, and it was Meg's voice saying, "Chisholm! Wake up and help me."

She was standing over him holding in one hand, quite steadily, a diminutive pistol which, he idly supposed, was a Derringer that dead gambler had carried in his checkered waistcoat pocket. It threw one .45 slug, and all those crowded-back faces knew it, now that the sudden appearance of a woman had stopped them and given them a pause in which to think.

Chisholm, looking up at her—with wonder; with a beginning of tender amusement; with humble understanding—Chisholm got to one elbow carefully and raked in one of his dropped pistols with a blood-caked hand. But he wouldn't need it, he thought. A mob, once broken, does not surge in again. It becomes individual and uncertain men once more, who can be dealt with.

On one knee first, with his right hand holding the pistol, steady himself against the floor, Chisholm got to his feet.

Meg was beside him, suddenly weak. He glanced down at her face. Her eyes were closed, and painful tears were squeezing out under her lashes.

And so Chisholm found his belief. A

belief in essential human dignity, which does not change. Call it aristocracy of the mind, of the heart, of the automatic impulses for what has to be done, one mortal for another. It had been there all the time, though he had gone to death without faith. It was his now, forever; years would not shake it; she had shown him; it was crystallized in her.

Gently he said, "We'll be going now."

With his good shoulder, he shielded her from the stares of the massed faces as they backed toward the door.

Outside, leaning against the wet logs of the saloon's front, he waited for a minute, trying to gather strength. Holding his shoulder with his cupped hand, trying to stop the blood, he said, "Why did you do it? I had it coming."

She stood there looking down at the stubby pistol in her hand. Abruptly she tossed it away. It landed in the mud of the street. "No," she said. "Not any more. No one has it coming, anyway."

"I know," he said. "But Lassiter—your husband didn't either. You know I—"

"I don't want to talk about it," she said. "You took one life, but you gave back another. This time, you knew what you were doing."

"Meg," he said, "I must tell you—"

"Please," she said. "Not now."

A strange quality in her voice made Chisholm regard her closely. She too was leaning wearily against the log wall. Her face was obscure in the uncertain light of that frontier street, but he detected a faintly lifted eyebrow of sadness, of an irony which was puzzled and a little scared, perhaps, at what the chances of life and a woman's feelings could do to her—but an irony patient until his slower thoughts should catch up with it.

Shocked, he stammered, "But—"

She lifted her face and looked at him, and he closed his mouth. There was nothing to say. They would be together, and the wolf would wail his song of hunger across the snows, across this new land, this West. And perhaps a man and a woman, in full knowledge of follies and weaknesses, of the strange and terrible and sometimes squalid chances of human life, of the pitiful, vicious betrayals of mortal nerves and impulses and fears, but also in knowledge of that equally human, that frail quality of courage which somehow is always there—perhaps a man and a woman could be together in unspoken peace. In this raw West of blood, not remembering more of tragedy than they could help; in these mountains of gold, not looking for fortune beyond the reward of each day's life together. To be pioneers, to build solidly for future people upon this land, this California, called for greater courage than the quick pistol-bravery of the gold camps. It called for the quiet courage which she had shown him after he had found it within himself. And Barney, his little friend, would be there, in a cabin's firelight, and he would . . .

As if she were following his thoughts, Meg said slowly, "Barney doesn't know." They started walking back to the doctor's shack. Halfway, Chisholm said, "I'll tell him someday. When he's old enough to—when he's been with us long enough."

They walked on. Their hands were firm, now, and they held. And Chisholm knew that the summers would come: the thin hot summer afternoons of the High Sierra. When bees hung drowsy on the oak leaves, and the hills turned to pale straw-gold, and scorpions soaked up the dew to make their poisons. And in this land, to match this golden land. Barney, and all children, would have the dusty peach-blown color that the sun of the High Sierra gives to the young.

THE END

In Love and War

(Continued from page 35)

chance meeting in Belgrade this spring, he had believed for fifteen long years, ever since her marriage at seventeen to an Italian nobleman twice her age, he never wanted to see Elaine again.

Yet always she had haunted him. Her golden hair, her fair translucent skin. The grace with which she moved. Her eyes the color of topaz. His imagination soared ahead. He saw a hundred visions of her in Rome.

Not one of them, however, accorded with the actual scene upon which the May sun shone five mornings later.

Wearing a white summer dress, Elaine was seated at a card table on the high terrace of the Palazzo Landetti, busy with paste pot, scissors and pen. Ever since her return from Yugoslavia she had spent most of her waking hours at this arduous task. The end seemed almost in sight. An end of such vital consequence no merely personal concerns must deflect one second's thought.

So she told herself each morning at this hour. Yet again she asked the eager question: "Don't you suppose the mail has come, Anna?"

"I will see, Contessa." The dark-eyed Italian maid who had served Elaine since infancy sped across the bedroom toward the frescoed hall which shut off this private wing from the others.

The major-domo was just bringing in the tray of letters. "I never see Her Excellency," he complained. "She even takes her meals in her apartment."

"It makes less work, Marini." There was another reason for the Contessa's strict seclusion, but Anna had been sworn to secrecy about that.

"I would gladly do any amount of work myself," the old man said, "to be able to consult her. She is, after all, American-born. And my son writes me from America his sons are already in the Army. Will they come over here to fight their blood relatives? Will the Boches bring upon us this truly insupportable catastrophe? The Contessa could tell me what is rumor, what is truth."

"She will make an opportunity to talk to you. She is kindness itself."

"That you need not tell me, Anna. Why am I staying on here except for her sake? So she will not be lacking a man's protection, now that the Germans are overrunning Rome."

Anna spoke with deliberate lightness. "Well, if any of them drop by today, remember the Contessa is not at home to anyone—not anyone."

"Poor old Marini!" Elaine said when Anna had delivered his message. "I'll willingly tell him all I know, but I'm afraid he'll be even more discouraged. I wish we could take him with us when we leave Italy. If we leave, that is."

She glanced at the envelopes Anna had put down. The hoped-for writing was not there. She read only a letter on the stationery of the Grand Hotel.

Dear Countess Landetti:

I am in Rome for a few days before proceeding to a new post, and remembering with such pleasure having dined with you at the Embassy in London two years ago, I am hoping you will allow me to call on you while here. Will you let me know when it would be convenient?

Faithfully yours,

Thomas Jeffreys

Why, that was the young American diplomat John Lawrence had been with in Belgrade. Impulsively Elaine started toward the telephone. Then, glancing again at the note, she saw it was dated



"**MY HANDS MADE
ME FEEL AS OLD
AS GRANNY**"



"I was making a 'howling success' of my husband's business. But I wanted to 'howl' over my hands! No longer 'pale hands I love,' but rough, red, old-looking! They made me feel as old as my own great-grandmother!"



"Was there any way at all, I wondered frantically, to win back the 'young look' my work-roughened hands had lost? It was surely worth a try. But what would work best? Here I was, in my late twenties, and still looking young—all but my hands! What to do!"

"I'd heard the old saying that a woman's age shows in her hands. Well, working around the plant, I have to wash my hands a thousand times a day, seems as if. But I wanted them to stay soft, smooth, and young-looking."



"My cousin's a nurse—and one day it struck me that her hands had even more reason than mine to be rough and old-looking. Yet they weren't! Her 'secret'? 'Why, Pacquins!' she told me. So Pacquins is my 'secret' now—and my hands? Smooth, young-looking!"

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four days ago. She remained motionless. She had suspected she might be under surveillance; everyone was, in this city seething with distrust and fear; and in her case, were the truth known, there was justification. She had not supposed, however, her local mail would be intercepted. She gazed uneasily at the diaries on the card table beside the huge scrapbook and box of childish souvenirs. They contained potential dynamite. Dynamite which in the wrong hands might wreak irremediable evil, but which in the right hands at the right time might prove a force for inestimable good.

Some of the material came from the private journals her father had kept during his thirty years in the American foreign service. After his death in 1926 and her own almost immediate marriage, Elaine had continued the habit.

The Herculean task she had set herself, when she returned to Rome eight weeks ago, was to get these chronicles, violently inimical though they were to Fascists everywhere, out of Italy literally under the noses of the Fascisti vigilantly guarding the country's borders. With this as goal, she must guard her slightest word and gesture. Having refused all other callers, she dared not make an exception now, particularly in favor of a compatriot.

Resolutely she bent again over her task.

An apologetic cough jerked up her head. The major-domo stood in the doorway, speechless, apoplectic. Fire has broken out, Elaine thought, and began piling the diaries together.

It was a far worse misfortune the aged butler announced. "A visitor, *Eccellenza*. She would not take no."

"It is not in my vocabulary," said the one voice Elaine would least willingly have heard at this moment. A handsome young woman with black hair, dressed with ultra smartness, stepped out onto the terrace. "So this is where you're hiding!" She added in the clipped English she preferred to her native Italian, "How divine you look, darling."

Rage and fear clashed in Elaine's breast. Rage at Vittoria's insolence; fear of those observant blue eyes falling on these documents destined to help destroy the regime from which she derived vast power. Yet long training enabled Elaine to conceal all emotion other than natural surprise at this unexpected call. They had never been friends; while Alfredo had been alive they had necessarily seen something of each other, since he was a diplomat; this was their first meeting, however, since his death over a year ago.

"You look years younger than you used to," Vittoria said. "You've come to life. At last." She laughed; her teeth small, perfect, feline. "Who is he?" Then she shrewdly answered her own shrewd question. "But of course. You met Ulrich What's-his-name in Belgrade."

Elaine's heart pounded. Not because of romantic interest in Ulrich, but because the comment unwittingly confirmed her fear the Rome Foreign Office was keeping a record of her movements.

"My felicitations," Vittoria said. "Ulrich is charming. It's too bad he can't be allowed to enter Italy until the war is over. How tactless of him to have offended Berlin. Especially now, when they have so generously begun to help us police our country. But at least I understand now why you have shut yourself up here like a nun. I suppose you're all the harder hit because of all those years of being irreproachable. Personally, I always thought it idiotic. Everyone knew Alfredo was unfaithful before you'd been married for a month."

Mercilessly she tore open the old wounds, the agony almost unbearable at seventeen, the searing humiliations. Elaine gave no sign save a deliberate change of subject. "You've never seen this view, have you? It's my favorite in all Rome."

She gazed beyond the Tiber sparkling in the sunlight to the distant cypress-covered hills silhouetted against a cloudless blue sky. As always, they served to remind her of eternal verities.

Even Donna Vittoria's worldliness was threatened. "Isn't that the dome of St. Peter's far off to the right? Do you think it will save us from being bombed?"

"I don't know," Elaine said.

The moment of genuineness passed. Vittoria said with bold and unconvincing falsehood, "Not that they'll get a chance. Everything is going superbly for the Axis. In fact, we're giving a dinner to celebrate our most recent successes. Tomorrow evening. Some important for-

Elation too great for concealment swept over Elaine.

"Where is it you are so eager to be off to?" Vittoria queried sharply.

"Switzerland. I usually spend the summers there."

"And it would be the one place Ulrich could safely meet you!" Vittoria took from her purse a list of names, a seating plan. "Most of the party will be South Americans. But there is one charming"—she smiled proprietarily—"but really charming, man from New York. Hands off!"

Elaine glanced at the list. The name leaped out at her. The blood left her head. To steady herself, she took hold of the card table; inadvertently knocked over the stack of yellowed diaries.

"What in the world is all that?" Vittoria asked.

"Mementos of my past."

Elaine scarcely breathed until she saw Vittoria's amused shrug. "What a sentimental little thing you are! Until tomorrow, then. Eight forty-five."

"Eight forty-five," Elaine repeated. Thirty-three hours until John Lawrence would be here.

John Lawrence planned to shorten that interval a precious thirty minutes by pretending he'd thought the hour eight-fifteen. At eight o'clock he was striding across the Grand Hotel sitting room he shared with young Tom Jeffreys. "It's time that car turned up," he said. Wheeling abruptly, he lifted up the telephone, questioned the concierge.

"Be tranquil," he was told. "I myself guarantee the automobile will arrive at the designated moment."

"It's already ten minutes late," Lawrence retorted. He slammed down the white enamel instrument. "Damn it all, I begin to see why these Italians thought anyone was God who could make their trains run on time!" Then he laughed at his own outburst. "Just the same," he confessed, "there's going to be another international incident in just about sixty seconds. I'll go down there and—"

"No," the younger man said. "The most you'd accomplish would be a free stay in the Questura. Dictatorships are bad enough in peace time. In wartime—"

"You're right, of course," Lawrence agreed. "But that's all the more reason why I've got to see Countess Landetti alone. To see what we can do to get her out of this hellish country before it's too late. Before millions of us, including you and me, are marching in here in uniform. Why in God's name did she ever become an Italian citizen?"

"She had to, because she married an Italian diplomat."

John felt a sudden throbbing under the black silk sling which bound his left arm to his dinner jacket.

"Are you sure you feel all right?" Jeffreys asked.

"Never felt better." Again he laughed. "I'm just pained by my failure to live up to that fine old tradition that any American can lick a dozen foreigners with one arm tied behind his back."

"You've already outsmarted the smartest woman on the Continent," the other reminded him. "Donna Vittoria has no idea you've ever even seen Countess Landetti. She thinks this dinner is entirely her own idea. In fact, I think she believes you're staying on in Rome just for the sake of her own *beaux yeux*."

"A bitter pill to swallow," Lawrence said. But nothing was too bitter that led him to Elaine. "She regards you as a victim too."

"I wish she'd regarded me as an important enough one to include tonight. It's peculiarly unfair because, after all,

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eigners are in town; Il Duce has asked me to take over. I've decided to give the party here. The setting is impressive. And you are an experienced hostess."

With difficulty, Elaine found her voice. "I have given up all entertaining. I've no able-bodied servants left. And all food is rationed."

"Neither servants nor rationing need bother you," Vittoria assured her. "All you need do will be to appear *en grande toilette*. And be sure to wear your full set of rubies." Her eyes shone covetously. "You have them here, of course?"

"Of course." Except for the diaries, the rubies were the one thing Elaine was determined to take with her when she left this country. The rest of her once-comfortable fortune had long since disappeared: these jewels, though, had been a personal wedding present. If she could get them out she could be sure always of a roof, of food enough for Anna and herself. She said, "You are under a misapprehension, Vittoria. The Foreign Office could give orders to Alfredo, but my official days are over. I am now a private citizen."

"My dear Elaine," Vittoria said, "there is no such thing as a private citizen when a country is at war." Having let this frightening fact sink in, she went on, "Furthermore, you are still eager to enjoy certain prerogatives of official life. I understand you have applied to the Chigi for a *laissez-passer*."

This was true. Unless Elaine could get a safe conduct there would not be a chance of taking past the border either of the two things she had vowed to take.

Vittoria smiled. "Well, you know Il Duce's motto: *Niente per niente*."

Elaine said quietly, "Is it understood then that if I act as hostess tomorrow night I will get the *laissez-passer*?"

"It is understood."

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I was the one who took you to her villa. I was the one who got off the line—even though you did coach me in it—about having heard so much about the splendors of the Palazzo Landetti."

Lawrence seized the telephone before the first tinkle had ceased. His spine felt twisted into knots as he listened to the message.

Hanging up, he told Jeffreys, "The second round goes to Donna Vittoria. The concierge has dismissed my car because she graciously sent word she would call for me herself. How can I just walk into Elaine's cold? What will she say or do?"

"The right thing. That's certain. There's no emergency Countess Landetti wouldn't be equal to. She's truly a great lady."

"You know," Lawrence said, smiling at young Jeffreys, "when I'm President you're going to be Secretary of State. If I don't in the meantime spoil my chances by assassinating a famous foreigner whose name begins with V."

"Might help your chances," Jeffreys said. "If you lived to tell the tale, that is. I wouldn't, for example, choose her car as the scene of the crime. Those two men on the box look pretty murderous."

They did indeed, John Lawrence thought, when he was seated beside Donna Vittoria in the low-slung limousine. The shades were drawn at the windows. "It's not good policy," she explained, "to be seen in evening clothes and jewels."

He noticed then the band of diamonds across her smooth black hair, the matching necklace.

"I've even been forbidden to buy any more jewels now. It's maddening, because the earrings that match this set have just been offered for sale at a shop in the Via Condotti."

God, Lawrence thought, she expects me to say, "You must let me buy them for you as a token of my regard." Lady, the kind of regard I have for you could be expressed only by my hands tight around your pretty throat.

I'm getting right into the medieval spirit, he thought. Intrigue and violence . . . The modern world seemed wholly left behind as the tall iron gates swung open.

It seemed strangely familiar to be climbing marble steps carpeted in red velvet, lighted by torches. To find in the great entrance hall half a dozen footmen in wine-red livery.

Only I ought to have driven here in a pumpkin coach, Lawrence thought; then the whispered colloquy between one of the servants and Donna Vittoria brought him back to grim reality. Why, probably this whole crew were Fascisti secret service.

It behooved him to tread warily. At the entrance to the drawing room, he braced himself. The white-haired butler announced his name. Lawrence stepped across the threshold, feeling as if he were stepping onto the field of battle.

Over Vittoria's bare shoulders his eyes met Elaine's. Then Vittoria turned, formally presented them. They said in unison, "How do you do?" Their hands met briefly. He forced himself to say: "It is good of you to let me come here, Countess Landetti."

Elaine smiled. "I'm delighted to have you, Mr. Lawrence."

I would give ten years of my life, he thought, if I could be alone with you ten minutes.

No princess in a fairy tale was ever lovelier. Her dress of supple pale gold stuff was like that of a medieval princess, made with long tight sleeves, fitted closely to her slender waist, then rippling to the floor.

He did not notice the ruby necklace over the high neckline until Vittoria said

"What's happened to our Marriage?"



1. I met Stan when I went to work in a war plant. We fell in love, were married . . . and at first had a beautiful life. Then suddenly . . . a barrier between us! I, who counted so on our precious hours together, was crazy with grief!



2. Then one night, we went out with Kay and George, our closest friends. Later, Kay and I were alone and she asked why I looked so tragic. Anxious for sympathy, I told her my troubles. "Sue, darling," she said when I finished. "It's so simple. You know, a wife can often lose her husband's love if she's neglectful about . . . well, about . . . feminine hygiene . . ."



3. "See here, Sue," she suggested. "Why don't you try Lysol disinfectant? My doctor recommends it for feminine hygiene . . . says many modern wives use it." Then she told me how this famous germicide cleanses thoroughly . . . deodorizes, too. "And besides," she added, "Lysol's so easy to use. Just follow directions—it won't harm sensitive vaginal tissues."



4. Now, Stan and I are more happily in love than ever before! Kay was absolutely right about Lysol. It is easy and economical to use—and it works wonderfully!



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enviously, "And you have a tiara too, I remember. An entire set."

You don't need any jewels, John told Elaine silently. Your hair is like spun gold. Your eyes are the color of topaz.

"Did you ever see finer rubies?" Vittoria persisted.

He said, because Elaine had worn them in Belgrade, "I particularly like the ear-rings."

"Let's stop discussing me," Elaine said, smiling. "I'll take Mr. Lawrence over and introduce him to the Argentineans."

"No, I'll do it," Vittoria said. "There are other people coming in."

It did violence to his every instinct to move off beside Vittoria while Elaine stayed there alone. But caution told him he must play a waiting game.

He left two hours go by. It seemed two centuries. But by this time, even in his rôle of stranger, it would have seemed abnormal for him not to seek conversation with his hostess. The party had divided after dinner: two tables of bridge in one salon; in a long gallery looking out upon a court garden, a Spanish singer entertained the remainder of the guests. John had moved with apparent aimlessness from one room to the other. Now, knowing the card game would occupy Vittoria for a little while, he sauntered back into the gallery.

"I haven't had a word with you," he told Elaine.

The South American who had been sitting beside her rose gallantly. "I prove myself a good neighbor, yes, by giving you my chair?"

"You do indeed, *amigo*." John did not sit down, however. He told Elaine, "I've been laid up until a few days ago. I still feel queer at moments. Just now I feel a desperate need for fresh air."

She rose, moved toward the French door. He could not speak; could only move as in a dream.

The mingled scent of flowers was poignantly sweet. He heard the gentle splash of fountains. As his eyes grew accustomed to the semidarkness he saw the marble dolphins, the quaint symmetrical flower beds. Orange and mandarin trees were espaliered against the high fortress-like walls. Four walls, each overlooking this open square.

He said warily, "A charming garden. But so hemmed in, like a courtyard to which prisoners are taken for airings."

"Yes," Elaine said.

A door on the opposite side had opened. Light shone from the banquet hall; one of those alleged servants had stepped out, ostensibly to light a cigarette.

Elaine shivered. "I must go back to my guests."

Oh, God, John Lawrence thought, I can't leave her like this!

One of the flower beds contained roses of all colors. He bent down, picked a white one. "May I have this for my buttonhole?"

"Of course." She helped him fasten it in his lapel.

"It reminds me of a poem," he told her, and mentally he defied the whole Fascist secret service to make what they would of it. "A sonnet written to a girl by a youngster I knew back in 1926. He compared her to a white rose seen by moonlight. 'Incomparably fair, you teach me there is heaven . . .' It was far from great poetry, but it had authentic feeling. Do you remember it, by any chance?"

"I do remember." She looked up at him, and her eyes shone with tears. "It was long ago."

"Yes. But in the words of a greater writer: 'More than yesterday; less than tomorrow.'"

And having thus declared himself, he followed her inside, feeling suddenly as

young as the self of twenty-one who had written the sonnet; as gay as the Spanish song the plump Señorita was now singing.

Elaine, on the contrary, felt stunned; incapable of thought.

"You were only gone a moment," the Argentinean said.

An eternity, Elaine thought. A lifetime. I've come back to a new world.

Not entirely new, alas. "Eccellenza." She turned. One of those wretched men wearing the Landetti livery was holding out one of her own trays, one of her goblets. Filled, however, with champagne Vittoria had provided, along with the ingredients for the luxurious dinner.

She was no longer in control of her own household, her own movements. Vittoria stood beside her when the guests eventually departed; Vittoria insisted John Lawrence and the South American she had put at Elaine's right at dinner, stay for a final nightcap.

"A young friend of mine, Tom Jeffreys, was speaking of you today," John Lawrence told Elaine. "He hopes you'll let him call before he leaves. If you do, I wish you'd let me come along."

Elaine saw Vittoria's quick predatory look; remembered her "Hands off!" She said, "I'm unfortunately so busy just now, packing for the summer . . ." She seized the opportunity to say to Vittoria: "I can get my *laissez-passer* tomorrow, I suppose?"

Vittoria laughed. "That's rushing things."

Dear God, Elaine prayed, don't let her keep me here! She said, "But I plan to leave for Switzerland within a week."

"It would be impossible for the Foreign Office to act so quickly," Vittoria answered, with the habitual liar's smoothness. "And you know you'd loathe being disturbed at the border by the customs people and the military police."

LOATHE it? Elaine thought. Why, it would be better not to go at all than to have my baggage examined.

John Lawrence asked Vittoria incredulously, "You can't mean the Foreign Office has to be consulted every time anyone goes away for the summer?"

"Of course not. The point is, Elaine isn't willing to travel like an ordinary citizen. She wants a safe conduct. Even in wartime, she must still be the Ambassador."

"I can hardly believe it," Lawrence chuckled. "It would seem more probable to me that your transportation system had broken down. I know Tom Jeffreys can't get a reservation of any sort. He's been ordered to Berne and ought to leave right away, but he's had no luck. He knows the Crown Princess, but even she couldn't get a *wagon-lit* for him."

"Probably the Crown Princess couldn't," Vittoria answered, "but I am sure I could get a dozen *wagons-lits*."

"Six months from now, perhaps," Lawrence said with a chiding smile. "Oh, I know you are very influential, Donna Vittoria, but I'd be willing to wager anything in the world even you couldn't get reservations on the next express to Switzerland." He turned to the South American, whom Vittoria had been trying desperately to impress by stories of perfectly running war machinery. "Until I came to Rome I had no idea how badly bogged down the traffic system was. It doesn't bother me, personally. I'm going farther east by a transcontinental plane. But as for the famous Italian railroads——"

Vittoria interrupted. "You're completely wrong. I'll prove it."

"I'll bet you the pair of earrings to match your necklace, you can't produce reservations day after tomorrow."

Vittoria touched the diamonds at her throat. "Taken!" She told the Argentinean, "I'll have the earrings tomorrow."

Lawrence corrected, "Day after tomorrow, if at all." His smile robbed his words of harshness. "According to the rules of my native game of poker, bets stand as made. But cards must be shown before there's any payment. In other words, when, as and if I see Countess Landetti and Tom Jeffreys on their way, I shall present you with the earrings."

Elaine stood as if turned to stone. She admired the skill with which John Lawrence had jockeyed Vittoria into this position; she was deeply touched by these efforts on her behalf. But if only she could warn him, tell him she could not leave without a safe conduct!

"Agreed!" Vittoria said. She smiled maliciously at Elaine. "How will you feel, traveling without the accustomed *grand luxe*? With just an ordinary *visa*?"

Elaine could not speak. She raised her eyes to John Lawrence's.

He said, "Don't tell me I've misjudged you, Countess Landetti." His glance implored her to say, "You haven't."

She heard herself saying, "You haven't. I shall travel in the usual way. Gladly."

Gladly, her mind repeated. Why, you're insane! You're mad. Yet the words were out; the pledge given. For the first time since she had been full-grown, she had yielded deliberately to another's will. Far from feeling humbled, however, she felt strangely proud.

Even the triumphant glow with which Vittoria swept out with the two men could not shake this irrational contentment. Anna, waiting in the dress room, declared, "You have had good news, Contessa! You look radiant."

"We're leaving day after tomorrow."

"You have then the *laissez-passer*?"

"No. No, I can't get it."

The maid was deeply disturbed. "But Contessa, you cannot take your jewels. Without them, you will be penniless."

"That's true." And the diaries were so much more important. She had not revealed their value even to Anna.

Care should have weighed down her spirit. Yet her only problem, after she was settled in the wide Venetian bed, was where the fragrance came from. Mimosa grew on the terrace outside; yet the fresh spring air seemed to waft in the scent of roses. As the sounds from the street below died away, John Lawrence's remembered voice grew distinct: "More than yesterday; less than tomorrow." The smile which curved her lips as she fell asleep was as carefree as a child's.

That night's rest was the last she was to enjoy for three long days. As the crowded halting train once more stopped inexplicably, Elaine thought: I must really have been deranged. Hypnotized by John Lawrence's assuming command.

She had had no chance to speak privately to him during their brief meeting at the Termini Station in Rome, amid the jostling throngs of departing soldiers, weeping women. Donna Vittoria had remained close by, come with him aboard the train, seen Elaine and Anna installed in one compartment, Tom Jeffreys in another not far off. John Lawrence had handed Vittoria the jeweler's box expressionlessly. But telling Elaine, "Good-bye, good luck," his eyes had shone as elatedly as Vittoria's when she opened the square box.

After the train had started, Jeffreys had appeared at Elaine's door to ask if he could be of service. Mindful of the military police patrolling the corridors, she had merely said she would be grateful for his help in stowing the baggage. Anna, usually the most efficient of travel-

ers, was huddled in the corner, woe incarnate. She had left at an early hour for the dentist, returned too late to pack properly, but the pain must still be excruciating; she sat in utter silence, both hands pressed against the black cotton scarf she had tied around her head.

Having helped to restore order, Jeffreys said, "If I can be of further use, please command me."

"I will indeed." Elaine had evolved a timetable with painstaking care. Somehow she would manage, after they had left Milan and before they reached the border, to turn over the diaries to him. Her intention had always been to present them in due course to their country. They needed further work, but since Jeffreys was to be in Berne, she could put on the finishing touches there. The gift, if premature, was nevertheless genuine. He could therefore honorably transport it to Switzerland under the protection of his diplomatic passport.

Her jewels, no. She had left them in the wall safe of the Palazzo. Her key and Anna's were in her purse, together with her sixty-day transit visa. By the end of sixty days her American citizenship, she prayed, would be restored. Not that it would help her get back the jewels, but it would compensate a million times over for their loss.

Vittoria took for granted she had brought the rubies with her. She had spoken of them in the station; even more convincing, the hardest-eyed of the so-called footmen the other evening was on the train; dressed now in civilian clothes, he marched back and forth past her compartment. The first day, she had been amused by his presence, nicknamed him Camposanto, humanly pleased by the disappointment Vittoria was bound to feel when she discovered that there had been no efforts to smuggle out the

rubies, hence that their confiscation was impossible.

A good many other things had pleased Elaine that first carefree day. Particularly her own discretion in avoiding all but brief public conversation with Tom Jeffreys, in which she gave no inkling of her plan. The huge railway station in Milan would present a golden opportunity. She told him in the hearing of Camposanto she intended to get off there and try to find a hot drink for Anna.

She stayed almost an hour in the restaurant, yet he did not appear. When she returned to the train carrying an ersatz paper cup of ersatz coffee, Anna informed her the young American had been put off the train to make place for some high official.

If the train had not already been in motion Elaine would have got off herself, taking the largest suitcase with her. But the train was in motion; Camposanto was outside the door; the windows were hermetically sealed.

She stared at the suitcase. There was no way of destroying its contents.

Every nerve in her body was taut; the suspense of waiting was so terrible she felt almost relieved when late that night the train jerked to a stop at the village which marked the border.

Camposanto knocked, came in, followed by two inspectors. "Have you anything to declare, *Eccellenza*? Any valuables? Contraband?"

"No," Elaine said. "Just what you see in those bags. Some clothes; some books. 'No jewels, *Eccellenza*?'

"No jewels."

"Do you swear that in the presence of these witnesses? Remember, it is a serious offense to swear falsely."

She held her head high. "I give you my word of honor."

"When it comes to smuggling precious

stones a lady's word is not enough," he said. "Make the most thorough examination of your lives, my boys."

They pawed through the suitcases of wearing apparel, turning everything inside out.

"Nothing," they agreed dejectedly.

Now only the bag of books and Anna's untidy parcels remained. "There's nothing in my things," Anna said fiercely. "Don't you untie those boxes! I'll never get them tied again."

All three men turned toward her. "So that's it!" Camposanto said. "The maid has the jewels."

"Leave my things alone!" Anna protested, close to hysterics.

"Anna," Elaine said, "they have to open everything. It's all right."

She jumped as Camposanto yelled, "Here they are!" and pulled off layer after layer of wrapping paper, uncovered the white vellum jewel case that lay hidden in Anna's cardboard hatbox.

Elaine's heart turned over.

Camposanto pulled out the top drawer of the jewel case. The tiara gleamed like fire against the white satin. It will be becoming to Donna Vittoria, Elaine thought dully.

"It is the Contessa's own!" Anna cried. "She can take it where she chooses."

"That's where you're wrong, my good woman," the Fascist agent said. He opened the second drawer, looked lovingly at the necklace.

"The smaller pieces in the four-compartment bottom drawer are by far the finest," Elaine told him sardonically.

He closed the case. "Eccellenza, you could be put in prison for trying to smuggle this outside the country."

"Surely not," she said with serenity not wholly feigned. Vittoria had foreseen this precise situation; it was for this reason she had snatched the opportunity

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to withhold the safe conduct. "After all," Elaine told him, "you have the jewels now. No harm has been done. Just give me a receipt, and you can get off and take them back to Rome."

There was admiration in his eyes, respect. "You take it well, *Eccellenza*. Left to me—"

"But it is not left to you. Nothing in this country is left to anyone," she said.

"There is one more bag," the customs man suggested.

"We've got what we wanted." Camposanto looked without interest as the other thumbed through a huge scrapbook of old-fashioned Christmas cards, lace valentines. "Come on," he said. "Mark the bags and let's be off."

No work of art ever seemed to Elaine so beautiful as those chalked hieroglyphics. Weak with relief, as the door closed and the train began to move, she blinked back the tears.

Anna pulled down the shades giving on the corridor. She said, as if speaking to the small girl whom she had so often sung to sleep, "Don't worry, dear."

"Worry? It's the opposite, Anna!" Full explanation of what was pasted underneath the valentines and colored cards had better wait until they were on the other side. Elaine put her hand on Anna's shoulder. "Don't you worry, either, about the rubies. There was no chance of getting them out. And after I've become an American citizen, the Italian government will have a legal right to them. So I was bound to lose them. You did your best." "Si, contessa." Anna laughed out loud.

She untied her scarf. "My very best."

Elaine gasped.

Rubies and diamonds blazed in Anna's ears. "The clips I have concealed elsewhere," she said.

"I can't believe my eyes. Anna, it's incredible. You are a heroine!"

"Oh, it was not my idea," Anna said. "Signor Lawrence thought of it. The day after the dinner party he came to call. On me. He brought those red glass baubles I put in the four places in the lowest drawer. He is *simpaticissimo*, that one! We conspired together. He felt certain you wanted to take out something more important than the jewels. So he thought: Why not kill two birds with one stone? He instructed me at just what moment I was to divert attention from your luggage." Anna sighed contentedly. "It went well, did it not?"

Elaine nodded, her heart too full for speech.

"You can sell the clips and earrings for a good sum?"

"The clips, yes. Not the earrings."

"But the earrings are more valuable."

"Much, much more valuable! That's why I'll keep them." Elaine smiled.

The curious pressure of the air meant they were already in the tunnel. On the other side was pure free air. A free safe land, to which John Lawrence would surely come sometime. She would tell him about the diaries. He would recognize their worth; know she had accomplished something for their country. And when she saw him, she would wear the earrings he had admired.

Coming soon: Another story by Maude Parker in which John Lawrence, desiring only Elaine's safety, is nevertheless instrumental in bringing her to England on a dangerous mission

Kill or Be Killed (Continued from page 49)

Two men—he uses the "buddy system" throughout—are told to dig themselves a foxhole. D'Elisicu teaches that the entrenching tool is second in importance to the weapon.

"Make it a good hole. Your very lives might depend upon how good and how deep it is," they are told.

Once the foxhole for two is completed, the men are given such food and equipment as they would have in jungle warfare.

"Get in," is the command, "and don't let your heads above that foxhole for forty-eight hours."

For two days and nights the men live in that small hole, never once putting their heads above its top. Live ammunition whines over them at intervals, or kicks up dirt around them. They prepare their food, eat, sleep, and perform all their human functions in a little world of their own dug out of the ground.

When they crawl out at the end of the forty-eight-hour ordeal they are so dirty about all you see is their eyes. They have begun to learn something about the realities of jungle warfare that will possibly save their lives later on.

"If a man goes into battle knowing in advance that it's going to be mean, stinking and dirty," D'Elisicu says, "he's going in with his eyes open. Therefore he's a better soldier."

There are men fighting today who remember D'Elisicu's sustained shout on Ranger maneuvers, when they would carelessly show themselves as a target: "You're d-e-e-a-a-a-d!"

There are men alive today who would be dead had they not learned from D'Elisicu how to keep on living.

Men are being trained in the school

from two branches of the service—Army and Marines. They apply to their commanding officer for permission to try for the school. About one out of three meets the entrance qualifications. Once admitted, they become Ranger trainees regardless of what they were before. In the Rangers, a man is a man. He has to be—just that.

Despite the fact that only hardy and capable men are admitted to the school, only about half can endure its pace to the finish. Most of the graduates go out to be teachers themselves. Some of them—well, they're the kind of fellows you find mentioned in dispatches that say: "The Rangers landed at night and prepared the way for our landing forces." Much of what this select group does must remain untold for now.

The little men who fight for Japan in the South Pacific jungles once referred to the Americans as playboys. It has taken considerable persuasion to convince the Jap that the American is a very ornery critter, with a heritage from colonists who fought the Ranger way with Rogers, and who had to hack a home out of wilderness with a threat of death all around them.

What the Jap thought were playboys were fellows just trying to live a decent and useful life with a little fun on the side. By the millions they played football and baseball, boxed and wrestled, ran and jumped. As a nation, some might have been a little soft on the surface. The Jap did not know that underneath was very hard stuff.

He is beginning to catch on. And wait'll he meets the latest batch of Rangers from the school of "KILL OR BE KILLED"!

The best bargain in history—War Bonds

Band Leader

(Continued from page 43)

"Hello, beautiful!" and turned to eye Cubbie with a sixty-four-dollar question mark. "And who's this?" he demanded. "Deanna Durbin?"

"That," said Sonny Wylie, smiling at Cubbie with a pride which seemed pathetic to her, "is my daughter. Cubbie, this is Egg Fletelson, my press agent."

Egg was staring at Cubbie, his face a latticework of disbelief and something like horror. "Are you kiddin'?" he barked hoarsely.

"Why should I be?" The answer was quick, and there was something in her father's voice which made Cubbie look at him in alarm. His eyes were regarding Egg as though he were a worm with unpleasant ancestry.

Egg was surprised too. "Okay, okay, Sonny. Take it easy. I'll apologize." He patted Cubbie's hand. "No offense, kid. But why," he demanded, turning back to her father, "don't you tell me these things? You can't give birth to full-grown daughters overnight like that. It isn't done!"

"May I have a Daiquiri, Sonny?" asked Natica, with little ice cubes in her voice. And Cubbie saw that she didn't like Egg or want him there. This, for some reason, made Cubbie like him better. Maybe he wasn't so bad, after all.

Her father turned back from the waiter. "I can't see, Egg, that my having a daughter concerns you in any way. My private life is still my private life, you know."

"Don't get sore, Sonny," implored Egg. "I was just going to point out it ain't good for a glamour boy to have a daughter big enough to be an autograph hound. The public just don't like that sort of thing."

"Do me a favor, Egg." Sonny looked harassed, and half annoyed, half amused. "Just leave us in peace. You're spoiling our luncheon, which was supposed to be a holiday for Cubbie. And please don't make any more cracks about me as a glamour boy. I happen to be thirty-five years old, and the father of a fifteen-year-old daughter."

"S-sh! Not so loud!" Egg looked around again nervously. "You don't look a day over twenty-five!"

"It was nice seeing you," said Sonny. "Okay, okay." Egg stood up. "I'm scramming, but don't say I didn't warn you." He patted Cubbie's shoulder. "No offense, kid. But if you love your pappy, be a good girl and crawl back into your cocoon. So long, beautiful. So long, Sonny."

"I'm sorry." Sonny turned to Natica. "Let's have cocktails and start all over again."

"How can you stand horrible people like that?" asked Natica, giving a little shudder as though she'd just seen a big, repulsive water bug.

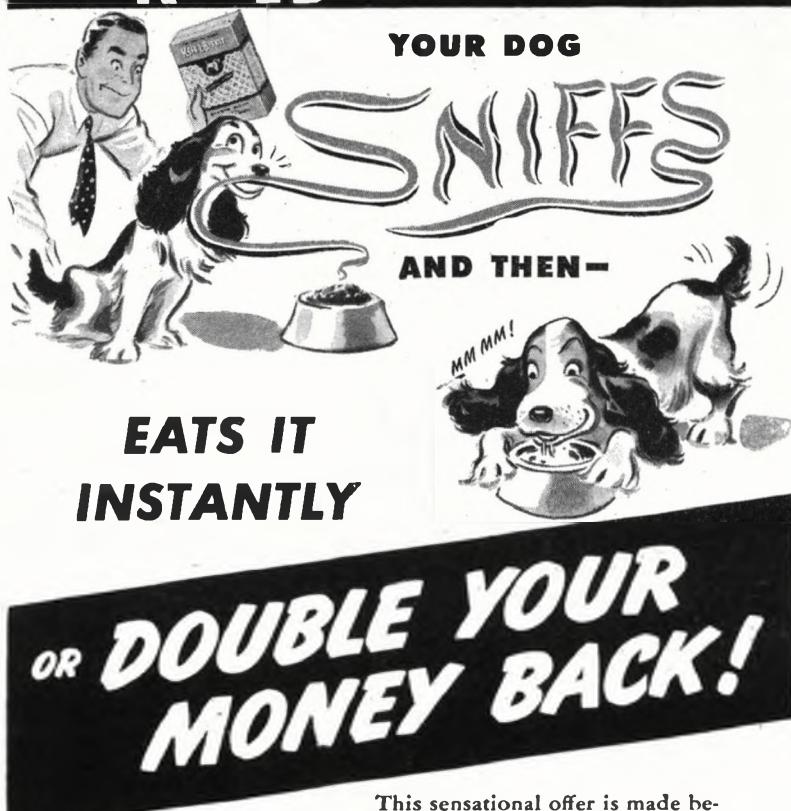
"Oh, Egg's all right." He's not horrible at all, thought Cubbie. He's sort of rough, but he likes Daddy very much, and he's worried about what will happen if people find out about me. He's right, too. Daddy doesn't look old enough to be my father. And I'm not pretty or glamorous enough to be his daughter.

She looked around the room at the other people. They were all rich and smart and terribly sure of themselves. They were terrifying because they made you feel like a country cousin, because you didn't fit here; you just didn't fit at all.

But Natica fitted. She fitted perfectly,

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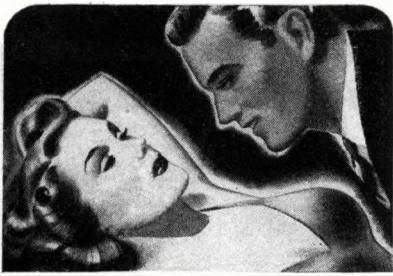
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... a small white kid glove. And she belonged with Daddy because she was lovely and glamorous-looking, and people didn't mind a band leader being in love. That was romantic. But it wasn't romantic to have a big hulking daughter. Big as a battleship. Big as—

"What are you going to have to eat, Cubbie?" As her father interrupted her thoughts, Cubbie's head came up like a horse who hears the fire bell.

"Steak!" she said promptly, for that was a schoolgirl's dream.

"Steak!" Natica sounded horrified. "At noon?"

Cubbie looked at her, startled, and once more her face turned a burning red. You didn't order steak at noon, of course. You ordered something dainty and lady-like, and then you pretended you weren't hungry. "I was only kidding," she added hastily.

But her father patted her hand. "Steak it shall be," he said firmly. Then he turned to Natica. "When I was in prep school I couldn't wait to get out so I could get steak. We were all that way. It's something that goes with school." He seemed to be trying hard to make her understand something.

"How, odd!" murmured Natica, looking up at him with her blue kitten's eyes. "May I have another Daiquiri, Sonny?"

"You may have ten more if you want them!" The way he smiled down at her made Cubbie look away with misery in her heart. He was in love with Natica and they would probably be married and live in an apartment that was all white and so beautiful you couldn't sit down without feeling like an Airedale. And Cubbie would always be a bone of contradiction or whatever kind of a bone it was, because her father always would have to be making something that was wrong about her sound right to Natica. Like the steak.

Cubbie didn't want the steak now. But there it was, big and red and repulsive, leering up at her. It had brought its friends along, crowds of French Fried potatoes and piles of bright green peas. It looked like mountains of food, alongside Natica's plate, which was a delicate pastel masterpiece of fruit salad and streamlined slices of chicken. Well, she had to eat the steak now, although it was going to make her feel like Henry the Eighth. She picked up the knife and fork and went into battle with such vicious determination that the steak recoiled, shied wildly to the left and landed with a juicy plop upon the snow-white tablecloth. With horror, Cubbie stared at the brown splashes on Natica's blue bosom. Natica was staring at them too, and a small exclamation of annoyance escaped from her.

Speechless with misery, Cubbie looked at Natica. She tried to speak, but no words came.

Natica was not amused. The rosebud mouth was tight at the corners as she dabbed at the spots with a napkin. "It's quite all right," she said in a cool voice, which said even more distinctly that it was not all right. Then she put down the napkin and stood up. "If you'll excuse me, I'll go to the powder room and see if the maid has a spot remover."

"Oh, Daddy!" Cubbie was almost in tears. "I ruined her suit!"

"I doubt that. And even if you had ruined her suit, it could hardly be a major tragedy in Natica's life," he said drily. "Now, eat your steak and forget it. This is your party, you know."

Cubbie smiled, and blinking hard to fight back her tears, she fell obediently upon the steak again, which this time took it like a lamb instead of a bucking bronco.

"We are going to the matinee of 'Jack-in-the-Box,' then we'll come back here for the cocktail dance hour, if you can stand watching your father work."

Cubbie stopped eating. She couldn't do it; she couldn't! Sit in a theater like a large-sized hyphen between Natica and her father, with Natica being polite and remotely beautiful like a snowy peak on a mountaintop!

She swallowed hard. "Daddy, it's just that some of the girls—" She stopped, helpless, and looked at him with a woe-begone expression. Lying was so awful when you weren't used to it.

"You planned something with the girls from school—is that it?"

She nodded mutely, hoping he wouldn't ask her what it was.

"Oh, I see." He looked taken aback. "So, a whole afternoon with the Old Man was too much to bear?" Then, seeing her expression, he laughed. "I'm only kidding, chicken. Don't give it another thought. After all, I guess I'm not the guy your boy friend Robert is!"

"Oh, I don't know," Cubbie said airily, falling into their old routine. "You're all right, I guess. And next to Robert Montgomery, you're just about my favorite person."

"Thanks for the compliment, but don't you think he's just a little bit old for you?"

Cubbie's laughter stopped suddenly as Natica appeared beside the table and waited for Sonny to stand and supervise a safe landing in her chair.

"We are having a quarrel," Sonny announced, "over my rival."

Natica looked up at him, a study in beautiful blankness. "Your rival?"

Sonny nodded. "Cubbie's boy friend—a fellow out in Hollywood named Robert Montgomery."

"Oh." Natica's tinkling laughter was like silver beads falling upon a glass table. "I thought you were serious!"

Sonny laughed, and Cubbie laughed too. But the joke somehow didn't seem funny the way it did when they played it alone. Everything was flat again and too polite, like a party which won't get going.

She does something to me, thought Cubbie desperately. When I look at her I feel myself growing bigger and bigger, like Alice in Wonderland. If I don't get out of here pretty soon I'll probably be too big to get through the door.

But it was finally over, and she found herself aimlessly walking down Fifth Avenue alone. If she went in for hating people, she decided that she'd probably hate Natica. Maybe I do, she thought disconsolately, and that was depressing, because if Daddy loved Natica it was going to be pretty messy to go around hating her. We'll all live unhappily ever after, she thought miserably.

She found herself standing before a record shop, and there in a window were albums with her father's picture on the front. "Sonny Wylie presents Persian Room hits," it said all over the place. She looked wistfully at the smiling pictures. That's my father, she thought dizzily, and I have to look at him through glass, like something in a museum. She seemed a very sad picture to herself, like the poor little rich girl on Christmas Eve standing out in the cold watching all the happy people inside trim the tree. This self-determination made her giggle, but at the same time a big tear rolled down her face, and she hastily dabbed at it with her handkerchief. I'm worse'n that old drip Elsie Dinsmore, she thought in disgust. Always going around feeling sorry for herself, the big crybaby.

Somehow Cubbie struggled through the afternoon, with the aid of a movie and

a long bus ride, and suddenly it was train time.

She joined the clamorous group waiting at the gate with the usual harassed chaperon, wearing what she hoped was the proper expression of a girl who has had a lovely exciting afternoon with a father who happens to be famous.

"Hi-ya, Cubbie!" was the greeting from all sides, for Cubbie was not only very much liked for herself, but on top of that she had a famous band leader for a father, which was SOMETHING. She began to feel warm and happy because this was HOME, and she was in her own world again.

They piled into the train and settled down into the customary hilarious rehash of the day's adventure. Cubbie braced herself and waited. And it came, of course, as inevitable as term exams.

"Whad'ya do, Cubbie?" asked Poogs Benson eagerly. "What goes on with my BURNING PASSION, who happens to be your father? Is he as handsome as ever?" Poogs leaned forward and pretended to pant loudly like a puppy.

Cubbie raised her eyebrows. "He has just had his face lifted, and now he has to wear a chin strap, but his beauty remains un-im-paired," she replied haughtily.

"Oh, quiet! What didya do?" persisted Poogs.

"Very well." Cubbie sighed wearily. "If you must know, we went to the Stork Club, and Daddy got drunk and fell under the table, and I had to send him home. Then a strange man with a beard who spoke Russian took me to El Morocco, and he passed out, and I left him, and the doorman who wears a burnoose took me to a horrible dive, where we smoked marijuanas and watched voodoo dancing. New York is an awfully wicked place," she finished sadly, shaking her head.

The derisive shouts of laughter were interrupted by Lena Gibbs, surnamed the Queen of Palestina, who was wildly waving a newspaper in the air.

"Cubbie! It's in here about your father and NATICA AMMIDON! Listen to this!" She began reading in a loud voice: "All Society expects an announcement of interest at any moment regarding the beauteous Natica Ammidon and handsome band leader Sonny Wylie who are wearing that look these days. Are they or are they not sniffing orange blossoms?"

Lena dropped the paper and closed her eyes in ecstasy. "Oh, Cubbie, how wonderful! Imagine having the glamorous Natica Ammidon for a stepmother!"

Cubbie winced, then turned to meet the attack of questions which rained upon her from all sides. "What is this," she asked coolly, "a meeting of the Quiz Kids?"

"Oh, Cubbie, for Pete's sake, don't be a drab! Break down and tell us something." This came from Dot Holder, who wielded a mean hockey stick.

Cubbie was clever enough to realize that carrying discretion too far promoted suspicion. "Why, yes," she said as if she suddenly remembered the answer to one of the questions. "I have seen the lady. Today, I think it was." She added carelessly, "She had luncheon with us."

There was another deluge of questions. What did Natica look like? Was she *glamorous*? Was she a snoot? Did Cubbie like her?

Cubbie pondered. "Umm." She pursed her lips. "She has possibilities."

"Is he really in love? Are they going to be married?"

Cubbie looked at them solemnly. "I haven't yet given them my permission," she said loftily. "I told them I would think it over and let them know when

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I arrived at a decision. Now, please don't bother me any more!"

Waving an imperious hand, she relaxed and looked out the window. I can take it, she told herself. And if I have to walk down the aisle strewing rosebuds in her path, I'll do it if it kills me. But I'd much rather carry a spear!

It was eleven-forty-five, and since it was Saturday night, Cubbie and her best friends had special permission to listen to the midnight broadcast from the Persian Room. The lights were all out, so they could completely give way to the Mood, and bodies were strewn all over the place like sleeping Arabs. Nothing but the happy crunching of chocolates broke the magic spell of music and dreams.

A break came in the music, and the voice of Sonny Wylie spoke to them out of the darkness: "And now we will play a special number for a very special person up in Connecticut—'Tea for Two'—for a little girl named Cubbie!"

Excited pokes and ecstatic exclamations broke the silence and then ceased as the lilting melody danced into the room. Cubbie lay very still on the bed. Her favorite number, and Daddy always played it when he thought she might be listening. "Me for you and you for me"—the words swam before her eyes. "Nobody near us to see us or hear us—no friends or relations." A sob rose in her throat. There'd always be somebody for him now. It wouldn't be "You for me, and me for you." It wouldn't ever be tea for two again. It couldn't be! Suddenly Cubbie buried her head in the pillow, and sobs shattered the magic spell. The bodies on the floor arose like a small colony of pup tents springing up on signal.

"What in the name of Saint Peter is wrong with *her*?" exclaimed Poogs in astonishment.

There was a startled silence, made all the more horrible by Cubbie's sobs. Then Mary Lou, Cubbie's roommate, said beligerently, "Does she have to tell you she's got a *stomachache* and spoil your evening? I suggest that you all *scram*."

For a moment they were stunned. Then Poogs said in a subdued voice, "I'm pushing off." One by one the little Arabs silently stole away. Mary Lou turned off the radio and slipped an arm around Cubbie. The sobs finally ceased.

There was a loud sniff, and Cubbie's head came up. "Th-thanks," she said, "f-for the stomachache!"

"Oh, shut up," said Mary Lou crossly. But the arm around Cubbie tightened.

The pall of Sunday afternoon hung over the school, and the emptiness of the halls emphasized the loneliness in Cubbie's heart as she tried to figure out this thing which was like a toothache in the stomach. And just then she was called to the telephone. It was her father, calling from White Plains. He was on his way up to see her. He was going to take her out to dinner, he said; he had something important to tell her. Cubbie hung up the receiver and stared at the wall. He was coming to tell her that he was going to marry Natica. That was it. And she'd never be able to carry it off. She couldn't bear to have him tell her. She couldn't!

She started walking slowly back to her room. If he didn't get a chance to talk to her today, he'd have to write a letter instead, because his contract at the Persian Room ended the following Saturday, and he was leaving for San Francisco immediately. By the time he got back in the fall, maybe she'd be used to the idea; or maybe—the thought struck her with a sickening pang—they'd already be married! She quickly pushed

that thought away. The important thing was *today*. She must fix it so they wouldn't be left alone a single moment. Then she couldn't mess things up and spoil his happiness by showing her own feelings.

She headed for the tennis courts. She'd round up the gang and tell them her father was giving them a party at the Totem Pole. That would do it. She'd ask Mary Lou and Poogs not to leave them alone; say she didn't want to talk about her allowance or her last report or something. Mary Lou would understand and not ask any questions, and Poogs wouldn't need much urging to persuade her to stick to her *PASSION* like fly-paper. Just get them all out to the Totem Pole and keep them busy!

The afternoon was a huge success so far as the girls were concerned. Getting away from school, riding in a beautiful open car, the Totem Pole *plus* Sonny Wylie was like a dream come true. Sonny was the perfect host. No one would have guessed that he had had any other idea beyond giving them the best afternoon they'd had in a long time. He didn't even protest when at least ten nickels were put in the juke box for the same Sonny Wylie number, although he said, "Personally, I prefer Tommy Dorsey."

And as the last notes of Sonny Wylie's band died away, excited whispers reached them from the people at a near-by table, where an underclassman from school had just come in with her family: "That's Sonny Wylie himself, and that's his daughter with him."

There was a pause. "Which one? The pretty one?"

"No," was the too loud reply. "The other one."

And like a poisoned arrow which struck Cubbie in the back came the astonished exclamation: "That big girl!"

Cubbie sat frozen, with a spoonful of ice cream half raised to her mouth. But Sonny gave no sign that he had heard. Instead, he leaned over to Cubbie and spoke in a low voice. "I want a chance to talk to you when we get back to school."

The dessert suddenly tasted like poison. Cubbie glanced at her watch, and panic seized her. They were going to get back too soon. She had to do something about it. Putting down her spoon, she asked, "Daddy, may I have another ice cream with chocolate sauce?"

Sonny looked surprised, for it had been a huge dinner, but he said, "Why not?" and summoned the waiter.

Cubbie whispered desperately to Mary Lou, "Keep eating—please!"

Mary Lou turned to Poogs, and five more requests for second desserts fell upon the astonished Sonny.

"Where," he asked in amazement, "do you put it all? I can see that Cubbie has plenty of storing room, but—" He looked at Mary Lou's ethereal thinness, and shook his head. "It's beyond me how you can put so much away!"

At this last reference to her corporeal capacity, Cubbie's reaction changed from one of hurt to anger. That doot it, all right! she thought grimly. I'm going to make him eat those words one of these days.

If Sonny realized there was a plot to keep him away from his daughter, he gave no evidence of it, even when they got back to school. But as the warning bell rang, he tried to pull Cubbie aside. "There is something I wanted to tell you, Cubbie," he began.

Cubbie raised her eyes to his. "Daddy, we've got to fly! I'll write to you." She threw her arms around his neck. "We had a lovely, lovely time—all of us. And

please be good and take care of yourself, won't you?"

Sonny gave up. "Okay, Cubbie," he said, holding her tight. "I'll write you. Be a good girl."

She looked at him, uncertain for a moment, then leaned close to his ear. "I think it will be wonderful if you marry Natica," she said breathlessly. "She's lovely." And kissing him again quickly, she stepped back and raised her arm. Sonny's eyes met hers. Then he smiled and waved, and the car slid down the driveway.

Cubbie stared after the car, then turned and walked rapidly down the hall. Marching straight into her room, she picked up the box of chocolates on her table and flung it out the window.

A horrified shriek came from Mary Lou. "Have you gone crazy?"

"No," Cubbie replied. "I'm going on a diet. I'm at least ten pounds overweight, and it's coming off! But that's only the beginning. Everything's wrong with me, and I can't take off my glasses and become beautiful, just like that, the way they do it in the movies, because I don't wear glasses."

"No," said Mary Lou. "But you could start by getting rid of that skirt."

Cubbie looked down in surprise. "What's wrong with it?"

"It makes you look like an Indian village. I've been telling you for weeks, but you insist upon going on around looking as though someone had been tossing wet wash at you."

"Do I?" Cubbie was surprised. Since she never gave a thought to her clothes or her appearance, it hadn't occurred to her that anyone else did either.

"I've been telling you," repeated Mary Lou, putting out the lights as the bell rang. "And you ought to do something about your hair. You're just lazy and slaphappy, that's all."

Cubbie undressed and got into bed, but she didn't go to sleep for a long time. There were so many things you had to do if you wanted to make yourself over. If being lazy was so bad, you probably had to do things you didn't want to do—such as go out for crew, try to make the swimming team, and all that bilge. Cubbie sighed wearily. It was undoubtedly going to be a hard life from now on, but if you couldn't be beautiful you had to do something; so that you would be a daughter your father wouldn't be ashamed of.

As she turned over, her hand touched something, and quivering fingers closed convulsively around a chocolate bar. The call of the flesh shook her violently from head to stern, and for a moment she trembled on the brink of temptation. Then quickly, as though it burned her, she tossed the chocolate bar out of the window.

A letter postmarked Chicago arrived a few days later, and Cubbie carried it tightly clenched in her hand to the lagoon behind the golf course, where she could be alone. This was what she had been waiting for—and dreading. She slowly opened it and read:

Dear Cubbykins:

I wanted to talk to you on Sunday, but since circumstances ruled it otherwise, I shall attempt to put it in writing.

About Natica first. I appreciate your giving your permission for me to marry her more than you will ever know. For a little girl of fifteen, you are very big indeed. But even as I know when a sour note is struck on a piano, I know when something goes wrong with you. So let us say plainly that you did not like Natica, and Natica did not like you. And that

changes a lot of things for all of us. For some time I have worried about the fact that I do not provide a normal home life for you, and I have thought that if the right person—for both of us—came along we might do something about it.

Natica is not that person. I thought she might be, for Natica is lovely and charming in many ways. But she saw you only as something like an unbecoming hat for her, and it was easy to see that her chief concern would be, in years to come, whether anyone might suspect that she were old enough to be your mother. Of the two, you were the mature one who only tried to conceal the fact that she made you feel ill-at-ease and unwelcome. You were more concerned over the steak spilled on her suit than she was of your feelings or mine. For in rejecting you, she rejected me too.

When I marry again it will be a marriage for three, not two. It has to be that way. I have had a perfect marriage—with Gloria, your mother—and while it only lasted a year until her death, it was, I know, more happiness than most people have in a lifetime. That cannot happen again, and until someone comes along who can help me make up to you for all that you have missed in life so far, I can get along, as I have been, on the whole a pretty lucky guy.

Which brings me to the important thing I have to tell you. Leading a band while the world is torn to shreds is not my idea of things, so I have decided to apply for a commission in the Navy. War will hit us sooner or later, and when it does, you wouldn't want a father who ignores his duty, because you are my daughter and I know we feel alike about these things.

That is all for now. I'll write you when we reach Frisco. Listen in Saturday night if you can, and be a good girl!

Love to you, baby

Daddy

P.S. Your pal R. Montgomery is applying for a commission, I understand, and he can't do that to me! D.

Cubbie finished reading the letter, and for a moment she stared at it with unseeing eyes. Then she threw herself on the ground and cried and cried as if her heart would break.

By the time school ended, Cubbie had lost fifteen pounds. It was amazing. At first it seemed as if she would die of starvation, but with grim determination she sat through innumerable midnight feasts chewing bubble gum and eating not a bite. When it became too much for her, she escaped to her room and wrote to her father. And sometimes she even studied, because, after all, you had to do something to keep your mind off the devil's foods and chocolate frosted angel cakes. To her astonishment, she suddenly found herself getting A's—and it was sort of nice to discover that you had a brain!

At the end of the term she won two places on the Class Roster, one Most Popular and the other a title created especially for her: Sophomore Showing Most Astonishing Improvement. She also won three letters for athletics and was one of the sophomores chosen to precede the graduating seniors in their final march down the aisle of the chapel.

But it was that summer that she really seemed to grow up. When a girl thins out and grows taller at the same time, it accomplishes miracles. And in addition, Cubbie had become clothes conscious. When the first skirt had to be given away because it practically slid off her hips and the old sweaters began to bag ludicrously, Cubbie suddenly realized that she had something to work on, and after



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the first surprise of seeing what the right clothes did to a "figger" (which was what everyone said she now had), she went into the business of wearing the right clothes with the zealousness of a crusader.

Her hair was always carefully brushed and shining. She kept her nose powdered; and carefully applied lipstick emphasized the loveliness of her mouth, and brought out the blueness of her eyes. Inferiority complex or not, Cubbie knew that now she wouldn't be mistaken for a tank in any language. And by August, she was eagerly counting the days until she would see her father again, for she knew that he would hardly know her.

But fate steps in sometimes and does strange things. She was in the wilds of Maine with Mary Lou and her family when her father was given a commission in the Navy, and before you could say "Davy Jones" he had been sent to England on some mission. Then school had started again, and before Cubbie could get over being dazed about England, letters were coming from Panama. December came with the holocaust of Pearl Harbor, and suddenly Cubbie was frightened. Forlorn and lost, she stood by the window that night looking out. There was a bright star in the early winter dusk, probably the North Star. And somewhere a ship was plowing through dark waters, probably guided by that shining star. Like a diamond in the sky . . .

"Sometimes," she said to Mary Lou in a choked voice, "I even feel like praying to a star. I'm just a big sissy, that's all."

"No, you're not," smiled Mary Lou. "You're just a big baby." But she isn't, Mary Lou thought. Not any more.

Cubbie stared at the star shimmering against the hard blue of the sky. Suddenly she turned to the desk, picked up her pencil and began to write. Like a diamond in the sky . . .

And at long last the news that she had waited for and prayed for and hoped against hope for came. Her father was back, safe, in New York. And like all the other things which had happened so swiftly, here she was walking across the esplanade on her way to meet him at the Plaza for the second time in her life,

"I can't believe it!" she kept saying joyously to herself over and over. But it was true. It was true!

She saw them before they saw her, for there were two tall figures in blue uniforms, one a lieutenant commander, and the slimmer one, an ensign. And on feet which carried her like wings she reached them, breathless. "Hello, Daddy!" she said softly.

Her father turned and stared at her with a slightly dazed expression. "Why, Cubbie!" he said, and then she was in his arms, and she was laughing and crying and clinging to him, and smiling up at the tall ensign, who had taken off his cap and was smiling at both of them. And he had a dazed expression on his face too, as he looked at Cubbie.

Her father held her off and looked at her. "I can't believe it," he said in wonder. "I left a little girl behind, and I come back to find a glamour girl!"

Cubbie looked up at him, her eyes also wide with wonder. For if he had found a glamour girl, she had lost a glamour boy. This was no glamour boy standing before her. It was a man with graying temples and little grim lines about the eyes that hadn't been there before, and a stern set of the jaw that didn't bear

much resemblance to the smile of Sonny Wylie at the piano. It was a Navy officer who stood before her, handsome and distinguished and even stern-looking. And he looked like a father. A father anyone could be proud of. "Oh, Daddy!" she breathed. "You look gorgeous!"

"So do you, gorgeous," he said, and then he remembered the dark-haired ensign standing there watching them. "Oh, this is Ron, Cubbie. I brought him along because he doesn't know anyone in New York. I told him you wouldn't mind."

"Mind?" Would anyone mind having something tall and handsome in a uniform delivered right to the door? With a sad, twisted smile and blue eyes which looked at you like that! Mind? Cubbie held out her hand and smiled up at him. "Hello, Ron."

"This is Cubbie, Ron. Or maybe," her father said, smiling quizzically, "we should call her Gloria now."

The ensign smiled right into her eyes, making her heart do strange, beautiful flipflops. "May I call you Gloria, Cubbie?"

"Yes." She smiled back at him. "But I don't feel very Gloria." She looked at her father. "I still eat steak," she said solemnly.

He laughed. "It's a fine idea. Let's get going." As Ron left to get cigarettes, her father spoke quickly. "His father didn't come back with us, and I thought we could try—"

"Oh," said Cubbie, and her eyes followed Ron with her heart in them.

"I was going to say that you don't need to mother him, but I see," her father said drily, "that that will not be necessary." He raised his eyebrows, and Cubbie blushed. "Anyway," he went on, tweaking her nose, "I like him better than you did Natica, and just in case—well, I hereby give my permission." He squeezed her arm as Ron rejoined them.

The steak was gone, and so was the sherbet and coffee. They lingered happily over cigarettes, and it seemed to Cubbie that never had three people had so much fun together.

"It seems funny," said Sonny, looking around, "to think that I once led a band here. I doubt that I'll ever do it again—or want to. I think I'll stay in the Navy." Then he frowned. "Or is there a rule against Navy officers writing music?"

Cubbie remembered something. "Oh, Daddy, I'm song leader of the class, and I've been writing a lot of songs." She fumbled in her pocketbook and brought out a folded piece of paper. "I wrote one about you when you were at sea. It probably isn't very good, but I thought perhaps you'd—" She colored and handed it to him.

"Hmm. I never raised my daughter to be a song writer." Her father bent over the piece of paper. "Like a diamond in the sky . . ." He read silently for a moment, then he looked up in surprise. "This is good. It's a damned good lyric!" He read it again. "In fact, it's so good that I'm going to put it to music. What do you think of that?"

Cubbie couldn't even speak. She just smiled at him, her face wreathed in happiness, and then she looked at the ensign and what she saw in his face made her smile even more radiantly. And her father, watching her eyes sparkle and glow, shook his head. That look, he said to himself, in a woman's eyes . . . He looked down at the paper again. "Like a diamond in the sky . . ." And Lieutenant Commander Wylie smiled. Like a father.

Coming: "Sailor, Take Care!" a story of headstrong love by Royal Brown

He Married a Doctor

(Continued from page 68)

at Ellis Island. You know better than that."

"But what a crazy idea! Naturally, not! But I was looking, I suppose, for some sort of escape. I tell you I can't sleep."

He asked, "What was wrong with Hilda? She seemed unlike herself."

Maida said, "Hilda doesn't confide in me. But I think that she and Carey have had some trouble."

"Trouble?"

"I wouldn't know, although I could have told anyone that they would, sooner or later. They simply are not suited."

Roger looked at her. "Maida, what are you up to?"

"I?" she asked, all innocence. "I don't know what you mean."

He said, "I don't know what you mean, either. But you're up to something. And if it's to hurt Hilda, I won't permit it."

"How could I possibly hurt her?" Maida murmured. She smiled. "I should think you would be the last person to be upset by knowledge of trouble in the Dennis ménage."

He said heavily, "I give up."

"I wouldn't, so soon. Because she'll turn to you eventually, Roger, and you know it. Just as Carey and I—" Maida stopped. She said, "I'm afraid I've said too much."

"Too much," agreed Roger, "and too little."

Later, leaving the von Kunst house, Roger drove straight to Haleakapu, where Karl informed him that Mrs. Dennis was not yet at home but that she had telephoned she would be there any moment, in case, Karl added meticulously, a message came from Mr. Dennis. If Dr. Spence would care to wait?

Roger indicated that he would.

He had smoked two cigarettes and lighted a third when he heard her come in. He heard first Karl's voice and then hers, and a moment later she walked into the drawing room.

He said, "I won't keep you long, Hilda, but I want to talk to you. Your man tells me Carey isn't home yet."

"No, it's a little early. I finished sooner than I expected. I had one more call after I saw you."

She had taken off her coat and hat in the hall. Now she sat down, motioned him to a chair and ran a hand through her hair, pressing her finger tips against her forehead.

"Headache?"

She managed a smile. "A little," she admitted; "but nothing sleep won't cure."

"I might diagnose tension," he said gravely. "Hilda, I must talk about Maida von Kunst."

She looked up. "Why? Did your examination show any—?"

He interrupted quickly. "No, certainly not. I'm not speaking as her doctor, but as your friend. What is she up to? I asked her that; but got no definite reply."

Hilda shook her head. "Honestly, Roger, I see no point in discussing her other than professionally."

"Climb down off the high horse," he advised. "She didn't say much, but it was enough." He smiled. "It is quite apparent to her that I'm in love with you," he added. "Don't look at me like that. I've been telling you so for some time—a little vaguely, perhaps. Also, she knows that Kathy and I are not on the best of terms and that it is likely that Kathy will ask for a divorce, once she is sure of her position regarding a second marriage. What I want to say is this: Maida informed me that I was running in luck,

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because you and Carey were having trouble."

"She said that?" demanded Hilda.

"More or less. So I want to know one thing: Are you having trouble? Don't shake your head; hear me out. I don't want to know for my own sake, Hilda, but I am interested for your sake. This may sound unlike me, and I think it is. But I am a practical man, my dear. I am conscious that, however I feel about you, you do not love me. You are deeply in love with your husband. Even if you were not—even if the setup were as Maida indicated, which I do not believe—I would not feel very hopeful.

"You told me not long ago that if you had never met Carey, if I had not been as blind as I was, we probably would not have found a happy future together. I think you are right, Hilda. If I had married you, I would have been jealous of you eventually, both professionally and personally. That's the way I am. As for being in love with you, I'll get over you; or if I don't, it won't especially matter. For it's one of those nostalgic it-might-have-been emotions which isn't too unpleasant. So I want to help you if I can."

Hilda was touched, and tears came to her eyes. She said, "Thank you, Roger, but there isn't anything you can do."

"Must I be brutal? Maida intimated that she and Carey—"

"Please, I'd rather not discuss it."

"I would, if I were you. Not with me, but with Carey. Because I don't believe it, Hilda. I think Maida is deliberately trying to break up your marriage, believing Carey will turn to her since he was once in love with her. The fact that she also believes, or pretends to believe, that you would turn to me has nothing to do with the situation. And while I don't know your husband very well, I do know him well enough to be convinced that if this were the case he would have told you the facts. He is that sort of man. There is nothing subtle about Carey; nothing underhanded or devious."

Roger was right, of course; still the good diagnostician. Hilda felt a deep shame. Because she had been so confused and disturbed, because all along she had been afraid of Maida without admitting it, her own chaotic emotions had blinded her to the simple fact which Roger now pointed out—the fact that Carey would not conduct an affair behind her back; would not leave it to Maida to tell her, but would have come to her, his wife, as soon as he was sure.

"So," said Roger, as she remained silent, "if you'll take my advice—"

She was smiling now. "I shall, and I'm very grateful."

He rose, and Hilda rose with him. He took her hands and said, "You're a stubborn girl, Hilda."

"The Major told me that too, today."

"And a nice one," he murmured. "I want to see you happy; I've liked seeing you happy, even if it gave me a pang. For it gives me a sharper pang to see you unhappy. If you can't be happy with me, Hilda, I'd like you to be with Carey."

She asked suddenly, "Roger, what are you going to do—about Kathy?"

"Try," he said briefly. "I came to that conclusion some days ago. I heard indirectly that Aliston is trying to get an Army commission. That doesn't sound as if he were going to urge Kathy to a divorce. Her pride will be hurt, and when her pride is hurt she—well, that's the way it is. I'm going to talk with her and see if she will consent to another attempt—an attempt to find happiness again. We were happy, you know, at first. I want her consent to that and to going for a time to Stivens' place. I don't be-

lieve the drinking has reached a stage where she cannot be cured. I think she has grown to depend on it as an escape—from me; perhaps, from herself. If she finds she does not need to, it may be easy to stop. Stivens will help her; rest will help her. I'll try, anyway, Hilda."

She said, moved, "I hope with all my heart that you succeed."

"Thanks," he said gravely, "and if I don't—well, maybe I'll wash up my practice and see if the government can use me." He bent and kissed the top of her head. "Good luck to us both," he said, and she held fast to him for a moment, sensing his real affection under the veneer. It was rather like the days when, at nine years old, she had run to a big smiling boy for protection.

Carey, coming in quietly, passed the drawing room and looked in. He went on upstairs to his own room. No one had seen him come. The front door was unlocked; he had not used his key. He went to his clothes closet, took out a suitcase, opened bureau drawers and began methodically to pack.

When a few moments later Hilda went upstairs, she heard him moving about. She opened the door between their rooms and went in and looked at him.

She said, "Carey, has your commission come?"

He straightened up and regarded her. "Yes," he said. "I have to go to Washington. However, I won't be gone long. After that I expect I'll have some weeks before my orders come through."

She put out her hand and took hold of a chair for support. She said, "I—I didn't hear you come in."

"No," he agreed. He added, "I saw you however, and Roger Spence."

"But why didn't you—?"

"I didn't care to interrupt," he said.

Hilda sat down on his bed. She asked, "Carey, what are you thinking?"

"What am I to think?"

She said, "But it's so absurd. There is nothing between Roger and me."

He said, "Once you told me you had been in love with someone. Was it Spence?"

"Yes," she said. "But that was over long ago; it was never much more than hero worship. I have known him since my childhood; I interned at Lister, when he was there."

He said slowly, "So Maida was right."

"Maida?"

"There's a rumor that Roger's wife is interested in someone else."

"What has that to do with us?"

"A good deal."

She said, "Then you don't believe me?"

He looked at her. "Yes, I suppose so. Yet everything's different, isn't it? And you didn't believe me, Hilda."

"Carey!" She got up and came to him. "We're at cross-purposes. You can't believe Maida . . . Look what she has done to Franz."

He was startled. "Franz? What has Franz to do with it?"

Hilda said, "Maida has proof that he's innocent of the charges against him, Carey, and she won't produce them because she wants to get rid of him; because she wants—you."

"What do you mean, proof? Who told you this?"

"The Major." Hilda repeated what Jenny had said, and Carey listened grimly.

He said, "If the Major's right—"

"She's sure of it."

He said, "I'm going to Washington. If I had the proof, I think I could find a way to use it."

"Carey," Hilda said desperately, "never mind that now. Think about us. I don't know how we came to this situation of cross-purposes and misunderstanding,

but we have to clear it up. We must!"

Her telephone rang insistently. She looked at him with the utmost appeal, then fled to answer it, and he followed her into her room and waited until she hung up and turned to face him.

"It's Aunt Jenny," she said. "She fell and sprained her ankle, or so Mrs. Mac thinks. I'll go right down. Will you call Isabel Richey and see if she's taken another case, and if she hasn't, ask her to stand by until I find out how serious it is?"

She went downstairs without another word. Carey picked up the telephone book, found Isabel's number and called it. Isabel had gone off the case a week ago, although Hilda had demurred. Now, when Carey reached her, he gave her the message and then rang for Karl.

He said, when the man appeared, "I am going to Washington. I shall drive to town. I want you to finish packing for me. Karl, but bring my car around first. I have an errand to do. If I do not get to Dr. Redding's before Mrs. Dennis returns, please say I will call her from New York. If she should call here, she can reach me at Baron von Kunst's."

Hilda drove to Jenny's, her thoughts centered on her aunt.

When she reached the house and raced in, Jenny was sitting in the living room with her foot soaking. She said, "I told Peg not to call you. It's nothing but a sprain."

Hilda knelt to examine the ankle. She said "It's a bad one. You'll be off that foot for some time."

"My school of thought is, strap it and stay on it."

"You're a big woman, Major," Hilda argued, "and you've been very ill. I think in this case you'd better stay off it. We'll have Isabel back for a few days." Jenny glared at her; Hilda glared back. Hilda said, "I'll call Dr. Bevin. He can arbitrate. I'll have to call him anyway, as you're his patient and not mine."

"He'll be gone soon," said Jenny gloomily, "and I'll have to shop for another doctor."

Hilda smiled. "Okay, but you won't have much choice. How about Jones?"

"I am not yet in my second childhood."

"Then," demanded Hilda, "how did this happen?" She pointed to the ankle.

"The idiot boy threw the evening paper on the porch. Peg didn't hear, and I was in the office. I got up in a hurry and went out to the door and slipped. I don't know on what," she said crossly, anticipating Hilda's question. "Anyway, first thing I knew I was flat. Peg came running, and Mac, and they got me back here and started treatment."

Hilda rose. "Well, you know what to do, but I'll call Dr. Bevin anyway. He'll bring his portable X ray, and we'll make sure."

"Must I tell you for the second time in one day what a mule you are?"

"You too," retorted Hilda. "What was the rush about getting the paper? You listen half the day to the radio; you know what's going on. Couldn't you have waited until Mrs. Mac brought it to you?"

"No," said Jenny, "I couldn't."

Hilda was getting her things on.

"You needn't rush," said Jenny crossly, "or is Carey home?"

"That's why," said Hilda. "His commission came through today. But he has to go to Washington tonight."

"I see," Jenny was silent. Then she said, "Run along, then. I needn't tell you to keep your chin up. Come here to me."

Hilda obeyed, and Jenny reached up and pulled her head down and kissed

her—a rare gesture, as she was not a demonstrative woman.

Hilda went into the office, and Jenny, soaking her swelling ankle, heard her niece telephoning Dr. Bevin. She came back a moment later and looked in.

"He's coming as soon as he can, and I'll get back after dinner, after Carey's gone."

"All right; but you're making an unholy fuss over nothing. It wasn't my heart that tripped me," Jenny said.

Yet, in a manner of speaking, it had been.

The office telephone rang, and Hilda went to answer it. She returned a moment later. She looked troubled and grave. "That was Eva Thracken. They've just had word that the boy has been killed, flying in England. I'll have to go over at once to see if there is anything I can do. Eva says her mother is very brave, but prostrated with shock. I'll phone Carey and tell him," she added. "I must get back before he leaves."

Her aunt heard her dialing the Halekapu number, then speaking to Karl. Presently she came back, bag in hand. She said, tight-lipped, "I needn't hurry. Carey's left word that he's at Maida's."

Jenny heard the door slam. She thought: So there's the rub!

Carey needed to think too. He had thought furiously on his way to Maida's. But when he reached there he still did not know what he would say. Maida's butler greeted him with a discreet smile, reporting smoothly that the baroness was alone and he would announce Mr. Dennis at once.

She kept him waiting a few minutes. When he finally opened her door and walked in she smiled at him. She said, "I thought you'd come back."

Carey stood beside the bed looking down at her. He asked, "Why?"

"Must I tell you? The attraction remains. You know it—now."

"I didn't come here to discuss your incredible self-delusion, Maida. I came to talk about Franz."

"Franz?" she repeated.

"Yes. From—from certain things which I have learned, I am convinced it is entirely your doing that he is at Ellis Island. I am convinced the authorities gave him a clean bill of health before the declaration of war and only information which you have since given, or possibly caused to be given them through other channels open to you, resulted in his detention. It is useful to you. You wanted it. But you have proof somewhere that Franz has not been indulging in subversive activities. You have proof that, on the contrary, he is passionately anti-Nazi and has been financing the underground in Germany, at great risk to himself."

Maida was very white under her make-up. She said, "Hilda told you that. She's trying to make trouble between us. She's insanely jealous."

He asked, "Why should Hilda be my source of information?"

Maida rushed on, heedless of the caution sign. "Because she accused me of this today; because she's anxious to put me in as bad a light as possible; because she won't give you up!"

"You gathered that?" he asked, and smiled. "For your information, Hilda did not tell me. But someone else did, a person in whom Franz confided and whose judgment I would stake my life upon." He hesitated, then took the gamble. "This person, as it happens, also has proof, Maida. Franz didn't wholly trust you. So the matter will come to the attention of the authorities, anyway. But if I were you, I'd put myself in a better



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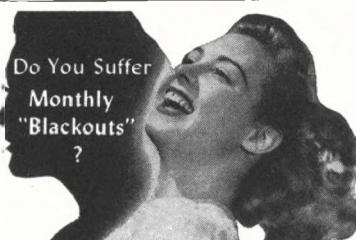
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position; I'd say, perhaps, that I came across the evidence by chance and of course rushed to my husband's rescue. That might whitewash you, though naturally not with Franz.

"Do you realize that in suppressing this evidence you are indirectly harming your own country? The German underground is composed of men and women who daily put their lives in danger in order to make a desperate united stand against Nazi domination. By so doing they are helping our cause, which is, presumably, your cause. You've placed Franz in a situation from which he cannot extricate himself to help them." He added, half to himself, "But why didn't he clear himself before the declaration of war? I'll never understand that."

She said sullenly, "He didn't have to. He wasn't approached. Other people were, friends of his, associates. It was a routine checkup. We weren't at war then. Nothing came of it."

Carey said, "So you admit it?"

She looked at him angrily. "Why not? I'm sick of Franz and of his preoccupation with Germany. I believe there's some woman over there; I don't think it's just his sister and the rest. He eats, drinks, sleeps underground. He's made me give him money; he's spent his own."

"What a despicable woman you are," said Carey.

She began to cry. "I know you hate me!"

"I don't hate you, for the emotion I feel is not as personal as hatred." Carey paused. "I'm going to Washington tonight. I want whatever evidence you have. I'll take it direct to headquarters and tell them your story. I'll say you didn't know. How you will square yourself with Franz is another matter. But I think I could manage better than you can. In the first place, if you are questioned too sharply—" He shrugged. "And besides, I don't trust you."

"You can't make me!" she said.

"Oh, yes, I can. Because I'm going to headquarters anyway. You needn't think that destroying any proof will help, Maida. You forget that someone else knows as much as you, and also has proof."

He was getting in deeper. He believed Jenny, but she certainly had no proof.

After a while Maida said, "Very well."

She got up and crossed the room. On one wall a picture hung. Behind it was a small wall safe. Maida whirled the dials, and the safe swung open. She took out a long leather envelope and threw it on the bed. "There it is."

Carey opened it and looked through the contents. There were letters, couched in veiled terms, but easy to translate if you knew for what you were looking. There were receipts for sums of money.

It was evident that before the United States entered the war Franz von Kunst had been financing the underground through various means: an American in Lisbon; certain people in Switzerland. He was still doing it. It was also clear that before England declared war he had worked through people in England—exiled Germans and others. It was all there in black and white.

She said, "If I give these to you, you'll keep me out of it, Carey?"

He looked at her, and she turned her eyes away. He said, "There's no *if* about it. I have them; I'll keep them and they'll go to the proper people. I'll say you sent them; that you were too prostrated to come yourself. I'll say Franz was afraid to tell you lest you too run a risk. Perhaps Franz will be convinced that you have had a change of heart. If he isn't, I don't envy you. But of course, after a decent lapse of time following his release, you can divorce him."

She said, "He'll never let me, not as long as I have money to carry on this—this lunacy. And what good does it do?"

"We won't know," said Carey, "until after the war. But your premise is absurd, Maida. How can he keep you from divorcing him?"

She did not answer, and he thought with renewed disgust: There is a reason; something that happened during the short time they have been married Spence? He didn't believe that. But that Franz had some hold over his wife Carey felt certain. He thought: I won't ever know about it. I don't want to. Only Franz's detention for the duration would help Maida in her plans for divorce. Because Franz wouldn't care, then. He would be of no use to what was once his country; he'd let her get a divorce.

Not now.

Carey thought: I wouldn't be in her shoes for all the gold at Fort Knox.

She said, "I—I did it for you."

"I doubt it," said Carey.

He walked out and left her. He doubted that he would see her again. He hoped he would not. He thought of Franz. The contents of this leather envelope would procure his release. And after that the Baron and Baroness von Kunst would be at home to their friends. Carey smiled, not pleasantly. He thought of a favorite word of Jenny's: *comeuppance*. Maida would have her *comeuppance*. The devoted couple; the loving wife who had stood by through thick and thin. Perhaps she would even spread the little fairy tale of the overdose of sleeping medicine, taken when crushed by the thought of her beloved's perfidy. She would also circulate the legend of her rapture when she learned that he was, after all, no traitor.

But she would have difficulty explaining why Franz hadn't told her where the evidence was kept. He wondered if by now Franz had told in an effort to clear himself, in which case the baroness would have visitors very soon. But that was up to her. It looked like an impasse to Carey. He didn't care. What happened to Maida was no concern of his, which was odd, he reflected, for once he had loved her. What happened to Franz was of great concern, which was odder still, for he disliked Franz von Kunst.

The telephone was ringing as Carey came downstairs, and Maida's butler answered. He said, emerging from the telephone closet, "It's for you, Mr. Dennis."

Hilda, thought Carey. He quickened his steps. He must get back to her at once. He would delay his departure for Washington and take the midnight. He must see her, must clear up this whole thing. It still rankled that she had not trusted him. He thought: But I didn't trust her. He thought: How much of all that was Maida?

But when he reached the telephone it was Jenny. "Carey," she said, "can you come here? I want to talk with you. It's important. What train are you taking?"

"I can take the midnight," he said, but—where is Hilda?"

"She had to see a patient. She'll be back presently. I'd like you to get here first. You can have dinner with me, both of you."

He asked, "What about your ankle?"

"Drat my ankle! Will you hurry?"

He said, "I'll have to pick up my bag, but I'll hurry."

He did so, driving through the winter dusk. He thought: What's wrong with the Major? But Hilda was the center of his thought. He thought: She tried—she did try to meet me halfway. Then the blasted phone rang, and I flung myself off in a stupid rage. I ought to be shot.

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We both should be, he told himself. We're a couple of idiots.

When he reached the house Jenny was being X-rayed, Bevin having arrived with the portable machine, and Isabel Richey was in command. Jenny gave him a look of bitter exasperation. She said grimly, "Find a paper or a magazine until this nonsense is over."

Bevin grinned. He said, "She'll live."

"You won't," said Jenny, "unless you get on with your wizardry. You and Hilda just try to impress me."

Carey wandered into the living room, and Mrs. Mac came in to talk to him. Bill was enlisting the first of the week. She had to talk to someone about it. It was what she wanted him to do, she said, but it was pretty hard on her and Mac in their old age. She added that she'd heard Mr. Mason was trying to enlist too—"and him just married," she added.

"My commission's come through," Carey said. "Congratulate me, Mrs. Mac."

Her eyes filled. She said, "I know. Poor Hilda." She put out her hand. "But she wouldn't want it different." She added, "Will she come home to live, Mr. Dennis?"

"I think so," Carey told her. "We—we haven't talked much about it yet."

Hilda's car drove up, and he went out bareheaded in the bitter wind and opened the door. She looked pale and drawn. "You? But I thought—"

"The Major sent for me," he said. "We're to have dinner with her. I'll take the midnight, Hilda."

Hilda walked past him into the house. Carey, following, caught up with her. He said, "Dr. Bevin is there."

Her face changed. She said, "I'll go right in."

Her attitude wasn't promising, he reflected, and felt his anger rise again. After all, it was a case of the kettle and the pot. Granted that Maida had said fantastic things to Hilda, wasn't Hilda sufficiently certain of his love, sufficiently sensible to take them for what they were worth, which was exactly nothing? What about his own perplexities? Hadn't he seen her with his own eyes in Roger Spence's arms not many hours ago?

He went back to wait. Presently Bevin appeared, Hilda beside him. He said, "I'll telephone when the plates are dry, though I'm pretty sure it's nothing more than a bad sprain. Keep her as quiet as you can, and don't forget you are coming to the office tomorrow to talk things over with me before I leave." He gave Carey his hand, saying, "I understand we're both in Mr. Whiskers' service. Who knows but that literally we may one day be in the same boat!"

Carey smiled. "Hope mine will be in Hawaiian waters."

"Yes, of course. Have you had word from your people, Dennis?"

"Yes," said Carey. "Thank heaven. They're all right, working hard, making the best of things. I have tried to persuade them to evacuate, to make their home with us—with Hilda," he corrected, "when I'm gone. Or to take a place of their own in California. They respond that they are doing good jobs, both of them. My father is on all sorts of committees; my mother heads a Red Cross unit. They are thriving under it, it seems. And it's exactly what I'd expect of them."

He seemed anxious to detain Bevin, thought Hilda. And she too. They both dreaded the moment when they would be left alone.

They were alone now, for that moment and no more. Carey said a little stiffly, "I wanted to tell you. I went to Maida to see if I could force her to disgorge the evidence of Franz's innocence, which the Major was so sure she possessed. She

did. I have it here. I am taking it to Washington."

Hilda said slowly, "That's why you went, Carey?"

"Yes. Did you think there could be any other reason?"

"I didn't know why," she admitted. "I've been very unbelieving," she said, low. "I tried to tell you, but—"

There were always interruptions. This time, twofold. First Isabel, erupting from Jenny's room, having made her patient comfortable. She said, "The doctor's going to have dinner on a tray, much to her annoyance. She wants to see you afterwards." She turned to Hilda. "You know she doesn't want me, doctor."

"Sure she does," said Hilda. "She loves being fussed over, but enjoys complaining about it. Isabel, when I was at the Thrackens' I sent for Eunice. I want her with the family." Hilda turned to Carey. "The Thrackens' son was killed, flying in England. Mrs. Thracken is showing wonderful courage, but she isn't strong. Eva's wonderful too." Hilda tried to smile. "She's in love with a Canadian flier and is more determined than ever to marry him, now that she has had it brought home to her how brief . . ." Her voice trailed off. "The father, however, has gone to pieces. He's suppressed his anxiety for a long time."

"Poor devil," said Carey.

Hilda looked at him. "Yes," she said. She remembered how, a little while since, she had left the Thracken house, her eyes half blind. She remembered thinking: *Suppose it were Carey!*

They had dinner. The conversation was general. And after it was over, they went in to see Jenny.

She was sitting in her high-backed chair, her foot on a stool. The swelling had been greatly reduced, and Bevin had strapped it for her greater comfort. Isabel had taken away the tray, but a cup of coffee sat on a table at the Major's elbow with a pile of newspapers.

"Sit down, you two." Jenny fixed Carey with a piercing black eye as he sat near her. "So you have your commission?" she said.

He sketched a salute. "That's right, Major. Anchors aweigh."

"And you're going to Washington?"

He grinned. "I want to pull some strings. You know where I want to be sent, Major?"

"Yes. I don't blame you." She looked at Hilda, perched on a big hassock. "What are your plans?"

Hilda looked astonished. "I—I haven't thought."

"Yes, you have," contradicted Jenny. "Don't be ridiculous. There's no sense in your renting a house with Carey away, and that mammoth place isn't practical. I'd advise you to try to sell or rent it, and if you fail, close it, leaving a caretaker. You'll move back here with me, I hope."

Hilda nodded. "Yes," she said.

"Good. Do you expect to have your orders soon?" Jenny asked Carey.

"In a month, perhaps. I don't know."

"That ought to give you time to settle your differences," said Jenny.

"Differences?" Hilda echoed. Carey said nothing, but Jenny did not care for his expression.

"If you're thinking Hilda has come running to me," she said, "you're wrong. She hasn't. I've already told her that I think you're both as stubborn as Army mules. I don't, as a rule, interfere with people's lives. But you make me so darned mad, both of you!" Her voice broke, and her black eyes misted.

Hilda said, "I'm sorry, Major."

"Well, I'm going to interfere," said the Major, "because it means too much to

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me not to. Hilda, tonight on his way home Roger Spence stopped in to see me. I don't approve of Roger, but I'm fond of him. He left here just before I had my accident. I wasn't looking for the paper; I went out in a hurry to call him back to ask him something. He told me he had been to see Maida von Kunst—and by the way, he also told me why you were called last night, Hilda. Who says women gossip more than men? Only he wasn't gossiping. He was worried. He'd seen you, he said, to discuss Maida with you. You weren't having any. But he gathered you were unhappy, and he didn't like it. So he came to me."

"Damned nerve!" commented Carey.

Jenny looked at him. "Carey, Roger's not a particularly happy man, and it's his own fault. He is genuinely fond of Hilda, but if you have an idea it's an affection which need cause you anxiety, say so."

Carey said, "I may have jumped to conclusions."

Hilda spoke. "You two needn't discuss me as if I were in another room. I did a little weeping on Roger's shoulder. He was very kind. As a matter of fact, he told me he thought Maida was trying to wreck my marriage and that I should ignore her and all her works because, if Carey were abetting her, Carey would have told me himself. Roger said I should know you better, Carey. I was trying to tell you that when the phone rang."

"Well," said Jenny, "how about it, Carey?"

He looked at her ruefully. "It was rather a shock, walking in this afternoon. I didn't mean all I said. I—I knew Hilda had been in love with Spence once, although she never told me his name. But I had guessed."

"That, translated, means Maida!" said Hilda furiously.

"Maybe; but remember, after we were married you confessed having carried a torch for someone."

Jenny held up her hand. "You're getting nowhere. Let me ask two simple questions. Hilda, you were once in love with Roger—at the age of nine to nineteen and from then on until shortly before you met Carey. I know. I saw you through it. It was puppy love and hero worship. If it had been more you would have gone to New York to be his assistant, as he wanted. But you wouldn't go. You were probably afraid, but mostly, you had more sense. Now, have you any feeling left for him?"

"None," said Hilda, "except liking him and being sorry for him. I—I got over him before I met Carey, really."

Jenny said, "Carey, you were engaged to the von Kunst woman."

"I got over her too," he said, "and stayed that way."

"Well, naturally," said Jenny, triumphant. "And I think you've both behaved like children."

"You don't understand—" began Hilda.

"I don't want to understand any more than I do," said Jenny. "If Maida raised some fancy ructions, I don't want to hear about them. I'll take Carey's word for it that, as far as he is concerned, they didn't mean anything."

"I went back to her house," said Carey, "and got the evidence which you were sure existed, Major, and which will release Franz. She had it all the time; but for her own purposes, she didn't want him released." His face was hard and bitter. He looked at Hilda. "She told me that you had accused her of withholding this proof."

"I was sure of it too," said Hilda, "after talking to the Major."

"But you didn't tell me you'd said anything to Maida."

"I didn't have time," Hilda said. Then she stopped. "Maybe I wouldn't have told you; maybe you wouldn't have believed me."

"I must say," said Jenny tartly, "you two show remarkable trust in each other! But I think you love each other just the same. That matters more than anything. I'm going to tell you something. I don't know why, as it has nothing to do with your problems—you'll have to work them out for yourselves. I was in love once; it has lasted all my life. I spoke of this once—to Carey."

Hilda said something softly, her eyes turned toward her aunt in astonishment—as if Jenny had suddenly become someone else. But she was just the Major, with her tumbled white hair and bright black eyes.

Jenny nodded. "Seems absurd, doesn't it? I met him in Vienna. He was taking a p. g. there too. It was like nothing on earth. Isn't there an expression now, 'out of this world'? It was like that. Funny old houses and narrow streets, snow falling, lighted Christmas trees and stars. This garnet pin"—she touched it gently—"Dan gave it to me. I've worn it often ever since, and always at Christmas. He couldn't afford it. He was dirt-poor; he'd slaved to get the money together to come to Vienna. His father had left him very little. But he wanted me to marry him, then."

"Why didn't you?" Hilda asked softly.

"I'd slaved too," said Jenny grimly, "and I couldn't see it. It wasn't fair to him, I thought then, or to me. But we had wonderful days together. We had that spring and summer." She was silent, and they were silent too, turning their eyes to each other. She went on, "I came home first. When he returned I met him in New York. He was going into his uncle's office in Chicago. His uncle was not well. Also, he wasn't much of a doctor; the practice didn't amount to much. Dan thought he owed it to his mother to build it up and to contribute what he could to her support. She had sacrificed greatly for him. And so we said we'd wait . . ."

She paused a moment, then continued. "We wrote, and we waited. Then things were better for him and he wanted me to come to Chicago. I wouldn't. I was just building up my practice here. I suggested that he come to New York, and he wouldn't. So we quarreled, and we didn't write to each other again. A year or so later I heard he had married."

"Oh, darling!" said Hilda softly.

"Well, I had it coming to me," said Jenny. "I had pride in those days. I was going to be a pioneer in my profession. I was going to make the world sit up and take notice, building up my reputation with the help of my father's old practice." She was silent.

Carey spoke after a while. "And then?" he asked.

"We saw each other again. Some time after, and many years ago. By accident, during a medical convention in New York. He came to my hotel afterwards and we sat up all night trying to talk and think things through. There was no solution, in honor. He was married; he had children. A professional man didn't approach divorce lightly in those days. And I was a professional woman. That made it twice as difficult. Nor had his wife given him cause. There was nothing, nothing. She loved him and their children; he was fond of her, and he adored his youngsters. What excuse had he to say to her, 'I love another woman; I want a divorce; our marriage was a mistake'? Oh, it happens a hundred times a day, I dare say, but it couldn't happen to him. The only

thing left for us was a little happiness by the back door; an occasional meeting, furtive, always fearing someone would see us. But—we wouldn't take it."

Hilda said pitifully, "I wish you had had even that, Major."

Jenny looked at her with a curious expression. "That's your generation speaking, not mine. We couldn't, Hilda. What we had was too good to lose through corruption. We were realistic. We knew what would happen if we snatched in secret. We were not young romantics, although I suppose this generation would think us both romantics and sentimentalists, suffering from puritanical frustrations. But we didn't think of ourselves that way. If you believe it was fear of scandal which held us back, you are partly right. But not altogether. We were concerned with innocent people and what we would be doing to them."

"Nor was that all. We were concerned as well for each other's integrity. We didn't think about frustrations. We had work which we loved and which once had separated us. Now, it would compensate us. I am trying to tell you that I was a fool. Earlier, I could have made my choice and worked with him. I didn't. I was wholly to blame, and I have had that knowledge to burden me all these years."

"I'm not so sure," said Hilda defiantly. "Why couldn't he have come here?"

Jenny smiled. "He liked his practice too much, and perhaps I was a little jealous of him, Hilda. He was far cleverer than I."

"I don't believe it."

Carey asked, "Have you ever seen him again, Major?"

She shook her white head. "Never; nor written. It was better so. I could have seen him. He comes often to New York on consultations or to professional meetings. But he is equally easy to avoid. His branch is not medicine, but surgery." She hesitated. "If I have regretted my decision a thousandfold, I have been, as I said, compensated. I have had my work and Hilda, and now you, Carey. One day, when this horrible business of bloodshed is over, I hope I shall have your child, as I fully intend to live that long."

Hilda was crying. But her voice was even as she spoke again, the tears bright on her cheeks. "Then you—you'd better not scare us again," she said, "as you did December seventh."

Jenny smiled at her. "Do you remember what I was listening to when I had my attack?"

Carey and Hilda spoke simultaneously, "The radio," they said.

"A Chicago commentator," explained Jenny, "who said that Dr. Daniel Morrow was in Honolulu. He'd gone there to lecture on brain surgery. How did I know he wasn't near Pearl Harbor?"

"Morrow?" said Hilda, startled. "But—but I've seen him. I once watched him operate at Lister."

She remembered Dr. Morrow that day; since then she had seen many pictures of him. A tall, thin man, slightly stooped. He had grave, tired eyes, incredibly beautiful, steady hands and a smile of great understanding and sweetness. She remembered telling Jenny about it in a letter. She remembered that the next time she came home Jenny had questioned her, chapter and verse.

Jenny said, "Yes, Dan Morrow. When I knew him he was thin as a reed and tall as a tree. He had blue eyes and untidy hair." She looked into the fire. "Well, that's that. I won't talk about it again. I've kept in touch, in a way. I have all the clippings—his daughter's

marriage; his sons'. The older son has gone into the Army."

Hilda said, "Men are all alike. I mean, he married."

"Why not?" asked Jenny. "A man can love several women during his lifetime in varying degrees. I made no gesture toward reconciliation. The normal man needs home, wife, children, something to work for. It's lonely, working alone. Women manage better, I think; they sublimate themselves in a niece, a parent, a sister, or the little boy next door. They make do with what they have."

She gestured toward the magazines. "Since Pearl Harbor there's been a lot about him—pictures, interviews, and not long ago I knew he was safe. But I have to accustom myself to knowing that the time will come . . ." She added, "Maybe mine will come first." She closed her eyes. When she opened them, she said, "Get out of here, you two, and send Isabel in. I'm tired. I'm going to bed. I'll see you in the morning, Hilda. Good luck on your trip, Carey." They rose and kissed her. She said, "There's nothing wrong with you two. Just the usual adjustments, with a little fireworks thrown in. The fireworks belong to the past. They fizzed out long ago."

They went out to the living room, and Hilda stopped to speak to Isabel. If Dr. Bevin telephoned, she said, he could reach her at Haleakapu.

Isabel watched them walk to the door together, their hands linked.

Outside, under the frosty sky, they stood and looked at each other. Hilda said, "You won't have time to come back home with me."

"Of course I shall," he said.

"No. Go from here," she told him, "or you'll be driving to town at an illegal rate of speed. Will you telephone me tomorrow and come home soon for the time left to us?" she asked wistfully.

He took her in his arms. "I'll come home the moment I can, and I'll telephone. Hilda, have you forgiven me?"

"Must I ask it too?"

"No. Can't we love each other beyond that unhappy necessity?"

Hilda lifted her mouth to his. "I've been so—ashamed. It was Roger who made me ashamed, darling. He put me in my place; he was like the big boy I once knew scolding a thoughtless small girl. He knew you, you see. So did I. But I was jealous."

"I, too."

She murmured, "I wonder what will happen to Maida?"

"Plenty, I think," said Carey, "but it is no concern of ours. All I care about is knowing that Franz goes free. Much as I dislike him, he rates it."

"I know. I'm so sorry, Carey, so sorry." Hilda stopped a moment, then added, "We have some weeks left—a little while."

"We have all our lives," Carey told her, "and you are never to doubt it." He kissed her again. "I'll telephone. I'll be back day after tomorrow, and I love you, Hilda, now and always."

She watched him get into his car, standing there in the frozen driveway. As she heard the motor start, she ran toward him. "Carey," she called. "Carey!"

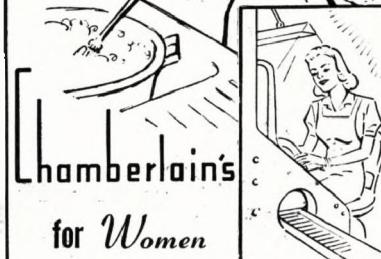
He leaned from the window. "Yes, Mrs. Dennis?"

"Your bag, have you got it with you?"

"Karl packed it," he said, "and I picked it up on my way to the Major's." He was smiling at her.

She stood close to the window. She said, "I love you, Carey."

He lifted his hand; the car pulled away. She was walking, head bent, toward her car when Mrs. Mac came out on the porch.



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"Hilda," she said, "there's a call for you. Mrs. Haines' mother's been taken sick. She wants you right away."

Hilda got into the car. "All right. Tell her I'll be there as soon as possible."

The car shot off down the road. Mrs. Mac went in and closed the door.

This is my job, thought Hilda, driving toward the Haines house in the village.

This, and loving Carey—believing in him, believing in myself, believing in our future, together. Believing in a future for all the world.

She heard the bitter wind; she saw the darkness of the encompassing night, the naked reality of the winter. But overhead were stars.

THE END

Hell's Doorstep (Continued from page 37)

in northern Berlin. The revolt began when the hungry workers discovered a whole freight train loaded with cabbage, carrots and other vegetables which had been left in the yards until the food had rotted. Workers and their wives, with arms full of rotten vegetables, rushed to the market place, shouting, "So this is our New Order! Nothing to eat while a few yards away food lies rotting."

The Gestapo appeared and two "komunistische Rädelsführer" (Communist ringleaders) were shot; others, arrested, have not since been seen, and hundreds were placed together with other homeless workers in the tent town outside Wedding, guarded by the Gestapo, who accompany them to and from the armament factories.

Major and minor tragedies that take place in every bombed town, always similar, do not awaken special interest, but I shall never forget what an eyewitness told me about a woman standing in the Landhausstrasse in front of her shattered house, surrounded by a few pieces of furniture, a phonograph, a half-burned cupboard. Her husband and three brothers had been killed at the front; her two children had been burned alive. She stood immobile when asked whether it was possible to help her—just stood there. Security squads came in the evening and were obliged to force her to accompany them. As she moved away, under force, she began hysterically shrieking, "Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler!"

A Swedish woman who returned to Stockholm after twelve years in Berlin said, "Although all my friends are there, I couldn't stand it." Her whole body shook as she described the nights of terror. Leaving a shelter after a raid, she found her home hit, and heedless of danger, she rushed into the ruins to retrieve what could be retrieved.

Silence greeted her as she searched among the rubble. Suddenly she had a feeling that something was beside her. On looking up her heart stood still. "It was Death himself," she whispered. "His bones were wrapped in tattered clothes, but he had eyes—eyes staring from deep cavities. I'll never forget those eyes."

It wasn't death, but one of those thousands of starving Russian prisoners who are forced to do clearing work while a bombardment is still in progress, ahead of the so-called *Katastrophendienst* (Catastrophe Service), organized to rescue citizens and furniture from burning buildings. This and nearly every other emergency service broke down during the raids. Many witnesses told me how the *Katastrophendienst* often arrived at a house where clearance squads were trying to reach a cellar to free those trapped there, and while the big cranes were at work the house would suddenly collapse. The *Katastrophendienst* would thereupon hang a sign on the ruins: "Corpses Still Here," and move on to easier rescue work. Many days after each raid the tragic remains of victims—arms, legs, heads and intact bodies—were being dug from ruins.

Berlin is not destroyed. But a great deal of it—Siemenstadt, Wedding, Char-

lottenburg, Schöneberg, Steglitz and Friedenau—has been badly battered. The Deutsches Opernhaus, the Schiller Theater and the Komödie are closed and boarded up. But Berlin is not Hamburg. It is much bigger, and the Hamburg raids were much heavier. But the raids will grow in intensity, and it has already been established that even when only certain quarters are bombed the whole urban administration is dislocated, making life a misery for all. As this is written in October, Berlin's traffic lungs are breathing heavily and workers go to work via the River Spree and the canals; streets are still covered with rubble and glass because clearance squads are inadequate.

One outstanding development is that Berlin's population now realizes the weakness of the Gestapo. If one can stand the horrors of bombings, one is no longer so frightened of the Gestapo.

Shortly after a bombardment a Swedish woman was present at a soirée given by the director of the Institute of Art, and heard part of a conversation between the director and a prominent S.S. officer. The director was appealing for some privilege. The S.S. officer answered, "You know I've done everything for you, but this is impossible."

The host then raised his wineglass, saying to the entire company, "I hate this damned National Socialism!"

There was dead silence as the S.S. officer rose. The director will be arrested, thought the Swedish woman, but the officer rushed to a window which stood open, closed it and returned with a sigh of relief to continue his drinking.

It seems as though desperation and the fear of death were killing innate discipline. Several with whom I have spoken have observed that soldiers in the streets of Berlin often do not salute officers—a dangerous reminder of 1918.

The Party is doing everything to stimulate the population. For instance, the bread ration has been increased, but according to my advices, merely by the addition of all sorts of ersatz. Efforts to win over the population by Berlin's chief of police, the notorious Count Helldorf, by citations making "heroes" of civilians, have failed. The popular feeling toward the highest authority of all is best described by this story: A Berliner, asked how many Germans had been killed in World War I, replied: "One too few."

If German morale is analyzed after the war, the Hamburg and Berlin raids certainly will be described as the crisis. The entire population of Germany now feel the cold breath of death's wings rushing over their nation. Only the Berlin working class reacted to the danger with typical dry humor. Ruined Hamburg was described as "an etching by Winston Churchill after an idea of Adolf Hitler." Men and women unable to hide their fears of approaching night were consoled with an ironic polemic against Goebbels' propaganda: "Don't worry, nothing will happen to you. You don't live near a hospital or a church!"

Goebbels MAY have thought he knew his Berliners, but the Berliners KNOW they know their Goebbels!

folks. Right about now, his father would be getting in from his round of morning calls, good-humoredly ironic about the imagined ills of human beings. And about his own real ills too.

Floyd went downstairs to the lobby at a quarter to two. His throat was dry. Nervous excitement beat in his chest like a separate heart. But none of this showed in his face. His face was burnt brown; it was full of interesting ridges and hollows, thin but muscular, sensitive at the corners of the mouth, at the corners of the deep quick eyes.

A wild uncertainty seemed all at once to scatter through him, and in the face of it, perversely exhilarated by it, he strode swiftly into the telephone booth. The book hung on a chain and he thumbed through it. His dark eyes glittered. His secret smile was self-mocking. Why, he demanded impatiently of himself, hadn't he phoned from Boston? Why had he come a hundred miles up here first?

Herron. Samuel E. Herron. That must be it. There was no other Herron listed. He gave the operator the number and was grateful for the seclusion, the utter boxed-in privacy, of the booth. He thought that everything he had ever felt or would ever feel was lumped suffocatingly in his throat.

"May I speak to Miss Herron?" He was surprised to find his voice composed, direct, straightforward.

"Madeline?" a woman's voice said. "Why, she doesn't get home from the office till five—a little later, if the mail at the post office is late."

"Oh," he said, and his heart lifted, grew big and full with thanksgiving, with hope. She worked, then. She worked for a living.

"Do you wish to leave a message?" the woman's voice asked.

"I—" He paused. He said, "This is Floyd Turner."

"Roy—I beg your pardon. I didn't catch your last name. This is Madeline's mother."

"How do you do, Mrs. Herron?" He felt his voice constricting. "Not—not Roy. Floyd. F-l-o-y-d. Floyd Turner. T-u-r-n-e-r. Turner."

"Now I have it. Floyd Turner. Yes, Mr. Turner?"

But she'd never heard of him. Suddenly he felt drawn and bleak. "I'll phone again, between five and six," he said.

"I'll tell Madeline, Mr. Turner. 'By."

He hung up. He was sweating. He mopped his face. A day in his life like a year—and she hadn't even mentioned his name to her mother! He made a rueful grimace. But like a year, only in his life, he thought darkly. Not in hers. And would she remember his name?

Why should she? He left the booth and went up to his room. Why should she? He felt miserable. He had felt miserable a hundred times before—at sea; in the strange streets of Murmansk; in the London hospital after the torpedoing. Dozens of times he had written her and torn up what he had written. He hadn't known how to write, what to say, whether to mention the last moment at the trolley or to ignore it. And the longer he had waited, the more he had put it off, the harder it had become to write anything at all. Until he had decided, finally, that there was only one thing to do: wait. Wait and see. See her again. See if what meant so much to him meant anything at all to her.

Her name was ringing in his head. Madeline. Madeline. At least, Madeline,

remember my name. For God's sake, remember my name.

He stood near the post office in the winter twilight, his shoulders hunched in his turned-up collar. The lights had come on in the stores, and people hurried through the cold. They came out of the stores or out of automobiles, from all directions, and converged on the post office. It was like mailtime in his own town. It was encouragingly familiar. Except in his town you didn't see so many big cars, and you saw no uniformed chauffeurs at all. His town was a farmer's town, bleak gray in winter, hot and dusty in summer—and the big Kansas City-St. Louis trains went through fast.

He took a breath, the air sharp and astringent in his nostrils, and held it. He saw her. She wore a loose yellow coat with a broad belt and a big collar, and there was a beret on her head. She bounded over a mound of snow and disappeared in the post office.

Floyd moved nearer the post office, standing straight and slender, waiting, waiting. Time stopped. He felt suspended, inanimate.

And then he thought, abruptly, how much easier it would be just to telephone. If he telephoned, she wouldn't be able to see him. He wouldn't run the risk of having her look straight at him and not recognize him. He put his hands behind his back and clasped them hard together. No, he'd stay. He'd get it over with, one way or the other—for better or worse. He planted his feet a little wider apart, as if to brace himself.

And then she came out. But she came out with a man holding her arm familiarly, and he was saying something that made her laugh and wrinkle her nose at him. He tapped the bridge of her nose with his forefinger. He was a tall man, somewhere in his thirties. His gray Homburg was tilted attractively on his head. His shoulders were set square in the fur-collared overcoat he wore. He wasn't just anybody. He was somebody.

He gave her arm a cozy squeeze. "See you at eight, then."

"You bet, Ty."

Ty touched his hat and swung off briskly. Madeline, glancing at the letters she shuffled, moved off in the opposite direction. Floyd gazed hungrily after her. There was panic in him, frustration, some burning nameless nostalgia, an immense ache that had no center, no core, but which was all over him at once.

He followed her, a faint humming in his ears, a peculiar lightness in his head. His steps were strangely measured, as if measured to hers, but actually they were longer, and he was fascinated by the slow, inexorable way he was overtaking her. Round the corner and up a quiet street, where the thick trunks of elm trees were still spattered with snow.

She looked around casually—a glance, meaningless. She went on. Then suddenly she looked around again and stopped.

"Hello, Madeline," he said. It was the kind of random greeting you tossed off to somebody you saw every day, and he hadn't seen her in six months. "I thought it was you."

Her arms dropped to her sides. She opened her mouth to say something and then closed it. She shook her head slowly from side to side. She smiled uncertainly. Her eyes were wide open, full of wonder and confusion. She sighed, and her voice shook when she said, "Why, Floyd. Floyd Turner."

"I thought I'd come up. I came up on the bus today. We got in yesterday, but

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I couldn't get away until today." It was harder now. He swallowed. "How are you?"

"But you—you just—vanished!"

"H'm?"

"I mean—" She crushed the letters in her hand. She was as bewildered as he was. She was almost as inarticulate as he was. "I mean—well, vanished."

He glanced at her. Had his coming here, unannounced, upset her? The suspicion flicked him like the tip of a whip. He looked away.

"You know how it is. They never tell you. Things happen fast. This ship had to sail suddenly next day to pick up a convoy—and two of us were thrown into the gun crew."

"Oh, dear!"

"Russia," he said.

"Russia. That's so far, so terribly far."

"It's far, all right."

"Are you—will you be here long?"

"A week," he said. "I'm at the hotel."

"A week?" She looked up, her glance troubled.

Did it mean a week was too long or too short?

"I phoned your home," he said. "I got your mother."

"Mother? Did you?"

She was anxious, he felt. She was caught, webbed in something. She hadn't been prepared to meet him here in her own town. She had met him at the shore on a holiday, away from her town, her folks, the people she knew. He felt things sliding away from him again.

He laughed quietly, with false levity. "I had to spell my name out." He was sorry the instant he had said it. He was ashamed. "Well, it's cold," he said. "I won't keep you like this."

She put out her hand as if to touch his arm, but withdrew it. "I—I'll phone you," she said.

He felt as if he wanted to rip aside some dark, concealing curtain. "Look," he said quietly, earnestly. "The last thing in the world I want to do is cause you any trouble."

She put her hand on his arm. "I'll ring you. Tonight." She dropped her hand down his arm, pressed his hand. Her lips were stiff, and as she turned away she gave him a quick, stiff smile.

He walked back to the hotel and sat in the lobby in one of the rocking chairs that faced the plate-glass window. He watched the cars go by in the clear, sharp winter dusk. Gradually, the tension left him; the dry, acrid bitterness consumed itself. There was no reason why he should feel bitter. Who was he to feel bitter? Because his feeling for her was so deep, so implacably rooted, his sole desire now was to place all the blame on himself. He should have written her. He should not have surprised her. It was unfair. He should have waited, and her mother would have given her the message, and then she would have time to compose herself before he phoned again. He blamed himself without compromise, and this had the strange effect of exhilarating him.

A subtle fragrance of food came to him, and he realized all at once that he was hungry. He had not eaten since early morning. A lunchroom would be less expensive, but he didn't want to miss her phone call. He told the old man behind the desk that he was expecting a call and went into the dining room. Every time he heard the phone ring he stopped eating and watched the door.

He was sitting in the lobby again, chain-smoking cigarettes, impatience and anxiety knotted in his breast, when, at seven, Madeline phoned and asked if it would be all right if she picked him up at the hotel at eight-thirty.

He paced the length of the cleared sidewalk in front of the hotel, waiting. He glanced often at his watch, irked that minutes should move so slowly. She arrived a little ahead of time and he ducked into the seat beside her, feeling the blast of the car heater against his cold legs.

"Mother thought it would be nice if you'd come up," she said.

"Oh?"

She drove irregularly, in spurts, turned the corner and started up the hill.

"Floyd, you've met my grandmother."

He peered at the pale blue her face made in the darkness. "I've met your grandmother?"

"At her cottage at the shore. You remember where I said I was spending my holiday?"

He nodded. "Yes, I remember that. But—"

"We met there. When grandma's at the shore, she likes to invite service men in for dinner occasionally, particularly those who are far away from home. She knows a commander who makes all the arrangements. Sometimes she even invites them for week ends. You were there for a week end, Floyd."

He was silent. He would agree to anything she said, but he was nonetheless silent, some small recalcitrant part of him twisting against subterfuge.

Madelene spurred the car over the top of the hill, then slowed down. "It's a little thing, Floyd. It doesn't mean anything at all—except to my parents."

He gave a small laugh, in an attempt to make light of his silence. "I'll probably make a mess of explaining it."

"It's all explained."

He was still uneasy. "But how about your grandmother?"

"She explained it."

"You mean your grandmother?" his startled voice said.

"Before I got home. After you phoned, Mother mentioned it, and grandma, who is very quick, said, 'Oh, yes, he's one of my boys.' Any service man who's eaten at least one meal at the cottage is one of her boys. Then she put on her coat to get a breath of air—at about the time she knew I'd be coming home. She met me at the gate and told me."

He said, "She must be a very unusual grandmother."

"She's terribly fond of me. So—you understand?"

"Yes. Yes, I understand."

She turned in between stone gateposts and followed a driveway toward a scattering of lights. At first Floyd thought the lights were in two houses; then he saw they were in one. It was a big house, with wings at each end. It was as big as any of the houses he had seen on Main Street. His heart fell. The colored fan-light above the door made a bright splash against the whiteness of the snow and the house.

Floyd got out of the car by the wide, curved veranda. He felt remote, detached, cut adrift on some uncharted sea. Then Madeline came round the back of the car, slipping on the snow, stumbling. He caught her as she lost her balance—caught first one arm, then the other, and straightened her. His muscles were taut. It was as if by holding her up he were holding himself up too, steadyng himself. There was a breathless utterance on her lips—a little gasp, a garbled word.

He let her go, and she slapped snow from her coat. She started up the steps, paused when he did not move and held out her hand. He blinked, mumbling, "Oh," and followed her. And all at once, as she opened the door, all his doubt and uneasiness and trepidation were

funneled into a remote recess inside him and held there, locked and barred. He felt miraculously composed, steady, his mind keen, crystal-clear—just as it was at the penultimate moment of action at sea.

It was in the large entrance hall, with its fine curved balustrade leading upstairs, that he saw a momentary wisp of anxiety in Madeline's eyes. He grinned at her as he gave her his hat and coat. His eyes twinkled. He flexed his shoulders and made sure his collar set right.

"How do I look?" he said jocularly.

She smiled happily at him and nodded. She hung up his things and then her own, and he thought how much her hair looked like the color of a horse chestnut after you'd polished it in your hand. He followed her across the hall, feeling as if he were riding the crest of a wave, and hoping that nothing would happen that might pitch him into the trough.

As he entered the room with her, his gaze caromed from face to face, and he heard the lively crackling of wood in the fireplace. Ty, bent over, was poking at the wood. He glanced up, then stood up, his eyes striking with sudden intense curiosity across the room. Then a woman's face was in front of Floyd; and a little distracted, as if the man's blue gaze had startled him, like a blow from behind, he said, "How do you do, ma'am?"

She dug sharp fingernails into his hand as if to right him, to steady him. And she said loudly, "Floyd Turner, where the devil have you been all these months? I told you you must come back to the cottage for another week end."

His face turned scarlet. Already, in the very beginning, he'd got off on the wrong foot. This, of course, was Madeline's grandmother, a remarkably well-preserved old lady, with rouge on her cheeks, a cigarette in her hand. Her eyes danced at him, chiding him, warning him, and at the same time measuring him, searching his face. There was something reckless and daring about this old face—but something shrewd too, and canny, and infinitely wise.

"I—I didn't get a chance," he said.

"Mother."

Floyd turned a little, stood with his heels together, heard Madeline's mother say, "So you're one of my mother's boys?" And he liked her. There was a mixture of Madeline and the old lady in her—still some of Madeline's fresh, clean loveliness, spiced with something of the old lady's quick, observing eyes. But that was all. She had the intangible quality of someone who has been sheltered and nurtured in familiar surroundings. The old lady had the intangible quality of someone who has weathered storms, good times and bad, and come through triumphantly, with toughness of spirit.

Then Madeline's father was shaking his hand. "I understand you're staying at the hotel," Mr. Herron said. "You shouldn't have done that. We've always an extra room here for one of Mother's boys." He stood back on his heels, a stout man in country tweeds, bald, with a vague preoccupation in his gentle eyes. He glanced sidewise, said, "Oh, have you met Tyson Ward? No, of course you haven't. Tyson Ward."

Tyson Ward's pale blue eyes behind rimless spectacles were icily penetrating. His handshake was brisk. "I think it was awfully swell of you to come all the way up here to see Grandma Hattie—and Madeline. July, wasn't it, when you were at the cottage?"

"July, yes," Floyd said, and in a dim way he feared this man and was suspicious of him.

"I'll have to show you through the plant," Tyson Ward said enthusiastically.

"You'll be interested. We make range finders, you know. You've probably used them. Will you be in town long?"

"I have to be back in a week," Floyd said.

Tyson Ward put a hand on his shoulder. "Old Ty will see you have few dull moments. I'll have to take you ice fishing, too."

"Meet the rest of us," Grandma Hattie said, as two couples wandered in from the room beyond, arguing about a bridge game.

Uncles and aunts of Madeline. Warm, friendly people, comfortably self-assured, with an aura of good will about them.

Floyd began to feel at ease. His eyes sparkled. He could smile naturally across the room at Madeline. He could meet Grandma Hattie's bright, twinkling, shrewd glances—the old lady still deftly measuring him, adding up, with something tantalizingly noncommittal in her manner. And he could meet calmly—with good humor, even—the scintillating blue inquisition of Tyson Ward's eyes. It seemed to him that Tyson Ward struck a jarring note in this firelit room. It was as if he sought, with his explosive laughter, his loud, dogmatic voice, to dominate the room—and succeeded only in reaping humorous indulgence.

At half past ten Floyd stood up and said he must go. Grandma Hattie took his hand, giving it a quick, hard pressure. Her old eyes shone like a young girl's.

"I'll run you down," Madeline said.

But Tyson Ward said, "Nonsense! I've got to get along too; it's on my way."

Madeline gave Tyson Ward a quizzical glance. And Floyd, saying good night all around, followed her across the entrance hall and got his hat and coat. Her face was white, her lips compressed. She clasped her hands as if she were cold.

"Madeline."

But then Tyson Ward came swinging across the hall. He shouldered zestfully into his fur-lined overcoat, wheeled, quite familiarly and intimately took Madeline's chin in his hand and kissed her firmly on the lips.

"Good night, darling," he said gaily and opened the door. "Coming, Turner?"

Going out, Floyd caught a blinding glimpse of Madeline standing motionless, with downcast eyes, a sick look on her face, her body limp and slack. The night air seemed to go all the way down into his body, as if his body were hollow. He followed Tyson Ward to one of the cars, got in, sat stiff and still while Tyson Ward started the motor and said:

"Marvelous folks—the whole family. Salt of the earth. Why, they practically run open house for service men. In the summertime hardly a week goes by but that two or three aren't up." He drove out between the gateposts. "And awfully decent fellows, too. Of course," he chuckled, "once in a while one of the boys will fall hard—smacko!—for Madeline. In a nice way, of course. But after all," he added benevolently, "I don't suppose you can blame a fellow for going haywire over Madeline. And I don't mind, really. They come and go. Innocent fun, really. Here today and gone tomorrow."

Floyd said nothing. Did Tyson Ward think for a minute that he was being subtle? But how could he know there was anything between them? How could he know about that wonderful day at the shore? "Or am I imagining?" Floyd asked himself. He's probably a pretty decent fellow. He doesn't know anything. He's just making conversation. But he knows I came here to see Madeline—not the old lady. And he wants me to know that Madeline is his girl. Maybe I'd do the same, in his shoes.

The car stopped. They were in front

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Because of wartime limitations of magazine paper this directory is smaller than usual. However, this department continues to cooperate with colleges and schools in all sections of the country and is prepared to give personal attention to the educational problems of our readers. Your inquiry should mention the student's age, previous education and special interests, your preference as to location, and the approximate sum you have in mind to cover expenses.

May G. Linehan, Director

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of the hotel. "Thanks," Floyd said, "for driving me down."

"On my way, old man. Nothing at all. I always pitch in for one of grandma's boys."

Floyd walked into the hotel lobby, his entrance rousing the old man who sat dozing in a rocking chair.

"What's the first bus to Boston in the morning?" he asked.

"Morning? Boston? Ten after nine."

"Good night, sir," Floyd said and climbed the stairs.

He lay in bed with the winter moonlight lambent in the room and winter creakings in the old building and in the old trees outside. It was no go—and he told himself he wasn't a bit surprised. She had tried to be nice to him; to be at least decent to him after he'd made the long trip up here. She was sorry about the thing at the shore. She was wonderful and beautiful, but she was caught up in the pattern here—family and relatives and friends and living the right way among people she knew. And she was Tyson Ward's girl. She had known Tyson would kiss her good night when he left, and that was why, in the hall, her face had been white.

Get out. Get out as fast as a bus can carry you. You'll get over it. You don't want her to be nice to you just because she's decent and understanding, and because she's sorry you took it the way you did. You've got a pair of legs. Stand on them.

He lay very still, but his thoughts raced and he could feel his blood pounding. There was so much to do in his life, and he had always been a boy with a purpose; with dreams salted with common sense. He had got a good start in St. Louis and they'd liked his work, and the week after Pearl Harbor, when he'd told them he'd passed his physical for the Navy, they'd been regretful. Well, when this was all over, he'd pick up where he'd left off. By George, before he was thirty he'd be a partner or have an advertising agency of his own.

He closed his eyes tight and saw himself with his own advertising agency. And enough, plenty, to take care of his folks when they were old—so that his father wouldn't have to make the daily rounds taking care of sick people when he was sick himself. These thoughts burned in him, filling him with a sense of hard, brilliant invincibility.

But somewhere, always, in quick kaleidoscopic flashes like horizon lightning, was Madeline.

He shaved and packed his things in the little bag and carried it downstairs with him and went right into the dining room. He placed his bag and hat on a chair and sat down. The sun was over the rooftops, sparkling on the snow, gleaming in the water pitcher on the table. He ate a big breakfast, saving the coffee till the last, so that he could have a cigarette with it. The cigarette tasted good, and the coffee was hot and thick and creamy. He watched a man in a yard next door splitting cordwood.

"Hello," Madeline said.

He started, his feet scraping the floor under the table.

"Don't get up," she said, and sat down opposite him, placing white woolen gloves on the table. She gave the bag on the

chair a guarded look. "I thought you might be going. I started to work early." She opened the collar of her yellow coat. Her nose, her cheeks, were nipped pink by the cold. "Are you really going?"

He crushed out his cigarette, hard. He looked out the window at the man splitting wood, and she looked too.

"Papa wants to take you to the Rotary dinner tonight."

"I'm not one of grandma's boys," he said.

"It's over, usually, at eight or half past, and I thought I'd wait for you and we'd go to the movies."

"And Tyson Ward wants to show me

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through the plant and take me ice fishing. Because I'm one of grandma's boys. I'm not one of grandma's boys!"

"I know," she said. "You're hurt."

"I'm not hurt. But I ought to have my head examined."

They were silent as a group of six came into the dining room and sat down at the big round table next to them. Floyd frowned, paid the check, stood up and gathered his things together. Madeline walked beside him into the lobby and stood aside while he paid his bill. They went out to the veranda together. "Where does the bus stop?" he said.

"Up the street—at the town hall."

It was colder than it had been yesterday. His breath smoked out in front of him, and when he opened his mouth he could feel the cold sting his teeth. They walked up the street to the town hall.

"It's awfully cold," she said. "You can wait where I work. It's across the street, there, and you can see the bus."

He crossed the street with her.

It said "Real Estate & Insurance" on the plate-glass window, and she un-

locked the street-level door, and he followed her inside. She bent and turned up the flame in a circulating oil heater and took off her galoshes. She pulled a batch of letters out of her coat pocket and put them on the desk. She glanced at the clock on the wall, at Floyd's back, at the desk, and then everywhere and nowhere at once.

He heard the leisurely, irrevocable ticking of the clock on the wall. He heard the tearing of envelopes and crackling of paper. And the thumping in his chest, hard and regular, reached all through him, to his throat, the back of his neck.

"Where shall I write you?" she asked.

He gritted his teeth. "Write me!" He turned, shaking. "Why should you write me?" His dark eyes flashed. "My morale is all right. Nobody has to write me. People don't have to be kind to me. They don't have to take me to Rotary dinners and show me through plants and take me ice fishing and be nice, nice to me, and kind, kind! They don't have to write me letters! They don't have to be patriotic on my account!"

Her voice came small and muffled. "Papa likes you, really. Mama likes you. Grandma likes you. Grandma says there is something fine and steady in you, and gay and sad and sensitive."

"And you like me," he said wildly. "And Tyson Ward is just crazy about me!"

She was silent for a moment. "Ty is Ty. No, I don't think Ty likes you. Ty remembers the end of July. He remembers when I came back from grandma's place at the shore. You see, I was almost engaged to Ty. And then I couldn't. He suspected I'd met somebody else. And I'd have told him—I'd have told him, really, if I'd known for sure. But I didn't. Sometimes it seemed as if I'd dreamed it all. Not hearing from you. Not even a card. And taking this job to have something of my own, some money of my own, if it wasn't a dream, if you'd come back . . .

"Only grandma knew. When I got back to the cottage that night I couldn't hide it—I couldn't. I told her. But when you didn't show up on the beach next day, or the next, or the next—all week—and no word from you, nothing, I almost died. And I begged her

to keep it a secret. But I hoped, I hoped. And Ty kept after me, wearing me down, determined, relentless—until, yes, yes, Floyd. I was ready to give up. Because it became so hard, so agonizingly hard, to recapture that beautiful day, that moment in the dark by the car shed. Floyd, Floyd."

"Madeline," he said, rooted. "Madeline, when he kissed you last night—"

"I know. I saw it on your face, Floyd. The minute you came into the room. I knew he knew you were the one. And I knew he'd do something. I didn't know what. And he did it deliberately—and I was defenseless, utterly defenseless!"

"Honey," he said.

And this was it, this wordlessness, this fullness, this immense tenderness that no word, no act, could adequately express. Music was in his head, and bells, and nameless lyric thoughts. This was it. This was it. And some of it was in her eyes, he knew, as he went toward her. In her parted, breathless lips. In her rising arms. In her lips, suddenly and wildly against his own.



~ MERRY CHRISTMAS ~

Something we would like you to know
this Christmas . . .

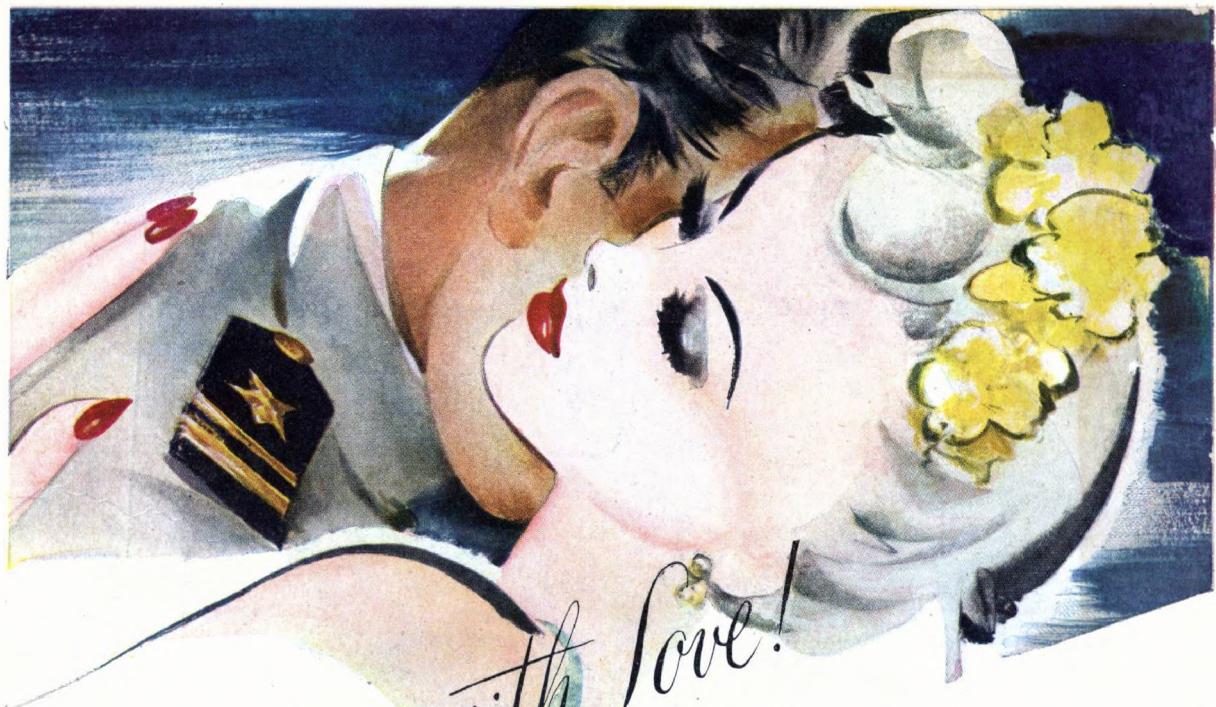
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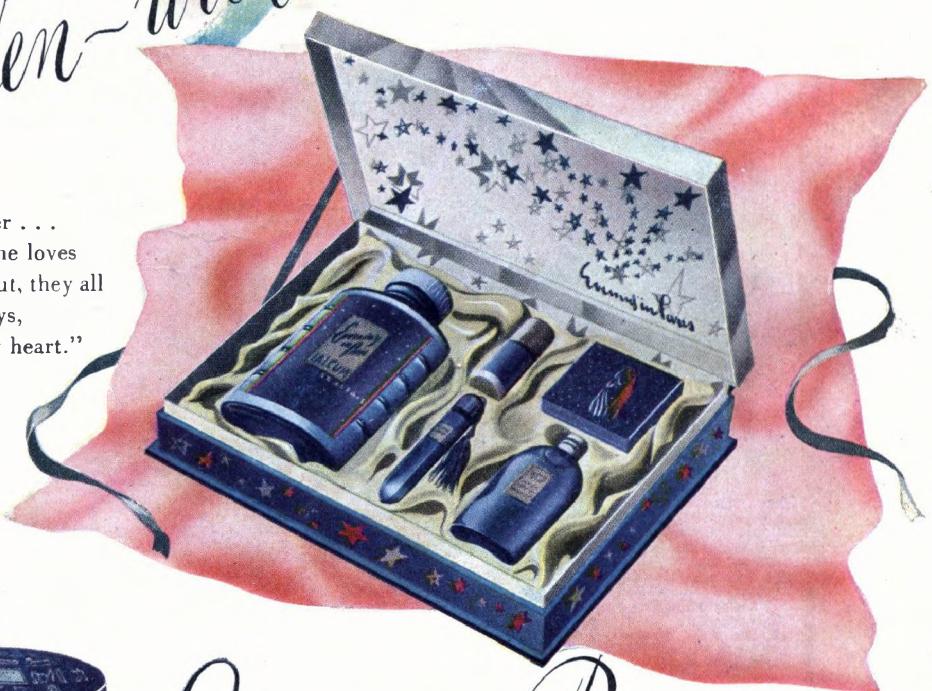


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