

Watches the mad world with immobile lids.
 The Hebrews humbled them at Pharaoh's name.
 Cradle of Power! Yet all things were in vain! 10
 Honor and Glory, Arrogance and Fame!
 They went. The darkness swallowed thee again.
 Thou art the harlot, now thy time is done,
 Of all the mighty nations of the sun.

1921, 1922

America

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
 And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
 Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
 I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!
 Her vigor flows like tides into my blood, 5
 Giving me strength erect against her hate.
 Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.
 Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,
 I stand within her walls with not a shred
 Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer. 10
 Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
 And see her might and granite wonders there,
 Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,
 Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.

1921, 1922

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

1890–1980

Over a long writing life Katherine Anne Porter produced only four books of stories and one novel, *Ship of Fools*, which did not appear until she was over seventy. Her reputation as a prose writer did not depend on quantity; each story was technically skilled, emotionally powerful, combining traditional narration with new symbolic techniques and contemporary subject matter.

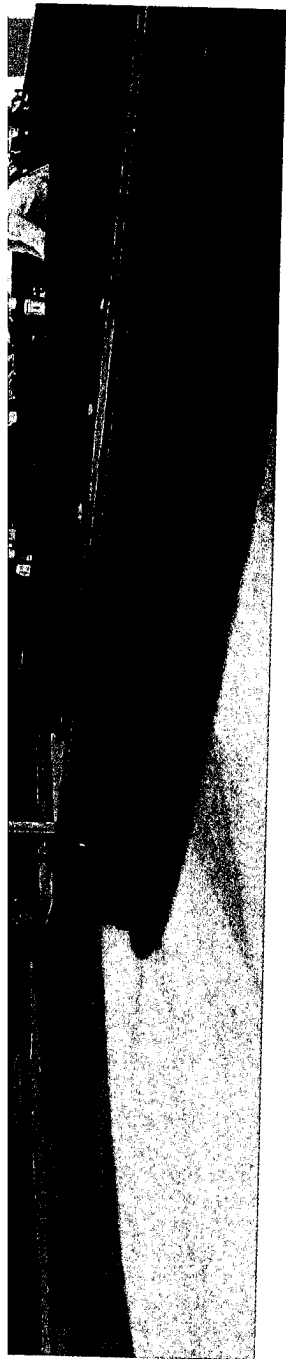
Callie Porter—she changed the name to Katherine Anne when she became a writer—was born in the small settlement of Indian Creek, Texas; her mother died soon after giving birth to her fourth child, when Porter was not quite two years old. Her father moved them all to his mother's home in Kyle, Texas, where the paternal grandmother raised the family in extreme poverty. The father gave up all attempts to support them either financially or emotionally; the security provided by the strong, loving, but pious and stern grandmother ended with her death when Porter was

1914–1



Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, Marcel Duchamp

Rejected by Duchamp's fellow French modernists when *Indépendants* (the annual exhibition of France's Society of Independent Artists) went on to become the most controversial International Exhibition of Modern Art in New York City, *Nude Descending a Staircase* went on to become the most controversial work known, after its site in a National Guard armory. Featuring avant-garde artists as well as a scattering of Americans, the Armory Show brought modernist art to the United States. *Nude Descending a Staircase* links Cubism's technique of multiple perspectives with the innovations of late nineteenth-century photography, a precursor to motion pictures.



Night Hawks, Edward Hopper, 1942

Born in Nyack, New York, and trained at the New York Institute of Design, Hopper sold his first painting at the 1913 Armory show and lived in New York's Greenwich Village for most of his career. Hopper's painting represents the night life of loners in the city. Its stylized realism preserves traditional perspective, accentuated by the deep view through the restaurant's large plate-glass window, but simplifies both realistic detail and painterly brushwork. In both style and subject, Hopper's painting is often compared to the work of writers like Ernest Hemingway and to the visual style of 1940s film noir (literally, "dark film"). *Night Hawks* depicts a clean, well-lit restaurant against a dark urban background of uncertain danger or promise. The customer with his back to the viewer, like one of the "private eye" characters of film noir, keeps to himself but stands in for the viewer's anonymous perspective on the scene.

eleven. Porter married to leave home immediately after her sixteenth birthday, only to find that rooted domesticity was not for her. Long before her divorce in 1915, she had separated from her first husband and begun a life of travel, activity, and changes of jobs.

She started writing in 1916 as a reporter for a Dallas newspaper. In 1917 she moved to Denver, the next year to New York City's Greenwich Village. Between 1918 and 1924 she lived mainly in Mexico, freelancing, meeting artists and intellectuals, and becoming involved in revolutionary politics. In Mexico she found the resources of journalism inadequate to her ambitions; using an anecdote she had heard from an archaeologist as a kernel, she wrote her first story, "María Concepción," which was published in the prestigious *Century* magazine in 1922. Like all her stories, it dealt with powerful emotions and had a strong sense of locale. Critics praised her as a major talent.

Although she considered herself a serious writer from this time on, Porter was distracted from fiction by many crosscurrents. A self-supporting woman with expensive tastes, she hesitated to give up lucrative freelance offers. She enjoyed travel and gladly took on jobs that sent her abroad. She became involved in political causes, including the Sacco-Vanzetti case. She was married four times.

Porter planned each story meticulously—taking extensive notes, devising scenarios, roughing out dialogue, and revising many times, sometimes over a period of years. She did not write confessional or simple autobiographical fiction, but each story originated in an important experience of her life. Although not a feminist, Porter devoted much of her work to exploring the tensions in women's lives in the modern era. The story that made her famous for life, so that everything else she published thereafter was looked on as a literary event, was "Flowering Judas" (1929), set in Mexico and dealing with revolutionary politics, lust, and betrayal. The reality of mixed motives and the difference between pure idealism and egotistical opportunism as they are encountered in revolutionary politics are among the themes in this deceptively simple narrative. It appeared in the little magazine *Hound and Horn*. The collections *Flowering Judas* and *Noon Wine* came out in 1930 and 1937. In 1930 Porter went back to Mexico and the following year to Europe on a Guggenheim fellowship; she lived in Berlin, Paris, and Basel before returning to the United States in 1936. Two more collections of stories and novellas appeared in 1939 (*Pale Horse, Pale Rider*) and in 1944 (*The Leaning Tower*). These later collections feature several stories about Miranda Gay, a character who is partly autobiographical and partly an idealized image of the southern belle facing the modern world. *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* narrates Miranda's World War I romance with a soldier in the highly charged political climate of the American home front.

Soon after arriving in Europe in 1931 Porter began working on a novel, but it was not until 1962 that *Ship of Fools*, which runs to almost five hundred pages, appeared. Set on an ocean liner crossing the Atlantic to Germany in August 1931, it explores the characters and developing relationships of a large number of passengers; the ship, as Porter wrote in a preface, stands for "this world on its voyage to eternity." As in "Flowering Judas" and *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* the personal and the political intersect in *Ship of Fools*, since the coming of Nazism in Germany frames the interlinked stories of the travelers. In its film version, *Ship of Fools* brought Porter a great deal of money. Capitalizing on the publicity, her publishers brought out the *Collected Stories* in 1965, from which followed the National Book Award, the Pulitzer Prize, the Gold Medal for fiction of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and election to the American Academy of Letters, all in the next two years. The happiest occasions in her later years—she lived to be ninety—were connected with endowing and establishing the Katherine Anne Porter Room at the University of Maryland, not far from her last home near Washington, D.C.

The texts are from the *Collected Stories* (1965).

herself that it is time to sleep. Numbers tick in her brain like little clocks, soundless doors close of themselves around her. If you would sleep, you must not remember anything, the children will say tomorrow, good morning, my teacher, the poor prisoners who come every day bringing flowers to their jailor. 1-2-3-4-5—it is monstrous to confuse love with revolution, night with day, life with death—ah, Eugenio!

The tolling of the midnight bell is a signal, but what does it mean? Get up, Laura, and follow me: come out of your sleep, out of your bed, out of this strange house. What are you doing in this house? Without a word, without fear she rose and reached for Eugenio's hand, but he eluded her with a sharp, sly smile and drifted away. This is not all, you shall see—Murderer, he said, follow me, I will show you a new country, but it is far away and we must hurry. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand, no; and she clung first to the stair rail, and then to the topmost branch of the Judas tree that bent down slowly and set her upon the earth, and then to the rocky ledge of a cliff, and then to the jagged wave of a sea that was not water but a desert of crumbling stone. Where are you taking me, she asked in wonder but without fear. To death, and it is a long way off, and we must hurry, said Eugenio. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand. Then eat these flowers, poor prisoner, said Eugenio in a voice of pity, take and eat: and from the Judas tree he stripped the warm bleeding flowers, and held them to her lips. She saw that his hand was fleshless, a cluster of small white petrified branches, and his eye sockets were without light, but she ate the flowers greedily for they satisfied both hunger and thirst. Murderer! said Eugenio, and Cannibal! This is my body and my blood. Laura cried No! and at the sound of her own voice, she awoke trembling, and was afraid to sleep again.

1929, 1930

Pale Horse, Pale Rider¹

In sleep she knew she was in her bed, but not the bed she had lain down in a few hours since, and the room was not the same but it was a room she had known somewhere. Her heart was a stone lying upon her breast outside of her; her pulses lagged and paused, and she knew that something strange was going to happen, even as the early morning winds were cool through the lattice, the streaks of light were dark blue and the whole house was snoring in its sleep.

Now I must get up and go while they are all quiet. Where are my things? Things have a will of their own in this place and hide where they like. Daylight will strike a sudden blow on the roof startling them all up to their feet; faces will beam asking, Where are you going, What are you doing, What are you thinking, How do you feel, Why do you say such things, What do you

1. First words of an African American spiritual, based on Revelation 6, in which four horses and their riders associated with the Apocalypse appear: "power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and

with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (verse 8). The last of these figures is a "pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him" (verse 8).

mean? No more sleep. Where are my b Fiddler or Graylie or Miss Lucy with t How I have loved this house in the mor tangled together like badly cast fishing l born here, and have wept too much here have been too angry and outrageous wit died in this bed already, there are far too on the mantel-pieces, there have been to this house, she said loudly, and oh, what allowed to settle in peace for one momen

And the stranger? Where is that lank g ing about the place, welcomed by my gr times removed cousin, my decrepit hou they take to him, I wonder? And where ar window in the evening. What else besid Nothing. Nothing is mine, I have only no ful and it is all mine. Do I even walk ab thing I have borrowed to spare my modes for this journey I do not mean to take, G can jump ditches in the dark and know teeth? Early morning is best for me beca stones are stones set in shades known to l or surmises, the road is still asleep with tl Graylie because he is not afraid of bridge

Come now, Graylie, she said, taking his the Devil. You are no good for it, she told before the stable gate, among them the ho tarnished nose and ears. The stranger s leaned far towards her and regarded her stare of mindless malice that makes no t drew Graylie around sharply, urged him to and the narrow ditch beyond, and the dus beating hoofs. The stranger rode beside in his half-closed hand, straight and eleg flapped upon his bones; his pale face sm glance at her. Ah, I have seen this fellow place him. He is no stranger to me.

She pulled Graylie up, rose in her stirru you this time—ride on! Without pausing rode on. Graylie's ribs heaved under her, h am I so tired, I must wake up. "But let n opening her eyes and stretching, "a slap been talking in my sleep again, I heard m

Slowly, unwillingly, Miranda drew her: of sleep, waited in a daze for life to beg her mind, a gong of warning, reminding h happily in sleep, and only in sleep. The wa head. Dangling her feet idly with their sli of the way all sorts of persons sat upon Every day she found someone there, sitt

members tick in her brain like little clocks, around her. If you would sleep, you must even will say tomorrow, good morning, my come every day bringing flowers to their confuse love with revolution, night with

as a signal, but what does it mean? Get up, your sleep, out of your bed, out of this in this house? Without a word, without genio's hand, but he eluded her with a his is not all, you shall see—Murderer, he now country, but it is far away and we must you take my hand, no; and she clung first to the most branch of the Judas tree that bent to the earth, and then to the rocky ledge of a cliff a sea that was not water but a desert of sanding me, she asked in wonder but without offering, and we must hurry, said Eugenio. No, no hand. Then eat these flowers, poor prisoner, take and eat: and from the Judas tree he took, and held them to her lips. She saw that small white petrified branches, and his she ate the flowers greedily for they satisfied her! said Eugenio, and Cannibal! This is I No! and at the sound of her own voice, she died to sleep again.

1929, 1930

the Pale Rider¹

bed, but not the bed she had lain down in was not the same but it was a room she had a stone lying upon her breast outside of the door, and she knew that something strange and early morning winds were cool through the dark blue and the whole house was snoring

they are all quiet. Where are my things? hide their place and hide where they like. Day after day the roof startling them all up to their feet; you going, What are you doing, What are you doing, What do you say such things, What do you

¹ with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (verse 8). The last of these figures is a "pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him" (verse 8).

mean? No more sleep. Where are my boots and what horse shall I ride? Fiddler or Graylie or Miss Lucy with the long nose and the wicked eye? How I have loved this house in the morning before we are all awake and tangled together like badly cast fishing lines. Too many people have been born here, and have wept too much here, and have laughed too much, and have been too angry and outrageous with each other here. Too many have died in this bed already, there are far too many ancestral bones propped up on the mantel-pieces, there have been too damned many antimacassars in this house, she said loudly, and oh, what accumulation of storied dust never allowed to settle in peace for one moment.

And the stranger? Where is that lank greenish stranger I remember hanging about the place, welcomed by my grandfather, my great-aunt, my five times removed cousin, my decrepit hound and my silver kitten? Why did they take to him, I wonder? And where are they now? Yet I saw him pass the window in the evening. What else besides them did I have in the world? Nothing. Nothing is mine, I have only nothing but it is enough, it is beautiful and it is all mine. Do I even walk about in my own skin or is it something I have borrowed to spare my modesty? Now what horse shall I borrow for this journey I do not mean to take, Graylie or Miss Lucy or Fiddler who can jump ditches in the dark and knows how to get the bit between his teeth? Early morning is best for me because trees are trees in one stroke, stones are stones set in shades known to be grass, there are no false shapes or surmises, the road is still asleep with the crust of dew unbroken. I'll take Graylie because he is not afraid of bridges.

Come now, Graylie, she said, taking his bridle, we must outrun Death and the Devil. You are no good for it, she told the other horses standing saddled before the stable gate, among them the horse of the stranger, gray also, with tarnished nose and ears. The stranger swung into his saddle beside her, leaned far towards her and regarded her without meaning, the blank still stare of mindless malice that makes no threats and can bide its time. She drew Graylie around sharply, urged him to run. He leaped the low rose hedge and the narrow ditch beyond, and the dust of the lane flew heavily under his beating hoofs. The stranger rode beside her, easily, lightly, his reins loose in his half-closed hand, straight and elegant in dark shabby garments that flapped upon his bones; his pale face smiled in an evil trance, he did not glance at her. Ah, I have seen this fellow before, I know this man if I could place him. He is no stranger to me.

She pulled Graylie up, rose in her stirrups and shouted, I'm not going with you this time—ride on! Without pausing or turning his head the stranger rode on. Graylie's ribs heaved under her, her own ribs rose and fell, Oh, why am I so tired, I must wake up. "But let me get a fine yawn first," she said, opening her eyes and stretching, "a slap of cold water in my face, for I've been talking in my sleep again, I heard myself but what was I saying?"

Slowly, unwillingly, Miranda drew herself up inch by inch out of the pit of sleep, waited in a daze for life to begin again. A single word struck in her mind, a gong of warning, reminding her for the day long what she forgot happily in sleep, and only in sleep. The war, said the gong, and she shook her head. Dangling her feet idly with their slippers hanging, she was reminded of the way all sorts of persons sat upon her desk at the newspaper office. Every day she found someone there, sitting upon her desk instead of the

chair provided, dangling his legs, eyes roving, full of his important affairs, waiting to pounce about something or other. "Why won't they sit in the chair? Should I put a sign on it, saying, 'For God's sake, sit here?'"

Far from putting up a sign, she did not even frown at her visitors. Usually she did not notice them at all until their determination to be seen was greater than her determination not to see them. Saturday, she thought, lying comfortably in her tub of hot water, will be pay day, as always. Or I hope always. Her thoughts roved hazily in a continual effort to bring together and unite firmly the disturbing oppositions in her day-to-day existence, where survival, she could see clearly, had become a series of feats of sleight of hand. I owe—let me see, I wish I had pencil and paper—well, suppose I *did* pay five dollars now on a Liberty Bond,² I couldn't possibly keep it up. Or maybe. Eighteen dollars a week. So much for rent, so much for food, and I mean to have a few things besides. About five dollars' worth. Will leave me twenty-seven cents. I suppose I can make it. I suppose I should be worried. I am worried. Very well, now I am worried and what next? Twenty-seven cents. That's not so bad. Pure profit, really. Imagine if they should suddenly raise me to twenty I should then have two dollars and twenty-seven cents left over. But they aren't going to raise me to twenty. They are in fact going to throw me out if I don't buy a Liberty Bond. I hardly believe that. I'll ask Bill. (Bill was the city editor.) I wonder if a threat like that isn't a kind of blackmail. I don't believe even a Lusk Committeeman³ can get away with that.

Yesterday there had been two pairs of legs dangling, on either side of her typewriter, both pairs stuffed thickly into funnels of dark expensive-looking material. She noticed at a distance that one of them was oldish and one was youngish, and they both of them had a stale air of borrowed importance which apparently they had got from the same source. They were both much too well nourished and the younger one wore a square little mustache. Being what they were, no matter what their business was it would be something unpleasant. Miranda had nodded them at them, pulled out her chair and without removing her cap or gloves had reached into a pile of letters and sheets from the copy desk as if she had not a moment to spare. They did not move, or take off their hats. At last she had said "Good morning" to them, and asked if they were, perhaps, waiting for her?

The two men slid off the desk, leaving some of her papers rumpled, and the oldish man had inquired why she had not bought a Liberty Bond. Miranda had looked at him then, and got a poor impression. He was a pursy-faced man, gross-mouthed, with little lightless eyes, and Miranda wondered why nearly all of those selected to do the war work at home were of his sort. He might be anything at all, she thought; advance agent for a road show, promoter of a wildcat oil company, a former saloon keeper announcing the opening of a new cabaret, an automobile salesman—any follower of any one of the crafty, haphazard callings. But he was now all Patriot, working for

the government. "Look here," he asked her, "don't you?"

Did he expect an answer to that? Be quiet. Bound to happen. Sooner or later it happens. Waggled his finger at her, "Do you?" he persisted. Obstinate child.

"Oh, the war," Miranda had echoed on a risk at him. It was habitual, automatic, to give that when you spoke the words or heard them spoken. You could pronounce it or not, was even better shrugged.

"Yeah," said the younger man in a nasty way by the tone, met his eye; his stare was really a kind of thing you might expect to meet behind. This expression gave temporary meaning to a descriptor, the face of those men who have no war, and some people are buying. "They don't seem to get around to it," he said. "That's the trouble."

Miranda frowned with nervousness, the question. "You selling them?" she asked, taking the cover and putting it back again.

"No, we're not selling them," said the older man. "Why you haven't bought one." The voice was

Miranda began to explain that she had no money to find any, when the older man interrupted: "All, and you know it, with the Huns⁵ overrun."

"With our American boys fighting and dying," said the younger man, "anybody can raise fifty dollars."

Miranda said hastily, "I have eighteen dollars a week. I simply cannot buy anything."

"You can pay for it five dollars a week," said the older man, there cawing back and forth over her head. "I can't do this office, and a lot of other offices besides."

Miranda, desperately silent, had thought, but said what I really thought? Suppose I said, "Suppose I asked that little thug, What's the trouble with rotting in Belleau Wood? I wish you were . . ."

She began to arrange her letters and notes, and things properly. The older man went on making his hard, of course. Everybody was suffering, not his share. But as to that, a Liberty Bond was what you could make. It was just like having the money and the government was back of it and where better to

2. Equivalent of a U.S. Savings Bond, established to finance the war effort during World War I.

3. Member of a committee established in 1919 by the New York State Legislature, chaired by state senator Clayton Lusk, to investigate subversive activities: pacifism, left-wing labor activ-

ism, socialism, communism; it was one of several undertakings associated with the "red scare" of 1919–21. Porter's dating is in error, because the narrative—set in a small city named Blue Mountain—takes place immediately before and during the war's end, i.e., autumn 1918.

4. It is war (French, literal trans.); used colloquially to mean "what else can you expect?"

5. Disparaging term for German soldiers fighting against the combined armies of France, England, and the United States.

6. Another disparaging term for German

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the government. "Look here," he asked her, "do you know there's a war, or don't you?"

Did he expect an answer to that? Be quiet, Miranda told herself, this was bound to happen. Sooner or later it happens. Keep your head. The man wagged his finger at her, "Do you?" he persisted, as if he were prompting an obstinate child.

"Oh, the war," Miranda had echoed on a rising note and she almost smiled at him. It was habitual, automatic, to give that solemn, mystically uplifted grin when you spoke the words or heard them spoken. "*C'est la guerre*,"⁴ whether you could pronounce it or not, was even better, and always, always, you shrugged.

"Yeah," said the younger man in a nasty way, "the war." Miranda, startled by the tone, met his eye; his stare was really stony, really viciously cold, the kind of thing you might expect to meet behind a pistol on a deserted corner. This expression gave temporary meaning to a set of features otherwise nondescript, the face of those men who have no business of their own. "We're having a war, and some people are buying Liberty Bonds and others just don't seem to get around to it," he said. "That's what we mean."

Miranda frowned with nervousness, the sharp beginnings of fear. "Are you selling them?" she asked, taking the cover off her typewriter and putting it back again.

"No, we're not selling them," said the older man. "We're just asking you why you haven't bought one." The voice was persuasive and ominous.

Miranda began to explain that she had no money, and did not know where to find any, when the older man interrupted: "That's no excuse, no excuse at all, and you know it, with the Huns⁵ overrunning martyred Belgium."

"With our American boys fighting and dying in Belleau Wood," said the younger man, "anybody can raise fifty dollars to help beat the Boche."⁶

Miranda said hastily, "I have eighteen dollars a week and not another cent in the world. I simply cannot buy anything."

"You can pay for it five dollars a week," said the older man (they had stood there cawing back and forth over her head), "like a lot of other people in this office, and a lot of other offices besides are doing."

Miranda, desperately silent, had thought, "Suppose I were not a coward, but said what I really thought? Suppose I said to hell with this filthy war? Suppose I asked that little thug, What's the matter with you, why aren't you rotting in Belleau Wood? I wish you were . . ."

She began to arrange her letters and notes, her fingers refusing to pick up things properly. The older man went on making his little set speech. It was hard, of course. Everybody was suffering, naturally. Everybody had to do his share. But as to that, a Liberty Bond was the safest investment you could make. It was just like having the money in the bank. Of course. The government was back of it and where better could you invest?

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soldiers. Belleau Wood is a forested area in northeastern France, which was the scene of a hard-won victory over German troops by a force composed chiefly of Americans in a battle waged on June 6–25, 1918.

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church. Why, if he had a million dollars
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d Miranda. "But next week, if I can. Not

er man. "This ain't any laughing matter."
y Editor's desk, past Bill the City Editor's
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copy boy would come flying. "Never say
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issy pride and vainglory, lighting cigars
over their eyes.

g water, and wished she might fall asleep
: time to sleep again. She had a burning
remembering she had waked up with it
ig before. While she dressed she tried to
adache, and it seemed reasonable to sup-
"It's been a headache, all right, but not
eemen had left, yesterday, she had gone
fary Townsend, the Society Editor, qui-
e was perched on the edge of the shabby
he center, knitting on something rose-
ut down her knitting, seize her head with
od," in a surprised, inquiring voice. Her
syp, so of course everybody called her
a great deal in common, and liked each
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which no marriage had taken place, after
e swollen, had sat with her mother, who
id of blankets. They had both wept pain-
rters to suppress the worst of the story.
al newspaper printed it all the next day.
cen their punishment together, and had
male jobs, one to the theaters, the other
on, that neither of them could see what
e, and they knew they were considered
e girls, but fools. At sight of Miranda,

Towney had broken out in a rage. "I can't do it, I'll never be able to raise the money, I told them, I can't, I can't, but they wouldn't listen."

Miranda said, "I knew I wasn't the only person in this office who couldn't raise five dollars. I told them I couldn't, too, and I can't."

"My God," said Towney, in the same voice, "they told me I'd lose my job—"

"I'm going to ask Bill," Miranda said; "I don't believe Bill would do that."

"It's not up to Bill," said Towney. "He'd have to if they got after him. Do you suppose they could put us in jail?"

"I don't know," said Miranda. "If they do, we won't be lonesome." She sat down beside Towney and held her own head. "What kind of soldier are you knitting that for? It's a sprightly color, it ought to cheer him up."

"Like hell," said Towney, her needles going again. "I'm making this for myself. That's that."

"Well," said Miranda, "we won't be lonesome and we'll catch up on our sleep." She washed her face and put on fresh make-up. Taking clean gray gloves out of her pocket she went out to join a group of young women fresh from the country club dances, the morning bridge, the charity bazaar, the Red Cross workrooms, who were wallowing in good works. They gave tea dances and raised money, and with the money they bought quantities of sweets, fruit, cigarettes, and magazines for the men in the cantonment hospitals. With this loot they were now setting out, a gay procession of high-powered cars and brightly tinted faces to cheer the brave boys who already, you might very well say, had fallen in defense of their country. It must be frightfully hard on them, the dears, to be floored like this when they're all crazy to get overseas and into the trenches as quickly as possible. Yes, and some of them are the cutest things you ever saw, I didn't know there were so many good-looking men in this country, good heavens, I said, where do they come from? Well, my dear, you may ask yourself that question, who knows where they did come from? You're quite right, the way I feel about it is this, we must do everything we can to make them contented, but I draw the line at talking to them. I told the chaperons at those dances for enlisted men, I'll dance with them, every dumbbell who asks me, but I will NOT talk to them, I said, even if there is a war. So I danced hundreds of miles without opening my mouth except to say, Please keep your knees to yourself. I'm glad we gave those dances up. Yes, and the men stopped coming, anyway. But listen, I've heard that a great many of the enlisted men come from very good families; I'm not good at catching names, and those I did catch I'd never heard before, so I don't know . . . but it seems to me if they were from good families, you'd know it, wouldn't you? I mean, if a man is well bred he doesn't step on your feet, does he? At least not that. I used to have a pair of sandals ruined at every one of those dances. Well, I think any kind of social life is in very poor taste just now, I think we should all put on our Red Cross head dresses and wear them for the duration of the war—

Miranda, carrying her basket and her flowers, moved in among the young women, who scattered out and rushed upon the ward uttering girlish laughter meant to be refreshingly gay, but there was a grim determined clang in it calculated to freeze the blood. Miserably embarrassed at the idiocy of her errand, she walked rapidly between the long rows of high beds, set foot to foot with a

narrow aisle between. The men, a selected presentable lot, sheets drawn up to their chins, not seriously ill, were bored and restless, most of them willing to be amused at anything. They were for the most part picturesquely bandaged as to arm or head, and those who were not visibly wounded invariably replied "Rheumatism" if some tactless girl, who had been solemnly warned never to ask this question, still forgot and asked a man what his illness was. The good-natured, eager ones, laughing and calling out from their hard narrow beds, were soon surrounded. Miranda, with her wilting bouquet and her basket of sweets and cigarettes, looking about, caught the unfriendly bitter eye of a young fellow lying on his back, his right leg in a cast and pulley. She stopped at the foot of his bed and continued to look at him, and he looked back with an unchanged, hostile face. Not having any, thank you and be damned to the whole business, his eyes said plainly to her, and will you be so good as to take your trash off my bed? For Miranda had set it down, leaning over to place it where he might be able to reach it if he would. Having set it down, she was incapable of taking it up again, but hurried away, her face burning, down the long aisle and out into the cool October sunshine, where the dreary raw barracks swarmed and worked with an aimless life of scurrying, dun-colored insects; and going around to a window near where he lay, she looked in, spying upon her soldier. He was lying with his eyes closed, his eyebrows in a sad bitter frown. She could not place him at all, she could not imagine where he came from nor what sort of being he might have been "in life," she said to herself. His face was young and the features sharp and plain, the hands were not laborer's hands but not well-cared-for hands either. They were good useful properly shaped hands, lying there on the coverlet. It occurred to her that it would be her luck to find him, instead of a jolly hungry puppy glad of a bite to eat and a little chatter. It is like turning a corner absorbed in your painful thoughts and meeting your state of mind embodied, face to face, she said. "My own feelings about this whole thing, made flesh. Never again will I come here, this is no sort of thing to be doing. This is disgusting," she told herself plainly. "Of course I would pick him out," she thought, getting into the back seat of the car she came in, "serves me right, I know better."

Another girl came out looking very tired and climbed in beside her. After a short silence, the girl said in a puzzled way, "I don't know what good it does, really. Some of them wouldn't take anything at all. I don't like this, do you?"

"I hate it," said Miranda.

"I suppose it's all right, though," said the girl, cautiously.

"Perhaps," said Miranda, turning cautious also.

That was for yesterday. At this point Miranda decided there was no good in thinking of yesterday, except for the hour after midnight she had spent dancing with Adam. He was in her mind so much, she hardly knew when she was thinking about him directly. His image was simply always present in more or less degree, he was sometimes nearer the surface of her thoughts, the pleasantest, the only really pleasant thought she had. She examined her face in the mirror between the windows and decided that her uneasiness was not all imagination. For three days at least she had felt odd and her expression was unfamiliar. She would have to raise that fifty dollars somehow, she supposed, or who knows what can happen? She was hardened to stories of personal disaster, of outrageous accusations and extraordinarily bitter penalties that had grown monstrously out of incidents very little more important than her

failure—her refusal—to buy a Bond. No, she thought, flushed and shiny, and even her hair flung in the other direction. I must do something about this, she told herself, knowing that even when she turned for the turn of her door knob, and when she came out, as if by sheer force of light cast cold slanting shadows in the room and this day is beginning badly, but they will be another. In a drowse, she sprayed perfume on her cap and jacket, now in their second winter, again being glad she had paid a frightening price for them all this time, and in no case would she be able to search for it, then stood undecided a moment, she had forgotten something she would miss.

Adam was in the hallway, a step outside the door, if quite startled to see her, and said, "Hello, Miranda, today after all—isn't that luck?"

Miranda smiled at him gaily because she had been thinking of him. He was wearing his new uniform, a tawny, hay colored and sand colored from the sun, again that he always began by smiling at her, but that his eyes became fixed and thoughtful in the light.

They walked out together into the fine morning, leaves under their feet, turning their faces toward the sun and spotless. At the first corner they waited for the messengers seated straight and firm as if proud in their uniforms.

"I imagine I'm late," said Miranda, "as usual."

"Nearly half past one," he said, slipping into the old thrust of his arm upward. The young men were looking about their wrist watches. Such of them as were from the southern and southwestern towns, far off from the city, had always believed that only sissies wore wrist watches, "one vaudeville comedian was always a good joke, never stale."

"I think it's a most sensible way to carry your time, needn't blush."

"I'm nearly used to it," said Adam, who was used to it, time and again how all the he-manly regulars of the horrors of war," he said; "are we downhearted?"

It was the kind of patter going the rounds.

He was tall and heavily muscled in the shoulders and flanks, and he was infinitely buttoned, straight as a strait jacket as tough and unyielding in cut as a strait jacket and supple. He had his uniforms made by a tailor he had confided to Miranda one day when she told him he was in his new soldier suit. "Hard enough to make a man of you," he told her. "It's the least I can do for you around looking like a tramp." He was twer

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or the most part picturesquely bandaged
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tening for the turn of her door knob, and he would be in the hallway, or on
the porch when she came out, as if by sheerest coincidence. The noon sun-
light cast cold slanting shadows in the room where, she said, I suppose I live,
and this day is beginning badly, but they all do now, for one reason or
another. In a drowse, she sprayed perfume on her hair, put on her moleskin
cap and jacket, now in their second winter, but still good, still nice to wear,
again being glad she had paid a frightening price for them. She had enjoyed
them all this time, and in no case would she have had the money now. Maybe
she could manage for that Bond. She could not find the lock without leaning
to search for it, then stood undecided a moment possessed by the notion that
she had forgotten something she would miss seriously later on.

Adam was in the hallway, a step outside his own door; he swung about as
if quite startled to see her, and said, "Hello. I don't have to go back to camp
today after all—isn't that luck?"

Miranda smiled at him gaily because she was always delighted at the sight
of him. He was wearing his new uniform, and he was all olive and tan and
tawny, hay colored and sand colored from hair to boots. She half noticed
again that he always began by smiling at her; that his smile faded gradually;
that his eyes became fixed and thoughtful as if he were reading in a poor
light.

They walked out together into the fine fall day, scuffling bright ragged
leaves under their feet, turning their faces up to a generous sky really blue
and spotless. At the first corner they waited for a funeral to pass, the mourn-
ers seated straight and firm as if proud in their sorrow.

"I imagine I'm late," said Miranda, "as usual. What time is it?"

"Nearly half past one," he said, slipping back his sleeve with an exagger-
ated thrust of his arm upward. The young soldiers were still self-conscious
about their wrist watches. Such of them as Miranda knew were boys from
southern and southwestern towns, far off the Atlantic seaboard, and they
had always believed that only sissies wore wrist watches. "I'll slap you on
the wrist watch," one vaudeville comedian would simper to another, and it
was always a good joke, never stale.

"I think it's a most sensible way to carry a watch," said Miranda. "You
needn't blush."

"I'm nearly used to it," said Adam, who was from Texas. "We've been told
time and again how all the he-manly regular army men wear them. It's the
horrors of war," he said; "are we downhearted? I'll say we are."

It was the kind of patter going the rounds. "You look it," said Miranda.

He was tall and heavily muscled in the shoulders, narrow in the waist and
flanks, and he was infinitely buttoned, strapped, harnessed into a uniform
as tough and unyielding in cut as a strait jacket, though the cloth was fine
and supple. He had his uniforms made by the best tailor he could find, he
confided to Miranda one day when she told him how squish he was looking
in his new soldier suit. "Hard enough to make anything of the outfit, any-
how," he told her. "It's the least I can do for my beloved country, not to go
around looking like a tramp." He was twenty-four years old and a Second

Lieutenant in an Engineers Corps, on leave because his outfit expected to be sent over shortly. "Came in to make my will," he told Miranda, "and get a supply of toothbrushes and razor blades. By what gorgeous luck do you suppose," he asked her, "I happened to pick on your rooming house? How did I know you were there?"

Strolling, keeping step, his stout polished well-made boots setting themselves down firmly beside her thin-soled black suède, they put off as long as they could the end of their moment together, and kept up as well as they could their small talk that flew back and forth over little grooves worn in the thin upper surface of the brain, things you could say and hear clink reassuringly at once without disturbing the radiance which played and darted about the simple and lovely miracle of being two persons named Adam and Miranda, twenty-four years old each, alive and on the earth at the same moment: "Are you in the mood for dancing, Miranda?" and "I'm always in the mood for dancing, Adam!" but there were things in the way, the day that ended with dancing was a long way to go.

He really did look, Miranda thought, like a fine healthy apple this morning. One time or another in their talking, he had boasted that he had never had a pain in his life that he could remember. Instead of being horrified at this monster, she approved his monstrous uniqueness. As for herself, she had had too many pains to mention, so she did not mention them. After working for three years on a morning newspaper she had an illusion of maturity and experience; but it was fatigue merely, she decided, from keeping what she had been brought up to believe were unnatural hours, eating casually at dirty little restaurants, drinking bad coffee all night, and smoking too much. When she said something of her way of living to Adam, he studied her face a few seconds as if he had never seen it before, and said in a forthright way, "Why, it hasn't hurt you a bit, I think you're beautiful," and left her dangling there, wondering if he had thought she wished to be praised. She did wish to be praised, but not at that moment. Adam kept unwholesome hours too, or had in the ten days they had known each other, staying awake until one o'clock to take her out for supper; he smoked also continually, though if she did not stop him he was apt to explain to her exactly what smoking did to the lungs. "But," he said, "does it matter so much if you're going to war, anyway?"

"No," said Miranda, "and it matters even less if you're staying at home knitting socks. Give me a cigarette, will you?" They paused at another corner, under a half-foliaged maple, and hardly glanced at a funeral procession approaching. His eyes were pale tan with orange flecks in them, and his hair was the color of a haystack when you turn the weathered top back to the clear straw beneath. He fished out his cigarette case and snapped his silver lighter at her, snapped it several times in his own face, and they moved on, smoking.

"I can see you knitting socks," he said. "That would be just your speed. You know perfectly well you can't knit."

"I do worse," she said, soberly; "I write pieces advising other young women to knit and roll bandages and do without sugar and help win the war."

"Oh, well," said Adam, with the easy masculine morals in such questions, "that's merely your job, that doesn't count."

"I wonder," said Miranda. "How did you manage to get an extension of leave?"

"They just gave it," said Adam, "for no flies out there, anyway. This funny new d cocked hat."

"It seems to be a plague," said Miranda. "Ages. Did you ever see so many funerals, I mean?"

"Never did. Well, let's be strong minded for four days more straight from the blue and under our feet. What about tonight?"

"Same thing," she told him, "but make special job beside my usual run of the mill."

"What a job you've got," said Adam, "I'll give you a dizzy amusement to another and then write a story."

"Yes, it's too dizzy for words," said Miranda. "The day passed, and this time they watched it in side an angle and winked in the sunlight, her I mean," she told Adam, "my head swims. I'm coffee."

They lounged on their elbows over the cream for the stay-at-homes," she said, "and two or none; that's the kind of martyr I'm cabbage and wear shoddy from now on around. No war is going to sneak up on me."

"Oh, there won't be any more wars, don't worry," said Adam. "We're going to mop 'em up then mopped, and this is going to be all."

"So they told me," said Miranda, tasting, making a rueful face. Their smiles approved had got the right tone, they were taking the Miranda, no tooth-gnashing, no hair-tear and it doesn't get you anywhere.

"Swill," said Adam rudely, pushing back for breakfast?"

"It's more than I want," said Miranda.

"I had buckwheat cakes, with sausage and and two cups of coffee, at eight o'clock, and a famished orphan left in the ashcan. I'm a steak and fried potatoes and—"

"Don't go on with it," said Miranda, "it so after I'm gone." She slipped from the high chair and glanced at her face in her round mirror, decided that she was past praying for.

"There's something terribly wrong," she said. "It can't just be the weather, and the war."

"The weather is perfect," said Adam, "and the war is true. But since when? You were all right."

7. A global influenza epidemic, lasting from 1918 to 1919, affected at least one billion people, killing about half a million in the United States and at least 20 million worldwide. The influenza seems to have arrived in the United States via ships from Europe.

, on leave because his outfit expected to make my will," he told Miranda, "and get a lades. By what gorgeous luck do you suppose pick on your rooming house? How did

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light, like a fine healthy apple this morning, he had boasted that he had never before remembered. Instead of being horrified at the grotesque uniqueness. As for herself, she had never mentioned them. After working a paper she had an illusion of maturity and youth, she decided, from keeping what she had done in her natural hours, eating casually at dirty little tables all night, and smoking too much. When he came to Adam, he studied her face a few moments before, and said in a forthright way, "Why, you're beautiful," and left her dangling there, wishing to be praised. She did wish to be praised, but she had kept unwholesome hours too, or had another, staying awake until one o'clock to read also continually, though if she did not know exactly what smoking did to the lungs. "How much if you're going to war, anyway?"

"Less than you think, even less if you're staying at home, will you?" They paused at another corridor and he hardly glanced at a funeral procession passing by with orange flecks in them, and his eyes when you turn the weathered top back to look out his cigarette case and snapped his fingers several times in his own face, and they

he said. "That would be just your speed. Don't you think?"

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"They just gave it," said Adam, "for no reason. The men are dying like flies out there, anyway. This funny new disease.⁷ Simply knocks you into a cocked hat."

"It seems to be a plague," said Miranda, "something out of the Middle Ages. Did you ever see so many funerals, ever?"

"Never did. Well, let's be strong minded and not have any of it. I've got four days more straight from the blue and not a blade of grass must grow under our feet. What about tonight?"

"Same thing," she told him, "but make it about half past one. I've got a special job beside my usual run of the mill."

"What a job you've got," said Adam, "nothing to do but run from one dizzy amusement to another and then write a piece about it."

"Yes, it's too dizzy for words," said Miranda. They stood while a funeral passed, and this time they watched it in silence. Miranda pulled her cap to an angle and winked in the sunlight, her head swimming slowly "like goldfish," she told Adam, "my head swims. I'm only half awake, I must have some coffee."

They lounged on their elbows over the counter of a drug store. "No more cream for the stay-at-homes," she said, "and only one lump of sugar. I'll have two or none; that's the kind of martyr I'm being. I mean to live on boiled cabbage and wear shoddy from now on and get in good shape for the next round. No war is going to sneak up on me again."

"Oh, there won't be any more wars, don't you read the newspapers?" asked Adam. "We're going to mop 'em up this time, and they're going to stay mopped, and this is going to be all."

"So they told me," said Miranda, tasting her bitter lukewarm brew and making a rueful face. Their smiles approved of each other, they felt they had got the right tone, they were taking the war properly. Above all, thought Miranda, no tooth-gnashing, no hair-tearing, it's noisy and unbecoming and it doesn't get you anywhere.

"Swill," said Adam rudely, pushing back his cup. "Is that all you're having for breakfast?"

"It's more than I want," said Miranda.

"I had buckwheat cakes, with sausage and maple syrup, and two bananas, and two cups of coffee, at eight o'clock, and right now, again, I feel like a famished orphan left in the ashcan. I'm all set," said Adam, "for broiled steak and fried potatoes and—"

"Don't go on with it," said Miranda, "it sounds delirious to me. Do all that after I'm gone." She slipped from the high seat, leaned against it slightly, glanced at her face in her round mirror, rubbed rouge on her lips and decided that she was past praying for.

"There's something terribly wrong," she told Adam. "I feel too rotten. It can't just be the weather, and the war."

"The weather is perfect," said Adam, "and the war is simply too good to be true. But since when? You were all right yesterday."

7. A global influenza epidemic, lasting from 1918 to 1919, affected at least one billion people, killing about half a million in the United States and at least 20 million worldwide. The influenza seems to have arrived in the United States via

ships bringing wounded soldiers back from Europe. Soldiers in crowded conditions were especially vulnerable—more military people died in the pandemic than were killed in battle during the entire war.

"I don't know," she said slowly, her voice sounding small and thin. They stopped as always at the open door before the flight of littered steps leading up to the newspaper loft. Miranda listened for a moment to the rattle of typewriters above, the steady rumble of presses below. "I wish we were going to spend the whole afternoon on a park bench," she said, "or drive to the mountains."

"I do too," he said; "let's do that tomorrow."

"Yes, tomorrow, unless something else happens. I'd like to run away," she told him; "let's both."

"Me?" said Adam. "Where I'm going there's no running to speak of. You mostly crawl about on your stomach here and there among the debris. You know, barbed wire and such stuff. It's going to be the kind of thing that happens once in a lifetime." He reflected a moment, and went on, "I don't know a darned thing about it, really, but they make it sound awfully messy. I've heard so much about it I feel as if I had been there and back. It's going to be an anticlimax," he said, "like seeing the pictures of a place so often you can't see it at all when you actually get there. Seems to me I've been in the army all my life."

Six months, he meant. Eternity. He looked so clear and fresh, and he had never had a pain in his life. She had seen them when they had been there and back and they never looked like this again. "Already the returned hero," she said, "and don't I wish you were."

"When I learned the use of the bayonet in my first training camp," said Adam, "I gouged the vitals out of more sandbags and sacks of hay than I could keep track of. They kept bawling at us, 'Get him, get that Boche, stick him before he sticks you'—and we'd go for those sandbags like wild-fire, and honestly, sometimes I felt a perfect fool for getting so worked up when I saw the sand trickling out. I used to wake up in the night sometimes feeling silly about it."

"I can imagine," said Miranda. "It's perfect nonsense." They lingered, unwilling to say good-by. After a little pause, Adam, as if keeping up the conversation, asked, "Do you know what the average life expectation of a sapping party⁸ is after it hits the job?"

"Something speedy, I suppose."

"Just nine minutes," said Adam; "I read that in your own newspaper not a week ago."

"Make it ten and I'll come along," said Miranda.

"Not another second," said Adam, "exactly nine minutes, take it or leave it."

"Stop bragging," said Miranda. "Who figured that out?"

"A noncombatant," said Adam, "a fellow with rickets."

This seemed very comic, they laughed and leaned towards each other and Miranda heard herself being a little shrill. She wiped the tears from her eyes. "My, it's a funny war," she said; "isn't it? I laugh every time I think about it."

Adam took her hand in both of his and pulled a little at the tips of her gloves and sniffed them. "What nice perfume you have," he said, "and such

a lot of it, too. I like a lot of perfume on g again.

"I've got probably too much," she said. "I must have a fearful cold."

"Don't catch cold," said Adam; "my leave last, the very last." She moved her fingers i fingers and turned her hands as if they w and of great value, and she turned shy and him, and there was more than this but it because he was not for her nor for any w already, committed without any knowledge took back her hands. "Good-by," she said fi

She ran upstairs and looked back from th and raised his hand without smiling. Mirar back after he had said good-by. She could one glimpse more of the person she had be save too rude and too sudden a snapping people hurried away, their faces already cl towards their next stopping place, already act or encounter. Adam was waiting as if under his brows fixed in a strained frown, l

At her desk she sat without taking off jack pretending to read the letters. Only Chuck and Ye Towne Gossyp were sitting on her having there. She sat on theirs when she pl talking and they went on with it.

"They say," said Towney, "that it is really German ship to Boston, a camouflaged sl under its own colors. Isn't that ridiculous?"

"Maybe it was a submarine," said Chuck, the sea in the dead of night. Now that sour

"Yes, it does," said Towney; "they alwa details . . . and they think the germs were : in Boston, you know—and somebody req greasy-looking cloud float up out of Bosto over that end of town. I think it was an old

"Should have been," said Chuck.

"I read it in a New York newspaper," said T

Chuck and Miranda laughed so loudly at at them. "Towney still reads the newspapers

"Well, what's funny about that?" asked Bi ing into the clutter before him.

"It was a noncombatant saw that cloud,"

"Naturally," said Towney.

"Member of the Lusk Committee, maybe

"The Angel of Mons," said Chuck, "or a c

Miranda wished to stop hearing, and talk five minutes of her own about Adam, really t no time. She had seen him first ten days ag

8. Group of soldiers skilled in explosives who dig trenches to approach or undermine enemy positions.

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"Don't catch cold," said Adam; "my leave is nearly up and it will be the
last, the very last." She moved her fingers in her gloves as he pulled at the
fingers and turned her hands as if they were something new and curious
and of great value, and she turned shy and quiet. She liked him, she liked
him, and there was more than this but it was no good even imagining,
because he was not for her nor for any woman, being beyond experience
already, committed without any knowledge or act of his own to death. She
took back her hands. "Good-by," she said finally, "until tonight."

She ran upstairs and looked back from the top. He was still watching her,
and raised his hand without smiling. Miranda hardly ever saw anyone look
back after he had said good-by. She could not help turning sometimes for
one glimpse more of the person she had been talking with, as if that would
save too rude and too sudden a snapping of even the lightest bond. But
people hurried away, their faces already changed, fixed, in their straining
towards their next stopping place, already absorbed in planning their next
act or encounter. Adam was waiting as if he expected her to turn, and
under his brows fixed in a strained frown, his eyes were very black.

At her desk she sat without taking off jacket or cap, slitting envelopes and
pretending to read the letters. Only Chuck Rouncivale, the sports reporter,
and Ye Towne Gossyp were sitting on her desk today, and them she liked
having there. She sat on theirs when she pleased. Towney and Chuck were
talking and they went on with it.

"They say," said Towney, "that it is really caused by germs brought by a
German ship to Boston, a camouflaged ship, naturally, it didn't come in
under its own colors. Isn't that ridiculous?"

"Maybe it was a submarine," said Chuck, "sneaking in from the bottom of
the sea in the dead of night. Now that sounds better."

"Yes, it does," said Towney; "they always slip up somewhere in these
details . . . and they think the germs were sprayed over the city—it started
in Boston, you know—and somebody reported seeing a strange, thick,
greasy-looking cloud float up out of Boston Harbor and spread slowly all
over that end of town. I think it was an old woman who saw it."

"Should have been," said Chuck.

"I read it in a New York newspaper," said Towney; "so it's bound to be true."

Chuck and Miranda laughed so loudly at this that Bill stood up and glared
at them. "Towney still reads the newspapers," explained Chuck.

"Well, what's funny about that?" asked Bill, sitting down again and frown-
ing into the clutter before him.

"It was a noncombatant saw that cloud," said Miranda.

"Naturally," said Towney.

"Member of the Lusk Committee, maybe," said Miranda.

"The Angel of Mons," said Chuck, "or a dollar-a-year man."

Miranda wished to stop hearing, and talking, she wished to think for just
five minutes of her own about Adam, really to think about him, but there was
no time. She had seen him first ten days ago, and since then they had been

crossing streets together, darting between trucks and limousines and pushcarts and farm wagons; he had waited for her in doorways and in little restaurants that smelled of stale frying fat; they had eaten and danced to the urgent whine and bray of jazz orchestras, they had sat in dull theaters because Miranda was there to write a piece about the play. Once they had gone to the mountains and, leaving the car, had climbed a stony trail, and had come out on a ledge upon a flat stone, where they sat and watched the lights change on a valley landscape that was, no doubt, Miranda said, quite apocryphal—"We need not believe it, but it is fine poetry," she told him; they had leaned their shoulders together there, and had sat quite still, watching. On two Sundays they had gone to the geological museum, and had pored in shared fascination over bits of meteors, rock formations, fossilized tusks and trees, Indian arrows, grottoes from the silver and gold lodes. "Think of those old miners washing out their fortunes in little pans beside the streams," said Adam, "and inside the earth there was this—" and he had told her he liked better those things that took long to make; he loved airplanes too, all sorts of machinery, things carved out of wood or stone. He knew nothing much about them, but he recognized them when he saw them. He had confessed that he simply could not get through a book, any kind of book except textbooks on engineering; reading bored him to crumbs; he regretted now he hadn't brought his roadster, but he hadn't thought he would need a car; he loved driving, he wouldn't expect her to believe how many hundreds of miles he could get over in a day . . . he had showed her snapshots of himself at the wheel of his roadster; of himself sailing a boat, looking very free and windblown, all angles, hauling on the ropes; he would have joined the air force, but his mother had hysterics every time he mentioned it. She didn't seem to realize that dog fighting in the air was a good deal safer than sapping parties on the ground at night. But he hadn't argued, because of course she did not realize about sapping parties. And here he was, stuck, on a plateau a mile high with no water for a boat and his car at home, otherwise they could really have had a good time. Miranda knew he was trying to tell her what kind of person he was when he had his machinery with him. She felt she knew pretty well what kind of person he was, and would have liked to tell him that if he thought he had left himself at home in a boat or an automobile, he was much mistaken. The telephones were ringing, Bill was shouting at somebody who kept saying, "Well, but listen, well, but listen—" but nobody was going to listen, of course, nobody. Old man Gibbons bellowed in despair, "Jarge, Jarge—"

"Just the same," Towney was saying in her most complacent patriotic voice. "Hut Service⁹ is a fine idea, and we should all volunteer even if they don't want us." Towney does well at this, thought Miranda, look at her; remembering the rose-colored sweater and the tight rebellious face in the cloakroom. Towney was now all open-faced glory and goodness, willing to sacrifice herself for her country. "After all," said Towney, "I *can* sing and dance well enough for the Little Theater, and I could write their letters for them, and at a pinch I might drive an ambulance. I have driven a Ford for years."

Miranda joined in: "Well, I can sing and dance too, but who's going to do the bed-making and the scrubbing up? Those huts are hard to keep, and it

9. Civilian aid provided for soldiers abroad.

would be a dirty job and we'd be perfectly dirty job and am perfectly miserable, I'm g
"I think the women should keep out of it just add skirts to the horrors of war." Ch
good deal about missing the show. "I could leg off by now; it would have served the have to buy his own hooch or sober up."

Miranda had seen Chuck on pay day givi
He was a good-humored ingratiating old s
of him. He slapped his son on the back
bleared eye of paternal affection while he

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"You're much too sensitive," said Towney

Bill had been raging about, chewing his l
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"That hooper you panned in this morning
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Chuck stood up and arranged his maroo
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1. English woman (1820–1910) who founded modern nursing
female nurses to serve in the Crimean War.

tween trucks and limousines and pushed for her in doorways and in little restaurants they had eaten and danced to the urgent music they had sat in dull theaters because of the play. Once they had gone to the mountains and climbed a stony trail, and had come out they sat and watched the lights change on the mountain. Miranda said, quite apocryphal—"We try," she told him; they had leaned their heads against the wall, watching. On two Sundays in the afternoon, and had pored in shared fascination over the fossils, fossilized tusks and trees, Indian gold lodes. "Think of those old miners' huts beside the streams," said Adam, "and I know he had told her he liked better those red airplanes too, all sorts of machinery, but he knew nothing much about them, but not him. He had confessed that he simply read a book except textbooks on engineering—he regretted now he hadn't brought his car; he loved driving, he had driven many hundreds of miles he could get over the road in a few shots of himself at the wheel of his roadster, very free and windblown, all angles, but he had joined the air force, but his mother had not let him. She didn't seem to realize that dog was better than sapping parties on the ground at the top of course she did not realize about sapping, on a plateau a mile high with no water, but otherwise they could really have had a good time. She felt she knew pretty well what he was like. She liked to tell him that if he thought he was an automobile, he was much mistaken. He was shouting at somebody who kept saying, but nobody was going to listen, of course, in despair, "Jarge, Jarge—"

Working in her most complacent patriotic mood and we should all volunteer even if they don't, she thought at this, thought Miranda, look at her; after the war and the tight rebellious face in the sun, the en-faced glory and goodness, willing to do anything. "After all," said Towney, "I can sing and play the guitar, and I could write their letters for them. I have driven a Ford for

working and dance too, but who's going to do it? Those huts are hard to keep, and it

would be a dirty job and we'd be perfectly miserable; and as I've got a hard dirty job and am perfectly miserable, I'm going to stay at home."

"I think the women should keep out of it," said Chuck Rouncivale. "They just add skirts to the horrors of war." Chuck had bad lungs and fretted a good deal about missing the show. "I could have been there and back with a leg off by now; it would have served the old man right. Then he'd either have to buy his own hooch or sober up."

Miranda had seen Chuck on pay day giving the old man money for hooch. He was a good-humored ingratiating old scoundrel, too, that was the worst of him. He slapped his son on the back and beamed upon him with the bleared eye of paternal affection while he took his last nickel.

"It was Florence Nightingale¹ ruined wars," Chuck went on.

"What's the idea of petting soldiers and binding up their wounds and soothing their fevered brows? That's not war. Let 'em perish where they fall. That's what they're there for."

"You can talk," said Towney, with a slantwise glint at him.

"What's the idea?" asked Chuck, flushing and hunching his shoulders. "You know I've got this lung, or maybe half of it anyway by now."

"You're much too sensitive," said Towney. "I didn't mean a thing."

Bill had been raging about, chewing his half-smoked cigar, his hair standing up in a brush, his eyes soft and lambent but wild, like a stag's. He would never, thought Miranda, be more than fourteen years old if he lived for a century, which he would not, at the rate he was going. He behaved exactly like city editors in the moving pictures, even to the chewed cigar. Had he formed his style on the films, or had scenario writers seized once for all on the type Bill in its inarguable purity? Bill was shouting to Chuck: "And if he comes back here take him up the alley and saw his head off *by hand!*"

Chuck said, "He'll be back, don't worry." Bill said mildly, already off on another track, "Well, saw him off." Towney went to her own desk, but Chuck sat waiting amiably to be taken to the new vaudeville show. Miranda, with two tickets, always invited one of the reporters to go with her on Monday. Chuck was lavishly hardboiled and professional in his sports writing, but he had told Miranda that he didn't give a damn about sports, really; the job kept him out in the open, and paid him enough to buy the old man's hooch. He preferred shows and didn't see why women always had the job.

"Who does Bill want sawed today?" asked Miranda.

"That hooper you panned in this morning's," said Chuck. "He was up here bright and early asking for the guy that writes up show business. He said he was going to take the goof who wrote that piece up the alley and bop him in the nose. He said . . ."

"I hope he's gone," said Miranda; "I do hope he had to catch a train."

Chuck stood up and arranged his maroon-colored turtle-necked sweater, glanced down at the peasoup tweed plus fours and the hobnailed tan boots which he hoped would help to disguise the fact that he had a bad lung and didn't care for sports, and said, "He's long gone by now, don't worry. Let's get going; you're late as usual."

1. English woman (1820–1910) who founded modern nursing and in 1854 organized a unit of thirty-eight female nurses to serve in the Crimean War.

Miranda, facing about, almost stepped on the toes of a little drab man in a derby hat. He might have been a pretty fellow once, but now his mouth drooped where he had lost his side teeth, and his sad red-rimmed eyes had given up coquetry. A thin brown wave of hair was combed out with brilliantine and curled against the rim of the derby. He didn't move his feet, but stood planted with a kind of inert resistance, and asked Miranda: "Are you the so-called dramatic critic on this hick newspaper?"

"I'm afraid I am," said Miranda.

"Well," said the little man, "I'm just asking for one minute of your valuable time." His underlip shot out, he began with shaking hands to fish about in his waistcoat pocket. "I just hate to let you get away with it, that's all." He riffled through a collection of shabby newspaper clippings. "Just give these the once-over, will you? And then let me ask you if you think I'm gonna stand for being knocked by a tanktown critic," he said, in a toneless voice; "look here, here's Buffalo, Chicago, Saint Looey, Philadelphia, Frisco, besides New York. Here's the best publications in the business, *Variety*, the *Billboard*, they all broke down and admitted that Danny Dickerson knows his stuff. So you don't think so, hey? That's all I wanta ask you."

"No, I don't," said Miranda, as bluntly as she could, "and I can't stop to talk about it."

The little man leaned nearer, his voice shook as if he had been nervous for a long time. "Look here, what was there you didn't like about me? Tell me that."

Miranda said, "You shouldn't pay any attention at all. What does it matter what I think?"

"I don't care what you think, it ain't that," said the little man, "but these things get round and booking agencies back East don't know how it is out here. We get panned in the sticks and they think it's the same as getting panned in Chicago, see? They don't know the difference. They don't know that the more high class an act is the more the hick critics pan it. But I've been called the best in the business by the best in the business and I wanta know what you think is wrong with me."

Chuck said, "Come on, Miranda, curtain's going up." Miranda handed the little man his clippings, they were mostly ten years old, and tried to edge past him. He stepped before her again and said without much conviction, "If you was a man I'd knock your block off." Chuck got up at that and lounged over, taking his hands out of his pockets, and said, "Now you've done your song and dance you'd better get out. Get the hell out now before I throw you downstairs."

The little man pulled at the top of his tie, a small blue tie with red polka dots, slightly frayed at the knot. He pulled it straight and repeated as if he had rehearsed it, "Come out in the alley." The tears filled his thickened red lids. Chuck said, "Ah, shut up," and followed Miranda, who was running towards the stairs. He overtook her on the sidewalk. "I left him sniveling and shuffling his publicity trying to find the joker," said Chuck, "the poor old heel."

Miranda said, "There's too much of everything in this world just now. I'd like to sit down here on the curb, Chuck, and die, and never again see—I wish I could lose my memory and forget my own name . . . I wish—"

Chuck said, "Toughen up, Miranda. This is no time to cave in. Forget that fellow. For every hundred people in show business, there are ninety-

nine like him. But you don't manage right. All you have to do is play up the headline the also-rans. Try to keep in mind that Rypinsky and you were nered in this town; please Rypinsky and you were nered, please them and you'll get a raise. You're a child, will you never learn?"

"I seem to keep learning all the wrong things."

"You do for a fact," Chuck told her cheerfully. "I've never seen you like I ever saw. Now do you feel better?"

"This is a rotten show you've invited me to. What are you going to do about it? If I were writing it up for you, I'd be ready to leave, anyway, but don't tell anybody."

"You mean it? All my life," said Chuck. "I'm a dramatic critic on a hick newspaper, and that's all I want to do."

"Better take it," Miranda told him. "It may be the beginning of the end of something. So don't open to me. I shan't need bread and butter while you're here. He has a venerable father to buy hooch for. Adam, I hope I see you once more before I get out. Get together with me. "I wish the war were over," she said, talking about that. "I wish it were over and I could go home."

Chuck had got out his pad and pencil and was writing. What she had said seemed sage enough but he didn't care how it started or when it ends," said Chuck. "I'm going to be there."

All the rejected men talked like that, though they didn't want the thing they wanted, now they couldn't have it. Some of them went to go, some of them. All of them had a sidelong look at her with about it, a guarded resentment which she could feel on me, you bloodthirsty female. I've offered you a job, you won't have it." The worst thing about war for anyone to talk to any more. The Lusk Corner is a watch out. Bread will win the war. Work will win the war. Nonsense. *Not* nonsense, valuable high explosive to be got out of peach baskets in a hurry during the canning season to lay the altar of their country. It keeps them busy and these women running wild with the men and giving something to keep their little minds off the girls, the intact cradles of the future, with their heads becomingly in Red Cross wimples,³ roll cocooned in a base hospital, and knit sweaters that they can't see their minds dwelling lovingly on all the blood and glory at the Acanthus Club for the officers of the quiet will win the war.

2. Sign of cowardice.

3. Headcoverings surrounding the entire face and chin.

stepped on the toes of a little drab man in a pretty fellow once, but now his mouth teeth, and his sad red-rimmed eyes had a wave of hair was combed out with brilliant the derby. He didn't move his feet, but resistance, and asked Miranda: "Are you a hick newspaper?"

Just asking for one minute of your valuable time with shaking hands to fish about in his pocket you get away with it, that's all." He riffled through paper clippings. "Just give these the once-over if you think I'm gonna stand for being a fool, in a toneless voice; "look here, here's Philadelphia, Frisco, besides New York. The business, *Variety*, the *Billboard*, they all know my Dickerson knows his stuff. So you can't ask you."

Reluctantly as she could, "and I can't stop to

his voice shook as if he had been nervous. "Was there you didn't like about me? Tell

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isn't that," said the little man, "but these cities back East don't know how it is out there and they think it's the same as getting it. They don't know the difference. They don't know the more the hick critics pan it. But I've won by the best in the business and I want to win me."

"The curtain's going up." Miranda handed him a card were mostly ten years old, and tried to get her again and said without much conviction "our block off." Chuck got up at that and took out of his pockets, and said, "Now you've got to get out. Get the hell out now before

of his tie, a small blue tie with red polka dots pulled it straight and repeated as if he had said "The tears filled his thickened red lids." He looked at Miranda, who was running towards the door. "I left him sniveling and shuffling," said Chuck, "the poor old heel."

of everything in this world just now. I'd like to see Chuck, and die, and never again see—I don't forget my own name . . . I wish—"

Miranda. This is no time to cave in. Forget the people in show business, there are ninety-

nine like him. But you don't manage right, anyway. You bring it on yourself. All you have to do is play up the headliners, and you needn't even mention the also-rans. Try to keep in mind that Rypinsky has got show business cornered in this town; please Rypinsky and you'll please the advertising department, please them and you'll get a raise. Hand-in-glove, my poor dumb child, will you never learn?"

"I seem to keep learning all the wrong things," said Miranda, hopelessly.

"You do for a fact," Chuck told her cheerfully. "You are as good at it as I ever saw. Now do you feel better?"

"This is a rotten show you've invited me to," said Chuck. "Now what are you going to do about it? If I were writing it up, I'd—"

"Do write it up," said Miranda. "You write it up this time. I'm getting ready to leave, anyway, but don't tell anybody yet."

"You mean it? All my life," said Chuck, "I've yearned to be a so-called dramatic critic on a hick newspaper, and this is positively my first chance."

"Better take it," Miranda told him. "It may be your last." She thought, This is the beginning of the end of something. Something terrible is going to happen to me. I shan't need bread and butter where I'm going. I'll will it to Chuck, he has a venerable father to buy hooch for. I hope they let him have it. Oh, Adam, I hope I see you once more before I go under with whatever is the matter with me. "I wish the war were over," she said to Chuck, as if they had been talking about that. "I wish it were over and I wish it had never begun."

Chuck had got out his pad and pencil and was already writing his review. What she had said seemed sage enough but how would he take it? "I don't care how it started or when it ends," said Chuck, scribbling away, "I'm not going to be there."

All the rejected men talked like that, thought Miranda. War was the one thing they wanted, now they couldn't have it. Maybe they had wanted badly to go, some of them. All of them had a sidelong eye for the women they talked with about it, a guarded resentment which said, "Don't pin a white feather² on me, you bloodthirsty female. I've offered my meat to the crows and they won't have it." The worst thing about war for the stay-at-homes is there isn't anyone to talk to any more. The Lusk Committee will get you if you don't watch out. Bread will win the war. Work will win, sugar will win, peach pits will win the war. Nonsense. *Not* nonsense, I tell you, there's some kind of valuable high explosive to be got out of peach pits. So all the happy housewives hurry during the canning season to lay their baskets of peach pits on the altar of their country. It keeps them busy and makes them feel useful, and all these women running wild with the men away are dangerous, if they aren't given something to keep their little minds out of mischief. So rows of young girls, the intact cradles of the future, with their pure serious faces framed becomingly in Red Cross wimples,³ roll cockeyed bandages that will never reach a base hospital, and knit sweaters that will never warm a manly chest, their minds dwelling lovingly on all the blood and mud and the next dance at the Acanthus Club for the officers of the flying corps. Keeping still and quiet will win the war.

2. Sign of cowardice.

3. Headcoverings surrounding the entire face and chin.

ere," said Chuck, absorbed in his review. Miranda. She slipped down in the chair dusty plush, closed her eyes and faced for the certain, the overwhelming and awful g at all ahead for Adam and for her. Nothing held her hands together palms up, gazing at oblivion.

, for the lights had come on and the audience. "I've got it all done, even before the Ella Mayhew, and she's always good, she's e's going to sing 'O the blues ain't nothin'.' That's all you need to know about her. you be willing to sign it?" red at them conscientiously, turning them ment, and gave them back. "Yes, Chuck, e must tell Bill you wrote it, because it's

aid Chuck. "You read it too fast. Here, lis- utter excitedly. While he was reading she it face with some kind of spark of life in it, ng of the brow above the nose. For the first she wondered what Chuck was thinking nd unhappy, he wasn't so frivolous as he ing into the aisle, bringing out their ciga- tch the instant they reached the lobby; at their wraps, men stretched their chins s, and Chuck said, "We might as well go ket, stepped into the moving crowd, think- hem? There must be a great many of them re not say a word to each other of our des- ds letting ourselves be destroyed, and why? ings we say to each other?"

e of the wicker couch in the cloakroom, and leave Adam with her. Time seemed to entricity, leaving twilight gaps in her mind ke a second, and then hard flashes of light roving that three minutes is an intolerable hanging by her thumbs. At last it was re- ng out of the house in the early darkness on be rain, he would be on the way, and him, after all. There was only the wish to threat, of not seeing him again; for every er seemed perilous, drawing them apart in spite of his most determined strokes is re tide. "I don't want to love," she would n, there is no time and we are not ready for

walk, with his foot on the first step, and et him. Adam, holding her hands, asked,

"Do you feel well now? Are you hungry? Are you tired? Will you feel like dancing after the show?"

"Yes to everything," said Miranda, "yes, yes. . . ." Her head was like a feather, and she steadied herself on his arm. The mist was still mist that might be rain later, and though the air was sharp and clean in her mouth, it did not, she decided, make breathing any easier. "I hope the show is good, or at least funny," she told him, "but I promise nothing."

It was a long, dreary play, but Adam and Miranda sat very quietly together waiting patiently for it to be over. Adam carefully and seriously pulled off her glove and held her hand as if he were accustomed to holding her hand in theaters. Once they turned and their eyes met, but only once, and the two pairs of eyes were equally steady and noncommittal. A deep tremor set up in Miranda, and she set about resisting herself methodically as if she were closing windows and doors and fastening down curtains against a rising storm. Adam sat watching the monotonous play with a strange shining excitement, his face quite fixed and still.

When the curtain rose for the third act, the third act did not take place at once. There was instead disclosed a backdrop almost covered with an American flag improperly and disrespectfully exposed, nailed at each upper corner, gathered in the middle and nailed again, sagging dustily. Before it posed a local dollar-a-year man, now doing his bit as a Liberty Bond salesman. He was an ordinary man past middle life, with a neat little melon buttoned into his trousers and waistcoat, an opinionated tight mouth, a face and figure in which nothing could be read save the inept sensual record of fifty years. But for once in his life he was an important fellow in an impressive situation, and he reveled, rolling his words in an actorish tone.

"Looks like a penguin," said Adam. They moved, smiled at each other, Miranda reclaimed her hand, Adam folded his together and they prepared to wear their way again through the same old moldy speech with the same old dusty backdrop. Miranda tried not to listen, but she heard. These vile Huns—glorious Belleau Wood—our keyword is Sacrifice—Martyred Belgium—give till it hurts—our noble boys Over There—Big Berthas⁴—the death of civilization—the Boche—

"My head aches," whispered Miranda. "Oh, why won't he hush?"

"He won't," whispered Adam. "I'll get you some aspirin."

"In Flanders Field the poppies grow, Between the crosses row on row"⁵— "He's getting into the home stretch," whispered Adam—atrocities, innocent babes hoisted on Boche bayonets—your child and my child—if our children are spared these things, then let us say with all reverence that these dead have not died in vain—the war, the war, the war to end war, war for Democracy, for humanity, a safe world forever and ever—and to prove our faith in Democracy to each other, and to the world, let everybody get together and buy Liberty Bonds and do without sugar and wool socks—was that it? Miranda asked herself, Say that over, I didn't catch the last line. Did you mention Adam? If you didn't I'm not interested. What about Adam, you little pig? And what are

4. Powerful, long-range mounted artillery guns used by the Germans; named for Bertha Krupp, daughter of German armaments manufacturer Alfred Krupp.

5. Line 1 of famous World War I poem by the

Canadian army doctor John McCrea (1872–1918), first published in the English magazine *Punch* on December 8, 1915, and then in McCrea's posthumous volume *In Flanders Fields and Other Poems* (1919).

we going to sing this time, "Tipperary" or "There's a Long, Long Trail"?⁶ Oh, please do let the show go on and get over with. I must write a piece about it before I can go dancing with Adam and we have no time. Coal, oil, iron, gold, international finance, why don't you tell us about them, you little liar?

The audience rose and sang, "There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding," their opened mouths black and faces pallid in the reflected footlights; some of the faces grimaced and wept and had shining streaks like snail's tracks on them. Adam and Miranda joined in at the tops of their voices, grinning shamefacedly at each other once or twice.

In the street, they lit their cigarettes and walked slowly as always. "Just another nasty old man who would like to see the young ones killed," said Miranda in a low voice; "the tom-cats try to eat the little tom-kittens, you know. They don't fool you really, do they, Adam?"

The young people were talking like that about the business by then. They felt they were seeing pretty clearly through that game. She went on, "I hate these potbellied baldheads, too fat, too old, too cowardly, to go to war themselves, they know they're safe; it's you they are sending instead—"

Adam turned eyes of genuine surprise upon her. "Oh, *that* one," he said. "Now what could the poor sap do if they did take him? It's not his fault," he explained, "he can't do anything but talk." His pride in his youth, his forbearance and tolerance and contempt for that unlucky being breathed out of his very pores as he strolled, straight and relaxed in his strength. "What *could* you expect of him, Miranda?"

She spoke his name often, and he spoke hers rarely. The little shock of pleasure the sound of her name in his mouth gave her stopped her answer. For a moment she hesitated, and began at another point of attack. "Adam," she said, "the worst of war is the fear and suspicion and the awful expression in all the eyes you meet . . . as if they had pulled down the shutters over their minds and their hearts and were peering out at you, ready to leap if you make one gesture or say one word they do not understand instantly. It frightens me; I live in fear too, and no one should have to live in fear. It's the skulking about, and the lying. It's what war does to the mind and the heart, Adam, and you can't separate these two—what it does to them is worse than what it can do to the body."

Adam said soberly, after a moment, "Oh, yes, but suppose one comes back whole? The mind and the heart sometimes get another chance, but if anything happens to the poor old human frame, why, it's just out of luck, that's all."

"Oh, yes," mimicked Miranda. "It's just out of luck, that's all."

"If I didn't go," said Adam, in a matter-of-fact voice, "I couldn't look myself in the face."

So that's all settled. With her fingers flattened on his arm, Miranda was silent, thinking about Adam. No, there was no resentment or revolt in him. Pure, she thought, all the way through, flawless, complete, as the sacrificial lamb must be. The sacrificial lamb strode along casually, accommodating his long pace to hers, keeping her on the inside of the walk in the good American style, helping her across street corners as if she were a cripple—"I hope we don't come to a mud puddle, he'll carry me over it"—giving off

6. Popular war songs.

whiffs of tobacco smoke, a manly smell of leather and freshly washed skin, breathing his chest easily. He threw back his head and misted, promising rain. "Oh, boy," he said, "that review of yours so we can get started?"

He waited for her before a cup of coffee pressroom, nicknamed The Greasy Spoon. freshly washed and combed and powdered, s the dingy big window, face turned to the stre extraordinary face, smooth and fine and gold set in a blind melancholy, a look of pained su: one split second she got a glimpse of Adam w the face of the man he would not live to be. I bright glow was there.

Adam pulled their chairs together at their tab tened to the orchestra jazzing "Pack Up Your

"In an old kit bag, and smoil, smoil, smoi under the draft age, gathered around a table n incoherently, laughed in great hysterical burst to be merriment, and passed around under tl taining a clear liquid—for in this western city drunken miners, no one was allowed to take h into their tumblers of ginger ale, and went on Tipperary." When the tune changed to "Madelc It was a tawdry little place, crowded and hot an nothing better. The music was gay; and life thought Miranda, so what does it matter? This this is all we're going to get, this is the way it i "Adam, come out of your dream and listen to i and my head and my heart and they're real. I an in such danger as I can't bear to think about, ai other?" When her hand tightened on his shoul her waist instantly, and stayed there, holding fi smiled continually at each other, odd changing found a new language. Miranda, her face near dark young pair sitting at a corner table, each w of the other, their heads together, their eyes star ever it was, that hovered in space before them. table, his hand over it, and her face was a blur w he raised her hand and kissed it, and set it dow would fill again. They were not shameless, they they were, or they had no other place to go, perl and the small pantomime repeated itself, like a ning monotonously over and over again. Miranc that girl. At least she can weep if that helps, an ask, What is the matter? Tell me. They had cups after a long while—Miranda and Adam had d: twice—when the coffee was quite cold, they drank as before, without a word and scarcely a glance

rary" or "There's a Long, Long Trail"?⁶ Oh, get over with. I must write a piece about it and we have no time. Coal, oil, iron, gold, you tell us about them, you little liar?

"There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding," faces pallid in the reflected footlights; some and had shining streaks like snail's tracks lined in at the tops of their voices, grinning or twice.

arettes and walked slowly as always. "Just would like to see the young ones killed," said n-cats try to eat the little tom-kittens, you do they, Adam?"

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whiffs of tobacco smoke, a manly smell of scentless soap, freshly cleaned leather and freshly washed skin, breathing through his nose and carrying his chest easily. He threw back his head and smiled into the sky which still misted, promising rain. "Oh, boy," he said, "what a night. Can't you hurry that review of yours so we can get started?"

He waited for her before a cup of coffee in the restaurant next to the pressroom, nicknamed The Greasy Spoon. When she came down at last, freshly washed and combed and powdered, she saw Adam first, sitting near the dingy big window, face turned to the street, but looking down. It was an extraordinary face, smooth and fine and golden in the shabby light, but now set in a blind melancholy, a look of pained suspense and disillusion. For just one split second she got a glimpse of Adam when he would have been older, the face of the man he would not live to be. He saw her then, rose, and the bright glow was there.

Adam pulled their chairs together at their table; they drank hot tea and listened to the orchestra jazzing "Pack Up Your Troubles."

"In an old kit bag, and smoil, smoil, smoil," shouted half a dozen boys under the draft age, gathered around a table near the orchestra. They yelled incoherently, laughed in great hysterical bursts of something that appeared to be merriment, and passed around under the tablecloth flat bottles containing a clear liquid—for in this western city founded and built by roaring drunken miners, no one was allowed to take his alcohol openly—splashed it into their tumblers of ginger ale, and went on singing, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary." When the tune changed to "Madelon," Adam said, "Let's dance." It was a tawdry little place, crowded and hot and full of smoke, but there was nothing better. The music was gay; and life is completely crazy anyway, thought Miranda, so what does it matter? This is what we have, Adam and I, this is all we're going to get, this is the way it is with us. She wanted to say, "Adam, come out of your dream and listen to me. I have pains in my chest and my head and my heart and they're real. I am in pain all over, and you are in such danger as I can't bear to think about, and why can we not save each other?" When her hand tightened on his shoulder his arm tightened about her waist instantly, and stayed there, holding firmly. They said nothing but smiled continually at each other, odd changing smiles as though they had found a new language. Miranda, her face near Adam's shoulder, noticed a dark young pair sitting at a corner table, each with an arm around the waist of the other, their heads together, their eyes staring at the same thing, whatever it was, that hovered in space before them. Her right hand lay on the table, his hand over it, and her face was a blur with weeping. Now and then he raised her hand and kissed it, and set it down and held it, and her eyes would fill again. They were not shameless, they had merely forgotten where they were, or they had no other place to go, perhaps. They said not a word, and the small pantomime repeated itself, like a melancholy short film running monotonously over and over again. Miranda envied them. She envied that girl. At least she can weep if that helps, and he does not even have to ask, What is the matter? Tell me. They had cups of coffee before them, and after a long while—Miranda and Adam had danced and sat down again twice—when the coffee was quite cold, they drank it suddenly, then embraced as before, without a word and scarcely a glance at each other. Something

was done and settled between them, at least; it was enviable, enviable, that they could sit quietly together and have the same expression on their faces while they looked into the hell they shared, no matter what kind of hell, it was theirs, they were together.

At the table nearest Adam and Miranda a young woman was leaning on her elbow, telling her young man a story. "And I don't like him because he's too fresh. He kept on asking me to take a drink and I kept telling him, I don't drink and he said, Now look here, I want a drink the worst way and I think it's mean of you not to drink with me, I can't sit up here and drink by myself," he said. I told him, You're not by yourself in the first place; I like that, I said, and if you want a drink go ahead and have it, I told him, why drag *me* in? So he called the waiter and ordered ginger ale and two glasses and I drank straight ginger ale like I always do but he poured a shot of hooch in his. He was awfully proud of that hooch, said he made it himself out of potatoes. Nice homemade likker, warm from the pipe, he told me, three drops of this and your ginger ale will taste like Mumm's Extry.⁷ But I said, No, and I mean no, can't you get that through your bean? He took another drink and said, Ah, come on, honey, don't be so stubborn, this'll make your shimmy shake. So I just got tired of the argument, and I said, I don't need to drink, to shake my shimmy, I can strut my stuff on tea, I said. Well, why don't you then, he wanted to know, and I just told him—"

She knew she had been asleep for a long time when all at once without even a warning footstep or creak of the door hinge, Adam was in the room turning on the light, and she knew it was he, though at first she was blinded and turned her head away. He came over at once and sat on the side of the bed and began to talk as if he were going on with something they had been talking about before. He crumpled a square of paper and tossed it in the fireplace.

"You didn't get my note," he said. "I left it under the door. I was called back suddenly to camp for a lot of inoculations. They kept me longer than I expected, I was late. I called the office and they told me you were not coming in today. I called Miss Hobbe here and she said you were in bed and couldn't come to the telephone. Did she give you my message?"

"No," said Miranda drowsily, "but I think I have been asleep all day. Oh, I do remember. There was a doctor here. Bill sent him. I was at the telephone once, for Bill told me he would send an ambulance and have me taken to the hospital. The doctor tapped my chest and left a prescription and said he would be back, but he hasn't come."

"Where is it, the prescription?" asked Adam.

"I don't know. He left it, though, I saw him."

Adam moved about searching the tables and the mantelpiece.

"Here it is," he said. "I'll be back in a few minutes. I must look for an all-night drug store. It's after one o'clock. Good-by."

Good-by, good-by. Miranda watched the door where he had disappeared for quite a while, then closed her eyes, and thought, When I am not here I cannot remember anything about this room where I have lived for nearly a year, except that the curtains are too thin and there was never any way of

7. Brand of champagne.

shutting out the morning light. Miss Hobbe but they had never appeared. When Miranda at the telephone that morning, Miss Hobbe tray. She was a little red-haired nervously fri said all too plainly that the place was not pa edge.

"My dear *child*," she said sharply, with a g is the matter?"

Miranda, with the receiver to her ear, said "Horrors," said Miss Hobbe, in a whispe hands. "Go back to bed at once . . . go at om

"I must talk to Bill first," Miranda had tol ried on and had not returned. Bill had shout everything, doctor, nurse, ambulance, hosp usual, everything, but she was to get back to l into bed, thinking that Bill was the only pers ally tore his own hair when he was excited en to be sent home, she thought, it's a respect death on the family if you can manage it. Ne ness, but not in this room, I hope . . . I wish l the snow, that's what I should like best; and a ranges of the Rockies wearing their perpetua rels of cloud, chilling her to the bone with the have warmth—and her memory turned and had known first and loved best, that now she ments of palm and cedar, dark shadows and a zling, as this strange sky had dazzled witho long slow wavering of gray moss in the drows ering of buzzards overhead, the smell of crus and without warning a broad tranquil river i she had known. The walls shelved away in o on either side, and a tall sailing ship was moc weathered to blackness touching the foot of jungle, and even as it appeared before her, sh read or had been told or felt or thought abo alive and secret place of death, creeping wit rainbow-colored birds with malign eyes, leop and extravagantly crested lions; screaming l among broad fleshy leaves that glowed with su the ichor of death, and rotting trunks of unfai ing slime. Without surprise, watching from h swiftly down this gangplank to the slanting l leaned on the rail and waved gaily to herself spread its wings and sailed away into the jung shattering scream and the hoarse bellow of voi and colliding above her like ragged storm-clou words only rising and falling and clamoring ab danger, the voices said, and War, war, war. T Adam standing with his hand on the knob, and

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Miranda a young woman was leaning on the wall. "And I don't like him because he's not a drink and I kept telling him, I don't want a drink the worst way and I think I can't sit up here and drink by myself, I don't want a drink in the first place; I like that, I said, and I don't have it, I told him, why drag *me* in? So he brought me ginger ale and two glasses and I drank but he poured a shot of hooch in his. He said he made it himself out of potatoes. I said, the pipe, he told me, three drops of this rum's Extry.⁷ But I said, No, and I mean I don't want to be? He took another drink and said, I don't want this, I said, I don't want this, I said, I don't want this, I said, Well, why don't you then, he said—"

long time when all at once without even a word, Adam was in the room turning on the light. She had been sitting on the floor and sat on the side of the bed and began to cry. "I don't know what they had been talking about but she said she had been talking about the pipe and tossed it in the fireplace.

"I left it under the door. I was called to the office and they told me you were not coming here and she said you were in bed and she said she give you my message?"

"I think I have been asleep all day. Oh, I don't know. Bill sent him. I was at the telephone and an ambulance and have me taken to the hospital and left a prescription and said he said—"

asked Adam.

"I saw him."

he tables and the mantelpiece.

back in a few minutes. I must look for an ambulance. Good-by."

opened the door where he had disappeared and looked at the door, and thought, When I am not here I don't know where I have lived for nearly a year and there was never any way of

shutting out the morning light. Miss Hobbe had promised heavier curtains, but they had never appeared. When Miranda in her dressing gown had been at the telephone that morning, Miss Hobbe had passed through, carrying a tray. She was a little red-haired nervously friendly creature, and her manner said all too plainly that the place was not paying and she was on the ragged edge.

"My dear *child*," she said sharply, with a glance at Miranda's attire, "what is the matter?"

Miranda, with the receiver to her ear, said, "Influenza, I think."

"Horrors," said Miss Hobbe, in a whisper, and the tray wavered in her hands. "Go back to bed at once . . . go at *once*!"

"I must talk to Bill first," Miranda had told her, and Miss Hobbe had hurried on and had not returned. Bill had shouted directions at her, promising everything, doctor, nurse, ambulance, hospital, her check every week as usual, everything, but she was to get back to bed and stay there. She dropped into bed, thinking that Bill was the only person she had ever seen who actually tore his own hair when he was excited enough . . . I suppose I should ask to be sent home, she thought, it's a respectable old custom to inflict your death on the family if you can manage it. No, I'll stay here, this is my business, but not in this room, I hope . . . I wish I were in the cold mountains in the snow, that's what I should like best; and all about her rose the measured ranges of the Rockies wearing their perpetual snow, their majestic blue laurels of cloud, chilling her to the bone with their sharp breath. Oh, no, I must have warmth—and her memory turned and roved after another place she had known first and loved best, that now she could see only in drifting fragments of palm and cedar, dark shadows and a sky that warmed without dazzling, as this strange sky had dazzled without warming her; there was the long slow wavering of gray moss in the drowsy oak shade, the spacious hovering of buzzards overhead, the smell of crushed water herbs along a bank, and without warning a broad tranquil river into which flowed all the rivers she had known. The walls shelved away in one deliberate silent movement on either side, and a tall sailing ship was moored near by, with a gangplank weathered to blackness touching the foot of her bed. Back of the ship was jungle, and even as it appeared before her, she knew it was all she had ever read or had been told or felt or thought about jungles; a writhing terribly alive and secret place of death, creeping with tangles of spotted serpents, rainbow-colored birds with malign eyes, leopards with humanly wise faces and extravagantly crested lions; screaming long-armed monkeys tumbling among broad fleshy leaves that glowed with sulphur-colored light and exuded the ichor of death, and rotting trunks of unfamiliar trees sprawled in crawling slime. Without surprise, watching from her pillow, she saw herself run swiftly down this gangplank to the slanting deck, and standing there, she leaned on the rail and waved gaily to herself in bed, and the slender ship spread its wings and sailed away into the jungle. The air trembled with the shattering scream and the hoarse bellow of voices all crying together, rolling and colliding above her like ragged storm-clouds, and the words became two words only rising and falling and clamoring about her head. Danger, danger, danger, the voices said, and War, war, war. There was her door half open, Adam standing with his hand on the knob, and Miss Hobbe with her face all

shrilly, "I tell you, they must come for her . . . I tell you, this is a plague, a plague, people to think about!"

"Come for her tomorrow morning. They'd better come now!"

said Adam, "and there aren't any beds. They're all busy. That's all there is to I look after her."

"See that," said Miss Hobbe, in a particu-

larly drily, "and you keep out."

He was carrying an assortment of miscellaneous things, looking astonishingly impassive.

He was leaning over and speaking very quietly.

"A nice prospect, isn't it?"

Adam, "and you're to begin with it this morn-

ing," said Miranda.

"I said Adam, "all the theaters and nearly closed, and the streets have been full of people all night—"

She was laughing, feeling hilarious and light-headed. She slipped on the robe. "I'm glad to see you. Give me a cigarette, will you, and sit near one of the windows and sit near one of them."

"Don't you know that? Why do you do it?" she said, "your medicine," and offered her two large pills. He took them promptly and instantly vomited. He was beginning to laugh. "I'm so sorry." Adam's stern expression washed her face with ice from one of the packages, and firmly.

"It's what they always did at home," she said. "Crushed with humiliation, she put her hands to her face, painfully."

"I said Adam, pulling her hands from her face, "hardly begun. And I've got other things, they told me to feed you ice cream—and a thermometer. You have to work through it, it's not easy."

"I'm leaning," said Miranda, and drank some water. He told him about the room, as he did things before, like a man alone; now and again he put his hand under her head, would hold a cup or a glass, and drank, and followed him with her eyes. The night was happening.

"I thought of something. Maybe they forgot St. George's. I'll go there and ask them not to be so selfish with the candles. I only want a very small dark ugly one for the room."

He believed, apparently, that she was still more or less in her right mind, for she heard him at the telephone explaining in his deliberate voice. He was back again almost at once, saying, "This seems to be my day for getting mixed up with peevish old maids. The sister said that even if they had a room you couldn't have it without doctor's orders. But they didn't have one, anyway. She was pretty sour about it."

"Well," said Miranda in a thick voice, "I think that's abominably rude and mean, don't you?" She sat up with a wild gesture of both arms, and began to retch again, violently.

"Hold it, as you were," called Adam, fetching the basin. He held her head, washed her face and hands with ice water, put her head straight on the pillow, and went over and looked out of the window. "Well," he said at last, sitting beside her again, "they haven't got a room. They haven't got a bed. They haven't even got a baby crib, the way she talked. So I think that's straight enough, and we may as well dig in."

"Isn't the ambulance coming?"

"Tomorrow, maybe."

He took off his tunic and hung it on the back of a chair. Kneeling before the fireplace, he began carefully to set kindling sticks in the shape of an Indian tepee, with a little paper in the center for them to lean upon. He lighted this and placed other sticks upon them, and larger bits of wood. When they were going nicely he added still heavier wood, and coal a few lumps at a time, until there was a good blaze, and a fire that would not need rekindling. He rose and dusted his hands together, the fire illuminated him from the back and his hair shone.

"Adam," said Miranda, "I think you're very beautiful." He laughed out at this, and shook his head at her. "What a hell of a word," he said, "for me." "It was the first that occurred to me," she said, drawing up on her elbow to catch the warmth of the blaze. "That's a good job, that fire."

He sat on the bed again, dragging up a chair and putting his feet on the rungs. They smiled at each other for the first time since he had come in that night. "How do you feel now?" he asked.

"Better, much better," she told him. "Let's talk. Let's tell each other what we meant to do."

"You tell me first," said Adam. "I want to know about you."

"You'd get the notion I had a very sad life," she said, "and perhaps it was, but I'd be glad enough to have it now. If I could have it back, it could be easy to be happy about almost anything at all. That's not true, but that's the way I feel now." After a pause, she said, "There's nothing to tell, after all, if it ends now, for all this time I was getting ready for something that was going to happen later, when the time came. So now it's nothing much."

"But it must have been worth having until now, wasn't it?" he asked seriously as if it were something important to know.

"Not if this is all," she repeated obstinately.

"Weren't you ever—happy?" asked Adam, and he was plainly afraid of the word; he was shy of it as he was of the word *love*, he seemed never to have spoken it before, and was uncertain of its sound or meaning.

"I don't know," she said, "I just lived and never thought about it. I remember things I liked, though, and things I hoped for."

"I was going to be an electrical engineer," said Adam. He stopped short. "And I shall finish up when I get back," he added, after a moment.

"Don't you love being alive?" asked Miranda. "Don't you love weather and the colors at different times of the day, and all the sounds and noises like children screaming in the next lot, and automobile horns and little bands playing in the street and the smell of food cooking?"

"I love to swim, too," said Adam.

"So do I," said Miranda; "we never did swim together."

"Do you remember any prayers?" she asked him suddenly. "Did you ever learn anything at Sunday School?"

"Not much," confessed Adam without contrition. "Well, the Lord's Prayer."

"Yes, and there's Hail Mary," she said, "and the really useful one beginning, I confess to Almighty God and to blessed Mary ever virgin and to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul—"

"Catholic," he commented.

"Prayers just the same, you big Methodist. I'll bet you *are* a Methodist."

"No, Presbyterian."

"Well, what others do you remember?"

"Now I lay me down to sleep—" said Adam.

"Yes, that one, and Blessed Jesus meek and mild—you see that my religious education wasn't neglected either. I even know a prayer beginning O Apollo. Want to hear it?"

"No," said Adam, "you're making fun."

"I'm not," said Miranda, "I'm trying to keep from going to sleep. I'm afraid to go to sleep, I may not wake up. Don't let me go to sleep, Adam. Do you know Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? Bless the bed I lie upon?"

"If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Is that it?" asked Adam. "It doesn't sound right, somehow."

"Light me a cigarette, please, and move over and sit near the window. We keep forgetting about fresh air. You must have it." He lighted the cigarette and held it to her lips. She took it between her fingers and dropped it under the edge of her pillow. He found it and crushed it out in the saucer under the water tumbler. Her head swam in darkness for an instant, cleared, and she sat up in panic, throwing off the covers and breaking into a sweat. Adam leaped up with an alarmed face, and almost at once was holding a cup of hot coffee to her mouth.

"You must have some too," she told him, quiet again, and they sat huddled together on the edge of the bed, drinking coffee in silence.

Adam said, "You must lie down again. You're awake now."

"Let's sing," said Miranda. "I know an old spiritual, I can remember some of the words." She spoke in a natural voice. "I'm fine now." She began in a hoarse whisper, "'Pale horse, pale rider, done taken my lover away . . .' Do you know that song?"

"Yes," said Adam, "I heard Negroes in Texas sing it, in an oil field."

"I heard them sing it in a cotton field," she said; "it's a good song."

They sang that line together. "But I can't remember what comes next," said Adam.

"'Pale horse, pale rider,'" said Miranda, "(We really need a good banjo) 'done taken my lover away—'" Her voice cleared and she said, "But we ought to get on with it. What's the next line?"

"There's a lot more to it than that," said Adam. "I've had it done taken away mammy, pappy, brotha, and the lover—"

"But not the singer, not yet," said Miranda. "I can't seem to mourn. 'Death,'" she sang, "'oh, leave me—'"

"'Pale horse, pale rider,'" chanted Adam. "I've had it done taken my lover away! (I think we're good at act—)"

"Go in Hut Service," said Miranda, "and sing 'Over There.'"

"We'll play banjos," said Adam; "I always play."

Miranda sighed, and lay back on the pillow. She can't hold out any longer. There was only a faint memory of Adam. There were no longer any multiplications of memory and hope pulling taut between them. There was only the time of time, and Adam's face, very near hers, and there was to be nothing more. . . .

"Adam," she said out of the heavy soft darkness. "I love you, and I was hoping you would say something."

He lay down beside her with his arm under her head, his smooth face against hers, his mouth moving. "Can you hear what I am saying? . . . What do you want to tell you all this time?"

She turned towards him, the cloud cleared for an instant. He pulled the covers about her and said, "darling, darling, if you will go to sleep now and bring you hot coffee and tomorrow we'll be here, you, go to sleep—"

Almost with no warning at all, she floated away. In sleep that was not sleep but clear as wood, an angry dangerous wood full of iron, she saw sharply like the whine of arrows and she saw these singing arrows that struck him in their path through the leaves. Adam fell and rose again unwounded and alive; another invisible bow struck him again and he fell untouched in a perpetual death and resurrection. She, angrily and selfishly she interposed herself, crying, No, no, like a child cheated, must you always be the one to die? and the arrow struck the heart and through his body and he lay on the wood whistled and sang and shouted, even the grass had its own terrible accusing voice. She lay in the middle of the room, running, and she was asleep too. What happened, you screamed.

After he had helped her to settle again, she lay under her chin, resting her head on her hand, searching for her words because it was impossible. "I had a very odd sort of dream, I don't know what it was."

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d almost at once was holding a cup of hot

told him, quiet again, and they sat hud-
ed, drinking coffee in silence.
again. You're awake now."

ow an old spiritual, I can remember some
ral voice. "I'm fine now." She began in a
rider, done taken my lover away . . ." Do

oes in Texas sing it, in an oil field."
field," she said; "it's a good song."
But I can't remember what comes next,"

Miranda, "(We really need a good banjo)
voice cleared and she said, "But we ought
ne?"

"There's a lot more to it than that," said Adam, "about forty verses, the rider
done taken away mammy, pappy, brother, sister, the whole family besides
the lover—"

"But not the singer, not yet," said Miranda. "Death always leaves one singer
to mourn. 'Death,'" she sang, "'oh, leave one singer to mourn—'"

"'Pale horse, pale rider,'" chanted Adam, coming in on the beat, "'done
taken my lover away!' (I think we're good, I think we ought to get up an
act—)"

"Go in Hut Service," said Miranda, "entertain the poor defenseless heroes
Over There."

"We'll play banjos," said Adam; "I always wanted to play the banjo."

Miranda sighed, and lay back on the pillow and thought, I must give up, I
can't hold out any longer. There was only that pain, only that room, and only
Adam. There were no longer any multiple planes of living, no tough fila-
ments of memory and hope pulling taut backwards and forwards holding her
upright between them. There was only this one moment and it was a dream
of time, and Adam's face, very near hers, eyes still and intent, was a shadow,
and there was to be nothing more. . . .

"Adam," she said out of the heavy soft darkness that drew her down, down,
"I love you, and I was hoping you would say that to me, too."

He lay down beside her with his arm under her shoulder, and pressed his
smooth face against hers, his mouth moved towards her mouth and stopped.
"Can you hear what I am saying? . . . What do you think I have been trying
to tell you all this time?"

She turned towards him, the cloud cleared and she saw his face for an
instant. He pulled the covers about her and held her, and said, "Go to sleep,
darling, darling, if you will go to sleep now for one hour I will wake you up
and bring you hot coffee and tomorrow we will find somebody to help. I love
you, go to sleep—"

Almost with no warning at all, she floated into the darkness, holding his
hand, in sleep that was not sleep but clear evening light in a small green
wood, an angry dangerous wood full of inhuman concealed voices singing
sharply like the whine of arrows and she saw Adam transfixed by a flight of
these singing arrows that struck him in the heart and passed shrilly cutting
their path through the leaves. Adam fell straight back before her eyes, and
rose again unwounded and alive; another flight of arrows loosed from the
invisible bow struck him again and he fell, and yet he was there before her
untouched in a perpetual death and resurrection. She threw herself before
him, angrily and selfishly she interposed between him and the track of the
arrow, crying, No, no, like a child cheated in a game, It's my turn now, why
must you always be the one to die? and the arrows struck her cleanly through
the heart and through his body and he lay dead, and she still lived, and the
wood whistled and sang and shouted, every branch and leaf and blade of
grass had its own terrible accusing voice. She ran then, and Adam caught
her in the middle of the room, running, and said, "Darling, I must have been
asleep too. What happened, you screamed terribly?"

After he had helped her to settle again, she sat with her knees drawn up
under her chin, resting her head on her folded arms and began carefully
searching for her words because it was important to explain clearly. "It was
a very odd sort of dream, I don't know why it could have frightened me.

old-fashioned valentine. There were two
y the same arrow—you know, Adam—
n the gentlest sort of way, and sat kissing
th a kind of accustomedness, as if he had
f those lace paper things.”
nd were us, you understand—this doesn't
out it was something like that. It was in a

nd put on his tunic and gathered up the
to that little stand and get us some ice
; “and I'll be back in five minutes, and you
tes,” he said, holding her chin in the palm
er eye, “and you be very quiet.”

again.” But she was not, and the two alert
hospital who had arrived, after frantic urg-
of the *Blue Mountain News*, to carry her
ided that they had better go down and get
her, she sat up, got out of bed at once and
Why, you're all right,” said the darker and
oth extremely fit and competent-looking in
a flower in his buttonhole. “I'll just carry
t and wrapped it around her. She gathered
ere is Adam?” taking hold of the doctor's
nched forehead, shook his head, and gave

ring her voice confidentially, “he was here

e told her easily, “he's just gone round the
orry about Adam. He's the least of your

re?” she asked, still holding back.

he interne. “Come now, it's time we got out

o his shoulder. “I feel very badly,” she told

ping out carefully, the other doctor going
rst step of the stairs. “Put your arms around
won't do you any harm and it's a great help

asked as the other doctor opened the front
re frosty sweet air.

one of one humoring a child.

ve in a pretty mess?”

ildesheim.

quite fresh and dapper in his white coat,
ing at the edges, was leaning over listening
roscope, whistling thinly, “There's a Long,
e he tapped her ribs smartly with two fin-
d him for a few moments until she fixed his

bright busy hazel eye not four inches from hers. “I'm not unconscious,” she
explained, “I know what I want to say.” Then to her horror she heard herself
babbling nonsense, knowing it was nonsense though she could not hear
what she was saying. The flicker of attention in the eye near her vanished,
the second interne went on tapping and listening, hissing softly under his
breath.

“I wish you'd stop whistling,” she said clearly. The sound stopped. “It's a
beastly tune,” she added. Anything, anything at all to keep her small hold
on the life of human beings, a clear line of communication, no matter what,
between her and the receding world. “Please let me see Dr. Hildesheim,”
she said, “I have something important to say to him. I must say it now.” The
second interne vanished. He did not walk away, he fled into the air without
a sound, and Dr. Hildesheim's face appeared in his stead.

“Dr. Hildesheim, I want to ask you about Adam.”

“That young man? He's been here, and left you a note, and has gone
again,” said Dr. Hildesheim, “and he'll be back tomorrow and the day after.”
His tone was altogether too merry and flippant.

“I don't believe you,” said Miranda, bitterly, closing her lips and eyes and
hoping she might not weep.

“Miss Tanner,” called the doctor, “have you got that note?”

Miss Tanner appeared beside her, handed her an unsealed envelope, took
it back, unfolded the note and gave it to her.

“I can't see it,” said Miranda, after a pained search of the page full of
hasty scratches in black ink.

“Here, I'll read it,” said Miss Tanner. “It says, ‘They came and took you
while I was away and now they will not let me see you. Maybe tomorrow they
will, with my love, Adam,’” read Miss Tanner in a firm dry voice, pronounc-
ing the words distinctly. “Now, do you see?” she asked soothingly.

Miranda, hearing the words one by one, forgot them one by one. “Oh,
read it again, what does it say?” she called out over the silence that pressed
upon her, reaching towards the dancing words that just escaped as she
almost touched them. “That will do,” said Dr. Hildesheim, calmly authori-
tarian. “Where is that bed?”

“There is no bed yet,” said Miss Tanner, as if she said, We are short of
oranges. Dr. Hildesheim said, “Well, we'll manage something,” and Miss
Tanner drew the narrow trestle with bright crossed metal supports and
small rubbery wheels into a deep jut of the corridor, out of the way of the
swift white figures darting about, whirling and skimming like water flies all
in silence. The white walls rose sheer as cliffs, a dozen frosted moons fol-
lowed each other in perfect self-possession down a white lane and dropped
mutely one by one into a snowy abyss.

What is this whiteness and silence but the absence of pain? Miranda lay
lifting the nap of her white blanket softly between eased fingers, watching
a dance of tall deliberate shadows moving behind a wide screen of sheets
spread upon a frame. It was there, near her, on her side of the wall where
she could see it clearly and enjoy it, and it was so beautiful she had no curi-
osity as to its meaning. Two dark figures nodded, bent, curtsied to each
other, retreated and bowed again, lifted long arms and spread great hands
against the white shadow of the screen; then with a single round move-
ment, the sheets were folded back, disclosing two speechless men in white,

standing, and another speechless man in white, lying on the bare springs of a white iron bed. The man on the springs was swathed smoothly from head to foot in white, with folded bands across the face, and a large stiff bow like merry rabbit ears dangled at the crown of his head.

The two living men lifted a mattress standing hunched against the wall, spread it tenderly and exactly over the dead man. Wordless and white they vanished down the corridor, pushing the wheeled bed before them. It had been an entrancing and leisurely spectacle, but now it was over. A pallid white fog rose in their wake insinuatingly and floated before Miranda's eyes, a fog in which was concealed all terror and all weariness, all the wrung faces and twisted backs and broken feet of abused, outraged living things, all the shapes of their confused pain and their estranged hearts; the fog might part at any moment and loose the horde of human torments. She put up her hands and said, Not yet, not yet, but it was too late. The fog parted and two executioners, white clad, moved towards her pushing between them with marvelously deft and practiced hands the misshapen figure of an old man in filthy rags whose scanty beard wagged under his opened mouth as he bowed his back and braced his feet to resist and delay the fate they had prepared for him. In a high weeping voice he was trying to explain to them that the crime of which he was accused did not merit the punishment he was about to receive; and except for this whining cry there was silence as they advanced. The soiled cracked bowls of the old man's hands were held before him beseechingly as a beggar's as he said, "Before God I am not guilty," but they held his arms and drew him onward, passed, and were gone.

The road to death is a long march beset with all evils, and the heart fails little by little at each new terror, the bones rebel at each step, the mind sets up its own bitter resistance and to what end? The barriers sink one by one, and no covering of the eyes shuts out the landscape of disaster, nor the sight of crimes committed there. Across the field came Dr. Hildesheim, his face a skull beneath his German helmet, carrying a naked infant writhing on the point of his bayonet, and a huge stone pot marked Poison in Gothic letters. He stopped before the well that Miranda remembered in a pasture on her father's farm, a well once dry but now bubbling with living water, and into its pure depths he threw the child and the poison, and the violated water sank back soundlessly into the earth. Miranda, screaming, ran with her arms above her head; her voice echoed and came back to her like a wolf's howl, Hildesheim is a Boche, a spy, a Hun, kill him, kill him before he kills you. . . . She woke howling, she heard the foul words accusing Dr. Hildesheim tumbling from her mouth; opened her eyes and knew she was in a bed in a small white room, with Dr. Hildesheim sitting beside her, two firm fingers on her pulse. His hair was brushed sleekly and his buttonhole flower was fresh. Stars gleamed through the window, and Dr. Hildesheim seemed to be gazing at them with no particular expression, his stethoscope dangling around his neck. Miss Tanner stood at the foot of the bed writing something on a chart.

"Hello," said Dr. Hildesheim, "at least you take it out in shouting. You don't try to get out of bed and go running around." Miranda held her eyes open with a terrible effort, saw his rather heavy, patient face clearly even as her mind tottered and slithered again, broke from its foundation and spun like a cast wheel in a ditch. "I didn't mean it, I never believed it, Dr. Hildesheim,

you musn't remember it—" and was gone again without answer.

The wrong she had done followed her and took vague shapes of horror she could not heart cringed at sight of them. Her mind, denied what she saw in the one instant, for darkness her reasoning coherent self watched coldly, reluctant to admit the truth of its vis despairs.

"I know those are your hands," she told me they are white tarantulas, don't touch me

"Shut your eyes," said Miss Tanner.

"Oh, no," said Miranda, "for then I see you in spite of her will, and the midnight of her eyes."

Oblivion, thought Miranda, her mind filled with words she had been taught to describe the whirlpool of gray water turning upon itself perhaps more than the distance to the far ledge over a pit that she knew to be bottom; she could not comprehend it; the ledge was her childhood dream back against a reassuring wall of granite a pit, thinking, There it is, there it is at last, it shaped words like oblivion and eternity are all. I shall not know when it happens, I shall I consent now, I am lost, there is no hope there it is, that is death and there is nothing left, still shrinking stiffly against the grand dream of safety, breathing slowly for fear of death separately, Look, don't be afraid, it is nothing

Granite walls, whirlpools, stars are things, an image of it. Death is death, said Miranda, but she butes. Silenced she sank easily through death she lay like a stone at the farthest bottom of deaf, speechless, no longer aware of the world withdrawn from all human concerns, yet a coherence; all notions of the mind, the reason of blood and the desires of the heart, dissolved there remained of her only a minute fierce self knew itself alone, that relied upon nothing susceptible to any appeal or inducement, but one single motive, the stubborn will to live. itself unaided to resist destruction, to survive of being, motiveless and planless beyond the hard unwinking angry point of light said

At once it grew, flattened, thinned to a fan and curved out into a rainbow through altogether believing, looked upon a deep clear soft meadow and sky, freshly washed and blue. Why, of course, of course, said Miranda

man in white, lying on the bare springs of the springs was swathed smoothly from head to foot across the face, and a large stiff bow like a crown of his head.

The matress standing hunched against the wall, the dead man. Wordless and white they were pushing the wheeled bed before them. It had been a spectacle, but now it was over. A pallid light was floating before Miranda's eyes, a weariness and all weariness, all the wrung faces of abused, outraged living things, all the estranged hearts; the fog might part and reveal the order of human torments. She put up her hand but it was too late. The fog parted and two figures moved towards her pushing between them with their hands the misshapen figure of an old man in a white sheet, his mouth opened as he bowed his head and delay the fate they had prepared for as trying to explain to them that the crime was not his; that the punishment he was about to receive would merit the punishment he was about to receive. No cry there was silence as they advanced. The man's hands were held before him beseeching, "O God I am not guilty," but they held his hands, and were gone.

Each beset with all evils, and the heart fails, the bones rebel at each step, the mind sets itself against what end? The barriers sink one by one, the landscape of disaster, nor the sight of the field came Dr. Hildesheim, his face a pale yellow, carrying a naked infant writhing on the floor. A red spot marked Poison in Gothic letters. Miranda remembered in a pasture on her knees, now bubbling with living water, and into it she had dropped the poison, and the violated water sank. Miranda, screaming, ran with her arms outstretched and came back to her like a wolf's howl, "Kill him, kill him before he kills you. . . . I would words accusing Dr. Hildesheim tumbling eyes and knew she was in a bed in a small room sitting beside her, two firm fingers on her forehead and his buttonhole flower was fresh. "No, no," and Dr. Hildesheim seemed to be gazing in depression, his stethoscope dangling around his neck, at the foot of the bed writing something on a

"At least you take it out in shouting. You don't shout around." Miranda held her eyes open, her heavy, patient face clearly even as her head broke from its foundation and spun like a top. "No, no, I never believed it, Dr. Hildesheim,

you mustn't remember it—" and was gone again, not being able to wait for an answer.

The wrong she had done followed her and haunted her dream: this wrong took vague shapes of horror she could not recognize or name, though her heart cringed at sight of them. Her mind, split in two, acknowledged and denied what she saw in the one instant, for across an abyss of complaining darkness her reasoning coherent self watched the strange frenzy of the other coldly, reluctant to admit the truth of its visions, its tenacious remorse and despairs.

"I know those are your hands," she told Miss Tanner, "I know it, but to me they are white tarantulas, don't touch me."

"Shut your eyes," said Miss Tanner.

"Oh, no," said Miranda, "for then I see worse things," but her eyes closed in spite of her will, and the midnight of her internal torment closed about her.

Oblivion, thought Miranda, her mind feeling among her memories of words she had been taught to describe the unseen, the unknowable, is a whirlpool of gray water turning upon itself for all eternity. . . . eternity is perhaps more than the distance to the farthest star. She lay on a narrow ledge over a pit that she knew to be bottomless, though she could not comprehend it; the ledge was her childhood dream of danger, and she strained back against a reassuring wall of granite at her shoulders, staring into the pit, thinking, There it is, there it is at last, it is very simple; and soft carefully shaped words like oblivion and eternity are curtains hung before nothing at all. I shall not know when it happens, I shall not feel or remember, why can't I consent now, I am lost, there is no hope for me. Look, she told herself, there it is, that is death and there is nothing to fear. But she could not consent, still shrinking stiffly against the granite wall that was her childhood dream of safety, breathing slowly for fear of squandering breath, saying desperately, Look, don't be afraid, it is nothing, it is only eternity.

Granite walls, whirlpools, stars are things. None of them is death, nor the image of it. Death is death, said Miranda, and for the dead it has no attributes. Silenced she sank easily through deeps under deeps of darkness until she lay like a stone at the farthest bottom of life, knowing herself to be blind, deaf, speechless, no longer aware of the members of her own body, entirely withdrawn from all human concerns, yet alive with a peculiar lucidity and coherence; all notions of the mind, the reasonable inquiries of doubt, all ties of blood and the desires of the heart, dissolved and fell away from her, and there remained of her only a minute fiercely burning particle of being that knew itself alone, that relied upon nothing beyond itself for its strength; not susceptible to any appeal or inducement, being itself composed entirely of one single motive, the stubborn will to live. This fiery motionless particle set itself unaided to resist destruction, to survive and to be in its own madness of being, motiveless and planless beyond that one essential end. Trust me, the hard unwinking angry point of light said. Trust me. I stay.

At once it grew, flattened, thinned to a fine radiance, spread like a great fan and curved out into a rainbow through which Miranda, enchanted, altogether believing, looked upon a deep clear landscape of sea and sand, of soft meadow and sky, freshly washed and glistening with transparencies of blue. Why, of course, of course, said Miranda, without surprise but with

made to her had been kept long after she
 se from her narrow ledge and ran lightly
 at bow that arched in its splendor over the
 ol green of the meadow on either hand.
 ver unhurriedly, lapped upon the sand in
 s flurried before a breeze that made no
 ely as clouds through the shimmering air
 eings, and Miranda saw in an amazement
 she had known. Their faces were transfig-
 ond what she remembered of them, their
 good weather, and they cast no shadows.
 knew them every one without calling their
 on she bore to them. They surrounded her
 d their entranced faces again towards the
 easily as a wave among waves. The drift-
 d each figure was alone but not solitary;
 othing, desiring nothing, in the quietude
 as, eyes fixed on the overwhelming deep

ead, in the prodigal warmth which flowed
 dow, within touch but not touching the
 bout her, Miranda felt without warning a
 ne small flick of distrust in her joy; a thin
 fident tranquillity; something, somebody,
 ing, she had left something valuable in
 it be? There are no trees, no trees here,
 ing unfinished. A thought struggled at the
 voice in her ear. Where are the dead? We
 ad, where are they? At once as if a curtain
 led, she was alone in a strange stony place
 ng a steep path of slippery snow, calling
 what direction? Pain returned, a terrible
 er veins like heavy fire, the stench of cor-
 ish sickening smell of rotting flesh and
 pale light through a coarse white cloth
 of death was in her own body, and strug-
 s drawn away; she saw Miss Tanner filling
 ical expert way, and heard Dr. Hildesheim
 rick. Try another." Miss Tanner plucked
 oulder, and the unbelievable current of
 ns again. She struggled to cry out, saying,
 ly incoherent sounds of animal suffering.
 t each other with the glance of initiates at
 eir eyes alive with knowledgeable pride.
 ork and hurried away.

gling together as they collided in mid air,
 y with cries of human distress; sulphur
 e black window pane and flashed away in
 dreamless sleep asked without expecting
 for there was a bustle of voices and foot-

steps in the corridor, and a sharpness in the air; the far clamor went on, a
 furious exasperated shrieking like a mob in revolt.

The light came on, and Miss Tanner said in a furry voice, "Hear that?
 They're celebrating. It's the Armistice. The war is over, my dear." Her hands
 trembled. She rattled a spoon in a cup, stopped to listen, held the cup out to
 Miranda. From the ward for old bedridden women down the hall floated a
 ragged chorus of cracked voices singing, "My country, 'tis of thee . . ."

Sweet land . . . oh, terrible land of this bitter world where the sound of
 rejoicing was a clamor of pain, where ragged tuneless old women, sitting
 up waiting for their evening bowl of cocoa, were singing, "Sweet land of
 Liberty—"

"Oh, say, can you see?" their hopeless voices were asking next, the hammer
 strokes of metal tongues drowning them out. "The war is over," said Miss
 Tanner, her underlip held firmly, her eyes blurred. Miranda said, "Please
 open the window, please, I smell death in here."

Now if real daylight such as I remember having seen in this world would
 only come again, but it is always twilight or just before morning, a promise
 of day that is never kept. What has become of the sun? That was the longest
 and loneliest night and yet it will not end and let the day come. Shall I ever
 see light again?

Sitting in a long chair, near a window, it was in itself a melancholy wonder
 to see the colorless sunlight slanting on the snow, under a sky drained of its
 blue. "Can this be my face?" Miranda asked her mirror. "Are these my own
 hands?" she asked Miss Tanner, holding them up to show the yellow tint like
 melted wax glimmering between the closed fingers. The body is a curious
 monster, no place to live in, how could anyone feel at home there? Is it pos-
 sible I can ever accustom myself to this place? she asked herself. The human
 faces around her seemed dulled and tired, with no radiance of skin and eyes
 as Miranda remembered radiance; the once white walls of her room were
 now a soiled gray. Breathing slowly, falling asleep and waking again, feeling
 the splash of water on her flesh, taking food, talking in bare phrases with
 Dr. Hildesheim and Miss Tanner, Miranda looked about her with the covertly
 hostile eyes of an alien who does not like the country in which he finds him-
 self, does not understand the language nor wish to learn it, does not mean to
 live there and yet is helpless, unable to leave it at his will.

"It is morning," Miss Tanner would say, with a sigh, for she had grown old
 and weary once for all in the past month, "morning again, my dear," showing
 Miranda the same monotonous landscape of dulled evergreens and leaden
 snow. She would rustle about in her starched skirts, her face bravely pow-
 dered, her spirit unbreakable as good steel, saying, "Look, my dear, what a
 heavenly morning, like a crystal," for she had an affection for the salvaged
 creature before her, the silent ungrateful human being whom she, Cornelia
 Tanner, a nurse who knew her business, had snatched back from death with
 her own hands. "Nursing is nine-tenths, just the same," Miss Tanner would
 tell the other nurses; "keep that in mind." Even the sunshine was Miss Tan-
 ner's own prescription for the further recovery of Miranda, this patient the
 doctors had given up for lost, and who yet sat here, visible proof of Miss Tan-
 ner's theory. She said, "Look at the sunshine, now," as she might be saying,
 "I ordered this for you, my dear, do sit up and take it."

"It's beautiful," Miranda would answer, even turning her head to look, thanking Miss Tanner for her goodness, most of all her goodness about the weather, "beautiful, I always loved it." And I might love it again if I saw it, she thought, but truth was, she could not see it. There was no light, there might never be light again, compared as it must always be with the light she had seen beside the blue sea that lay so tranquilly along the shore of her paradise. That was a child's dream of the heavenly meadow, the vision of repose that comes to a tired body in sleep, she thought, but I have seen it when I did not know it was a dream. Closing her eyes she would rest for a moment remembering that bliss which had repaid all the pain of the journey to reach it; opening them again she saw with a new anguish the dull world to which she was condemned, where the light seemed filmed over with cobwebs, all the bright surfaces corroded, the sharp planes melted and formless, all objects and beings meaningless, ah, dead and withered things that believed themselves alive!

At night, after the long effort of lying in her chair, in her extremity of grief for what she had so briefly won, she folded her painful body together and wept silently, shamelessly, in pity for herself and her lost rapture. There was no escape. Dr. Hildesheim, Miss Tanner, the nurses in the diet kitchen, the chemist, the surgeon, the precise machine of the hospital, the whole humane conviction and custom of society, conspired to pull her inseparable rack of bones and wasted flesh to its feet, to put in order her disordered mind, and to set her once more safely in the road that would lead her again to death.

Chuck Rouncivale and Mary Townsend came to see her, bringing her a bundle of letters they had guarded for her. They brought a basket of delicate small hothouse flowers, lilies of the valley with sweet peas and feathery fern, and above these blooms their faces were merry and haggard.

Mary said, "You *have* had a tussle, haven't you?" and Chuck said, "Well, you made it back, didn't you?" Then after an uneasy pause, they told her that everybody was waiting to see her again at her desk. "They've put me back on sports already, Miranda," said Chuck. For ten minutes Miranda smiled and told them how gay and what a pleasant surprise it was to find herself alive. For it will not do to betray the conspiracy and tamper with the courage of the living; there is nothing better than to be alive, everyone has agreed on that; it is past argument, and who attempts to deny it is justly outlawed. "I'll be back in no time at all," she said; "this is almost over."

Her letters lay in a heap in her lap and beside her chair. Now and then she turned one over to read the inscription, recognized this handwriting or that, examined the blotted stamps and the post-marks, and let them drop again. For two or three days they lay upon the table beside her, and she continued to shrink from them. "They will all be telling me again how good it is to be alive, they will say again they love me, they are glad I am living too, and what can I answer to that?" and her hardened, indifferent heart shuddered in despair at itself, because before it had been tender and capable of love.

Dr. Hildesheim said, "What, all these letters not opened yet?" and Miss Tanner said, "Read your letters, my dear, I'll open them for you." Standing beside the bed, she slit them cleanly with a paper knife. Miranda, cornered, picked and chose until she found a thin one in an unfamiliar handwriting. "Oh, no, now," said Miss Tanner, "take them as they come. Here, I'll hand them to you." She sat down, prepared to be helpful to the end.

What a victory, what triumph, what happiness in a chorus. The names were signed with florid bugle notes, and they were the names of those she had known well and pleasantly; and she remembered her, then or now. The thin letter in the unfamiliar handwriting of a strange man at the camp where Adam had died of influenza in the camp hospital. Adam had died, that thing happened, to be sure to let her know.

If anything happened. To be sure to let her know. "Your friend, Adam Barclay," wrote the stranger, "I looked at the date—more than a month ago.

"I've been here a long time, haven't I?" she asked, folding letters and putting them back in their envelopes.

"Oh, quite a while," said Miss Tanner, "but you must be careful of yourself and not get back now and then and let us look at you, but your effects are very—"

Miranda, sitting up before the mirror, wearing a medium, one ounce flask Bois d'Hiver perfume, and slippers⁸ without straps, two pairs gray sheer stockings.

Towney, reading after her, said, "Everything will be almost impossible to get?"

"Try it, though," said Miranda, "they're nice, made of silvery wood with a silver knob."

"That's going to be expensive," warned Towney.

"You're right," said Miranda, and wrote in the book of my other things. Ask Chuck to look for this, Mr. Lazarus, come forth. Not unless you bring it. Stay where you are then, you snob. Not at all. I'll be there in a cream," wrote Miranda, "a box of apricot powder, eye shadow, do I?" She glanced at her face in the mirror. "Still, no one need pity this corpse if we look properly at it."

Mary Townsend said, "You won't recognize me, will you?"

"Do you suppose, Mary," asked Miranda, "I'll be back again?"

"That should be easy," said Mary. "We stored up my things with Miss Hobbe." Miranda wondered again at the thought of going to the dead. But not quite. She was not dead, one foot in either world now; soon I shall be back again. The light will seem real and I shall be glad to know I know has escaped from death. I shall visit the dead and tell them how lucky they are, and how glad Mary will be back soon with my gloves and my shoes. I must begin saying good-by to Miss Tanner and to you, now you need not die again, but still I wish you had come back, what do you think I came back for this?

8. Gloves with a cuff covering part of the arm. "Bois d'Hiver": w

ld answer, even turning her head to look, odness, most of all her goodness about the d it." And I might love it again if I saw it, she d not see it. There was no light, there might as it must always be with the light she had so tranquilly along the shore of her paradise. heavenly meadow, the vision of repose that ie thought, but I have seen it when I did not r eyes she would rest for a moment remem- aid all the pain of the journey to reach it; a new anguish the dull world to which she eemed filmed over with cobwebs, all the arp planes melted and formless, all objects d and withered things that believed them-

ly lying in her chair, in her extremity of grief she folded her painful body together and for herself and her lost rapture. There was Tanner, the nurses in the diet kitchen, the machine of the hospital, the whole humane ; conspired to pull her inseparable rack of ; to put in order her disordered mind, and road that would lead her again to death.

ownsend came to see her, bringing her a ed for her. They brought a basket of delis of the valley with sweet peas and feath- their faces were merry and haggard.

ssle, haven't you?" and Chuck said, "Well, hen after an uneasy pause, they told her e her again at her desk. "They've put me ," said Chuck. For ten minutes Miranda id what a pleasant surprise it was to find betray the conspiracy and tamper with the hing better than to be alive, everyone has nt, and who attempts to deny it is justly at all," she said; "this is almost over."

ap and beside her chair. Now and then she tion, recognized this handwriting or that, the post-marks, and let them drop again. on the table beside her, and she continued ll be telling me again how good it is to be me, they are glad I am living too, and what ardened, indifferent heart shuddered in had been tender and capable of love.

l these letters not opened yet?" and Miss y dear, I'll open them for you." Standing ly with a paper knife. Miranda, cornered, a thin one in an unfamiliar handwriting. "take them as they come. Here, I'll hand red to be helpful to the end.

What a victory, what triumph, what happiness to be alive, sang the letters in a chorus. The names were signed with flourishes like the circles in air of bugle notes, and they were the names of those she had loved best; some of those she had known well and pleasantly; and a few who meant nothing to her, then or now. The thin letter in the unfamiliar handwriting was from a strange man at the camp where Adam had been, telling her that Adam had died of influenza in the camp hospital. Adam had asked him, in case anything happened, to be sure to let her know.

If anything happened. To be sure to let her know. If anything happened. "Your friend, Adam Barclay," wrote the strange man. It had happened—she looked at the date—more than a month ago.

"I've been here a long time, haven't I?" she asked Miss Tanner, who was folding letters and putting them back in their proper envelopes.

"Oh, quite a while," said Miss Tanner, "but you'll be ready to go soon now. But you must be careful of yourself and not overdo, and you should come back now and then and let us look at you, because sometimes the aftereffects are very—"

Miranda, sitting up before the mirror, wrote carefully: "One lipstick, medium, one ounce flask Bois d'Hiver perfume, one pair of gray suède gauntlets⁸ without straps, two pairs gray sheer stockings without clocks—"

Towney, reading after her, said, "Everything without something so that it will be almost impossible to get?"

"Try it, though," said Miranda, "they're nicer without. One walking stick of silvery wood with a silver knob."

"That's going to be expensive," warned Towney. "Walking is hardly worth it."

"You're right," said Miranda, and wrote in the margin, "a nice one to match my other things. Ask Chuck to look for this, Mary. Good looking and not too heavy." Lazarus, come forth. Not unless you bring me my top hat and stick. Stay where you are then, you snob. Not at all. I'm coming forth. "A jar of cold cream," wrote Miranda, "a box of apricot powder—and, Mary, I don't need eye shadow, do I?" She glanced at her face in the mirror and away again. "Still, no one need pity this corpse if we look properly to the art of the thing."

Mary Townsend said, "You won't recognize yourself in a week."

"Do you suppose, Mary," asked Miranda, "I could have my old room back again?"

"That should be easy," said Mary. "We stored away all your things there with Miss Hobbe." Miranda wondered again at the time and trouble the living took to be helpful to the dead. But not quite dead now, she reassured herself, one foot in either world now; soon I shall cross back and be at home again. The light will seem real and I shall be glad when I hear that someone I know has escaped from death. I shall visit the escaped ones and help them dress and tell them how lucky they are, and how lucky I am still to have them. Mary will be back soon with my gloves and my walking stick, I must go now, I must begin saying good-by to Miss Tanner and Dr. Hildesheim. Adam, she said, now you need not die again, but still I wish you were here; I wish you had come back, what do you think I came back for, Adam, to be deceived like this?

8. Gloves with a cuff covering part of the arm. "Bois d'Hiver": winter wood (French).

At once he was there beside her, invisible but urgently present, a ghost but more alive than she was, the last intolerable cheat of her heart; for knowing it was false she still clung to the lie, the unpardonable lie of her bitter desire. She said, "I love you," and stood up trembling, trying by the mere act of her will to bring him to sight before her. If I could call you up from the grave I would, she said, if I could see your ghost I would say, I believe . . . "I believe," she said aloud. "Oh, let me see you once more." The room was silent, empty, the shade was gone from it, struck away by the sudden violence of her rising and speaking aloud. She came to herself as if out of sleep. Oh, no, that is not the way, I must never do that, she warned herself. Miss Tanner said, "Your taxicab is waiting, my dear," and there was Mary. Ready to go.

No more war, no more plague, only the dazed silence that follows the ceasing of the heavy guns; noiseless houses with the shades drawn, empty streets, the dead cold light of tomorrow. Now there would be time for everything.

1937, 1939

ZORA NEALE HURSTON

1891–1960

Zora Neale Hurston was born in 1891 in Notasulga, Alabama, and moved with her family in 1892 to Eatonville, Florida, an all-black town. Her father, a Baptist preacher of considerable eloquence, was not a family man and made life difficult for his wife and eight children. The tie between mother and daughter was strong; Lucy Hurston was a driving force and strong support for all her children. But her death when Zora Hurston was about eleven left the child with little home life. Hitherto, the town of Eatonville had been like an extended family to her, and her early childhood was protected from racism because she encountered no white people. With her mother's death, Hurston's wanderings and her initiation into American racism began. The early security had given her the core of self-confidence she needed to survive. She moved from one relative's home to another until she was old enough to support herself, and with her earnings she began slowly to pursue an education. Although she had never finished grade school in Eatonville she was able to enter and complete college. In the early 1920s at Howard University in Washington, D.C. (the nation's leading African American university at that time), she studied with the great black educator Alain Locke, who was to make history with his anthology *The New Negro* in 1925. After a short story, "Drenched in Light," appeared in the New York African American magazine *Opportunity*, she decided to move to Harlem and pursue a literary career there.

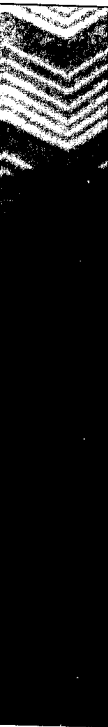
As her biographer, Robert Hemenway, writes, "Zora Hurston was an extraordinarily witty woman, and she acquired an instant reputation in New York for her high spirits and side-splitting tales of Eatonville life. She could walk into a room of strangers . . . and almost immediately gather people, charm, amuse, and impress them." The Eatonville vignettes printed here convey the flavor of this discourse. Generous, outspoken, high spirited, an interesting conversationalist, she worked as

a personal secretary for the politically liberal novelist Fannie Hurst and entered Barnard College. Her career took two simultaneous directions: at Barnard she studied with the famous anthropologist Franz Boas and developed an interest in black folk traditions, and in Harlem she became well known as a storyteller, an informal performing artist. Thus she was doubly committed to oral narrative, and her work excels in its representation of people talking.

When she graduated from Barnard in 1927 she received a fellowship to return to Florida and study the oral traditions of Eatonville. From then on, she strove to achieve a balance between focusing on the folk and her origins and focusing on herself as an individual. After the fellowship money ran out, Hurston was supported by Mrs. R. Osgood Mason, an elderly white patron of the arts. Mason had firm ideas about what she wanted her protégés to produce; she required them all to get her permission before publishing. In this relationship, Hurston experienced what many other artists of the Harlem Renaissance had to face—they were the sponsors of, and often expected to be the

Hurston's work was not entirely popular with the Harlem community. She quarreled especially with the idea that a black writer's chief concern should be the white reader. She did not write to "uplift her race." Because she was already uplifted, she (like Claude McKay) wrote characters as mixtures of good and bad, strong and weak. Many writers thought her either naïve or egotistical, but she could only mean freedom from all coercion, no matter how subtle.

The Great Depression brought an end to the structure of Hurston's fieldwork, and she turned fully to writing. Her first work appeared in the mid-1930s when there was a general decline in African American writing in general. She published *Jane Eyre* (whose main character is based on her father); *Mules and Men* (material from her field trips in Florida—this was her first book, a total of only \$943.75); and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (about an African American woman's quest for self-fulfillment). *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was her critical favorite, both a woman's story, and a descriptive of African American folk society, showing its divisions and divisions. It was an organized, highly metaphorical novel, with passages of extreme artistic compression. Other books followed: an autobiography—*Dust Tracks on a Road*—which



Zora Neale Hurston
Van Vechten in