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HARLOT'S GHOST | 99

Intourist guide. Instead, a cabdriver approached, a snarling New York-type cabdriver who reminded me of Thomas Wolfe's dictum that people in the same profession tend to be the same all over the world. My man wanted twenty dollars to take me to the Metropole, a hotel which a travel agent in New York had assured me was a piece of good luck to get into, the Metropole being almost as difficult to snag as the old National. "I can slip you into the new National," the travel agent had said, "but you don't want that. It's all tourist groups."

"Yes," I had said, "I don't want tourist groups." Had something been obvious about me? Of course, I had popped in on the agent, paid cash, asked for speed in processing my visa (on the assumption he had connections sufficient to rush one through occasionally), and he did, and I tipped him for getting the permissions in a week although it had probably meant putting William Holding Libby on a KGB list which went under some unappetizing category like Individual Tourist, Special. Now, before I was even settled into my cab seat, the driver announced in his black-market English that he wished to buy American dollars from me. His rate, three rubles for a buck, was almost four times better than official exchange.

It could be a trap. I didn't like him. I certainly didn't trust him. The authorities could have me jailed for dealing in rubles on the black market.

Indeed, the driver was demanding so much of my attention that I was hardly looking out the window. I was not taking in my first impressions of Russia. Travel in a state of nerves is like passage through a tube. The racket of the car—we were in some kind of Soviet mini-fivver—impinged on me more than the landscape. The driver's voice, "All right, you tell me, hey, how many dollars you got, come on," gargled in my ear.

We passed expanses of clean snow, dirty snow, and melted fields about as sprightly as the mud in the Jersey flats. Bits of Moscow began to appear, funky little gingerbread shacks by the side of the road, built in rows but yawning individually, paint peeling. Then came palisades of high-rise housing projects, dirty white for the most part in the dirty white snow. They looked as if the plaster had cracked on the lower floors before they put the trowel to the top ones: what



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a misery was this land. The March sky was as gray as the concrete walls in the Sheremetyevo Airport. Communism was irritating me personally at this point, equal to the cabdriver, pushy, dirty, depressed, eager for loot, out of date. Of course, the driver might be some outrigger of the KGB. Was I being encountered?

A banner stretched across the superhighway. A legend in Russian. I saw Lenin in the words. Some bouquet, doubtless, of homiletic language. Over how many roads in how many mean and outrageously underequipped Third World countries would you see these banners? Zaire for one. Ditto Nicaragua, Syria, North Korea, Uganda. Who could care? I couldn't even come out of my tunnel. Moscow streets began to appear, but the side windows of my car were mud-spattered, and sights to the front were only visible through the slip-slop of two overworked wipers that kept drawing striated salt fans on the glass. The driver was as sullen as heavy weather in August.

Now we were on a large boulevard without much traffic. Solomenn old buildings—government departments and specialist institutes—perambulated by the side windows. There were few pedestrians. It was Sunday. This was downtown.

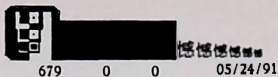
We came to a stop in a public square before an old green six-story building. Its sign read *митропол*. I was at the Metropole. My home away from home.

I gave the cab driver two dollars for a tip. He wanted ten. He had his own peculiar psychic force. Some weak nerve in me was pinched, for I gave him five. My nerves, we can repeat, were not what once they were.

A stocky, wide-jawed old boy, equal to a retired Mafia soldier of the lowest rank, was the doorman. He had a decoration on the lapel of his gray coat—a hero of the Great War. He would not be about to show cordiality to a stranger.

Nor was he in a rush to help me with the bags. His function was to keep people out. I had to show him the travel-agency voucher in order to get through the door. Inside, the lobby was grim. The palette passed from cigar-butt brown to railroad-coach green. The floor was an aged parquet that buckled like cheap linoleum when you stepped on it. I felt as if I had landed in one of those unhappy hotels





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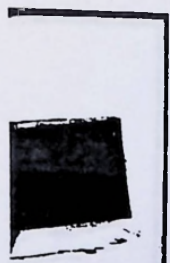
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on the side streets of Times Square that sit in old cigar smoke, waiting to be demolished.

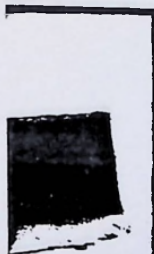
Was this the famous Metropole where, if my historic recollections proved correct, the Bolsheviks used to gather before and after the Revolution? A huge marble stairway spiraled upward in right-angle turns around an elevator shaft faced in wrought iron.

The woman at the registration desk was wearing a sweater and had a nose cold. She wore eyeglasses, was plain, and pretended not to notice me until I seized her attention. Her English had an unhappy accent reminiscent of such tortures to the spirit as ballet lessons for unpromising girls. The elevator operator, another decorated old war hero, was gruff, and the concierge on the fourth floor was a heavy blonde of about fifty with a beehive hairdo and a big tough Russian face—she looked like a mate for the doorman. She sat behind a little glass-topped desk facing the elevator, kept a rose in a small vase, and scowled at the task of looking for my key which was large and bronze, and as heavy as a pocketful of change.

The route to my room led down one long dark corridor and then turned a right angle to another old shellacked floor. It was parquet with a considerable number of gaps in which squares of plywood had been inserted. A narrow, red carpet, half a football field in length, went down the first corridor, then half a football field down the other to my door. Since the floor buckled every step of the way, I had the sensation—if I may allude to frozen water once more—that I was hopping from one ice floe to the next.

My room was eleven feet by fourteen and had a ceiling twelve feet high. The window looked on a gray court. I had a chest of drawers and a narrow bed with a thin, European mattress laid upon a larger mattress. At the head was a bolster as heavy as a water-soaked log. Plus a TV set!

I turned it on. Electronic snow, pulses of wave-over. Black-and-white. A show for children. I turned it off. I sat on my narrow twin bed and put my head in my hands. I got up. I closed the curtains to the courtyard. I sat down again. I was here, and—assuming I had entered without attracting official attention—I could stay here for a week at least, and sort some questions into categories. I had so many questions that I no longer looked for answers. Only for





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categories.

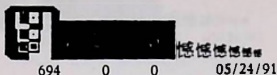
The rigors of remembering a life that had, in many ways, terminated in the middle of one long night had me proceeding, as you may imagine, through states of peculiar delicacy. A director once told me how, after one of his films was wrapped, he had not stopped living with the camera crew and actors. They had departed, but he would awaken from every sleep with fresh commands. "Bernard, we have to reshoot the market sequence today. Tell Production it's a hundred extras at least." He would be out of bed and shaving before he could say to himself: "The movie is over. You have gone mad. You cannot shoot any more." But he had, as he explained to me, stepped through the looking glass. The film was more real than his life.

Was I equal to that director? For a year, hiding out in a rented room off an airshaft in an apartment house in the Bronx, I had worked to raise a wall between my last memory of Kittredge and myself. Sometimes a month would go by without incident, and I would sleep through the night and work through the day putting one word onto another as if I were spinning a thread to guide me out of the caves.

Then, without warning, love for her would strike. That word is the operative verb. I felt like an epileptic on the edge of grand mal. One misstep and seizures would come. After many months, the Bronx became untenable for me—I had to move.

Besides, they had to be looking for me. That was certain. The longer I did not surface, the wider would become their frame of reference. They would have to wonder if I had moved to Moscow. How I laughed—in those paroxysms of silent laughter with which one entertains oneself in the pit—that all the while I was living in the Bronx, they were thinking of me in Moscow.

Yet out of a logic of separate steps that seemed altogether rigorous to me—although I could not specify the steps, I had come to the conclusion that I had to take a trip—for the first time—to the U.S.S.R. I did not know why. I was in profundities of trouble if they ever ran me down in Bronx County, New York, but to be found in Moscow by the KGB? With my extended memoir in microfilm? Why, that would be unforgivable even to myself. What if, despite safe passage through Customs, the Russians knew of my arrival? If



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Harlot had defected, my present alias might be sitting in Soviet files. That supposition, however, belonged to the world of common sense. I was living in a domain of subterranean logic. Which told me to take along the microfilm of Alpha. Who knows how the boxcars of obsession are shuttled through the freight yards of sleep? I did not feel insane, yet, there was a schedule to madness I seemed to obey. I clung to my writings as if they were body organs. I could never have left Alpha behind. Indeed, the old Jewish lady in whose apartment on the Grand Concourse I had rented a room was aware that I was a man who was writing a book.

"Oh, Mr. Sawyer," she said when I told her of leaving, "I'm going to miss the sound of your typewriter."

"Well, I'm going to miss you and Mr. Lowenthal."

He was an eighty-year-old arthritic; she, a seventy-five-year-old diabetic—we had entertained not much more than passing conversations for most of a year, but I was content with that. Bless them—I knew their lives were bound to be, should I know them better, boring to me. I could feel the worm of condescension stirring when we spoke. It was hard for me to take people seriously who had spent their lives being good thrifty middle-class people. While I expected they would be curious enough about my past, I did not have the heart to regale them at length with the fictitious careers and possible marriages of one Philip Sawyer—a name I employed in order to leave no trail for William Holding Libby, but then there was not much flim-flam with the Lowenthals. We made occasional conversation when we met in the hall, and that was it. They were able to supplement their retirement monies with my rent (paid, happily, for both parties, in cash) and I could keep my privacy relatively intact. I stayed in my room except when I grew tired of soup on a hot plate and went out to eat or see a film. I wrote slowly and painfully.

The writing of Omega, however, had gone as well as could be expected, considering how slowly it did go. There were days when I felt neither haunted nor invaded. Nonetheless, I knew I was a boulder on the edge of a cliff. Sooner or later, it would fall. It did. Moscow blinked in my mind like a lit-up billboard. I saw the travel agent, made preparations, tried to study Russian, and said farewell



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to the Lowenthals. I told them I was going to Seattle. Mrs. Lowenthal said in reply, "Will you have a finished book for your family to read?"

"Yes," I said.

"I hope they like it."

"Well," I said, "I hope so too."

"Maybe you'll even get a publisher."

"Conceivably."

"If you do, please mail me the volume. I'll pay for it. I want you to autograph my copy."

"Oh, Mrs. Lowenthal," I said, "I'd be delighted to send you a free copy."

It was exactly the sort of conversation she would never forget. If they ever found this lair in the Bronx, they would learn from her that I had done some typing.

I got off the bed of my room in the Metropole, opened my valise and started to unpack. I took out everything but the envelope containing Alpha. I was hardly ready to begin reading. It was four now, Sunday afternoon, Moscow time, which was eight o'clock in the morning for me. I was sleepy, I was exhausted. I had left at eight in the evening from Kennedy, lost eight hours to the clock, and ten to the flight (with the transit stop at Heathrow) and had landed at 2:00 P.M. Moscow time which was 6:00 A.M. New York time. My nerves, long out of synchronization, were upside down. Since it was 8:00 A.M. now in New York, no wonder I felt full of the false vigor that comes in the morning after a night of false sleep. I had to get out of the room for a while.

I took a walk. My first steps in Moscow. If forty years of American media was enough to bring anyone to the conviction that Communism was evil, I had had my stints of special scholarship. Communism might well be evil. That is an awesome and terrible thesis, but then the simple can reign over the complex. Perhaps evil was to be comprehended in the grand thesis that Communism was evil.

My first steps, therefore, on Moscow streets were hardly routine to me.

I felt not unlike a prisoner let out of jail after twenty years. Such

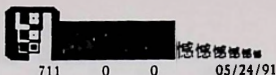
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a man does not know the world he is entering, does not, for example, know how to walk into a store and buy a pair of pants. He has been issued pants for twenty years. Now, I did not know what was allowed me here. I was not certain I could leave the hotel and go out on the street without some proper paper being stamped. I hung about the lobby to observe the comings and goings, but soon felt uneasy. My continued presence might become suspect. So I took a chance, walked to the entrance, stepped out, and was met by a scowl from the doorman—it would take me a while to realize that because he had not placed me yet as a checked-in hotel guest, he was scowling.

At any rate, I was on the street. Cabdrivers, parked at the hotel curb, yelled at me as a prospect, passersby took their glances. I just walked. I made no moves to determine if anyone was following, for I did not wish to show any knowledge of evasive tactics, but, then, for the little it was worth, I did not feel as if I were being followed. I had put on an old jacket and wore a black knit hat pulled over my ears like a merchant seaman. It was all right. I felt like giving a great whoop.

A square away from the hotel would be, I knew, a statue to Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, "Sword of the Revolution," great-grandfather of the KGB. Back of him would be the infamous Lubyanka. From books, photographs, and debriefings, I knew that place better than any American prison—I had listened a hundred times in the imaginary auditorium of my ear to the screams of the tortured in the cellars of the Lubyanka, and I did not know if I wanted to go near it now, but, thus debating, went directly from the Metropole to Dzerzhinsky Square. Before me was an edifice, a late nineteenth-century seven-story morgue of an office, the Lubyanka, once a prerevolutionary business palace for Czarist insurance companies. It still had white curtains on the windows, and highly polished brass fittings on the entrance door, but its exterior wall was a soiled khaki-yellow, a dismal, old-fashioned building in and out of which on this late Sunday afternoon came and went a few men wearing officer's uniforms. The air was as cold as a New England forest in winter, and all the while I heard no screams. This Lubyanka—conceivably my future home—failed to stir adrenaline.

I wandered away through side streets, gray in the light, near



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to black in the shadows, "the old streets of the merchants"—a phrase from my guidebook. Had these enclaves of gloom ever lifted? It was nearly agreeable to discover depression this palpable, and I had a moment in which I understood the comforts of gloom—was this my first real thought in a week? For even as the acceptance of one's own poverty might be the first protection against corruption of the soul, so was gloom a fortress in which one could live encapsulated from insanity. Yes, the protective if heavy resonance of gloom would not be hard to find in Moscow, and thinking this, I came out of one more side street onto Red Square, a shock as nice as stepping from a Roman alley into the great plaza of St. Peter's, except here was no Vatican but a field of cobblestones near to half a mile long and hundreds of feet wide spreading out to the walls of the Kremlin. On the gray horizon were early signs of a lavender twilight, but Russians were still waiting to see the tomb of Lenin and his body, preserved below, in its vault. Two thousand people, two by two, were in that line, and perhaps twenty people entered the tomb each minute, suggesting that the last man in the queue would have to wait one hundred minutes in this cold, a reasonable mortification for a pilgrimage.

I began to pay attention to these Russians on the street. They all looked middle-aged. Even the young had an air of relinquishment that speaks of middle age. All the same, Red Square was a cheerful scene. To my astonishment, it was cheerful on this late Sunday afternoon. There was a shimmer to the air, a conviviality to the faces red with cold. Busloads of tourists—native Russians—were leaving, others were yet arriving. Hundreds of others walking through the Square were showing the simple happiness that comes to hardworking people when they are transported to an important place. These could have been Mormons, or Jehovah's Witnesses, on a ferry to the Statue of Liberty.

How much like a film it appeared to be. The center of Red Square rose higher than the corners which left people in the distance only visible above the knee. Their feet had disappeared beneath the cobblestone horizon. Everyone seemed to bounce, therefore, as they walked, even as heads bob when a crowd is perambulating toward a telephoto lens. I did not know the history of Red Square, which





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is to say, didn't know what old great events had produced this bouquet of the spirits, but my own were up—I felt delivered from the iron clangor of the Bronx and the walls of Moscow. I was ready, for one irrational instant, to celebrate, I hardly knew what. Maybe it was only the joy of coming to the end of a trip.

I went back to the Metropole, received an increment more of greeting from the doorman, the elevator man, and the dezurnaya (my floor lady), returned to the room, sat on my bed, sat on the chair next to the bed, took down my valise, looked at the neatly concealed velcro seam to the false compartment where I kept the microfilm, put the valise up in the closet again, and realized abruptly how tired I was. I was weary from the cold outside, the scrambling of the hours, my whippings-about of mood, the rigors of the walk—everyone in Moscow seemed to stride along at top pace, and I, good American, had stepped it up to stay with them. Now I was tired with the real desolations of my mood. I did not know if I had ever felt so alone on a quiet day.

I went downstairs to eat, but it was not much better. I was seated among strangers at a table for eight with a rumpled tablecloth, not dirty exactly, but no more immaculate than a shirt that has been worn for a few hours. The only dish available was chicken Kiev, a rubber chicken fit for a routine political banquet with a gusher of butter that tasted like lubricating oil mixed with some sour sorrow emanating from the kitchen. The kasha was overcooked, the dark bread was coarse, the fresh vegetable was a thin slice of tomato. Then came one cookie and a cup of tea. The waitress was a heavy, middle-aged woman with weighty personal concerns. She sighed a lot. It took all of the little attention she could give to the world outside herself to keep level with her job.

After I left the table, I realized that I had supped in the equivalent of the hotel's coffee shop, an eating hall, so to speak, exclusively for guests. The real restaurant, designed for a more prosperous gang, was entered by two glass doors off the lobby. Here black markeeters and bureaucrats, accompanied by their wives, waited on line. Inside, a dance band as full of pep as some of the prom bands that used to work the dances at Yale, was hacking away, a weird, bouncy band whose sound reverberated through the glass



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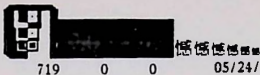
doors.

I went back to the elevator. I needed to sleep. I hoped I would get to sleep. At the landing, as I got off, my dezurnaya with the blond beehive gave a real smile when she handed over the key. I understood. Already I gave every evidence of going by her desk many times a day, of being a regular customer. The comings and goings of her keys were her liveliest transactions. True hell. Homage to Sartre.

I locked my door, undressed, washed my face, dried my hands. The sink was cracked, the soap was gritty, the bathtowel was small and coarse. So was the toilet paper. This was one of the ten best hotels in Moscow. I was furious suddenly at I knew not what. How did these people presume to be our greatest enemy on earth? They did not even have the wherewithal to be evil.

Then I got into bed. Sleep did not come. There was every intimation the High Holes were on their way. I decided to get up again and read Alpha. Will it tell you something of the year I spent in that rented room in the apartment of the Lowenthals that I knew the first pages by heart? But then, I knew much of the material by heart. It had taken me through many a night when I could not work on Omega. Yes, even when Kittredge appeared in these pages, Alpha was endurable. My actual love affair with Kittredge had not begun, after all, during the period I covered in Alpha. Besides, as I projected the microfilm, I would sometimes whisper the words aloud. That held off certain thoughts. Even as we and the Soviets had spent years jamming each other's radio broadcasts, so would I recite the manuscript of Alpha whenever Kittredge became too alive. Such observances did not always work, but when they did, I could turn the corner. The ghosts of long-gone deeds would not appear, and I could live with Kittredge. Alpha was all I had of her now. I began, therefore, to recite my first sentences aloud, slowly, quietly, intoning the words; the sounds themselves came forward as forces in the unseen war of all those silences in myself that rode to war when I slept.

Alpha commenced. I read by microfilm even as I whispered some of the words aloud. It was half of my past, expressed in what style I could muster after years of ghostwriting, but it was a good half of



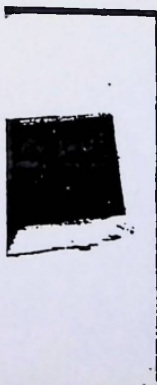
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my past: "A few years ago, in disregard of the discretionary contract I signed in 1955 on entering the CIA . . ." That is how the Foreword to Alpha begins. (Of course, a two thousand page manuscript is always in need of a foreword.)

So I was back in the book again, reading with my white hotel-room wall for a screen, moving my microfilm manually through my special flashlight equipped with its filmgate and lens, reading about the early career in the CIA of Harry Hubbard, a name that sometimes seemed as separate from myself as the name one repeats on shaking hands with a stranger just introduced in a room full of other strangers whose names one will also repeat. I felt as near and as removed from my original pages as if I were looking at old photographs attaching me imperfectly to the past.



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From the Alpha manuscript, working title:

THE GAME

Foreword

A few years ago, in disregard of the discretionary contract I signed in 1955 on entering the CIA, I embarked on a memoir that looked to present a candid picture of twenty-five active years in the Agency. I expected the work to be of average length but my account proliferated until it may now be the longest reminiscence ever written by anyone within the Agency. Perhaps I was captured by Thomas Mann's dictum that "Only the exhaustive is truly interesting."

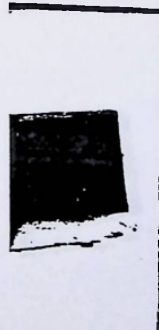
This attempt, then, to follow the changes in my character and outlook from 1955 to 1965 (for indeed I have managed to carry my account no further as yet) is not to be read as a memoir. It is rather a *Bildungsroman*, an extended narrative of a young man's education and development. Any sophisticated reader of spy novels picking up this book in the hope of encountering a splendidly plotted work will discover themselves on unfamiliar ground. As an Agency officer, I certainly encountered my fair share of plots, initiating some, concluding others, and serving as messenger



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for many, but I was rarely able to see them whole. By bits and pieces they passed before me. It is even a reasonable conclusion that this is the way of life for nearly all of us in CIA. One learns to live with the irony that we who spend our lives in intelligence usually read spy novels with the wistful sentiment, "Ah, if only my job could turn out so well-shaped!"

Nonetheless, I hope to offer a private insight into the nature of our daily lives and our intermittent adventures, sometimes exceptional for the complexity of the inner experience an intelligence officer must reconnoiter while spending his professional years on the team that plays this unique game.



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PART ONE

EARLY YEARS, EARLY TRAINING



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page

1 | Let me offer the primary fact. I am a Hubbard. Bradford and Fidelity Hubbard arrived in Plymouth seven years after the *Mayflower* and branches of the clan are to be found today in Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. To my knowledge, however, I am the first Hubbard to make public admission that the family name is not quite as impressive as our share of lawyers and bankers, doctors and legislators, one Civil War general, several professors, and my grandfather, Smallidge Kimble Hubbard, Headmaster of St. Matthew's. He remains a legend to this day. At the age of ninety, he still managed on warm summer mornings to get into his single shell and row one hundred strokes out into Blue Hill Bay. Of course, one stroke missed and over he would have gone into cold Maine waters, a near fatal proposition, but he died in bed. My father, Boardman Kimble Hubbard, known to his friends as Cal (for Carl "Cal" Hubbell the New York Giants pitcher, whom he revered) was equally exceptional, but so divided a man that my wife, Kittredge, used him as a source of private reference for her work *The Dual Soul*. He was a swashbuckler and yet a deacon; a bold, powerful man who showered in cold water with the same

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morning certainty that others used to feel while eating eggs and bacon. He went to church each Sunday; he was a prodigious philanderer. During the time shortly after World War II, when J. Edgar Hoover was doing his best to convince Harry Truman that the proposed CIA was not necessary and the FBI could take over all such jobs, my father went on a save-our-outfit mission. He seduced a few key secretaries in the State Department, thereby picking up a flood of in-office secrets which he then passed to Allen Dulles, who promptly sent such product on to the White House with a cover story to protect the secretaries. It certainly helped to convince the White House that we might need a separate Intelligence body. Allen Dulles was fond of Cal Hubbard after that and said to me once, "Your father won't admit it, but that month with the secretaries was the best time of his life."

I loved my father outrageously and thereby had a frightened childhood, worried, strained, and cold within. I wished to be the salt of his salt but my stuff was damp. Much of the time I came near to hating him because he was disappointed in me and I did not hear from him often.

My mother was a different matter. I am the product of a marriage between two people so quintessentially incompatible that they might as well have come from separate planets. Indeed, my parents were soon separated and I spent my boyhood trying to keep two disjointed personalities together.

My mother was small-boned, attractive, and blond, and she lived, but for summer at Southampton, in that social nucleus of New York which is bounded by Fifth Avenue on the west, Park Avenue to the east, the Eighties to the north and the Sixties to the south. She was a Jewish Princess but the emphasis can be put on the second word. She could not have told you the difference between the Torah and the Talmud. She brought me up to be ignorant of every Jewish subject but one: the names of prominent New York banking houses with Semitic roots. I think my mother thought of Salomon Brothers and Lehman Brothers as ports of call in some future storm.

It was sufficient that my mother's great-great-grandfather was a remarkable man named Chaim Silberzweig (who had his name streamlined by immigration officials to Hyman Silver-



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stein). He came over as an immigrant in 1840 and rose from a street peddler to the clear-cut status of a department-store owner. His sons became merchant princes and his grandsons were among the first Jews tolerated in Newport. (The name by now was Silverfield.) If each generation of my mother's family was more spendthrift than the one before, it was never at a catastrophic rate: my mother was worth about as much in real money as the first Silverstein had left for his immediate heirs—and she possessed about a quarter of his Jewish blood. The Silverfield men married golden gentile women.

That is my mother's family. Although I saw more of her when young than of my father, it was my paternal grandfather with his single shell than I deemed to be true kin. My mother's side I tried to ignore. A man on death row once said: "We owe nothing to our parents—we just pass through them." I felt that way about my mother. From an early age I did not take her seriously. She could be charming and full of interesting follies; she was certainly a lot better than average at giving merry dinner parties. She was also, unfortunately, the owner of a terrible reputation. The Social Register dropped her a few years after Jessica Silverfield Hubbard became an ex-Hubbard, but it took another ten years before her best friends stopped seeing her. The reason, I suspect, was not her succession of affairs so much as her propensity to lie. She was a psychopathic liar, and finally her memory became her only lasting friend. It always told her what she wished to remember about the present and the past. In consequence, you never could know what anyone was up to if you listened to her. I make this point because my mother equipped me, I believe, for counterespionage, a field where we do, after all, attempt to implant errors in our opponent's knowledge.

At any rate, I can hardly pretend that I ended as any good fraction of a Jew. My only kinship with "that herring baron," as my mother referred to great-great-grandfather Chaim Silberzweig, is that anti-Semitic slurs made me tense. I might as well have grown up in a ghetto for the size of the fury aroused in me. For I would then feel Jewish. Of course, my idea of feeling Jewish was to be reminded of the strain on people's faces in the rush hour on the New York subway as they stood prey to harsh

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and screeching sounds.

I had, however, a privileged boyhood. I went to the Buckley School and was a Knickerbocker Gray until asked to withdraw, a reflection of my serious incompetence at close order drill. While marching, I would generate headaches of such intensity that I would fail to hear commands.

Of course, the bad reputation of my mother may have been another factor, and I take confirmation for this suspicion by the manner in which my father had me reinstated. As a cold-shower warrior he was not inclined to ask for favors for his progeny. This time, however, he called on people one saves for emergencies. The Hubbards had well-placed friends in New York, and my father took me to meet a few alumni of the Grays. "It's unfair. They're blaming the boy for *her*," was part of what I overheard, and it must have done the work. I was reinstated, and managed to soldier my way thereafter with fewer headaches, although I never knew one relaxed breath as a cadet.

I suppose people who were happy when young may recall their childhood well. I remember little. Summary disposes of the years and I collect memories by subjects. I can always answer such absurd essay questions as "What was the most important day you spent with a parent?" I would reply: "When my father took me to Twenty-One for lunch on my fifteenth birthday."

Twenty-One was the perfect place to take me. While my father did not know "one superior hell of a lot"—his phrase—about boys, he knew enough to be standing at the bar waiting for me.

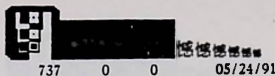
I cannot swear in all confidence that the downstairs dining room has not been altered since 1948, but I might bet on the possibility. I think the same model toys are still suspended from the low dark ceiling, same steamships, 1915 Spad biplanes, railroad locomotives and trolley cars. The little coupe with its rumble seat and spare tire in the white slipcover is still above the bar. Above the bottle cabinet hang the same hunting horns, cutlasses, elephant tusks, and one pair of boxing gloves small enough to fit an infant. My father told me that Jack Dempsey gave those gloves to the owner of Twenty-One, Jack Kriendler, and while I would hope the story is true, my father did not mind polishing legends of his own devising. I think he had concluded

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that good feeling was always in danger of being wiped out; ergo, he gilded the stories he told. He had, by the way, a degree of resemblance to Ernest Hemingway—he was at least equally vivid in presence—and he cultivated the same large dark mustache. He also had Hemingway's build. Sporting relatively spindly legs for a man of strength, he often said, "I might have made first team All-American fullback if not for my pins." He also had a great barrel of a chest which bore a distinct likeness to the antique bronze cash register on the bar at Twenty-One. My father's heart beat with pride.

Of course, the pride was for himself. If I state that my father was vain and self-centered, I do not wish to demean him. While he carried the complacent look of a successful college athlete, his fundamental relation to others was a reflection of his concealed but endless negotiations with himself: the two halves of his soul were far apart. The deacon and the swashbuckler had miles to walk each night before they slept; I think his strength was that he had managed to find some inner cooperation between these disparate halves. When the headmaster's son, impacted with Cromwellian rectitude, was able to hook up with a venture that the conquistador could also applaud, well, the energy poured forth. My father, while not uncommonly reflective, did say once: "When your best and worst motive agree on the same action, watch the juices flow."

On this day in December 1948, my father was dressed in what I would come to call his "battle tweeds." That once had been a suit of light brown Scotch tweed (light in hue, but as heavy and hard to the touch as a horse-blanket). He bought his suits from Jones, Chalk and Dawson on Saville Row, and they knew how to outfit a horseman. I had seen this same suit on him for ten years. By now, patched with leather at elbows and cuffs, and become more malleable, it could still stand on its legs when taken off. It fit him, however, with a comfortable surround of dignity to suggest that these two materials—his manly flesh and that iron cloth—had lived together long enough to share a few virtues. In fact, he no longer owned a business suit and so had nothing more formal to wear until you got to his black velvet dinner jacket. Needless to say, on such nightly occasions, he was a lady's vision. "Oh, Cal," they would say of him, "Cal's *divine*."



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If only he didn't drink so much."

I think my father would have broken relations with any friend who dared to suggest Alcoholics Anonymous was waiting for him, and he could have been right. His contention was that he drank no more than Winston Churchill and held it as well. He never got drunk. That is to say, his speech never slurred and he never staggered, but he did move through moods powerful enough to alter the electromagnetic fields through which he passed. It is a way of remarking that he had charisma. He had no more than to say "Bartender" in a quiet tone, and the man, if his back were turned, and had never heard my father's voice before, would nonetheless spring around as if starting a new page in his bar accounts. My father's emotional temperature seemed to rise and fall as he drank; his eyes, by the shift of the hour, could blaze with heat, or install you in a morgue; his voice would vibrate into your feet. Doubtless I exaggerate, but he was my father, and I saw him so seldom.

On this day, as I came in, he and his battle tweeds were sheeted in anger. For practical purposes, I was not unlike one of those little wives who are married to huge sea captains: I could feel his thoughts. He had been busy on some serious job before lunch, and had nearly cracked its difficulty; now he was putting down his first martini with all the discontent of interrupted concentration. I could imagine how he said to some assistant, "Damn, I've got to see my son for lunch."

To make matters worse, I was late. Five minutes late. When it came to promptitude, he was always on the mark, a headmaster's son. Now, waiting for me, he had had time to finish the first drink and review in his mind an unpromising list of topics about which we might converse. The sad truth is that he invariably gave off gloom on those rare occasions when we were alone with each other. He did not know what to talk to me about, and I, on my side, filled with my mother's adjurations, injunctions, and bitch-fury that I was going to see a man who was able to live in whole comfort apart from her, was jammed up. "Get him to talk about your education," she'd say before I was out the door. "He's got to pay for it, or I'll take him to law. Tell him that." Yes, I would be in great haste to tell him. "Watch out for his charm. It's as real as a snake," and, as I was going out the door,





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"Tell him I said hello—no, don't you tell him that."

I gave a nod with one quick bob of my head and got onto the barstool next to him. Naturally, I scrunched my larger testicle by too abruptly lowering my butt to the seat. Then I sat there through the small wave of discomfort this brought on and tried to study the signs above the bar.

YO, HO, HO, AND A BOTTLE OF RUM, said one old wooden placard.

21 WEST ZWEI UND FÜNFZIGSTRASSE, said a painted street sign.

"Oh," I said, "is that German, Dad?"

"Fifty-second Street," he told me.

We were silent.

"How do you like St. Matthew's?" he said.

"Okay."

"Better than Buckley?"

"It's tougher."

"You're not going to flunk out?"

"No, I get B's."

"Well, try to get A's. Hubbards are expected to get A's at St. Matt's."

We were silent.

I began to look at another sign hanging over the bar. It obviously enjoyed its misspelling. CLOSE SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS, it said.

"I've had one superior hell of a lot of work lately," he said.

"I guess," I said.

We were silent.

His gloom was like the throttled sentiments of a German shepherd on a leash. I think I was something of a skinny version of him, but I believe he always saw every bit of resemblance I had to my mother during the first five minutes of every one of our meetings, and I even came to understand over the years that she might have done him a real damage. There was probably never a human he wished to kill more with his bare hands than this ex-wife; of course, he had had to forgo such pleasure. Blocked imperatives brought my father that much nearer to stroke.

Now he said, "How's your leg?"

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"Oh, it's recovered. It's been all right for years."

"I bet it's still stiff."

"No, it's all right."

He shook his head. "I think you had your trouble with the Grays because of that leg."

"Dad, I was just no good at close-order drill." Silence. "But I got better." The silence made me feel as if I were trying to push a boat off the shore and it was too heavy for me.

"Dad," I said, "I don't know if I can get A's at St. Matthew's. They think I'm dyslexic."

He nodded slowly as if not unprepared for such news. "How bad is it?" he asked.

"I can read all right, but I never know when I'm going to reverse numbers."

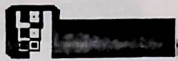
"I had that trouble." He nodded. "Back on Wall Street before the war, I used to live in fear that one bright morning my touch of dyslexia would make the all-time mistake in the firm. Somehow, it never did." He winked. "You need a good secretary to take care of those things." He clapped me on the back. "One more lemonade?"

"No."

"I'll have another martini," he said to the bartender. Then he turned back to me. I still remember the bartender's choice of a keen or sour look. (Keen when serving gentlemen: sour for the tourists.) "Look," my father said, "dyslexia is an asset as well as a loss. A lot of good people tend to have dyslexia."

"They do?" Over the past term a few boys at school had taken to calling me Retardo.

"No question." He put his eyes on me. "About ten years ago in Kenya we were going for leopards. Sure enough, we found one, and it charged. I've hit elephants coming at me, and lions and water buffalo. You hold your ground, look for a vulnerable area in the crosshairs, then squeeze off your shot. If you can steer between the collywobbles, it's as easy as telling it to you now. Don't panic and you have yourself a lion. Or an elephant. It's not even a feat. Just a measure of inner discipline. But a leopard is different. I couldn't believe what I saw. All the while it was charging it kept leaping left to right and back again, but so fast I thought I was watching a movie with pieces missing.



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You just couldn't get your crosshairs on any part of that leopard. So I took him from the hip. At twenty yards. First shot. Even our guide was impressed. He was one of those Scotsmen who sneer at all and anything American, but he called me a born hunter. Later I figured it out for myself: I was a good shot because of my dyslexia. You see, if you show me 1-2-3-4, I tend to read it as 1-4-2-3 or 1-3-4-2. I suppose I see like an animal. I don't read like some slave—yessir, boss, I'm following you, yessir, 1-2-3-4—no, I look at what's near me and what's in the distance and only then do I shift to the middle ground. In and out, back and forth. That's a hunter's way of looking. If you have a touch of dyslexia, that could mean you're a born hunter."

He gave my midriff a short chop with his elbow. It proffered enough weight to suggest what a real blow would do.

"How's your leg?" he asked again.

"Good," I said.

"Have you tried one-legged knee raises?"

The last time we had been to lunch, eighteen months ago, he had prescribed such an exercise.

"I've tried it."

"How many can you do?"

"One or two." I was lying.

"If you're really working at it, you would show more progress."

"Yessir."

I could feel his wrath commencing. It began slowly, like the first stirring of water in a kettle. This time, however, I could also sense the effort to pull back his annoyance, and that puzzled me. I could not recollect when he had treated me to such courtesy before.

"I was thinking this morning," he said, "of your ski accident. You were good that day."

"I'm glad I was," I said.

We were silent again, but this time it was a pause we could inhabit. He liked to recall my accident. I believe it was the only occasion on which he ever formed a good opinion of me.

When I was seven, I had been picked up at school one Friday in January by my mother's chauffeur and driven to Grand Central Station. On this day, my father and I were going to





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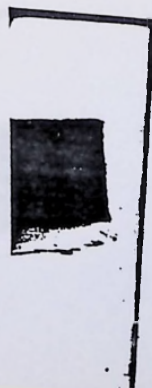
board the weekend special to Pittsfield, Mass., where we would ski at a place called Bousquet's. How the great echoes of Grand Central matched the reverberation of my heart! I had never been skiing and therefore believed I would be destroyed next day flying off a ski jump.

Naturally, I was taken over no such towering jump. I was put instead on a pair of rented wooden slats, and after a set of near-fiascos on the long rope-tow up, attempted to follow my father down. My father had a serviceable stem turn which was all you needed to claim a few yodeling privileges in the Northeast back in 1940. (People who could do a parallel christie were as rare then as tightrope artists.) I, of course, as a beginner, had no stem turn, only the impromptu move of falling to either side when my snow plow got going too fast. Some spills were easy, some were knockouts. I began to seek the fall before I needed to. Soon, my father was shouting at me. In those days, whether riding, swimming, sailing, or on this day, skiing, he lost his temper just so quickly as first returns made it evident that I was without natural ability. Natural ability was closer to God. It meant you were wellborn. Bantu blacks in Africa, I came to learn in CIA, believed that a chieftain should enrich himself and have beautiful wives. That was the best way to know God was well disposed toward you. My father shared this view. Natural ability was bestowed on the deserving. Lack of natural ability spoke of something smelly at the roots. The clumsy, the stupid, and the slack were fodder for the devil. It is not always a fashionable view today, but I have pondered it all my life. I can wake up in the middle of the night thinking, What if my father was right?

Soon he grew tired of waiting for me to get up.

"Just do your best to follow," he said, and was off, stopping long enough to call back, "Turn when I turn."

I lost him at once. We were going along a lateral trail that went up and down through the woods. Going uphill, I did not know how to herringbone. I kept getting farther behind. When I came to the top of one rise and saw that the next descent was a full-fledged plunge followed by an abrupt rise, and my father was nowhere in sight, I decided to go straight down in the hope such a schuss would carry me a good way up. Then he would not have to wait too long while I climbed. Down I went, my skis in



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a wobbly parallel, and almost at once was moving twice as fast as I had ever traveled before. When I lost my nerve and tried to switch to a snowplow, my skis crossed, dug into the soft snow, and I wrenched over in a somersault. There was no release to the bindings in those days. Your feet stayed in the skis. I broke my right tibia.

One did not know that at first. One only knew more pain than ever felt before. Somewhere in the distance my father was bellowing, "Where are you?" It was late in the afternoon and his voice echoed through the hills. No other skiers were coming by. It started to snow and I felt as if I were in the last reel of a movie about Alaska; soon the snow would cover all trace of me. My father's roars were, in this silence, comforting.

He came climbing back, angry as only a man with a powerful, sun-wrinkled neck can be angry. "Will you rise to your feet, you quitter," he cried out. "Stand up and ski."

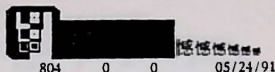
I was more afraid of him than the five oceans of pain. I tried to get up. Something, however, was wrong. At a certain point, my will was taken away from me completely. My leg felt amputated.

"I can't, sir," I said, and fell back.

Then he recognized there might be more than character at issue here. He took off his ski jacket, wrapped me in it, and went down the mountain to the Red Cross hut.

Later, in the winter twilight, after the ski patrol had put on a temporary splint and worked me down to the base in a sled, I was put in the back of a small truck, given a modest dose of morphine, and carried over some frozen roads to the hospital in Pittsfield. It was one hell of a ride. By now, well into the spirit of the morphine, the pain still rasped like a rough-toothed saw into my broken bone each time we hit an evil bump (which was every fifty yards). The drug enabled me, however, to play a kind of game. Since the shock from every bump shivered through my teeth, the game became the art of not making a sound. I lay there on the floor of the truck with a wadded ski jacket under my head and another beneath my leg, and must have looked like an epileptic: my father kept wiping froth from my mouth.

I made, however, no sound. After a time, the magnitude of my personal venture began to speak to him for he took my hand



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and concentrated upon it. I could feel him trying to draw the pain from my body into his, and this concern ennobled me. I felt they could tear my leg off and I might still make no outcry.

He spoke: "Your father, Cal Hubbard, is a fathead." That may be the only occasion in his life when he used the word in reference to himself. In our family, fathead was about the worst expression you could use for another person.

"No, sir," I said. I was afraid to speak for fear that the groans would begin, yet I also knew the next speech was one of the most important I would ever make. For a few moments I twisted through falls of nausea—I must have been near to fainting—but the road became level for a little while, and I succeeded in finding my voice. "No, sir," I said, "my father, Cal Hubbard, is not a fathead."

It was the only time I ever saw tears in his eyes.

"Well, you silly goat," he said, "you're not the worst kid, are you?"

If we had crashed at that moment I could have died in a happy state. But I came back to New York in a cast two days later—my mother sent chauffeur and limousine up for me—and a second hell began. The part of me that was ready to go through a meat grinder for my father could hardly have been the poor seven-year-old boy who sat home in New York in his Fifth Avenue apartment with a compound fracture surrounded by a plaster cast that itched like the gates of sin. The second fellow seethed with complaints.

I could not move. I had to be carried. I went into panic at the thought of using crutches. I was certain I would fall and break the leg again. The cast began to stink. In the second week the doctor had to cut the plaster off, clean my infection, and encase me again. I mention all this because it also cut off my father's love affair with me nearly as soon as it had begun. When he came over to visit—after an understanding with my mother that she would not be there—he would be obliged to read the notes she left—"You broke his leg, now teach him to move."

Allowing for his small patience, he finally succeeded in getting me up on crutches, and the leg eventually mended, just a bit crooked, but it took too long. We were back in the land of paternal disillusion. Besides, he had more to think about than





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me. He was happily remarried to a tall, Junoesque woman absolutely his own size, and she had given him twin boys. They were three years old when I was seven, and you could bounce them on the floor. Their nicknames—I make no joke—were Rough and Tough. Rough Hubbard and Tough Hubbard. Actually, they were Roque Baird Hubbard and Toby Bolland Hubbard, my father's second wife being Mary Bolland Baird, but rough and tough they promised to be, and my father adored them.

Occasionally I would visit the new wife. (They had been married four years but I still thought of her as *the new wife*.) It was just a trip of a few blocks up the winter splendor of Fifth Avenue, that is to say, an education in the elegance of gray. The apartment houses were lilac-gray, and Central Park showed field-gray meadows in winter and mole-gray trees.

Since finding myself on crutches, I no longer ventured from my apartment house. In one of the later weeks of convalescence, however, I had a good day, and my limb did not ache in its cast. By afternoon, I was restless and ready for adventure. I not only went down to the lobby and talked to the doorman but, on impulse, set out to circumnavigate the block. It was then the idea came to me to visit my stepmother. She was not only large but hearty, and succeeded at times in making me think she liked me; she would certainly tell my father that I had visited, and he would be pleased I was mastering the crutches. So I decided to attempt those five blocks uptown from 73rd to 78th Street and immediately went through a small palsy the first time I put my crutches out from the curb down six inches to the gutter. This small step accomplished, however, I began to swing along, and by the time I reached their apartment house, I was most talkative with the elevator man and pleased with how much pluck I was showing for a seven-year-old.

At their door a new maid answered. She was Scandinavian and hardly spoke English, but I gathered that the nurse was out with the twins and "the Madame" was in her room. After some confusion the new girl let me in and I sat on a couch, bored by the wan afternoon sun as it reflected on the pale silk colors of the living room.

It never occurred to me that my father was home. Later, much later, I would gather that this was about the time he had



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the ongoing fantasy of my childhood, but it is true that I began to spend many an afternoon after school alone in my room making drawings of an underground city. It was, as I look back on it, a squalid place. Beneath the ground in a set of excavations, I penciled in clubhouses, tunnels, game rooms, all connected by secret passages. There was an automat, a gym, and a pool. I giggled at how the pool would be full of urine, and installed torture rooms whose guards had Oriental faces. (I could draw slant eyes.) It was a warren of monstrous and cloacal turns, but it brought peace to my young mind. Indeed, I even had a hospital ward in one wing staffed by Dracula, Frankenstein, and Dr. Hardy.

"How are your headaches?" asked my father at the bar at Twenty-One.

"No worse," I said.

"But they don't get better?"

"They don't, I guess."

"I'd like to reach in and pull out what's bothering you," he said. It was not a sentimental remark so much as a surgeon's impulse.

I shifted the subject to Rough and Tough. They were now Knickerbocker Grays, and doing well, he told me. I was tall for my age, almost as tall as my father, but they gave every promise of outstripping me. As he spoke, I knew there was some other matter on his mind.

It was his inclination to pass me tidbits about his work. This presented curious debits to his duty. In his occupation, you were supposed to encapsulate your working life apart from your family. On the other hand, he had formed his reflexes for security, such as they were, working for the OSS in Europe during World War II. Nobody he knew then had been all that cautious. Today's secret was next week's headline, and it was not uncommon to give a hint of what one was up to when trying to charm a lady. Next day, after all, an airplane was going to parachute you into a strange place. If the lady were made aware of this, well, she might feel less absolutely loyal to her husband (also away at war).

Besides, he wanted to fill me in. If he was not an attentive parent, he was at least a romantic father. Moreover, he was a

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team man. He was in the Company and his sons ought to be prepared as well: while Rough and Tough were a foregone conclusion, he could hardly swear on me.

"I'm all riled up today," said my father. "One of our agents in Syria got shot on a stupid business."

"Was he a friend of yours?" I asked.

"Neither here nor there," he replied.

"I'm sorry."

"No, I'm just so goddamn mad. This fellow was asked to obtain us a piece of paper that wasn't really needed."

"Oh."

"I'll tell you, darn it all. You keep this to yourself."

"Yes, Dad."

"One of those playboys at State decided to be ambitious. He's doing his Ph.D. thesis on Syria over at Georgetown. So he wanted to present a couple of hard-to-get details that nobody else has. He put through a request to us. Officially. From State. Could we furnish the poop? Well, we're green. You could grow vegetables with what they scrape off our ignorance. We try to oblige. So we put a first-rate Syrian agent on it, and there you are—lost a crack operator because he was asked to reach for the jam at the wrong time."

"What'll happen to the fellow in the State Department?"

"Nothing much. Maybe we'll slow down a promotion for that idiot by talking to a guy or two at State, but it's horrifying, isn't it? Our man loses his life because somebody needs a footnote for his Ph.D. thesis."

"I thought you looked upset."

"No," he said quickly, "it's not that." Then he hoisted his martini, stepped off the stool, raised his hand as if calling a cab, and the captain was there to bring us to our table which was, I already knew, in his favored location against the rear wall. There my father placed me with my back to the room. At the table to my left were two men with white hair and red faces who looked like they might have gout, and on the right was a blond woman with a small black hat supporting a long black feather. She was wearing pearls on a black dress and had long white gloves. Sitting across from her was a man in a pencil-thick pinstripe. I mention these details to show a facet of my father: he was able,

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in the course of sitting down, to nod to the two gentlemen with gout as if, socially speaking, there was no reason why not to speak to one another, and freeze the man in the pencil-stripe suit for the width of his stripes while indicating to the blond lady in black that she was blue ribbon for blond ladies in black. My father had a gleam in his eye at such times that made me think of the Casbah. I always supposed a Levantine would come up to you in the Casbah and give a flash of what he had in his hand. There!—a diamond peeked out. That made me recollect Cal Hubbard rolling with Mary Baird on the carpeted floor, which in turn caused me to look down quickly at my plate.

"Herrick, I haven't seen a superior hell of a lot of you lately, have I?" he asked, unfolding his napkin, and sizing up the room. I wasn't too happy being placed with my back to everyone, but then he gave a wink as if to suggest that he had his reasons. It was incumbent on his occupation, as he once explained, that he be able to *eye* a joint. I think he may have picked up the phrase from Dashiell Hammett, with whom he used to drink before word went around that Hammett was a Communist. Then, since he considered Hammett smarter than himself, he gave up the acquaintance. A loss. According to my father, he and Dashiell Hammett could each put down three double Scotches in an hour.

"Well, there's a reason I haven't seen a lot of you, Rick." He was the only one to call me Rick, rather than Harry, for Herrick. "I have been traveling an unconscionable amount." This was said for the blond woman as much as for me. "They don't know yet whether I'll be one of the linchpins in Europe or the Far East."

Now the man in the pencil-stripe suit began his counteroffensive. He must have put a curve on what he said, for the woman gave a low intimate laugh. In response, my father leaned toward me across the table and whispered, "They've given OPC the *covert* operations."

"What's covert?" I whispered back.

"The real stuff. None of that counterespionage where you drink out of my teacup and I drink out of yours. This is war. Without declaring it." He raised his voice sufficiently for the woman to hear the last two phrases, then dropped back to a

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murmur as if the best way to divide her attention was to insinuate himself in and out of her hearing.

"Our charter calls for economic warfare," he said in a highly shaped whisper, "plus underground resistance groups." Loudly: "You saw what we did in the Italian elections."

"Yessir."

He enjoyed the *yessir*. I had broadcast it for the blond lady.

"If not for our little operation, the Communists would have taken over Italy," he now stated. "They give the credit to the Marshall Plan but that's wrong. We won in Italy in spite of the money that was thrown around."

"We did?"

"Count on it. You have to take into account the Italian ego. They're an odd people. Half sharp, half meatball."

By the way in which the man in the pencil-stripe reacted, I suspected he was Italian. If my father sensed that, he gave no sign. "You see, the Romans themselves are civilized. Minds quick as stilettos. But the Italian peasant remains as backward as a Filipino. In consequence, you mustn't try to motivate their self-interest too crudely. Self-esteem means more to them than filling their bellies. They're always poor, so they can live with hunger, but, they don't want to lose their honor. Those Italians really wanted to stand up to us. They would have derived more pleasure spitting in our face than sucking up to us with their phony gratitude. Nothing personal. The Italians are like that. If Communism ever takes over in Italy, those Red wops will drive the Soviets just as crazy as they're driving us."

I was feeling the wrath of the Italian man next to me. "Dad, if that's what you think," I blurted out, scurrying to save the peace, "why not let the Italians choose their path? They're an ancient and civilized people."

My father had to ponder this. Allen Dulles may have said that the happiest week of Cal Hubbard's life was spent seducing secretaries, but I expect no period could have been equal to the year he spent with the partisans. If Italy had gone Communist in 1948, my father would probably have gone right over to form an anti-Communist underground. In recesses of his brain so secret he could not even reach them in his dreams, I believe he would have enjoyed a Communist takeover of America. What an

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American underground he could have helped to set up then! The thought of dynamite Americans waging an underground war up and down our countryside against an oppressive enemy would have been a tonic to keep him young forever.

So my father may have been on the edge of saying "You bet," but he didn't. Instead, he answered dutifully, "Of course, we can't afford to let the Russians in. Who knows? Those guineas might get along with the Russians."

We had an interruption here. The man next to us suddenly called out for his check, and my father immediately stopped our conversation in order to look appreciatively at the blond lady.

"Weren't we introduced at Forest Hills this fall?" he said to her.

"Nah. I don't think so," she answered in a muffled voice.

"Please tell me your name," said my father, "and I'm certain I'll recollect where it was."

"Think of nowhere," said the man in the striped suit.

"Are you trying to give directions?" asked my father.

"I heard of people," said the man, "who lose their nose by poking it around the corner."

"Al!" said the blond lady.

Having stood up abruptly, Al was now putting money on the table to cover his tab. He dropped each new bill like a dealer snapping cards, signally upset that one of the players had called for another deck. "I've heard of people," repeated Al, and now he looked sideways at my father, "who stepped off the curb and broke a leg."

Into my father's eyes came that diamond of the Casbah. He, too, stood up. They each took a long look at the other. "Buster," said my father in a happy, husky voice, "don't get tough!"

It was his happiness that did the job. Al thought of replying, then thought better. His jaw did not work. He folded his napkin as if folding his tent, looked for the opportunity to throw a sneak punch, did not find what he was looking for, and gave his arm to the blond lady. They left. My father grinned. If he couldn't have her, he had at least broken a couple of eggs.

Now my father began to talk a good deal. Any victory over a stranger was kin to triumph over rival hordes. Al was out there with the Russians. "There are six million soldiers in the Red



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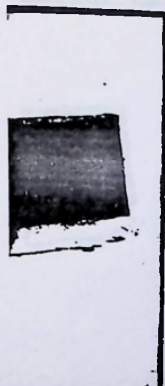
Army," said my father, "and only a million of us. That's counting NATO. The Russians could take all of Europe in two months. It's been true for the last three years."

"Then why haven't they?" I asked. "Dad, I read that twenty million Russians were killed in the war. Why would they want to start one now?"

He finished his drink. "Damned if I know." As the waiter sprang for the refill, my father leaned forward: "I'll tell you why. Communism is an itch. What does that mean, to have an itch? Your body is out of whack. Little things take on large proportions. That's Communism. A century ago, everybody had their place. If you were a poor man, God judged you as such, a poor man. He had compassion. A rich man had to pass more severe standards. As a result, there was peace between the classes. But materialism came down on us. Materialism propagated the idea that the world is nothing but a machine. If that's true, then it's every man's right to improve his piece of the machine. That's the logic of atheism. So, now everybody's ears are being pounded to bits, and nothing tastes right anymore. Everybody is too tense, and God is an abstraction. You can't enjoy your own land so you begin to covet the next guy's country."

He took a long, thoughtful swallow from his drink. My father could always bring a cliché to life. Many have been described as taking long thoughtful swallows of their drinks, but my father drank like an Irishman. He took it for granted that real and true spirits were entering with the fire of the liquor. He inhaled the animation around him and could breathe back his own excitement. Emotion must never be wasted. "Rick, keep clear on one matter. There's a huge war brewing. These Communists are insatiable. We treated them as friends during the war and they'll never get over that. When you're older, you may have the bad luck to get into an affair with an ugly woman who happens to enjoy what you offer but has never been on daily terms with a man. She's too ugly. Fellow, you're going to have trouble on your hands. Before long, she's insatiable. You've given the taste of the forbidden to her. That's the Russians. They got ahold of Eastern Europe; now they want it all."

He did not halt long at this place. "No," he said, "it's not a good analogy. It's really worse than that. We're in an ultimate



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struggle with the Russians, and that means we have to use everything. Not only the kitchen sink, but the vermin that come with the sink."

My father was interrupted at this moment by the two white-haired gentlemen seated on his right. They were getting up to leave and one said, "I couldn't help hearing what you were explaining to your son, and I wish to say, couldn't agree more. Those Russians want to crack our shell and get all the good meat. Don't let them."

"No, sir," said my father, "not one knuckle will they get," and he stood up on that remark. The rich compact that comes from a common marrow guarded us all. Honor, adventure, and sufficient income was in the air of Twenty-One. Even I could prosper there.

When we sat down again, my father said, "Keep this most strictly to yourself. I'm going to trust you with a weighty secret. Hitler used to say, 'Bolshevism is poison.' That idea is not to be rejected out of hand just because Adolf said it. Hitler was so awful that he ruined the attack on Bolshevism for all of us. But the fundamental idea is right. Bolshevism is poison. We've even come to the point"—and here he dropped his voice to the lowest whisper of the lunch—"where we've got to employ a few of those old Nazis to fight the Reds."

"Oh, no," I said.

"Oh, yes," he said. "There's hardly a choice. The OSO is not all that competent. We were supposed to put agents in place all over the Iron Curtain countries and couldn't even seed it with birdfeed. Every time we built a network, we discovered the Russians were running it. The great Russian bear can move his armies anywhere behind the Iron Curtain, and we don't have an effective alert system. If, two years ago, the Soviets had wanted to march across Europe, they could have. We would have gotten out of bed in the morning to hear their tanks in the streets. No reliable intelligence. That's fearful. How would you like to live blindfolded?"

"No good, I guess."

"It came down to this: we had to use a Nazi general. I call him General Microfilm. I can't reveal his name. He was top intelligence man for the Germans on the Russian front. He

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would weed out the most promising of the Russians captured by the Germans and manage to infiltrate them back behind Russian lines. For a while, they honeycombed the Red Army, even worked a few of their boys into the Kremlin. Just before the war ended, this general, prior to destroying his files, buried fifty steel boxes somewhere in Bavaria. They were the microfilm copies of his files. A voluminous product. We needed it. Now he's dealing with us. He has built up new networks all through East Germany, and there isn't much those East German Communists don't tell his West German agents about what the Reds are planning to do next in Eastern Europe. This general may be an ex-Nazi, but, like it or not, he's invaluable. That's what my business is about. You work with the next-to-worst in order to defeat the worst. Could you do that?"

"Maybe."

"You might be too liberal. Herrick. Liberals refuse to look at the whole animal. Just give us the tasty parts, they say. I think God has need of a few soldiers."

"Well, I believe I could be a good one."

"I hope so. When you broke your leg, you were a great soldier."

"Do you think so?" This moment alone made the lunch superlative for me. So I wanted him to say it again.

"Not in question. A great soldier." He paused. He played with his drink. His free hand made a rocking motion on the table from thumb to little finger. "Rick," he announced, "you're going to have to pull up your gut again."

It was like coming in for a landing. My focus moved closer to my father's with every instant.

"Is it medical?" I asked. Then answered myself. "It's the tests I took."

"Let me give you the positive stuff first." He nodded. "It's operable. There's an 80-percent likelihood it's benign. So when they take it out, they've got it all."

"A benign tumor?"

"As I say, they are 80-percent certain. That's conservative. I believe it's 95-percent certain."

"Why do you think that?"

"You may have bad headaches but the powers that be aren't

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ready to lift you from the board. It makes no sense."

"Maybe the whole thing makes no sense," I said.

"Don't you ever believe that. I'd rather you took a dump right here in public, right in the middle of my favorite restaurant, than that you descend into that kind of sophomoric nihilism. No, look at it this way. Assume the Devil made a mistake and put all his eggs in one basket concerning you"—again my father was whispering as if any loud statement of Satan's name could summon him to your side—"and we're going to remove him all at once. Excise him. Rick, your headaches will be gone."

"That's good," I said. I was ready to cry. Not because of the operation. I had not realized an operation was this near, but it had been part, certainly, of my inner horizon. I had been taking tests for three months. No, I was ready to cry because now I knew why my father had taken me to lunch and favored me with professional secrets.

"I convinced your mother," he said. "She's a very difficult woman under any and all circumstances, but I got her to recognize that one of the best neurosurgeons in the country is available for this. I can tell you in confidence he also works for us. We've talked him into putting his toe in the water for some studies we're doing on brainwashing techniques. We need to keep up with the Russians."

"I guess he'll learn a little more about brainwashing with me."

My father gave a half-smudged smile for the joke. "He'll give you every chance to become the man you want to be."

"Yes," I said. I had an awful feeling I could not explain. There was no doubt in my mind that the tumor was the worst part of me. Everything rotten must be concentrated there. I had always supposed, however, that sooner or later it would go away by itself.

"What if we don't have surgery? I can keep living with my headaches," I said.

"There's a chance it is malignant."

"You mean when they open my head, they could discover cancer?"

"There's one chance in five."

"You said 95 percent. Isn't that one chance in twenty?"

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"All right. One in twenty."

"Dad, that's twenty to one in our favor. Nineteen to one, actually."

"I'm looking at other kinds of odds. If you're debilitated with headaches during all the formative years to come, you'll end up half a man." I could hear the rest. "Shape up" were the words he was inclined to speak.

"What do the doctors think?" I asked at last.

I had given up the game by asking this question. "They say you must have the operation."

Years later, a surgeon would tell me that the operation would have been elective, not mandatory. My father had lied. His logic was simple. He would not manipulate me or any other family member who was arguing a point out of his own feelings; if third parties, however, were consulted, then the debate had become a recourse to authority. Since I asked what the doctors said, my father was ready to substitute himself as final authority.

Now he got out his wallet to pay the check. Unlike Al, my father did not snap his money down. He laid it like a poultice on the plate.

"When this is over," he told me, "I'm going to introduce you to a dear friend of mine whom I've asked to be your godfather. It's not customary to have a brand-new godfather at the age of fifteen, but the one we gave you at birth was a friend of your mother's and he's dropped out of sight. The guy I'm bringing in is wholly superior. You'll like him. He's named Hugh Montague, and he's one of us. Hugh Tremont Montague. He did wonderful stuff for OSS while on liaison with the Brits. During the war he worked with J. C. Masterman—I can tell you that name. An Oxford don. One of their spymasters. Hugh will fill you in on all of that. The English are such aces in this kind of work. In 1940, they captured a few of the first German agents sent over to England and succeeded in turning them. As a result, most of the German spies who followed were picked up on arrival. For the rest of the war, the Abwehr was fed the niftiest disinformation by their own agents in England. And, oh, how the Brits got to love their German agents. Just as loyal to them as to their favorite foxhounds, yes, they were." Here my father began laughing heartily. "You have to," he added, "get Hugh

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to tell you about the code names the English gave their little Germans. Perfect names for peachy dogs. CELERY," said my father, "SNOW, GARBO, CARROT, COBWEB, MULLET, LIPSTICK, NEPTUNE, PEPPERMINT, SCRUFFY, ROVER, PUPPET, BASKET, BISCUIT, BRUTUS. Is that, or is that not, the English?"

For years, I would fall asleep surrounded by men and women holding brass nameplates in capitals: BRUTUS, COBWEB, TREASURE, RAINBOW. As I grew ready in the last of this lunch at Twenty-One to lose a part, forever, of the soft meats of my brain, so were old spies with the code names of hunting dogs filing one by one into the cavity waiting for them.

2 | In adolescence, I had only to say "God," and I would think of my groin. God was lust to me. God was like the image of the Devil offered to us at St. Matthew's. Chapel was daily and devoted to Christ, but once a week on average we might hear of the temptings of a somewhat legendary master-ghost named Satan. Chapel kept God and Satan well separated, but I, unlike other Matties, kept mixing them up. I had my reasons: I was introduced to carnal relations during my first year in the school by an assistant chaplain of St. Matthew's who *glommed*—I choose the word to convey the sensation of that rubbery, indefatigable seal—my fourteen-year-old penis in his tight, unhappy lips.

We were in Washington, D.C., on a school trip. Maybe that is one more reason I dislike our subtle, oppressive capital, that broad, well-paved swamp. Boredom and bad memory are at the root of many an oppression, I would suppose, and that night I was sharing a double bed with the assistant chaplain in an inex-

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pensive hotel not far from H Street, NW, and was unable to sleep and feeling full of apprehension just about the time that the chaplain came out of a millrace of stentorian snoring, murmured his wife's name several times, "Bettina, Bettina," and proceeded to embrace my hips and strip my bewildered young privates of their primeval dew. I remember lying there with a complete sense of the sixteen other members of my class who were also on the trip and in the hotel. I visualized them, two by two, and four by four, in all the other six bedrooms where they had been placed. On this annual trip to Washington the assistant chaplain was our guide, and since I had not succeeded in my first year at the school in being associated in anyone's mind with anyone else, and was marked as a loner, the assistant chaplain, a sympathetic fellow, had assigned me to his room.

In the other cubicles, who knew what might be going on? At St. Matthew's, they used to call it "kidding around." Since my memory was seared with images of the two-backed beast of my father and stepmother (it was a two-backed beast long before I ever encountered the phrase in *Othello*), I stayed far apart from such gang-play. All of us knew, however, that there were goings-on all up and down the dorm. Boys would stand side by side and stroke themselves into erections to see who was longer. It was the age of innocence. Being wider was not even a concept to us, for it would have suggested penetration. The nearest any of the boys came to that was by mounting a sweet, fat little creature named Arnold; we called him St. Matthew's Arnold. Even at the age of fourteen, literary wit was not discouraged among us, and St. Matthew's Arnold (in no way to be confused with Reed Arnold Rosen) used to drop his pants and lie on a bed, buttocks exposed. Six or eight of us would watch while two or three of the more athletic of our skulk would take turns slapping their brand-new instruments onto the crack between St. Matthew's Arnold's cheeks. "Ugh, you're disgusting," they'd say, and he'd whine back, "Aaah, shut up. *You're* doing it too."

It was never homosexual. It was "kidding around." Once done, it was not uncommon for the budding jock to leap off the body, wipe himself, and say, "Why can't you be a girl? You look just like a girl." Which was true—Arnold's cheeks were cousins to the moon—and Arnold, having his own male dignity to de-

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fend, would reply, "Aaaah, shut up." He was smaller than the boys who did it to him, so they barely cuffed him for being rude.

I would, as I say, merely watch. I was not up for studies in comparative phallitude. I was electrified by them, but even at fourteen I had already acquired some of our Hubbard insulation. I didn't show a spark.

My own relation to these sports and circuses was revealed to me, however, by the sweet-edged shudder which the chaplain's mean little lips pulled from me. When it was over, and I had been given an adolescent's peek into the firmament, he swallowed all the nourishment offered the parching of his mouth and began to sob in shame. Deep sobs. He was not a weak man physically, and his strength, like my father's, was in his upper body. So his sobs were strong.

I felt injected with ten tons of novocaine. Except, that is not true either. Two rivers were flowing in me, although to opposite directions. I felt relief I had never known before in my limbs, yet my heart, liver, head, and lungs, were in a boil. This was even worse than seeing Mary Bolland Baird and my father in their roll-around. I knew myself to be the compliant apprentice of a monster.

After his sobbing, the man began to weep. I knew he was worried about his wife and children. "Don't worry," I said, "I'll never tell." He hugged me. Gently, I disengaged myself. I did it gently out of no noble funds of generosity, rather in the fear he would turn angry and grow rough. I think my secret instinct knew he wished me to have, in turn, a thirst I would slake on him. If I had none (and I did not), well, went his unspoken imperative: Generate some! You damn well better generate some.

How the poor man must have been hung between his lust for one good, reciprocal suck on his charged-up end and the horror of knowing that he was inching out along the precipice of his career. When I remained still and did not move at all, his sobbing finally ceased and he lay still as well. I did my best to picture him officiating at a High Mass in school chapel, white silk surplice over white linen cassock, his ritual gestures a talisman I could employ against him. It may have been a real magic. After an interval of silence, equal in weight to the darkness of our

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hotel room, he gave a sigh, slipped out of bed, and spent the rest of the night on the floor.

That was the extent of my homosexual experience, but what a bend it put into the shape of my psyche. I stayed away from sex as though it were a disease. I had bog-and-marsh dreams where I was Arnold and the chaplain released streams of the foulest suppurations over me. In turn, I would awaken to feel infected. My sheets were wet, sprayed with nothing less than the pus, I was certain, of my unholy infections. The headaches grew worse. When the boys got ready to kid around, I took off for the library. I believe I finally accepted my father's desire to have an operation on my head because I could not overcome the part of me that was certain there was awful matter in the brain to be cut out.

Conceivably, something may have altered. When I went back to St. Matthew's in the fall of 1949, after my summer of convalescence, the school seemed at last a reasonable place. Our soccer teams (it was the first prep school I knew to take soccer seriously), our football scrimmages at every class level, our Greek, Latin, daily chapel, and prayers before meals, our ice-cold showers from October to May (lukewarm in June and September), our button-down shirts and school ties for all occasions but sports (starched, white collar and shirt on Sundays) had now become an agreeable order of the day. My dyslexia seemed to wane after the operation. (As a result, my case was written about in neurosurgical papers.) I felt more like others, and stronger for average tasks. I had a B-plus average.

Left to myself, I think I might have ended like most of my classmates. From Yale, where many a good Mattie went in those days, I would have continued on to Wall Street or the Bar. I probably would have made an acceptable, even a good estate lawyer, my experience with the chaplain keeping me alert to the pits of horrible possibility in the most proper affairs, and like many another not quite notable prep school product, I might even have improved with the years. The odds are favorable if you can hold your liquor.

Hugh Tremont Montague intervened. My father, who always kept his promises, if late by many a season, finally arranged for the meeting a year and a half after our lunch at Twenty-One.

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My operation had come and gone, as well as my convalescence. I was now a senior, and a responsible figure to my younger cousins and brothers in the summer frolics at Doane, curious frolics—the eight-hundred-yard swimming race around the island, four hundred with the current, four hundred back in the channel against it, and the all-day hike that commenced at The Precipices south of Bar Harbor at eight in the morning, went over Cadillac Mountain to Jordan Pond at noon, then up to Sargent Mountain and down all the way to Somesville; next, Acadia Mountain descending to Man of War Creek. We ended at the dock in Manset by eight in the evening. There a lobster boat came to meet us for the trip by water around the Western Way, up to Blue Hill Bay and Doane. A platoon of Marines would have complained of a twenty-mile march over hills like that, but we were rewarded by explorations in the lobster boat over the next few days to islands scattered around the bay, islands so small their names were in dispute, and their topography eccentric—great grass meadows on one, guano-encrusted sea ledges on another, forests with unearthly trees warped by long-lost winds. We would feast on lobsters boiled over driftwood fires and clams baked in the coals—even the charred hot dogs tasted as good as wild game caught with bow and arrow. To this day, Kittredge and I are visited in summer by cousins who have shared these Hubbard gymkhanas. No great tennis players ever came out of such a regimen, but our family life was our social life.

When Hugh Tremont Montague came up one weekend with my father in a light chartered plane from Boston, it was, therefore, an event of the first measure. We had a much spoken-of visitor. I might have heard of my anointed godfather for the first time during lunch at Twenty-One, but his name seemed present everywhere thereafter at school. A new file in my personal history had been opened. He was, as I now discovered, one of the myths of St. Matthew's. All through my first year at school, teachers must have spoken of him, but the name never entered my ear. Once my father inscribed his importance on my attention, however, accounts of him popped up everywhere. One spoke of him now as if he had been headmaster. By actual record, he was coach of the soccer team and founder of the

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Mountaineering Club. A graduate of St. Matthew's, '32, and of Harvard, '36, he taught at the school until he joined the OSS. Instructor in English and in Divine Studies, he installed his own dicta in our dogma and lore. At St. Matthew's I had heard of the Egyptian goddess Maat before I ever heard of Hugh Montague. Maat had the body of a woman and a large feather for her neck and head. As the Egyptian Goddess of Truth, she embodied a curious holy principle: in the depths of one's soul, the difference between a truth and a falsehood weighed no more than a feather. St. Matthew's tended to equate this weight to the presence of Christ, and Montague was the determined author of that addition. St. Matthew's had always taken Divine Studies seriously, but after Montague's influence on us, we felt we had a greater contribution to make than any other school of our ilk in New Hampshire or Massachusetts, or, if one is to lower the bars, Connecticut. We were closer to God than the others and Mr. Montague had given the clue: Christ was Love, but Love lived only in the Truth. Why?—because one's ability to recognize the presence of Grace (which I always saw as a leavening in the region of the chest) could be injured by a lie.

Harlot left other precepts at St. Matthew's. God the Father—awesome, monumental Jehovah—was the principle of Justice. Mr. Montague added that Jehovah was also the embodiment of Courage. Just as Love was Truth and there could be no compassion without honesty, so was Justice equal to Courage. There was no justice for the coward. There was only the purgatory of his daily life. Did a student feel despair? Look to the root. A cowardly act had been committed, or a lie told. Somewhere in the school pamphlets sent out to increase St. Matthew's endowment, there are a few lines quoted from an address Hugh Montague gave on a special occasion to a senior class in chapel. "The first purpose of this school," he said, "is not to develop your potentialities—although some of you do indeed bear the unruly gift of quick mentality—but to send out into American society young men keen to maintain their honesty and sense of purpose. It is this school's intention that you grow into good, brave young men."

I will say it for Mr. Montague and St. Matthew's. Our theology was more complex than that. There was the special tempta-

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tion of evil for the good and brave. The Devil, Montague warned, employed his finest wits to trap the noblest soldiers and scholars. Vanity, complacency, and indolence were a curse, since bravery was an ascending slope and one could not rest on it. One must succeed in rising to every challenge except the ones that would destroy us needlessly. Prudence was the one amelioration God allowed to the imperative of Courage; Love, on fortunate occasions, could offer support to Truth.

Competition on the playing field became, therefore, an avatar of Courage and Prudence, Love and Truth. On the playing field, one could find the unique proportions of your own heart. Later, properly prepared, out in the world, one might be able to deal with the Devil. Although it was never stated so at St. Matthew's, we all knew that women—as opposed to mothers, sisters, cousins, and ladies—had to be one more word for the world.

Since Mr. Montague had been gone for six years before I entered, I had no notion of the dialectical niceties of his mind. Only the precepts came down to us in strong doses imparted by instructors who lived with the conclusions. So hypocrisy also abounded at St. Matthew's. We were all smaller than our precepts. Indeed, the assistant chaplain who minted my adolescent glans was a disciple of Hugh Tremont Montague, even a rock climber, although I heard he was not a good one.

Rock climbing, after all, was the objective correlative of Virtue, which is to say, the meeting of Truth and Courage. I was soon to find out. That night in the summer of 1949 when Hugh Montague came to the Keep for the first time, he was thirty-five and I was seventeen, and much as I expected, he looked half a British officer with his erect posture and mustache and half an Anglican clergyman by way of his wire-rimmed eyeglasses and high forehead. Let me say that he could have been taken for a man of forty-five, but continued to look no older for the next twenty years, right up to his dreadful fall.

On shaking hands, I knew immediately why Christ was Truth not Love for Mr. Montague. He had a grip to remind you of the hard rubber pads that are put on vise-jaws to keep them from injuring any object in their grasp. Heaven help me, went my thought, this man is a real prick.

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Accurate was my instinct! Decades later, over the seasons of my marriage to Kittredge, I learned the innermost secrets of Harlot's young manhood even as he had confessed them one by one to her; what other gift could measure his profound love for Kittredge? He had indeed been a prick, and of the worst sort. His personal devil had been a great desire to ream young pits. There was hardly a good-looking boy in his instruction whom he had not wanted to bugger. According to Kittredge, he never had: at least, not if he was telling the truth—which was always the question—but he avowed that until he met her, this impulse was the ongoing daily torment of his years at Harvard, then later at St. Matthew's where he ground his teeth in sleep. Indeed, he had not entered the ministry for fear that he would, one good day, dive deep into his impulses and betray his church. The sexual energies, in consequence, were in-held. As he took my hand on introduction and stared into my eyes, he was a force and I was a receptacle: he was clean as steel and I was a punk.

I remember how my father, forty pounds heavier than Hugh Tremont Montague, circled nonetheless around our introduction like an anxious relative, a facet of Cal Hubbard's personality I had never seen before. I not only realized how much this meeting had to mean to my father, but even why it had taken so long to arrange—Cal Hubbard's expectations would suffer a dull return if it did not work.

I describe our meeting as if there were no one else in the house. In fact, something like seventeen of us, Mary Bolland Baird, Rough, Tough, cousins, fathers and mothers of cousins, aunts, uncles, numerous Hubbards were there. It was our last summer in that period at the Keep. My father was in the process of selling the place to Rodman Knowles Gardiner, Kittredge's father, and we were all taking a long farewell to our summer house. There might have been five people present when we were introduced, or ten, or we could have been alone. All I remember is that my father circled Mr. Montague and me, and my father was soon gone. I have some recollection that we then went down to the den to have a talk. That comes to me with clarity.

"You're out of the dyslexia, your father says."

"I think so."

"Good. What are your subjects at St. Matthew's?"

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I named them.

"Your favorite?"

"English," I said.

"What's the best novel you've read this year?"

"*Portrait of a Lady*. We had it assigned, but I liked it a lot."

He nodded sourly. "Henry James is a quince-pie as large as the Mojave Desert. It's a pity. Put Hemingway's heart in him and James would have been a writer to equal Stendhal or Tolstoy."

"Yessir," I said. I was such a liar. I had gotten an A for my paper on *Portrait of a Lady*, but I had merely parroted a few critical appreciations. *The Young Lions* was what I had enjoyed most last year. Noah Ackerman, the Jew, had appealed to me.

"Let's go out tomorrow," he said. "Your father wants me to take you on a climb. I hear there's dependable rock suitable for beginners over at a place called Otter Cliffs. We'll pick a route that's feasible."

"Yessir." I was hoping that what he called Otter Cliffs was some other Otter Cliffs than the one I knew. That was black rock and dropped a straight eighty feet down to the sea. Sometimes on the rise of the tide, there was a heavy roll of surf in Frenchman's Bay, and I had heard the growl of black waters on black rock at Otter Cliffs. Indeed, the fall was so steep I could never look over the edge.

"Guess I haven't done any rock climbing," I said, and regretted the remark on the instant.

"You'll know a little more tomorrow than you know right now."

"Yessir."

"Your father asked me to be your godfather."

I nodded. My quick fear at the thought of tomorrow had already commandeered the lower register of my voice. If I said "yessir" one more time it would come out like ship's pipes.

"I have to tell you," he said, "I was inclined to refuse." He fixed me front and center with his stare. "One must have a close personal interest to be a godfather."

"That's true. I suppose." I croaked it forth.

"I don't like close personal interest."

I nodded.

"On the other hand, I have regard for your father. No one

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will ever know how good his war record was until the secrets can be told."

"Yessir." But I beamed. Absolutely unexpected to myself, I experienced such happiness at this confirmation of my father's qualities that I knew the value, on the spot, of family pride and could have been filled from head to toe with well-nourished blood.

"Some day," he said drily, "you must try to equal him."

"Never," I said. "But I intend to try."

"Harry," he said, giving me back my name for the first time, "you're fortunate to be carrying that kind of burden. I don't tell people often, but since you and I are obviously embarked on a special venture, at least personally speaking, I choose to inform you that a father one admires extravagantly may be less of an impost than growing up without one. Mine was killed in Colorado in a shooting accident."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"I was eleven when it occurred. I must say I didn't have to grow up altogether without him. He was always a presence in my life."

It took a few more years before I was to learn from Kit-tredge that David Montague, Harlot's father, had been shot by Harlot's mother, Imogene, as David entered the master bedroom one night. It was never clear whether he had lost his keys and was climbing through the window or walking through the door. There was too much blood on the floor. Either he had traveled on his belly, mortally wounded, from the window to the door, as was her claim, or had been dragged by Hugh's mother from the door to the window, then back to the door, to support the story that his unexpected entrance by the window caused her to believe he was an intruder. I understand Ty Cobb's father was shot under similar circumstances and there are some who believe it accounts for the tigerish rapacity of Ty Cobb on the base paths. If that is the formula for generating ungodly determination, I see no reason why it could not apply to Harlot.

Next day, true to his promise, he drove me out to Otter Cliffs. In anticipation, I spent a sleepless night. First I hoped it would rain, then that it would not. I was certain Mr. Montague would say the essence of rock climbing was to accept the given.

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If the rock was slippery, we would still have a go. So I began to pray it would not rain.

It was misty at 6:30 in the morning, but I knew the weather on Mt. Desert well enough to see that the sky would be clear by eight. To avoid a family breakfast, we had fried eggs and coffee at a hash-house (no granola for outdoorsmen then!) and I ate my food in all somber duty, the yolk and biscuits going down like sulphur and brimstone, after which we took the Park Drive along the eastern shore of Mt. Desert. As we drove I named for him places long familiar to me, the Beehive, Sand Beach, Thunder Hole, Gorham Mountain, a guide leading the way to his own terminal hour. Or so I was convinced. Rock climbing was familiar to me, if only in sleep. I always knew when a dream had become a nightmare, for there was I clinging to a wall.

We parked. We walked along a wooded trail for a hundred yards, and suddenly had, all to ourselves, the precipice of a cliff. Our view was open to the boom and hiss of the Atlantic pounding on rocks below. I took a quick glimpse down. It proved no easier than standing on the edge of a roof seven stories high that had no railing. My impulse was to ask Mr. Montague if this were, for certain, the right place.

He was scouting, his boots six inches from the lip. He strode along, frowning and clucking, weighing one ascent against another while I sat beside his pile of climbing gear, nerveless, and for all I knew, limbless. The stone on which I perched was pale pink and friendly, but the straight rock-fall below was dark gray, and black at the bottom. Years later, in the Department Store in Saigon, I was to have an outrageous attack of anxiety one night while staring at a Vietnamese prostitute's outspread legs. Her open vagina looked as sinister to me as an exotic orchid. Only then did I realize that the contrast of her pink petals and near-black overleaves had brought me back to the fearful minutes I waited for Harlot to take the measure of where to commence my instruction.

Finally he settled on the right place. "This will do," he told me, and unstrapped his gear, took out two coiled nylon ropes from the tote bag, and tugged on a few trees near the edge. "We'll rappel down," he said. "It's easy. Beginners like it. I, however, confess to you—it terrifies me."

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Somehow, that was reassuring. "Why?" I managed to ask.

"You're dependent on things external to yourself," he answered, as if that were the only reply. "There's no sure means of knowing when a little tree like this gives way."

He was taking precautions. I will not try to describe all that he did, but I could see that he anchored one end of the rappel rope not only to the tree, but to an adjacent rock through the agency of a long sling of webbing. These various ties converged through an oval chromium ring smaller than my palm, which I knew was called a carabiner.

"Are you going to use pitons?" I asked, trying to give a warrant of knowledgeability.

"Oh, no need," he said. "Not for this."

Old as he was, we were acting as if both of us were seventeen. Which made it worse—he was vastly superior.

"All right, you wait here," he said when done, "and I'll go down, look it over, and come back. Then you'll do it."

I found it hard to believe that he was going to make a voyage up and down that cliff as casually as taking reconnaissance of a few floors on an elevator, but indeed, he gave one mighty yank on the anchor of his rappelling rope, and satisfied with such security, stood on the edge of the cliff, back to the sea, the rope wound once around his waist, and stated, "You'll find this the hardest part of the rappel. Just slack off some rope and consign your butt to the void. Then, sit back on the rope." Which he did by placing the sole of his shoes on the lip and leaning backward, until his extended legs were in a horizontal line with the ground. "Now," he said, "just walk down, step by step. Keep your legs stiff, your feet against the rock, and give yourself slack when you need it."

He made a few moves slowly, simulating the step-by-step technique a beginner should employ, the performance going on for five or six steps of descent. After which, bored with the sluggishness of this method, he gave a little whoop, shoved off with his feet from the rock, and slackened ten feet of rope in a rush. When he bounced, toes first, back into the wall, he was a good piece further down already, and with three or four more such springs out from the wall, there he was below, standing on a ledge of flat, black, wet stone.



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He slipped the rope from around his waist, called to me to pull it up. Then he climbed right after. It seemed to take him no longer than he would have spent on five or six flights of stairs.

"Nice rock," he said. "You'll have a good time."

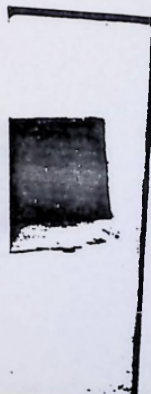
I did not say a word. I thought of every excuse I could make. I had had no sleep. My operation left me dizzy at unexpected times. I would like to approach this more slowly: Could we warm up on a trail that did not require ropes? Below, tolling loudly on the rocks, the surf reverberated among my fears.

I said nothing. My own destruction was by now superior to whimpering out of this situation. Since I could find no excuse to survive, I stood as passively as a martyr before faggots and flames, but I was only a numb body suffering the rope to be fastened about me. Later there would be much sophistication of apparatus, but on this occasion, he merely knotted one end of a mountain cord around my waist and dropped the rest of the coil on the ground beside him. He took another rope, doubled it, and slipped it through the carabiner attached to the tree, after which he passed it through two carabiners linked onto my harness at the waist, these carabiners to serve as brake, he explained, during the rappel. Then he ran this double rope under my thigh, passed it diagonally across my chest, and around my back to the other arm. So holding each end of its snakelike embrace of me, one hand guiding the slack, the other out for balance, I prepared to go off the lip.

To put one's heels on a ledge and lean backward into space, holding only to a rope, is equal to the wail one hears in childhood on falling out of bed. One discovers the voice is one's own. My first few steps, feet pressed flat against the vertical rock, were as clumsy as if my legs were concrete posts.

It was only after I descended five or six steps that I began to comprehend that the act of rappelling could actually be accomplished; indeed, it was a good deal easier than learning to use crutches.

How intimate was the surface of the rock, however! Each pock before me was an eye-socket; each large crack, a door ajar. Faces of intricate benignity and malevolence looked back at me from the lines and knobs of the rock. I felt as if I were lowering myself around the flank of Leviathan. Yet such was my relief at



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being able to perform these acts that before I reached the bottom, I actually gave a few thrusts out with my legs and tried running off slack through the double-carabiners at my waist, these tentative efforts not dissimilar, I am certain, to the first stir of the lower throat that a six-week-old dog will make in preparation for barking.

I reached the ledge. The surf was steaming just below, and the wet, black stone under my sneakers felt as oily as a garage floor. I released the double rappel rope from the double carabiner and only then realized I had been attached all the while by my harness itself to the coil of cord Mr. Montague had held. If all had gone wrong, and I had lost balance on the rappel, Mr. Montague would have been there to support me by the second connection. Now my initial fear felt absurd to me. I was commencing to learn that fear was a ladder whose rungs are surmounted one by one, and at the summit—as Mr. Montague would probably say—lay judgment itself.

He now plummeted down in three long swoops to stand beside me on the wet ledge. "This climb will test you," he said. "However, it's not unreasonable. Just a matter of learning a new vocabulary."

"What do you mean?" I murmured. I now had had my first good look at the ascent, and fear returned.

He gave the smallest smile—the first he had been ready to offer since his arrival. "You'll find I picked a climb with a few buckets."

Unattached to any rope, he started up. "Try to recall my route when you're here," he called down from fifteen feet above. "but don't fret if you lose it. Part of the fun is to come on your own finds." Whereupon he mounted the face in one continuous series of easy moves and was at the top before I became aware again that the rope attached to my waist was still very much in place, and its other end was tied to some tree above the lip and out of sight. Mr. Montague appeared on the edge, some eighty agonizing feet above, sitting on the brink in all comfort, his feet dangling over, my rope—the rope, that is, with which he would belay me—wound casually, and only once, around his waist.

"Won't I pull you with me if I fall?" I asked. My voice emerged in a reasonably clear little croak, but the effort was



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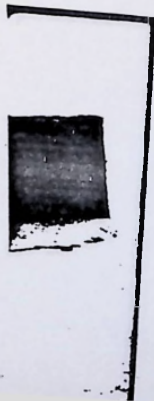
analogous to hurling the shot put.

"I'm anchored to the tree." He beamed down on me. "Get started. I'll send you clues by carrier pigeon." I was beginning to understand what animated him. The air of funk in others can taste, I suppose, like caviar.

How to speak of the beauty that rises from one's fear of the rock? I was shriven. I understood the logic of God: The seed of compassion is to be found in the harsh husk of the demand.

As I started up the wall, I could not believe how vertical was the ascent. I thought there might be some slant in my favor, but no. Vertical. True, the rock was cracked and scarred and nubbled and pitted, a raw acne of surface that you could certainly get a grip on. Feeling a friendly knob of a hold at the top of my reach, and seeing a small slot for my foot, I stepped in, reached up, and pulled myself one foot off the bottom ledge. I knew something of the emotions of the first great day at Kitty Hawk then. Yes, this was as good as the virgin jump from the balcony deck into Blue Hill Bay. To fortify me, Mr. Montague pulled slightly on my harness. "If you need a little help," he yelled down, "call: 'Tension,' " on which, by demonstration, he pulled harder so that I felt somewhat less than my own full weight and more inclined to climb. I found another grip and foothold just above, took the move, took another, and another, glanced down. I was eight feet above the ledge. Splendid! I found another knob and just above my knee was one of the buckets of which he spoke, a hole about as large as a pool-table pocket in which I could rest my foot. There I halted, catching my breath. The rock felt alive. It had odors, grooves filled with dirt, overhanging elbows, armpits; it had pubic corners. I do not wish to exaggerate, but I was not prepared for the intimacy of the activity. It was as if I were climbing up the body of a giant put together of the bones and flesh and pieces and parts of a thousand humans.

Now, soon enough, I entered a more difficult portion of the ascent. About halfway up, I came to a place where I did not know how to continue. There were no good grips to reach with my hands, and not a quarter inch of rock-wrinkle to support the next push with my foot. In deadlock, straddled, I encountered the agonizing indecision of the rock climber. All the while that one's limbs are burning from expenditures of anxiety, one does



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not know whether to try to continue up or look to descend a few feet in order to veer onto another route. Frozen on the rock, my voice scorched in my throat, the open depths below were falling away into the unrecoverable past. I stared like a pawnbroker at the dubious possibilities presented by each ripple in the rock. I think half of all I ever learned about rock climbing came from these first five minutes on Otter Cliffs; I was given a quick introduction to the great social world of vertical stone. There the smallest bit of irregularity can prove an immensely useful friend, a treacherous if conceivably employable associate, a closed door, or an outright enemy. I had by now managed to maneuver myself into a coffin's corner just beneath an overhang.

There I rested, sobbing for breath, altogether bewildered what to do next. The more I squeezed myself into this perch, which accommodated only a part of my body, the more I had to consume the strength of my arms in unhappy holds. I heard Montague call out, "Don't build your nest there. It's no place to breed."

"I don't know what to do," I said.

"Back down a few feet. Work to your right."

Here I discovered the curious nature of one's own virtue. That is so inaccessible to us on normal occasions that we are doomed to become more intimate with our vices. Even as I took my first step in retreat, eyeing already the potentialities he had suggested on the right, I saw what might be a quicker way around the overhang if I tried a route to the left. It was riskier. To the right, I had his word at least, whereas to the left I could see one good move and then another, but there appeared to be a straddle ten feet above—a smooth rock face with two vertical cracks five feet apart—perhaps a grip or two, I could not tell. What appears to be a hold from below can prove only the shadow of a bulge; what promises an edge for one's foot comes out to no more than a striation in the stone.

I took the option to the left. It was mine. It had not been given to me and so could become my virtue. Such was the state of my logic. Panting for breath as unashamedly as a woman in labor, (which image I account for by my adolescent, film-sophisticated understanding of how a woman acts in labor), I could feel my religious education advancing by leaps. Virtue was

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grace. The impossible could be traversed by the intuitions of one's heart. Scaling off to the left, I had to make moves I would not have attempted before. Desperate to prove my choice, I had to include one fancy scramble from one welt of rock up to another, neither step of which could have held me for more than a second, but I did it all in one continuous move as if I were Montague, and in reward found myself able to stand and rest on the small ledge above the overhang.

Montague called down, "Three cheers, boy. You're past the crux."

It came on me. I had gotten through the worst. I continued on to the top in a state of elation that was potentially as dangerous as an all-out funk. "Perfect," he said when I joined him. "Now we'll try you on tougher stuff," and began packing the gear for the drive to the next step.

3 | One's fears on the rock soon gain proportion. If one does not take the lead like Montague, but is belayed from above by a good climber, it soon becomes clear that you can afford on occasion to fall. Unaware my first time up of such relative security, I made every move as if a mistake might be my death. It took a second ascent that afternoon on a vertical column in The Precipices to make me aware that I was living in comparative safety. For when one move I made did not work and I slipped from a fractional foothold, I plunged but a couple of feet, suffering no more than a scrape to my knee. The rope was belaying me from above.

I made progress after that. Mr. Montague had accepted my father's invitation to take his two-week summer vacation at Doane. So for two weeks I went out every day with him. (And



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often in the rain.) Once, he took along two of my cousins, but I took no pleasure in their fears. I felt—rare emotion—like a veteran.

Mr. Montague and I preferred to be alone. Each day he took me over a different kind of hazard. I was introduced to finger jams and pressure holds. I learned how to *smear* smooth rock with the heel of my hand. Lie-back holds and crack-backs were shown to me, foot jams and chimneys. He took me up squeeze chimneys and over slabs, gave me problems in mantling and hand traverses. Forgive me, but I mention these techniques to keep track of the different rock faces on which we spent our days. There were nights when the proper placement of pitons and bongs clanged in my head as I went to sleep, and I heard the hiss of the rope as Mr. Montague, on the lead, tugged it through the carabiner above me.

I had fallen in love with the illimitable skill of the rock climber. Clumsy, using my arms more than my legs, and my will as a substitute for wisdom, I scratched my way up many a face, growing filthy with the effluvia of the stone. For those two weeks of summer, I did not have a finger, an elbow, or a knee that was not raw, and my thighs and shins acquired a hundred bruises, but I was happy. I expect I was more happy than not for the first time in my life, and thereby, at the age of seventeen, grasped a truth some choose never to go near: happiness is experienced most directly in the intervals between terror. As each climb he led me to was, in general, more difficult than the one before, so did I rarely have a day in which I was not washed in sweat. I spent time with fear as intimately as a body down with flu knows fever. I learned the implacable law of fear. It has to be conquered or it collects, then invades one's dreams. There were days when I could not complete a climb and had to go down. In rock climbing, it is harder, however, to descend than to climb—one's feet have to search for the holds, and they see less well than the fingers. So I slipped often, and dangled on the rope, and sweated, and knew myself doubly abject, and could not sleep that night for confronting my terror: I would have to return next day and do it properly. A compelling transaction. One is raising at such times all the ships that sank in childhood from loss of courage, yes, hoisting them up from the sea bottom of oneself.

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I felt as if all the childhood fears that weighed me down had begun their ascent to the surface—I was being delivered from the graveyard of expired hope. But what a chancy operation! Each time I failed to complete a climb, the fear I was hoping to cure was not consumed but turned corrupt.

Yet each time I succeeded, I received my dependable reward. For an hour, or for a night, I was happy. On the best day I had in those two weeks, which was next to the last day, Montague brought me back to Otter Cliffs and told me to take the lead. Notwithstanding all I had learned, going up first on the same ascent where I had begun proved several times more difficult. Taking the lead, I had to hammer in my pitons as I went, my arm in such a catalepsy of controlled panic that it would cramp after every few raps of the hammer. Now the prospect of a fall was serious again. On the lead, I tried to put a piton in every five feet, knowing each prospective fall could double the length since one might plummet from five feet above the last piton to five feet below. And that ten feet would double again should the lower piton pull out. Facing such a prospect, easy climbs became difficult.

Once I did fall. It was for ten feet, no more. My piton held, but I bounced on the end of the rope, then took a mean swing into the rock. Scraped, bruised, and feeling as shattered as a cat who has been plunged into a pail of ice water, I held my breath against the long temptation to whimper, took a full minute to call back the wide-flying streamers of my will, and, hard to believe that I was exacting this on myself, took on the climb again and searched for a way through the crux. It happened to be the same overhang as on the first day, but now I was dragging a rope behind me rather than being encouraged from above. Two weeks of newly acquired knowledge made the difference. I worked my way to the lip without another fall.

Those two weeks did more for me than any operation on my skull. I had new standing in the family. My cousins gave way to my opinions in passing squabbles, and my father took me out for a night of drinking in the modest bars of Bar Harbor. Toward the end of the evening, I was feeling as relaxed as a piece of spaghetti cooked in wine, and my male parent, giving, as usual, no more sign of drink than his massive emanations of good or

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bad will, said—he was obviously in a splendid spirit—"Hugh Montague has a good opinion of you. That's the accolade, Harry. He doesn't have three words to say for any ten people."

"Well, I'm glad," I said. I felt so corny I was ready to cry. Instead, I laid in a good swallow of bourbon. The flush it inspired told me for the first time how rich my father's insides must feel.

"Hugh's going to take you for a lobster dinner tomorrow," he told me. "Hugh says you're worth a good-bye party all to yourself."

In the event, Hugh Montague had a great deal to say to me. By the first drink, I had begun to babble—the intoxication of having encountered this vocation which was a sport, a skill, and an open-air monastery for the soul, augmented by my successful lead that very afternoon, not to mention my felicitous connection with bourbon the night before, as well as the great (if hitherto unadmitted) release of knowing that Mr. Montague, fearsome godfather, would be gone tomorrow, had me nattering. I was ready to take vows never to betray the new discipline, but Mr. Montague cut me off.

"Harry, I'm going to tell you something that will hurt. I advance it, however, for your benefit. I have kept a high opinion of you over these two weeks. You are going to make a good man, and I respect that doubly in your case because you were dealt paltry cards in childhood. I gather your mother is tiny."

"Yes."

"And not wholly dependable, according to your father."

"Not wholly."

"Men work to develop their evil skills. Women—it is my belief—merely summon them." When he saw my adolescent eyes were not within a hundred miles of the peak of this observation, he shrugged, and said, "When we know each other better, we might trade a few anecdotes about our respective mothers"—he came to a full stop as if startled by himself—"although, don't count on it."

"Yessir."

"From now on, when we're alone, you and I, I want you to call me by the name my associates employ. That name is Harlot. Not to be confused with Harlow, Jean Harlow, but *Harlot*."

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"Yessir."

"One of the most persistent little questions over at Foggy Bottom is why Montague chose such a point of reference. Sooner or later, they all make the pilgrimage over to my good side and have the touching simplicity to ask directly. As if I were in haste to tell! Should we become exceptional friends, I'll spill the beans. In twenty years."

"Yes, Harlot." I stopped. "It doesn't sound right."

"Never fear. You'll get used to it." He picked up the knuckles of a claw, twisted them apart without getting his fingertips caught on the spurs, and proceeded with his lobster fork to pluck forth the meat.

"Harry, I'll present you with the worst first." He fixed me with his eyes. There would be no sliding off. "I want you to give up rock climbing."

He could as well have struck me in the face.

"Oh," I said. "Golly."

"It's not that you are bad. You are better than your physical skills. You have innate moxie. Of ten beginners one might instruct, I say you would probably come in second or third in the lot."

"Then why do I have to stop?" I paused. I dropped my voice. "Would I kill myself?"

"Probably not. Hurt yourself, certainly. But that's not my reason. It's more particular than that. Only the best of beginners should ever dream of going on. It's more than just a sport, you see, for brave ones like yourself." This was the first time anyone had ever called me brave.

"No," I said. "why? Why do you want me to quit?"

"It's an activity that insists on excellence. Harry, if you went on, it would take over your life. You could not rest. Whenever you failed on a climb, the memory would overpower every thought until you succeeded. Even among good people, that can be a terribly debilitating process. An addiction. One ends as a coward, a victim, or a mediocre monomaniac. It is like being an ex-alcoholic. One is able to contemplate nothing else."

I was sufficiently agitated to say to him, "I don't understand what you're saying." My voice must have been rude-edged for I could feel his annoyance. His disciplines as a pedagogue may



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have saved me from a few thrusts of his temper.

"All right then," he said, "we will go further. A man who acquires high competence in rock climbing is able to become the instrument of his own will. That's what we try to arrive at. That's what we're encouraged to desire from the year one. A child is taught not to soil his pants. His bowels become the instrument of his will. And as we grow older, we often feel emotions that are as low and obstreperous as the embarrassing necessity, if caught in public, to take a *drop*." He used the word as though that were the only acceptable synonym ever to employ. "None-theless, we say to our good sphincter, so much the creature of our will, 'Tighten up, you fool.'

"Obviously rock climbing firms the upper regions of the will. But it's quite a process. And just as dangerous as black magic. For every fear we are ready to confront is equally open, you see, to the Devil. Should we fail, the Devil is there to soothe our cowardice. 'Stick with me,' he says, 'and your cowardice is forgiven.' Whereas, rock climbing, when well done, pinches off the Devil. Of course, if you fail, his nibs returns two-fold. If you are not good enough then, you spend half your days getting the Devil out. That is marking time. And so long as we stay in place, Satan is more than satisfied. He loves circular, obsessive activity. Entropy is his meat. When the world becomes a pendulum, he will inhabit the throne."

"Maybe," I said, "I would know what I could climb and what I couldn't, and just stick with that."

"Never. You are half your father. That half is not going to rest. I could see from the first day that by one measure you were equal to the best rock climbers. You understood it. You knew you were in one damned awesome church, indeed the only one where religion comes close enough to Our Lord to give a little real sustenance."

"Yessir."

"There's a story I was told about some far-fetched, terribly intense sect of Jewish people called Hasidim. They used to inhabit village ghettos in Russia and the Ukraine. It seems that one of their folk, a rabbi, was so devotional that he prayed to God forty times a day. Finally, after forty years, the rabbi grew impatient and said, 'God, I have loved You for so long that I want You

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to reveal Yourself to me. Why won't You reveal Yourself to me?' Whereupon God did just that. He revealed Himself. How do you think the rabbi reacted?"

"I don't know."

Harlot began to laugh. I had never heard him give a full laugh before. It gave a clue to why he had chosen his name. Inside him were more people than one would have thought. His laugh was all over the place. "Well, Harry, the good fellow dived right under the bed and began to howl like a dog. 'Oh, God,' the rabbi said, 'please do *not* reveal Yourself to me.' That, Harry, is a useful story. Before all else, God is awesome. It's the first thing to know. If Christ had not been sent to us, no one would ever have gotten out of the cave. Jehovah was too much for all of us. There would have been no modern civilization."

"What about Egypt, or Greece and Rome? Didn't they take us out of the cave?"

"Harry, those cultures marked time. They were perfect examples of the obsessional. Devil's abodes, all three, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Don't be impressed by how beautiful they were. The Devil, you must never forget, is the most beautiful creature God ever made. Spiritually, however, those cultures did not choose to emerge from Plato's cave. It took Christ to come along and say, 'Forgive the sons for the sins of the fathers.' That's the day, Harry, that scientific inquiry was born. Even if we had to wait a millennium and more for Kepler and Galileo. So, follow the logic: Once the father begins to believe that his sons will not suffer for his acts of sacrilege, he grows bold enough to experiment. He looks upon the universe as a curious place, rather than as an almighty machine guaranteed to return doom for his curiosity. That was the beginning of the technological sleigh ride which may destroy us yet. The Jews, of course, having rejected Christ, had to keep dealing with Jehovah for the next two millennia. So they never forgot. God is awesome. 'Oh God, do not reveal Yourself to me. Not all at once!'"

He paused. He ordered another drink for each of us. Hennessey for himself, and Old Harper's. I recollect, for me. "Let us have an Old Harper's for Young Harry," he actually said to the waitress, and went right back to his disquisition on the awesome: "I suspect that God is with us in some fashion on every

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rock climb. Not to save us—how I detest that tit-nibbling psychology—God saves!—God at the elbow of all misbegotten mediocrities. As if all that God had to do was preserve the middling and the indifferent. No, God is not a St. Bernard dog to rescue us at every pass. God is near us when we are rock climbing because that is the only way we get a good glimpse of Him and He gets one of us. You experience God when you're extended a long way out beyond yourself and are still trying to lift up from your fears. Get caught under a rock and of course you want to howl like a dog. Surmount that terror and you rise to a higher fear. That may be our simple purpose on earth. To rise to higher and higher levels of fear. If we succeed, we can, perhaps, share some of God's fear."

"His fear?"

"Absolutely. His fear of the great power He has given the Devil. There is no free will for man unless the Devil's powers were made equal on this embattled planet to the Lord's. That is why," he said, "I don't want you to continue rock climbing. The brute fact is that you don't have the exquisite skills that are necessary. So you will keep finding a little courage and losing it. You could end up like one of those monumentally boring golfers who work for years to improve their swing and never stop talking about it. Orotund blobs of narcissism."

"Okay," I said. Now I was angry. Awfully hurt but clearly angry.

"All this is not in disrespect for your feelings, but in true respect. I believe there is a place for you. It will make demands upon your courage, your intelligence, your will, and your wit. You will be tempted by the Devil at every turn. But you can, in my modest opinion, serve God. In a far better way, I propose, than as a rock climber."

Formidable were his gifts of transition. I had been shifted from the pits of an unexpected wound to a pitch of interest. "Are you saying what I suppose you are saying?"

"Of course. Your father asked me to spend my vacation looking you over as a prospect. Nothing less. I had other plans for these two weeks. But he said, 'More than anything, I want the boy to come aboard with us. Only, however, if you think he's right. It's too important a matter to be judged by my desires and



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affection.' "

"Did my father speak that way to you?"

"Most definitely."

"You told him I could come aboard?"

"Yesterday. By now, I know you better than your father does. You have nice gifts. I'll say no more. Your father is an enthusiast, and overextended, therefore, on occasion, in judgment, but I pride myself on a cold eye. You have qualities that your father, for all his splendid stuff, is lacking."

I was tempted to say, "There is nothing special about me"—is that not the most painful cry one can utter in adolescence?—but now I was gifted with judgment. I kept my mouth shut.

"You're planning to go to Yale?"

"Yessir."

"I'd say, short of a collapse on entrance exams, it can be taken for granted you will get in. Yale is perfect. I call it Uncle Eli's Cabin."

I laughed.

"Oh, yes," said my new associate, Harlot, "part of the underground railway. One of the stations on the route. At least for a few." He made a face. "As an old Harvard man, I don't like to say this, but Yale is a touch niftier to our purposes. Harvard gets quiffy about recruitment. It's a stinking irony since half of our real people did happen to go there. Well, as I always say, trust a good fellow so long as he doesn't matriculate at Princeton."

Harlot held up his glass. We would drink to that. One knew all the merriment of drinking to the health of Annapurna as opposed to Nanda Devi. Then we shook hands and drove back to the Keep. In the morning, Harlot left. He would drop me a letter on a point of advice from time to time, but I was not to be in the same room with him again for several years.





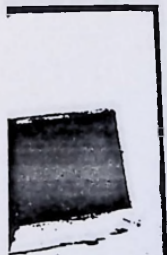
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4 | The rock climbing left its inheritance. In my senior year at St. Matthew's, I went from second shell to first on the 150-pound crew and rowed against St. Paul's and Groton. I passed my Entrance Boards with good marks and one full leap ahead of my now domiciled dyslexia. I won the one fistfight I had in my three years at prep school. I even worked out at wrestling which was difficult for me since I was still expunging from my brain every trace of the glom-job by the assistant chaplain (who always nodded when we passed). My loins no longer felt impacted with pus. And I did get into Yale. I had had, as one would suspect, a sense of future mission all through my last year at St. Matthew's and it continued in college. I entered Yale with the full expectation that some official at one of the freshman inquiry desks would lead me over to my undergraduate CIA unit, but as I soon learned, the Agency did not go in for college cells. No raps sounded on my door at midnight.

At Harlot's suggestion, I did join ROTC. "You'll be dealing with idiots," he told me, "but there are requirements for military service that have to be satisfied before you can join the Agency, and ROTC takes care of that. After Yale, you certainly wouldn't want to face two years in the armed services before coming to us."

I did close-order drill over the next eight semesters and managed to get good enough to air out any dank memories of left-foot-club-foot with the Knickerbocker Grays. I discovered a vein of optimism in myself. As one grew older, the traumatic impasses of childhood could actually dissolve.

Harlot would telephone from time to time and prove interested in which courses I chose. Usually it was to push my interests toward English. "Learn your mother tongue and you'll appreciate the others." Before sophomore year he sent me what he saw as a great gift, a first edition of Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, and truth, it wasn't bad. There was a time when I could not only locate the roots of a word in Latin and Greek, but enjoy the exotic yams and tubers that come to us from Scandinavian and Celtic. I learned of English words derived from Italian by way of Latin, as well as of Portuguese from Latin (*auto-da-fé* and *binnacle*), and French out of Por-



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tuguese from Latin (*fetich* and *parasol*), and French out of Spanish from Latin, and Portuguese out of Spanish and Dutch derived from Latin (*cant* and *canal* and *pink*), and German from Latin, and French from Late Latin, and German out of Hungarian from Serbian from late Greek from Latin, all to be tapped for *hussar*. I learned crossbreeds of French out of Spanish from Arabic from Greek—*alembic* is one reward—and I will not go on at length about English that came to us from Low German, Dutch, Slavonic, Russian, Sanskrit, Magyar, Hebrew, Hindustani. Harlot, by his lights, was getting me ready for CIA. The theory? Why, look to the tendrils of other tongues that had grown their way into English. Thereby one might develop a taste for the unspoken logic of other lands.

Of course, I saw it all as preparation. For the next four years, my courses and the friends I made, were all there to contribute to my mission as a CIA man. If I had any conflict over my future occupation, it was on spring nights in New Haven, after an occasional and frustrating date with a girl, when I would tell myself that I really wished to become a novelist. Brooding upon this, I would also inform myself that I did not have sufficient experience to write. Joining CIA would give me the adventures requisite to working up good fiction.

I was certainly single-minded. I see myself in Junior year before the Yale-Harvard game, drunk at Morey's with my peers, holding the silver bowl high. I was obliged to keep drinking Green Punch for as long as my table would continue to sing, yes, how I drank and how they chose to sing. The song was long, and I would not quit until the last bar of music was sung, and sung again.

Words I have not thought of in thirty years come to me out of the pale, sunlike glare of the interior of that large silver punch bowl. I quaffed Green Punch at Morey's and around me in a ring of ten illuminated voices, the song cried on:

It's Harry, it's H, it's H makes the world go round.
It's Harry, H, that makes the world go round.
Sing Hallelujah, sing Hallelujah.
Put a nickel on the drum,
Save another drunken bum,



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Sing Hallelujah, sing Hallelujah,
Put a nickel on the drum,
Save another drunken bum,
Put a nickel on the drum,
And you'll be saved.

They paused for breath but I had to keep drinking.

Oooh, I'm H-A-P-P-Y to be F-R-double-E,
F-R-double-E to be S-A-V-E-D,
S-A-V-E-D from the bonds of S-I-N,
Glory, glory Hallelujah,
Hip, Hooray, Amen.

And I, drinking that sweet, potent, noxious, liquor-hallowed Green Punch, swallow into swallow, giving my soul to finish the bowl, knew that angels watched me as I drank, and if I drank it all before the song was done, we would beat Harvard tomorrow, we would serve our team from the stands. We would be there to offer our devotion, our love, our manly ability to booze with the gods at Morey's. Only gods drank to the depths of a silver bowl. We would ring Yale Bowl with the might of our mission at Yale, which was to defeat Harvard tomorrow. God, didn't I guzzle it down, and the score next day, in that November of 1953, was Yale 0, Harvard 13.

5 | I was introduced to Kittredge toward the end of junior year at Yale. Just before Easter vacation, a summons came by telegram: COME MEET MY FIANCEE HADLEY KITTREDGE GARDINER. SPEND EASTER AT THE KEEP WITH KITTREDGE AND JEAN



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HARLOW.

Back to Doane. I had not been to the island since my father, in need of the money a couple of years ago, had pushed and cajoled his two brothers and single sister into agreement on the sale. Why his funds needed replenishment remained one more family mystery. Among the Hubbards, windfalls, disasters, and outright speculation were kept at a greater distance from the children than sexual disclosure; all we knew (and it was talked about in whispers) was: "A damn shame. Got to sell the Keep. Boardman's idea." My father walked about for two weeks that summer with a mouth as tight as a South American dictator under palace arrest. I hardly cared. I loved the Keep less than the others, or so I thought. It was only over the next summer which I spent at loose ends in Southampton with my mother, getting drunk with new, rich friends I did not like, and banging tennis balls through August days, that I came to understand what it was to lose the splendor of afternoon silences over the Maine hills.

The call to go back to the Keep was then agreeable; the opportunity to see Harlot spoke of more. I was still like a girl who fell in love with a man who went away to war. If he had not come back for three years, no matter. The girl went on no other dates; she did not even accept telephone calls from nice boys.

I was in love with CIA. I am one of those types—is it one in ten, or one in fifty?—who can give up just about all of life for concentration upon a part of life. I read spy novels, made island hops from word to word in Skeat, attended foreign-policy forums at Yale, and studied photographs of Lenin and Stalin and Molotov, of Gromyko and Lavrenti Beria: I wanted to comprehend the face of the enemy. I eschewed political arguments about Republicans and Democrats. They hardly mattered. Allen Dulles was my President, and I would be a combat trooper in the war against the Devil. I read Spengler and brooded through my winters in New Haven about the oncoming downfall of the West and how it could be prevented. Be certain that under these circumstances I sent Harlot a telegram that I was on my way, signed it Ashenden (for Somerset Maugham's British spy), and drove my car, a 1949 Dodge coupe, up from New Haven all the way to the back side of Mount Desert, where I found the house

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not at all as it used to be.

I do not know if I care to describe the changes. I would need to add a treasures-in-trash catalogue to the insights of a geologist: generations of Hubbards had left their strata. We used to have oak whatnots in corners, and blonde-wood Danish in the Cunard; one fine old drafting table at the Camp had come down to us from Doane Hadlock Hubbard (who also left us punctilious drawings of a proposed lookout tower one hundred feet high that he once planned to build on the southern head of the island). Along the walls were hordes of washed-out framed photographs, spotted, glass-cracked, oak-mitred, come down to us from the 1850s on. Then there were the color prints, long sun-faded, of Matisse, Braque, Dufy, Duchamp—all introduced by my mother. They had been kept, even if she never came back. Once up on a wall, things remained; it was a summer house. No wars of selection went on—merely an accommodation of accumulation. The beds were a disaster area, summer-cottage pallets. Lumpy, broken-spring mattresses with old ticking, wooden bureaus with thick paint scored by fingernail scrapings to attest to hot bored summer afternoons; spider webs on casement windows, birds' nests under the eaves, and mouse droppings in many an unused room were the price we paid for that much spread of house.

Rodman Knowles Gardiner and his wife fixed it up when they bought it from us. Kittredge's father, being a Shakespeare scholar (distantly related to the famous Shakespearean, George Kittredge, also of Harvard), knew enough about the unwinding of plots to stipulate later in the deed of transfer to the couple for a wedding present that in the event of Kittredge's divorce from Hugh Montague, she was to own the Keep without impediment. Which is how I returned to living in it. By way of Kittredge. But that was in time to come. Now in the Easter of my junior year at Yale, more than two years after the closing with the Hubbards, Dr. Gardiner and his wife had certainly spruced up the Keep. Retired from teaching, they moved some of their best Colonial furniture from their Cambridge home to Maine. There were drapes on the windows now and the walls bore Dr. Gardiner's collection of nineteenth-century Victorian paintings. The bedrooms had new beds. At first sight I hated it. We now

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looked like a New England hostelry of the sort that keeps the temperature too high in winter and screws down the windows.

I spent a difficult two hours after my arrival. Neither Hugh Montague nor his fiancée were there—instead, I was received by the eminent Shakespearean and his wife, Maisie. They endured me; I suffered. He was a Harvard professor of a variety that may no longer exist. Dr. Gardiner was so well established that there were tiers to his eminence. Stages of his personality, much like assistants in a descending chain of command, were delegated to conversation. We spoke of the Yale and Harvard football teams of the previous fall, then of my category in squash—I was a B-group player—and of my father, whom Dr. Gardiner had last seen with Mr. Dulles at an annual garden party in Washington: "He looked very well indeed—of course, that was last year."

"Yessir. He still looks well."

"Good for him."

As a tennis player, Dr. Gardiner would not have let you enjoy rallies during the warm-up. He'd drive your innocent return crosscourt and leave you to trot after it.

Maisie was not conspicuously better. She spoke of the flower garden she would put in this May; she intoned in a dreary if nonetheless dulcet voice against the unpredictability of spring weather in Maine. She mentioned the hybrids she would plant: when I offered mention of some wildflowers to look for in June and July, she lost much interest in me. Conversational pauses expanded into extensions of silence. In desperation, I tried to charge into Dr. Gardiner's center of strength. I expatiated on a term paper (for which I had received an A) on Ernest Hemingway's work. The consciously chosen irony of the later style showed, I said, that he had been enormously influenced by *King Lear*, particularly by some of Kent's lines, and I quoted from act one, scene four, "I do prefer . . . to love him that is loved, to converse with him that is wise and say little, to fear judgment, to fight when I cannot choose, and to eat no fish." I was about to add, "I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly," but Dr. Gardiner said, "Why concern yourself with the copyist?"

We sat. After a stretch, Kittredge and Hugh Montague came back in the twilight. They had been—it was a very cold Easter—



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ice climbing on parts of the lower trail of Gorham Mountain. Nice stuff, Kittredge assured me, and she looked full of red cheeks and Christmas.

She was lovely beyond any measure I had for a woman. Her dark hair was cut short like a boy's, and she was wearing pants and a windbreaker, but she was the most wonderful looking girl. She could have been a heroine out of her father's collection of painted Victorian damsels, pale as their cloisters, lovely as angels. That was Kittredge—except that her color today after the afternoon's ice climb was as startling as a view of wild red berries in a field of snow.

"It's wonderful to meet you. We're cousins. Did you know that?" she asked.

"I suppose I did."

"I looked it up last evening. Third cousins. That's no man's-land if you get down to it." She laughed with such a direct look (as if to speak of how very attractive a man younger than herself might be if she liked him) that Hugh Montague actually stirred. I knew little enough yet of jealousy, but I could feel the wave that came over from him.

"Well, I must tell you," she said, "all the while Hugh was taking us up this dreadful pitch, I kept saying I wouldn't marry him until he promised never to do such a thing to me again, whereupon he said, 'You and Harry Hubbard are in the same boat.' He banishes us equally from his grubby art."

"Actually," said Hugh Montague, "she's a little better than you, Harry. All the same, it's hopeless."

"Well, I should hope so," said Maisie Gardiner. "Fool's play to risk your neck on ice."

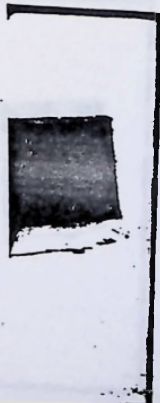
"I love it," said Kittredge. "The only thing Hugh would bother to explain was, 'Ice won't betray you until it does.' What a husband you'll make."

"Relatively secure," said Hugh.

Rodman Knowles Gardiner had a coughing fit at the thought of his daughter in marriage.

At precisely that moment Kittredge said, "I believe Daddy thinks of me as Desdemona."

"I don't see myself," said her father, "as a blackamoor, nor espoused to my daughter. You have rotten logic, darling."



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Kittredge changed the subject.

"Never did any ice climbing?" she asked of me. When I shook my head, Kittredge said, "It's no worse than the awful thing they do to you at the Farm when you have to leap out of a mud ditch and scramble up a link fence in between sweeps of the searchlight." She stopped, but not in caution, more to calculate when I would be eligible for that chore. "I guess you'll be getting into it year after next. The fence is modeled on the Grosse-Ullner barrier in East Germany."

Hugh Montague gave a smile with no amusement in it. "Kittredge, don't practice indiscretion as if it were your *métier*."

"No," said Kittredge. "I'm home. I want to talk. We're not in Washington, and I'm tired of pretending through one blah-blah cocktail party after another that I'm a little file clerk at Treasury. 'Oh,' they say, 'what do you file?' 'Oodles of stuff,' I tell them back. 'Statistics.' They know I'm lying. Obviously, I'm a madwoman spook. It stands out."

"What stands out is how spoiled you are," said her fiancé.

"How could I not be? I'm an only child," said Kittredge. "Aren't you?" she went on to ask.

"By half," I said, and when no one responded, I felt obliged to give a summary explanation.

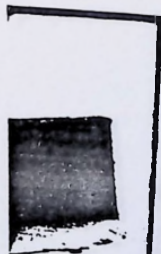
She appeared to be fascinated. "You must be full," she said, "of what I call ghost-overlays." She held up a marvelous white hand as if she were playing traffic cop in a skit at a charity ball. "But I promised everybody I would not theorize this weekend. Some people drink too much. I never stop theorizing. Do you think it's a disease, Hugh?"

"Preferable to drink," he offered.

"I'll tell you about ghost-overlays when we're alone," she declared to me.

I winced within. Hugh Montague was possessive. If she smiled nicely at me, he saw the end of their romance in her smile. Ultimately, he was right—it is just that lovers condense all schedules. What would take us more than fifteen years looked like immediate danger.

On the other hand, he was bored. Carrying on a conversation with Rodman and Maisie Gardiner was equal to taking dinner in a room where light bulbs keep going off and on. Most



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of the time we talked as if there were rules against logical connection. During drinks I kept track of a few remarks. Ten statements were uttered over ten minutes. Three belonged to Dr. Gardiner, two were by Maisie, three by Harlot, one from Kittredge, one from me. There are limits to memory. I offer a reasonable substitute.

Rodman Knowles Gardiner: "I've got Freddy Eaves at the boat yard looking out for a new spinnaker."

Maisie: "Why do the royal purple zinnias slip into blight so much more readily than the cosmos zinnias?"

Hugh Montague: "There was word of a major avalanche yesterday in the Pyrenees."

Kittredge: "If you would give the purple zinnias a bit less mulch, Mother . . ."

Maisie: "Is Gilley Butler a reliable handyman, Mr. Hubbard? Your father, Cal Hubbard, says to watch out for him."

Myself: "I should listen to my father."

Montague: "They weren't carrying avalanche cords so the bodies are not recoverable."

Dr. Gardiner: "The spinnaker ripped in the Backside Regatta. I had to finish with a jenny. Half as much headway."

Montague: "Three cheers for making the honor roll again, Harry."

Dr. Gardiner: "I'm going to fill the martini shaker."

Kittredge and I had, nonetheless, one hour alone. She demanded it. On Sunday morning, coming back from Easter Mass, with an hour to wait for Maisie's cook to serve us Sunday dinner, she forced the situation. "I want Harry to show me the island," she said to Hugh. "I'm sure he knows the nooks and crannies." A lack of plausibility quivered in the air. It would not require a guide to find nooks and crannies on our small island.

Hugh nodded. He smiled. He held out his hand like a pistol, thumb up, forefinger extended. Wordlessly, he fired a shot at me. "Keep those nasal passages clean, Herrick," he said.

Kittredge and I walked in kelp and sea wrack on the pebbled shore. Near us reared the unseen presence of Harlot, a stallion over the field of our mood.

"He's awful," Kittredge said at last and took my hand. "I adore him but he's awful. He's *raunchy*. Harry, do you love sex?"

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"I would hate to think I didn't," I said.

"Well, I would hope you do. You are as good-looking as Montgomery Clift, so you ought to. I know I like sex. It's all sex with Hugh and me. We have so little else in common. That's why he's jealous. His Omega is virtually void of libido and his Alpha is overloaded."

I did not know as yet that she had been consorting with these two principalities, Alpha and Omega, ever since the concept first came to her four years ago. Now I heard of them for the first time. I would encounter those words again over the next thirty years.

"What makes it worse," she said, "is that I'm still a virgin. I think he is too, although he won't offer a conclusive word about it."

I was twice shocked, once at these astonishing facts, and again that she would tell me. She laughed, however. "I take a True Confession pill every night," she said. "Are you a virgin, Harry?"

"Regrettably," I replied.

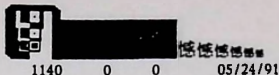
She laughed and laughed. "I don't want to be," she confessed. "It's absurd. It isn't as if Hugh and I don't know each other's bodies rather well. In fact, we know them perfectly. We're very much naked together. That kind of truth binds us. But he insists on waiting for marriage to consummate the last part."

"Well, you'll be wed soon, I guess."

"In June," she said. "We were supposed to gather up a few final plans this weekend, but Daddy and Hugh when put together are hopeless. Worse than two relics in an old folks' home trying to make conversation with each other's dentures."

It was my turn to laugh. It went on for so long that in embarrassment I sat down. She sat beside me. We perched on the southern head of the island and looked down Blue Hill Bay to the cold Easter sun shining over the remote Atlantic.

"Hugh may be the most complicated person I've encountered," she said, "but this weekend he's ridiculously simple. He's in a thundering grouch because we can't get together at night. Daddy insisted on putting me in the room next to Mother and him. So Hugh is falling apart. He's outrageously priapic,



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you see. Back in Washington he's on me all the time. I hope you don't mind hearing this, Harry. I've got to talk."

"Yes," I said. I didn't know what she was talking about. The facts seemed to contradict each other. "How can he be on you," I asked, "if you're both virgins?"

"Well, we go in for what he calls 'the Italian solution.'"

"Oh," I said. I didn't know anymore. Then I did. It was physically painful to contemplate what she allowed him to do. Nor could I conceive how it connected with all her soap and sunlight.

"Actually," she said with the quick, rising zephyr of a Radcliffe girl. "I love it. It's debauched. To be a virgin and yet feel so wanton. Harry, it's opened a purview on the Renaissance for me. Now I see how they could observe the Catholic forms and yet live in such near-mortal violation of so much. That's not the unhealthiest approach, you know."

"Do you talk this way to everyone?" I asked.

"Heavens, no," she said. "You're special."

"How can that be? You don't know me."

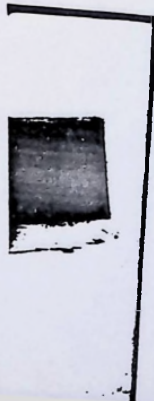
"I only needed one look. Before it's over, I said to myself, I'm going to tell this man everything. You see, Harry, I love you."

"Oh," I said. "I guess I love you too." I did not have to pretend. The thought of Hugh Montague as a satyr hot on her back, left me feeling criminally wounded. I might as well have been the cuckolded lover. I hated how her confidence had reached so easily to the very center of me.

"Of course," she said, "you and I are never going to do anything about it. We're cousins, and that's what we'll always be. Dearest friends. At worst, kissing cousins." She gave the littlest example of such a kiss to my lips. That too went all the way in. Her mouth had the scent of a petal just separated from the flower. I had never been near a nicer breath. Nor one with more surprises. It was like picking up a great novel and reading the first sentence. *Call me Ishmael.*

"Someday," she said, "after Hugh and I are tired of each other, maybe you and I will have an affair. Just the passing kind to give a lot of naughty pleasure."

"Kissing cousins," I replied hoarsely.





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"Yes. Only now, Harry, I need a good friend. I need one like pure stink. Somebody I can tell everything to."

"I'm incapable of telling all," I confessed, as if I had numerous adventures meticulously secreted away.

"You *are* buttoned up. It's what I brought you out of the house for. I want to talk about your ghost-overlays."

"Is that phrase from your psychological theories?"

"Yes."

"My father told me you're a genius. Allen Dulles says so."

"Well, I'm not," she said petulantly as if the stupidity of the supposition doubled every likelihood of great loneliness. "I have a brain that's marvelously empty when I'm not using it. So it allows thoughts to enter which other people would sweep away. Don't you think the heavens often reach us with their messages just as fully as dark forces below tickle our impulses?"

I nodded. I would not have known how to argue with this. But then, she was not looking for a debate. By her change in tone, I could sense that she was in a mood to expound.

"I've always found Freud uncongenial," she said. "He was a great man with bushels of discoveries, but he really had no more philosophy than a Stoic. That's not enough. Stoics make good plumbers. The drains go bad and you've got to hold your nose and fix them. End of Freud's philosophy. If people and civilization don't fit—which we all know anyway—why, says Freud, make the best of a bad lot."

She had obviously given this speech before. She must have to explain her thesis often on the job. So I took it as a mark of friendship that she was willing to outline it for me. Besides, I liked listening to her voice. I felt she would give this lecture because she wanted us to be closer. And felt a pure pang of the nicest kind of love. She was so beautiful, and so lonely. Wild-flowers in her hair, and blue sneakers on her feet. I wanted to hug her, and would have, if not for a sense of the prodigiously long shadow of Hugh Montague.

"Philosophically speaking," she went on, "I am very much a dualist. I do not see how one can not be. It was all very well for Spinoza to postulate his Substance, that wonderfully elusive, metaphysical, metaphorical world-goo he employed to bind all opposites together and so be able to declare himself a monist.

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But I believe he was scuttling the philosophical bark. If God is trying to tell us anything, it is that every idea we have of Him, and of the universe, is dual. Heaven and Hell, God and the Devil, good and evil, birth and death, day and night, hot and cold, male and female, love and hate, freedom and bondage, consciousness and dreaming, the actor and the observer—I could add to such a list forever. Consider it: we are conceived out of the meeting of one sperm and one ovum. In the first instant of our existence, at the moment of our creation, we are brought to life by the joining of two separate entities; how very much unlike they are. Immediately, we start to develop with a right side and a left side. Two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two lips, two sets of teeth, two lobes to the brain, two to the lungs, two arms, two hands, two legs, two feet."

"One nose," I said.

She had heard this before. "The nose is only a work of flesh surrounding two tunnels."

"One tongue," I said.

"Which has a top and a bottom and they're awfully different." She put her tongue out at me.

"Five fingers on each hand."

"The thumb is in opposition to the others. The big toe used to be in opposition to the foot."

We began to laugh. "Two testicles," I said, "but one penis."

"It's the weak link in my theory."

"One navel," I went on.

"You're awful," she said. "You're implacable."

"One head of hair."

"Which you part." She ruffled my hair. We almost kissed again. It was delicious to be flirting with a third cousin who was a couple of years older than me.

"Try to be solemn," she said. "There's really more evidence for duality than singularity. I decided to take the next step. What if there are not only two nostrils, two eyes, two lobes, and so forth, but two psyches as well, and they are separately equipped. They go through life like Siamese twins inside one person. Everything that happens to one, happens to the other. If one gets married, the other is along for the ride. Otherwise,

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they are different. They can be just a little different, like identical twins, or they can be vastly different, like good and evil." She stopped for a nearer example. "Or optimism and pessimism. I'm going to choose that because it's somewhat easier to discuss. Most things that happen to us have optimistic overtones, and pessimistic possibilities. Suppose Alpha and Omega—for those are the two names I've finally applied to these two psyches—one has to offer them some kind of name, and A and Z is much too cold to live with—so, Alpha and Omega. It is pretentious, but one does get used to it."

"You were going to give me an example," I said.

"Yes. All right. Let us say that Alpha tends to be optimistic in most situations, whereas Omega is inclined to pessimism. Each experience that comes their way is interpreted with different sensitivities, so to speak. Alpha picks up what might be positive in a specific situation; Omega anticipates what could be lost. That divided mode of perception operates for any duality you wish to invoke. Take night and day. Let me propose that Omega is a little more responsive to nocturnal experiences than Alpha. In the morning, however, Alpha is better at getting up and going off to work."

As if to prove the presence of Alpha and Omega within herself, her intimacy, so innocent and audacious at once, had by now, drawn back, and the pedant had appeared. One would have to win both sides of this woman. It also occurred to me that I was not being very loyal to Hugh Montague, but what the hell, that might be my Omega. "I just don't see," I said, "why the two must react differently all the time."

"Remember," she said, holding up an instructor-like finger, "Alpha and Omega originate from separate creatures. One is descended from the sperm cell, Alpha; Omega from the ovum."

"You are saying we have a male and a female psyche inside ourselves?"

"Why not? There's nothing mechanical about it," said Kit-tredge. "The male side can be full of the so-called female qualities, whereas Omega can be an outrageous bull of a woman just as virile and muscular as a garbage collector." She gave a merry look as if to show the return of her Alpha. Or was it Omega? "God wants us to be as various and faceted as kaleidoscopes."

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Which looks to the next point: Hugh and I agree on this: The war between God and the Devil usually goes on in both psychic entities. That's as it should be. Schizophrenics tend to separate good and evil altogether, but in more balanced people, God and the Devil fight not only in Alpha, but in Omega as well."

"There seems to be endless capacity for strife in your system."

"Of course there is. Doesn't that fit human nature?"

"Well," I said, "I still can't see why the Creator desired such a complicated design."

"Because he wished to give us free will," she said. "I agree with Hugh on this as well. Free will amounts to giving the Devil equal opportunity."

"How can you know that?" I blurted out.

"It's what I think," she said simply. "Don't you see, we have a true and real need for two developed psyches, each with its own superego, ego, and id. That way, one can feel some three-dimensionality, so to speak, in our moral experience. If Alpha and Omega are quite unlike, and, believe me, they often are, then they can look upon the same happening from wholly separate points of view. It's why we have two eyes. For the same reason. So we can estimate distance."

"Account for this," I said. "When our eyes become too different from each other, we need glasses. If Alpha and Omega are awfully different, how can a person function?"

"Look at Hugh," she said. "His Alpha and Omega must be as far apart as the sun and the moon. Great people, and artists, and extraordinary men and women have dramatically different Alpha and Omega. Of course, so do the feeble-minded, the addictive, and the psychotic."

Something in the certainty of her voice was making me dogged. "How do you account, then," I asked, "for the difference between an artist and a psychotic?"

"The quality of inner communication, of course. If Alpha and Omega are incredibly different, but can manage all the same to express their separate needs and perceptions to each other, then you have an extraordinary person. Such people can find exceptional solutions. Artists, especially. You see, when Alpha and Omega don't communicate, then one or the other must

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become the master or there's a standstill. So the loser becomes oppressed. That's a desperately inefficient way of living."

"Like totalitarianism?"

"Precisely. You do see what I'm talking about."

I was awfully pleased to hear that. Encouraged, I asked: "Would a healthier person have an Alpha and Omega about as different, say, as Republicans and Democrats? Agree on some things, disagree on others, but work it out?"

She beamed. I had brought out her better side. The wicked light was in her eye again. "You're wonderful," she said. "I do love you. You're so direct."

"You are making fun of me."

"I'm not," she said. "I'm going to use your example with some of those dummies I have to give explanations to."

"Don't they love your ideas? I can see where Alpha and Omega tell us a lot about spies."

"Of course. But so many of the people I work with are afraid to trust it. I'm just a girl to them. So they can't believe that this could prove the first reliable psychological theory to explain how spies are able to live with the tension of their incredible life-situations, and in fact, will not only bear up under such a double-life, but indeed, go looking for it."

I nodded. She had termed me direct, but I was wondering if her mode of presentation might not also be somewhat too unadorned. Most of the intellectuals I had met at Yale seemed obliged on first meeting to fire off an artillery barrage of great and/or esoteric authors they had presumably absorbed. With Kittredge, however, one citing of Spinoza plus one reference to Freud seemed to take care of it. She had not sent out a cavalry of esteemed authorities to turn my flank. She pursued her thoughts; they were enough. I thought she showed the forceful but innocent head of an inventor.

Well, we went on talking. We never came to ghost-overlays, but before we were done with our hour in the nooks and crannies of Doane, I was somewhat offended that she could take as much pleasure in exposition as in our flirtation. Before we went back to the house, therefore, I tried to tease her. I asked her to confess: Who was her own Alpha, her own Omega?

"Oh," she said, "others perceive such things better than

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oneself. Tell me your impressions of how they shape up in me."

"Oh," I said in imitation of her voice, "I think your Alpha is full of loyalty and your Omega is as treacherous as the tides. Alpha is surfeited with chastity, and Omega is unbalanced with sacrilege. You're a spontaneous child on one side and an empire-builder on the other."

"You're a devil through and through," she said, and gave me another kiss on the lips.

Nothing will ever tell me for certain whether Harlot saw that small embrace or merely sensed it. As we walked back, hand in hand, we came on him standing above a rock. He had been holding a view of our approach. I have no idea how long he had been there, but some constraint in the pit of my heart seemed confirmed. He certainly did not alter his manner, but intimacy between Kittredge and me was *singed* by his presence. The word is just. When we came near, my eyebrows felt like ash: I wondered if I would pay for my hour with his fiancée when I joined the CIA.

What I have next to relate is painful. That Easter Sunday evening, Dr. Gardiner gave vent to the buried furies in his throat, and honored his guests: by the light of the fire in his den, he read Shakespeare aloud to us.

He offered an early work: *Titus Andronicus*. An odd choice. I would not recognize how bizarre until I knew the family better. While Dr. Gardiner did not belong to the school of scholars who thought Shakespeare had not written *Titus Andronicus* he did consider it, he told us, one of the Bard's poorest plays. Uninspired, and much too dreadful. Yet Dr. Gardiner read from it on Sunday night with a voice full of passion, choosing the terrible speech where Titus tells Chiron and Demetrius that in consequence of their vile acts on his family—they have severed his hand and cut off both hands of his daughter, Lavinia—he, Titus, will now revenge himself.

*Hark, wretches! How I mean to martyr you,
This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,
Whilst Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold
The basin that receives your guilty blood.
Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,*

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*And with your blood and it I'll make a paste;
And of the paste a coffin I will rear;
And make two pasties of your shameful heads.*

*And now prepare your throats. Lavinia, come,
Receive the blood, and when that they are dead,
Let me go grind their bones to powder small.
And with this hateful liquor temper it;
And in that paste let their vile heads be baked.
Come, come, be everyone officious
To make this banquet, which I wish might prove
More stern and bloody than the Centaurs' feast.*

He recited it in the full sonority of a renowned lecture voice, gave it all the Elizabethan hullabaloo due vowels and consonants grappling with one another over hurdles and down falls: how he relished the conjunctive sinews of these words. Hair stood on my neck. I knew then what a sixth sense was hair.

"I do not approve of the play," said Dr. Gardiner when he was done. "but the bile of the ages is in the boil of this fabulous stuff."

Maisie had fallen asleep while he read. Her head was to one side, her mouth was open, and I thought for a moment she had suffered a stroke. She had merely taken her nightly jot of three Seconals; soon Dr. Gardiner walked her up to bed. It would also take years before I learned—how many little confessions was Kittredge eventually to make!—that Dr. Gardiner had a preferred means of connubial union: it was to investigate Maisie while she slept. Kittredge discovered her father's habit when she was ten. She peeped and saw it all. In sleep, Maisie, a wanton of Morpheus, made cries like a bird.

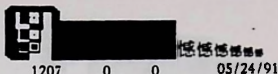
Husbands and wives have been known to discover that their separate childhoods are curiously linked: Kittredge and I had both seen our parents in the act of love. Or, more to the fact, we had, between us, seen three of our four parents. Titus and Lavinia, taken together, had lost three of their four hands. The allusion is meaningless, I am certain, except that numbers command their own logic, and Augustus Farr may have been on a promenade that night while Dr. Gardiner and his somnolent

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Maisie were transported to those underworlds that dwell beneath the navel.

6 | I returned to the Keep in June for the marriage of Hadley Kittredge Gardiner to Hugh Tremont Montague. My father and stepmother, my brothers, my uncles, aunts, and cousins, were there in the gathering of good Maine summer families. The Prescotts and the Peabodys came, the Finletters and Griswolds, the Herters, and the Places. Even Mrs. Collier from Bar Harbor together with half of the Bar Harbor Club took the crooked twenty-mile journey west across the fifteen miles of the island to the back side. Contingents were present from Northeast Harbor and Seal Harbor, and David Rockefeller attended. Desmond Fitzgerald was in view, and Clara Fargo Thomas; Allen Dulles flew up from Washington with Richard Bissell and Richard Helms, Tracy Barnes and Frank Wisner, James Angleton and Miles Copeland. One of my cousins, Colton Shaler Hubbard, who liked to see himself as the operative definition of a wag, was heard to say, "Drop a bomb on this shindig and U.S. Intelligence is gone to smithereens."

It is no part of my intention to expatiate on the floral arrangements chosen by Maisie, nor the sober character of our Episcopal church, St. Anne of the Trinity in the Woods (which has been quietly criticized since the turn of the century for its penurious Presbyterian air), and I am certainly not equipped to describe the niceties of the wedding-gown brocades. I speak of the nuptials because they confirmed my suspicion that I was in love with Kittredge, and that proved to be the most inexpensive, self-sustaining, and marvelous love a young man could attach himself to. For a long time, it cost me no more than the luxuri-

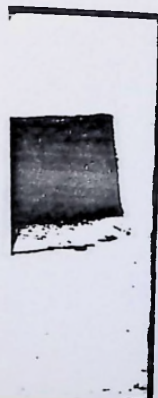


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ous enrichment of my self-pity, which was promoted on the day of the wedding from the spiritual equivalent of a sigh to the deepest mahogany melancholy. I was in love with a beautiful, brilliant girl who was married to the most elegant and incisive gent I had ever met; there was no hope for me but, oh, the love was beautiful.

Mr. Dulles seemed to agree. Soon after we assembled back at the Keep for the wedding party, he stood up and (very much in his function as Director of CIA) gave the first toast. I still remember how delicately he held his glass yet with what a sense of gravity.

"The Greco-Roman concept of the healthy mind in the healthy body is personified by our good and brave colleague, Hugh Tremont Montague," were Dulles' first words. "Indeed, if it were not for the one prodigality he shares with me—no, let me say in which he surpasses me—at squandering the once rich crop of his hair, we could speak of the perfect fellow." Polite but happily unweighted laughter passed gently through the room. "For those few of you who are not connected to the legends of his heroic exploits in OSS during the war, let me say that you must take it on faith. His feats, for the present, remain in the bailiwick of the highly classified. For equally good cause, I cannot begin to describe the work he does now except to hint that he is always threatening to become indispensable before he is even properly middle-aged." Sweet, light laughter. "Nonetheless, for all his sterling attributes, he is still the luckiest fellow in the world. He is marrying a young lady of incommensurate beauty who, if I dare to grow portentous on so festive an occasion, has also become by dint of inspiration, talent, and study, a psychological theorist of a power and persuasion to inspire all Jungians and confound all Freudians. When she was still an undergraduate at Radcliffe, I happened to be shown her senior thesis and it was a wonder. I break a little confidence by saying I was quick to tell her, 'Kittredge, your thesis is a marvel and I can promise you that some of us just might need it. You, Kittredge, are coming aboard.' How could a young lady, confronted by such admiration, not give assent? I, holding this cup for the toast, raise high my heart as well. God bless you both. May He sanctify your marriage, handsome, half-bald Hugh



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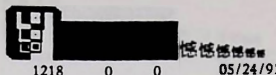
Montague, and our own Hadley Kittredge Gardiner, here with us, yet remaining on such close terms with the divine."

Afterward, I had been introduced in a rush as the Director was leaving, and there was time to receive no more than a four-square handshake and the friendliest smile. "Your father is one whale of a fellow, Harry," he said with eyes to twinkle at all the rich findings between the lines. Mr. Dulles, I decided, might be the nicest man I met at the wedding. My impatience to hook up with CIA was hardly less lively.

Of course, I was also feeling the presence of many men whose names had been legends to me ever since my father began to speak of them in the intimate tones reserved by a god for fellow gods; such names as Allen and Tracy, Richard and Wiz, Dickie and Des, were already installed in an amphitheater of my mind. While none of these personages was as handsome as my father, many were as tall, or as forceful; their persons offered the suggestion that one should not impinge on them for too little. They had *bottom*. "Something in me," said their presence, "is inviolable."

I gave up the last semester of my senior year at Yale, making a quick decision right after the wedding to enroll immediately in summer school so that I could graduate at midterm in January and thereby apply to the Company six months earlier. It was a sacrifice, the first conscious one I had made, for I was comfortable at Yale, liked my rooms, and still had the idea from time to time that I might want to spend a year after college writing fiction. I even had the means to write late at night for I had carefully chosen no classes that began before 10:00 A.M. I also had friends of all the shades and affiliations you make after three years at a good college, and was otherwise ensconced. I even had some small chance of making the Varsity Eight after slaving at crew the last three seasons. By my lights, I was giving up a lot. Yet I wanted to. If I wished to serve my country, I could start best by making a sacrifice. So, I went to summer school, and was graduated eight accelerated months later onto the slushy streets of Washington in early February, a midyear diploma-holder, a bear cub without hair. But I was proud of my sacrifice.

I will not describe the tests I took for admittance. They were numerous, and classified, but then, given the Agency officers



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who may have been enlisted in support of my application, I suppose I would have had to do poorly not to get in.

Of course, you were expected to do well. Only a few out of every hundred who applied were able to make it all the way through the IQ tests, the personality tests, the lie-detector, and the security questionnaire. I remember that in the Personal History Statement, there was the question: *On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your dedication to this work?* I put down a five and wrote in the space allowed for comment: *I have been brought up to face ultimates.*

"Explain yourself," said the interviewer.

"Well, sir," I said, and I had been waiting to make this speech, "I feel that if I had to, I could stand trial before an international tribunal." When my interlocutor looked at me, I added, I thought not unadroitly, "The point I'd like to make is that although I am a moral person, I am ready to get into activities where I might have to stand trial for my country, or, if it ever came down to it, die for ultimate purposes."

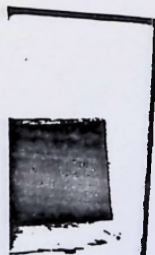
I had more trouble with the lie detector. It was the test to dread. Although we were warned not to talk about it with applicants who had already taken it, we met with them as soon as possible after the drear event; usually they said as little as they could and consumed prodigies of beer.

I still see my polygraph interview in transcript. It is an imaginary transcript. What the interviewer and I said to one another at the time cannot be what I now remember. I offer a false memory, then, but it is imprinted. The face of the interviewer has, in recollection, become long-jawed and bespectacled; he looks as gray as a personage in a black-and-white film. Of course, we were installed in a dingy-white cubbyhole off a long crowded hall in an edifice called Building 13 off the Reflecting Pool, and much of my memory of those wintry days is, indeed, in gray and white.

I offer what I recollect. I do not vouch for anything in this reconstructed transcript other than its ongoing psychological reality for me.

INTERROGATOR: Ever had a homosexual experience?

APPLICANT: No, sir.



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INTERROGATOR: Why are you having such a large reaction?

APPLICANT: I didn't know I was.

INTERROGATOR: Really? You're giving the machine what we call a *flush*.

APPLICANT: Couldn't the machine make a misinterpretation?

INTERROGATOR: You are saying you are not homosexual.

APPLICANT: Certainly not.

INTERROGATOR: Never?

APPLICANT: Once I came close, but held off.

INTERROGATOR: Fine. I can read you. Let's move on.

APPLICANT: Let's.

INTERROGATOR: Get along with women?

APPLICANT: I've been known to.

INTERROGATOR: Consider yourself normal?

APPLICANT: You bet.

INTERROGATOR: Why am I getting a flutter?

APPLICANT: You're asking me to volunteer a response?

INTERROGATOR: Let me rephrase it. Is there anything you do with women that community consensus might consider out of the ordinary?

APPLICANT: Do you mean—unusual acts?

INTERROGATOR: Specify.

APPLICANT: Can I be asked a specific question?

INTERROGATOR: Do you like blowjobs?

APPLICANT: I don't know.

INTERROGATOR: Overlarge response.

APPLICANT: Yessir.

INTERROGATOR: Yessir what?

APPLICANT: Yes, to the blowjob.

INTERROGATOR: Don't look so unhappy. This won't keep us from accepting you. On the other hand, if you were to lie in this test, it could hurt you a lot.

APPLICANT: Thank you, sir. I understand.

I get a whiff of the old perspiration. I was lying to the lie-detector: I had still not lost my cherry. Even if two-thirds of my class at Yale could probably say the same, anything was better than such confession. How could a CIA man be a virgin?

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Down the line, I would learn that many another applicant lied to protect the same green secret. That was all right. The tests were looking to screen out men who might be vulnerable to blackmail. Well-raised college graduates, however, claiming more amatory experience than they'd earned could be accepted just as they were.

During those weeks of testing, I lived in the YMCA and shared meals in drug stores with other applicants. They, for the most part, had come from state universities and had taken their majors in government, or football, or languages, in foreign affairs, economics, statistics, agronomy, or some special skill. Usually, one of their professors had had an exploratory conversation with them, and if interest was there, they received a letter that spoke of an important government career with foreign duties, and were told to reply to a post office box in Washington, D.C.

I pretended to have been approached like the others, but given my lack of gov. ec, pol-sci, or applied psych, I pretended to have made some studies in Marxism instead. None of my new acquaintances knew much about that. I got away with it, until I met Arnie Rosen whose father was a third cousin of Sidney Hook. Rosen, in homage, perhaps, to this family tie, had read Lenin, Trotsky, and Plekhanov in his adolescence, not, he assured me, to become an advocate of such ideas, but to set himself up as their future antagonist. As he put it to me one morning over pancakes and sausage, "From the word go, I knew the cockamamie elements in V. I. Lenin." Yes—Rosen, Honors, Phi Beta Kappa, Columbia. I disliked him to the quick.

For those four or five weeks, my life in junction with other applicants was spent in promenade from one processing building to another in the I-J-K-L complex, a set of four long buildings in a row that ran from Lincoln Memorial for more than a quarter mile along the Reflecting Pool toward the Washington Monument. On gray and barren winter mornings those buildings looked not wholly unlike pictures I had seen of Dachau, same long, two-story sheds that went on forever. We were jammed into quarters thrown up for government offices during the Second World War. Since we had other facilities dispersed over many a side street, and in many a fine old house, special bottle-green government busses took us from building to build-

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ing in Foggy Bottom. We filled out questionnaires and walked in self-conscious groupings, obviously inductees.

All the while, I pretended, as I say, to be just like my new friends. In truth, so dislocated was this existence from all I had known at Yale that I felt myself a stranger in my own land. Such feelings were most likely to come over me in the course of listening to a lecture in one of our ubiquitous classrooms with its beige walls, blackboard, American flag in a stand, and its dark gray stain-compatible carpet and portable lecture chairs with their small one-arm writing table attached. My classmates showed the same good American crew cut as myself (good for at least 80 percent of us), and if our collective demeanor was somewhere between the YMCA and the Harvard Business School, it did not mean I was yet like anyone else. I was discovering how little I knew about my countrymen, at least those who were trying like me to get into CIA. Nor did I feel altogether real to myself. That, on reflection, was a familiar wind in my lonely harbors.

Occasionally I voyaged out to the canal house in Georgetown which Kittredge and Harlot had bought in the first year of their marriage, and such evenings were full of stimulation for me. Some of their dinner guests were grand. Henry Luce was there one night, and he took me aside long enough to inform me that he knew my father. Mr. Luce had white hair and hugely heavy black eyebrows. His voice turned husky as he said to me, "It's a wonderful life you're going to have. Momentous decisions, and the best of it is that they will count! I've worked on occasion on endeavors much larger than myself or my own interests, and I can tell you, Harry, since we share the same diminutive, whether from Herrick or Henry, that there's no comparison. Doing it for the larger dream is what it is all about, Harry!" Like a reverend, he did not release me until he took his hand from my shoulder. Nor could I pretend to myself that I was ungrateful for the speech, since after evenings at the Montagues, I would go back to my brother dogs at the Y to find them worrying where the next bone was going to be thrown. I, however, would feel like a radioactive dog. I would glow within. I had seen the Company, and it was there. The CIA was not merely long, shedlike buildings, or the dead-tank smells of peo-

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ple crowded into impossibly small office spaces, nor leering inquisitors who strapped belts and instruments to your body; no, CIA was also a company of the elegant, secretly gathered to fight a war so noble that one could and must be ready to trudge for years through the mud and the pits. Ah, those evenings at the canal house! Indeed, it was Harlot who was the first to tell me I was in, certified and in, on the day after my last test. My roomies at the Y would have to wait three more days to obtain as much knowledge, and I suffered with the secret I could not relate to them, and so discovered that holding a confidence when one wishes to let it out, is comparable to thirsting for a shot of liquor on an awful day.

After acceptance, we reported one morning for our orientation lecture. Perhaps a hundred of us were taken by bus from the 9th Street Personnel Pool to an old five-story house with a Queen Anne roof behind the State Department. There we crowded into a small basement auditorium. A man sitting up on the stage whom I would have taken for an Ivy League professor stood up to welcome us and said, "In case any of you are wondering, you will now be working for CIA."

We laughed. We applauded. He strode across the stage to an easel on which a cloth was draped. Whisking the sheet away, he revealed the first of our scrolls—an organizational chart. With a pointer, he informed us that the Agency had three Directorates which could be envisaged as analogous to three sister corporations, or three regiments of a division: "The Directorate for Plans oversees covert action and gathers intelligence. It directs spies. Learn a new word. Plans *runs* spies, even as you would run a business." Since espionage and counterespionage were Harlot's province, and covert action belonged to my father, the Directorate of Plans was nine-tenths of CIA for me.

Then he went on to speak of the Directorate for Intelligence, which analyzed the material gathered by Plans, and the Directorate for Administration "which keeps in order the management of the first two directorates." Needless to say, I had no interest in either.

"Gentlemen," he continued, "you one hundred and three men"—he looked about—"or, if I avail myself of the indispensable tool of precision, you one hundred and one men and two

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women have been chosen for the Directorate of Plans. That is a fine place to be."

We cheered. We stood up and cheered him, but not for long because next, Allen Dulles, now Director of Central Intelligence, came through the curtains to speak. On this day, Mr. Dulles had a genial, courteous, even benign warmth of the sort that would enable you to believe in any establishment with which he was associated, whether bank, university, law firm, or branch of government. Dressed in old tweeds with leather patches for the elbows, a nifty bow tie, his pipe in hand, his spectacles as bright with reflected light as intelligence itself, he was quickly successful in giving all one hundred plus of us the same impression he had given me at the wedding.

"Being with you here at the beginning, I can all but promise that you will have lively, worthwhile, exciting careers." We applauded, "Winston Churchill, after Dunkirk, could only offer the gallant British people 'blood, sweat, toil, and tears,' but I can promise you dedication, sacrifice, total absorption, and—don't let this get out—a hell of a lot of fun." We whooped.

"You are all in Plans, an uncommon group. You will live, most of you, in many countries, you will doubtless see action, you will—no matter how tired and weary—never lose sense of the value of your work. For you will be defending your country against a foe whose resources for secret war are greater than any government or kingdom in the history of Christendom. The Soviet Union has raised the art of espionage to unprecedented heights. Even in times of so-called thaw, they wage their operations with unflagging vigor.

"In order to catch up, we are in the process of building the greatest agency for Intelligence the Western world has seen. The safety of this country depends on no less. Our opponent is formidable. And you, here, have been chosen to be part of the great shield that resists our formidable foe."

You could feel the happiness in the room. No matter the small basement stage with its American flag to one side, we shared, at this moment, the warmth of a venerable theater as the curtain descends to a momentous conclusion.

He was hardly finished, however. It was not Mr. Dulles' style to end on a major note. More agreeable was to remind us that

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we had been accepted into a fellowship; our privileges entitled us to hear a story at the expense of the leader.

"Years ago," he said, "when I was as young as most of you, I was posted by our foreign service to Geneva during World War I, and I remember one particularly warm spring Saturday in 1917 when I was on watch for the morning duty. There was little to do in the office, and all I could think about was tennis. You see, I had a date for tennis that afternoon with a young lady who was lovely and comely and beautifully composed . . . a veritable knockout!"

Who else could speak in such a way? In this pre-Civil War basement which might, more than ninety years ago, have heard cannonading to the south, Allen Dulles was telling us of Geneva in 1917.

"Just before midday my phone rang. A most heavily accented voice was on the line," said Allen Dulles, "a man who wanted a *responsible* American official to speak to. *Verantwortlich* was the word he used. He gave his speech in the worst German. One of those importuners, I decided. Someone with a tale of petty woe bound to tell it in the worst accent possible.

"Now, the only American official at the Embassy that morning who happened to be remotely *verantwortlich* was myself. Was I going to play tennis with a lovely English girl, or was I going to eat sauerkraut with some Russian emigré?"

He paused. "Tennis won out. I never saw the fellow."

We waited.

"Too late I learned who the man happened to be. The voice with the dreadful German accent, frantic to talk to a responsible American official, was none other than Mr. V. I. Lenin himself. Not long after our phone call, the Germans sent Mr. Lenin across Bavaria, Prussia, Poland, and Lithuania in a sealed train. He arrived at the Finland Station in Leningrad to bring off in November of the same year nothing less than the Bolshevik Revolution." He paused, giving us sanction to become hilarious at the size of Allen Dulles' miscue.

"Al," a voice cried out, "how could you do that to the team?"

It was my first glimpse of Dix Butler. His face was unforgettable. His head, his massive jaw and neck, his full mouth were

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as strongly formed as the features in a Roman bust.

Dulles looked pleased. "Profit by my error, gentlemen," he said. "Reread your Sherlock Holmes. The most trivial clue can prove the most significant. When you are on duty, observe every detail. Do the damndest fine job you can do. You'll never know when the shovel turns up an unexpected gem."

He canted his pipe back into his mouth, parted the stage curtains, and disappeared.

Our next speaker offered business. Burns, Raymond James "Ray Jim" Burns, case officer: Japan, Latin America, Vienna. He would be our instructor in an eight-week course on World Communism. He was also captain of the pistol team at Plans. He would, he told us, welcome anyone interested in improving his aim.

A man of medium height, he was there for us to study. He had short, reddish-brown hair, a trim build, and regular features with an unforgiving twist. His mouth was a short straight cut. He was wearing a brown jacket, a white shirt, a narrow brown tie, light pink-khaki trousers, and sunglasses shaded brown. His belt had three narrow horizontal stripes, brown, tan, and brown. His shoes were brown and cream and as pointed as his nose. He wore a heavy ring on his left hand and clicked it on the podium for emphasis. He had one decoration, a maple-leaf pin in his buttonhole, a spot of gold. I was feeling full of Mr. Dulles' adjuration to observe each detail.

Ray Jim hated Communists! He stood on the podium and pinned us with his eyes. They were bullet-brown, a deep lead brown, near to black, a hole impinging on you. He looked us over, one by one.

"There's a tendency these days," said Burns, "to give a little leeway to the Communists. Khrushchev is not as bad as Stalin; you're going to hear that. Of course Khrushchev was called the Butcher of the Ukraine in his earlier days, but he's not as bad as Stalin. Who could be as ruthless as Iosef Djugashvili, alias Joe Stalin, the purge-master? In the U.S.S.R. they have a secret police that has no parallel to us, no comparison. It's as if you boiled the FBI, the Agency, and the state and federal prison systems into one big super-equivalent of the CIA, but lawless, unrestrained, ruthless! Their police—some of whom

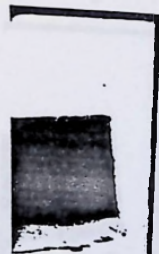
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are even supposed to be in Intelligence—are kept busy purging millions of their own poor citizens, sending hordes of them by the million out to Siberia to die under forced labor and near starvation. Their crime? They believe in God. In the Soviet Union, you can slice up your grandmother before they'll rate your crime on a par with believing in the Lord Almighty. For the Soviet think-police know how the force of God stands in their way, resisting all those Red dreams of world conquest. To that purpose the Red devotes his evil genius. You can't begin to conceive of what we are up against, so don't try to understand Communists by the measure of your own experience. Communists are ready to subvert any idea or organization which is a free expression of the human will. Communists look to invade every cranny of every person's private activity, and seep into every pore of democratic life. I say to you: Be prepared to fight a silent war against an invisible enemy. Treat them like a cancer loose in the world body. Before you are done with this orientation course, you will be on the road to *defusing* their attempts to *con*fuse world opinion. You will be able to counterattack subversion and brainwashing. You are going to come out of your training as different men"—he peered about—"and, seeing as they rationed me to one joke, two different women."

We laughed that he had been good enough to release the tension, and then we stood up to cheer him. He was one of us. He was not, like Mr. Dulles, a little above the fray, but one of us. Since Ray Jim was dedicated, we too could aspire to such clarity of purpose.

Of course I was not taking close account of myself. Mr. Dulles was much nearer to my understanding. Ray Jim came out of that vast middle of America which goes from west of the Hudson out to Arizona, that huge tract which, in comparison to the neatly tended garden of my education, was a roadless desert, but I did not wish to say to myself that I did not know my own country.

In the heat of the standing ovation we gave Mr. Burns, we were administered the Vow. Standing under the grand seal of the CIA in the center of the proscenium arch, our hands upraised, we were inducted formally and legally into the Agency, and swore not to speak without permission of what we





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learned, *now and forever*.

That is a solemn vow. I have been told of Masons, inactive for years, who will nonetheless impart not one detail of the rites of the fraternity, not even to their sons. Some equivalent of that fidelity must have entered us. My fear of retribution was lashed at that moment to my sense of honor. I might just as well have been commingling my blood with another warrior's. A sacred (and sweet) pang of emotion came to me on this instant of induction. If not for the perils of hyperbole, I would say that my will stood to attention.

This vow was not diminished by our training. It constrains one's mind to describe the awesome loyalty that soon developed. To give away our secrets was to betray God! A mighty syllogism! I must say this oath still retains some of its essence after close to thirty years in the Agency. Of my own actions, I recognize that I am obliged to tell a good deal. I will break through—if need be—but I still feel inhibition at discussing our seminars in the use of such agents of influence abroad as could be found among native lawyers, journalists, trade unionists, and statesmen.

I will, however, describe our tradecraft as it was then. Most of these methods have been superseded, so it is relatively safe to go on about such matters. They are the stuff of spy novels. Besides, I may as well confess, it is what I enjoyed the most at the time. Courses in economics and administrative procedures made me fearfully drowsy. I got my marks, and was able to spout the stuff back, but my true love was tradecraft. I was not in the CIA to become a bureaucrat but a hero. So if this memoir is a tale of development, my purpose may be served if I relate my instruction in picking a lock and all the other wonderfully amoral techniques of my profession.

All the same, I must take one more pass at our instruction in the evils of Communism. Such studies may have lacked the zest of tradecraft, but they managed to convince me that any mischief we could work on our evil opponent left us clearly on the right side. I think that was the allure of tradecraft. Is there any state more agreeable than living and working like a wicked angel?

Well, I had far to go. Let me demonstrate.



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7 | About four weeks after I took the Vow, I had become so marooned in the repetitions of Raymond James Burns' course in World Communism that I made the mistake of yawning in class.

"Hubbard, am I boring you?" Ray Jim asked.

"No, sir."

"I'd like to hear you repeat what I've just said."

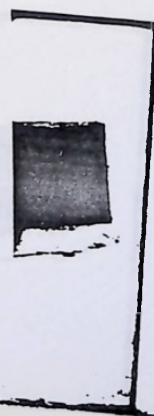
I could feel my father's temper stir in me. "Look, Mr. Burns," I said. "I'm not bored. I get it. I know the Communists are treacherous, and double-dealing, and use *agents provocateurs* to try to subvert our labor unions and work double-time to befuddle world opinion. I know they have millions of men in their armies getting ready for world domination, but I have to wonder one thing . . ."

"Shoot," he said.

"Well, is every Communist a son of a bitch? I mean, are none of them human? Isn't there one of them somewhere down the line who likes to get drunk just for the fun, say, of getting drunk? Must they always have to have a reason for what they're doing?"

I could feel by the shift in the class that I was by now marooned in Harry-Hubbard-Land, Population: 1. "You've told us," I went on, "that the Communists condition people to the point where they can only receive *approved ideas*. Well, I don't really believe what I'm going to say next, but for the sake of argument"—I was obviously preparing for a graceful exit—"would you say that we're receiving something of the same nature, although different in degree, and, of course, democratic, because I can speak in freedom without reprisals."

"We're here," said Ray Jim, "to sharpen your instincts and your faculties of critical reasoning. That is the opposite of brain-washing. Specious political reasoning is what we're on the lookout for. Find it and uproot it." He was striking the palm of one hand on the back of the other. "Now, I like your example," he said. "It shows critical faculties. Just carry them further. I'm willing to accept the idea that there's a dedicated Communist here and there who might get a hard-on without Party approval, but I'll tell you this. Before long, he's got to decide. Is it his



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career, or his dick?"

The class laughed with him. "Hubbard," he stated, "you can put all of the Soviet people into three categories. Those who have been in a slave camp, those who are in slave camp now, and those who are waiting to go."

I now rejoined the fold by saying, "Thank you, sir."

One night, visiting the Montagues at their canal house, I brought it up with Hugh. He didn't take long to reply. "Of course the question is more complex than good stalwarts like old Ray Jim would have you know. Why, we're debriefing a Soviet defector right now who's obsessed with one fellow he destroyed, a silly drunk whom he'd encourage to booze up in some black hole of a bar in Siberia. So much anti-Soviet sentiment was milked out of the drunk that not only the poor wretch but all of his family were sent off to a camp. All of them harmless. But our defector had a quota of arrests to make, in the same way New York police are given parking tickets to hand out. It revolted him. A human Communist, so to speak."

"Let me ask a stupid question," I started. "Why are Communists so awful?"

"Yes," he said. "Why?" He nodded. "It's very Russian to be awful. Peter the Great once beached a small fleet of his on the bank of some large lake in Pereslavl. Then he didn't go back to the place for thirty years. Of course, his beautiful boats had just about rotted out on the muddy lake shore. Peter's rage is captured in a formal document. 'You, the governors of Pereslavl,' went his pronouncement, 'shall preserve these ships, yachts, and galleys. Should you neglect this obligation,'"—here Harlot's voice rose in imitation of his idea of Peter the Great—"you, and your descendants, will stand to answer."

He nodded. "Extreme, would you say?"

I nodded.

"Normal. That is, normal to the pre-Christian view of things. Christ not only brought love into the world, but civilization, with all its dubious benefits."

"I don't follow you."

"Well, as I seem to recollect telling you. Christ adjured us to forgive the son for the sins of the father. That's amnesty. It opened the scientific world. Prior to this divine largesse, how

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might a man dare to be a scientist? Any error which proved an insult to nature could bring disaster down on his family. The Russians are spiritual, as every Russian will rush to tell you, but their Greek Orthodoxy gagged on that gift from Christ. It would have wrecked the tribal foundations. Forgive the sons? Never. Not in Russia. The punishment must remain greater than the crime. Now they want to march forward into technology land, and they can't. They're too spooked. Deathly afraid of terrible curses from Mother Nature. If you sin against nature, your sons will perish with you. No wonder Stalin was a total paranoid."

"In that case," I said, "the Russians ought to be easy to overcome."

"Easy," said Harlot, "if the retarded parts of the Third World have a true wish to enter civilization. I'm not sure they do. Backward countries may dream of cars and dams, and rush to pave their swamps, but it's halfhearted. The other half still clings to pre-Christian realms—awe, paranoia, slavish obedience to the leader, divine punishment. The Soviets feel like kin to them. Don't sneer altogether at Bullseye Burns. It is awful over there in the Soviet. Just today a paper crossed my desk about a sect of twelve poor Doukhobors who were rounded up in some alley of an outlying town in some poor half-forgotten province. The present Soviet leaders know the potential power in a dozen starved clerks and workers. Lenin and Stalin and Trotsky and Bukharin and Zinoviev, all of that top layer, were also a ragtag circle once of impoverished clerks. In consequence, the KGB doesn't cut down the sapling, it looks to extirpate the seed. That has huge effect. Suppose I hand you a six-chamber Colt with one round in it, spin the barrel, and say, 'Now for Russian roulette.' The chances in your favor are five to one as you pull the trigger, but in your heart it will feel no better than even money. Indeed, you probably expect to die. Ditto with extreme punishment. Let it fall on twelve individuals, and twelve million will shiver. Bullseye Burns is not so far off the mark."



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8 | After eight weeks of Mr. Burns' course in the Recreation and Services Building on *The Communist Party: Its Theory and Tactics*, I could offer exposition on the organization and tactics of the Comintern, the Cominform, the Cheka, the GPU, the NKVD, and the KGB in each of its twelve directorates. If the material required memorization of long, inhospitable lists, be certain I devoted the same concentration a medical student gives to his lectures out of the unholy fright that should he fail to store away one item, a future patient might perish. It was tough. Burns stuffed us like sausage. Word passed through the class that he had once been a counterintelligence man in the FBI. No surprise if we had to store away such memorabilia as "The Eleventh Directorate of the KGB, also called the Guard Directorate, is responsible for safeguarding the security of the Praesidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R." I, who had never found it routine to pay attention while suffering instruction, was now trying to reorganize my nervous system.

We were also introduced to the machinery for routing messages through the hierarchy of our offices, and learned how to write in government language (no small matter!). We took instruction in how to compartmentalize an agent's dossier, biographical material in one file, reports on his activities in another. We, too, in future, would be given our separate cryptonyms for different transactions. Harlot had, at one time, as he later confided to me, eight, one of which was DEUCE. Running an operation in Africa, the tag became LT/DEUCE, LT to indicate that Africa was the theater. Another job in Vienna would list him as RQ/DEUCE, RQ for Austria. Later, during the Austrian endeavor, for one or another reason, he might metamorphose into RQ/GANTRY. Like a lazy body after a week of stiff workouts, my mind, imbibing all this input, felt stiff and sore and livid with new sensation. I thought the change of name itself ought to be enough to alter one's character—ZJ/REPULSE should call for a different personality than MX/LIGHT—my thoughts took sensuous turns. Perhaps it was due to my sexual virginity, but I was now so pervasively libidinous that I could even take pleasure in such courses as *Locks and Picks*, *Flaps and Seals*, or *Reversi*.

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bles. Best of all was the mnemotechnic we were provided for recalling telephone numbers. Intimations of buried wealth streamed into strange corners of my psyche.

I was very young. I loved, for example, *Flaps and Seals*, that is, unsealing letters. Methods ranged from the use of a teakettle spout all the way over to highly classified chemical swabs. By whatever means, I enjoyed the moment when the flap, supposedly protecting inviolable contents, relaxed its grip. The small sound elicited by that act produced what I thought was a private reaction, but the instructor was ahead of me. "Ever hear of the chorus girl who was horny?" he asked our class. "She did a split and stuck to the floor." We moaned at our own merri-ment.

Then came *Reversibles*. In preparation for shadowing a man, we practiced quick changes. We would dart into a vestibule off the classroom, doff our raincoat, turn it inside-out, and reappear (eight seconds allotted) in a tan Burberry rather than a blue waterproof, a simple enough matter, but even as shifting one's cryptonym called forth a new potentiality for oneself, so was there a shiver of metamorphosis in this alteration of appearance.

I could say, to stretch a point, that we were being schooled in minor arts of sorcery. Are not espionage and magic analogous? I took unholy enjoyment in the stratagem for memorizing a phone number once that process was mastered. Of course, no immediate gratification was found at first, since there was much stress on the need to concentrate. We would stand at the front of the class and an accomplice walking past us would whisper a telephone number, and move on. Another trainee would come up from the other side to offer one more number. As the exercise grew more demanding, we built to as much as five telephone numbers at once. Finally, we were put into competition: our winner managed to retain nine of ten numbers. (I was, by the way, that winner—which still provides a freshet of recollected glory.)

The point, from which I digress, is that this technique, so full of tension in class, became agreeable on the edge of sleep. The seven digits of a telephone number became a boudoir.

That may be worth expounding upon. We were assigned a specific color for each number. White represented zero; yellow

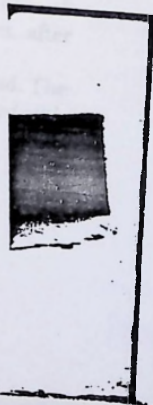
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was 1; green equalled 2; blue, 3; purple, 4; red, 5; orange, 6; brown, 7; gray, 8; black, 9.

Next, we were asked to visualize a wall, a table, and a lamp. If the first three digits of the telephone number were 586, we were to picture a red wall behind a gray table on which was sitting an orange lamp. For the succeeding four numbers, we might visualize a woman in a purple jacket, green skirt, and yellow shoes sitting on an orange chair. That was our mental notation for 4216. By such means, 586-4216 had been converted into a picture with seven colored objects. Today, in training, the area code has to be added. Now, the room has a window to look out on sky, water, and earth, a woe my class did not suffer. I think of brown sky, red water, and blue earth for the area code 753, an interesting day for Gauguin! We, however, had to visualize no more at the sound of 436-9940, than a purple wall, a blue table, and an orange lamp. Our lady—Yolanda was the name we gave her—sat in the purple room with the blue table and the orange lamp; she was wearing a black jacket, black pants, and purple shoes as she installed herself on her white chair: 436-9940. It seems like the long way around, but I became so proficient at these equivalents that I saw hues so soon as I heard numbers.

We can skip over lock-picking. Those simple but elegant swages we employed are still marked SECRET, and for a Junior Officer Trainee like myself, able to find sexual stir in the flap of an envelope, what was to be said for cracking a door? That was primal stuff. Each lecturer took entitlement to one off-key joke, and for this course, our instructor was there to tell us: "If you can't figure out a way to get this little pick into this old lock, well, fellows, I don't know what you'll do when you get older."

I never did use lock-picking until 1972 when I had all but forgotten the techniques. Then I used it in the White House, and twice in five minutes, once to open a door, once to open a desk, but that is down the road. *Codes* is next on my list, but I do not care to get into *Codes* either for its study took up a good many hours during winter and spring in Washington, and it is certainly too technical a subject. I will say that it was so sealed a curriculum that even the cryptographic labs were an introduction into the logic of real security: barred windows on either side



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of the hall; credentials necessary in every section: receptionists and armed guards; even food-servers for the special pre-packaged sandwiches in the cryptographer's cafeteria were chosen because they were blind and so could never identify any of the workers in *Codes* by photographs if, perchance, the KGB turned one of them.

Let me move to a more agreeable discipline. Anyone who has read a spy novel is familiar with *dead drops*, but active instruction in the practice is another matter. All twenty-three trainees in my class left our home-room, and filed down the corridor past the bulletin board notices to the men's lavatory where, predictably, ritual jokes were offered to the lone woman in our group; she, in ritual repayment, was good enough to blush. For that matter, I felt my cheeks reddening. I was uncomfortably aware of the unabashed odor coming up from the open urinals, but then 1955 is a long time ago.

Our first dead drop! The instructor took a handful of paper towels out of the metal dispenser by the sink, removed a roll of 16mm Minox film, the size of a thimble, from his vest pocket, put it in the dispenser, and replaced the towels. In turn, to much laughter, each of us repeated the act. The laughter derived, I believe, from how quickly a few of us could accomplish it and how slow were the others. Soon the paper towels were hopelessly mangled. Admonished to practice on our own, we were then shown other possibilities to be extracted from this same restroom, including the cardboard cylinder at the core of the toilet-paper roll. Such dead drops, we were assured, were only suitable when the contact could make rendezvous soon after. *Brush drops*, therefore, were preferable. You did not have to worry whether the agent had found your parcel.

To become familiar with brush drops, we were taken on a field tour to the aisles of a Washington, D.C., supermarket. Having enriched my shopping basket with a can of Campbell's Tomato Soup and a pound of Armour's Hickory Smoked Bacon, I bumped into my assigned mate, and in the course of such collision, managed to drop a roll of film into his basket, after which, exchanging apologies, we moved on.

It must have looked odd to any housewife buying food. The aisles, invariably empty at mid-morning, were now packed with

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a platoon of men bumping vigorously into one another and whispering loudly, "No, you hacker, it's my turn." What can I add? The brush was electric. One waited for sparks to jump from basket to basket.

Later that night we were taken on a tour of a private estate beyond Chevy Chase and given further instruction about dead drops in more rural areas. If, for example, the agent liked to take daily walks, we looked for a loose brick in a garden wall, or a split in a dead elm. I became aware all over again of the cavernous recesses in a tree trunk. Groping about in the dark of the estate forest, my crevice seemed hairy. What a transaction! I could not find the film at first, and when I did, whipped my hand out so quickly as to draw a remonstrance from the instructor, "Casual, buddy, keep the thing casual."

On our last night, Bullseye Burns threw a party for our class in his small apartment in a newly built four-story complex of middle-cost housing in the outskirts of Alexandria, Virginia. He had three kids, all boys, all towheads, and I learned on this night that he and his wife were high school sweethearts from Indiana. Mrs. Burns, plain-faced, slab-shaped, served us the casserole dish of cheese and tuna and hot dog relish that had been her party fare for twenty years. (Or, as she called it, her "main-eventer.") It was obvious that she and Ray Jim barely bothered to speak to each other anymore, and I must say I studied them like a foreign student looking for insight into American customs of the Midwest and the Southwest. I concluded that people like Jim Ray did not quit their marriages until they were feeling inclined to take an ax to their mate.

So I was surprised at how good the casserole tasted. Somehow, it did. We were eating in the fold of the Vow and drinking what Ray Jim called, "My favorite Italian red ink. It's my favorite because it's cheap."

A Junior Officer Trainee named Murphy started to jibe at Bullseye Burns. "All right, sir," he said, "for eight weeks you have given us JOTs a lot of hints about how you guys dispose of spooks. In special circumstances, that is."

"Yessir," said Ray Jim, but the arm holding his glass became as stiff as erectile tissue.

"Well, sir, to satisfy our ravenous class curiosity, did you

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ever personally pull the plug on a double-crossing foreign individual?"

"Decline comment."

"Never had to call on your Browning?" asked Murphy. "Not even once?"

"Policy is against drastic termination," Burns stated. "Individual solutions cannot be, however, disallowed." He made a point of staring straight ahead.

"I get it," said Murphy, making a pistol of his forefinger and fist. "Ping, ping," he said, offering two shots. I was one of the men who made the mistake of laughing.

We were not to get away unmarked. After supper, Burns took out a tin box from which he extracted bits of note paper one by one. "I collect doodles," he said, "from the work desks of the Junior Officer Trainees. I recommend their study." He held one up, squinted, and said, "This is Murphy's. Shows he is impulsive, and self-destructive."

By now, a lot of us were drunk on vino tinto, and we jeered at Murphy, who had a habit of punching hallway walls in the YMCA when he got drunk.

"This doodle is Schultz's. Schultz, are you ready?"

"Yessir."

"You are showing me what I know already."

"Yessir. What is it, sir?"

"You, Schultz, are tight as a tick."

It was my turn.

"Hubbard, your doodle is one hell of a dilly."

"Yessir."

"It shows that you are up to something difficult."

"What, sir?" I made the mistake of asking.

"You are engaged in the noble attempt to fly up your own asshole."

I think he had time to offer his kind verdict on ten more of us before my normal pulse came back to me. To the Farm!

9 | On the weekend leave before the commencement of field training at Camp Peary, I went up to New York on Friday night to see a Mount Holyoke girl who was in town for Easter vacation, had a routine date that would spark no memories for either of us, and took my mother out to lunch on Saturday at the Edwardian Room of the Plaza.

I do not know if it is a reflection of how complex was our relation, or how superficial, but my mother and I were not close, and I never confided in her. Yet she had that delicate power which immaculately groomed blond women can always exercise. I was constantly aware of pleasing or displeasing her, and such critical emanations began with the first glance she took of my person. She could not bear unattractive people; she was generous to those who pleased her eye.

On this noon, we were off to a bad start. She was furious; she had not heard a word from me in two months. I had not told her I was in the Agency. Her animosity toward my father, a dependable reaction in a loose and caterwauling world, suggested that I not advertise how closely I was following his example. In any case, I was not supposed to inform her. Theoretically, one's wife, one's children, and one's parents were to be told no more than that one did "government work."

Since she would see immediately through such a phrase, I presented her instead with vague talk of an importing job I had taken on in South America. In fact, I was actually looking forward to using some of the Company's more exotic mail-routing facilities for sending her an occasional postcard from Valparaiso or Lima.

"Well, for how long are you planning to be there?" she asked.

"Oh," I said, "this import stuff could keep me terribly active for months."

"Where?"

"Everywhere down there."

I had made the first mistake of the lunch. When around my mother, I always made errors. Did I like to think of myself as razor-keen? Her powers of detection sliced my intelligence into microscopic wafers. "Darling," she said, "if you're going to

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South America, don't be bland about it. Tell me the countries. The capitals. I have friends in South America."

"I don't want to visit your friends," I muttered, calling by habit on the old sullenness with which I used to greet her men friends when I was an adolescent.

"Well, why not? They're wonderfully amusing people, some of them. Latin men are so concentrated in their feelings, and a Latin woman of good family might be just what you need for a wife—someone deep enough to bring out the depths in you," she murmured half caressingly, but for the other half, most critically. "Tell me, Harry, what sort of importing is it?"

Yes, what *sort* of case officer would I make when I had not even developed my cover story? "Well, it's precision military parts if you want to know the truth."

She put her head to one side, her cheek resting against one white glove, her blond hair all too alert, and said, "Oh, my Aunt Maria! We're traveling to South America for *precision* military parts! Herrick, you truly think I'm blissfully stupid. You are joining the CIA, of course. It's evident. I say, three cheers. I'm proud of you. And I want you to trust me. Tell me it's so."

I was tempted. It would make this lunch considerably easier. But I could not. That would be transgression of the first injunction given us. Worse, she would let every one of her New York friends in on the secret—only-for-your-ears! Might as well drop an announcement in the *Yale Alumni Magazine*. So I stuck to my story. Well, I told her, she might have her dear friends in South America, but I happened to be a far less contemptuous person than she about the Latin people's potential economic possibilities. When it came to casings and gunpowder, quite a few Southern Hemisphere nations could bid most competitively with our own bullet folk. There was money to be made. I wished to make money, I told her. For my sense of pride and self, if nothing else. I was speaking with enough indignation to convince my own ear, but her eyes filled, and in complete disregard of the damage to her highly crafted eyelashes, a tear ran down, depositing mascara in its train. The misery of her life sat on her stained cheek. "I think of all the people I've loved, and, do you know, Herrick," she said, "none of you have ever trusted me."

Lunch went on, but that was the true end to it, and I left



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New York on the first train I could catch, and returned to Washington and went down the next day, which was Sunday, to the Farm.

That involved a bus to Williamsburg, Virginia, and a cab to drop me and my luggage at a fresh-painted shed and gate in an endless chain-link fence beside a sign that read: CAMP PEARY—ARMED FORCES EXPERIMENTAL TRAINING ACTIVITY. In answer to a phone call made by the sentry, a jeep finally arrived driven by a drunken Marine who kept wheeling his head up and down, or from side to side while he steered, as if his shaven skull happened to be a small craft. Sunday was obviously the day to get drunk.

Down the twilight we motored along a narrow road between tidewater pines, passing fields of thicket full of thorny scrub that spoke of ticks and poison ivy. It was a long two miles to reach a parade ground. Around it were wooden barracks, some buildings that looked like hunting lodges, a chapel, and a low cement-block structure. "The Club," said my driver, speaking at last.

I dropped my bags on an empty cot in the barracks I had been told to report to, and since nobody was about except for one fellow sleeping in the upstairs dormitory, I headed over to the Club. My classes would begin in the morning, and all day people in my group had been arriving. Dressed in clothing suitable for Washington on Sunday, we stood out as rookies. Not yet issued camouflage fatigues and combat boots and cartridge belts like the veterans around us (first rule of the military I learned was that a veteran has a week of seniority on you), we did our best to show our mettle by slugging down mugs of beer. Men at the pool tables and ping-pong tables set up a counter-din to the far end of the bar, which was being used for parachute landings. Veteran trainees in camouflage uniforms would hop up on the mahogany, shout "Geronimo," and drop the yard and a half to the floor, feet together, knees bent, as they rolled over.

Others were discussing explosives. Before long, those of us who had just come in were attaching ourselves to technical discussions: Could you blow a lap-butt box-girder joint weld with C-3 plastic? I gave appropriate nods and gobbled beer like a wolf let loose on wounded game. The Green Punch at Morey's could not have gone down faster.



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Later, as I fell asleep in the upstairs dormitory of my new barracks, my cot turned into a gondola and carried me along mysterious canals. I had an epiphany. I was reminded of those distant relatives of mine, the Jews, who believed in twelve just men. Once, at Yale, a lecturer in Medieval History had spoken of the ancient ghetto belief that the reason God, whenever He became enraged at humankind, did not destroy the universe, was because of His twelve just men. None of the twelve had any conception that he was unique, but the natural and unwitting goodness of each of these rare men was so pleasing to God that He tolerated the rest of us.

In my half-sleep, I wondered if something of the same divine phenomenon had not been taking place in America ever since the Pilgrims landed. Were there not forty-eight just men for the forty-eight states I had grown up with? (For that matter, would the sum change when we went to fifty?) In any event, America had God's sanction. Out in Camp Peary, on my first night at the Farm, I wondered if I might be one of America's forty-eight just men. My patriotism, my dedication, my recognition that no one could love America more, put me—was it possible?—among such anointed innocents. Yes, I, lacking conspicuous talents and virtues, could be a true lover all the more. I adored America. America was a goddess. Washed by beatific rhapsodies, I fell asleep on my half-gallon of beer.

In the morning, I was queasy at stomach and owned a pile driver for a head. Taken by our drill instructor to the supply room for fatigues, we promptly christened them by jogging two miles out to the gate house and two miles back. In those days, jogging was looked upon as bizarre—about as many people practiced it as do hang gliding now, but then everything that first day was alien. As was the rest of the week. We took most of our courses in two-hour labs, and our curriculum was exotic to me. It was like sitting down in a restaurant to discover that you had never tasted anything on the menu before: roast of peccary, cassowary stew, anteater steak, breast of peacock, lumpwort salad, passion-fruit pie, bisque of kelp.

Owing to the Agency's success in 1954 in Guatemala, priorities at the Farm had gone back to covert action. While we still had clandestine photography, surveillance, border crossing, in-

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terrogation techniques, clandestine radio communication, advanced use of dead drops, the real emphasis over the next sixteen weeks was focused on aiding resistance groups to overthrow Marxist governments. We had courses in parachute jumping, map reading, wilderness survival, unarmed special combat (dirty fighting), silent strikes (murdering without noise), physical conditioning, obstacle courses, and the assembly and disassembly of foreign and domestic pistols, rifles, submachine guns, mortars, bazookas, grenades, grenade launchers, TNT, C-3, C-4, dynamite and classified explosives with an accompanying variety of pressure release, push-pull, delay, slow fuse, and other varieties of detonators for the demolition of bridges, generators, small factories.

Compared to the real difficulties, our sixteen weeks, we were soon told, was an overview. After all, you wouldn't attempt to become a good courtroom lawyer in sixteen weeks. Still, it had purpose. The alumni who came back to St. Matthew's to deliver an evening exhortation in chapel were fond of remarking over tea how strenuously tough it used to be in the old days. Invariably, they would tell us in confidence, "My years at St. Matt's were the worst of my life, and the most valuable." Say something of the same for the Farm. I went in as a young man not properly graduated from college, a stranger to his own nature, not ready, but for his rock climbing, to pin any merit badges on his soul, and came out in the best physical condition of my life, ready for a street fight, ready for glory. I was also one hell of a patriot. I would have trouble falling asleep if I began to think of Communists; murderous rages rose in me, and I was ready to kill the first Red who came through the window. I was not brainwashed so much as brain-fevered.

I also made friends in large numbers. Were there thirty Junior Officer Trainees in our group? I could devote a chapter to each—if, that is, we have, as I suspect, chapters for those who come close enough to color our emotions. Yet the irony is that we formed these deep alliances like actors who are together in a play for sixteen weeks and love and detest each other and are inseparable and have nothing to do with one another again until meeting once more on a new job. If I speak of Arnie Rosen or Dix Butler, it is because I saw a lot of them later.

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Camp Peary, however, could have turned out badly. I had been put, by the luck of the draw (unless my father's hand was present) into a training platoon of ex-football players and ex-Marines. If I did well in the more sedentary classwork, and Rosen even better, our physical tests were severe. While I was adequate at weapons, found map reading a piece of cake and forty-eight-hour survival treks in the forest around Camp Peary, offering, after summers in the Maine woods, no undue demand. I found myself hopelessly inhibited at silent strikes. I could not throw myself into the state of mind required to tiptoe up behind a trainee while I whipped a ribbon (in substitute for a wire garrote) around his neck. When it was my turn to serve as sentry I'd flinch before the cloth even touched my skin. My Adam's apple, a prominent Hubbard pride, was in its own panic at getting crunched.

Dirty fighting went better. It was not difficult to simulate breaking a man's fingers, stamping on his feet, cracking his shin, sticking three fingers into his larynx, one finger into his eye, and biting whatever was available. After all—these were dummy moves.

Boxing was done on our own time at the gym, but we all felt the unspoken imperative not to avoid it. I hated being hit on the nose. One blow was enough to switch me over to all that was wild-swinging in my makeup. Besides, I was afraid. Whenever I caught my opponent with anything harder than a tap, I'd blurt out, "Sorry!" Who was fooled? My apology was to hold the other man off. I could not learn a left hook, and my jab flew out with no force, or left me lunging off balance. My straight right was as round as a pork chop. After a while, I accepted the inevitable, and proceeded to mill as best I could with men who were something like my own weight, and learned to take punishment everywhere but on my nose which I so protected that I was always getting hit on the brow. Boxing left me with headaches equal to college hangovers, and my worst humiliation was with Arnie Rosen, who was as scrappy as a cornered and wholly frantic cat. Nothing he bounced off my head and body made a dent into the hard envelope of my adrenaline, but it was infuriating to realize that he might even have won the round.

One night at the Club, I ended up drinking with our boxing

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instructor, who had the odd name of Reggie Minnie. He was the only one of our teachers that we found impressive. The verdict in our training group had soon gone around: good men in the Agency were too valuable to use for teaching. We received the culls. Minnie, however, was special. He fought in a stand-up classic stance, and had been a Navy boxing champ during the war. He had also been married to an English girl who was killed in a car accident, a fact to mention because he was the driver. His sorrow was complete; it was as if he had been dipped into a tragic rue. This loss permeated every pore and organ cell, left him, indeed, a complete man, all of one piece, one whole tincture of loss. He spoke in a gentle voice and listened to every word that everyone said, as if words were as much of a comfort as warm clothing.

While he sipped his one beer and I had three, while we drank in the twilight and explosions still kept going off in the woods while men on a twenty-four-hour exercise dashed in for a quick shot and dashed out, I complained about my ineptitude at defense as if it were a peculiar phenomenon, some hopeless relative to my body.

He then made a remark I never forgot. "You have to learn how to hit," he said. "It'll give you more of a sense of when the punch is coming at you."

I thought a good deal over the next few days of the cousin who had knocked me down to one knee when he was eleven and I was nine, and how I had not risen to fight him back but merely watched blood fall from my nose to splash down on the ground, and with each drop, wished for it to be his blood. Now in the gym, when I worked on the heavy bag, something of that vast and near to long-lost rage came back to me, and I tried to embody a bit of such hatred into each punch I gave the bag.

How well it worked, I do not know. I got better as time went on, but then, so did everyone. I may have gained a few strides on the rest. At the least, I began to handle Rosen with ease. What did more for me was parachuting. From the day they first brought us to the thirty-eight-foot tower, I was ready. Four stories above the ground, I would leap through a mock-up of a C-47 hatch—our instructor called it the "open-door policy"—and jump into space with my parachute harness (no parachute)



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attached to a spring cable. I was back to leaping off the balcony in Maine—when STOP! the cable and harness jerked us to a halt, and we swung above the ground. Some of the ruggedest men in our class would throw up before making their jump.

It was even better when those few of us considered best in these exercises were allowed to practice accuracy jumping at a nearby airport. I found that I was relatively free of fear, even of the fear I might have packed my chute incorrectly. I thought it was not unlike sailing: some understood it, some never did. In Maine, I used to show what the family called a spiffy nostril for the yaw of the wind to port or starboard, but the signs were subtler passing through air. Still, the pullulation of the trees gave a clue to the wind vector, and I became enough of an adept to steer my parachute onto a target during night drops. The sky could be black and the white-washed landing circle below appear no more phosphorescent than the miniscule presence of a barnacle on a rock deep underwater, but I made the circle as often as any man in our group.

Veteran covert-action officers kept coming back to Camp Peary for this special parachute training, so I cannot make the claim that I was the best in our class, but I was among the best, and the first of my pleasures was to be clearly superior to Dix Butler. He had the fastest time on the obstacle course, was unapproachable at dirty fighting, surprisingly silent as a putative assassin, and a beast at boxing. Nobody but Minnie could work with him. He was also the unofficial arm wrestling champion at Camp Peary, and once succeeded in taking on everyone in the Club at the time, twenty-two men was the count, instructors and heavies among them, and it did not take long.

I could top him every time, though, when it came to hitting that parachute target. It proved unbelievably grievous to his idea of himself. Rage came off him like a ground wave.

The irony is that he ought to have been proud of his parachuting. He began with a large fear of airplanes. Later, after we knew him better, he explained it one night in the Club. While he usually did his drinking in a group, for he liked a quorum to give resonance to his stories, Rosen and I were his pets, and on occasion, he drank only with us. I expect his motive was clear. Rosen and I were invariably first and second at book work.

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Butler, surprisingly good in the classroom, could nonetheless recognize our superiority there. I think he saw us as members of the Eastern establishment which, from his point of view, was running just about everything in the Company. In consequence, Rosen and I became the field studies available. On the other hand, he was hardly without contempt for us. He loved to tell us how to live. "You fellows would not be able to comprehend it. Big strong man, ha, ha. Why is he so afraid of flying? Horse-shit. I have what I call superior-athlete fear." He stared at us hard, then without warning, grinned, as if to feint us off our feet. "Neither of you can comprehend what goes on in an athlete's skull. You think like sportswriters. They observe, but do not comprehend. The clue to a superior athlete is that he is telepathic." Butler nodded. "Some of us also have the power to hypnotize moving objects, no, not hypnotize—the appropriate word is *telekinesize*. When I am properly keyed, I can not only read which play is next in my opponent's mind, but I can telekinesize a football."

"Divert it in its path?" asked Rosen.

"By one foot at least on a long pass. And when a punt hits the ground, I can affect the bounce."

"You're crazy," said Rosen comfortably.

Butler reached forward, took Rosen's upper lip between his thumb and forefinger, and squeezed. "Cut that," Rosen managed to cry out through the grip, and to my surprise, Butler let go. Rosen had an odd authority, not unlike the way a spoiled but very self-assured young boy can command a fierce police dog. Up to a point.

"How could you do that?" Rosen complained. "We were just having a discussion."

"They don't teach it here," Butler said, "but that's the treatment for quieting an hysterical woman. Grab her upper lip and squeeze. I have used it in motel rooms from the time I was sixteen." Another toke of beer. "Goddammit, Rosen, don't you people in New York have the foggiest conception of manners? An hysterical woman calls me crazy, not a man talking to me."

"I don't believe your claims," said Rosen. "It's delusional. Telekinesis cannot be measured."

"Of course it can't. Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty

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applies."

We laughed. But I was not unimpressed that Butler could cite Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty.

"My fear of airplanes," said Dix Butler, "derives from the fact that I am always looking to raise the ante. The first time I got on a plane, it was a ten-seater with no partition between the pilot and the passengers. I tell you, I just had to play some games. Before long, there is old Dix putting his mind into the pilot's fingertips, and thereby getting the plane a bit whippy. Well, the pilot overcame that in turn by his will. You can move other men's matter just so much with your mind—it's a highly inefficient interpersonal mode," and here he looked at us across the table, his yellow-green eyes as childlike and solemn as a lion in a tender moment, full of a poet's sweet awe at the wondrous equations of movement, and said, "All right, what do I do now that this pilot's hand is on guard, why, I start to listen to the plane. It's old, and its two motors are wheezing out their lungs with every buck and tuck—man, my ears get into the vitals of that ship. I know how little it would take to set the motors on flame or crack the wing at the root. Nothing is holding that flying machine together but the mental strength of every one of the passengers and the pilot praying to keep hold of their paltry existence. And there I am, in the middle, a maniac. My existence is larger than myself. I've been in car wrecks, been shot at. There's a no-man's-land out there between the given and the immense, and it has a set of rules very few can follow. All I know is that I am not sufficiently afraid of death. It is a transcendental experience that calls to me right through the foam of this piss-taster's brew. Can rational shit-heads like the two of you comprehend that? I tell you, the mad scientist in me was ready to experiment. I wanted to wreak a mischief on the inner machinery of that plane. You better believe that the desire was powerful. Why, the little washed-out idiots sitting around me in their passenger seats were so fearful of losing what they never had, an honest-to-God life, that I had to pull myself back from exercising my powers. I could truly visualize those plane motors catching fire. I still believe that by my mental efforts, I could have started such a blaze. In another moment, I would have. But I pulled myself back. I saved the plane from myself. Gentlemen,

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I was sick from the effort. My forehead had sweat on it the size of hailstones, and my liver might just as well have been stomped on by a platoon of Marines. I had to crawl off that misbegotten flying flivver when we landed. And I have been afraid of planes ever since. Afraid of my inability to restrain my evil impulses." Beer. A pause. Another swallow. One could visualize the stately flow of the beer down his gullet, equal in solemnity to the sure sweep of a conductor's baton.

I had no idea if he was serious or had merely been telling one of his tales, always and dependably extreme, but I suspect it was the truth, for him at least, since I believe he told it to purge himself, in much the way I had given my confession to Reggie Minnie. Next day, he began to make progress in his parachuting techniques, even as I began to move up in boxing until I even dared to get into the ring with Dix, and mustered enough character not to mumble as I put in my mouthpiece, "Take it easy, will you, Butler?"

It was an interesting three minutes. We were using head-gear and fourteen-ounce gloves, but his jab was heavier than a straight right from any other trainee, and the first left hook I caught sent me half-across the ring.

I was in a panic. Only the sight of Reggie Minnie in my corner made me stay in with Butler and accept the bombardment to my ribs: I felt brain cells blinking out in full banks each time his jab rammed my forehead. When, once or twice, he chose to catch me with a straight right, I was taught all I needed to know about electricity. The voltage discharged in my brain would never be discharged again. In the middle of it, I began to understand for the first time what a serious athlete must feel, for I had reached a place where I was ready to live in the maelstrom. I no longer wished to quit. I had found peace in combat. Blessed feeling! Damn the damage! Whatever little futures were being wrecked in me forever was not going to count against this fortification of my ego.

Of course, I knew the bell would ring, and the three minutes would be over. My vast determination to take whatever onslaught the gods would loose was attached to a three-minute contract. Just as well. Another three minutes and I might have been in the infirmary. Later, watching Butler blast away at the



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trainee closest to him in weight, I was appalled at the power of his punches. Had Butler been hitting me that hard? I made the mistake of asking Rosen.

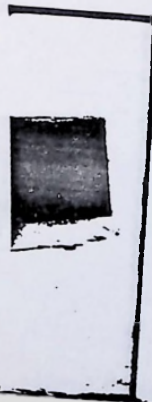
"Are you kidding?" he said. "He carried you."

I offer that in partial explanation for my dislike of Rosen.

10 | Our training for the last two weeks was given over to *Fun and Games*. Introduced to surveillance, we were formed into three-man teams that practiced tailing an instructor (our Target) through the streets and stores of Norfolk. This involved a good amount of fast walking, and a great deal of standing in front of windows that could offer a clear reflection of the street. Our leader, the Point, was supposed to stay close to the Target while Liaison and Reserve watched alternate exits in buildings. We had signals to direct each other back and forth: Stop. Go right. Go left. Speed up. Slow down. were indicated by such actions as removing our hat, leaning against a wall, stopping by a fire hydrant, blowing one's nose, tying one's shoe, and—the abominable favorite—cleaning your ear with a forefinger.

Our signs broke down. Before long, we were waving at one another, and running at a half-trot. Rushing into a department store behind Target, we invariably lost him to an elevator. If Point did manage to sight Target again, Liaison or Reserve had been lost on one of the turns. When, sooner or later, Target would finger Point, the game was over. Every hour on the hour, we returned to the steps of Norfolk City Hall to take on another Target.

That night at the Club, drinking turned into a spree. Practical jokes abounded. Dix and one of the detonation experts set



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up a compressed air cartridge in the toilet connected by a wire to their end of the bar. There was a fifteen-minute wait for *in-phase resolution*, but when Rosen finally went to the toilet to take, as he made the mistake of announcing, "an ungodly dump," Trigger flicked the switch. Cartridge went off. Geyser splashed Target clear off the seat. Rosen's clothing was so drenched that he cut back to his barracks for a change of denims. "Surveillance is working at Camp Peary," became Dix's battle cry.

Meanwhile, more bona fide explosions went off on night demolition exercises in the woods, and night parachutists landed, and men with blacking on their faces rushed in, quaffed a beer, rushed out. Years later, on my way to Vietnam, I was invited to a movie set by an old Yale classmate, now a producer, and so was able to watch a battle being filmed. It was a bit of preparation for Vietnam, and it certainly reminded me of the Farm. War consisted of special effects going off from time to time; that was more in the nature of the event than death. "Death is the price you pay for enjoying a real war," one of our more hard-bitten instructors said, and I thought of that on nights when I was having a good time in Saigon.

Now I felt like a kid on one of those endless August evenings when the late fever of summer games keeps one running into the house and slamming the door on the way out. Our surveillance exercise might have been nerve-wracking, humiliating, and just about wholly unsuccessful, but the hysteria peculiar to the work was erupting now. We had, after all, been active in the next thing to an honest-to-God movie. Shadowing a man felt as odd as a dream.

Another victim walked into the bathroom of the Club, sat on the throne, and came out soaking wet. We laughed, and something in that commotion of waters got into the rest of the night. Rosen joined us again in dry clothes. Drunk on beer, he made the mistake of saying to Butler, "That was a crazy thing to do to a buddy. You're lopsided."

"Punk," said Butler, "spread your cheeks. I'll teach you lopsided."

He said it within the hearing of everyone around. Rosen, who usually presented a small but iron face to his persecutors,