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and may all the bang juice be wiped off his hard-hitting putter." yes, it got as elaborate and stupid as that. From Porringers, of course.

Anyway, I had one insight into Sally and Sherman late that evening. At the end of dinner, about the time we were all thickening up—you can't call it sobering up—they happened to be alone for a moment at one end of the table, and she was looking sour, and he was full of bilious, much-compacted anger. (I know he had to be upset that his elaborate golf-and-bang-juice toast did not go over.) So the Porringers sat there like a warning to all who might contemplate marriage, old before their time. It's awfully sad, because she has a perky little face. Maybe she was a cheerleader in high school, for certainly she has a nice body.

At any rate, I began to notice what the Porringers were doing with their napkins. It told the tale. Sherman had squeezed his piece of linen and released it, squeezed it and released it (with his thighs, I assume) until now, laid on the table, it looked like a piled-up thundercloud. Hers, to the contrary, appeared to have undergone a regimen of successive flattenings from the palm of her hand. Still, the cloth kept rising. Her poor trapped heart?

I think the Porringers are both from the Southwest, college sweethearts perhaps, I seem to recollect that he went to Oklahoma State. The point to this, I expect, is that each of them touches me in the oddest way. Ever since I voted with him against Sonderstrom, his relations toward me have been a study. Stop-and-go. Brusque; friendly. Highly critical of my work, followed by a clap on the back. Superciliously superior, then helpful. I, in turn, don't know if I like him any better. I mention this because he did pass on a plum of a job to me. Right in front of Sonderstrom, he said, "Rick can field this one better than Gatsby, and you and I just don't have the time."

Do you know, I realize that all of this letter has been a preamble to a serious decision. Everything I've disclosed up to now can be seen as venial, but if I fill you in on the new job, and am discovered, I'm in the soup. As are you. So, let us wait a couple of days. I'll write again before the week is out. It's 3:00 A.M. once more. Apologies for this abrupt ending. I have to think this out for myself. It's of too much consequence to rush into.

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Love,
Harry

I was not telling the truth about Sally Porringer. We had begun an affair, and it was already into its second week on the night I invited my good Agency associates to dinner. So, the sadness I felt on watching Mrs. Porringer flatten her napkin was more complex than simple sorrow, and not without a tinge of fear. I lived among trained observers, after all, and the affair, if ever discovered, would look dreadful. Having helped me to get an important assignment, Sherman Porringer had been given a set of horns for Christmas.

Nonetheless, I fell asleep with no difficulty. Encountering the cold center of myself was not unreassuring. It suggested that I might be well equipped for the more difficult tasks I would face. I certainly felt cold enough to recognize that a very small part of me, which was nonetheless quintessential, would never forgive Kittredge for having another man's child.

Jan. 5, 1957

Dearest Number One,

I've weighed out the contingencies. As you may have supposed, I am going to tell all. Our operation is called AV/OCADO, and if it works as well as we hope, there's a good deal of entrée. I suppose you could say it's in fulfillment of one of our two major objectives. Ideally, according to the Missions Directive, the Priority is to effect a penetration into the Soviet Embassy, and next Priority is to get into the higher ranks of the PCU. (That last, if you recall, is the Uruguayan Communist Party.)

Well, this second objective is well along. Thanks to Porringer, it's become my baby. I'm inheriting a Priority Task, and I am going to take you into it, for I may need advice farther down the line. I can tell you—I don't want any repetition of that embarrassing Berlin period when I was on the secure phone every other day with our mutual friend. This time I am going to bring the job off on my own.

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Let me provide the filler. Did I mention that we have two contract agents? Besides Gordy Morewood, there is Roger Clarkson. He's also done good work for us, and his cover is excellent. He not only works for the most prestigious public relations firm in Montevideo (which handles the accounts for most of the U.S. corporations here), but has put in a lot of time with the local Anglo-American drama group. You would think that is not a particularly fertile place to pick up our kind of information, but it certainly is where the winds of gossip blow. Many upper-class Uruguayans gravitate to the Montevideo Players on the pretext that they wish to improve their English, whereas, actually, the Players has become a classy arena for the great South American upper-middle-class sport—infidelity. Roger Clarkson has served as our facsimile of a KGB joy-boy. He's tall, good-looking, straight nose, blond hair, Princeton—a splendid example of what we're advertising to the rest of the world. In the course of his activities, he's picked up a lot of what is going on at the Legislative Palace. No great haul, but indispensable bits to corroborate or refute the information we receive from our heavier sources—the usual Uruguayan legislators, journalists, businessmen, etc.

Some months ago, Roger came in with a big one. Eusebio "Chevi" Fuertes popped up at the drama group. Chevi is almost as good looking as Valentino, Roger assured us, at least if you are ready to discount a somewhat chewed-up Latin street face. Fuertes, who comes out of Uruguayan working-class stock, went to the University of the Republic here, then married up into a middle-class family of local lawyers and doctors, part of the Montevideo radical establishment.

At present, Fuertes is a member in good standing of the PCU, ditto his wife. He is, however, no stable hardworking Communist, but, on the contrary, is somewhat taken with himself, and is pulled in many directions. For example, he quit his university studies some years ago, and with no money went off to New York. (Only agreed to marry his wife after he came back a year later.) She is apparently a wholehearted party-liner who has already risen high in the local ranks. Everyone, including her husband, expects her to become one of the PCU's national leaders in ten years. She's a lawyer, polemicist, functionary, and her

family has, as I say, an old radical tradition.

Chevi, by contrast, pretends to be a loyal member but secretly can't bear whole aspects of the Party, the discipline, the self-sacrifice, and the patience required to obtain power. The year he spent in New York seems to have affected him eccentrically. He returned to Uruguay admiring America and hating it, but cocky from the experience. It seems among other stints as dishwasher and short-order cook and waiter, he was also some kind of unwilling consort—"never a pimp," he assures Roger—to a Harlem whore.

All this has been learned by Clarkson and passed on to us. It seems he and Fuertes get along famously. They have even double-dated a couple of the ladies in the Montevideo Players. To use a phrase I've recently learned—they *run* together. Roger, who remains agreeably modest concerning his cachet with the local actresses, explained that *studs* (speaking of new words!) often *run* in parallel. So, Clarkson and Fuertes are fascinated with each other.

I confess to equal fascination. I'm learning how much you can pick up about a man by studying reports. Clarkson, who keeps a tidy ship, has been feeding detailed memos to the Station after each evening spent with Fuertes, and I, having been assigned to take over when he leaves for America (which is just a couple of weeks away) read everything Roger turns in as if it were "Gerontion" or *Remembrance of Things Past*. Clarkson's no stylist—he's not, dear God, supposed to be!—but the material, considering my oncoming relation to it, certainly proves stimulating. Fuertes, very clever and very suspicious, is always on the alert against manipulation. He has startling insights into Clarkson, then spasms of rage against American imperialism which alternate with gouts of vitriol against Uruguayan Communists. He most respectfully declares his love for his powerful wife, but soon allows that he resents and detests her. He loves Clarkson yet hints he'll leave a knife in him someday should Clarkson ever betray him, that is, prove to be a CIA agent. This is Fuertes' declared suspicion of our Roger. In a bar, on their last meeting after rehearsal (the Montevideo Players are now doing Paul Osborn's *The Vinegar Tree*), Chevi not only accused Clarkson of working for the Agency but stated that he must be in the CIA

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since it was well-known that 50 percent of the Agency's contract people were employed by American public relations firms.

All this while, Chevi, despite such outbursts, has been drawing closer to Roger. Chevi's real desire, he now announces, is to talk over his problems—as between men. Those problems, he declares, are acute in the region of emotion. (Don't you enjoy the formal turn Latins bring to English?) His hatred of the Communist Party in Uruguay is *una enormidad*, he confesses. Of course, on other days, it is the Soviet Union that gets berated. They have betrayed the world revolution. Next night, he goes back to blaming the lust for power of the Uruguayan leaders, and the stupidity of the rank and file. They are not revolutionary, but bourgeois he declares. Communism in South America has degenerated into a hobby of the intelligentsia, a virulent fever of the decaying middle classes. The villains of every revolution, from Robespierre to the present, have revealed their attachment to the middle-class umbilicus. There are times, Roger allows, when he can't keep up with Fuertes.

Should Clarkson try, however, to put in a good word for the U.S., Chevi bombards him with polemical abuse. Capitalism feeds on the excrement of progress. The people of the United States are dispossessed of their souls. Capitalists are pigs. Pigs in limousines. He says at the end of one of these sessions, "Since I know you work for the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States of America, and are aware that my wife and I are members of the Partido Comunista de Uruguay, and that I am unhappy in such a role, why do you offer no proposition?"

"Because I'm goddamned if I can trust you!"

Roger is not only bold enough to make that reply, but is forthcoming enough—or is it scrupulously responsible enough?—to include it in his *Summary of Jan. 2 Meeting with AVOCADO*. (Needless to say, Sonderstrom does not leave that little speech uncensored on its way to Argentina-Uruguay Desk, God, they would have thrown the book at Clarkson.)

Roger was accoutered with a sneaky that night. Of course, his recording was garbled a bit, but Clarkson, like a good soldier, filled in some of the blanks. He claims to have respectable ability at recalling conversation, and calls the result "*fortified transcription*." For certain, he has produced a document that I

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think enough of to reproduce for you.

AV/OCADO: You do not comprehend me. You are too insulated. That is how Americans fulfill their soul-destroying functions.

AV/UNCULAR: Why don't you just cut the crap?

AV/OCADO: Si, Señor, I am full of crap. But how may I cut it? You desire to make an offer to me, yet you dare not.

AV/UNCULAR: Have a heart, friend. How am I to begin? You don't trust yourself.

AV/OCADO: That is no less than the truth. I am a man who lives in an anguish that is self-perpetuated. I am lacking in *pundonor*. Do you comprehend *pundonor*?

AV/UNCULAR: You are never lacking in *pundonor*. You, *amigo*, have death-guts.

AV/OCADO: I thank you for the sentiment. You speak like a friend. But I cannot trust the authority of your sentiments because in the *cono del sur*, a man must live for his *pundonor*. He must be prepared for mortal confrontation. Yes, every day of his life. Do you know? It is a comedy. Uruguayans live to be eighty. Whether or not we face our death-guts, we live to be eighty. We are *cómico*, my friend. (Long pause.) You do not comprehend me. What can be the value of a friend if he is not the generous spirit of comprehension? You, however, are a North American. You are looking for an edge. A grip on me. Go fuck yourself.

AV/UNCULAR: Hey, let's have another drink. It'll make you more mellow.

AV/OCADO: For people such as you, I must spell it out.

AV/UNCULAR: Have it your way.

AV/OCADO: Spell it out, or spit it out. These are the established modes of communication for Americans, *verdad*?

AV/UNCULAR: We're no good.

AV/OCADO: Now I know it. You *are* CIA. It is in the logic of your responses. I utter scathing insults upon you and your country, and you, a proud and virile North American, do not challenge me to step outside this bar.

AV/UNCULAR: Would you challenge me if I insulted Uru-

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guay?

AV/OCADO: There would be no alternative.

Kittredge, this is the clearest part of the conversation. Over the next ten minutes, it became too garbled for Clarkson to restore. Then, he must have shifted his seat, because their exchanges now came through again loud and strong. Here is more of the *fortified* transcription.

AV/OCADO: I have always stationed myself on the barricades of independent thought. I do not have a group mind, my friend, nor predesigned sentiments due to lack of inner subjectivity. So, at present, I am drenched in the poisons of humiliation.

AV/UNCULAR: Explain it to me. I want to listen.

AV/OCADO: I am a lawyer who serves clients who are too poor to pay their bills. I am a husband who attracts less respect in public than his wife. I may be more intelligent than my spouse, but my ideas veer too far to the right, then too far to the left. That is because I lack sufficient foundation to hold them in place.

AV/UNCULAR: What do you require, then?

AV/OCADO: A salary large enough to give ballast to the discord in myself. I need commercial focus. I am like all the other shits. I want money.

Sonderstrom, Porringer, and myself, after meeting with Roger, are obviously of two minds about whether to take on the two opposed spirits of Eusebio "Chevi" Fuertes. He hates his wife and the PCU enough to work for us—on that we all agree. But will he gear into the job? Will he begin to make something of himself in the Party and take on PCU tasks so diligently that he becomes a high Party functionary? I argue that to achieve equality with his wife would be a real and powerful motivation for him. In that case, what a probe we would have. The breadth of this possibility pushes us into taking him on, but, oh, the tremors. Sonderstrom, who has experience, after all, in these matters, says Chevi is selling himself so hard he could be a dangle. Roger, however, disbelieves that Fuertes is a gift of the

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KGB. "He's not a good enough actor to orchestrate all that confusion," says Roger. "Over at the Montevideo Players, we see him as a ham."

What aggravates the problem, of course, is Roger's pending return to the States. As of two months ago, his contract was already concluded. Given the potential importance of AV/OCADO, he has delayed his departure twice, but now Roger has given the Station final notice. He is getting married to his childhood sweetheart—one plain Jane by her photographs—and plans to work for her father. This does not make much sense, given the importance of what he's doing for us here—why can't the bride come down to Uruguay? Then we are treated to the subtext: The childhood sweetheart is going to inherit a fortune. She may be plain-looking, but has enough temper for an ugly duchess. Roger does not dare to keep her waiting. Her father, you see, is an advertising tycoon with a hell of a job for Roger. In a week, Clarkson is definitely departing.

It's not the best of situations to insert me at this point, but where's the choice? Roger is not going to kiss Miss Money-bags good-bye.

Sonderstrom, for all his faults, is, I'm beginning to recognize, not the worst den mother. He knows how to put a reasonable face on things. "Your situation could turn out satisfactorily," Gus says to me at the end of the meeting. "With a new case officer in place, AV/OCADO might shape up more quickly. A stranger can be effective in situations like this. AV/OCADO obviously likes to torture his friends."

Succinct enough, but I'm the one in the passenger seat next week.

This time I won't tell you how late it is. Will just sign off. My new cryptonym, specially crafted for the new job, is—I must say they save the tasty ones for me—AV/AIABLE.

Humbly yours,
Available Hubbard

P.S. Did you ever get the brooch?

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Jan. 18, 1957

Harry, dear,

It's my turn to make a confession. I kept wanting to acknowledge the brooch, but couldn't. You see, I've lost it.

There was the most unsettling premonition when I opened your little package—so small, so carefully wrapped, obviously your Christmas gift—and beheld that breast pin. I knew it had belonged once to some particularly nasty old family who suffered some horrid disaster.

I've always had psychic powers there was no sense talking about. They proved no use to me, and usually came at the oddest times and for the most inconsequential reasons. I even wondered why I possessed this one milligram of magic so altogether unconnected to the other hundred and twenty pounds of me. Since Christopher has been born, however, it's come to focus. It's a gift, a power of maternity, if you will. I developed an exceptional sense of what to have in our house for Christopher, and what should not be there. Dear Herrick, when I opened your package, I wondered if you had gone in for the cruellest kind of joke. It was as if I started to bite into a scrumptious éclair and a roach came swimming up out of the cream. I almost shrieked. That brooch was loathsome. I could not understand how you and I, so close in so many ways, could be so far apart on this one matter. I didn't even want to keep your gift in the house. Yet, given my feelings, I couldn't pass it on to a friend, and it's dangerous, my instincts tell me, to throw away any object you consider *evil*. (Measure my true regard for you by the honesty of these remarks!) I decided finally to sell it. Filthy lucre can, at least, demagnetize the aura of awful things—after all, isn't that what they invented money for? I thought I might wash that cash through another transaction or two, and get it back to you. Such was my plan. Instead, I discovered this morning that the brooch is gone. It has disappeared from the box I kept in a corner of the bookshelf. I can't believe the nurse or the cleaning woman stole it. I'm in a state as I write this, and now hear the baby crying. I'll have to continue in a while.

Two hours later

Well, he had colic. Full diaper. I submit that baby-doo doth smell as if the little creatures discovered corruption all by themselves—that much to back up Original Sin. Then, I had a salary negotiation with the nurse who feels she's underpaid and wishes to rewrite our original understanding. After which, I had to go shopping for formula plus three medallions of beef to show up in the Montagues' Wellington tonight (two for Hugh), and shallots, and *chanterelles*—how he adores them! When I came home, I decided to clean Hugh's study. (Which I hadn't been near for a week.) First thing I saw was the brooch, hanging from a little metal knob on one of the cubbyhole drawers of his desk. I had never mentioned your gift to him, and now Hugh had appropriated it. He must have thought it was something I picked up in a flea market.

Harry, it's odd. The moment I saw your gift among his papers, I knew it was all right. Hugh is so girded about with his own talismans that I believe he can, without having any idea at all of what he is doing, make wise decisions when it comes to handling these indefinables. Your petite Uruguayan monster is absolutely stripped of its powers so long as it is attached to his desk—oh, never believe this, you can't, but just as I wrote these last words, I had one of those precious little fantasies it's tempting to call a vision. In part, I saw the history of the brooch. The founder of the family who owned it was either a hanging judge or an executioner—some form of expeditor of the bloodier social tasks.

Well, even as I wrote this, I stood up, crossed to his study, looked again at fearsome Miss Bijou, and realized it has now become a part of the world that communicates with me. Ninety-nine and $\frac{99}{100}$ percent of such a world is composed of people, hurrah, but there is a tree here and there, and a bird I recollect from my childhood, as well as a pug my father gave me in adolescence. That dog was an absolute spirit; now, this bloody breast pin. Harry, the brooch just told me that you had better watch your step with your highly disturbed Latin Communist. This Fuertes. Do be careful. He could wreck your career.

And do forgive the gloves. Your Christmas, I keep reminding myself, is as hot as July.

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Love,
Kittredge

I had bought the brooch on the morning after I began my affair with Sally Porringer. Since I was, at the time of purchase, full of anticipation of a vigorous sexual future, and feeling some guilt toward Kittredge, I picked out the ornament by its price, and had the inner gall to pretend it had been bought on a deep impulse. Had I taken on one more of the mortal debts and curses?

Jan. 22, 1957

Dearest Kittredge,

I am now set up with AV/OCADO, and for the present it's going a little better than one could have hoped. Sonderstrom was right. The changing of the guard has sobered up our Latin friend. Indeed, the transition went off well. We met in a safe house that the Station is maintaining in a brand-new apartment building on the Rambla above Playa de Los Pocitos. There are a good many similar such high apartment buildings now going up and when they're finished, I'm sure the Rambla will look like one more bare, bleak version of Lake Shore Drive in Chicago; already you can feel that developer's aura. In the safe-house flat, taking it in from our picture window on the twelfth floor, the cars below seem as small as dog-track rabbits whipping by the wide clay-colored beach and the greenish-brown sea. Half the adolescents of Montevideo seem to be sporting on that beach. Bikinis galore. Even from this distance, big Spanish hips on the girls. Once again, the 238 pounds of beef and pork per capita shows in this registry of buttocks.

Our safe house is uncomfortably bare. We're paying whatever our substantial rent must come to, yet have purchased nothing in the way of furniture but for the bed and bureau in the sleeping alcove, and the folding couch-bed, plastic dining table, one armchair, one lamp, and a few bridge chairs set about the living room. Plus one discarded Embassy no-color-left rug. I don't understand safe-house economics. If we're anteing up

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for a luxury apartment, why not make it appealing? (Perhaps this mean agenda has something to do with keeping the agent's stipend low.)

In any event, I don't know how to describe Chevi Fuertes. In advance, I studied photographs of him, and know more of his formal biography than I do, say, of Sonderstrom's, but I'm still not prepared for his presence. He is so alive that you want to shelter him. My first thought was: Kittredge would adore him. He's dark, of course, and thin, with a hawklike nose and a full share of the stygian Spanish gloom that always makes me think of the body pits of undertakers—there! I've just vented my hitherto unconscious dose of resentment at being stationed here. All the same, Chevi takes you by surprise with his smile. The face picks up lights, and a tender if wicked youth peers out at you from the mask of the gloomy man.

Roger Clarkson, having made a point of introducing me brusquely, even perfunctorily, as Peter, proceeds to business. He tells Chevi that an emergency was calling him back to the United States and I would be the replacement. We would no longer meet at the Montevideo Players, but at this safe house.

Chevi said to Roger, "I do not believe your story."

Roger waved his hand ambiguously as if to blend all that was false with all that was true. "Peter is here," he said, pointing to me. "This is the fact."

"I," said Chevi, "do not believe you are returning to the United States."

"But I am."

"No," said Chevi, "you are going to Europe to work with Hungarian refugees whom your people will send back to Budapest for works of sabotage."

"I cannot go affirmative on that," Roger replied. His powers of improvisation are obviously in fine shape. "But you ought to know, Chevi, that they could never put me onto those Hungarians. I can't manage Magyar diphthongs." He gave Chevi a wink. It carried the day. Fuertes obviously needed to believe that his acumen was on the mark. Roger took care of that with the wink. Yes, it said, you happen to be right, but I can't tell you. Aloud, he said, "Why don't we deal with the here and now of the transfer?"

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After that, Fuertes listened soberly and answered the detailed questions of our debriefing with long answers. I won't bore you, Kittredge, with the product of these several hours. It was technical, procedural, and relatively smooth. Even as Fuertes gave us the Table of Organization of the PCU and the names of the leaders and section heads, my initial compassion for him began to deepen. He was so obviously divided. Perhaps 51 percent of the man had decided to go with us, but the other 49 percent is still attached to a network of old friendships closely woven into his childhood, adolescence, and university days, his Party work and his marriage, even his old neighborhood.

It was, we all knew, preparatory. One of the tips Sonderstrom had passed along to Roger and myself was to interview Chevi at length about his childhood and young manhood. "It will," said Gus, "initiate a positive bond. He'll feel important. People aren't used to other people taking them that seriously."

Do you know, Kittredge, once again Sonderstrom was right. As Chevi spoke into our tape recorder, I could feel resignation settle in over his gloom. It was as if he had embarked on a boat and was watching the shore of the past recede from the rail. When we were done and the cash payment had taken place, which I, not Roger, disbursed per Sonderstrom's instructions—Chevi is getting fifty dollars a week—I noticed that he literally winced as the money touched his palm. (Do you know—I was perspiring from the effort of counting it out in front of him. It is humiliating to be obliged to humiliate a fellow human being.) I must say paper money had never felt so dirty.

Clarkson then did something subtle and proper. While Chevi had to be aware that we would discuss him in detail so soon as we were alone with each other, still, Roger had the courtesy to leave first. He gave an *abrazo* to Chevi, said, "I'll send a post card from the Balkans," and walked out the door.

My brand-new agent and I must now have looked like freshmen who will be rooming together for the year to come. We were standing an uncomfortable yard apart.

"I am going to make my first request to you, Peter," he said.

"Whatever it is, I will do it," I replied. I figured the request would not be unpalatable.

"I wish you to ignore every conception Roger has im-

planted in you about the lineaments of my character. I would prefer that you come to know me by yourself."

"I comprehend," I said.

"I would hope you do." We shook hands on that.

Well, that was a couple of weeks ago. Since then I've seen him twice. We make progress slowly. Chevi may have told me that it would not prove laborious to get to know him, but no one at the Station or back at the Groogs (which has become our exasperated name for our Washington overseers at the Argentina-Uruguay Desk) is ready to buy such an avowal. The Groogs are making us check out everything, from Chevi's legal probity to his hemorrhoids. For fact, Sonderstrom has Gatsby and me looking up police, medical, and school records. We discover that Eusebio Fuertes was an honor student, but was also arrested, when seventeen, for riding around with friends in a stolen car—sentence suspended.

The heavy work, however, begins with cross-referencing of the take. We check out everything he tells us about the PCU against the knowledge we already have about their personnel. While our local files bear no comparison to the Snake Pit, still, files have a tendency to become files. Nothing is more demoralizing than to creep one's fingers over hundreds of folders trying to chase down a confirmatory fact that comes to seem less and less essential as the lost hour slips by. Well, I won't make you suffer with me.

There is also infernal cable traffic with the Groogs. They're terrified that Soviet Russia Division, with all its maniacally suspicious people, will come charging down the hall if we decide that AV/OCADO is a KGB dangle. So, without quite admitting it to ourselves, we're looking to decide he's not, and what he tells us does fit our fact list. At least so far. Of course, we haven't asked him yet to bring back something we can really use, and when I propose that we do, I'm shot down at once. Until we are confident he is not a dangle, we don't dare to show what we are looking for, since that could feed the KGB.

Besides, Sonderstrom informs me, it is still too dangerous. Chevi is not yet ready, and we must not imperil our agent needlessly. I'm becoming impressed with Gus. Big, bald, red-faced ex-Marine, yet his underlying passion is to be virtuous. It makes

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me think about Americans. You know, the French, they say, have a passion for financial security, and the English, according to my father, care only about manners. You can be a swine and get away with it if your manners are either good, or, better, interesting. But in America, we have to be virtuous, don't we? Even the pimps and the drug dealers have their code, I hear. Roger certainly felt virtuous, going off to marry his money-bags princess. Didn't want the poor ugly girl to die of a broken heart. So, Sonderstrom. He worries about doing his job with decency. Even to throwing a golf game properly. Maybe it's late, and I'm sipping too much *fundador*, but suddenly I love Americans.

I can't say that I always do at the office. The inquiries on AV/OCADO keep coming from the Groogs. It seems Fuertes is the agent-of-the-month, worldwide—I joke—but he is large enough to excite unholy interest back at Headquarters, and I am the one who talks to AV/OCADO, I know what he looks like. I am the *point*! (Of course, I tell myself, this is nothing to how they're debriefing Roger right now in Washington.) Anyway, we move forward like an elephant on clogs. I don't think you need worry yet about any quick perils to my career. What with the Groogs and Upper Whambo (Western Hemisphere Division) and Soviet Russia Division, also known as the Sourballs, nobody will allow me to get into trouble.

I will tell you something that may amuse. Maybe not. The cable presence most feared here, although not one inquiry has come from it, is an odd desk under the mysterious umbrella of your own TSS. It is called GHOUL. That office, or eminence, or whatever it is, reports only to Mr. Dulles. I hear via Porringer that even the Soviet Russia Division is leary of GHOUL. Should this mysterious desk ever suspect that AV/OCADO is a KGB dangle, our lives down here will become unmitigated cable hell. I'm told we'll be on the Encoder-Decoder twelve hours a day answering questionnaires.

Of course, I presume to know who GHOUL is.

I left the matter there. I hardly knew what I was up to, but, then, I was feeling wicked. I wanted to tell Kittredge about Sally Porringer and knew I couldn't, yet, all the same, I decided to try.

Recognizing that I might change my mind, in the middle of composition, I took up this theme on a new page.

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Intermission for coffee and *fundador*
2:00 A.M.

Kittredge,

Brand new subject. Please save judgments until you've read all. What I have to tell will not, I pray, affect our friendship. You see, I am now embarked on what may yet prove an ongoing affair. While in Washington you were always trying to find some attractive young lady for me, the woman I'm now meeting *on the sly*—this slippery cliché certainly has the feel of it!—is, I fear, not suitable. In fact, she is married, has two children, and is the spouse, worse luck, of one of my colleagues.

All right, I know you'll ask how it began, and who she is, and I'll reply that she is Sally Porringer, the wife of Oatsie.

Let me give the facts. It began one evening about a week before Christmas after a party at Minot Mayhew's house. Our Chief of Station, having received word that E. Howard Hunt is finally coming to replace him toward the end of January, threw a farewell party for himself in the form of a Christmas gathering. He invited the Station folk and wives, plus a number of his State Department cronies, plus an even larger number of relatively—I thought—undistinguished Uruguayan businessmen and their wives, and I must say it proved nothing remarkable, what with all the other Christmas parties going on.

For that matter, Christmas down here is curiously discordant. That sense of a rose-chill to winter twilight, sweet as fine

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sorbet, is missed in the heat of summer. One is angry and compassionate in bursts. I mention this because Mayhew's party in his well-appointed house, filled with career mementos and hacienda-type furniture (armchairs with steer's horns), and paid for, no doubt, with his stock-market profits, did improve once he sat down to the piano. "Every man I know," my father told me once, "has an unexpected skill." Mayhew's is to sing and play. He led us through all the expected. We did "Deck the Halls," and "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "Noel, Noel," "Jingle Bells," "Silent Night," of course, and then somewhere in "O Come, All Ye Faithful," there was Sally Porringer next to me, her arm around my waist, and swaying in rhythm as we and thirty other people sang along with Mayhew.

I'm no great vocalist, you know. There are all too many inhibiting influences ravaging my impulse to utter golden notes, but I have a little bass in me, and so I get along. Sally, however, elucidated something better from my voice. I don't know if it was due to the fact that I had never before swayed rhythmically while singing, but I heard my voice coming forth, thank you, and this freedom to sing and feel the beauty—not of the words, so much, but all the nuances and timbre of an ice-cold rose-sweet time of year, was going through me again. I felt as if it was really Christmas, even in Uruguay. I had the epiphany I always wait for as December descends into its climactic week, that feeling so hard to live without through most of the year—the conviction (I whisper it) that He may really be near.

Well, I was transported just enough to be fond suddenly of all my cohorts and their wives, and I thought of all the sweet solemn calls of country, duty, rich endeavor, and one's dearest friends. Most of all, I thought of you because I can often feel that Christmas is near to me again by recollecting your beauty—there, I've said it—and then, even as I'm singing out, "O come, let us adore Him," I look down and see Sally Porringer's face and she smiles back with a warmth and energy that is part of my own sudden good voice, and I liked her for the first time.

After the carols, we sat on the sofa for a while, and I asked her a question about herself. She gave me a considerable amount of her life story in return. Her father was a rodeo rider, but drank too much and left her mother, who remarried a nice

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grain-and-feed man. Sally and Sherman knew each other in high school (Stillwater, Oklahoma), went on to Oklahoma State in the same class, but never saw much of each other the first three years. He was a grind, getting all kinds of academic honors, and she was on the cheerleaders' team. (I was right about that!) I took a second look at her then. She's pretty enough, if in no striking way, small turned-up nose, freckles, pale green eyes, sandy hair, a slightly harried housewife in her present cast, but I could see how it must have been ten or twelve years ago. She was probably healthy and vivacious then, and was having, as she now indicated, some kind of all-out affair with one of the football players. I expect he ditched her, since in senior year Sherman and she found each other and were married after graduation.

I knew I was now expected to reply in kind, but I didn't feel like raiding my own meager cupboard. So I sat there, and smiled, knowing I had to come up with something. Will you believe it? I went on and on about discovering Skeat at Yale, and I expect she did her best to keep from falling asleep in disappointment. A minute later, just as we were about to move away from one another, Sherman came up. He was Duty Officer tonight at the Embassy. That meant he had to take his car to work and was leaving now. She wanted to stay on. I, being equipped for the evening with a Chevrolet two-door from the Embassy motor pool, offered to drop her off on my way back to the Cervantes. I hardly wanted to, I would just as soon have departed right behind Porringer—I did not like the idea of those paranoid eyes staring at me through the malign screen of his thick spectacles, but she looked so sad at having to leave that I stayed.

A little later, I danced with her. Minot Mayhew was now playing all kinds of what I call Charleston rags, although I know the term is not accurate for dances like the Shag and the Lindy and the Lambeth Walk. I didn't know how to do them, but she did, and we had fun. When he played a couple of slow foxtrots from the thirties—"Deep Purple" and "Stardust" are the ones I remember—she danced just a little too intimately, I thought. It was the sort of semifirtatious stuff that's acceptable, I suppose, if the husband is still in the room. Which he wasn't. Then, Barry Kearns, our Commo Officer, cut in—to my relief. When

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I sat down, however, I was irked because she seemed to be enjoying herself just as much with Barry.

Sally was right there with me, however, on the turn of the party tide, and we left together. On the drive back to Montevideo from Carrasco, I searched for subjects to discuss, but we were silent. I was feeling the same kind of tension I used to have years ago at the Keep playing kissing games with the neighbors' girls; there was that awful silence as you marched out of the room with a girl. I remember that I always felt then as if I were passing through the woods during a thaw and every sound of melting water had the composure of a far-seeing purpose.

So soon as I parked in front of her house, she said, "Drive around the block."

I did. The Porringers were living in a small stucco house on one of the medium-income, medium-horizon, only-slightly-crumbling streets in an anonymous area back of the Legislative Palace. Even in summer, the streets are relatively deserted, and the block behind her house was distinguished by several empty lots. We parked, and she waited, and I did nothing. Then she reached around to lock the doors and close the windows. I still did nothing. I think my heart was beating loud enough for her to hear it. I did not really want to make love to her, and I did not want to cuckold Sherman Porringer, although there was, I admit, some dirty little rise somewhere down there. Then she said,

"May I ask you a personal question?"

"Yes," I said.

"Are you a queer?"

"No," I said.

"Then why won't you kiss me?"

"I don't know."

"Prove to me you're not a queer."

"Why do you think I am?"

"You talk so upper-class. Sherman says you're a preppie."

I plunged. She went off like a firecracker. I confess to you, Kittredge, I didn't know that women could be so passionate.

This last sentence betrayed what I had known from the

beginning—I was not going to go to conclusion. The carnal details were not to be put into a letter. So I sat back in my chair, looked out my hotel room window at the grim building across the street from me, and recalled how her lips had kissed mine as if our mouths were in combat. Her hands, free of any conceivable embarrassment, hooked onto the buttons of my fly. Her breasts which she soon freed of her brassiere, were in my mouth whenever she had need to lift her head to breathe, and then, to my horror, as if a long string of underground ammunition dumps in the sexual field of my fantasies were all to be detonated at once, she twisted, quick as a cat, bent down, and wrapped her mouth around the prow of my phallus (which seemed to me at that moment not only larger than I could ever remember, but worthy of the word phallus) and proceeded to take into her mouth the six, eight, nine, eleven jackhammer thrusts of the battering ram she had made of me. Then, in the midst of the extreme ejaculations of such ammo dumps blowing up, she added insult to injury and stuck her finger without a by-your-leave up my anus. I had obviously had one good Oklahoma cow-poke of a fuck, and we hadn't even had sexual intercourse yet.

That was remedied in surprisingly little time. I decided Lenny Bruce knew less than he imparted on the inner logic of the second time. Only one far-off part of me could possibly be working for the ego bit. The rest was hell-bent on enjoying all I could, as much as I could, as fast as I could, and yet, how I was repelled! It seemed manifestly unfair to raid the treasury of sex. In the middle of all my elation, exuberance, sexual wrath, and jubilee, in the midst of all my sense of something awfully strong in each of us smacked totally up against one another, there was the long, faint, elevated horror that Kittredge—for whom I had saved myself; Ingrid did not count!—was forever removed from my first taste of all-out frenzy and lust. I had always assumed this kind of heat could only arrive at the end of the deepest sort of love affair, and with momentum as gravely joyous as the mount toward elation in a majestic orchestra embarked on a mighty symphony. Sex with Sally was a football *mêlée* with bites and bruises and chocolate squashed in your crotch.

By my third ejaculation, I was weary of her. The car win-

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dows were clouded, our clothes were a wadded-up joke, and I hardly knew if I was a stud or a rape victim. Drawing away from her, I managed to induce us to get our clothes together, Sally, half-unwillingly. Her kisses—how cruel is the after-shade of desire!—had begun to seem leechlike. I wanted to get home.

I could not leave her at her door, however, like a package delivered by someone else. "I'll call you soon," I said, and felt all the powers of extortion being worked on me.

"Oh, you better," she said. "That was groovy."

Groovy! I had been offered the key to my country. I was now a charter member of that great, unknown middle land of America that I was prepared to defend. And felt a great relief as I drove off because so far as I knew, no pedestrian had passed our automobile on that lonely street. The risk of what we had undertaken was just becoming real to me.

Well, I had seen her since, of course. Once at her home while the children were out with a babysitter—a dreadful clammy occasion when we fornicated in fear that Sherman in full deployment of his paranoid powers would pop home, and we had certainly done better in the Cervantes despite carnal heats on a mattress that smelled of disinfectant. Finally, I dared all the gods of precaution and took her to the safe house above Pocitos Beach, where we coupled in a chair by the twelfth-story window looking down on the passing traffic and the clay-colored waves.

No, I decided, it would have been hopeless to write about any of this to Kittredge, and I put aside the pages I had written about Sally. Because I could not ignore the part of myself, however, that pleaded for some kind of confession, I conceived of a tale to close the gap.

Intermission for coffee and *fundador*
2:00 A.M.

Kittredge,

Brand new subject. What I have to tell will not, I hope, affect us grievously since our relation is dearer to me than any loyalty or pleasure I could find on the banks of the Rio Plata. You must believe that. I hope you will not be shocked if I confess that after many weeks of the most intense suffering from sexual absten-

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tion, I have at last felt bound to go to one of the better brothels here, and after a week or two of the inevitable winnowing out of choices, concerning which I will regale you someday, I have now settled on one Uruguayan girl in the Casa de Tres Árboles, and have what yet may prove to be an arrangement with her.

It makes sense to me. While you will always be the nearest embodiment I can know of the ineluctable quest, so do I also understand that you and Hugh will be together forever, as indeed you should be. There is no one I know closer to greatness than Hugh. Forgive such sententiousness, but I just want to say that I love you and Hugh together as much as I adore you separately, which, mathematically, is like trying to equate finite numbers with infinite sums—I come to full stop: all I wish to say is we must be truthful with one another as best we can, and I just had to have a woman. I know there's no conventional reason to ask your forgiveness, but I do. And I feel innocent, I confess. I hope you won't think that the next observation is facetious or in any way impinges on your work, but I have found that Alpha and Omega are indispensable as tools of understanding for the sexual relationship. Sex with love, or sex versus love, can be handled so naturally by your terminology. I even presume to say that at present my Alpha and Omega are most asymmetrically involved. Very little, or maybe no Omega is present in the act—a good, fine part of me cannot bear the woman, the prostitute, I have chosen. My Alpha, however, if Alpha is, as I assume, full of clay and low mundane grabby impulses, well, obviously, my Alpha is not wholly unengaged.

I went on with the letter, spinning careful false tales of the mood of the brothel and finally signed off, not knowing whether I felt vicious or wise in using my original if now unsent letter about Sally as a guide to the false tale, but I knew myself well enough to feel a certain contentment at my guile even as I was falling asleep. It occurred to me with the last of my drowsing spirits that I might not be as unlike my mother as I had once supposed.

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The Stable
Jan. 26

Dear Harry,

I was awfully annoyed by your last letter. It isn't the brothel. Of course, you have to explore some of the good and bad experiences these women have to offer. I confess that I did go into a silent tantrum of sheer envy at the way you men are free to explore your sexual curiosity and alter yourselves in the process. I hope not for the worse. Yet what is freedom ultimately but the right to take serious chances with one's soul? I do believe that somewhere in sexual excess—at least for good people, brave people—there is absolution. Am I babbling? Do I sound like that smelly old libertine, Rasputin? What a swath he would have cut with some of the Washington ladies I know!

At any rate, I'm still annoyed with you. First, for shipping off dubious pieces of jewelry whose history you are insensitive to, and now for coming in like an overfed bull to trample over my terminology. It left me grateful for the first time in moons that my theories, for all effective purposes, are sealed in TSS and I am no household name. Because I do not dare to think of how the nuances of Alpha and Omega would be crunched by the magazine public when even you expose a gross misconception of what it's all about.

I will lecture you, then, one more time. I promise not to go on too long. The key principle in Alpha and Omega is that they are not to be seen as the equivalent of containers for the psyche, the one to the left collecting whores and business routines and baseball games and drunken evenings, while the other broods on philosophy and reads your mail. That's the pitfall for everyone. They start to see it that way. As two carry-all bags. Put part of your experience into one, other part into the other.

Nothing to do with it. I am saying: Multiply by two the complexities of human personality. Postulate two complete and different persons in each of us. Each of these characters is more or less equally well developed. Trickier to grasp is that each is as complex and wholly elaborated as what we usually think of as

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a complete personality. So, Alpha and Omega can not only be neurotic, but possess the power to form vastly different neuroses. (That dire situation is, of course, reserved for terribly sick people.)

All right, I next postulate that one of them, Omega, originated in the ovum and so knows more about the mysteries—conception, birth, death, night, the moon, eternity, karma, ghosts, divinities, myths, magic, our primitive past, so on. The other, Alpha, creature of the forward-swimming energies of sperm, ambitious, blind to all but its own purpose, tends, of course, to be more oriented toward enterprise, technology, grinding the corn, repairing the mill, building the bridges between money and power, *und so weiter*.

Given these highly delineated and separate personalities of Alpha and Omega, we should be able, if we possess the skills—which, alas, we do not at present—to separate them out from the murky confusion with which we pretend to analyze individuals. In psychology, we try to understand patients by the aid of schemata that are equal to plumbing systems (Freud), or blunder about on the assumption there is only one psyche and it is oceanic (Jung). Harry, I am beginning to think that the world is filled with geniuses, but only a few survive. The rest perish in the desperation of having to repeat themselves. (Since I am certainly no genius, perhaps I will endure.) But I certainly must repeat, over and over, that Alpha and Omega are individual people. Each Alpha, each Omega, is different from all others. One Omega can be artistic, night-dwelling, a seer; another Omega can be Omega only in name, even as you can find a Sicilian, I suppose, with blue eyes, a cheerful manner, and blond hair. Ditto for Alpha. Sometimes Alpha and Omega borrow or steal each other's properties. They are, after all, wed together like the corporeal lobes of the brain. They can influence each other, or spend their lives in all-out strife for power over the other. The model is marriage. Or, if you prefer, the Republicans and the Democrats. Or the Czarists and the Bolsheviks—is that why the Russians tear themselves apart, and get drunk all the time? Your Chevi Fuertes is a superb example of Alpha and Omega in constant tug of war. You say it yourself when you remark that he is 51 percent with us and 49 percent against, and

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functioning in great depression. All right, sir, fundamental concepts in place, let us take up your whorehouse capers. "Very little or maybe no Omega is in the act," you write squiffily, as if you were a parson trying not to sniff his fingers after touching a dog turd. Then you are crass enough to go on about Alpha and his grabbies. God, you are a farce. Forgive me if I'm rude, but I'm also becoming aware of how irascible is the territorial imperative in me. So, don't make weak gropes at my terminology. The point about sex is that both Alpha and Omega enter the act and digest the separate experiences they receive. Indeed, they digest them as individually as two people at a play for an evening can sit side by side and come away with separate critical reactions. And somewhat different memories of what they saw. When you say, therefore, that Omega was not in the act, you reveal merely that in sexual matters, Alpha is ruling your ship with an iron hand. Alpha does not listen to any of Omega's variant interpretation of the experience. This is analogous to fascism. Your smug acceptance of a full half of sexual indifference in yourself is a way of stating that you, unbeknownst to yourself, are a sexual fascist. There, it's true, and I'm glad I said it.

Do you find me vengeful? I'm a mother now. Each time Christopher begins to scream in the middle of the night, and this has happened on several inexplicable occasions since your brooch popped up in the mail, I have been ready to curse you, and once almost did, but then didn't—curses are a serious matter with me.

An hour later—I've just fed Christopher
Now I'm fond of you again. I just gave Christopher the best of both my temperamental jugs, and he seemed to like it. We drew closer and closer and by the end were spanning little universes. His fingers kept tapping my breast like a fat man rubbing his own belly after a good meal. This never happened before.

Suddenly I realized I'm in debt to you. I was sweet with the baby because my nasties had been liberated by writing a letter bound to wound you in all your soft places. Well, as Hugh might say: It's time you toughened up.

I will reveal that I've been keeping a plum for you in abso-

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lute velvet wrappings. You won't believe how fortunate you are. Hugh and I decided a couple of weeks ago to find out a little more about your Chief of Station Designate, so we invited Howard Hunt, and his wife, Dorothy, to dinner. Oh, Lord and sweet peas, do I have stuff to tell you. Now, you must wait for the next letter. My husband's key is in the lock.

After midnight

Hugh, for once, is asleep ahead of me, and I want to present you with your plum.

Not instantly, however. You do need the background. You see, Howard and Dorothy were invited to dinner as part of the Montague Plan. Hugh never does anything without a reason. While this is certainly not one of his charms, I confess I'm amazed at how often he can get me to carry on like a loyal subaltern, considering how spoiled I was when we commenced our marriage. I do end up working away for his notions, grand or silly. In this case, concerning the Hunts, Hugh, while not about to admit it, did resent the now-legendary High Thursday when his peers came so close to pulling off their palace revolt. I've never talked to you about this, but there is an unspoken War of Succession going on as to who, eventually, will replace Allen. The old boy's gout is getting more frequent in its attacks.

The next question obviously is who will replace him? Is it to be a bang-juice paramilitary and propaganda specialist, a Wisner? Or Dick Bissell? Or, says Hugh to me, do we try to remember what we're all about, and continue to gather *intelligence*? Since we're not really supposed to fight those small nasty wars the Joint Chiefs are always looking to pass on to us, Hugh keeps tugging on that side of Allen which is responsive to espionage and counterespionage. Hugh feels the Russians are preparing deceptions on a grand scale, and the Berlin tunnel, for example, may have been stage-managed by a KGB mole in MI6 from the beginning. Of course, I don't know when my poor ice-climbing goat is going to find time to mine that Berlin mountain of files. He has so many urgent tasks. My father used to be a prodigious worker, but Hugh does put him to bed.

Yet, with all this work load, and me coming to term with Christopher last fall, why, no matter, "Let's have some candi-

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dates over to dinner," he said to me soon after the near-fiasco of the High Thursday.

In consequence, a group of worthies has been arriving in twos and fours for dinners twice weekly ever since you've been gone. Hugh's passion is to find someone in the line of succession who will be reasonably sympathetic to his purposes, and by now he has been able to take a look at just about all of the leading possibilities for the next Director. Poor Hugh. Having gotten everywhere by his excellence, he's now telling himself that he should play politics. He may be right. Once Allen goes, the Succession becomes all important to our Montague. Hugh's present role is perfect for his talents. Only a romantic like Allen Dulles could ever have set Hugh up in the role that Allen, if younger, would have chosen for himself. You spoke half-facetiously about GHOUL. Oh, dear boy, GHOUL! I've told Hugh a hundred times to change it to GATES or MANSIONS or MEWS, but no, his grottos call for GHOUL. Well, GHOUL is top-drawer. Am I drunk? I'm sipping a fair lot of sherry as I pen away on this. Hundred-year-old sherry makes me love the very wood of the table I'm writing on. So there we have Hugh and Allen with GHOUL—both boys got their wish. A *sanctum sanctorum* for two. GHOUL's outer office, however, contains scores of super-equipped specialty people with super-secret files all working for Hugh, one nonattributable step removed from Allen. They are ferreting out little trouble spots all over our Company universe, and Allen's successor must prove able to comprehend the value of GHOUL. So, Hugh invites people over to size them up, and his present but glum choice is Dickie Helms. Helms will never come down with two feet on one side of a dividing line until he's located all the shoes on either side. On the other hand, Helms will be inclined, thinks Hugh, to support the continued existence of GHOUL.

Well, by the time we used up every likely in-town GS-18, Hugh had developed a taste for the game and we started inviting some second-rank people to cast new light on the top-drawer faces. That was when I decided to put all this up for some use by my team. "Let's have Howard Hunt," I said.

"Do you mean E. Howard Hunt?" Hugh asked. "How will we address him? As E? E Howard? How Eee?" This is Hugh's

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private humor. That is why you never see public signs of it. He's about as funny as a hee-haw cowboy. Don't forget—Hugh, along with all else, could ride a mustang before his legs were long enough to reach the pedals on his kiddie bike. Just a Colorado cowboy.

I talked Hugh into inviting How Eee. Pointed out to my beau that Hunt was in on the Guatemala move. Hugh thinks that may yet prove to be the most catastrophic American victory of all. Smash an oxymoron, and you will encounter the Light! Yes, darling, *catastrophic victory*. Hugh feels it has pointed us in the wrong direction for decades to come. He wouldn't speak to Allen for weeks after the Agency, via Hunt and some of his pals, got Arbenz pushed out. So I had to talk Hugh into studying Mr. E. Howard Hunt, and wife.

Darling, I can't go on. I'm not being a bitch. I *will* finish tomorrow. Don't know why I got into the sherry. Yes, I do know. I'm revealing too much, and feel unfaithful to Hugh. But I do want secret letters from you and must pay the price. On that note, I excuse myself. Christopher is stirring.

K.

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January 28th, 1957

Harry Dear,

I didn't mail yesterday's letter until I could reread it. It's not as bad as I feared. Indiscreet, but didn't we agree to be just that?

Now, to the occasion. E. Howard Hunt. It's clear after the first five minutes that Hugh and I have invited to dinner a very ambitious man. Afterward, we agreed that if there's anything in

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the world Mr. Hunt wants in years to come, it is to be DCI. This desire is, I hope, more pathetic than frightening.

"No hard feelings, I hope," is the first bloody thing Hunt said as he came through the door.

"Dear boy," replied Hugh, though he can't be more than five years older, "no hard feelings about *what*?"

"The ruckus. I'm afraid I opened a bird bath for you on a certain Thursday."

"Howard," said Mrs. Hunt, "Hugh Montague may have thought of other matters since." She did it nicely. She's *tough*. Dark—I found out she's one-eighth Sioux—and determined. I wouldn't be surprised if she's the engine behind Howard's ambition.

Hugh could have left it there, but he's a pertinacious dog. Self-imposed civility is as agreeable to him as dysentery. "Why, Mrs. Hunt," he said, "Howard is right. I haven't stopped brooding. I assumed it was all part of a clockwork plot, and they wound Howard up."

Can you conceive of this conversation opening our evening? But Howard is *breezy*. "No sir," he replied, "I did it on my own. You are looking at an honest-to-God *espontáneo*. That's my vice."

"Have a drink," said Hugh, "we'll measure vices."

I was debating whether to booze a little—would the relaxation sweeten my milk more than the liquor would sour it? Afloat in such primary questions of motherhood, I hate the first twenty minutes of any of these evenings. But Hunt is a talker. By the time we sat down to dinner, I could see that this was his event-of-the-week. Harry, I have to tell you that in no way am I a snob except for the endless amusement of it. It is fun to observe a climber trying out new steps on the slippery slope. Nothing makes such people more nervous than to be observed, and of course, I'm not all that encouraging from my cat-bird seat. I offer an assortment of blank smiles.

Soon enough, he makes the mistake of bragging about his family background which is, in the main, New York State. Although I grew up in Cambridge, my father happens to be good old stock from Oneonta, N.Y., and that, while nothing to make you hold on to your hat, is still leagues above Hamburg, the

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particular suburb of Buffalo where the heraldic seat of the Hunts, bless all, was located. Now, Howard does have a few credentials. You may be certain he trots them out. His ancestor, Captain James Hunt, served in the Revolutionary War, and Hunt's Point in the Bronx is named after him. "That's so sweet," I say. Tomorrow I expect he will look up my pedigree and discover Maisie and the ancient relatives on the Mayflower.

Mr. Hunt goes on, and of course, the closer we listen, the more he swings on his own noose. It's a cruel business. He was kind of pleased with his family facts until they hit the light of our cold hearth. His father and mother, for instance, sang in the Cornell Glee Club.

"Oh," I say, "terrific. Your father must have loved Cornell."

"He did. One of the tragedies of his life is that I chose to go to Brown. He was the sort of man, however, never to express his disappointment."

"Good fellow," said Hugh.

"Yes. Dad, I warrant, is no fool. Said to me once, 'I'm on to your work, Howard. I didn't become a Thirty-Second Degree Mason for too little, did I?'"

"How odd," said Hugh, "My father was also a Shriner."

"Let's drink to that happy coincidence," said Howard.

"Why not?" said Hugh, "why not?" But I winced. Hugh never talks about his father. It brings back the fatal night. Of course, Hugh can ride right over such rocks without suffering visible scratches on the hull. "Yes," he said, "my father was a secretive man"—a sip of his wine—"and my mother." Second sip.

This warmed Howard. He knew he had been tendered some small favor by the master. I believe Hunt is not without psychic gifts. His next remark was certainly aware of sudden mortality as an appropriate topic. He began to talk about a plane crash. Last summer, the Hunts, scheduled to return to Washington from Tokyo, lost their sleeping bunks on the overnight passage due to a booking error. Since, as Howard put it, "I am not one to subject my family to inferior accommodations when the government has already coughed up *the stimulus* for proper treatment. I chose to postpone our departure inasmuch as a later

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flight did have bunks available. Lo, the discerning finger of Kismet!" concluded Howard in the mildest voice, as if to discount any outsize claim to magical selection. "Do you know, the first plane went down in the Pacific? All passengers lost."

I think there was a hint of special pride in the way he told the story, as if Providence peered through the smog of mankind long enough to spare E. Howard Hunt and family. After all, they do have large roles to play.

There it is. He isn't so much outrageously ambitious as filled with the idea that he's anointed. Be certain, therefore, in all your dealings with your new boss, not to lose sight of this belief he has in himself. If he weren't half attractive, the man would be intolerable. Too confident for too little.

Item: The Hunts occupied a house in Tokyo designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Not bad for a Chief of Covert Operations in North Asia. (Howard's highly titled job, so far as I could make out, consisted of propaganda, public relations, and leaving stink-bombs at Communist meetings.) Hunt, by the way, calls them Who-Me's.

"Who-Me's?" I ask.

"Yes," says Howard. "If they ask, 'Did you leave that odor?' you answer, 'Who? Me?'" He then laughs at his own explanation, with an involuntary whinny, a snaffling sort of sly skinny laugh. (I think he considers it the appropriate response to genteel humor about the anus.) I naturally am more interested in being given some idea of what it was like to live in a Frank Lloyd Wright house, but he doesn't respond directly to such questioning. His pleasure comes from the name: *Frank Lloyd Wright*. Goes on to describe the moon gate, the courtyard, the garden with granite shrines, and the deep lily pond. "It was, of course, lovely," said Howard, "but upon due consideration, and the assurance by the Japanese gardener that the lilies would eventually grow back, we pulled them out and converted the pond to a swimming pool that could serve the children."

"Didn't you hesitate," I asked Dorothy, "over the lilies?"

"Well, I did," she said.

"I didn't," he said. "Not as soon as I knew it was feasible. Not for a moment. Children's needs precede aesthetic considerations."

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As you can see, he's a bit of a menace. When he speaks of his daughter Lisa, for instance, it is all too often by her full name. Obviously likes the euphony of Lisa Tiffany Hunt. "Her birth," he tells us, "is inscribed in the Civil Register of Mexico City where she was born while I was establishing the first OPC station in that region for Frank Wisner. As a result, Lisa is on the Consular List of Americans born abroad, and belongs thereby to a special and insufficiently recognized natural club of birth."

Just as I've come to the conclusion that this is pretty heavy going—Consular List, my suffering little toe!—why, he crosses me up by adding in a faintly spiteful voice, "Of course, some Americans in foreign settings are just out for the oofah."

"Oofah?" I ask.

"Jack and stack. Stickum." When I am still blank, he translates, "The simoleons, the shekels." I remember that he's already spoken of money as "the stimulus." I expect he has an astonishing number of synonyms for good old filthy lucre. It seems he's not only anointed, but wistfully greedy, and all too keenly aware of the economic sacrifice we make in working for the Agency. He just can't figure out how he'll ever be oofy, and opulent.

All the same, I may be laughing at Howard Hunt a little too much. He can be as stuffy as turkey stuffing, but he's sly for all that. He's going to love having you on board. He even told Hugh that a friend of his at Brown had gone to St. Matthew's and was on the soccer team Hugh used to coach.

"I remember him," said Hugh. "Tried hard. Slow feet."

Living with a man in holy matrimony is analogous to taking a course in human mechanics. Hugh, I have discovered, has gears in his voice box. They tell me when he is ready to take over the conversation. "I hear you did a nice job of preparation in Guatemala," he now said.

"It killed me," answered Hunt, "to be taken out before the real op began, but the powers that be insisted my job had been accomplished and I was now needed in Japan."

"Well, the powers did lend you that Frank Lloyd Wright house for consolation," said Hugh.

"Hardly compensatory," said Hunt. "It's nettling to hear, far away in Tokyo, that your former assistant was actually invited

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over to the White House and congratulated by President Eisenhower for his fine work. Most of that fine work was mine."

"I heard from my more elevated sources"—Hugh's reliably effective reference to Allen—"that the President was effusive. 'To take that country with just a few hundred men! All that sleight-of-hand!'"

"I'm glad you can understand how I feel," said Hunt.

"Well, before we quaff the cup of eternal friendship," said Hugh, "let us put it to the test. What would you say if I remark that your famous operation was, in my opinion, a gross error. American interests would have been better served if we had allowed Arbenz to build up a little Communist state in Guatemala." For all his desire to play politics, Hugh is not capable of it.

"What you're saying," said Hunt, "seems awfully liberal to me."

"Say behind my back that I wish to bugger little boys, but do not suggest that I am liberal. I loathe the faintest emanation of Communism. It is a cancer in full metastasis on the body of the Western world."

"Hear, hear," said Hunt. "My sentiments are being most elegantly expressed. Aren't they, Dorothy?"

"Of course," she said.

"But, sir, if it is a cancer, why not operate on it? Whenever and wherever you can."

"Because each cancer is a study in its own anomaly," said Hugh, "and world Communism is a *weak* cancer. You see, Howard, it got into metastasis before it asked itself whether it was ready. It doesn't have the inner wherewithal to fight those cancer wars on every front. Guatemala was, potentially, a desperately expensive proposition for the Soviets. They would have had to invest in that country, supply it, and probably end up feeding it. Their economic system is altogether unsuited for such a job. A huge inefficiency would have been sent to succor a dwarf inefficiency. Why, we could have cost the Russians a pretty penny. And if they had been so foolish as to invest real force, we could have pulled off your surgical incision then. That would have exposed them to serious mockery around the world."

"Wouldn't it also increase the danger of a nuclear war?" asked Dorothy.

"Nuclear scenarios must never be linked to small-scale foreign operations. Nuclear war will come, if it ever does, from another factor altogether."

"Would you name it?" Dorothy asked.

"Despair. World despair. Nuclear war is mutual suicide. A husband and wife make a pact to kill themselves only when they believe they do not have the right to continue to exist. They are spoiling too much. Whereas, in the real world, no two countries are as vain as the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. Neither of us can believe for a moment that we could spoil anything. But if I decide that I am wonderful, and it's the other fellow who is the mess, I guarantee you, Mrs. Hunt, I will not embrace him in a deadly grip and jump off the fatal bridge. I will try to get rid of the beast by other means."

"By starving the Russians out?" she asked.

"Exactly. Exhaust their wherewithal. Entice them into places that use up Soviet energies to little avail. Just think of a million Red Army soldiers in Mexico. What chance would they have against us in a land war?"

"I wouldn't want the numbers to get that high in our backyard," said Hunt.

"They never would," said Hugh. "The Russians are not that stupid. Would we try to put a million soldiers into Eastern Europe? We certainly didn't make the move in Hungary, did we? Yet we can afford a serious war far better than the Soviets. I repeat. We should have left Guatemala alone. They would have built up a third-rate Communist state that would soon have been looking to us for aid."

"I can't agree, sir," said Hunt. "I believe we must shoot varmints between the eyes before they grow up to raid our crops. I hate Communist rats wherever I find them."

Harry, he was seized, as he said this, with the most peculiar intensity. His voice was as husky as a boy getting ready to kiss a girl, and if he felt close to murder, and I would say he did, it was as a virtuous, if not wholly manageable, emotion.

I saw it then. Do you know, Harry, I fear our lovely country has become a religion. Joe McCarthy only dipped his finger into

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the bowl of the new holy water. It's not the cross but the flag that is going to stir all those larger feelings people can't live without.

In any event, Hugh had heard enough by now to decide that Hunt could not be bent to any of his uses. So my husband diverted the conversation over to real estate values in Georgetown, about which Howard and Dorothy, as one might expect, knew a lot.

I keep thinking of you working with this odd, semi-inspired man as your future boss. I think Hunt is going to love you. Snobs on the slope always will. Before the evening was done, he let us know that Dorothy was not only one-eighth Oglala Sioux, but descended from the John Quincy Adams family on mother's side, and the Benjamin Harrison family on the father's end. (He made another point of saying, "*President Benjamin Harrison*"—I suppose this august name does not register for all.) "There," he might just as well have declaimed, "is our little tit to your fat tat, Miss Mayflower." Yes, Howard Hunt keeps his kickers for the end. Be sure to tell me all about him.

Yours,
Kittredge

10 | Hunt arrived in Montevideo in advance of Kittredge's letter, and I had formed my own impression by then.

Jan. 29, 1957

Dearest Kittredge,

Well, our new Chief of Station disembarked yesterday with his family, wife, two daughters, son, maid, and Cadillac from the SS *Rio Tunuyan*. Mayhew leaves in a week—which can't be too

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soon for any of us, including Mayhew. Long live the new Chief! God, Hunt and his wife, Dorothea, came in like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda. Twenty-two pieces of luggage, all monogrammed with an E.H.H., no less. Plus untold furniture and cartons. All this related to us by Gatsby (speak of serendipity), who was deputied to go with Mayhew to the pier and take him through Customs. (We would all have gone but Agency policy is, of course, not to call all that much attention to new arrivals.)

The Hunt entourage, staying at present in a suite at the Victoria Plaza, are already looking for an appropriate home in Montevideo's best suburb, Carrasco, ten miles out of town. Great changes are going to take place in the Station. We know that. Hunt appears quiet and affable, but stimulates a room by entering it. He is obviously, and with total happiness, full of himself. It's his first stint as COS.

Can't write any more at this point. Will finish tomorrow.

Harry

By the next day, however, her letter was in my hand, and I decided to wait on mine. We were considerably apart on Hunt, and I did not wish to receive another lecture. Station work, after all, had become more interesting from the day Hunt came in.

Even before Mayhew had departed (and that did not take the usual month, but was accomplished in seven working days), we had already learned that our new COS was going to be active among us. Indeed, he gave a full address to the troops, all six of us, counting Nancy Waterston, on the day after he landed, and we listened with rising hope as we sat in a semicircle around him in the office.

"Ever since I came back to Washington from Tokyo," said Hunt, "I've been studying this Station, and I can warrant that there will be changes. Before we get, however, down to analysis and rectification, I want you to know the Agency credentials of the man you will be working for. This is my first full Chief of Station slot, but I feel highly qualified and will lay out why. On graduation from Brown University in June 1940, I chose to enlist in the U.S. Naval Reserve, V-7 program, and after a speeded-up program at Annapolis, went out as a midshipman in

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February 1941, ten months before Pearl Harbor, on the destroyer *Mayo*. At sea, I suffered a combat-related injury climbing an ice-coated turret ladder during a general quarters alarm in the North Atlantic in early December 1941 and the injury was serious enough to give me an honorable medical discharge. Since I can see by your faces that you are ready for more intelligence, I will state that the injury was groin-related, but had no permanent effects. Praise the Lord, I can still pass the ammunition."

We laughed. Even Nancy Waterston. It might have been a small joke to others, but it was a large one to us. We already knew more about Hunt than we had ever learned about Mayhew.

"While recuperating, I wrote a novel, *East of Farewell*, which was accepted by Alfred A. Knopf, Publishers. Soon after, *Life* magazine named me their South Pacific war correspondent to replace John Hersey in such places as Bougainville and Guadalcanal. Back in New York in 1943, I enlisted in OCS, was commissioned, and not too long after, went into OSS training. Assigned to China, I flew over the Hump, and found myself in Kunming when the war ended. A stint of screenwriting in Hollywood soon followed, and from there I went to work on Averell Harriman's staff in Paris for the Marshall Plan, and before long was recruited by Frank Wisner to join the Office of Policy Coordination. Have any of you heard of a brilliant fellow named William F. Buckley, Jr., who's now chief editor of a magazine he founded himself, the *National Review*?"

We nodded.

"Good. It's worth being familiar with that magazine. Buckley was my assistant in Mexico, and damn good. Might be with us still if the magazine world had not called to him. After Mexico, I was posted in Washington as Chief of Covert Operations, Southeast Europe Division. That meant Desk at Headquarters and related trips to Athens, Frankfurt, Rome, and Cairo. Then, I was transferred to the Propaganda and Political Action Staff for the Guatemala op, where with three hundred men and—I will say it myself—a brilliant psychological and radio communications campaign, we succeeded in getting the Arbenz government to decamp. Moses designed the march into Israel, but he never got there. I, speaking as a poor man's Moses, also did not

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enjoy, at first hand, the fruits of my design. I was already en route to Tokyo to handle Covert Operations in North Asia Command, where I did my best to confound, confuse, dismay, and dishearten every effort of the Chinese Communists to spread their propaganda throughout Japan and South Korea.

"That brings us to the present. In Washington, at the Argentina-Uruguay Desk, I could not help but be aware that there's a feeling this Station is not a mainstream activity. Well, let me pass one bit of advice. There are no small jobs in our life. South America, in my opinion, is the land of musical chairs. You never know which leader is going to lose his seat next. Any Station in South America can become a center of high Agency focus. We are going to bring initiative, therefore, to the Uruguay Station of a like that has not been seen here. By the time we're done, the going remark back at Headquarters will be, 'Yessir, Uruguay is the tail that wags the South American dog.' "

We gathered around him afterward and pumped his hand. I recognized that I was happy. My desire to work was alive again.

March 5, 1957

Herrick,

Six weeks have gone by since my last letter. Are you now the rage of Montevideo, or just the King of the Brothels?

Please advise.

Kittredge

March 27, 1957

Dear Harry,

I detest owing money or favors to anyone. I loathe it even more when people I care about are in debt to me. Silence is the commencement of debt.

Kittredge Montague

April 5, 1957

Dear Kittredge,

Yes, yes, no and no, yes, no, and yes. You may pick any of

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the above answers to your questions. Yes, I am the king of the brothels, no, I am not; yes, Mr. Howard Hunt is mad about me, no, he is not; yes, I miss you, no, I don't; I'm too busy to think.

Take this as an apology and trust me. I will write a long letter in the next ten days.

Your own H.H.

p.s. I just realized that Howard Hunt, but for his beloved E, is also H.H., and God, are we different. Hugh, Harvey, Hunt, and Herrick Hubbard. I've always thought H was the most peculiar letter in English, and cite for evidence that the Cockneys never came to agreement with it, and they're a practical people. H is the silent presence in "ghost" and the capital proprietor of Heaven and Hell. It is half-silent as in half, and changes error to horror.

p.p.s. As you see, I'm as mad as you are.

I dispatched the letter before second thoughts could commence. Then I went back to my hotel room and tried to sleep, but the sheets reeked of Sally, formaldehyde, and me. She always left behind a strong odor of herself, half carnal and half grudged out of existence by her deodorants which didn't always take care of the job.

I hardly knew what to do about Sally. We were more intimate than our affection for each other. And my derelictions of duty were increasing. If Porringer was working triple-time under Hunt, I took time out from my own double-time to arrange a meeting with Chevi Fuertes which I knew would not take place. I had not notified him. Instead, I saw Sally. A week later, I did as much again. Professionally speaking, it was easy to conceal. Agents often missed meetings. Like horses, they bolted at the sight of a leaf blowing by. I had to file bogus reports, but they were routine, and bought two hours each time with Sally in my bedroom at the Cervantes. I, waiting for her, would have my clothes off, and my bathrobe on; she, knocking on the door with a tap followed by two taps, would be out of her shoes and off with her skirt even as we embraced in the first of her powerful

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kisses. "Glue sandwiches" I would have labeled them if not in the mood, but I was usually in the mood, and, naked in a streak, we grappled toward the bed, stealing handfuls of each other's flesh en route before diving down into the song of the bed-springs, her mouth engorging my cock. There are a hundred words, I suppose, for a penis, but cock is the one that goes with fellatio, and her open marriage with lust, abandonment, and sheer all-out hunger for Hubbard's Yankee prong gave that fellow a mind of his own, a hound off his leash, a brute pillaging the temple of her mouth, except who could call it a temple?—she had confessed to me in one of our postcopulatory conversations that from high school on, she had had a natural appetite, or was it thirst, for this outpost of the forbidden, and, God, it was out of control by the time she came to me.

I, in my turn, was developing tastes and inclinations I did not know I had. Before long, she was presenting her navel and pubic hair toward me, and I, facing the contradictory choices of domination or equality, found my own head reaching to explore her sandy, almost weedlike bush. I am cruel enough to mention how wild and scraggly it looked because that came to mean little. It was the avid mouth behind the hair that leaped out to a part of me that did not know it existed until I was licking and tonguing away with my own abandon which I had never known could belong to my critical lips until they opened into the sheer need I knew to jump across the gap from one bare-ass universe to the next. The only way I ever felt close to Sally Porringer was when her mouth was on my cock and my face was plastered into the canyon between her legs. Who could know what things we had to tell each other at such times? It was not love we exchanged, I expect, but all the old bruises and pinched-off desires—how much there was of that! Lust, I was deciding, had to be all the vast excitement of releasing the tons of mediocrity in oneself. (Then, afterward, when alone in my bed, I would wonder if new mediocrity had been ingested just as much as the old had been purged.) I was discovering that I had the gusto of a high school athlete and the chill estimates of a man so noble in perception of each unhappy nuance as T. S. Eliot.

Say this for the act. When we rose dripping from the sweet and sour mire of feeding on each other, my copulation came

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pounding happily out of me. To fuck fast was to throw one's heart into the breech and pound enough blood to the head to banish Thomas Stearns of the Eliot family. One gunned the motors of one's soul and the sugar of one's scrotum—what a joy to discover that Hubbards also secreted scrotum sugar—up, up, over the hill, and into the unchartable empyrean beyond. That vision seemed to disappear almost as soon as it afforded its glimpse. I would be happy for a while to know I was a man and that she wanted me and I gave her pleasure. Soon enough she would be stirring once more. She was not insatiable, but near enough. By the third time, I would be thinking again of Lenny Bruce, and the worst of all this passion was not its successive blunting, but the knowledge that when we were done, we would not know how to talk. We were about as essentially happy with each other in this situation as two strangers who attempt to make conversation on a train.

Whatever the shortcomings, two days later, I would want her again. It was hardly an environment in which to write to Kittredge, but some jobs have to be done.

April 10, 1957

Dearest Kittredge,

Your delineation of Howard Hunt was of no uncertain help to me, even if I plead guilty to being the clod who did not acknowledge this earlier. But, Lord, angel, I have been busy. You have had a glimpse of the social side of EH2 (which is what we call Mr. E. Howard H. on occasions when he is not around) but we have been living with the professional end of the man, and he is a martinet for work. That is, the work he inspires us to perform. He takes a lot of time off to play golf, and hunt and fish. We, in turn, have to end up suspending judgement, because his outside recreation is invariably with important Uruguayans. Having taken over Minot Mayhew's role, he stands in as nominal First Secretary of the Embassy at all those diplomatic functions, which, if you remember, Mayhew used to pass on to Sondstrom, Porringer, and myself. So, that's one change. Howard and Dorothy (who handles social credits and debits like a chief auditor, and manages the Embassy party life with skill compara-

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ble to any admiral steering the fleet) have already taken over an astonishingly large part of Montevideo society. We worked and scraped under Mayhew (via Sonderstrom) to eke out a few useful relationships, but Hunt puts all this to shame. He is off every weekend at some large *estancia* in the pampas hunting for *perdiz* and working his American charm on very rich landowners. As a small corollary of this, he's thrown out the old intriguing AV/AVAILABLE and AV/IARY style of cryptonymming (if you'll forgive my coining one more awful word) and has announced that any term we desire can now follow AV. His saddlebags, for example, come in as AV/HACENDADO. It's a great switch for us traditionalists down here, but, do you know, he's right. There aren't that many AV words left, and according to Hunt, we're going to need plenty for the operations he plans to set up.

Needless to say, most of the new ops are still in the planning stage, but I mock him not. He laid out his credentials first day in the office. Normally one would get tired of listening to a man talk about his deeds, but Hunt left me feeling wistful for my own lack of an exciting life. While I know he can't have done as much as Cal or Hugh, by God, he has had adventures and served in interesting places. All the envy I felt as an adolescent that I missed the OSS has come back. Hunt made me realize how young I am, and how much life experience you need to be a proper Chief of Station. So I ate up what he had to tell us. Kittredge, if you want to comprehend our scene here, forbear quick criticism. Men are more impressed by an action-filled life than women.

On the second week after taking over, Howard made another speech to the effect that there was a power elite in Uruguay whom he had to cultivate: "There may be times when you will think I came down here on good Company money to hunt and fish up a storm for myself. Nothing is farther from the truth. I want you to trust me, so I'll be frank. Yes, I do take pleasure in hunting and fishing. But, get it straight, men. These influential Uruguayans are also rod and gun folk. They like a man who can ride and shoot with them. A man who can bring in a fighting fish on sporting line. Hell, I may even go up to the Argentine Andes to ski with them come this July. But know what I'm up to. Envy is poison in a Station, so fix on this fact: A Station Chief is always

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working. In the midst of any social gathering, no matter how prestigious, I will be pursuing Company business. End of sermon, gentlemen. Gather round. I have a small assignment for you." Whereupon, he handed out copies of the same communication to all of us. It read:

NGECL	RBNEL	XYEDE	LYNYE	SYRPJ
NJLVS	BFYED	BXNBF	DOLPN	UDBUS
BULZE	YSGGD	NPZVD	MORYE	ILPLU

Kittredge, that's not even half—there are thirty-six of these five-letter groups—but I promise you, I'm tired of copying it. He wouldn't give us a one-time pad, said it was a clear one-for-specific-one, and we could work it out on the periodicity of the letters. "The text deserves it," he said. "Lose an hour this afternoon, and learn again what we're all about."

Well, you know, we were rusty. A clear one-for-one is not hard to decode, but it takes time. Porringer and Kearns were the driving force, and I put in my share. Sonderstrom sat in the corner and looked like he was going to have a stroke. I have never seen Gus' face so red. He's all thumbs on deciphering—even hates to use the Encoder-Decoder—and, of course, we did not have the use of one for this. Our COS had given us back-to-school homework.

Here was the readout:

IFTHE	UNITE	DSTAT	ESIST	OSURV
IVELO	NGSTA	NDING	AMERI	CANCO
NCEPT	SOFFA	IRPLA	YMUST	BEREC

And here again, enough is enough. When we were done, Porringer insisted on reading aloud. *"If the United States is to survive, longstanding concepts of fair play must be reconsidered. We must develop effective espionage and counterespionage services and must learn to subvert, sabotage, and destroy our enemies by more clever, more sophisticated, and more effective methods than those used against us."*

"My Aunt Mary," said Sonderstrom, "he had us decoding the Doolittle Report."

Kittredge, can you imagine? Who among us is not familiar

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with such holy text, but Howard had us picking up the peas with a knife. Next morning, on the wall above each of our desks, Nancy Waterston, following his order, had tacked an eight-by-ten piece of white cardboard to the wall of each of our cubicles with the five-letter groups, all thirty-six, neatly typed. Presumably, we are to do our work for the rest of our two or three years here with the Doolittle Report staring at us in that Simple-Simon code. I didn't know whether Hunt was a genius in the making, or a third-rate malefactor. The Doolittle Report! We had fun over beer that evening. "I promise to subvert, sabotage, and destroy our enemies," one of us would begin, "by more clever, more sophisticated, and more effective methods," the second would take up, "than those used against us," would solemnly conclude the third. After which, Porringer, Kearns, and myself would solemnly recite, "Why ell are why ell—eks dee eff dee en—be why ee are why," which is how the letters in the last three five-letter groups do sound. Barbarically collegiate, I know, but we were having fun. I even liked Porringer. He is an incisive type. He told me, "Sonderstrom is looking to get relocated."

"How do you know?"

"I know."

That was over two months ago—oh, Kittredge, I see now how long it's been!—and I can only tell you that Porringer was absolutely right. Four weeks after Hunt came down to us from the Great White North, Sonderstrom managed to get himself transferred to Angola. It was tough on his wife, a fat Irish lady who hates hot climates and loves to sit on stuffed sofas—the wicker of cool African furniture is going to leave a checkerboard on her bland buttocks, I fear—but Angola was the only place that could use a Deputy COS immediately, and Sonderstrom has, he tells us, a real shot to move up to COS at the same Station after a year. Poor Sonderstrom. I'm not sure he has a real shot. He speaks no Angolese—whatever it's called. And once he thought he would replace Mayhew. I've come to recognize how tough the Company can be, which is, of course, as it should be. In any event, I'm now not so much impressed by Porringer's acumen as depressed by my lack of same. Of course Sonderstrom would look to move. Hunt has taken over all his functions, golf and social work, plus all the things Gus didn't and

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couldn't do, such as cultivating very rich ranch owners in the pampas. Moreover, it was clear by the end of Hunt's first month that he had struck up a tighter, tougher relationship with Salvador Capablanca (the untrustworthy Chief of Police of the Gómez adventure, remember?) than Sonderstrom ever did. According to Porringer, Hunt seized the nettle. Took the Police Chief out to lunch, as any First Secretary of the American Embassy might (remember—this is Hunt's cover title), but right after coffee, in answer to Capablanca's condescending, "Mr. Secretary, now tell me, sir, how can one be of service for you?" Hunt replied, "Easy, Salvador, just tap a couple of embassy lines for me. Soviet, Polish, East German, Czech. That should be enough for starters."

Porringer says Capablanca lost his poise.

"Oh, then . . ." he said, "oh, then . . . you are . . ."

"Yes, I'm CIA," said Hunt. "You don't think I really look like one of those flapdoodles in the State Department, do you?" *Flapdoodle* was apparently one great choice of a word. Capablanca laughed as much as if he were having lunch with Bob Hope. (Incidentally, that's what Hunt's ski-jump nose reminds me of—Bob Hope!) But Porringer says Capablanca only laughed so much because he was frightened. Our CIA reputation casts a long shadow. Even the Chief of Police down here thinks we're capable of disposing of people by a snap of our fingers. (Just as well they don't know how relatively law-abiding we are.) In any case, Hunt was playing on such fear. Next thing he said was: "Señor Capablanca, as you well know, such taps can be put in mit or mitout."

"Mit or mitout? Would you explain, Señor Hunt?"

"Mit or mitout your help."

"Oh, I see." Capablanca laughed again.

"But if we do it together, the take can be shared."

"I would have to tell President Batlle."

"*Cómo no*," said Howard, and they shook hands over that.

On the drive back, Hunt listened carefully to Porringer. Oatsie's read was that Batlle would be too anti-American to cooperate, but too spineless to get in the way of our taps. However, the Deputy Chief of Police, Peones, who was also at the lunch, was ready to be recruited. Porringer told Hunt that he

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had been working on Peones for nine months. (Why does it always take nine months to make an agent? Another one of our Station jokes.) Hunt shook Porringer's hand solemnly. "That will be one A-OK coup," he said. In fact, Kittredge, it now is. Peones has been in the fold since February. Brownie points for Porringer.

After this lunch, Sonderstrom hastened his departure. He and Hunt were civil to one another, but they were not in tune. Now the Sonderstroms are gone and Porringer is, at present, Acting Deputy COS, and expects to take real title. His scrupulosity on detail and inside political savvy will back-stop Howard nicely.

Incidentally, I spent an interesting evening at Porringer's home just a couple of weeks ago. His wife is a serious bridge player, and in the States was working on her National Tournament Rating. Marooned here, she has joined a bridge club in Montevideo, which forces her to learn basic Spanish—"Yo declaro tres corazones!" The Porringers brought in a member of Sally's local group for my date, a dolorous, much-wrinkled duenna of seventy or seventy-five who spoke passable English, and played real hot cards. I do an acceptable college rubber, and Porringer is slightly better, but that was the size of the evening. I pass, you notice, quickly over the meal. Sally is, alas, no cook, and we had pot roast that tasted like boiled beef in dishwater, sort of reminiscent of the old St. Matthew's grub. Later, during bridge, the kids would stir once in a while in their all-American bedroom, bunk-bed small, and stuffed with half-broken toys as I discovered when sitting it out as dummy and thereby being the one free to walk the youngest back to her bed after she woke up for the usual nocturnal and fluvial reasons. Why do I tell you all this? It's just that our American domesticity is so strange to me that I look upon it as Martian. (Confession: I envisaged Christopher's bedroom in a few years. Please: no broken toys.)

The banality of the Porringer evening was relieved by one astonishing insight into Sherman. His house looks as you would expect—gray drapes, and blonde-wood furniture, formica dining table and chairs, unpainted stack shelves jammed with books and papers—exactly the way a Midwestern graduate student's apartment figures to shape up. Even a rug made of straw squares

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sewn together. And frayed. They brought all their furniture with them from Washington because it's shipped at Company expense. (That gave me a sense of all our modest U.S. families deployed around the globe.) At any rate, in the midst of this predictable household, is one glass case with eight hand-painted eggs within. They're remarkably well done. A vista of tree and pond wraps around the shell in one. Another is a gothic castle with moonlight shimmering through a purple forest; they all are separate and exceptional—painted by someone who can use those fine brushes with one or two hairs. Then I learn they are in the glass case because, Sally tells us, Sherman has carefully sucked out the egg by way of a tiny hole he drilled. Once that is accomplished, he paints the fragile surface. Enjoys the risk of it. You can lose all you've put in with one careless move. "Would you like to see these gorgeous things up close?" asks Sally.

Well, prepare yourself for the horror. Even as Sherman is passing the first of his eggs to me, said object falls between our fingers to shatter on the floor. I feel as if a baby bird has just croaked. Kittredge, there are clumsy accidents, and there are what I would call third-force accidents. This was in the latter category. The eggshell left his hand and I swear it took its own willful flip into space.

Well, I apologized till I felt as if I were chewing aspirin, and he kept shrugging it off. A bull rage was stirring so deep in him that it will just bury another piece of his much suppressed soul. I'm sure five, if not ten, hours of immaculate work were lost, and nothing to do about it. He said at the end of a long time for me, but short enough, I suppose, for him to get his sentiments in harness again—"Well, don't feel too bad. It's my least favorite egg. I always take it out first if strangers are going to handle the stuff." Given the circumstances, I must admit Porringer was being gracious. His blue-black shaven cheeks looked as funereal as the occasion.

It's late, and I can't possibly send a letter off which ends on a note like this. So will hold, and write more tomorrow, and mail you that.

Your indentured servant,
H2

11 |

April 11, 1957

I can't imagine why I told the awful egg story, except I do know. Even as I write this to you, the reason comes home. It was the sound of the egg as it struck their tile floor. Being just an empty shell, it made the softest, saddest little sound on breaking. I can't get that out of my head. Once on a High Thursday, Hugh told us of an ancient Egyptian saying that the difference between the truth and a lie weighs no more than a feather.

Enough! The exciting news is that we now have an Observation Post right next to the Russian Embassy, and this is as major-league as we have been able to get. Once again, credit is due to Porringer, since the OP comes to us by way of Peones, yet the action derives from Howard's efforts to wake us up. I have not described Peones, but you would hate him. He's heavy, very vain, half Spanish, half Italian, and built to endure. Medium height, with massive shoulders and legs. Large black mustache. Frankly, he's swarthy. Gives off an animal odor that he covers with scent. Peones knows all the brothels in Montevideo and scouts them for new talent the way an assistant college coach will go out to high school football games to look for recruitments. Well, Porringer, I've learned, is something of a brothelmaniac himself. Much more than I ever was, so quiet all contumely. I've settled down. I'm frankly working too hard. But Porringer and Peones became friends by running together from brothel to brothel. It's not the most discreet way to develop an agent, but in this case was a dependable means of stoking a relationship. And please don't say *poor Sally Porringer*. I'm sure Sherman has his reasons.

About three months ago, Oatsie made the pass on Peones. Here is the background: Peones not only hates Capablanca, but systematically had been deluding him about Sonderstrom and Porringer. Kept insisting they were bona fide State Department. Conceive of his embarrassment (and Oatsie's) when Howard popped out with the direct admission to Capablanca that the lunch was under the auspices of the Intelligence Agency from the Colossus of the North. Peones was mad as hell after that

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lunch, but Porringer showed his skills. "Face it, Pedro," he told him—Peones' full name is, yes, Pedro Peones—"we've been working on you for months and you never join us. I tried to hold my Chief back but he's impatient. He wants to know straight out—how much is joining us worth to you?"

"We have a saying," said Peones. "Money buys everything but integrity."

"We say: Every man has his price."

"Mine is concealed. It is sequestered."

"Where might it be sequestered?"

"Why, I tell you, Sherman, it is a little secret, but I tell you: It is sequestered in my *cajones*."

Kittredge, I did not believe this conversation when Porringer recounted it. Pedro Peones' price was located in his no doubt massive testicles. There was, it seems, a girl in the brothels of Montevideo who was so beautiful and so talented that she had gone to Havana a couple of years ago to make her fortune. Now, she had become a legend from the Caribbean to South America. Her name—the working name, that is—comes to no less than Libertad La Lengua (which in loose translation does not signify Freedom of Speech nearly so much as "Ah, Freedom—your tongue!").

Libertad, it appears, has been corresponding lately with Peones. She is the love of his life. If the Central Intelligence Agency would bring her back from Havana to Montevideo—of her own free will, of course—he is ready to serve. Much of Uruguay, via Peones, would be at our disposal: selected government officials, individual dossiers, the telephone company, Embassy Row, and police informers in left organizations. Peones finishes by saying in English, "My country is yours."

Porringer carried the offer back to the Station. Peones' promises are vast, but can he be trusted to deliver? Once the girl is here, what if he fails to come through? Moreover, can we afford it? If she is doing all that well in Havana, her shift of venue may prove expensive. No, Peones promises, the cost will not be prohibitive. The girl sincerely desires to return to him. It is a true love affair, he tells Porringer.

Moreover, says Pedro, we will have to bear no more than the transportation costs. Once she is here, he will establish her

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in one of several fine properties he already commands. She will be Super-Deluxe. La Montevideana.

So a good deal of cable traffic has gone into these projected costs. It may not be as fearful, economically speaking, as we anticipated. (Two thousand dollars will get the girl here, bag and baggage, first class, bonus included.) Moreover, EH2 knows his way around the appropriate fields in Foggy Bottom. I soon learn that where one COS will get empty pockets on the return cable, another, like Howard, will come up with the kale. You're right. Hunt does talk about money all the time, and has more synonyms for checks and cash than anyone I ever met. "Does Libertad have any idea how many stick-em-ups it will take to transport her butt down here?" is one of his remarks. "Lettuce," he calls the stuff, and "frogskins," "cartwheels" (for silver dollars, I find out), and "farthings." "Bawbees," "tanners," "bal-boas," "bolivars." It's fun when he gets going.

To my surprise, the biggest impediment is Havana Station. Howard suspects that Caribbean Desk has been using Libertad for specific assignments, but he knows how to pull a few strings on the I-J-K-L harp, and the impasse is adjudicated. We get her. We only wonder a little why did Havana tried to throw all that sand into the gears.

Anyway, Pedro is so happy that we now have a new term around the Station for extreme emotional states: it is *Delirium Peones*. In successive fits of generosity—since the girl has not as yet arrived—Pedro has already installed a tap on the phone lines of his detested superior, Salvador Capablanca. Our listening post immediately gives us the confirmation we need—Luis Batlle, President of Uruguay, is even more pro-Soviet than anticipated. Capablanca is completely his boy. We divined that already, but confirmation is to divination as a good meal to an empty belly.

Then comes the super-coup. After the confirmation cable that Liberated was definitively en route, Peones made a short speech to Porringer. "Sherman," he said, "I am a man who lives by my values. The highest value a man can possess is to be a *caballero*. You will soon see what a *caballero* you have found in me."

Do you know, he was as good as his word? He had a prize

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prepared. Over a year ago he had obtained a lease on a villa situated next to the Russian Embassy on Bulevar España. These last twelve months, Peones chose to make no money on the rents—merely took in enough to pay his expenses from a family who, in return for the low rental, had agreed to move out on a week's notice. His instinct was certainly acute enough to know that we would give much to be able to put some of our own people into such a building, but he took no steps until he knew that we trusted him enough to bring his Libertad back to Montevideo.

If Sonderstrom were still here, he would be dubious of this prize, and Hugh would approach it as a tainted sweetmeat. Even Gatsby and Kearns spoke up. What if the villa next to the Russian Embassy is already wired by the KGB, and Peones has suckered us in?

Hunt cuts through such arguments. "We'll only use the house as a lookout post on the Soviet garden until a few security people are flown down to check it out. Why, even if the Russians have bugged the villa, they are not going to hear anything of value."

No, we decide, not if we put the right people in. They must be people who know nothing of our business yet will be patient enough to sit for hours behind the window curtains, always ready to turn on our Bolex H-16 movie camera should someone enter or leave the Embassy. While it is getting late for outdoor parties, the weather here in April is warmer than Washington in October, so there figure to be a few gatherings in the garden underneath our side windows before cold weather sets in. Obviously, we have to find the proper tenants pronto. But, where do we get them? We don't want to rely on Peones for this.

Hunt decides to collar Gordy Morewood, and soon we have a father and mother installed in the villa with their thirty-year-old daughter. They're vintage Jewish refugees from the Nazis and came to Montevideo in 1935 or thereabouts. Their name is Bosqueverde, which is changed from the original German, I assume. Grunewald may have been the original. Never altered Hyman to Jaime, however. So it's Hyman Bosqueverde, and his wife is Rosa. Daughter is Greta. They call her Gretel. They are a timid, very retiring couple with a shy, plain daughter, but very

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close to one another. If the daughter sneezes, the mother shivers. I know all this because Howard has made me their Support Officer.

You see, none of us dare speak to the Bosqueverdes in English (a pity since their English is not bad) but it would be a total giveaway if the KGB had miked the villa. The solution, therefore, was to use me. While my German is not great, I believe I can get away with laying a heavy Spanish accent over it. We hope the assumption will be—if, that is, the KGB is listening—that I'm some Spanish friend of the Bosqueverdes trying to improve his accent.

At any rate, my duties here are simple and small. In return for living in the villa rent-free, the Bosqueverdes are obliged to keep someone near the movie camera and tripod from six in the morning until dark. Since the daughter works as a librarian, I assume she puts in less hours than the parents. I visit every third or fourth night to bring over new film and carry back exposed reels. We get the take developed in a safe lab, and I then put in my hours with a movie projector and screen studying the arrivals and departures from the front gate of the Soviet Embassy, ready to attach a new number to each new face. Then the film is pouched up to Cockroach Alley where Soviet Russia Division has the capacity to recognize faces and attach dossiers to them. As we receive their findings, life becomes more interesting. One of the faces, for example, belonged to a high-level KGB man. He came to the Embassy a couple of times, left again on each occasion after a half-hour visit, and then flew back to Paris, which we were able to determine via AV/OUCH-2 in Passport Control. Of course, we don't know why he made his visit, but SR Division has one more straw for their giant nest.

The garden parties are another matter. Two have been photographed so far, and I run the reels with as much absorption as if I am sitting on the bank of a lake at evening and can't stop studying the light on the water. It's a curious image to use because the Bosqueverdes are not skillful photographers, and the result is close to bad home movies with a telephoto lens thrown in. The pans are abrupt enough to make you feel as if a wrestler is throwing you half across the ring. Still, I study the footage over and over for clues to Soviet Embassy personnel

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relationships, and can't begin to tell you how absorbing that is. I feel as if I'm watching a film by Roberto Rossellini. I'm tempted to relate more, but would rather wait until the next garden party, which is scheduled for this Saturday. Personnel from the American Embassy have actually been invited, and while the Ambassador won't go, Hunt may fill in for him as First Secretary, and I could be brought along as Assistant to the First Secretary. How surrealistically splendid it will be if I am present at the party talking to Russians, knowing all the while that I will be able to study them later at leisure. Howard is weighing the pros and cons. He is afraid that if they are indeed tapping the villa they may recognize my voice. I'll give you his conclusion next week.

For now, let me describe our tenants. They live, as I say, rent-free, and Hyman ekes out his income by giving Hebrew lessons to a few young Jewish pupils who are getting ready for their Bar-Mitzvah. Apparently there is a substantial Jewish community in Montevideo. I am absolutely fascinated by these Bosqueverdes. They are the first Jewish family I have ever visited, and everything they do is of interest to me. Almost always when I go over at night, they are drinking tea in glasses, and often are eating some kind of light supper. Sometimes it's cold herring in sour cream with onions, and the smell, while not disagreeable, does permeate the room. They always offer me food and I always refuse it (since my instructions are to get into no long conversations with them and certainly no verbal transactions about reels and equipment. They know enough to hand over the product silently.)

Sometimes one of Hyman Bosqueverde's students will be studying with the old man in an alcove removed from the camera, and I listen to the mutual recital of Hebrew as if all the words are magical. The man and the boy both wear skullcaps, and that seems equally arcane to me. Think of it! They are getting ready for a Bar-Mitzvah in the midst of all this. As I go out, the old lady buttonholes me near the foyer and whispers directly into my ear in a strong German-Jewish accent, "Please, you should take the best care of Mr. Morewood. He works so hard for you."

"Ja," I say, "sí, ja," and I smile and leave with the exposed

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reels rattling in my paper bag. (Which also has a loaf of bread sticking out of it.) And I am back on the street and sauntering along for three blocks to my pool car, taking a couple of leisurely stops en route to see if perchance I'm being followed. So far—*nichts!* Good enough. I have the feeling that the villa is not tapped. The Sovietskys simply don't feel the need to keep up to anything like their standards in Berlin.

On the drive to my hotel I keep thinking about the Jews. They are only one-eighth of me but I have this peculiar whole response to them.

Time for bed. Give my love to my godson, and to you and yours.

Harry

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April 14, 1957

Dearest Kittredge,

The garden party is tomorrow and Hunt has decided that I'm the one to go with him. No doubt about it, he's bold, and I'm pleased. I know the terrain, I've done the chores, and now I'm entitled to the reward. Of course, I'll have to be three times as cautious in future when dropping in on the Bosqueverdes, or else turn the visits over to Kearns or Gatsby (who are, incidentally, jealous of Hunt's growing fondness for me—you were certainly right about that) but, on balance, I'm pleased. To sip cocktails behind the enemy's garden walls—how many can speak of such an experience?

As a result, work hung heavy today, and I left early, and now find an urge to write to you again. There are so many sides to

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my job that I feel as if I'm only giving you the most partial glimpses. From the day he came in, for instance, Hunt was fascinated by my work with AV/ALANCHE. Before long, he was giving me slogans to pass on to the gang. Howard wants to see in letters five feet high such declarations as *MARXISMO ES ODIOSO*, or—a real blockbuster—*MARXISMO ES MIERDA*.

"Howard," I tell him, "I don't believe those kids will want to put *mierda* up. They may be slum children, but they're strait-laced about such stuff."

"Scatology," says Howard. "has a hell of an impact in poor countries. Let me tell you what the Chinese did to the Japs during the war." And he provided a long tale about the OSS giving stink-bomb spray dispensers to Chinese kids who would sneak up on Japanese officers taking a stroll and loose the littlest squirt on their pants. Five minutes later, the officer smelled as if he had been bathing in dung. "What a loss of face for the Japs," said EH2.

"Yes," I say, "that's quite a story." He senses my resistance and lets it go for the time being.

All the same, he is rash. He is trying to get me to accelerate Chevi Fuertes' efforts, and I resist. Chevi is coming along nicely with me. For my devoted readers back in the Groogs, I have developed a fairly detailed picture of the top PCU personnel, and which PCU factions have clout with which unions, etc. Porringer, who has kept on the labor scene these last two years, claims my stuff is good but hardly new—I'd hate to think this is repayment for the broken egg. In any event, Howard now wants me to push Chevi to install a couple of sneakies into the inner office of the PCU. That's no huge job. One has only to replace the present old-fashioned electrical wall outlets (which look like white porcelain door knobs) with new outlets, built to look exactly the same but containing miniature microphone and transmitter within. Gatsby has managed to rent a listening post in an office building near enough to PCU headquarters to pick up these limited-range transmissions. So Hunt says the job is in place and all we're waiting for is Chevi to bring his screwdriver.

The trouble is that the office is well guarded. Chevi draws guard duty once a week in the inner office. He and a fellow Communist camp out there for the night. Since the PCU is

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certainly paranoid about security, neither man is supposed to leave the other alone. They don't even go down the hall to the bathroom. A bucket is left for them. This rule, however, is there to be broken. Once a night, Chevi's companion will pay a ten-minute visit to the loo. That can be counted on. In these ten minutes, Chevi could substitute our porcelain outlet for the other. But if it goes wrong, I don't want to think of what would happen to Fuertes. I'm not certain they'd hurt him physically, but, at the least, he's ruined among his own people forever. (In a sense, he is already, to himself.) Of course, I also have to consider whether I'm being too protective of my agent. That is as bad as being too reckless. In any event, the pressure is on to push Fuertes, and I believe I will. Hunt wants us to get moving in every direction. For instance, Gatsby, under Sherman's tutelage, has taken over Porringer's relations with a centrist labor union that has been keeping us informed on several left-wing unions. Hunt wants more. "We're here to war on the Reds," he says, "not to monitor their social progress." So Gatsby has been pushed into using stink-bombs. A couple of left-wing meetings have been broken up lately by right-wing students whom Gatsby (with an assist from Gordy Morewood) recruited over the last three months. Hunt insists there's double mileage in the use of Who-Me's. "It makes the recipient feel infantile. Helpless infants live in the midst of such smells. So, it deprives these labor leaders of some of their ability to take themselves seriously. That's a vital blow to a labor leader."

Gatsby, whom I don't believe I've described to you, is sandy-haired, scrub-featured, freckled, and, in a word, not very describable. He was never exactly noticeable, not even with a mustache that happened to be dark enough to contrast with his light hair. But Hunt convinced him to shave it off. Now he is truly inconspicuous.

Last note on stink-bombs. AV/ALANCHE-1 through 7 have been armed with pellets. Hunt claims these Who-Me's will beef up morale for my kids. To my surprise, it does. Last time AV/ALANCHE 1-7 went out, they actually got into a pitched battle with a left-wing gang they had been wary of before, but the pellets apparently did the job. On their next sally, they intend to paint MARXISMO ES MIERDA on a warehouse wall near

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the center of town.

The *next sally* reminds me that the Porringers are also going to the Soviet garden party. I feel like Anthony Trollope. Will Herrick Hubbard convince Mrs. Porringer to dance with the Russians?

Your own Harry

April 15, 1957

Kittredge,

I wish I hadn't dispatched that letter yesterday. Now you are expecting news I can't offer. The Russians called off their garden party. The excuse is that their *residentura*, Samoilov, is ill with flu. It's nonsense. We know better. A quick check with the Bosqueverdes confirmed that Samoilov has been in and out of the Embassy several times this morning.

Whom, you may ask, do we dare to send to the Bosqueverdes' door in broad daylight? It's an ingenious piece of work—another nice touch from the unpopular Mr. Morewood. Gordy calls on a twelve-year-old nephew of the Bosqueverdes whenever he wants Hyman to come out to a pay phone. Since the boy lives near the villa, he merely saunters over in his skull-cap to pay, ostensibly, a visit to his Hebrew teacher. Of such *pointillism* is the complete spy's palette. I wish one could like Gordy more—there is so much to learn from him.

By such means, Hyman Bosqueverde did relay to us the news that Samoilov was walking about and healthy. Why the party was canceled we cannot answer yet. We notified the Groogs who took it up with Soviet Russia Division. Their analysis is that Khrushchev's friendly gestures of late toward the West are intended to slow down the nuclear buildup in NATO. The invitation to us here in Montevideo was one of the far-flung expressions of such a gambit. Something, however, went wrong overnight, and they pulled back the olive branch. A worldwide checkout on Soviet Embassy parties reveals that the Montevideo bash, plus a party in Johannesburg to which our Embassy people were also invited, seem to have been the only two canceled.

Our best readout after a three-way cable interchange is that the Russians were indicating that a minor, not a major chill, is

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taking place. As evidence, the entire party was called off, which is far better, on balance, than merely disinventing the American Embassy. God, what a way to waste a day. I'm at raw ends. And Barry Kearns is in a worse state. He had to spend the entire morning and afternoon on the Encoder-Decoder with Soviet Russia Division. When Kearns makes even the smallest error in routing, which is not hard to do, the Sourballs become awfully nasty. (Merely to reach them, however, calls for invoking an entry code that changes with the hour.) Kearns forgot that Washington, of late on Daylight Saving Time, is no longer sixty minutes behind us—well, contemplate the return vituperations. Kearns' error cost the Sourballs some ninety minutes in the Great Bin of Lost Messages until they located his cable. Here is part of their reply:

NEXTT IMESH OWYOU RCERT IFICA
TEOFI DIOCY

I'll spare you the rest of that billet-doux. The SR Division has to be composed of thick-spectacled creatures with half-bald heads, woodpecker noses, and wholly splenetic dispositions.

Poor Kearns. I haven't described him to you, but he's our misfit. Six-four, he weighs much too much, maybe one of the heaviest people in the Agency, lardlike, even soft. I don't know how he played golf for Sonderstrom, although I hear he had some ability to drive a long ball and was a finicky but reasonably dependable putter. His golf bag, however, is gathering dust. Under Hunt's baleful supervision, Kearns' inadequacies are beginning to show up. He panics, and can easily blow a communications procedure. Kearns also has a heavy hand when trying to joke with the Groogs. There's a cable protocol, I could even call it a cable *panache*, that he lacks. Whereas, Hunt has it. This is what Howard sent last week to the Argentina-Uruguay Desk: NOBODY TOLD ME BUT I BELIEVE TODAY TO BE THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR URUGUAY STATION. GIFTS AND CONGRATULATIONS WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. DO NOT REMIT CASH.

I can see how such humor won't translate over to you, but given our oft-strained relations with the Groogs, it was a funny cable. They sent back the following reply: WOULD YOU CONSIDER

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THIRTY THOUSAND AMERICAN PENNIES TO ACCOMPANY THE USUAL FELICITATIONS FOR A JOB PRETERNATURALLY (AS ALWAYS) HALF-BAKED TO A PERFECT TURN.

Well, I'm feeling psychic across six thousand miles. I sense your Furies stirring. Kittredge, do try to forgive the disappointment this letter must be.

Harry

April 19, 1957

Harry,

I believe that I am a case officer manqué. I know that when I expect information and don't receive it, I have to hold on to a temper so terrible that I am convinced my Gardiner forebears own a touch of Druid's blood. Your last letter, to put it kindly, reads like drool from Fathead Lane. What do I care about your third-rate Chief of Station and his Napoleonic urinations into the pea-pot of Uruguay? His cables are equal to his mentality. Your appreciation of such mediocrity inspires me with horror.

As I write this, I am sitting at Harlot's desk looking at your brooch. Note that this is the first time I have ever called Hugh by the name for which he is famous. I wonder what Christopher's proud cryptonym is yet to be? STRUMPET? TOMBSTONE?

The baby is crying. Again. Again. It is because I called him TOMBSTONE. His life is part of my future death.

Brooch

Your brooch

April 20, 1957

Dear Harry,

Forget yesterday's letter if you can. I mailed it immediately upon completion, and that is all I remember. Whatever was in it cannot possibly be more than half true. I suffer attacks like migraine, except my head does not hurt. It's just that I undergo temporary amnesia.

Have you given up your brothel girl or are you deep in the slop-pits with her?

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I fear the worst.

I really do not wish to correspond with you anymore.

This is an order.

Cease all communications with me.

Hadley Kittredge Gardiner Montague

If I had sworn that I would not use the secure phone to reach Harlot, the oath had to be broken. Our Station's secure phone was kept, however, in a locked closet in Howard Hunt's office. He was not sympathetic to my request.

"Howard," I told him, "I must have use of it."

"Could you provide the reason?"

"Personal."

Howard sat behind his desk and shrugged. "In that case, why don't you find a pay phone on the other side of town?"

"This is Company business. The man I want to reach won't speak unless the line is secure."

"Hugh Montague. Is he the gentleman?"

"Yessir."

Howard put his elbows on the desk and looked at me from the tent of his upraised and slanted fingers. "Harry, I think you ought to know," he said, "that Harlot is a legend in the Agency for six good reasons and eight bad ones. One of the bad ones is that you can't have a decent conversation with the guy unless you're using a secure phone."

"I accept the fact that Hugh Montague is a man full of quirks. But this happens to be a family matter of first importance."

Howard showed his temper. "The secure phone is placed in my hands as Chief of Station. You are asking me to abuse this serious privilege."

"For God's sake, I was able to use a secure phone all the time I was in Berlin. It happened to be located right at the end of a corridor in the Department of Defense. Anyone could use it."

"Berlin," said Howard, "is an orgy. A goddamned out-of-control orgy."

"Yessir."

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"I can't allow you to use my secure phone for a private matter. That's cutting a hole in the membrane."

"Yessir. But I do have to talk over a family matter."

"I thought we passed that stop."

"Howard, I am godfather to the Montague's child, Christopher. Upsetting news came to me this morning by way of a letter."

"Isn't Hugh Montague your godfather?"

"Yessir." But I could not hold back the question. "How did you know?"

He touched his thumb with his forefinger several times to indicate a duck quacking. "I had lunch back in Washington with Arnie Rosen."

"Rosey," I said, "is better than an old-fashioned telephone operator."

To my surprise, Hunt laughed. "Here!" He reached into a vest pocket and withdrew a small key. "Help yourself. Maybe I know what it is to be worried about a kid."

"Thank you, Howard."

"And when you're done, not today, but soon, I have a couple of things to talk to you about. Don't ask who, but a couple of people warned me off of one Harry Hubbard. Told me you fucked up in Berlin."

"Maybe I did."

"Well, everybody messes up under Bill Harvey. The real bad word, if you want to hear it, is that you're locked in with the wrong rabbi."

I made no reply. I was damn angry by now and trying to be as calm as stone.

"We can," said Hunt, picking it up. "talk about it over drinks or dinner." He looked at his watch. "Hey, I'm late for one big lunch. This office is going to be yours. Leave it as you found it." He laughed to subdue the edge of his last remark, and was gone.

Using a secure phone proved difficult in Montevideo. I had to pass through relays of operators from Buenos Aires to Mexico City to Washington. It took a half hour to learn that Harlot was not in his office, nor at home, but another call to Inquiry-Secure directed me to WILD GARLIC, the cognomen given to

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Harlot's phone at the Keep. An hour had been spent in Howard Hunt's closet to reach a man I dreaded speaking to.

"Are you calling about Kittredge?" Harlot said for greeting. Once again came the impression of hearing a voice from the other end of a long tube.

"Yes," I said, "just what I am calling about."

"How the hell did you get to Howard's phone? Have to give away a piece of yourself?"

"Probably."

"Doubtless too much."

"Hugh, is Kittredge with you at the Keep?"

"She's all right. Under some sedation, but fine."

I could not see how someone who was under sedation was fine, but he must have heard what I did not say, for he added.

"I'm with her. She's not alone."

"Yessir."

He was silent for the longest time, and when he spoke, it was as if he had made a whole decision to tell me more.

"Harry, she didn't go out of her head, you know. It was overload."

"I've been worried," I said.

He snorted. "Worried? I've been grinding a few teeth. Do you know? She was still trying to nurse the baby, and keep up at work, and with it all, most unfortunately, experimenting with a substance. At such times, of course, she would not nurse the baby. Not when the substance was in her."

I could hardly believe what he had said. "The what?"

"Kittredge would never test others before jumping in the pool herself. But her timing was ill-advised."

"Is she all right?" I asked.

"I told you. She is mending. She is under sedation. A good doctor-friend of mine is supervising her recovery. Friend of Allen's."

"Did she go to the hospital?"

"Of course not. A psychotic episode in your 201 is about as desirable as joining the Communist Party in your youth."

I could feel his desire to talk. In what a state must he be!

"Hugh, forgive this question, but are you certain she shouldn't be seeing a very good psychiatrist?"

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"I know the lot," said Montague. "We run them in and out of TSS in relays. I comprehend Kittredge far better than ever they could. They are not qualified to deal with her fine mind. She is all right, I tell you. In another week, she will be herself. Of course, she must not work for a time, and in future has to forswear any ingestion of substances whatever. It's her ambition, don't you see? The only part of the girl that is not balanced. They don't recognize the stature of her work sufficiently. That's enough to drive a sane mind wild."

"May I speak to Kittredge?"

"She is sleeping. I would not wake her."

"May I call back?"

There was a full pause. I waited, but he did not reply.

"Is Christopher with you?" I asked.

"Naturally."

"And a nurse?"

"A good Maine woman who comes in by the day. I get up with Christopher if he wakes at night." He was silent after that.

I wanted to ask about his office. Who was covering? Kittredge had once spoken of two assistants who were absolutely dependable. They would be guarding the doors at GHOU. I had a small but inescapable panic that my time on the phone was running out. I would be alone in Uruguay so soon as he hung up.

"May I call later?" I asked again.

His telephone silence, teeming with static, seemed equal to the babble of a myriad of infinitesimal creatures.

"Harry, look into yourself," said Harlot. "You've been a son of a bitch. I want your correspondence with Kittredge to cease."

My first reaction was to wonder whether he had read the letters, or merely knew of their existence.

"Dear God, Hugh," I said at last, "I think that ought to be Kittredge's decision."

"Harry, the birth of a baby is as incapacitating to an ambitious, talented woman as the hole left by a spear. She needs to mend. So cease this correspondence. That is my wish and it is hers."

"I'm going to ask for a leave."

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"You may get it, but I won't permit you to see her."

"Hugh, don't cut me off. I'm six thousand miles away."

"Well, you're going to discover the stuff of which you are made. My uneasiest sentiment, now that we are perforce joined by truth for a moment or two, is that you, Harry, are not tough enough. Not for the life work you have chosen. Prove me wrong. Plunge into your job. Take a sabbatical from us until we come around."

With that, he hung up.

13 | Since it was near my hotel, I had the habit of stopping by the Central Post Office each morning on the way to work. Sally Porringer would leave letters for me there. Her notes, as one could anticipate, were functional—"Oh, Harry, I miss you so much, I'm just aching for you. Let's figure out something for Saturday," is a fair sample.

It was nice, however, that someone was aching for me. In the month after the last letter from Kittredge, I made love to Sally in a cold fury. It was unfair, but I held Sally responsible for the loss, and copulated in hate, which may have had the obverse effect of melting some icy moraine in her, for she kept telling me I was wonderful. Sexual vanity with its iron-tipped fingers kept clawing me forward, therefore, into more performance, even as I kept asking myself why I couldn't act like other Americans and just find women and forget them. Porringer, for example, was always ready to regale Gatsby and me about his nights in Montevideo brothels. If Sherman, with a wife, two children, and all of the duties of a Deputy COS, could still disport "like the happiest hog on the hind tit," as he put it himself—somber, blue-cheeked, paranoid Porringer—why could I not enjoy it?

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The irony is that I was even beginning to feel a bit of loyalty to Sally. The paradox of sex is that it always negotiates some kind of contract with love—no matter what, love and sex will never be entirely without relations. If I had added to my clandestine jamborees with Sally all the anger I felt at exercising my brains right out of my head with the wrong girl, and so felt more and more separated from the only woman I could adore like a goddess—strong words, but I was suffering my loss—all this anger had to live nonetheless with my sexual greed. Loss had left me a displaced person in the land of love.

So love slipped over, if only by a little, into my feelings, and I did not despise Sally quite so much, and had compassion for the awful loneliness of her life in a land where the only people who understood her at all were maniacal old lady bridge players, a young, grim, and much detached lover, and a husband who understood her so well he did not comprehend her at all. "Does he think it makes me feel good," she complained once, "for him to announce to company, 'Oh, Sally's a good old girl,' as if I was his 4-H Blue Ribbon in the prize sow contest? I hate Sherman sometimes. He's so needful and inconsiderate," and she began to weep. I, holding her, felt the first beginnings of compassion move out from me and into her. I still looked upon her with a great measure of contempt, but there were limits to how long I could keep my best feelings—that inner chalice of tender compassion—reserved entirely for Kittredge Gardiner Montague when I ached within from every bruise she had bestowed.

Besides, it was too painful to think of her. Was she mad? There was not a night when I did not curse myself for failing to get leave to go back to America. Yet it was hopeless. Harlot was never less than his word. Besides, he could be right. It might be one's duty to suck up the slack.

Nonetheless, I still felt treacherous toward Kittredge whenever Sally and I put in our raunchy hours. Sex with Sally grew more appealing despite myself. I would lie in her arms afterward wondering if Kittredge were on the mend, or had I, across six thousand miles, just sent another thundering blow to the head?

Suck up the slack, yes. I felt like a strip miner through all of May and June. The mild winter of Montevideo might as well have been spent in an Eastern coal pit. I was alone in Uruguay



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with no letters to write. So I took on work as Harlot had advised. I saw Chevi Fuyertes twice a week, and AV/ALANCHE once, AV/OUCH-1 and 2 at Travel Control and Passport Control were on my route, and AV/ERAGE, the homosexual journalist on the society beat, was also given to me now that Gatsby had been put onto Porringer's old trade union contacts. And there were always the Bosqueverdes (who spent their winter photographing the passage of live souls in and out of the Soviet Embassy gate). They were mine. And Howard Hunt gave me Gordy Morewood as well, and I had to deal with his unrelenting demands for cash. On certain mornings, every face was an irritant. Sometimes when Porringer and Kearns and Gatsby were all together in our big office room with its four desks, I knew again how faceless were everyday faces. And how intimate! Every mis-grown nostril hair!

Hunt became my friend during that Uruguayan winter which was the summer of 1957 in North America. Two months after I spoke across six thousand miles to Harlot up at the Keep in Maine, I was wending my way out to Carrasco twice a week for dinner with Dorothy and Howard. If the high regard I used to hold for Harlot was now buried like provisions kept for one's return from a long journey, the habit of such respect, its shadow, so to speak, became transferred to Hunt. While he had a nasty temper, and was as easy to dislike at one moment as to like at the next, he was still my leader. I was discovering all over again that our capacity for love, when all else fails, attaches easily to such formal investments as flag and office.

In the midst of all this, on an average cold morning, following my habit of stopping at the Central Post Office on the way to work, I pulled my hand out of the box one day with a letter from Kittredge. She had written to me directly rather than by way of the pouch.

The Stable

June 30, 1957

Dear Harry,

Got this address from your mother. I believe open mail will be all right. This is really to tell you that I am now all right. In

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fact, in a limited sense, I'm thriving. To my modest sorrow, the baby is off my breast and onto formula, but, on balance, it works. We have a daily nurse-housekeeper, and I am back on the job, indeed, no one over at the shop knows I was ill. Hugh managed that with great dispatch. Allen may be witting but certainly no one else. Hugh just brazened it through with a Kittredge-and-I-haven't-had-a-vacation-since-marriage sort of stance that only he could get away with. Of course, he did work at the Keep, and damn hard while I was sorting out the little mad things for myself. Don't repeat this, but the real trouble was not you, nor the brooch, nor the baby, nor Hugh, all of whom I was beginning to see as encircling fiends, but, in fact, was due to the most injudicious experimenting with a fabulous if horribly tricky drug for altering consciousness called LSD. Certain of our people have been trying it the last five or six years with the most fascinating *but* inconclusive results, and I was vain enough to decide to experiment on myself and try to trace LSD's impact on Alpha and Omega. Needless to say, Alpha and Omega got into a frightful hoedown.

So, this letter is apology to you. I recollect just enough of my deep dive to be certain it was unforgiveable. I've wanted to tell you for some time but didn't quite dare to use our old set-up on the pouch. He's forbidden me to write to you and he's correct up to a point. I think I was indulging a species of double life. Chaste, but nonetheless double. I vowed to Hugh I would not correspond with you again unless I told him first. Of course, I crossed my fingers as I said it, so the vow is discounted by this letter. Anyway, as you see, I wanted to take the chance.

It is really to tell you, as I have already said, that I am all right. In truth, I love Hugh now more than ever. He was fabulous to me up in Maine, strong but so concerned. I realized how much he loves me and the baby, and I hadn't really known that before. Hadn't truly taken it in. The spring of his love must come from a source one thousand feet deep. I think without him I might have sunk into much more loss of time and frantic mindlessness.

This is also to tell you that I miss you and your letters. I'm patient. I will wait another three or four months to prove to Hugh that relapses are not in my makeup, not at all. I'm back,

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but still I want to demonstrate it to him, and by fall—your spring—I am going to tell him that I wish to write to you again, and if he doesn't permit it—well, we'll see. Be patient.

Think of me as your cousin, your kissing cousin, with whom you cannot have congress. Whoopee! *Hélas*. I will always love you on a most special note, but it feels warm and comfy right now, I confess, to think of you as far-off.

Amitiés,
Kittredge

p.s. Hugh never saw any of your letters. I confessed to him that we had been corresponding, but only as college sweethearts who were not about to do anything about it. That much he could tolerate because he had seen the evidence when you would visit. So, my confession confirmed his acumen. I did not dare to tell him how candid we were about other matters. That he would never comprehend and never forgive.

I lied again when I told him that the letters were destroyed by me on the night I took the LSD. Even in the midst of my madness, you see, I knew enough to lie.

14 | Even when we were only three for dinner, our setting was formal. At their long, handsome table, Howard always sat at one end and Dorothy at the other. If he and she were absolute snobs, I was learning nonetheless that to be accepted by such people is not unlike receiving an award; one is bathed in balmy waters. Since Howard's visit to the Stable still smarted, all the more appealing was I, not only for the Hubbard ancestors, but as someone to steal from the Montagues. Howard did not yet comprehend the impossibility of certain social

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desires. I believe one reason I liked him was that I often felt more than equal to him.

Back at the office, I paid, of course, for these attentions. One of my tasks was to bring the day's reports out to Hunt's house in the evening whenever he had spent the afternoon hobnobbing with Uruguayans at the Jockey Club. I had not been doing it for long, however, before Porringer and crew arrived at the intuition that this was not merely a chore, but that I was a steady guest for dinner. On nights when I was out working as a case officer, Gatsby or Kearns or even Oatsie himself would take the twelve-mile drive along the Rambla out to Carrasco Beach where the Hunts lived in a white stucco villa with red roofed tiles just two sweepingly curved streets away from the sea, but my colleagues were not often asked to remain for the evening meal. Kindness to social inferiors was not one of Dorothy's virtues. Indeed, I winced at the thought of Sally in her clutches. Nor was the the thought of Kearns at table any happier. He had the tiniest wife and they looked bizarre when together. Disproportion was enough to dilate Dorothy's nostrils. If Jay Gatsby had graduated from The Citadel and his wife, Theodora, came out of some good Southern ladies' emporium of education called Atkins Emory (or some equivalent concatenation of consonants), that may have been enough to elicit a second invitation from the Hunts, but no more.

The worst afternoon I spent with Sally was the day preceding Howard and Dorothy's arrival at the Porringers' for a pay-back dinner. Sally's most formidable asset, the ability to say farewell to her mind for thirty wholly concupiscent minutes, was subverted. I made love to a woman with a rigid body and a mind teeming with social fear. Hunt might throw himself into MARXISM ES MIERDA and ship cartons of pelleted Who-Me's up to the front without a backward look, but he could not enjoy a repast with people who did not know how to serve the damn thing. And Dorothy was worse. To the stern blood standards of her one-eighth of Oglala Sioux and the Harrison ancestors could be added Mrs. Hunt's relinquished title. Dorothy had been married to the Marquis de Goutière, and had kept house with him in Chandernagore, which happened to be, Howard could tell you, "the family seat of the de Goutières. It's near Calcutta."

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I never knew if the de Goutières were Franco-Hindu or Indo-French, and if I heard the sound of "Marquesa" from time to time, I barely knew how to spell it. But allow Dorothy her due—she was aristocratic. With dark hair, large dark eyes, a large and aquiline nose, and lips that could curve into many a nuance of displeasure, she was curiously attractive, and rarely lacking in inner sentiments of self-worth.

Whatever were the virtues and shortfalls at the home of the Hunts, I paid for their hospitality by absorbing a concomitant chill from my brother operators at the office. No matter. I accepted the transaction. I was learning a good deal about Hunt's view of the Station. While dinners in Carrasco adhered to Dorothy's edict that no outright business could be transacted at table, the half hour before dinner invariably installed me in Howard's study, and there I was used as a sounding board. An audible meditation, minutes in length, on the defects of Gatsby and Kearns would issue from the thriving hive of his thoughts. I rarely had to reply as Hunt conducted me through each loose drum skin in our Station. I knew it was only a way of warming me up for a new job. Porringer was liaison to each of the Uruguayan journalists and editors we paid to plant our pieces in the Montevideo press. Last week, however, Porringer had spent more time writing for the Montevideo periodicals than reading them. "Khrushchev, Butcher of the Ukraine," went the theme.

So I saw my new task shaping up. While Porringer's contacts with journalists were as sacrosanct to him as an Oklahoma dirt farmer's forty acres, I would now be given a heavy share of the writing and editing. Hunt's litany of imperfect execution of projects by Gatsby and Kearns was, I knew, the mirror image of their complaints to him that I was not taking on my proper load. The oldest game at every Station, I had begun to learn, was to slough dull tasks onto the new man at the next desk, and Hunt, who could hardly be unaware of what it must cost to be his favorite, must have decided to unload more of the shop work on me. When I agreed, therefore, to put my hand in on the material Porringer sent over to his three best journalists, AV/ARICE, AV/ENGE, and AV/IATOR, Hunt had obtained his purpose, and could feel expansive.

"Harry, when all is said and done," he told me now, "prop-

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aganda is half of what we do. Sometimes I think it's the better half." He opened his desk drawer and shut it as if to take a spot check on whether the Sovs had left a sneaky there recently. "Hate to tell you," he said with his hand to the side of his mouth as if to hold off all alien ears, "just how many newspapers back home also take plants from us. Journalists are easier to buy than horses!"

The maid knocked on the door of the study. It was time for dinner. End of business and commencement of history. Dorothy, who was considerably less talkative than Howard, was always ready to accept his monologues at table, and converted them, I expect, into periods of meditation for herself. After all, she had heard the tales.

I, however, had not, and thought he told them well. Let one suffice for the many.

"Back in Tokyo about two years ago . . ."

"More like a year and a half ago," commented Dorothy.

"You're keeper of the clock," said Howard. "All right, eighteen months ago, the Chinese Communists had the effrontery to announce that they were going to open their first trade fair in Japan. Show off their advanced machine-tool equipment. This set up a hell of a ripple. We knew better, but still! What if they were actually competitive? American interests had a lot of ducats in the pot, so we certainly didn't want the Japanese people looking to China. Well, I managed to slip into their preview and the ChiCom stuff was pathetic. Poor copies of our machine tools. The few good products were hand-crafted. Obviously, they were going to make no dent in the bacon-and-beans department, no, sir, no Almighty Dollars would have to be spent competing with them. All the same, I decided to bomb their exposition."

"Did you employ Who-Me's?" I asked.

"Not at all. This job called for finesse. So I authored a nifty op. Hundreds of thousands of leaflets floated down on Tokyo one night from a plane. 'Come to the Chinese Trade Fair,' said the invitation. 'Free Admission, Free Beer, Free Rice, Free Sashimi.'"

Hunt began to laugh. "Harry, the ChiComs were inundated with Tokyo citizens waving these leaflets. They had to close their



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doors. They didn't have any free anything. Terrible press. Had to slink their Chinese butts out of town.

"Speak of Brownie points," said Howard. "I think one reason I'm sitting in a COS seat right now was the success of that coup. Of course, I might also have to thank Dorothy." He lifted his glass to her. "Friend," he said, "when you look at your hostess, what do you see?"

"A beautiful lady," I interjected.

"More than that," said Hunt, "I also glimpse the female persona at its most elusive. Ask yourself, Harry, would Dorothy make a spy?"

"None better," I replied.

"You are on course." He sipped his wine. "I'm going to let out one I ought not to. While in Tokyo, she managed to cop the Argentine code books."

"I'm impressed," I said to Dorothy.

"Well, Howard had to bring it up, but I will say it was no great feat. I was working, after all, for the Argentine Ambassador."

"Her Spanish is impeccable," said Howard. "She was his speech-writer."

"Part-time," said Dorothy.

"Part-time just managed to be enough," said Howard, "for Dorothy to pick up the code books during the midday siesta. We had a little team around the corner who photographed her take faster than you can skin a rabbit, and Dorothy got them back before the first *siestarero* returned. That was worth a private salute from the North Asia Command. Darling, you are the real article," said Howard. "Why, if we hadn't met in Paris, I would probably have encountered you in Hong Kong on some enchanted evening."

"And what would I have been doing there?" asked Dorothy.

"Running a large espionage mill. Contract players at every price. All nations welcome."

Dorothy said: "Pass the wine before you drink it all."

"Another bottle," said Howard.

We got very drunk that night. Long after Dorothy had gone to bed, Howard kept talking to me. I had never had an older brother, but Hunt was beginning to present some notion of one.

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Back in the paneled wood study after dinner, he took out a bottle of Courvoisier, and we honed our after-dinner sentiments. Hunt's study must have had fifty photographs on the wall, silver-framed shots of himself and Dorothy in their separate childhoods, then together in Paris; pictures of their children; pictures of Howard playing the saxophone in a college band; Ensign Howard Hunt, USNR; Correspondent Hunt at Guadalcanal; Hunt at the typewriter for one of his novels; Hunt in a Chinese dugout with a sniper's gun; Hunt on a ski lift in Austria; Hunt with a brace of pheasants in Mexico; Hunt at the beach in Acapulco; Hunt in Hollywood, Hunt with antelope horns in Wyoming; Hunt with ram's horns in I don't know where—he grew tired of the tour by the time we got to Greece. He gave a wave of dismissal to himself at the Acropolis, settled in one big leather chair, and, obviously provident, was able to offer me its mate.

The more we drank, the more confidential he became. In a little while, he began to call me Hub. I could see a long career for Hub and quickly offered an explanation (which had no truth) that one of my twin brothers had such a nickname.

"Back to Harry," he said equably. "Good name, Harry."

"Thank you."

"What do you see for yourself, Harry, down the road?"

"Down the road?"

"Thirty years from now. Do you see a Director's chair, or is it fur-lined slippers on Retirement Lane?"

"I like this work. I learn something every day. I just want to get awfully good at it."

"No attacks of conscience?"

"A few, perhaps, but I'm in need of seasoning."

"Good," said Howard and opened his desk drawer. "What I show you next is in whole confidence."

"Yessir."

"These are personnel evaluations."

"I see."

"We can skip Gatsby and Kearns. I can't send back anything very good about them."

I couldn't either, so I was silent.

"Porringer gets his B-minus. You do better."

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He must have had some second thoughts because he closed the drawer without removing any papers. "I give Sherman good marks for hard work and agent-recruitment initiative, but I have pigeonhole him. He's Deputy COS level. Can go no higher until he learns to run a happy Station. That, I am afraid, is going to stick to him, but my job is to evaluate without tilt."

"I can see the difficulty."

"You present more of a problem. Bill Harvey is a vindictive son of a bitch, we can all agree, but something unique came out of him. He labeled you *untrustworthy*—which is a slash to the regular. Then he withdrew it a week later. '*On reconsideration,*' he wrote, '*this man is unorthodox but talented and trustworthy.*' When you come up for promotion, the examiner could begin to wonder what caused Harvey's 180-degree change of heart. That does you no great good."

"Yessir." I paused. "Wow," I heard myself say.

"You need a firm, unequivocal yes from me."

"I would think so."

"I believe you're going to get it. I see something in you that a lot of good young officers don't have, good as they are. You anticipate. I am going to say that while still inexperienced, you show potential for high echelon. 'Worth keeping an eye on,' is the plus I intend to put in for you."

"Thank you, Howard."

"It is because you have ambition."

Did I? Knowledge versus power had never seemed a painful choice for me. I preferred the first. Did he see something I did not perceive in myself? I do not know if it was the Courvoisier or Hunt's large assessment of my qualities, but I knew the warmth of flattery in all my limbs. As for Harvey's evaluation, I would brood on that tomorrow.

"The key thing, Hub—sorry! *Harry!*—is not to kid oneself. We all want to become Director of Central Intelligence. To me, that means more than being President. Do you feel that way?"

I could hardly answer in the negative. I nodded.

"Hell, I do. I recognize the odds. Howard Hunt has got one shot in twenty, maybe one in fifty—Dorothy says I have the unfortunate habit of being a little too easy on myself. Call it one in a hundred. That particular *one* is a live nerve. It runs from the

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top of my head to the tip of my toes. Another ten or fifteen years and I might be in real contention for an empyrean slot. So might you be in twenty or twenty-five years."

"I'm beginning to see what good brandy is all about."

"Ha, ha. Say that again, Harry." He fit his words to his actions by taking a sip from the snifter. He had a nifty way of clicking his ring finger against the glass. "Fine. We comprehend the meaning of the endgame. Here's to high purpose." He raised his glass.

"To high purpose."

"Let me line up one more crucial target for your sights. One of these days you are going to get married."

"It's to be expected."

"A good CIA wife has to be a work of art. About the time they assigned me to Guatemala, Dorothy was well along in her third pregnancy. I had to leave her behind in Washington during a most difficult period. So, obviously, there are pros and cons. Career-wise, being single can prove a plus for the short term. You can pick up and move anywhere. But over the long haul, it's an Agency minus to be without a wife. Objectively speaking, the best wife for a Company man is a rich girl, wholly presentable on the social side, who is self-sufficient enough to survive without you for months at a time.

"Let's put it this way. So long as you stay unmarried, take advantage of it. Look for every change of Division they offer you. Broaden your field. Then, when you have the right girl, and I'm talking about a masterpiece like Dorothy, get married. You can't make COS without that. A Station Chief is his own kind of Ambassador. We're the embodiment of what foreigners expect of Americans." He pointed a long finger up from the brandy snifter at a forty-five-degree angle. "You see, I have a thesis. We Americans abroad are engaged in Envy-Control. We've shown the globe a way to live that's clean and prosperous, so they hate us all over the world. Everything we do, therefore, has to keep an eye on Envy-Control. They may hate us, but be sure to leave them feeling impotent in that envy. That's where your woman makes a difference."

All the while he spoke, I was thinking that that was not what I was in it for. It could have been the brandy, but I did not think

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I wanted to be DCI, no, I was here for the double life. In the double life lay all my hope for sanity, and I nodded wisely as if the brandy and I were vintage friends.

15 | I did not hear again from Kittredge until the weather had turned warm and my second Christmas in Uruguay was approaching.

Dec. 12, 1957

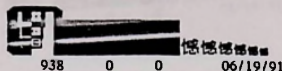
Harry, dear Harry.

I want to hear from you, and to write to you of all that's happened to me. So much has shifted within.

Of course, I am breaking a promise. (I refuse to call it a vow, since Hugh extorted it from me. To give one's word when at one's weakest is not to give the heartfelt word.) On the dubious logic of this, I decided not to tell Hugh that I am going to correspond with you again. He would not agree, and my life with him would, as a result, grow intolerable. I will not submit to his force; he would never accept my rebellion. Our marriage, which has moved equably, and in all honesty, happily, on the foundation of his prodigious care of me when I needed it most, could be thrown into the doldrums again.

I have obviously learned much. One lives with what works, but the spirit looks for what needs to be added. By this logic, I need your letters. In consequence, the royal itch to deceive Hugh has sprung up in me once more and I'm going to tell you considerably more about myself than you may expect, in fact, I'll soon overwhelm you with a long one.

Guess Who



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P.S. It's safe to try the pouch again. New addresses, however.
Still Polly Galen Smith, but new Route, AT-658-NF

I returned a two-line letter: "Just to say that your Christmas
present arrived intact. I await words and music."

Jan. 5, 1958

Dear Harry,

Christopher might delight you now. What a splendid little fellow your godson has become. Of course, he is also in that frightful stage other mothers have warned me about—he walks, but does not talk! I cannot tell you how fearful a situation this creates, and it could last for many hysterical months to come. The only way to protect the furnishings is to keep Christopher out on the street in his stroller, or penned upstairs. Once he gets into our parlor, he comports himself like a drunken hellion, staggering about, arms out, trying to overturn all our carefully acquired goodies. God, I love him. Each time I shriek, "No!" as he is about to knock over my hand-wrought Elfe or the beautiful Pimm, he offers a resolute manly little grin with just a hint of the glint in Hugh's evil eye. Lord, I am awful when I come face to face with my impeccable love of property. Flesh and blood go to the block before antique value.

I find as I write that I am preparing you for a considerable confession. I don't know that you've been made aware of the real landscape of my mental abdication all those many months ago. Yes, it was due to LSD, and the brooch, and Hugh, and you, all that I have already admitted to, but there were some unmanageable fantasies as well. And serious and most concrete difficulties. The real cause I have never really talked to you about. It was my work in TSS.

I now relate to you that whenever I think of the corpus of offices and corridors composing Technical Services Staff over in our wing of Cockroach Alley, I tend to think of Allen Dulles wrinkling his nose as he walks down our smelly corridors. In my dreams and daydreams he has a tail and a cloven hoof, simple as that. You do know that he was born with a club foot? The

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Dulles family had him operated on quicker than crackers, so he has only had to limp the least little bit through life except when gout strikes his Satanic appetites. Of course, given Allen's tropisms, he did marry a young lady named *Clover*. (Just change the *r* to an *n*.) Harry, forgive this string of sitting ducks, but there are times when I hate Hugh and I hate Allen for they inhabit me, which, I suspect, is what being a good boss is all about.

Well, don't fret—I'm now over on the meditative side of these unruly emotions, and only tell you this to indicate the previous intensity of my feelings. You see, I've felt badly divided at times on the justifiability of the work we do at TSS. So much of it is sheer mind-control. That comes down to manipulating the souls of other people. Yet, here is my Harlot all for mind-control so long as it's the people he approves of who are doing it. Yes, the great war for the human future—Christians versus Reds! And weren't those Russian materialists brilliant to choose all the blood and fire of red as their emblematic color? Brilliant, I say, for it brought a necessary sense of the elemental to fill their materialistic void. Am I wandering? The one concept I've lived with ever since meeting Hugh is that Communists strive twenty-four hours a day to find ways to coerce the soul of humankind, and so we must labor our own twenty-four to confound them. TSS is the temple where we not only search for secret germs but hypnotic manipulations, abracadabra drugs and psychological methods to take over the enemy before they control us. Hugh, indeed, gave me a stiff lecture before we married. It was to the effect (and this is his favorite thesis on the source of vital human energy) that only when the best and worst in oneself is equally attached to the same mission, can one operate with full strength. In an exceptional moment of candor, he said to me, "I am attached to rock climbing because I have to conquer my fear of great falls—that is the good motive—but I also revel in it because I can dominate and humiliate others, and that happens to be an equally deep-rooted part of me." Harry, I was stirred by his candor. I knew that deep under my glowing college-girl exterior were Shakespearean closets of blood, gore, and other unmentionables. I also knew that Hugh was a man who could steer a cool route through such an underworld in me.

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Well, my husband-to-be did have his thesis well in hand. He said we were blessed in our work at the Agency because the best and the worst in ourselves could work together on a noble venture. We were to thwart, dominate, and finally conquer the KGB, even as they, expressing by their lights the good and bad in themselves, were engaged, "tragic fellows" (Hugh's words), in an ignoble venture.

So, on I went to TSS with Allen's blessing and Hugh's strong arm around my waist. I was prepared to dive into the dark depths, but, of course, as soon as I finished training, they wrapped me in cotton. Technical Services Staff, as you can guess, is as highly compartmentalized as any place you're going to work in the Agency. Even now, after five years in TSS's recessive folds, I still can't decide such basic things as whether we go in for wet jobs, or, leaving assassination quite to the side, whether we indulge in even worse deeds, such as honest-to-god termination experiments. If one were to believe the more sinister gossip, it's true. Of course, such rumors do come to me in the large from Arnie Rosen, and I'm not sure he's always to be trusted. (He loves wild stories too much!)

Well, the time is come to let you in on a subconfession. About a year and a half ago, Arnold began to work for me, and soon became my number-one assistant. He's brilliant, and he's *bad*. You have to understand *bad* as an old Radcliffe foible. When we used to say that of a male friend, it meant he was homosexual. Arnold—and you are absolutely not to repeat this—is very much in hiding about his predilections. While he says that he's eschewed all sex since he's come into the Company, I don't believe him. All the same, he swears to it. I suppose he must. Apparently, he was a bit of a queen in high school. Hard to imagine. There he must have been, funny looking, wearing eyeglasses, school valedictorian, all summa grades, of course, but had an addiction to "debasement," as he puts it. He says it like a black man, not one word but two, "dee basement." He is, when you get to know him (and he drops that awful lapdog admiration which he used to put on for Hugh), a wicked and incredibly funny gossip. When I asked him how he managed to get through the wings of the flutter bird in the entrance tests, he said, "Darling, we people know how to pass a lie detector.

That's part of our lore."

"Well, how *do* you?" I asked.

"I can't possibly tell. It would offend your proprieties."

"I have none," I said.

"Kittredge, you are the most innocent and locked-up person I know."

"Tell me," I said.

"Darling, we eat a lot of beans."

"Beans?" I didn't get it. Not at all.

"Once you know when the test will be given, the rest is merely a small bout of discomfort. In anticipation, you eat a good plateful of beans."

I slapped his hand. "Arnie, you're a psychopathic liar."

"I am not. The idea is be able to think of nothing but your bowels while you are being fluttered. Your mind couldn't care less whether or not it is telling a lie when the prime drama is to control your sphincter. I can tell you that the test administrator got awfully annoyed with me. 'You're one of those,' he said. 'General tension in all responses. It's hopeless.' 'I'm so sorry, sir,' I told him. 'It must be something I ate.'"

Harry, he's a bit of a demon. If I'd never thought of Alpha and Omega before, Arnie Rosen's existence would have suggested it. He has two totally different personalities—the one I expect that you are familiar with, and this considerably different one for me. I think Hugh had him attached to my court so I'd have at least one wise fellow around. He certainly indulges my outsized curiosity about some of the very strange people one does pass in the corridor. Rosen is full of whispers as to what might be going on. "Kittredge, feel the aura coming off that closed door! It's Dracula's Lair!"

I accept that. I believe it. But, then I wonder if I am hypersensitive to the occult. (One full summer and a half ago, you may recall that I encountered the ghost of Augustus Farr up at the Keep, and to my over-fevered recollection, he limped just like Allen on a bad day. Ho, ho, ho.)

Well, I want to bring you back a few years more than that. To the time when I was wrapped in cotton. Allen Dulles had taken to my Radcliffe senior thesis on Alpha and Omega so completely that he funded me right from the start. On the com-

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pletion of my Farm training—do you remember that that was the spring we met?—I was set up with a bona fide group of five graduate students in psychology at Cornell who did not even know they were being paid by the Agency. Another bit of nifty cover. I used to fly up to my seminar in Ithaca every two weeks to see how research was progressing.

By every visible measure, I was doing nothing dirty. I was merely developing my chosen work. I may have been a little in love with Allen during those first couple of years. If not for Hugh, I could actually have contemplated going to bed with the man. Allen was *dear*. I certainly loved him enough to want to develop something of exceptional use for him. So I dashed off in the wrong direction. Instead of pursuing Alpha and Omega a little further into the labyrinth of myself, and serving as my own laboratory which—all proportions kept—is what grand old Master Plumber Freud did, that is, spent many years analyzing himself before giving us ego and id, I absconded from my floods and raging furnaces, and went searching too quickly for overt tests the Agency could use to spot a potential agent.

I worked for the last five years, therefore, trying to elaborate a test profile that could be used to detect potential treachery. The final form, as of eight months ago, shows up as twenty test sheets with twenty-five items to check off on each page, and at certain levels we were as good at predicting mental disorders as a Szondi test or a Rorschach.

Extracting a reliable Alpha-Omega profile, however, is backbreaking. We learned to our horror that Long Tom (our in-house term for the five hundred pairings) has to be taken a minimum of five times in order to pick up the style of transition from Alpha to Omega. While certain kinds of bureaucrats keep the two personae wholly separate for years, actors and psychopaths can go back and forth twenty times a day. For such people, the test has to be repeated, therefore, at different hours of the day. Dawn and midnight, so to speak. Drunk and sober. We did end with a pretty foolproof set of vectors to spot a putative agent, or even better, a putative double agent, but administering Long Tom was more difficult than raising orchids.

Harry, for the last five years, I have carried this burden of

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woe, doubt, misery, and burgeoning frustration. And every year, across the corridor, so to speak—actually, he works out of town—another psychologist named Gittinger, who came to us from his work at the State Hospital in Norman, Oklahoma, has been running rings around my tests merely by adapting the good old Wechsler Intelligence test to what he calls the Wechsler-Bellevue G. It works. Gittinger, who's a stocky Santa Claus type with a pepper-and-salt goatee, can use his battery of tests (which require only one session) to spot defectors and putatives better, I fear, than I can.

Rosen, by the time we came to trust each other, began to warn me of the turn in affairs: the Wechsler-Gittinger was prospering at TSS, and I was not.

"What are they really saying?" I asked him at last.

"Well, there is some talk that your work may be only a lot of talk."

That hurt. Then I had to deal with the news that Gittinger had been allocated some scrumptious funding through one of our more elegant foundation covers. He can now play with the Human Ecology Fund. Whereas my seminar at Cornell has not been renewed.

This has been my introduction to the down slope. Harry, life has always treated me as a darling, and for much too long. If my mother merely adored me whenever she came around to noticing my existence, my father more than made up for it. Ever been fêted by a riproaring Shakespearean? We never did get into formal incest, Dad and I, but I knew what it was to feel a powerful man's love at the age of three. It never faltered. Just grew more and more possessive. How Daddy hated Hugh. I think that's the first storm of passion I ever encountered out of books. Up to then, our princess trod only on carpet. Radcliffe was a coronation. I was either adored all over again, or envied, or both, and didn't even notice. My brain was so fertile that I could have gone off to a desert island and been deliriously happy with myself. The only pains I knew were the ferocious congestions attendant on new ideas. Lord, they were forever streaming into my thoughts. And as Hugh's wife, *figure-toi*! I was twenty-three years old, yet grizzled veterans of the intelligence wars were lining up to charm me. Darling, was ever a brilliant fool

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more spoiled?

Now, at TSS, after five years, I was on the down slope, and Gittinger was growing greater by the week and month. Yet it proved impossible to dislike the man. He's a wise, subtle, jolly Oklahoman who, as Arnie says, uses his twang like a guitar string. Gittinger has the power to dispense happy laughter. Sometimes he shows off for us. Give him a Wechsler-Bellevue G test-profile of a man or woman he has never met and he will return an interpretation that is about as complete as a personage out of Proust. Truly formidable. Gittinger is the only one in the profession who can get such a splendid readout off a mere Wechsler-Bellevue G, but then he works twenty-four hours a day, and has the ability to correlate everything that comes his way, agents, taps, sneakies, verbal interviews, photos (for body language), and handwriting analysis. He charms all of us, because he is, or pretends to be, a modest man. Always downgrades his own work. "Another fellow could do as well with Tarot cards." So he charms all the competitors he's outstripping. (Although it did hurt when Rosen told me that everyone now referred to Gittinger as "our resident genius.") Harry, there was a time when they spoke that way of me. So I knew the pains of a toppled monarch. Yet G. always flatters me. "Your Alpha and Omega will take us yet into the true caves. I just make charts of the surface."

That's all very well, but I've lost out wholly. Gittinger is already working in the field with case officers and agents (wherever a Chief of Station will allow this) and I have become one of his adjuncts. *The Gardiner Annex to Gittinger*, you could call it.

Harry, hear the worst. Shortly before my LSD episode, I had been cut down to one assistant, Rosen, and put onto collation studies with our graphology department. Instead of showing our handwriting experts how to look for Alpha and Omega, the graphologists were now giving ratings to my work.

About this time, Arnold had a long talk with me. It was a preface, I knew, to telling me that he was going to apply for a transfer over to Gittinger's track. "Loyalty is a virtue," he said at last, "but I want to get out of *dee basement*." Suddenly, it was no longer so funny. I saw it through his eyes. To be Jewish in the Agency doesn't call for an automatic welcome, but then to

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be locked up as well in his little secret. However, he did seem miserable at his own ambition. He also warned me that the time had come for Hugh to intervene.

"Kittredge, you have real enemies in TSS."

"You'd better name a few, or I won't listen to this."

"I can't point to the real estate. It could be some of Hugh's enemies."

"You mean I can't even create antagonists of my own?" God, we were having coffee in the K-shed cafeteria at three in the afternoon, and Rosen was sitting across from me with tears in his eyes. I felt like screaming. "I think I've created a few enemies of my own," I said.

"Maybe you did."

"I was too cocky when I began."

"Yes," he said, "probably."

"And I did show a little too much disdain for some of my colleagues."

"Oh, you know you did." He was virtually crooning.

"I was uncooperative with my overseers. Especially when they wanted to change my terminology."

"Yes."

"But all that was in the beginning. Lately, my worst crime has been to obtain a few extra perks for my best research assistant."

This was meant to stun him precisely between the eyes. It only brought out his anger. I think he was looking to find that anger. "Kittredge, let's go back to your office," he said. "I've got some yelling to do myself."

Whereupon, once we made the long, endlessly long, silent walk back down Cockroach Alley, he did unload a bit. "The fact, Kittredge, is that there's a fundamental flaw in the test. Putative agents make prodigiously good liars. They're not going to reveal themselves just because Mrs. Gardiner Montague has devised a few word games."

"How dare you," I said. "We've loaded the thing with traps."

"Kittredge, I love you," he said, "but whom have you trapped? I just don't think the damn thing works. And I will not spend my life supporting an enterprise that can't stand up."

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"Apart from all these tests, don't you believe in Alpha and Omega?"

"I believe in them, dear one. As metaphor."

Well, we were through, and we knew it.

"Arnold, before you leave, tell me the real worst. What are they saying? Metaphor is not the word they are employing."

"You don't want to hear."

"I believe you owe me that much."

"All right." I realized suddenly that he was not a silly man nor a weak man, nor even a witty scamp. Under all, was the person who will yet come out of some further resolution of his impossible A and O, the future gentleman was there before me, a most steady and resolute fellow. We will hear from Arnold Rosen yet. "Kittredge," he said, "the common notion here at TSS is that Alpha and Omega do not really exist. Alpha is merely a new way to describe consciousness, and Omega is a surrogate concept for the unconscious."

"They still can't get it through their heads. How often must I say that Alpha and Omega each possesses its own unconscious. And superego and ego."

"Everyone knows that, Kittredge. But when we try to apply it, we keep being brought back to consciousness and the unconscious all over again, and Alpha is the first and Omega the second. Let me say that such people are not the worst of your detractors."

"Tell me, as I have asked you more than once, what the worst are saying."

"I don't care to."

"As a species of final contribution."

"Very well." He looked into the whorls of his fingertips.

"Kittredge, the cognoscenti have decided that your concept of Alpha and Omega is a whole-cloth projection of what can only be your latent schizophrenia. I am sorry."

He got up, he extended his hand, and, do you know, I took it. We shook hands limply. I think we were mourning the end of our work together. Despite all. Since then, I've only seen him in the cafeteria and the corridor. I miss his wit, I will testify to that.

Now, Harry, I couldn't keep this last blow to myself. I told

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it all to Hugh and he set up a meeting with Dulles and Helms. Hugh probably thought I should pull my own potatoes out of the fire, but I wouldn't go. I could hardly be present to plead my own case if I were being accused of schizophrenia. Well, Dulles told Hugh that he did not for a moment believe my thesis was a projection of my own schizophrenia. What a shocking notion. No, for them, Kittredge's theory remained, as always, profound. "I would even," said Dulles, "call it sacrosanct."

Helms then spoke: Kittredge, in his opinion, was to be seen as a most innovative inventor. Such creative originality often suffered in unfair fashion. "The trouble," he said, "is that we have a psychological reality to deal with. The rank and file in TSS do tend to see Alpha and Omega as some kind of sound-and-light show."

"Paranoid sound-and-light show?" asked Hugh.

"Look," said Helms, "we can bat these words back and forth until the courts are too dark to play upon. The crucial difficulty is that it's one thing to support an underground circus like TSS, but it is absolutely *verboten* to let word get around that it is a freak show. Kittredge has had five years and an absence of conclusive results. We've got to find another *boulot* for her."

Boulot. Old argot for *job*, kiddo. Harry, I've never seen Hugh quite as upset as when he related this conversation to me. Do you know, it was on the day your brooch arrived. That may explain a few things. I plunged right off into the LSD. Anything to come up with a new grasp on the testing process. I took terrible travels on that little trip. My vision led me down a long purple road to phosphorescent pools of moonlight where pigs were wading, and worse. I was a young man disporting in a brothel.

These days, I put in four sessions a week on graphology, a fascinating business after all. And I still pursue a few thoughts on the development of Alpha and Omega. Oh, I'll be back, I promise I'll be back.

Now you can see, however, why I want to hear about your life again. And in detail. I sense all over again that I do not know enough about the details of my own life. I certainly never knew how many fellow workers, often strangers, were determining my fate. Your letters give me some understanding there.

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Harry, write again. I am truly fascinated with how you spend your days. It seems so long since I've held one of your full letters in my hand. What has happened to AV/OCADO and his tormented soul? And what of your Russian garden parties and dear Hyman Bosqueverde and his wife who whispers nice things about Gordy Morewood? Yes, give me all the rest, your Gatsby with his yellow hair and the dark-brown mustache that Howard Hunt made him remove? You see, I do remember, and want to know more.

You can even write to me about your upwardly mobile COS. I realize now why I disliked Mr. Hunt. He was that worldly principle I was secretly unequipped to deal with. But no longer will I indulge such prejudices. If one would have new ideas, one must find a way to renew oneself. So tell me all about him too. My curiosity deepens, my strictures become flexible. My love for you will always grow apace, dear long absent man.

Kittredge

16 | The letter was written in her small Gothic script. By the time I was done, longing had thrown another noose around my wish to escape from love.

Jan. 11, 1958

Dearest Kittredge,

I will not try to tell you how near your letter brought you to me. How deep, how damnable, and how unfair it must all have felt. I see now why my letters, with their small details, have been agreeable to you. Let me try to divert you, then. Here at this Station on a busy day, when two or three things are coming to

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a boil (or coming apart), one feels in the midst of a Rube Goldberg machine. Right now, on Saturday afternoon, it is quiet—a rare occasion!—a quiet Saturday afternoon in the midst of our January summer. Everyone I know is at one or another of our clay beaches and coffee-colored sea. It's hot, and I sit in my shorts, still in the same cheap hotel room, believe it or not—I'm one of their three oldest residents by now. Kittredge, I pride myself at how little I need of material things. On the other hand, I virtually percolate with pleasure in enumerating Station activities. I feel as if that is my store, and I'm taking proud inventory.

Here is a good portion of the news. The Bosqueverdes have two awful Washington people from the Soviet Russia Division virtually bivouacked in their quarters. On Tuesday nights, in another part of town, AV/ALANCHE is fighting pitched battles against the left student youth group, MRO. AV/ALANCHE are the sign painters, do you recollect? And there's still Peones and Libertad, and Chevi Fuertes to bring you up on, plus the Russians, which is to say, our one Russian couple. I am now on good visiting terms with Masarov and his wife. Yes, the greatest single change is that I am, under the most stringent precautions you can imagine, permitted, even encouraged, to cultivate a relationship with Masarov. It has turned the pockets of my inner life inside-out.

Before commencing, however, I must tell you, Kittredge, how much I adore you. I am absolutely confounded that anyone in our line of work can doubt for one moment the existence of Alpha and Omega. Well, a good writing teacher I know at Yale said never to use qualifiers like absolutely unless one was hopelessly in love. Absolutely not.

To my good friend Boris Gennadyevitch Masarov and his gypsy wife Zenia, then. (She told me once that she was one-nineteenth gypsy.)

"One-nineteenth?" I asked her.

"You are brutal as Russian with fascination for facts, figures, numbers," she responded.

"One-nineteenth?" I inquired again.

"Are good-looking young man. Why ask silly question?"

Having set down this exchange, I see that I have failed to present her quality. She is not shallow. She carries herself as if

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nothing has transpired in Russia of any moment since Dostoyevsky was saved from the firing squad by the czar's reprieve. I suppose I am saying that she elicits a chord in one's historical appreciation. I now know how an aristocratic woman of the provinces might appear to us in the middle of the nineteenth century. The best of Russian literature comes alive for me when I am around Zenia. So many of Turgenev's dissatisfied women come to mind, and Chekhov's incomparable glimpses of the Russian provinces. Zenia is all of them for me, and more. Yet, she is also a woman who has lived under the horrors of Stalin. Kittredge, you can feel the depredations of Soviet history through the sense one receives of her much-battered soul. While she looks over forty, the Russians show their age in ways we do not. Do you know, I believe they take a certain grim satisfaction in wearing their souls on the wrinkled surface of their face. We Americans would, of course, go squeak before we'd ever let anyone have the satisfaction of thinking he was looking into our spiritual depths, but that may be exactly what the Russians have to offer. "I have passed through cataclysmic days, and permitted state horrors to be visited on friends, but I have never lied to my soul." That is what her face says to me. (She has the most extraordinary deep dark eyes—operative definition of "Otchi Chorniya".) Yet she has to have been around frightful events. She is KGB, after all. Or at least her husband is. Then she tells me that she is thirty-three. Yes, history has cut its lines into Russian faces.

Well, here I am, rushing new people on to you without the courtesy of a little development, but then this friendship with the Masarovs is the most interesting relation I have at present with anyone in Uruguay, even if it has been put together like an arranged marriage with brokers on both sides.

It began because here in Montevideo we are sometimes a working part of the State Department. "Our cover folds us into the crust" has become one of Hunt's sayings. Of course, he doesn't exactly hate the idea of pretending to be First Secretary to the American Ambassador. As you may recall, that worthy, Jefferson Patterson, Eisenhower's appointee, is a genteel man with a hopeless stammer in English and it gets worse when he attempts Spanish. So, Patterson continues to avoid functions.



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His deputy, the Counselor, is all right, but his wife, a lush, has been known to take off her shoes at Embassy dances and embark on impromptu high kicks—"Grand jets," she announces. Needless to say, they took her off the circuit. Which leaves the field open to the Hunts, and, on occasion, the Porringers, and myself.

Combine this with the State Department's estimate that Khrushchev's constant appeals lately for armament reductions, while clearly not to be trusted, must be met, nonetheless, with compensatory American moves. We-cannot-lose-another-contest-for-world-opinion is the present State Department stance. Word has even come to us from Western Hemisphere Division: Carefully monitored fraternizing with the Soviets is a viable option. Theoretically, we're always prepared to get friendly with any Soviet who throws us a side glance, but as a practical matter, whenever small conversations commence around the canapé tables, we comport ourselves as if we are offering Christmas politesse to lepers. You don't put a career on the line by fraternizing for too little.

Well, the directive has come in. And we have certainly heated up the GOGOL outpost (which is how we refer to the Bosqueverdes now that the Russian garden parties are going again. The Sourballs thought enough of this opportunity to send down two of their operators. Nearly all of Soviet Russia Div's people are anti-Soviet Russians, or Poles, or Finns, intensely fluent in Russian. They do make an odd breed. Paranoid and insular to an extraordinary degree, they give off about as much warmth as a barnacle. Yet they sport what could be Irish names if not for the odd spelling. Monikers like Heulihaen (pronounced Hoolihan) and Flarrety (pronounced Flaherty.) Heulihaen and Flarrety have been installed on separate eight-hour stints at GOGOL outpost for the last month, and have been photographing the very hell out of the lawn parties in the Soviet Embassy garden.

Hunt calls them our Finnish Micks. Left to themselves, the Finnish Micks would pass over to us about as much information as you could get from a Mickey Finn, but Hunt knows how to play the web back at Cockroach Alley. Result: The Finnish Micks grudgingly provide us with bits of poop and scam.

The largest discovery (accomplished by way of filming the

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Russians and their guests in the garden, then studying these home movies around the clock) is that a bit of infidelity is going on behind Soviet Embassy walls. There seems a likely connection between the new Soviet KGB chief, the *Resident*, named Varkhov, Georgi Varkhov, who looks exactly as he should, built like a tank, shaved head like a bullet, and—are you wholly prepared?—our own soulful Zenia.

Now, I was apprised of this item after I became friendly, all proportions kept, with the Masarovs. I still think Zenia is soulful, although her taste for Varkhov, if true, puts me off. The Finnish Micks, however, seem pretty certain of their ground. The working logic for such conclusions, as I piece it out, comes to this: in social life, we are always surrounded by hints of infidelity at every party. We see smiles, whispers, glances—all that movie-business sign language. Yet our perceptions are transitory. Hints of behavior are everywhere, but we usually cannot confirm what we have seen. On film, however, if we expend the patience to reexamine each move of our actors, the indeterminate can crystallize into the concrete. By such methods are we provided with a 75-percent certainty that Zenia Masarov and Georgi Varkhov are having a liaison, and Boris Gennadyevitch Masarov is aware of the situation.

I hate to terminate at just this place but an urgent phone call involving my work has just come in. Since I have to go by the Embassy, I will post this letter and do my best to carry it up to date tomorrow. Hopefully, I can send a full account then. Forgive such a brusque ending.

Love,
Herrick



17 | The urgent phone call did not involve my work but was from Sally. She had to be with me. She had just been to the doctor; she was pregnant.

Lately, I had been attempting to see her less often, but the results had been inconclusive. Now she was pregnant. My poor Sally was honest, or honest enough when pushed to the truth (since I did push her), to admit she had also had intercourse with Sherman in this period. She did not know whose child it was. Although she would swear it was mine.

I felt close to nausea. Soon, I recognized that she felt worse. She would not have an abortion, she told me. She would proceed to have the child—"And," she said, "let's hope he doesn't look too much like you." If it was a boy, she was certain it would be mine. Her logic seemed unassailable to her. "I want him to look a little like you," she said.

We sat on the edge of my bed, grasping each other in the way of beggars who hope to draw warmth out of the gnawing hole within themselves. For the first time, we neither took off our clothes nor made love with them on. Even as I pressed her to have an abortion, I knew she would refuse, and found a demon within my inmost worm. The thought that I would be having a child closeted in the home of Sherman Porringer did appeal to a very small part of me. I understood suddenly that evil did not have to be all-consuming, it need touch no more than one rare nerve. I did my best to tell myself that it might be Sherman's child after all. Then I decided that it did not matter. Sherman, devoted habitué of every good (and low) brothel in Montevideo, deserved whatever he got. It also occurred to me that he could have syphilis (in which case, so could I), although, loyal hog to modern medicine, Porringer was always consuming each new antibiotic that came into the Embassy pharmacy. He was a walking myocinizine of a penisulfamilimide.

Sally departed to the tune of mutual agreements to discuss these matters further. I even thought of the child to come. That finally gave me one fine pang. Some part of me might soon be trapped beneath Porringer's roof. I consoled myself with the thought that Sally would be a passionate and loving mother, albeit a loud one with a register of shrieks for the spills and slops

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of childhood.

I had certainly lost my Saturday. That night I did go to the Embassy, laid my letter into the box for the State Department pouch, and went home to write again.

January 11, 1958

Dear Kittredge,

It's midnight just about. Work has come, work has gone—a crisis with Fuertes proved not critical. I'll fill you in before too long on our Uruguay ace, but prefer first to expatiate on my new KGB cronies.

Of course, I can still hear one instructor at the Farm saying, "Expatriate!" That dependable Agency exhortation! The-space-you-ate, Hubbard, bring-forth-the-space-you-ate—as if memory were a mighty maw. Hark to these wings of metaphor! The truth is that I feel giddy writing to you again. Can it be the altitude? In case I haven't told you, after Luxembourg, Uruguay is the flattest country in the world. At sea level, too. Do you know I've had four drinks with an avocado.

I apologize. I feel just a little too much vertigo to go on. I'll sleep and pick this up tomorrow.

Sunday morning

It's now January 12th, and I will not tear up last night's final *pensées*. I believe, despite the evidence above, that my wits show their own curious gait when I'm drunk.

To the Masarovs. Some time ago, Varkhov, the Resident at the Russian Embassy, invited us to a large party. After cable exchanges with the Groogs and the Sourballs, we accepted. Hunt led the State Department delegation, and Porringer and I took up our cover as First Assistant and Second Assistant to the First Secretary to the Ambassador—shades of Gilbert and Sullivan! Hunt, looking over our team, decided that I needed a date.

"How about Libertad La Lengua?" I said to that.

"How about Nancy Waterston," he replied.

I'm sure it's been so long since I mentioned our Administrative Officer that I must refresh your memory. I believe I

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described Nancy once as sweet, bright, and hardworking but undeniably plain and very much a spinster. She used to be devoted to Mayhew, and Hunt now gets ditto loyalty. In the beginning, I took her out a couple of times when Mrs. Sonderstrom or Mrs. Porringer or Mrs. Gatsby or Mrs. Kearns couldn't find an unattached single girl for me. Nancy has to be ten years older than myself, and I would guess that she has never been to bed with a man.

Well, if it had been the Swiss Embassy, or even the Embajada de Gran Bretaña, I would have accepted the chore, but I felt curiously diminished to enter the Soviet lair with Nancy on my arm.

Hunt would have none of these niceties. "Do you know the meaning of 'The Colonel requests'?" he asked.

"Howard, Nancy won't enjoy herself."

"She will."

He laughed a lot at that in the sky-high skinny whinny you so detest. He has a long middle finger, and for the life of me, Kittredge (and I hope my candor will not put you off), I had an image of Howard inserting that finger into the poor chaste fold of Miss Waterston. It was the oddest flash to come into the conversation. I saw the finger probing back and forth—a series of wholly authoritative strokes. The mind takes us where it will, won't it?

"You look a little glassy-eyed," said Hunt.

"What is your motive?" I asked about as coldly as I dared.

"It's a ploy, Harry. The King Brothers won't know what to make of you and Nancy."

"They'll see right through it."

"Well, kid, they might not. Because I want you to introduce Nancy as your fiancée."

"Have you asked her?"

"She's amenable. It'll be fun for her."

"Howard," I said, "tell me the real motive. It will go down easier."

"The Sovs are always running a dupe-show on us. I've seen one of their joy-boys with three different Russian tomatoes at three different foreign embassy functions. Each time, the same fellow has the gall to introduce the *lady*"—he held both hands

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far apart and dipped quotation marks with bent fingers—"as his wife. The time has come to show them a little of our dipsy doodle."

Well, Kittredge, it ended up being quite an evening. We arrived at the Russian Embassy on a Saturday in late afternoon and the light was kind to the soft yellow tones of their stone manse. Like much of Montevideo architecture, it is a hodgepodge of Italian Renaissance, French Baroque, Transylvanian Gothic, Oak Park, Illinois, circa 1912, and plain old Russian samovar, a big sprawling villa with massive doors and turrets and ingrown balconies that look like ingrown toenails, dwarf windows and magnum windows, forbidding outer gates, black-spiked fence with painted gold tips on the spearheads. "Blue-beard's castle," I whispered to Nancy, as we entered the outer gate, and were steered by a wholly uncompromising young Russian Marine to the garden. I had an unruly impulse to look up at the Bosqueverdes' window where the Bolex H-16 is posted, and give a clenched fist of a Communist salute to the Finnish Micks.

Well, I've never described an embassy party on the theory that you're familiar enough with them in Washington, so why be offered details of our lesser spread? Still, the Russians do it up. They had invited about every foreign gang in town—Norway, Greece, Japan, Portugal, Costa Rica, name it, even the Orden Soberana de Malta, the Reino de Bélgica, and the República Socialista de Checoslovaquia. By the time the international tide was in, there may have been one hundred and fifty people on that lawn drawn from as many as forty embassies and consulates. A Soviet offering of hospitality to the world: one ton of black caviar, endless supplies of vodka, plus the usual array of appetizers, most of which struck the eye like a bead of acid-green pigment on a mound of cadmium orange. They also serve red wine and white wine from the Caucasus—some of the worst stuff ever corked—and all the foreign embassy types did their best to practice English on me. There is something so prodigiously fraudulent about the congealed friendliness of these embassy types. Such anxiety in the air. Everyone stirs with the restlessness of birds.

All this was exacerbated by the presence of Americans in

the Russian garden. How I wish you could have been here. Your beauty would have polarized the greensward. As it was, I anticipated in advance just how it was going to show in the films. From above, each American and each Russian was the center of a cluster of foreign embassy types. Caught by a telephoto lens, pieces of information seem equal to particles of food. Tongues dart out to snatch each morsel.

Afternoon opened onto twilight, and another mood settled in. Everyone got a little wild (by which I mean no more than a shade over into the indiscreet). Hunt tells me that movie people call this time of day the magic hour since the natural light is soft and wonderful, but the scene has to be captured on film in thirty minutes. (If I ever have to face a firing squad, I hope it's in a garden at twilight—what a thought!) I kept picturing the frustrations of Heulihaen and Flarrey as they bore down on us with their lens and (it better be) ultra-high-speed film. Of course, the more we all acted up at the party, the less light there was to satisfy our Finns.

Pretty soon, those minor and major embassies who happen on this day to have no particular business to initiate, begin to leave, and the lawn opens for dramatic action. Now you can pick up what is happening across the garden. Hunt is talking to Varkhov, who in turn is paying court to Dorothy. Before long, Zenia takes a stroll from the Foreign Office to the KGB, which is to say leaves two of Great Britain's officials to join her Resident, and she and Varkhov now laugh loudly at Hunt's jokes. In another corner of the garden, a joy-boy (from Irkutsk, no doubt) is flirting with Sally Porringer who no longer seems afraid that Sherman will put her tit in a wringer, and I, giddy from caviar after a year of eating meat twice a day, and not impervious to the vodka, move in on Boris Masarov, keeping Nancy at my side. "I want you to meet my fiancée," I say in the best good humor, as if the idea were mine all along.

Kittredge, I must tell you. Given my schooling, I am only now learning what wonderful and mysterious beings women are. I confess it. Nancy Waterston, whose face on a good day, would give competition to a parson's daughter, narrow, pinched, and all her features pulled by duty, her small bust unable to protrude beyond the forward hunch of her shoulders, now looked as

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attractive as if sparklers had been set off on her wedding cake. When a plain woman looks dazzling for an instant, one's breath stands still; the universe is full of surprise. (Which is equal to saying, I suppose, that the universe is meaningful.)

Masarov reacted formally. "I congratulate you," he said. "I lift glass to toast vital spirit of future marriage."

"Mr. Masarov, that is a distinguished toast," said Nancy in her good Midwestern accent so cram-packed with honest step-by-step sentiment. But then she gave a little laugh as such honesty came face to face with her present role. "Maybe you will attend our wedding," she said.

"It will be when?" he asked, and I could not help but notice that he was looking down the length of the lawn to where Zenia and Varkhov were still talking to Hunt and Dorothy. The anguish on Masarov's face (which I cannot say I would have perceived had not the Zenia-Varkhov liaison been advertised to me as a 75-percent likelihood) now seemed analogous to the wound of a tired animal who pauses, blood dripping, before gathering itself to climb one more hill. He downed his drink in a shot and stopped a Uruguayan waiter who was carrying an ice-cold bottle of vodka on a tray.

"We don't know the date yet," said Nancy, "because I believe in long engagements." Was she drunk, I wondered, or merely intoxicated by new found talents? "That's an old family institution," she told him. "My father and mother went together seven years before their wedding bells spoke up long enough to say, 'Enough of this. Please ring us. We're rusty.'"

"Yes," he said, "may I ask? What does your father do?"

"He's a circus acrobat," said Nancy, and giggled again. Her eyes were dancing behind her eyeglasses. I realized, as if I were cleansing the inside of myself with the nicest pomade of compassion and sweet sorrow, that this must be the liveliest evening she had had in Uruguay. "No," she said, "our country was founded on the idea that you cannot tell a lie. My father is retired, but he used to be a corporate executive in insurance in Akron, Ohio."

Masarov looked relieved, as if a piece of intelligence had just checked out. "My country was not founded," he said in reply. "More likely, was shot out of a cannon."

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Be certain, I underlined that last remark for referral to Hunt.

Masarov held up his glass. "Toast to future nuptials."

"I like being toasted," said Nancy.

"First, however, learn to drink our vodka. Americans are always telling me it is hard to keep up with Russian banquets. Because they do not know secret."

"Oh, give me the secret," she said.

At just this juncture, Varkhov, who was making a tour of his remaining guests, joined us, and jumped in so quickly on Masarov's speech that I realized both men were equally well used to informing all and sundry how to imbibe Russian spirits. Varkhov's syntax in English, however, was what an instructor at the Farm once called *Russky Tarzan*. Articles, pronouns, and the verb *to be* withered away. Primeval grunts were substituted.

"Not sipping," he said. "Never sipping. Gulp vodka. Only,"—Varkhov held up one Russian commissar of a flat, heavy palm—"offer toast. First! Deepest toast. Appraisal of relationship. From heart. Offered from heart, drink vodka in gulp." Which he did, and whistled for the waiter to come back. "Fill glasses. Not worry. Small glasses."

We filled glasses. "After vodka," he said, "eat caviar. Better, eat *zakushki*. Appetizer."

"Yes," said Nancy, as if she were well used to obeying orders.

"Then, darling lady never drunk."

"Ho, ho, ho," said I.

"Cynic," said Varkhov.

He held up his glass again. "Toast," he said. "To evening, to future of peace, to lovely lady, to American with mission," and he winked at me. We were all drunk, yessiree baby.

Outside on the Bulevar España you could hear the traffic going to and fro between the city to our right and Pocitos Beach, with its high-rise apartment houses, down to the left. I thought of the safe house where Chevi and I meet. From side streets, the tangential whoops of adolescents ricocheted through the evening air. Quite as abruptly as he had joined us, Varkhov bowed and left for another group.

"Do you play chess?" Masarov asked me.

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"Yes," I said, "not all that well."

"But not so badly?"

"I can play," I said.

"Good. You must be very good. I will invite you to my home. It is nearby. And you, Miss Waterston."

"Name the date, I'll bring the cake," she said.

"An old American expression?" he asked. Was I reading too much into him, or was it said with something like longing? He not only spoke reasonably good English but seemed to take pleasure in it.

"No," she answered, "it's as hometown and hicky as you can get."

"Hometown and hicky," he repeated. "Hicky is . . . pustule, pimple?"

"Just about," said Nancy.

Kittredge, this was the hot core of the evening. The string was thrown across the abyss and now the cord and rope will follow. Indeed, it has. I will tell you in my next letter about the evening with the Masarovs.

My love to you, to Hugh, and to Christopher,
Harry the Betrothed.

In my letter, I had jumped conveniently over the rest of the evening. Nancy was drunk and said she had eaten too many appetizers, so I took her home. Home proved to be three rooms on the second floor of a modest villa on the Calle Doctor Geraldo Ramón not three blocks from the Embassy. "I think freedom consists of being able to walk to work in the morning," she told me in most certain, if inebriated, terms. She certainly had a second voice installed behind the first. I made the mistake of kissing her.

She kissed back as if we were indeed betrothed and getting married tomorrow. I was discovering that the mouth of a virgin spinster was not like others. Her lips pressed against mine, a family seal upon wax. Her teeth offered the faint odor of dentifrice, mouthwash, and tooth inlay, but her breath was a furnace, and back of that was some baleful neutral zone inspired by her stomach. I had an awful set of impulses I could never have been

able to confess to Kittredge. I knew that Nancy Waterston could be mine forever if I chose, and the centrality of such power stirred something awfully cold in me. The image I had had of Hunt's finger stroking her vagina with precise professional strokes became the image of my finger. I had been using him as a cover story for my own impulses. It was then I kissed her a second time on the cheek, assured her that it had been a remarkable evening and perhaps we would visit the Masarovs together, and made my exit much impressed with the ability of one kiss to conduct me right up to the edge of a possible marriage.

On the way home, I had time to recollect that Sally (not at all witting of Hunt's improvised matchmaking) had had time to pass me on the lawn, and say, in a husky, shaky whisper which did not promise to be kept down for long, "Cheap son of a bitch, you could at least have some taste."

My immediate concern, however, was that the Finnish Micks might be photographing her lips. Quickly, I said: "A ploy. Hunt's idea. Don't zoom, Sally," and raised my glass in the salute you give to Company wives in whom you have no interest larger than minimal courtesy.

Only now, driving home, did it occur to me that the Russians may also have had a camera trained on the garden. They would have seen my face. What would my words communicate to them? *"A ploy. Hunt's idea. Don't zoom."* I might have given away much too much. On the other hand, it could prove rich in interpretation for Soviet eyes and send them off into far-flung scenarios.

One of Harlot's thoughts now came back to me. Evil, he had once informed me, was to know what was good, and do one's best to tamper with it. Whereas wickedness was merely one's readiness to raise the stakes when one did not know what one was doing. By that measure, I was wicked. It also occurred to me for a moment that everything we were doing in Uruguay might by that logic be equally wicked, but then I recognized that I did not care. Let no one say that the innocent are always good. I drove on to bed.

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January 27, 1958

Dearest Kittredge,

I was hoping for a letter, but perhaps you are waiting to hear more about the Masarovs. In any event, I feel like writing. You see, I'm obliged to report these days on each step taken with Boris and Zenia. Then the Groogs and Sourballs masticate my cables down to the molecules.

As one example of the present work mode, the Groogs and Sours decide in concert with Hunt (for he refuses to be bypassed on any decision, minor or major) that Nancy should not accompany me to the Masarov home. Their reasoning is that a continuing presentation of Miss Waterston and myself as prospective bride and groom might put our histrionic abilities to too great a test—Nancy's, anyway, Hunt allows. I suspect that Hunt messed up in the first place by putting an Administrative Officer like Nancy into such a slot.

At any rate, Miss Waterston was sufficiently disappointed to show chagrin. "Oh, fudge," she said, "oh, fudge and yee-God crackers," so help me, Kittredge, is what she said. Then, with a sigh and a formal, professional smile—Lord, she is professional—she went back to auditing one more of Gordy Morewood's Byzantine accounts. Poor Nancy—she is so weathered by disappointment.

Meanwhile, I get ready to visit the Masarovs. I call, and, via Hunt's specific instructions, make the date for Nancy and myself. The idea is to keep Zenia at home with Boris. If she knows Nancy is not accompanying me, she may absent herself, and Howard is trying to forestall that. It's deemed more rewarding to get a take on husband and wife together. If the Masarovs are near to a break-up, there may be indications which of the two could be more likely to defect. On the off chance that they present themselves as a strong, well-knit couple, maybe they'll fly the coop together. Such is our advance reasoning.

The day arrives. I trot over for tea and make my apologies about Nancy's indisposition. They seem disappointed. I cannot help thinking that Hunt was right. If Zenia had been told in

advance, she might not have been there.

Given the limited supply of desirable real estate in Montevideo, my friendly Russian couple is living in a high-rise apartment house just two blocks further down the Rambla from the similar high-rise in which is located our safe house. The Masarovs are on the tenth floor, and also have a view through their picture window of Pocitos Beach and the sea. There, all resemblances end. They have truly furnished their place. I do not know if it is to my taste, but their belongings do fill the living room. There are heavy velvet drapes looped around the picture window, several fat armchairs and a plump sofa with lace antimacassars, a small oriental carpet on top of a large one, two samovars—one in brass, the other in silver—a number of standing lamps with beaded shades, a large piece of mahogany furniture with open glass cases for the display of their plates and dishes, small casts of heavy nineteenth-century sculpture on every table, a bronze maiden, for example, with a filmy bronze gown clinging to her half-exposed breasts, then Apollo, standing on the ball of one foot, and gold-framed prints of paintings wherever there is space: Cezanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, plus a couple of Russian painters I do not recognize who portray czars flanked by Russian Orthodox high priests, and nobles dressed half like pirates—must be boyars. In the corner of one painting, a defeated boyar is bleeding to death from a wound in his neck. The agony on his mouth is expressive. Quite a picture to look at every day.

There are also oriental carpets put up as wall hangings, and I count four chess sets, two of which look to be of value. One of the boards is made of inlaid wood.

I can't help contrasting this old-fashioned, middle-class opulence with Sherman Porringer's child-scuffed, dog-chewed, blonde-wood furniture and bookshelves on bricks. The Masarovs, possessing not all that much space (now that they've filled it), have converted the hallway that ties their three and a half rooms together into a long, very narrow library. It is a squeeze for two people to walk side by side, yet both walls are lined with dark-stained oak book cases. Later I get to look at Boris' collection of tomes, and will tell you that he reads French, German, English, Spanish, Italian, and several Soviet languages whose

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names I would not know how to spell. That is a lot for him to have learned, but, then, he says he is thirty-seven. While this conflicts with the Sourball dossier, which pegs him at thirty-two, I must say it adds up. He speaks of the Second World War where he rose to the rank of captain, and countless framed photographs on a collection of end tables are certainly there to verify his military career. I do take mental note of the shoulder-board epaulets in these photographs so the Sours can check it out. Of course, I am not able to swear these are World War II snapshots, but they do have the feel of those times, and on one photograph you can witness for background an incredibly littered city of rubble and jagged artifacts. "Berlin," he told me, "in the last days. That is why we are smiling."

"Yes, you must have been happy the war was coming to an end."

He shrugged. Suddenly, he was gloomy. "Half happy," he replied gnomically, but then, as if it were not congenial to speak in such fashion to a guest, he added, "There is always question. Does one deserve life? Better men have perished."

"Still, you laugh in photograph," remarked Zenia.

"I am happy," he said, contradicting himself.

"We were meeting two days before," said Zenia. "Brishka and myself. First time."

"You, too, happened to be in Berlin?" I asked.

"Entertain troops."

"Zenia is a poet," said Masarov.

"Was," said Zenia.

"She has not written a poem in two years."

"Oh," I said.

"Close to goofy," said Zenia. "Moi."

"Well," I said. (Kittredge, I swear, we have to be as bad as the English when it comes to receiving sudden confession.) "Well, it must be difficult to sit in these well-furnished rooms when one's pen is dry." (To myself, I sounded like the Earl of Phumphedom.)

The Russians have one virtue, however. They are so abrupt that no deadening remark can keep a half-life of more than three seconds. "Well-furnished?" asked Zenia. "Aggregate. Is but aggregate."

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I heard "aggravate" at first, so was, of course, confused, until her next speech brought clarification. "His family, my family. Aggregate of Moscow apartment—his father; Leningrad apartment—my mother. Remnants of families now complete."

"None of it yours?"

"All mine. All belongs to Boris. *Aussi*. Also."

"Yes," I said, "and your government shipped it over here for you?"

"Of course," she said, "why not?"

"But your apartment in Moscow must be empty."

She shrugged. "People in it."

We sat down at this point before the second-best chess set and Boris handed me the white pawn. "You are my guest," he said.

Kittredge, you know I am not at all in Hugh's class as a player, but I'm not bad—once I won a low-level tournament of *patzers*, as modest players are referred to, and in a simultaneous exhibition with a ranked master who was taking on twenty Yale students at twenty boards, I happened to be one of three who came away with a draw. The other seventeen all lost. All the same, I am, when it comes to real levels of chess, essentially talentless.

I could sense, however, as soon as we commenced, that the game meant much to him. As if a first whiff of the great international contest for the soul of man had finally entered our mood, I was aware of his tension, and then, reciprocally, of mine. "When in doubt, open with a king's pawn," I said cheerfully to him, and did just that. He nodded curtly, but then was rude enough for the first time—since his manners, as I hope I've indicated, are the best of that whole Russian gang on Bulevar España—to sit in his chair and study me openly for a minute. He did not look at the board, rather at my face, my posture, my uncertain smile, my—in short—my emanations. He made me feel as if I were back in the gym at St. Matthew's, and was going to wrestle with the determined-looking fellow at the other end of the mat in just twenty seconds.

"I think," he said at last, "Sicilian Defense is appropriate reply," and he advanced a queen's bishop's pawn to the fourth rank. Kittredge, I remember clearly that you spoke once of giv-

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ing chess up at the age of twelve because you could think of nothing else. I would not wish to stir any half-buried cerebration, but I have to tell you this much: The black reply that always puts my king's-pawn opening into trouble is the Sicilian Defense. It seems to take a different turn every time, and I never get to play my game. I'm white, but I'm reacting all the while to what black is up to. It was uncanny of Boris to look me over so carefully, then pick the Sicilian.

Well, that's all you need to know. By the sixth move I was uncomfortable, by the eighth I was beginning to glimpse future defeat, and by the tenth move he had gotten up from his chair in impatience at how long it was taking me—we employed no clock—and came back with a book, and was impolite enough, or superior enough, or maybe it is elegant enough, to sit there reading while I cogitated over my next move. Then, as soon as I had come to a decision, he would look up, pull his upper teeth over his lower lip with the gentlest sound of tasteful appreciation, reach forward, make his move, which always took immediate account of whatever small positional scheme I was hoping to advance, and then without a by-your-leave, go back to his book, which happened to be—do you believe this?—the Modern Library Giant of *Moby-Dick*. He was, incidentally, well into it.

Masarov took a knight on the fourteenth move, and I gave up on the fifteenth. He had all the position by then and his rooks were ready to go. I never succeeded in castling. He kept me too busy.

Now Zenia brings out the tea. There is, in the wake left by the game, nothing to talk about. I comment that she does not use the samovars, but a teapot. "English tea," she replies. I ask for her patronymic. "My father's name—Arkady. I am Zenia Arkadyova."

"The sounds are beautiful," I say. "Zenia Arkadyova."

We make a little game of getting the accent right. "Many sounds in Russian," she tells me, "woods, earth, small animals in forest, rivers. English different. Derives from roads, hills, beaches. Surf of sea."

The largest generalizations are always begging to be adopted by me, but this is too basic.

"I'm sure you are right," I say.

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She stares at me. It is disconcerting. She seems to be searching for some person in hiding just behind myself. "May I look at your library?" I ask Boris.

He pulls himself out of the deep depression in which he has sat since the end of the game. He passes with a wave of his hand over the three quarters of his books that are in Cyrillic, and brings me to his American section. In English text, is all of Hemingway and most of Faulkner. Also Mary McCarthy, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, William Inge, Sidney Howard, Elmer Rice, all of O'Neill, Clifford Odets, and T. S. Eliot—*The Cocktail Party*.

"Do you have ambitions to be a playwright?" I asked.

He grunted. "A playwright?" he replied. "I would not know how to talk to actors."

"Nonsense," said Zenia.

He shrugged. "Hemingway I like," he said. "'Tis the essence of pre-World War Two America, would you agree?" ("Tis!") We had taken another step along the bookcase and were passing the works of Henry James. "Much studied by Lenin and Dzerzhinsky," said Masarov, tapping the binding of *The Golden Bowl*.

"Is that really true?" I asked. I was overcome by such news.

"No," said Zenia. "Brishka makes jokes."

"Not at all. *Golden Bowl*. Perfect symbol for capitalism. Of course Dzerzhinsky would read such work."

"Boris, ridiculous. Is insult to our guest."

He shrugged. "I apologize," he said, and looked me in the eye. "Who do you like? Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky?"

"Dostoyevsky," I said.

"Good, Dostoyevsky writes semi-atrocious Russian, but is, in fact, my preference. So we have possibility for friendship."

"First, I must improve my chess."

"Cannot be done," he said. His candor caught me by surprise, and I began to laugh. He soon joined me. He's got this heavy body and prematurely graying hair, much-lined face, one tough guy, but there's an odd youth lurking in the corners of his expression, as if he hasn't figured everything out yet.

"*Zakushki*," said Zenia. "Have *zakushki* with more tea. Or vodka."



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I declined. She protested. Despite an atrocious accent, her voice is deep and suggestive. At public functions, she seems like a mysterious and sensuous woman, exotic, occult, as removed from both of us as an oracle; this afternoon, she is middle-aged, fussy, maternal, the mistress of a small and very bourgeois establishment. I am finding it hard to piece together any sense of these two people as KGB, whether together or apart. Yet he has gone out of his way to mention Dzerzhinsky—that is obliged to be some sort of signal.

We sit down and chat about cultural matters American. He is interested in Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs, in Thelonius Monk, in Sonny Rollins, whom I have never heard of. He has a record of Sonny Rollins and plays it for me and beams when I say that I have never heard a better tenor saxophone.

Abruptly, he opens a new direction. "Zenya was telling untruth," he says.

"Zenya Arkadyova was lying?" I ask.

He smiles at my use of the patronymic. "She has, actually, written one poem in last two years."

"No, is awful. Do not show," says Zenia.

"In English," says Masarov. "This year, in Russian tongue, Zenia cannot express herself. Not this year. Is total block. So, in your language, she has essayed . . . attempted . . ."

"*Zakushki*. Little poem. Appetizer," says Zenia. She is wholly flushed now, and her ample bosom is, I could swear, surging. "Nugatory," she says. "Trivial." (Sounds like tree-vee-owl.)

"Let him read it," says Brishka.

They argue in Russian. She yields. She goes to the bedroom and comes back with a sheet of cheap notebook paper. On it, in a somewhat unwieldy hand, she has put this head: "Vertigo Is Joy."

You can believe that after encountering such a title, I picked up her offering with no happiness, but . . . let me write it out for you. Lord knows, I've not only got a copy, but can recite it by heart after the workout it got from the Sourballs.

Vertigo Is Joy

*Our bird passed away in my hand,
its feathers a shroud.
I knew the moment.
Its last heartbeat
spoke to my palm.
Comrade, said bird,
Do not wait in line
to mourn for me.
I fall into depths
that are great heights.*

"Better if in Russian," said Zenia, "but cannot find *les mots justes*. Not for Russian. Words speak from English. Boris gives correct grammar? Correct punctuation? Is correct?"

"Yes," I said.

"Is good? Good poem?"

"I think so."

"Zenia is recognized in Russia," said Boris, "although perhaps not recognized enough."

"Is good for printing in America?" asked Zenia.

"Probably," I said. "Let me take it. I have two friends who edit literary magazines."

"Yes," she said, "yours," and folded it into my hand, and looked at me with embarrassing intimacy considering that we were standing there in front of her husband. "Print with pseudonym for me," she said.

"No," said Boris. "Present as work of a Soviet poet."

"Madness," she muttered.

"I think you might change the title," I said. "It's a little too direct for English."

She would not change her title. She loved the sound. "Am adamant for *vertigo*," she said. In her pronunciation, it rhymes with tuxedo. Ver-tee-go.

I left after some discussion of when we would visit again. Masarov proposed a picnic with Nancy and me. I agreed. But, by the time that day arrived, Nancy was not on board, and Zenia had decamped for the day. Boris and I went on the picnic together.

I am beginning to rush, however, and would rather wait for

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a day or two and finish this off with another letter.

Yours,
Harry

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February 16, 1958

Dear Kittredge,

It was my intent to get back to you a couple of weeks ago. The Sourballs, however, have been taking me through session after session, and I come back to my hotel room each night hoping to empty my head long enough to find sleep. In addition, I am concerned by your lack of response. Sometimes I even wonder whether my letters pile up unread. Ah, well, if you are interrogated often enough by the Sourballs, there is no drear scenario that will not raise its paranoid head.

You may recollect how modest was my meeting with the Masarovs. Well, the Soviet Russia Division did not think so. After I sent off a lengthy cable to Washington concerning my little get-together with the new Soviet friends, I received by return cable a questionnaire about as long as my last letter to you. Answering it kept me busy for a day and a half. Then, a man flew down to us, care of Soviet Russia Division, to interrogate me personally. By accent and appearance, he has to be another Finnish Mick. He calls himself Omaley. (Pronounced like "hom-ily" without the *h*.) He is not too tall, and very thin, and has horns, yes, horns of hair on an otherwise near-bald head. He also has a profusion of what I am tempted to call reverse whiskers. His chest thatch is apparently so thick that it grows out of his shirt and half up his neck. It gives him a ruff above his collar.

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He looks like a malnourished wild boar. You can imagine how well Howard Hunt takes to Hjalmar Omaley.

Well, Hjalmar Omaley doesn't care one goddamn what anyone thinks of him. He lives to do his work. Around the second day of living in his implacably chill company, I recognize that he reminds me of the exterminator who used to come to my mother's Park Avenue apartment on those cheerful mornings when cook discovered cockroaches in the oven and was ready to quit because maid was not washing the grill. I don't want to throw your stomach into the next meal, but Omaley looks like a liquidator ready to leave nothing of our enemy but the last of its bodily seepage. Communists are vermin, Soviet Communists are rabid vermin, KGB Communists are rabid *occult* vermin, and I had been in contact with the latter.

Now, I exaggerate. Except, I don't. I was queried on what I could remember of the Masarovs' war photographs until I began to feel profoundly guilty that I could not remember more, indeed, I began to wonder at my lack of motivation in memorizing relatively so little. Hjalmar, who must have simmered in sperm-soups of suspicion before being received by the clear-eyed ovum in his mother's womb, led me through endless rephrasings of each question. I had made the large mistake in my first cable of describing Boris and Zenia as "reasonably agreeable." I had intended to give an objective appraisal, but it stirred frightful concerns in the counterintelligence gang at Soviet Russia Division. I can tell you that I was interrogated on every aspect of the meeting. Could I remember the exact sequence of moves in the chess game? I did my best to replay the game to their satisfaction but could not connect the opening to our final position. This infuriated Hjalmar Omaley. Apparently, Masarov is so good at chess (at least by their original dossier on him—which, I would remind you, places him at age thirty-two, not thirty-seven) that they wanted to see whether he was carrying me in the game; that might indicate whether his motive was to charm me. No, I told them over and over, he was not carrying me—it was embarrassing to have to resign by the fifteenth move.

Next, we catalogued the furniture. The Sourballs are looking into their sources to see if more can be learned about Masarov's father's Moscow apartment and Zenia's mother's

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Leningrad apartment. After which, they proceeded to interrogate me about the American novels and plays in his bookcase. How new were the volumes? How well thumbbed? The question is how close he is to what he presents himself as being—a Russian official with specialties on American cultural affairs.

Then we went to the poem. I had been wired with a sneaky which possessed only an hour's capacity, so the tape was finished before we came to the poem. I was asked, therefore, to reconstruct all dialogue not recorded. In what ways did the couple react to my suggestion that the poem was printable in America? Am I certain that Zenia muttered the word *madness*?

I won't bore you with how long they spent on "I fall into depths that are great heights." (It is, of course, being interpreted as the Masarov offer to defect.)

On the second day, I said to Omaley, "Do you always pursue details this intensively after Agency meetings with Russians?"

He smiled as if only an idiot like myself could ask such a question. I felt as if I were in the dentist's chair.

On the third day, Howard Hunt took me to El Águila, his favorite restaurant, for lunch. The Sourballs were in an uproar, he confided, over the discrepancy in Boris' dossier. Since my report that he was thirty-seven gummed up their Soviet Personnel Record file, they were damned upset. The question now is whether our present Boris is the original, or a new body? "Next question," said Hunt. "Does Boris want to defect, or does he wish to entrap you?"

"For practical purposes, he has," I said. "I can't get any of my other work done."

"This will pass," he answered. "Your bad mark in Berlin may put a little extra heat on you now, but just keep to the positive side of the equation. Get Boris to defect and you will hold all the bouquets." He nodded. "But, buddy, you've got to be more observant next time."

"It doesn't add up," I said. "If Boris wants to come over to us, why would he entertain me and put himself at risk?"

"Given Zenia's affair with Varkhov, Boris' judgment might be off." Hunt now tasted the first glass of wine from the bottle just opened for him, and made a face. "*Joven*," he said to the

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waiter, *"esta botella es sin vergüenza. Por favor, trae un otro con un corcho honesto."*

"Bottom line," he said to me. The situation does not add up. Why fraternize with you? What can you give them, Harry Hubbard? Maybe they believe you can offer them something."

"Way beyond me, Howard," I said, but at this moment, I had an image of Chevi Fuertes' face. Could the Russians be witting of AV/OCADO?

"Back to basics," said Howard. "What do we know for certain? It is that Boris, whether Masarov One or Masarov Two, is KGB. At the Montevideo *residentura*, he is definitely Number Two man under Varkhov."

"Definitely?"

"Heulihaen and Flarrety have studied their films comprehensively enough to establish an authoritative pecking order. They can document precisely whose ass is exposed to whose beak. Varkhov has precedence over the Soviet Ambassador and his minions. And Masarov is Number Two. Meanwhile, Number One is banging the boobies off the wife of his own Number Two, while Number Two seeks to fraternize with you."

"I'm dreading the picnic," I said. "It's not the picnic. It's the three days with Omaley that are going to follow."

"Get a couple of real pieces of Masarov meat, and I will grind Hjalmar's testes into powder. But do your best to avoid inconclusive results."

Thus armed, Kittredge, thus armed. Yesterday, Zenia phoned to ask if Nancy was coming. When I said that she was still indisposed, Zenia gave a grunt that sounded much like Boris. Zenia will not be with us either.

Then, today, Sunday morning—it is now late Sunday evening as I write to you—Boris and I drove out to the country. He took along his fishing gear, and little else since Zenia had neglected to pack a hamper. I felt wrung out and distracted; so, I suspected, was Boris. We hardly talked. After half an hour on the road, he reached over to his glove compartment and handed me a flask of Scotch, which was, under the circumstances, agreeable. On the *laissez-passer* of the booze, we uttered a word or two.

"Do you like the countryside?" he asked.

"Not much."

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Kittredge, this was only my second trip out of Montevideo. In almost a year and a half! I can't believe the fact even as I write this; I am such an underground animal! At Yale, I never left New Haven. Here, all my world is contained within the Embassy, the safe house, Hunt's villa in Carrasco, and my cheap hotel room. I think it is because everything I do means so much to me that I simply don't notice from month to month how circumscribed are my movements. I saw more of the city in my first three days than in all the time since.

Of course, outside Montevideo, there is not much to look at. Along the sea are third-rate resorts trying to rise to the second level. Stucco debris stirs dust in half-finished villas by the side of the road. Inland are no more than gently rolling grassy plains, occasionally fenced in with cattle, but, over the whole, monotonous.

Masarov speaks out of a silence. "*Cuando el Creador llegó al Uruguay, ha perdido la mitad de Su interés en la Creación.*" We laugh. His Spanish is not as good as his English, but I laugh heartily—partly at the Russian accent in Spanish. It's true. God did lose half His interest in creating the world after He came to Uruguay.

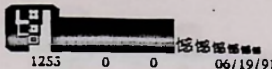
"Yet I like this country," he says. "Conducive to inner calm."

I am not feeling much of that. The highway has dwindled into a narrow two-lane road, much broken and humped and oil-stained by the weight and effluvia of truck commerce, and when we pull over to have lunch at a *café cum* gas station, it is for the omnipresent hamburgers, the local *cerveza*, and the smell of rendered beef fat and onions—what Porringer has called "the whorehouse-full-of-traffic smell."

Yet, Masarov is known in this *café*. We are apparently near his fishing hole, and he must have stopped here often. I am wondering if these poor roads, flat country, and functional little roadhouse do not remind him of his native country, and, as if we are curiously tuned to one another, he now says on the first sip of beer, "Uruguay is like small corner of Russia. Nondescript. To my liking."

"Why?"

"When nature grows awesome, man turns small." He lifts his mug. "Homage to the Swiss!"



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"Whereas here, you feel larger than nature?"

"On good days." He looks at me carefully. "You know Uruguayans?"

"Not many." I am thinking, however, of Chevi.

"Me neither." He sighs and lifts his beer. "To Uruguayans."

"Why not?"

We click glasses. We eat in silence. It occurs to me that Boris may be under as much tension as myself. I remember Hunt's injunction: Avoid inconclusive results.

"Boris," I say. "What are we up to?"

"That will develop."

I feel as if I am back in the chess game. Does he long for a book to read while waiting for each of my cautious moves?

"Let me put it," he says. "I know who you are, and you know who I am."

Now I have to turn on the sneaky. The switch is in my pants pocket, but the shift of position entailed to get my left hand over (for it is the left hand that has been holding the hamburger) cannot possibly appear as clumsy to him as it feels to me.

"Yes," I say, now that I have pressed the recording button, "you claim to know who I am, and that I know who you are."

He will not keep from smiling at this obvious move. "Of such nature," he replies.

"What does that promise?" I ask.

"Extended discourse. Is a possibility?"

"Only if we trust each other."

"Half-trust," he says, "sufficient for such discussion."

"Why choose me?"

He shrugs. "You are here."

"Yes."

"Seem cautious," he says.

"Apparently I am."

He drinks a good portion of his beer at a gulp. "I have more to lose," he says, "than you."

"Well, that," I say, "depends on what you want."

"Nothing," he says.

"Do you want to come over to us?" I ask.

"Are you mad, or clumsy?" he replies in a gentle voice.

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Kittredge, I am thinking of how bad this is going to look on the typed transcript. It will not convey the lack of personal offense in his voice. It will, to the contrary, project me as maladroit.

"No, Boris," I say, "I am neither mad nor clumsy. You approach me. Your overtures are friendly. You suggest that we have much to talk about. What can I suppose that to be but an indication of your desire to come nearer to us?"

"Or demonstration," he says, "of absolute ignorance of your people about mine."

"Are you prepared to tell me why we are here?"

"Could disappoint you."

"May I be the judge?"

He said nothing, and we sat side by side at our table looking out to the open end of the café which had no front window but only an awning that flapped with a sound as sharp as a pistol shot each time a truck went by.

"Let's approach this again," I said. "What do you really want?"

"Political intelligence." He smiled, however, as if to deny the remark.

"I may be more ready to receive than to give."

"Could not be otherwise," he said. He gave a weary sigh. "KGB," he said, "stands for Komitet Gosudarstvennoe Bezopasnosti. Committee for State Security."

"I know all that," I said. "Even a Foreign Service Officer in the State Department knows that much."

He looked amused that I would still insist on maintaining cover. "Many Directorates in KGB," he said.

"I know that as well."

"Will speak of First Directorate, and Second. First is for Soviet officers abroad; Second for home security. Respectively, CIA, FBI."

"Yes," I said.

"Our FBI, Second Directorate, has fine reputation in America. Is seen as effective. But, by many of us, is considered stupid. Wish to hear joke?"

"Yes," I said, "I would."

"Of course," he said. "Why not?"

Now, we both laughed. It was droll. We both knew that my sneaky was on, and everything said would generate analysis. We quaffed our beer. Down the hatch. He clapped his hands and *el patrón* came forward with two more mugs, and a bottle of vodka. It occurred to me that this café could conceivably be a Russian outpost with microphones in the woodwork and a camera in the ceiling cranking away.

Or—Masarov merely came here often enough for the owner to stock a few bottles of vodka.

Yes, Kittredge, droll. Masarov, with a glass in his hand was not unlike other sturdy souls who live for a booze-up—he mellowed quickly.

"Two men," he said, "from Second Directorate are in car following boy and girl in other car through multitudes of Moscow streets, then zip out to highway. The boy and girl have been with foreigners they should not visit, but are children of very high officials, so not frightened. Say to each other, 'We get rid of these yeggs, yes?' " He stopped. "Yeggs?"

"Perfect use of the word."

"Dumb cops. Yeggs. Yes?"

"Perfect."

"So boy and girl pull their car over to side of road. Behind them, other car also stops hundred meters back. Our brave boy gets out. Lifts car hood to indicate motor trouble. What do yeggs do?"

"Tell me," I said.

"Get out of car," Boris said solemnly, "and lift *their* hood. Copycats, yes?"

"Yes," I said, "stupid."

"Our Second Directorate," he said, "has undue complement of stupid people."

"Why do you tell me this?"

"Because your CIA should distinguish between First and Second Directorate. Your CIA sees all KGB as brutes."

"Oh, that's not true," I said. "We spend weeks analyzing what Dzerzhinsky learned from *The Golden Bowl*."

Now he starts to roar. He laughs with a great bellow and smacks me on the back. Boris is one hell of a strong man.

"I like you," he says.

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"Vertigo is joy," I reply.

We both laugh again. We are practically hugging one another. When the mirth ceases, he is suddenly and powerfully serious.

"Yes," he says, "in First Directorate, we go abroad. By our work, are obliged to study other nations. Become aware, sometimes painfully, of deficiencies in Soviet system. Within limitations of bureaucratic tact, we give accurate picture to home base. We try to help rectify our great Soviet dream. Yes. Even when answers are ugly and show it is our fault. The leaders of the First Directorate know more of everything wrong in the Soviet Union than anyone in your country."

"That's not the impression we get."

"Of course not. For you, KGB is equal to killers."

"It's a little more sophisticated than that."

"No! Low level! You speak of us as killers. We are professionals. Name one CIA officer who loses one little finger because of us."

"It's the hired help who get it," I said. I was thinking suddenly of Berlin.

"Yes," said Boris, "hired help get hell. True for you, true for us."

I was silent. "When do we go fishing?" I said at last.

"Fuck fishing," he said. "Let's drink."

We did. After a while I began to feel as if he had been waiting all his life to have a dialogue with one American. I was getting to know him so well that it was almost carnal, by which I mean that like most Russians he spoke with his face in mine (I suppose it is due to their small, crowded apartments) and so I came to know his exterior intimately—the places where his razor had missed some stubble, the spike-hairs in his nose, the breath of hamburgers, Turkish tobacco, onions, vodka, beer, and just enough caries to be, I swear, half-agreeable, as if a touch of rot in the mouth keeps a man honest. Hugh once imparted to me that unforgettable line of Engels—quantity changes quality—well, a touch of bad breath is altogether different from the odor of a badly corrupted mouth. I offer this aside because I lived for so long at a café table with Brishka, as he soon insisted I call him—Brishka and Harry, for sure—that