Read-Aloud Plays

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Read-Aloud Plays

Horace Holley

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INTRODUCTION

The first two or three of these "plays" (I retain the word for lack of a better one) began themselves as short stories, but in each case I found that the dramatic element, speech, tended to absorb the impersonal element of comment and description, so that it proved easier to go on by allowing the characters to establish the situation themselves. As I grew conscious of this tendency, I realized that even for the purpose of reading it might be advantageous to render the short story subject dramatically, since this method is, after all, one of extreme realism, which should also result in an increase of interest. As the series developed, however, I perceived that something more than a new short story form was involved; I perceived that

the "read-aloud" play has a distinct character and function of its own. In the long run, everything human rises or falls to the level of speech. The culminating point, even of action the most poignant or emotion the most intimate, is where it finds the right word or phrase by which it is translated into the lives of others. Every literary form has always paid, even though usually unconscious, homage to the drama. But the drama as achieved on the stage includes, for various reasons, only a small portion of its own inherent possibility. Exigencies of time and machinery, as well as the strong influence of custom, deny to the stage the value of themes such as the Divine Comedy, on the one hand, and of situations which might be rendered by five or ten minutes' dialogue on the other, each of which extremes may be quite as "dramatic" as the piece ordinarily exploited on the stage. By trying these "read-aloud" plays on different groups, of from two to six persons, I have proved that the homage all literature pays the drama is misplaced if we identify the drama with the stage. A sympathetic voice is all that is required to "get over" any effect possible to speech; and what effect is not? Moreover, by deliberately setting out for a drama independent of the stage, a drama involving only the intimate circle of studio or library, I feel that an entire new range of experiences is opened up to literature itself. Nothing is more thrilling than direct, self-revealing speech; and, once the proper tone has been set, even abstract subjects, as we all know, have the power to absorb. Thus I entertain the hope that others will take up the method of this book, the method of natural, intimate, heart-to-heart dialogue carried on in a suitable setting, and with attendant action as briefly indicated; for the discovery awaits each one that speech, independent of the tradition of the stage, has the power of rendering old themes new and vital, as well as suggesting new themes and situations. Indeed, it is in the confidence that others will follow with "read-aloud" plays far more interesting and valuable than the few offered here that I am writing this introduction, and not merely to call attention to a novelty in my own work.

Horace Holley.

New York City.

HER HAPPINESS

Darkness. A door opens swiftly. Light from outside

shows a woman entering. She is covered by a large cape, but the gleam of hair and brow indicates beauty. She closes the door behind her. Darkness.

The Woman

Paul! Paul! Are you here, Paul?

A Voice

Yes, Elizabeth, I am here.

The Woman

Oh thank God! You are here! I felt so strange—I thought ... Oh, I cannot tell you what I have been thinking! Turn on the light, Paul.

The Voice

You are troubled, dear. Let the darkness stay a moment. It will calm you. Sit down, Elizabeth.

The Woman

Yes.... I am so faint! I had to come, Paul! I had to see you, to know that you were.... I know I promised not to, but I was going mad! Just to touch you, to hold you ... but it's all right now.

The Voice

It is all right now, Elizabeth.

The Woman

I thought I could stand it, dear, I thought I could stand it. It wasn't myself—I swear to you it wasn't—nor him. I, I can stand all that, now. It was something else, something that came over me all at once. I saw—Oh Paul! the thing I saw! But it's all right now....

The Voice

It is all right, Elizabeth, because ours is love, love that is made of light, and not merely blind desire.

The Woman

Ours is love. We are love!

The Voice

So that even if we are separated—even if you cannot come to me yet, we shall not lose conviction nor joy.

The Woman

Yes, Paul. I will not make it harder for you. I know it is hard, and that it was for my sake you could bring yourself to bind me not to see you again.

The Voice

Love is, world without end. That is all we need to know.

The Woman

World without end, amen.

The Voice

And because I knew the power and truth of love in you I put this separation upon us.

The Woman

For my sake. I know it now, Paul! And trust me! You can trust me, Paul! Not time, nor distance, nor trouble nor change shall move me from the heights of love where I dwell.

The Voice

And because I knew the happiness of love could not endure in deceit, nor the wine give life if we drank it in a cup that was stained, I put you from me—in the world's sight we meet no more.

The Woman

In the world's sight ... and in the sight of God and man shall I be faithful to him from now on, in thought and deed and word, as a heart may be. Yes, Paul ... even that can I endure for your sake. For I know that hereafter—

The Voice

For love there is neither here nor hereafter, but the realization of love is ever according to his triumph. This has come to me suddenly, a light in the darkness, and I have won the truth by supreme pain.

The Woman

That, too, Paul. Pain.... I have been weak. I gave way to my nerves, but now in your presence I am strong again, and I shall not fail you.

The Voice

My presence is where your love is, and as your love so my nearness. Love me as I love you now, and I shall be more real to you than your hands and your eyes.

The Woman

Bone of one bone, and flesh of one flesh....

The Voice

Spirit of one spirit! The flesh we have put away.

The Woman

That, too, Paul. Oh the glory of it! So be my happiness that I shall not wish it changed, even before the Throne!

The Voice

I have given you happiness?

The Woman

Perfect happiness, Paul. I am happy, happier than I ever was before. But before I go home from here for the last time, turn on the light, Paul, that we may be to each other always as the wonder of this moment. For the last time, Paul. Paul?... Paul? Where are you? Why don't you answer?... Paul! (She turns on the light. It is a studio. At the piano, fallen forward upon the keys, sits the body of a man. There is a revolver on the floor beside him.) Paul!... As I saw him! Is this my happiness. Oh God, must I?

A MODERN PRODIGAL

The scene shows Uncle Richard's library, a massive and expensive interior suggesting prosperity rather than meditation. It is obviously new, and in the whole room there is only one intimate and human note, a quaint little oil painting of a boy with bright eyes—Uncle Richard at the age of eleven.

Richard walks about, waiting for his uncle, and examines the appointments with more curiosity than reverence. Stopping by the mantle for a moment he notices, with a start of surprise, his own photograph. He turns away with a shrug just as his uncle hurriedly enters.

Uncle Richard

Dick! Richard! At last! How are you? You received my letter?

Richard

I am very well, uncle. Yes, I received your letter. It was forwarded from Florence.

Uncle Richard

Good! Sit down, Richard, sit down.

Richard

I did not receive it until a few days ago, in New York. I came on as soon as possible. But I had engagements—business engagements—that delayed me.

Uncle Richard

Business? I am very glad, Richard, that you have given up your art. Not that art isn't entirely commendable, but in times like these, you know....

Richard

Don't misunderstand me, uncle. My business was connected with art. I haven't given up painting. I never shall.

Uncle Richard

In my letter—

Richard

Yes. Cousin Anne wrote me about Aunt Ethel's death, but I did not realize how changed everything here was until I read that letter from you. And now (glancing about) it is even clearer. It must have been a bitter shock to you, Uncle Richard. You had both come to the point where you could have done so much with life. But you are quite well, Uncle Richard?

Uncle Richard

I am never unwell. I don't believe in it. Yes, everything was ready here. In its larger issue, my life has not been unsuccessful.... But your business, Richard, it came out well, I hope?

Richard

Quite. You see after graduating I borrowed a certain sum to go abroad with a classmate. We had a

plan for doing a book on modern Italy, he writing
the text and I making illustrations. We had quite
a new idea about it all. It was good fun besides.
Well, the work has been placed, and now after repaying
the loan I have enough to take a studio and
begin painting in earnest.

Uncle Richard

Hum.

Richard

I believe I have a copy of one of the sketches with
me. (He tears a sheet from a note book and hands
it to Uncle Richard.)

Uncle Richard (looking at it wrong side up)

A sketch. I see. Of course it is unfinished?

Richard

Yes. But then, no painting should be what you call
"finished." A work of art can only be finished by
the mental effort of appreciation on the part of the
spectator. Photographs and chromos are finished—that's
why they are dead.

Uncle Richard

I was not aware of the fact. But ... you will remember,
Richard, that in my letter I asked you to
visit me?

Richard

Of course. And I shall be very pleased to stay for
a few days. Very kind of you to ask me.

Uncle Richard

Not at all, Richard, not at all! I—

Richard

On Monday I must return to New York and look for
a studio. With the book coming out I feel I shall
have no trouble selling my work.

Uncle Richard

Studio? Isn't that—hem! rather Bohemian, Richard?

Richard

Good gracious, uncle, you haven't been reading

George Moore, have you?

Uncle Richard

But Richard, did you not understand that I wanted
you to stay here longer than that?

Richard

Why no. How long did you mean?

Uncle Richard

Er—I hadn't thought, exactly. I mean that I wanted
you to bring your things here—bring your things
here and just live on with me.

Richard

I had no idea you meant that. Anyhow, as I couldn't
paint here, it's impossible. But, of course, if you
care to have me stay a few days longer—

Uncle Richard

But I have everything arranged for you here. Your
room—everything.

Richard

But you see, uncle, my work—

Uncle Richard

I hope you will give up your art, but if you must
paint I will provide you a room for it. Do you know
how many rooms there are in this house, Richard?

Richard

Really, Uncle Richard, I thank you, but—

Uncle Richard

Don't mention it. And of course you can see to its
proper arrangement yourself.

Richard

I had no idea of this when I came and—but you see,
it's not only the studio an artist requires, it's atmosphere,
the atmosphere of enthusiasm and feeling.
You might as well give a business man a brand new
office equipment and turn him loose on the Sahara
desert as to shut a painter up in a town like this and
expect him to create. Artists need atmosphere just
as business men need banks. It's the meeting of like

forces that makes anything really go.

Uncle Richard

But we are not wholly barbarous here, Richard. This,
for example, and no first-class New England city
lacks culture.

Richard

I suppose there's no use explaining, but what first-class
New England cities regard as culture your real
artist avoids as he would avoid poison.

Uncle Richard

Well, well. But circumstances—really, Richard,
don't you think it your duty to stay?

Richard

Why?

Uncle Richard

Must I explain? We are met, after a long separation,
in circumstances personally sorrowful to me,
and I trust, to some extent, to you as well. We....

Richard

Yes, a long separation.

Uncle Richard

I admit, Richard, that from your point of view my
attitude has not always been as—as considerate, perhaps,
as you might have expected. But I have been
a very busy man, and—

Richard

As far as I am concerned, uncle, I have nothing to
blame you for; but my mother....

Uncle Richard

Your mother? Surely, Richard, your mother never
criticised me to you? She was much too fine a
woman. Besides, I helped her in many ways you
may know nothing about.

Richard

No, mother said nothing. She wouldn't have, anyhow—and
as far as your helping her is concerned,
I can only judge of that by results.

Uncle Richard

Results? What do you mean? I have no desire to catalogue the things I have done for one who was near to me, but—

Richard

That's all very well, uncle, and I have no criticism to make. What's over is over. But when you speak of my duty to you, I think of how mother died so young, and how I found out afterward her affairs were so difficult. I had no idea—she sacrificed herself for me so long that I took it for granted. But I think that you, as a business man, must have known.

Uncle Richard

You found that everything was mortgaged? Well, Richard, it pains me to recall these things. Your father, unfortunately, was a poor business man. As for the mortgage, Richard, I held that myself.

Richard

You did!

Uncle Richard

Yes. Even your mother did not know. I acted through an agent, and the interest was two per cent.

Richard

But—

Uncle Richard

A nominal rate. Your mother was so proud—

Richard

Well, but there were other matters, long ago, that I have only lately heard about. You and father once started in business together....

Uncle Richard

We did. And I advised him to sell out when I did, but he thought better to hold on.

Richard

Poor father. You made—he lost....

Uncle Richard

But if he had followed my advice—. All this is painful
to me, Richard, and leads nowhere. As for yourself,
I have always been interested in you, more so
than you realize, and now—

Richard

Now?

Uncle Richard

I cannot feel at fault for anything that has happened.
Your father was unsuited for modern life.
By the ordinary standards he was bound to fail.
Still, it gives me great satisfaction that at the present
time, Richard, I can offer you a home. Yes,
Richard, a home.

Richard

It's difficult to decide.... You see, my studio—

Uncle Richard

Well! I confess I can't understand all this uncertainty!

Richard

For three years I have worked as hard as anybody
could to make a position allowing me to paint. I
have succeeded. I no longer need help!

Uncle Richard

Of course not! I don't question your ability to get
along. At the same time, your attitude now is rather
quixotic. Besides, as far as your painting is concerned,
you can always go about where you require.
It isn't slavery I am planning for you here, Richard!

Richard

Well ... but then, as I must live by my sales and
commissions, I'd cut a poor figure in surroundings
like these.

Uncle Richard

Ha! Very quaint that, Richard, very quaint! I
suppose artists are like that.... Richard, I see
you do not yet understand. I shall be most happy
to provide for you in every way. Yes. I have considered
the whole matter carefully, and for some
time have only waited an opportunity to explain to
you in person. Consider, then, that you shall have

an income of your own. You see, Richard?

Richard

No, I don't.

Uncle Richard

Why, it's simple enough!

Richard

Yes, the facts are, but I don't understand—an income, a home. Why, I never dreamed of such a thing!

Uncle Richard

And why not, my boy, why not? We haven't seen enough of each other, Richard. Perhaps I have been at fault there, not to show more clearly the interest I have always taken in you. Yes, indeed, a warm interest, Richard!

Richard

Why not, Uncle Richard? Three years ago you might have asked me that question. Now I ask you why?

Uncle Richard

Why? How strange! How could that question arise between a man and his own nephew?

Richard

Three years ago, before Aunt Ethel died, I spent Thanksgiving with you. It was during the recess, my second year at Harvard. I came here practically from my mother's funeral. I had just learned the truth about our affairs—not a thing of ours really ours, not a penny left. How mother had kept the truth from me, I don't know. But suddenly everything changed. The ground I had been standing on gave way—my hands grasped everywhere for support. I had never lacked, never thought about money either way. I took it for granted that families like ours were provided with a decent living by some law of Providence.... I came here. I thought of course you would help me. I didn't think so consciously—I turned to you and Aunt Ethel from blind instinct.

We spent Thanksgiving together. It was very quiet, very sad. You both talked about mother and the old days. At breakfast the next morning you wished me good luck and went off to your office. Afterward Aunt Ethel and I talked in the living room while I waited for the train. She seemed ill at ease. She alluded to your affairs once or twice, saying that you were quite embarrassed by the state of politics, and how sad it was that people couldn't do all they wanted to in this world for others.

Uncle Richard, when Joseph came with the carriage, Aunt Ethel kissed me, cried, and gave me—a twenty dollar bill. Good God! and I thanked her for it. Twenty dollars—carfare and a week's board! I left the house completely dazed: it seemed like a bad dream....

Uncle Richard

There, there, Richard! We never imagined for a moment. I thought your college course all provided for—and your Aunt Ethel never understood business. She doubtless exaggerated my difficulty. If either of us had dreamed you were so worried! As if I should have grudged you money!

Richard

That's what I thought at first, and I hated you for it, but afterward I realized it was not that—it was worse.

Uncle Richard

Worse!

Richard

Yes. It wasn't that you grudged the money, it was that you simply didn't think of it. You felt that something had to be done, because I made you feel uncomfortable, but you didn't know exactly what, and you were both relieved to see me go. I had spoiled your Thanksgiving dinner—that was the depth of your realization.

Uncle Richard

No, no, Richard! You were so cold, so silent. You made it impossible for us to help you.

Richard

I suppose I did seem cold. That's the instinct of inexperienced natures when they are desperate. But it would have been so easy to break through with one kind word or act.

Uncle Richard

There, there! How glad I am that conditions are changed!

Richard

Changed, yes, but it was I who changed them! The shock of poverty was terrible at first, not because I set too much value on money, nor because I was unwilling to work, but because I felt I had no power of attack. My nature was introspective, I lived in an epic of my own creation. My strength and my courage were wrapped up in dreams, and seemed to have no relation to the practical world. I could have faced the devil himself for an ideal, but to make my own living—that was the nightmare!...

That was why I was so cold, so silent. If you had said one human thing, straight from your heart to mine, I should have been comforted. In a case like that, as I now know, it is not money a man wants, even if he himself thinks it is. No. It is just sympathy, the right word that renews his courage and arms him against the new circumstances by making him feel he doesn't stand alone. If you had found that word, or even tried to find it, I should have loved you like a son. My heart was ready—you did not want it!

Uncle Richard

But you finished at college, Richard....

Richard

Yes, I finished. And do you know how? I spent that first night all alone in my room, thinking. In the morning I called on a classmate, a poor man who was working his way. I said: "Here, I haven't a cent. Advise me."

We talked it all over. He helped me sell my furniture, he sublet my room. And he gave me a job.

Uncle Richard

A—

Richard

A job. Collecting and delivering laundry. That's how I finished at college. I'm ashamed to admit it now, but at first that work hurt me like a knife. I couldn't see any relation between that and my ambition for art. But it wore off. I grew tougher, I learned the real meaning of things. And now I am glad it happened.

Uncle Richard

Admirable, admirable! Really, Richard, I am more than ever convinced that I have decided rightly. Richard, you must make this your home!

Richard

Are you still talking about my duty?

Uncle Richard

Richard, a man begins by working for himself alone, then he works for the woman he marries, but even that is not enough. One by one I have seen every motive that ever impelled or guided me grow insufficient and have to be replaced. Ambition and love, once satisfied, point forward. We must always have a future before us, Richard, unless we are willing to become machines of habit. At one point or another most men do become machines. Thank heaven, I never could. In these last few months I have begun to realize.... It was your Aunt Ethel's tragedy that she had no children. I wonder now whether it is not even more my own.

Richard, I have made you my heir.

Richard

Your heir!

Uncle Richard

My heir. And that is why, Richard—of course you could not realize it at the time—that is why I allowed myself to use the word "duty" as having reference to the future if not to the past.

For the future, Richard, is ours to enjoy, without misunderstanding, without disharmony, I at the end of my labours, you at the beginning of yours. You have revealed qualities I confess I had not suspected,

qualities fitting you for responsibility and administration. With the position you will henceforth occupy, Richard, you should enter public life. Nothing more honorable for a responsible citizen.... Nothing more essential to the welfare of our beloved republic at its present critical state. We need the English tradition over here, Richard—solid, responsible men to administer public affairs. I have often felt the need of an efficient aristocracy in our social and industrial life. And nothing would please me more than to see you rise to authority by the leverage of my wealth. Nothing would please me more—why, Richard, I should consider it the prolongation of my own life!

Richard

No. No you don't, Uncle Richard. Never!

Uncle Richard

What on earth do you mean?

Richard

I won't be your heir!

Uncle Richard

Wh—what? Good heavens! Are you mad?

Richard

I hope so. Yes, I hope that from your point of view I am quite mad. You won't understand me, because you don't understand what I most love and what I most hate. Oh you self-made Americans! When I really needed your helping hand you didn't think of me. You had the American idea that every tub must stand on its own bottom, that every young fellow must make good—that is, make money. You buy "art" at a certain stage in your development just as you buy motor cars, and you think you can buy artists the same way. You don't know that to buy dead art is to starve live artists.

Well, I made good. I can stand alone. Are you offering me money now to help me in my work? Not a bit! Rich men haven't changed since the first tribal chief ordered his bow and arrows, his wives and servants, to be buried with him.

Uncle Richard

You conceited young rascal! I needn't leave you a cent!

Richard

I haven't asked you to. I never thought about your money. I can get along very well without it. But can you take it with you?

Uncle Richard

Of course not! But I can leave it to whom I please.

Richard

Why don't you leave it to Joseph?

Uncle Richard

To Joseph—my coachman? Are you joking?

Richard

Not at all. Didn't he save your life in the Civil War? And what have I ever done for you?

Uncle Richard

I have remembered Joseph very handsomely, but to make him my heir—why, that isn't the same thing at all!

Richard

Well, to a university then?

Uncle Richard

No.

Richard

A church?

Uncle Richard

No!

Richard

A cat hospital?

Uncle Richard

Damn cats! There's been enough of them sick in my own house!

Richard

Well, I give it up.

Uncle Richard

You young fool! You don't know what you are saying!
Joseph! Church! Cat Hospital! What good
would I get out of that? Is that what I have been
working for all my life? No indeed!

Richard, you shall be my heir!

Richard

I won't! You are only interested in me because I
bear your name. If I were John Smith, though ten
times the better man, you would never waste a
thought upon me. My name is an accident—I care
nothing for that. My real self is my art, for which
you care even less. All you want is to establish a
dynasty—the last infirmity of successful men.

No, I won't be your heir!

Uncle Richard

Madness, madness! What kind of a world are we
coming to?

Richard

Listen. One day when I was walking outside Siena
I came to a fine old villa with a wonderful garden.
A row of cypresses ran along the wall inside, and
I wanted to paint it. The gardener let me in for a
tip. While I sat there working, he watching me—even
the peasants have a feeling for paint over there—we
heard a tap on the window. It was the
padrona. I saw that she wanted to speak to me, and
I went in. She was an old, crippled woman, holding
to life by sheer will, sitting all day by the fire
in one room. She spoke French, so we could talk.
To my surprise she was very much interested in me—asked
questions about my work, my family, and so
on. I couldn't understand why. But when I left
she began crying and told me that I reminded her
of her grandson who had been killed in Tripoli, and
that there was no one of the family name left, but
that she had to leave the property either to a cousin
whom she detested, or to the Church. And she said
just what you have: that this wasn't the same thing.
She had nothing to live for, she said, now the heir was
dead, except keep the place out of others' hands.
There she was, a prisoner in that beautiful villa, enjoying

nothing, where an artist would have been in paradise. I see her yet, bent over the fire in a black lace shawl, crying.

On my way back to town I happened to think of my last visit with you, and my state of mind returned, my feeling of dependence and the gloomy Thanksgiving dinner. The shock of contrast between my old and my new self stopped me short in the road. In a flash I saw the lying materialism on which the world is based, the curse of dollar worship that keeps opportunity away from the young, at the same time it keeps the old in a prison of loneliness and suspicion. If we worshipped life instead of metal disks, we would see that the young are not really the heirs of the old, but the old are heirs of the young. Then and there I vowed to keep myself clear of the whole wretched tangle, even if I had to carry laundry all my life, so that if any one ever tried to fetter me I could fling his words back in his face! (Uncle Richard's nerves are all on edge. A terrific storm of overbearing temper visibly gathers during this speech, and the Colonel's long habit of successful domination seems about to assert itself in an explosion. But at the last moment another power, deeper than habit, older than character, represses his wrath, and when Uncle Richard speaks again it is with an earnest gentleness almost plaintive.)

Uncle Richard

Richard, for heaven's sake let us stop this quarreling! Let us forget what has been said and done on both sides and begin anew. I offer you a home here during my life time, and all that I own after I am dead. I do care for you, my boy, I know it now as I know my own name. Surely, Richard, you need not take this offer amiss?

Richard

Well, but you see, Uncle Richard....

Uncle Richard

Do you prefer poverty for its own sake?

Richard

Of course not. But I prefer it to hypocrisy and compromise.

Uncle Richard

Well then. You will accept, Richard? For my sake, Richard?

Richard

Well....

Uncle Richard

It is the only pleasure left to me, Richard, thinking of the old name going down honourably in you. And as for the past, my mistakes were due to not having a son of my own. You have no idea what a difference it makes. It's my dream, Richard, don't destroy it!

Richard

If you really mean it that way—

Uncle Richard

My dear Richard! My dear boy! Why—now I know why we have been quarreling, Richard!

Richard

Why?

Uncle Richard

Because we are so much alike. At your age I was the same self-willed beggar you are. Richard, you are more like me than you are like your own father!

Richard

Le roi est morte, vive le roi. But (and he thumps the table with great emphasis) but there's one thing understood—I'm going to paint masterpieces!

Uncle Richard

Of course you are, my boy, of course you are! In fact, I always knew you would, Richard!

THE INCOMPATIBLES

A corner table in a Broadway restaurant, at evening. Between the man and woman who have just taken seats is a bouquet of red roses.

Marian

No, I don't want any oysters or clams. I ate enough

sea food in Atlantic City to last a season. I want some—Oh, what gorgeous flowers! Umm! I love the smell of roses! Especially out of season. Why, the other tables haven't any! Fred, did you—?

Fred

Sure I did, Marian. I knew you'd like 'em.

Marian

I do. But you mustn't be a silly boy any longer, Fred!

Fred

I will, too. It isn't silly, to give you flowers.

Marian

That's all right, Fred. Goodness knows I like the flowers. But I'm not a young idiot who expects her honeymoon to last forever. I've had one experience, you know.

Fred

Yes, but you mustn't judge all men by him.

Marian

I don't. I knew well enough you're different, or I'd never have married you. But at the same time—

Fred

Well, I'm going to show you that a real man don't get over the fun of being married to a peach like you in just two weeks. You don't want me to, do you?

Marian

Course not, Fred! Didn't I say you were different? But I don't want you to set a pace you can't keep up. You'd hate me in no time if I did.

Fred

I couldn't hate you, girlie! Besides, isn't this our first night back in the old town? We shan't be having dinner out like this every day.

Marian

Well, only I don't want to have you flop all of a sudden, like he did. What'll you have, a cocktail?

Fred

Let's see.... What's the matter, Marian?

Marian

Sh! Don't turn round!

Fred

What's up?

Marian

Him!

Fred

Him who?

Marian

George!

Fred

Good Lord! Well, don't mind him. He hasn't got anything on you now. You're mine.

Marian

Sure I am. He isn't looking. He's with a woman. By jingo! It's that millinery kid!

Fred

What millinery kid? Besides, what difference does it make? Let him have a hundred, if he wants 'em. We're happy.

Marian

The nerve of him! I knew it was her right along. He tried to throw a bluff it was some swell. I'll bet he paid good for those clothes!

Fred

Oh, come on! What'll you have? Besides, she might have made the clothes herself.

Marian

Made 'em herself! Say, a fine lot you know about ladies' gowns! That came from the Avenue, straight.

Fred

Well, what if it did? I'll get you a better one, you

just wait.

Marian

Sh! He's looking over here!

Fred

Hm! Look at me and you won't see him.

Marian

The nerve!

Fred

What's he done?

Marian

He smiled right over like nothing had ever happened.
I'll bet he's going to say something mean about me.
Oh!

Fred

Let's change our seats. I'm hungry!

Marian

Change nothing! Catch me giving him a laugh like
that! I could tell her things, the young—There,
now she's looking!

Fred

What if she is? Say, look here—

Marian

He's getting up! Well, of all the brass!

Fred

What?

Marian

He's coming over here!

Fred

He is! Don't you say a word. I'll take him on!

Marian

If he dares—

George

Hello, Marian!

Marian

Hm!

George

What, got a grouch on your honeymoon? That's a bad sign, Marian!

Marian

No, I haven't got any grouch! Don't you worry! You're the only grouch I ever had, thank the Lord!

George

Well then. It isn't every woman gets rid of an incompatible husband and gets hold of a compatible one, all in same season.

Fred

Look here!

Marian

That's just like him! Coming over here with a grin on like a kid with a new toy. Well, we don't want anything to do with you. See?

George

Sure. Excuse me for butting in. I just wanted to make a little announcement.

Marian

Oh, you did! Well, I'm surprised! I didn't think she was the kind you had to marry.

George

Huh! I knew you'd have your little knife out for her. But why you should have to be jealous now I can't see.

Marian

I'm not jealous!

George

What you worrying about, then?

Marian

I'm not worrying! I'm only sore because you butted in when we were so happy together here without you.

George

Oh, excuse me! As a matter of fact, I didn't come over to make any announcement. It's too late for that. I—

Marian

Married already! Anybody'd think you might wait a little while for common decency!

George

I waited a day longer than you did, anyhow.

Marian

That's different.

Fred

I beg your pardon! We were just ordering dinner. If you didn't come to make any announcement, why—

Marian

Yes, what did you butt in for?

George

Why, I got a letter from your friend Grace, and—

Marian

Grace? What did she have to say to you?

George

She said she was sorry I had to get a divorce, but I told her—

Marian

Sorry you had to get a divorce! Well, if I don't fix her!

George

Oh, she's getting married, too.

Marian

Who to?

George

That fellow, what's his name, that's got the garage over on Seventh Avenue.

Marian

Snider! So he's the one! Well! And I suppose she'll be all over town in a new car.

George

Sure. Saw him to-day. A big yellow one. I always told you she was out for money. And you thought she was in love with Jackson!

Marian

Hypocrite! She was. Or she told me so. Cried all over me. Have you seen Jackson?

George

Yes. He's as blue as your old kimono. He said—

Fred

Look here, Marian! I'm not going to wait all night for my dinner!

Marian

Order your old dinner! What did Jackson say, George?

THE GENIUS

The front porch of a small farmhouse in New England. Stone flags lead to the road; the yard is a careless, comfortable lawn with two or three old maples. It is autumn.

A boy of sixteen or so, carrying a paper parcel, stops hesitatingly, looks in a moment and then walks to the porch. As he stands there a man comes out of the house. The man is in his early forties, he stoops a little, but not from weakness; his expression is one of deep calm.

The Man

I wonder if you have seen my dog? I was going for a walk, but Rex seems to have grown tired of waiting.

The Boy

Your dog? No, sir, I haven't seen him. Shall I go look?

The Man

No, never mind. He'll come back. Rex and I understand each other. He has his little moods, like

me.

The Boy

If you were going for a walk—?

The Man

It doesn't matter at all. I can go any time. You don't live in this country?

The Boy

No, sir. I live in New York. I wish I did. It's beautiful here, isn't it?

The Man

It's very beautiful to me. I love it. You may have come a long road this morning, let's sit down.

The Boy

Thank you. I'm not interfering with anything?

The Man

Bless your heart! No indeed. What is there to interfere with? All we have is life, and this is part of it.

The Boy

I like to sit under these trees. It makes me think of the Old Testament.

The Man

That's interesting. How?

The Boy

Well, maybe I'm wrong, but whenever I think of the Old Testament I see an old man under a tree—

The Man

Yes?

The Boy

A man who has lived it all through, you know, and found out something real about it; and he sits there calm and strong, something like a tree himself; and every once in a while somebody comes along—a boy, you know,—and the boy talks to him all about himself, just as we imagine we'd like to with our fathers, if they weren't so busy, or our teachers, if they

didn't depend so much upon books, or our ministers,
if we thought they would really understand,—and
the old man doesn't say much maybe, but the boy
goes away much stronger and happier....

The Man

Yes, yes, I understand. The Old Testament....
They did get hold of things, didn't they?

The Boy

What I can't understand is how nowadays people
seem more grown up and competent than those men
were, in a way, and we do such wonderful things—skyscrapers
and aeroplanes—and yet we aren't half
so wonderful as they were in the Old Testament with
their jugs and their wooden plows. I mean, we aren't
near so big as the things we do, while those old fellows
were so much bigger. We smile at them, but
if some day one of our machines fell over on us what
would we do about it?

The Man

I wonder.

The Boy

I went through a big factory just last week. One
of my friends' father is the manager, and all I could
think of was what could a fellow do who didn't like
it, who didn't fit in.... Nowadays most everybody
seems competent about factories or business or something
like that—you know—and they've got hold of
everything, so a fellow's got to do the same thing
or where is he?

The Man

That's the first question, certainly: where is he? But
where is he if he does do the same thing?

The Boy

Why, he's with the rest. And they don't ask that
question....

The Man

I'm afraid they don't. It would be interesting to be
there if they should begin to ask it, wouldn't it?

The Boy

Yes.... I'd like to be there when some I know ask themselves! But they never will. Why should they?

The Man

Don't you mean how can they?

The Boy

Yes, of course. They don't ask the question because the big thing they are doing seems to be the answer beforehand. But it isn't! Not compared with the Old Testament. So we have to ask it for ourselves. And that's why I came here....

The Man

Oh. You want to know where they are, with their power, or where you will be without it?

The Boy

Where I'll be. I hate it! But what else is there to-day?

The Man

Why, there's you.

The Boy

But that's just it! What am I for if I can't join in? I came to you.... You don't mind my talking, do you?

The Man

On the contrary.

The Boy

Well, everybody I know is a part of it, so how could they tell me what to do outside of it? I've been wondering about that for a year. Before then, when I was just a boy, the world seemed full of everything, but now it seems to have only one thing. That or nothing. Then one day I saw a photograph somebody had cut out of a Sunday paper, and I thought to myself there's a man who seems outside, entirely outside, and yet he has something. It wasn't all or nothing for him ... and I wondered who it was. Then I found your book, with the same picture in it. You bet I read it right off! It was the first time in my life I had ever felt power as great as skyscrapers and railroads and yet apart from them. Outside of all they mean. Like the Old Testament. Those

poems!

The Man

You liked them?

The Boy

It was more than that. How can a fellow like the
ocean, or a snow storm?

The Man

Is that what you thought they were like?

The Boy

Why, they went off like a fourteen inch gun! Not
a whine about life in them—not a single regret for
anything. They were wonderful! They seemed to
pick up mountains and cities and toss them all about
like toys. They made me feel that what I was looking
for was able to conquer what I didn't like....
I said to myself I don't care if he does laugh at me,
I'll go and ask him where all that power is! And
so I came....

The Man

There's Rex now—over across the road. He's wondering
who you are. He sees we are friends, and
he's pretending to be jealous. Dogs are funny,
aren't they? But you were speaking about my poems.
It's odd that their first criticism should come from
you like this. You must be about the same age I
was when I began writing—when I wanted above
anything to write a book like that, and when such a
book seemed the most impossible thing I could do.
Like trying to swim the Atlantic, or live forever.

The Boy

It seemed impossible? I should think it would be the
most natural thing in the world, for you—like eating
dinner.

The Man

That's the wonderful thing—not the book, but that
I should have come to write it!

The Boy

But who else could write it?

The Man

At your age I thought anybody could—anybody and everybody except myself.

The Boy

Really?

The Man

Really and truly. You've no idea what a useless misfit I was.

The Boy

But I read somewhere you had always been brilliant, even as a boy.

The Man

Unfortunately ... yes. That was what made it so hard for me. Shall I tell you about it?

The Boy

I wish you would!

The Man

Brilliance—I'll tell you what that was, at least for me. I wrote several things that people called "brilliant." One in particular, a little play of decadent epigram. It was acted by amateurs before an admiring "select" audience. That was when I was twenty-one. From about sixteen on I had been acutely miserable—physically miserable. I never knew when I wouldn't actually cave in. I felt like a bankrupt living on borrowed money. Of course, it's plain enough now—the revolt of starved nerves. I cared only for my mind, grew only in that, and the rest of me withered up like a stalk in dry soil. So the flower drooped too—in decadent epigram. But nobody pointed out the truth of it all to me, and I scorned to give my body a thought. People predicted a brilliant future—for me, crying inside! Then I married. I married the girl who had taken the star part in the play. According to the logic of the situation, it was inevitable. Everybody remarked how inevitable it was. A decorative girl, you know. She wanted to be the wife of a great man.... Well, we didn't get along. There was an honest streak in me somewhere which hated deception. I couldn't

play the part of "brilliant" young poet with any
success. She was at me all the while to write more
of the same thing. And I didn't want to. The difference
between the "great" man I was supposed to
be and the sick child I really was, began to torture.
I knew I oughtn't to go on any further if I wanted
to do anything real. Then one night we had an
"artistic" dinner. My wife had gotten hold of a famous
English poet, and through him a publisher. The
publisher was her real game. I drank champagne before
dinner so as to be "brilliant." I was. And before
I realized it, Norah had secured a promise from the
publisher to bring out a book of plays. I remember
she said it was practically finished. But it wasn't,
only the one, and I hated that. But I sat down conscientiously
to write the book that she, and apparently
all the world that counted, expected me to
write. Well, I couldn't write it. Not a blessed word!
Something inside me refused to work. And there I
was. In a month or so she began to ask about it.
Norah thought I ought to turn them out while she
waited. I walked up and down the park one afternoon
wondering what to tell her.... And when I
realized that either she would never understand or
would despise me, I grew desperate. I wrote her a
note, full of fine phrases about "incompatibility,"
her "unapproachable ideals," the "soul's need of freedom"—things
she would understand and wear a
heroic attitude about—and fled. I came here....

The Boy

Of course. But didn't she follow you? Didn't they
bother you?

The Man

Not a bit. Norah preferred her lonely heroism. In
a few months I was quite forgotten. That was one
of the healthful things I learned. Well, I was a
wreck when I came here, I wanted only to lie down
under a tree.... And there it was, under that tree
yonder, my salvation came.

The Boy

Your salvation?

The Man

Hunger. That was my salvation. Simple, elemental,

unescapable appetite. You see I had no servant,
no one at all. So I had to get up and work
to prepare my food.... It was very strange.
Compared with this life, my life before had been like
living in a locked box. Some one to do everything
for me except think, and consequently I thought too
much. But here the very fact of life was brought
home to me. I spent weeks working about the house
and grounds on the common necessities. By the time
winter came on the place was fit to live in—and I
was enjoying life. All the "brilliance" had faded
away; I was as simple as a blade of grass.

For a year I didn't write a word. I had the courage
to wait for the real thing, nobody pestering me to
be a "genius"! Some day you may read that first
book. People said I had re-discovered the virtue of
humility. I had.

The Boy

I will read it! And how much more it will mean to
me now!

The Man

I suppose you know the theory about vibrations—how
if a little push is given a bridge, and repeated
often enough at the right intervals, the bridge will
fall?

The Boy

Yes.

The Man

Well, that's the whole secret of what you have been
looking for—what you found in my poems.

The Boy

I don't understand.

The Man

A man's life is a rhythm. Eating, sleeping, working,
playing, loving, thinking—everything. And
when we live so that each activity comes at the right
interval, we gain power. When one interrupts another,
we lose. Weakness is merely the thrust of one
impulse against another, instead of their combined
thrust against the world. When I came here, feeling

like a criminal, I was obeying the one right instinct
in a welter of emotions. It was like the faintest of
heart beats in a sick body. I listened to that. Then
I learned physical hunger, then sleep, and so on.
It's incredible how stupid I was about the elemental
art of living! I had to begin all over from the beginning,
as if no one had ever lived before.

The Boy

That's what you meant in your poems about religion.

The Man

Exactly! I learned that "good" is the rhythm of
the man's personal nature, and that "evil" is merely
the confusion of the same impulses. As time went
on it became instinctive to live for and by the rhythm.
Everything about my life here was caught up and
used in the vision of power—drawing water, cutting
wood, digging in the garden, dawn. It was all marvelous—I
couldn't help writing those poems. They
are the natural joys and sorrows of ten years. As a
matter of fact, though, I grew to care less and less
about writing, as living became fuller and richer.
People write too much. They would write less if
they had to make the fire in the morning.

The Boy

The first impulse ... I see. Oh, life might be so
simple!

The Man

Why not? The animals have it. Men have it at
times, but we make each other forget. If we could
only be each other's reminders instead of forgetters!

The Boy

Yes! But I see the only thing to do is to go away,
like you.

The Man

Not necessarily, I was merely a bad case, and required
a desperate remedy, earth and air and freedom
from others' will. I need the country, but the
next man might require the city as passionately.
Don't imagine that only the hermits, like me, live
instinctively. It can be done in New York, too, only
one mustn't be so sensitive to others.... After all,

friend, we were wrong in saying that this power lies outside the world of skyscrapers and business. It doesn't lie outside nor inside. It cuts across everything. Do you see? For it's all a matter of the man's own soul.

The Boy

Then?

The Man

We can't live in a vacuum. The more you feel the force, the more you must act. The more you can act. And in the long run it doesn't matter what you do, if you do what your own instinct bids.

The Boy

Then I could stay right in the midst of it?

The Man

Yes. And if you were thinking of writing poetry, it might even be better to stay in the midst of it. Drama, you know ... and it's time for a new drama.

The Boy

It isn't that, with me. I can't write.... I had one splendid teacher. He used to talk about things right in class. He said that most educated people think that intellect is a matter of making fine distinctions—of seeing as two separate points what the unintelligent would believe was one point; but that this idea was finicky. He wanted us to see that intelligence might also be a matter of seeing the connection between two things so far apart that most people would think they were always separate. I like that. It made education mean something, because it made it depend on imagination instead of grubbing. And then he told us about the history of our subject—grammar. How it began as poetry, when every word was an original creation; and then became philosophy, as people had to arrange speech with thought; and then science, with more or less exact, laws. I could see it—the thing became alive. And he said all knowledge passed through the same stages, and there isn't anything that can't eventually be made scientific. That made me think a good deal. I wondered if somebody couldn't work out a way of

preventing anybody from being poor. It seems so unnecessary, with so much work being done. That's what I want to do. Thanks to you, I—

The Man

Here's Rex! Rex, know my good friend. I know you will like him. Rex always cares for the people I do, don't you, Rex?

The Boy

Of course, I see one thing: it's the people nearest one that make the most difference. Mother, now, she will understand.... You don't believe in marrying, though, do you?

The Man

I certainly do!

The Boy

But I thought—

The Man

You thought because I left one woman and hadn't found another that I didn't care for women? Others believe that, too, but it isn't so. On the contrary. You see, I didn't so much leave her as get away from my own failure. Of course, there is such a thing as the wrong woman. She makes a man a fraction. The better she is in herself, the less she leaves him to live by. One twentieth is less than one half. But the right woman! She multiplies a man....

The Boy

Oh!

The Man

Why, you might have told from my poems how I believe in love.

The Boy

I don't remember any love poems.

The Man

Bless your heart! Every one of them was a love poem. Not the old-fashioned kind, about fading roses and tender hearts.... I sent that book out as a cry for the mate. It is charged with the fulness

of love. That's why I could write about trees and storms.

The Boy

I suppose if I had been older....

The Man

It isn't one's age but one's need. She will understand. Look, the sun has gone round the corner of the house. Is that lunch you have in the parcel?

The Boy

Yes.

The Man

Would you like to make it a picnic? I'll get something from the house, and then we can walk to the woods.

The Boy

I'd love to!

The Man

All right, I'll be ready in no time. Come, Rex!

SURVIVAL

The garden of a home in the suburbs. A man is walking up and down alone at dusk, occasionally stopping to water a plant, but more often falling into deep thought, unconscious of his surroundings. About the place there is an air of newness and prosperity.

A young woman enters the garden from the lawn next door.

Margaret

Look here, Roger, you can't keep this up!

Roger

No, I can't keep this up. Besides, it's going to rain to-morrow.

Margaret

What do you mean?

Roger

Watering the plants. Isn't that what you meant?

Margaret

You aren't watering the plants. I've been watching you for half an hour. If you only would! But you keep forgetting what you are at.

Roger

I wish it were only forgetting—it's remembering.

Margaret

Oh Roger, don't I know? But you mustn't!

Roger

I suppose not. I suppose not.

Margaret

I knew all along, and I kept away. How you felt, I mean. I ought to have come over a week ago. You haven't anybody to talk to—that's the trouble, Roger, really. I know. Now let's have the whole thing out. Come. And don't be afraid of me. Why, I could tie you all up in bandages if you needed it. And not flinch.

Roger

Yes, I guess you could.... It's, it's absurd how well I keep!

Margaret

Hm. Isn't it? You ought to be wilting away like a rose. But no, you keep your splendid strength and go on with two or three men's work! What would your mother think if she heard you talking like that? Don't you know that you couldn't please her better than by going on as you are?

Roger

That's so. Of course. But that really isn't what I was thinking of. I was thinking how queer this whole business is. Take our family. As far back as I know we were always struggling along with many children and few means. I am the first one who could really make money. And just when I could make mother comfortable and easy ... besides, I'm all alone.

Margaret

Ah, Roger, of course you feel that way! But you don't really appreciate that wonderful mother of yours. Do you think her happiness depended on having a new house, and a car?

Roger

No....

Margaret

Didn't she round out her life beautifully? Wasn't she repaid for her struggles by seeing you succeed? Didn't she pass away as quietly as going to sleep? And wasn't her marriage happy? You don't know how much a woman will meet with, if she's happy!

Roger

That part of it I can face all right, though I suppose it's hard for the ordinary selfish man to realize that love like mother's is its own reward. But toward the end she suffered—she worried....

Margaret

I know she did. She told me.

Roger

She told you? I didn't know that.

Margaret

We were good friends, your mother and I—and women. That's why she told me. And I think I reassured her.

Roger

Oh! She did seem to get mightily comforted, just at the last. I never understood why.

Margaret

I thank heaven I really did that!—And when I looked out the window and saw you standing here, I had to come over. I knew it wasn't your mother's death that was hurting you, but—but your brother's.

Roger

Arthur ... I'm glad the accident happened after she died.

Margaret

Yes. But there's something else. Something that hurts. You've got to tell me. Everything. Don't be afraid. Face it.

Roger

I have faced it. I—I've made up my mind.

Margaret

There's still pain somewhere. Is it in the way you have made up your mind?

Roger

How could that be?

Margaret

It depends. But tell me what you thought—I mean during this last year or so. It didn't come to you all at once.

Roger

Well.... Of course, I always took it for granted about his music. He seemed to be wonderful at that. And mother believed so in him. It really began when he left college, I found he had debts.

Margaret

Debts?

Roger

Yes. Not just clothes and living—other things. I paid up, but I didn't like it. I didn't like the things. But I thought it was just a boy's foolishness. I thought he would be all right after that, but—he wasn't.

Margaret

He wasn't....

Roger

No. After a couple of years I had to straighten it out again. I came down on him flat. He promised to cut it.

Margaret

But he was doing such wonderful work!

Roger

Yes, everybody began to say so. If he had only been that alone, the musician! But—

Margaret

But afterward?

Roger

Well, a year ago I began to hear things said again. And then I found letters and bills. It was the same thing all over. He hadn't kept his word.

Margaret

But what did he say?

Roger

I let it go for weeks, hoping he would say something. But never a word.

Margaret

He loved you so. How he must have suffered!

Roger

Yes, I suppose he did suffer. But if he cared so for me why did he try to keep it hidden, the one thing I would hate most?

Margaret

That was his way. It made him ashamed.

Roger

Well, he couldn't keep it dark forever. Mother almost found out.

Margaret

Almost found out?

Roger

Yes. So of course I stepped in. We had a frightful row.

Margaret

When was that?

Roger

Six months ago. I got him clear. It was hard—this time the woman almost got him.

Margaret

Oh!

Roger

I helped him. But I did it on one condition—that he go to work.

Margaret

Work? What about his music?

Roger

That's what he said. But I asked him if he had thought about his music when he got into these scrapes. He couldn't say a word. So it was all arranged for him to go into my office, right under my eye, when mother was taken sick. Then she wanted him to stay near her, so.... And then she died. And the accident. Well I don't see what more I could have done.

Margaret

No.... Of course, it wasn't as if you turned against him. And the office—he was to pay you back that way?

Roger

Pay me back? Why, if he could, naturally; but that wasn't my idea, that was only incidental. My idea was to get him into the habit of hard work.

Margaret

But he always did work!

Roger

Oh, he worked hard enough. At least he turned out a good deal. But that was spasmodic—night and day for weeks, and then loafing for weeks more. That's how he always got into trouble: loafing in between.

Margaret

Don't you remember how splendid he was the day he had just finished something? He seemed to have passed out of himself into a shining humility. It was said of Shelley: "Sun-treader!"... Don't you remember?

Roger

Yes.... Oh hang it! Why couldn't he have been only that! Yes, I remember. I hoped that six months or so at the office—but no. Anyhow, it's all over now.

Margaret

What were you going to say?

Roger

I suppose I might as well say it: I don't believe the office would have changed him, after all. That is, permanently. He'd have done his best for a while, and then—. No, nothing could help him.

Margaret

Is that what you have made up your mind about?

Roger

Oh, that. Yes, that's what started me thinking. Everybody has difficulties, troubles, and I believe in helping a fellow every time. Life piles up too high against one sometimes, but a little shove from the other side will move it away. I never believed in the devil take the hindmost, at all. But this was different.

Margaret

Different, how? What do you mean?

Roger

I mean that as long as a fellow's difficulties are outside him you can help him, because as soon as they are removed he's himself again; but when they are inside, part of the man himself, there's nothing you can do. Nothing. You can save a person from the world, but not from himself. That's where the devil comes in. I see it now. I believe in the devil.

Margaret

Oh! But Arthur....

Roger

I know you think I'm a brute for speaking of Arthur in connection with the devil, but it wasn't the old-fashioned devil I meant. I meant the devil of unfitness. Arthur wasn't fit. He had every chance. We

can't get away from what life is. Life shoves people
to the wall every day. I've had to fight hard myself.
I admit things aren't fair all round, but Arthur
had his chance, two or three chances, and he just—dropped
out. He couldn't survive. And it seems
to me that for those who loved him it may be a good
thing after all that he didn't have to go on.

Margaret

Roger! You shan't say that! You shan't!

Roger

I don't want to, Margaret, but that's what life itself
says. We can't get behind life. We can't beat evolution
and the law of survival.

Margaret

But his talent, his fine talent—and his exquisite
nature!

Roger

I know. But there it is. It's kinder in the long run
to be cruel, if the truth is cruel. We've got to be
true to things as they are.

Margaret

But take things as they are! He wasn't vicious
about—about women, he was like a child. Of course
they got his money, but even so, they weren't all mere
schemers. Some of them were very decent. Why,
one of them—

Roger

What the deuce do you know about them? What
about one of them?

Margaret

She cried. She said she knew it wasn't right, that
he couldn't marry her, but she did like him, and she
had children of her own.... I'm sure she was very
tender to him.

Roger

Who told you? Where did you see her?

Margaret

There.

Roger

There! In my own house?

Margaret

Yes.

Roger

How did she get there?

Margaret

Your mother sent for her.

Roger

My mother sent for her? Then she knew?

Margaret

Yes. She knew everything.

Roger

How?

Margaret

He told her—Arthur did.

Roger

Good Lord! I never heard a word of it.

Margaret

No. They were afraid—afraid you wouldn't understand.

Roger

Afraid I wouldn't understand? Why, I understood
only too well. It was mother that wouldn't have understood.
I'd have cut my hand off rather than tell
her.

Margaret

Well, she did understand. She understood better
than you did. She understood that part of him
hadn't grown up. He was like a boy. He just walked
into things....

Roger

How did he ever come to tell her?

Margaret

Once when he was sick. Your mother was taking care of him. He blurted it all out, like a homesick boy.

Roger

And she understood? Didn't break her heart, and all that?

Margaret

Oh, it was a shock, naturally. But they talked it all over, and your mother sent for this woman. I knew. Arthur knew I knew....

Roger

And mother packed her away without telling me?

Margaret

Oh, she didn't pack her away. That is, right off.

Roger

He kept on seeing her? With mother's knowledge?

Margaret

Yes. Your mother liked her.

Roger

Well, if women aren't the strangest things!

Margaret

Yes, they are. Some of them. Fortunately. But you see how wrong you were, Roger?

Roger

How was I wrong?

Margaret

About this unfitness—this survival.

Roger

On the contrary. It only proves it.

Margaret

No, it doesn't. I've been thinking, too ... about saving people from themselves, and all that. You say it's the law of life, and we can't go beyond life.

Roger

No, we can't. I still say it.

Margaret

Then what about your mother? What about all
women who—

Roger

About mother?

Margaret

Yes. Wasn't her love a part of life? And didn't she
keep on loving him in spite of everything? Is that
love blind and foolish—something for your old evolution
to get rid of?

Roger

I never thought of it. No, of course we don't want
to get rid of that—but even so, she didn't save him.

Margaret

She didn't know about it until lately—thanks to you.
If she had known sooner—and anyhow, you don't
know—Of course, she couldn't have saved him
directly. But indirectly ... through another
woman—

Roger

Through another woman?

Margaret

I mean, supposing there was another woman who
loved him—one who could be to him all he needed,
who would understand, and who was all right. One
he could marry.

Roger

Yes, but—

Margaret

And supposing this other woman had heard things
about Arthur, and was terribly hurt, and Arthur
knew she was, and that's why he kept away; but your
mother talked with her for a long while, and made her
understand. Even sent for that woman—you know.
And then this woman, the right one, did understand,
and was ready to marry Arthur....

Roger

Margaret, are you crying? Are you crying, Margaret?
Margaret, was it you?

THE TELEGRAM

Perron, a stout, middle-aged figure, is seated in front
of his watchmaker's establishment near the Place St.
Sulpice. The awning sags, and the shop wears an air
of sober discouragement. Whatever expression the
years have left Perron's round face capable of is concentrated
upon the changing scenes cinematographed to
his mind's eye by some strong and unusual emotion.
Alexandre, a tall, stooped man, with a flowing black tie,
bows in passing with old-fashioned punctiliousness to
Perron, who apparently is unaware of his presence.
Suddenly Perron starts, rubs his eyes, and glares about.

Perron

Alexandre! Alexandre!

Alexandre

Good day, my friend. You seem distraught.

Perron

Distraught! It was the strangest thing! But sit
here with me. Do. I have something to tell you.

Alexandre

I regret exceedingly, but a stupid engagement....
Later, perhaps—

Perron

No! No! I insist! Only a great mind like yours
can explain the strange thing which has happened.

Alexandre

Ah, in that case—what is a mere business affair compared
with divine philosophy? Far from being
pressé, friend Perron, I have an eternity at your
service.

Perron

First of all, tell me the exact date!

Alexandre

That I can do, and not on my own authority, which

in such details is often unreliable. This morning my concierge announced with great delicacy and feeling that to-day is Friday, the fifteenth July, and my rent is once more due. My rent, which—

Perron

Friday the fifteenth! Impossible!

Alexandre

Alas. My concierge is of a precision the most meticulous. For all legal, financial and military affairs, throughout the French Republic at least, to-day is Friday the fifteenth. But why should this seem impossible to you, a scientist and a watchmaker?

Perron

Only listen, and you will understand why I am tempted to doubt the calendar of the Church itself. Two weeks ago my wife announced to me that she had reason to expect the due arrival of a son. She said there could be no question it will be a son because in her mother's family for three generations it has been the same, three daughters followed by a son.

Eh bien, although I have always desired a son to follow me in this honorable and scientific profession, nevertheless I received the news with a certain consternation. In short, my affairs have not gone too well of late, and without my wife's assistance by her needle....

That evening I thought much how I might increase my funds, and so for two weeks—two weeks, mon ami—I have omitted my customary café after dejeuner, which all these years I have not failed to take with a serious group of friends at the Trois Arts, and even have I smoked no cigarettes. True, this has not added much to our wealth, though it has been some satisfaction to realize I have done my possible. My health has suffered somewhat—I have grown absent-minded, and in the morning my head feels strange. However, that may not be due entirely to my unnatural abstinence.

However, on Friday the fifteenth July, at three o'clock precisely, as I sat here in meditation having finished a small work, I saw a telegraph boy hurry

toward me down the street. Then had I a premonition.
My heart beat as it has not these twenty years.
In an instant I was reading the message: my brother,
who long ago ran away on adventure to Indo-China,
had just died and left me a fortune in tea.

That was on Friday the fifteenth. And do you know
what has happened since? I have lived two separate
lives. Yes, two existences have unrolled before me.
In one I saw myself as I would have been without the
telegram. My business fell away; my son was born
a daughter, to my wife's indignation and my own
dismay; and having sold my little shop I sought work
in a cursed factory. Ah me, it was terrible! But
the other picture. With my brother's fortune I made
aggrandisements and eventually moved to the Rue de
la Paix. My scientific genius was at last appreciated,
and my watches and clocks became the pride
of the haute monde. My son grew into a fine man,
much resembling myself, and after learning the profession
opened a branch office at Buenos Ayres. I
won the ribbon. In short, nothing lacked to make
life agreeable and meritorious.

But then it was, just at that point, I came to myself
and looking up recognized my friend the philosopher.
Years seemed to have passed—two separate life
times—and startled at finding myself seated in the
same chair and wearing the same clothes, I demanded
of you what day it was. And you answered Friday
the fifteenth. How can such a thing be possible?

Alexandre

To think that you, a watchmaker and a petit bourgeois,
should experience what many a saint has died
without realizing! I salute you, mystic, descendent
of prophets and seers!

Perron

But what was it then?

Alexandre

What was it? A mystical experience, an experience
of the highest order, like unto Saint Therese, though
in symbols of mundane things. But that is the fault
of the age more than yourself. With more practise
your mind will exhibit even greater power. You
must continue in the path. Who knows what you

could do after years of self-denial, when a mere two weeks without cigarettes have brought you this vision?

Perron

And without coffee. Don't forget the café! And now that I am rich I shall never go without it again. No, on the contrary, I shall have at least two, and on a silver tray.

Alexandre

Do you mean to say you really believe?—But it doesn't matter. Whether or not the telegram came, the important fact is that you had the vision. It is for this you must be grateful.

Perron

Can a philosopher really be such a fool? Of course the telegram came! And I am grateful!

Alexandre

No. You are the most ungrateful of men. But why mention the telegram? What matters is whether your vision arose from seeing the telegram or seeing the telegraph boy? The philosophic truth is the same.

Perron

Mon dieu! What difference does it make? But I swear I have the telegram, and it reads just as I told you!

Alexandre

But no! You are ungrateful, and for that I despise you!

Perron

But yes! And after reading it four times I locked it in my safe. Do I not know I entered my shop and locked it up?

Alexandre

Yes, and do you not know also that you moved to the Rue de la Paix?

Perron

Oh! Could it have been—Then I am ruined, and my brother is the most selfish of men!

Alexandre

But it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. In the path shall you grow steadfast and contented.

Perron

It doesn't matter!

Alexandre

Not at all. And when you have become reasonable and grateful, I shall return and speak further with you. I shall devise for you such sacrifice as shall make the saints but as little children. Au revoir.

(He turns away. The clock of St. Sulpice tones the half hour. The watchmaker listens to it with open mouth, and trembling violently, darts through the door of his shop.)

RAIN

PERSONS

Charles Everitt

Mary, his wife

Walter, seventeen

Alice, fifteen

Harold, five

The scene shows a hotel "parlor" in the White Mountains. Beneath the flashy ugliness of its modern wall paper and upholstery, a certain refinement persists from an older generation. The room itself is well proportioned, with a very good hearth. The parlor might once have been the ball room in a squire's mansion.

It is about seven o'clock of an August evening, the room feebly lighted by a flickering acetylene burner. One feels the commencement of rain. A door to the rear opens and the Everitts enter, the younger children first.

Harold

She didn't give me any toast. I want some toast!

Walter

A rotten supper!

Mrs. Everitt

Never mind, Harold, you had two cups of that beautiful milk.

Alice

Of course it was rotten. Everything's second rate here. Ugh! what a musty smell!

Walter

I told father we ought to go ahead. The car could have done another six miles easily. And we'd have reached the Mountain Inn.

Alice

I'm sure there's a dance there to-night!

Everitt

The car could not have done the six miles. We were lucky to make that last hill. You might have had to walk the whole way.

Alice

Well, we always start too soon or too late. For goodness sake let's at least have some light. There's no use having it as dark inside as out. (Everitt goes about lighting all the burners)

Harold

Hear the rain, rain, rain!

Walter

It is coming down. I never heard it make so much noise.

Mrs. Everitt

That's because city people never have a roof over their heads!

Alice

Why, mother, the rain makes your voice vibrate like—

Walter

Like a fire engine. I stood right by one, once.

Mrs. Everitt

Come, Harold, sit on my lap.

Everitt

Shall I close the blinds?

Alice

Yes.

Mrs. Everitt

No, don't. Nobody's about on a night like this.

Harold

Wish I could see rain. What it like?

Everitt

What's what like?

Harold

Rain—rain.

Alice

Like shower baths.

Harold

Oh. Mother, tell me story about rain. I like rain!
(Everitt feels about for his cigar case. A letter falls from his pocket which he picks up hurriedly)

Everitt

I'm going for a cigar.

Walter

It's like being in a submarine!

Harold

Mother, tell me story!

Mrs. Everitt

Once upon a time—

Walter

I'm going out for a minute.

Alice

I wish....

Harold

Once on a time!

Mrs. Everitt

Oh, yes. Once there was a little girl who lived in the country.

Harold

What country?

Mrs. Everitt

A country something like this. She and her mother lived in a little house beside a brook. The little girl loved to listen to the brook outside her window at night. One day she asked her mother where the brook went to. She didn't want her brook to run away. And what do you suppose her mother said?

Harold

What her mother say?

Mrs. Everitt

She said the brook didn't really run away, when it got out of sight across the fields it turned into rain. So then the little girl was glad whenever it rained, because she knew it was the little brook coming back to her.

Harold

Oh. And is this rain the brook coming back? The little girl's brook?

Mrs. Everitt

The little girl grew up and went away. But it's some little girl's brook. (Walter comes in with sticks)

Walter

I thought we'd have a fire.

Alice

Good! Make a big one.

Mrs. Everitt

Now, Harold, mother is going to put you in a nice bed, right under the roof where the rain-drops whisper and sing. (She takes Harold out)

Alice

Where'd father go?

Walter

He said he wanted a cigar.

Alice

He's been a long time.

Walter

Perhaps he's gone to look at the engine.

Alice

Walter, what's the matter with them? Last night....

Walter

I don't know. I heard them, too. It isn't the first time they have quarreled.

Alice

It's terrible!

Walter

Father's got a rotten temper, lately.

Alice

I thought she wanted him—

Walter

She did, but he had no business to get so angry about it.

Alice

But why did she want to change our plans at the last minute and go into Connecticut? Everything was arranged to come here.

Walter.

She said he had arranged it without speaking to her. She said—there's something about it I don't understand.

Alice

I don't either. I—(Mrs. Everitt enters)

Walter

Did he go to sleep?

Mrs. Everitt

No. He is talking to the rain. I never heard him say such odd things. I hated to leave him. It seemed as if he heard voices....

Walter

Sit down, mother. It's very jolly here.

Mrs. Everitt

Thank you, Walter. How many years since I've enjoyed a real fire, like this!

Walter

Oh, there isn't enough wood. Just a minute—(He goes out)

Alice

You look tired.

Mrs. Everitt

I'm all right, dear.

Alice

No you're not. Why won't you tell me?

Mrs. Everitt

But Alice, there's nothing to tell. I do feel a little tired, but then, I shall be all right in the morning.

Alice

I wish—(Walter enters with more wood)

Walter

Well, Alice, are you still thinking about that dance?

Alice

Why no, I'd forgotten all about it. Who could dance in such a rain? It would make the music seem artificial. I'm getting tired of boys, too. They don't really feel things—like rain, and fire.

Mrs. Everitt

What's that noise,—Harold?

Walter

No. It's the men in the bar room.

Mrs. Everitt

I'm sure it's Harold.

Alice

I'll go see. (She goes out)

Walter

Mother.

Mrs. Everitt

What, Walter?

Walter

I must be an awful coward—

Mrs. Everitt

Why, what do you mean?

Walter

I mean that when I really want something, and ought to say so, I go along without saying it. I don't mean that I'm really afraid to say it, but I always feel somehow that other people ought to know what I want, and save me the trouble of asking it. No, not trouble exactly—but you know what I mean.

Mrs. Everitt

Yes, Walter, I'm afraid I know exactly what you mean. Lots of us are cursed with the same instinct. I am, and sometimes I believe your father is, too. It ought to be that when one sees a thing clearly in his own mind, and knows it is best, others—at least those near to him—should somehow be aware of it. But they usually are not.

Walter

No. And it's those nearest one that it's hardest to say things to. But to-night, somehow, I don't feel that way.

Mrs. Everitt

Tell me.

Walter

It's this architecture. You remember when I used to play with water colors all the while, and say I was going to be an artist?

Mrs. Everitt

Yes, but—

Walter

Father always said I would get over it. But when
I didn't, then it occurred to him that if I learned
architecture I could help him in his building.... I
thought architecture would be the same. But it isn't.
I can't see any art in it at all—it's nothing but engineering.

Mrs. Everitt

But Walter, you haven't gone far enough in it. The
art will come later.

Walter

No it won't! At least not with father. He never
builds anything that lets me imagine. You don't
know how I hate those blue prints. I've been worrying
along so far because I didn't want to disappoint
father, though every day I hoped he would see what
I really felt. But to-night I know I can't go on any
longer without having it out. If he will let me follow
my own idea he will be better pleased in the end
than if I stick at this business of his. It will require
one good fight, and then I shall be free to show what
I can do.

Mrs. Everitt

But Walter, what is it exactly you want to do?

Walter.

I suppose I ought to say that I want to be an artist
rather than a builder's draughtsman, but that isn't
really it. I mean that behind the brain I think with
every day there is another brain, bigger and wiser,
that keeps asking the chance to show the rest of me
what and how to act. In ordinary things the everyday
mind gets along by itself all right, but I feel the
other self there all the while, wanting me to begin
something different, something to let it escape from
dreaming to doing. And it keeps threatening that
some day it will he too late. Only begin, begin!...
Yes, I have worried along so far, but just to-night,
for some reason or other, I seem to be standing on
the brink. I won't go another step. It's in the rain
now—I hear it. Oh, the pictures I could paint if

we lived in the country!

Mrs. Everitt

In the country!

Walter

Yes. It comes over me here how much these hills
mean. Oh! and there's another thing, mother....
I thought I was born in New York, I thought we
always lived there, but just a while ago I ran onto
your old family Bible, and it had the records in it.
I—

Mrs. Everitt

Oh, Walter!

Walter

It seems queer that neither of you said anything
about it, if I was really born in this very town....
I might never have thought much about it, but to-night
everything seems to be stirred up. Tell me,
mother—

Mrs. Everitt

We lived here only a little while. We didn't like it,
so your father sold his farm and we went away to
New York.

Walter

Yes, but why wasn't something said about it when
we came here this afternoon? It seems funny, not to.

Mrs. Everitt

Dear, there was a little family trouble, long ago,
which is best forgotten.

Walter

Oh.

Alice (entering)

It wasn't Harold, after all, but I just had to stay
and listen to him. He tried over and over to tell
me something. I couldn't make out what it was until
he showed me with his hands—you know that funny
little way he has—and what do you suppose it was?

Mrs. Everitt

The dear child. What was it?

Alice

Why, he remembered the big drum he saw once in a parade, and he was trying to explain that he was inside a drum. The rain, you know.

Everitt (entering)

We had to jack up the car. The barn is flooding with water.

Mrs. Everitt

Is that where you were?

Everitt

Yes.... How strange you look in that light, Alice! I never saw you look like that before. (He kisses her)

Alice

Oh!

Mrs. Everitt

What is it, Alice?

Alice

Why ... I thought his cigar was going to burn me.

Mrs. Everitt

Oh.

Everitt

Alice, you jumped because you didn't like my breath. I'm sorry, I did take a drink, and I shouldn't have kissed you, only....

Walter

Only what?

Everitt

She looked just as Mary did when I first knew her. It startled me.

Alice

Do I?

Mrs. Everitt

Was I like that?

Everitt

Of course you were.

Alice

Oh, I'm glad!

Mrs. Everitt

Thank you, dear, but you're not half so glad as I am.

Everitt

It's queer, there used to be a fine old stock up in this country. It seems to have died out. The people here don't half appreciate the place.

Mrs. Everitt

But you haven't seen many of them, have you?

Everitt

No, I talked with some in the bar room.

Alice

Oh, the bar room?

Everitt

Yes, I know. One can't judge from that. A filthy place—it made me ashamed of drinking. I only went in hoping to see some of the people I used to know.

Mrs. Everitt

Oh!

Walter

Where's my portfolio?

Mrs. Everitt

In the office, with those hand bags we decided not to open.

Walter

I'm going to get it. I just had an idea.... (He goes out)

Everitt

It's only ten o'clock, but it seems like midnight.

Alice

So it does. Are we going on to-morrow? Will the car be all right?

Everitt

George says so. To-morrow? I suppose so.

Alice

Well, I'm going to bed.

Mrs. Everitt

I hope Harold is asleep. Good night, dear.

Everitt

Good night, Mary.

Alice

You said "Mary."

Everitt

Did I? Well, you might be, for all that.

Alice (leaving)

Good night.

Everitt

If she had on that blue dress you used to wear, your own mother couldn't tell you apart.

Mrs. Everitt

Charles.

Everitt

What?

Mrs. Everitt

Walter knows he was born here. He wants to know why we didn't mention it to-day.

Everitt

So do I! So do I want to know why we didn't mention it! It's been between us all these years!
(Walter enters with his portfolio. He stands unnoticed at the door)

Mrs. Everitt

You want to know? You know very well yourself!
It's I who ought to ask what the matter is!

Everitt

You? Good heavens! Wasn't it you who suddenly
made up your mind we had to leave this town, and
insisted and insisted until I sold the house? Didn't
I do that to please you, because you went into hysterics
about it, and I had to think of Walter? I
didn't want to go. It isn't every man who would
change his whole life for a woman's unreasonable
whim!

Mrs. Everitt

Whim! It isn't every wife who—Oh! Oh!

Everitt

Yes whim! And haven't I stayed away all these years
from my people because you wouldn't hear to our
coming back even for a visit?

Mrs. Everitt

No you didn't stay away! You sneaked up here
the very next year when you made that trip to Boston.
And you can't deny it, because Janet Richardson
wrote me.

Everitt

Sneaked up here! Deny it! Are you mad? The
only reason I didn't mention it was because I never
understood your positive hatred for the place. What
harm was there in coming back for a day or two?
On every other subject you are all right, but whenever
we get within a mile of mentioning this town I
feel your hysteria, so I have kept still. But if there's
anything you can say to explain yourself, for goodness
sake say it! This nightmare has been between
us long enough.

Mrs. Everitt

Yes, it has! Too long! And I like your way of saying
you had to think of Walter! It was I had to
think of my baby! If it hadn't been for Walter, I
wouldn't have lived with you another day! I kept
on at first so that he might be born with a father to
look out for him, and then I kept on so that he
needn't grow up in the shame of a divorce. But oh,

the pain of it! To keep silent, year after year!

Everitt

Look here, are we both crazy? Out with it!

Mrs. Everitt

Annie Pratt!

Everitt

What? Who?

Mrs. Everitt

Annie Pratt!

Everitt

Who the devil's Annie Pratt? What's she got to do with it?

Mrs. Everitt

Ha! Not faithful even to her! Or are you trying to lie out of it? You can't, because I've still got the letter.

Everitt

What letter? I'm not going to stand these hysterics any longer!

Mrs. Everitt

You needn't. But you've got to stand the truth, do you hear me? I found the letter in your pocket. We hadn't been married a year. I was so happy! Oh! Oh!

Everitt

So was I happy, Oh! Oh!

Mrs. Everitt

Hypocrite! "Dearest Charlie: You said it is I who am your wife really, because it's I who make you happy." Vile cat!

Everitt

Annie Pratt, Annie Pratt. I remember her....

Mrs. Everitt

I should think you would! But any man who will—

Everitt

Look here! I've got the whole thing! You found that letter in my pocket?

Mrs. Everitt

Yes I did.

Everitt

Well, do you remember my quarrel with Charlie Fisher?

Mrs. Everitt

Yes. Why?

Everitt

Because, you poor child, that letter was written to him.

Mrs. Everitt

To him!

Everitt

Yes, Charlie Fisher. I found that he was going with Annie Pratt and I had it out with him one day in the barn. I told him if he didn't quit his foolishness I'd tell his people. We nearly came to blows—he was drinking too much, too—and I found that letter on the floor afterwards. I meant to burn it up, but I forgot it. And you thought I was the Charlie!

Mrs. Everitt

God forgive me!

Everitt

But why on earth didn't you come right out with it?

Mrs. Everitt

Oh! You can't realize how crushed I felt. I wanted only to run away, like a wounded animal.... And then I couldn't bear to quarrel, for the sake of Walter. So it's been festering in me all this time.

Everitt

So that's it. Well, thank heaven! (He starts to embrace her)

Mrs. Everitt

But that letter you picked up so quickly to-night—was that from somebody else?

Everitt

Lord, I'd almost forgotten it.

Mrs. Everitt

There! And I was almost happy!

Everitt

For goodness sake, read it!

Mrs. Everitt

From your bank.... I don't understand it.

Everitt

It's simple enough. They won't make me another loan.

Mrs. Everitt

Well?

Everitt

Between the unions and the new inspection—well, I can't finish the Broadway contract on time, and I'm done.

Mrs. Everitt

Done?

Everitt

Done. Smashed. I might save ten thousand dollars, that's all. My life's work....

Mrs. Everitt

You mean money?

Everitt

I mean the lack of it.

Mrs. Everitt

Is that all? Thank heaven!

Everitt

All! But do you realize it means giving up the house, and beginning all over again on ten thousand dollars?

Mrs. Everitt

I don't care. I was never happy there anyhow. And now I could be happy doing my own work in a tenement.

Everitt

I think I could be happy as a carpenter again by the day. But the children. It's going to be hard for them. Walter's architecture.

Walter

Father!

Everitt

Good gracious! Where did you come from?

Walter

I came back from the office.... I heard what you were saying. So that's all right. But you needn't worry about my architecture. I was telling mother to-night. I don't like it—it isn't my work. I only wanted you to feel as I do about it. Just feel that I really want to paint—to be an artist. Even if I have to work at something else for a long time, I'll feel easier, knowing you realize what I want. I love color so. And I want to let my imagination go. I'll help in any way I can, naturally. I'm glad too. I mean, I had rather live in the country like this than in New York.

Everitt

Good Lord! (Alice appears in the doorway holding Harold)

Walter

It seems to me that none of us has been really satisfied, so it isn't so bad after all. We can begin on something real to us all. Mother said she would be happy in a tenement. Well, maybe she would, but why not come up here?

Mrs. Everitt

Oh, Charles!

Everitt

Well ... but Alice.

Alice

Mother.

Mrs. Everitt

You, too! What is it? What's the matter with Harold?

Alice

Nothing. He wouldn't go to sleep, and wouldn't. He said he wanted to sit in your lap. I never saw him so. I had to bring him.

Mrs. Everitt

Give him to me, dear.

Alice

And I knew something was going on down here... I could feel it. I don't know what it was, but there's one thing I do know.

Mrs. Everitt

What?

Alice

Why, ever since father said I looked as you used to I've been thinking about what you must have been like as a girl, and it came over me how useless I am. I've never done anything. And you must have done a lot.

Everitt

I should say she did!

Walter

There! Say, Alice, how'd you like to live in that white house we passed, the one with the orchard?

Alice

Really? And do things?

Mrs. Everitt

Charles!

Everitt

This is the most extraordinary night I ever heard of. Here I was, feeling like a condemned criminal because I'd lost my business, afraid to tell Mary and you children, and now you all seem positively glad of it.

I expected all kinds of trouble, and all at once....
What the deuce is it?

Harold

Rain—rain.... Mother, why can't the brook come
back to the same little girl?

PICTURES

A studio on the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. There
is a small entrance hall, kitchenette, and a balcony before
which curtains are drawn. It is a winter afternoon,
and a young man is busy at an easel placed close
beside the north light. A young woman arranges tea
things on the table.

Silvia

Joe.

Joe

Um.

Silvia

Joe!

Joe

Um—um! (She walks over, draws his watch from
his pocket and shows him the time)

Silvia

It's nearly four o'clock.

Joe

Just a minute—the light's fine, and I want to finish.

Silvia

Yes, I know, but he may be here any minute.

Joe

Tea on?

Silvia

Yes.

Joe

Well, that'll keep him while I get ready. That's
mostly what they came for, anyhow.

Silvia

But he's different. He isn't a Cook's tourist—

Joe

No, he's a relative!

Silvia

You wouldn't say that if one of your family dropped in. Besides, I've never even seen him. And he's something of a collector, Joe. He buys pictures.

Joe

So I hear. The last thing he bought was a Bougereau!

Silvia

Well, he's a relative ... and when he sees your last things!

Joe

Um.... There, it's all done.

Silvia

I'm crazy to see it, Joe, but run up and get ready. Sh! (A knock at the door. Joe runs upstairs to the balcony. Silvia opens the door and admits Mr. Wentworth, rather stout and with gold spectacles)

Mr. Wentworth

Mrs. Carson?

Silvia

Yes. This is Mr. Wentworth? Joe and I have been expecting you. Let me take your coat. The studio's rather upset just now—

Mr. Wentworth

Delightful! How I love the atmosphere of work in a studio! I used to paint a bit myself, you know.

Silvia

Did you? Father never mentioned that.

Mr. Wentworth

Oh, I guess everybody has forgotten it by now. An early adventure with life! Goodness only knows what might have happened, though, if the business hadn't

fallen on me to look out for. I might have been a great artist. Ha!

Silvia

I'm sure you would, Mr. Wentworth. You've always been interested in art, haven't you?

Mr. Wentworth

Yes indeed. Of course I have been very busy, until lately. But I always followed the best English magazines.

Silvia

My husband's upstairs getting the paint off his hands. He will be down in a minute. Then we'll have some tea.

Mr. Wentworth

You don't paint, do you, Silvia? I may call you Silvia, may I not?

Silvia

Of course. No, I don't paint. I just fly around amongst the artists and see what's going on. Are you staying in Paris very long?

Mr. Wentworth

A couple of weeks more, at least. I am revelling in the galleries and museums here.

Silvia

Here comes Joe. Joe, I want you to meet my cousin, Mr. Wentworth. Mr. Wentworth—Mr. Carson.

Joe

Very glad to meet you, Mr. Wentworth.

Mr. Wentworth

It's a great pleasure for me to meet a real artist, Mr. Carson.

Silvia

Excuse me a moment. I'll bring on the tea.

Joe

Oh, as for that—I'm working along. Sometimes I hit it—

Mr. Wentworth

Ars longa, vita brevis you know! I want to see your pictures very much. I was just telling Silvia how I delight in the Louvre. I go there with a class for lectures every morning. I suppose you often copy the old masters?

Joe

Copy the old masters? I should say not. I'm not out to be a camera. It's all I can do to work out my own impressions.

Mr. Wentworth

Oh, I see. But—

Silvia

The tea's ready. Joe, bring up that chair for Mr. Wentworth. Mr. Wentworth, do you take cream and sugar?

Mr. Wentworth
If you please. Yes, two lumps. There's nothing like the atmosphere of a studio, is there? I love it. I feel I have missed so much. Still, the instinct for beauty, fragile as it is, does persist.... I was surprised to feel so many of my old emotions awake on coming to Paris. So much that hasn't been real to me for years! I have gained much inspiration for planning my new house.

Silvia

You are building a new house? I have heard father talk about your collection of Japanese prints.

Mr. Wentworth

A really delightful thing, Japanese prints. Yes, I intend building on Long Island. And my new interest in pictures ... I shall have a gallery especially for them.

Joe

Americans haven't done any too much for art so far.

Mr. Wentworth

Oh, I assure you! I know many men who are continually buying the best on the market.

Joe

Oh, that....

Silvia

Another cup, Mr. Wentworth? Joe, pass the cake.

Mr. Wentworth

No, thank you, Silvia. Yes, the cake if you please. Why, it's real English plumcake!

Silvia

English things are getting very popular over here. Joe, won't you show us the new picture? He finished it just before you came, Mr. Wentworth.

Mr. Wentworth

Indeed! I should like to see it very much.

Joe

There isn't very much light.

Silvia

No, the light is poor. But even so—and your colors will stand out, Joe.

Mr. Wentworth

Really, Mr. Carson, I counted on seeing some of your work. I have heard, nice things about you.

Joe

There. If you stand just here....

Silvia

Oh, Joe!

Joe

What?

Silvia

It's our little cottage! I'm so glad! That's where we lived last summer, Mr. Wentworth. I always wanted Joe to paint it. Joe, it's splendid! Don't you think so, Mr. Wentworth?

Mr. Wentworth

Yes.... Yes. Very interesting....

Silvia

Don't you love the bright colors and the firm, flowing lines?

Mr. Wentworth

Of course, it isn't exactly what I have been accustomed to.... I have heard that some of the younger Frenchmen and Russians are painting in a new way, but—

Silvia

Joe, it's so alive! I feel it, every inch of it! You've no idea, Mr. Wentworth, how Joe's painting has changed me. I used to be such a little New Englander, afraid of life, but now—

Joe

It isn't only what you call the "younger Frenchmen and Russians" who are learning how to paint—the modern movement has spread all over.

Mr. Wentworth

Of course, I don't pretend to be an artist myself, but I have always studied and loved pictures, and when you say "learning how to paint"—

Joe

That's exactly what it is. Learning how to paint. Learning what art is. Getting life into it instead of abstract ideas.

Mr. Wentworth

Art? But art is beauty! Eternal beauty. You can't change art over night, like a fashion!

Silvia

But that picture's beautiful!

Joe

Art changes as life changes. Art has always changed. If it didn't, why isn't your Japanese art just like Greek art? And Greek art like the Italian?

Mr. Wentworth

Oh, in that way, of course. But all the great masters obey the eternal laws of beauty!

Joe

There aren't any eternal laws of beauty! There's only the eternal impulse to create. Every artist has to express himself in his own way. What you call the "eternal laws" are merely the particular expressions your own favorite painters happened to work out in their time. If they had lived in another time—

Mr. Wentworth

A master would always be a master. There's no change possible in the vision of the soul.

Silvia

You see, Mr. Wentworth, what I have learned these last two years from living among artists is that the painter with an original vision is always opposed by the schools. That is, at first. But when he wins out, then the schools merely take over his technic and use it as a club to put down the next creator. And so it goes.

Mr. Wentworth

Naturally, the great artist suffers hardship. But if we once admit there are no laws, where are we? Anarchy!

Joe

The laws are contained in the impulses themselves. They come with the vision, not before it! If any one thinks this modern art is just an easy way of painting—

Silvia

Indeed it isn't! Joe works much harder than the students who go to the schools. Of course, he doesn't paint by the clock.

Mr. Wentworth

But the Louvre! All those beautiful pictures, those priceless treasures! What about the Louvre?

Joe

The Louvre? It's a museum.

Mr. Wentworth

What do you mean by "it's a museum"?

Joe

I mean that it's the place to put pictures in when they are dead.

Mr. Wentworth

Dead? A great masterpiece dead?

Joe

Of course. No man lives forever. Nobody that was ever born was useful enough to live forever. The bigger a man is the longer his influence is creative, in art and everything else, but the time always comes when his value is spent. When the world needs a new influence.

Silvia

It's really wonderful, Mr. Wentworth, how knowing the truth about art shows one the truth about other things. When I remember what I used to believe!

Mr. Wentworth

But see here, young man, you wouldn't do away with the Louvre, would you? Why, what would happen if these ideas were carried out....

Joe

No, I wouldn't do away with it. Why should I? If to burn it down would wake people up to life, I'd do it in a minute. But it wouldn't. They would only sanctify the superstition and make it immortal. No, leave the Louvre as it is. It's really quite useful.

Mr. Wentworth

But good gracious! Useful?

Joe

Yes. Like history. To do away with the Louvre would be to destroy a part of history. There's no good doing that. We need history—it cranks up life—but we've got to recognize that after all it is only history, not life itself—not art.

Mr. Wentworth

But what is art, if the Louvre isn't?

Silvia

Don't you see, Mr. Wentworth? If you could only get for a moment into the stream of experience where Joe and the others brought me! A picture is art as long as it's alive—as long as it can give back the fresh, first-hand impulses that were put into it. After that—when life has flowed on and set up new impulses requiring a different expression—then a picture drops back upon a lower level. What Joe calls history.

Joe

Like everything else.

Mr. Wentworth

But you put art on the same plane as invention. An improved motor car scraps the old model. But you can't improve art!

Joe

No, certainly not. We don't try to. We just do our best. We recover art.

Mr. Wentworth

Recover it?

Silvia

Yes—discover it all over again. It gets lost, lost in hard and fast rules or sentimentality, then a genius comes along and digs down to the buried city—creation. Art isn't like invention. It's more like religion.

Mr. Wentworth

There you are!

Joe

There we are! Isn't there a struggle going on all the time to free religion, the spirit of religion, from hard and fast rules and from false emotions? It's exactly the same thing.

Mr. Wentworth

Ah, but rules are necessary to maintain order. That's what I insist about art. We must have rules!

Silvia

I know exactly what you mean, Mr. Wentworth. You mean that if fanatics tore down all the churches on

the street corners, and there weren't any more Sunday morning sermons, everybody would run wild. But there again it's the same thing as with art: the man who has the spirit of the thing in him feels that the spirit itself is a far better control than heaps of stones and sermons. It's all a matter of living. Imagine asking one of the Apostles which church he went to!

Mr. Wentworth

Wait! We are getting art mixed up with too much else. Didn't you say, Mr. Carson, that pictures died when they no longer gave out impulses of beauty?

Joe

Yes.

Mr. Wentworth

Well! I admit there are dead pictures, too many of them, but they are the canvasses that were still-born. The masterpieces in the Louvre still give out impulses—beautiful impulses—to many of us, thank heaven!

Silvia

But that's just it! The impulses you mean aren't those of art at all. They—

Joe

Those pictures don't give out impulses to the artist. The impulses they do give out are only the emotions that satisfy the student who has learned some rules and then sees the rules worked out. The artist produced the rules as a side issue, but you are trying to make the rules produce the artist. That's the difficulty when people as a whole lose the creative sense. They are satisfied with things at second-hand. Second-hand expressions of life, and second-hand philosophies to justify the expressions. It's a kind of conspiracy in which everybody works against everybody else. Only the few real artists in any generation break through it into the light.

Silvia

The light of the sun!

Mr. Wentworth

I fear we are hopelessly at odds in this question. Well, as the Romans said, there's no disputing about tastes. Every one to his own taste.

Joe

No!

Mr. Wentworth

What do you mean?

Joe

I mean that it's a disgrace that Americans only study and only buy old masters. It's a burning shame that all they know about art is what they have been taught in books. They let their own artists starve—they make them come over here—while they bid up a Raphael like a block of shares. What good does it do Raphael? He had his day. And look how it holds back our own possible Raphaels!

Mr. Wentworth

Raphael? Ah, you are still very young. You don't understand the attitude of the majority, Mr. Carson. Raphael is one of our great inspirers of beauty.

Joe

You mean culture!

Silvia

Oh, it's getting quite dark. Joe, light the light.

Mr. Wentworth

Dear me, so it is! What time is it? It must be getting late—Good gracious! I have an engagement.

Silvia

You can't stay for a little dinner with us in the Quarter, Mr. Wentworth? Afterward we could go to one of the cafés.

Mr. Wentworth

I'm afraid I can't, Silvia. It's been a great pleasure to meet you both, I assure you. These little differences of opinion....

Silvia

Oh, that's all right. We argue art and religion every

day, don't we, Joe? Of course, though, we do feel strongly about the young artists—the young American artists. They come over here, and then they have to burn their bridges ... and we see how wonderful America could be if they were given things to do instead of being neglected....

Joe

Here's your coat, Mr. Wentworth.

Mr. Wentworth

Thank you. Thank you for the delicious tea, Silvia. If I weren't leaving town so soon.... Good night.

Sylvia

Good night. The stairs are rather dark.... (He goes out)

Joe

Damn!

Sylvia

Yes, I know, Joe. It's discouraging....

Joe

Discouraging? It's immoral! Oh, these smug people who have been taught what to admire! These unborn souls who want to shut us all up in the dark! I suppose he went away thinking I put myself up higher than Raphael. Who are we painting for? They don't want it—wouldn't take it for a gift. And here we are, a poor little group, standing amazed before the glory of the sun, and painting it—for the blind!

Silvia

Some day, Joe....

Joe

Some day—yes, when the life has oozed out of all our bright canvasses, when only the "rules" are left. And we won't be able to rise from our graves and curse them!

Silvia

Now, Joe!

Joe

I guess I let you in for a hard time, Silvia. I wish sometimes I could really paint the kind of thing that goes with stupid people's dining rooms. They with their Long Island Louvres!

Silvia

If you did, Joe, I'd put it in the stove. Don't think you are having all the fun of being a pioneer. It's exciting to be within a mile of it!

Joe

Good girl. Ugh! Let's go to Boudet's and have dinner. I want to get the bad taste out of my mouth!

HIS LUCK

The living room in a small flat in Beekman Place. Two women, one of them in mourning, sit beside the remains of tea.

Vera

But Jean, where are you going, when you pack up here?

Jean

I'm not leaving here. I'm staying on.

Vera

Oh. But I thought that now ... you were talking about being free for your own work at last....

Jean

If I have any work to do, I can do it here. You don't understand, quite. All these years I have been living from whirlpool to whirlpool, never settled, always deraciné—the thought of getting accustomed to another place makes me shudder.

Vera

I can imagine, now, how it has been, Jean. But can you find any peace here? With all these things about? You are so sensitive—lamps, and pictures, and rugs—these aren't just furniture to you, they are images of the past. Won't they be, too—real? Too personal? Won't you feel more at liberty with

yourself if you create your own atmosphere?

Jean

Ah, they are real enough! That table is a winter in Munich; the samovar is Warsaw one night in May; the lucerna is Rome ... and all that those places mean to me. I never realized how things could be alive—be personal—until I was left all alone in the midst of these.

Vera

There, don't you see? They're so dominating. I knew you before all this.... I wish you would get away—be yourself.

Jean

No. I shall stay here. As close as possible.

Vera

But really, Jean! I'm thinking of your work. Perhaps you don't appreciate what an insidious drug memory can be. Especially the memory of unhappiness. Let's be frank, Jean, for the sake of your future. You have been unhappy.

Jean

Unhappy? Yes, I have been outrageously unhappy! Years of it! Sharp arrows and poisoned wine. I wanted to die....

Vera

Jean!

Jean

You read a play by Strindberg, and you say it's very strong, very artistic, but all the while you believe it is only the nightmare of a diseased mind. It's just a play—you shut the book and return to "real" life, thankfully. Well, the Strindberg play has been my real life, and real life my play, my impossible dream. You can't imagine how terrifying it is to feel the situation develop around you. Two bodies caught naked in an endless wilderness of thorns. Every movement one makes to free the other only wounds him the more. Two souls, each innocent and aspiring, bound together by serpents, like the Laocoon.... It is one of those things that are

absolutely impossible ... and yet true.

Vera

I'll help you pack. Now. You must!

Jean

We had the deepest respect and admiration for one another, but somehow we never walked in step. His emotion repressed mine, my emotion repressed his. Sometimes one was the slave, sometimes the other. We couldn't both be free at the same time. There was always something to hide, to be afraid of.... Not words nor acts, but moods. It passed over from one soul to the other like invisible rays. And we couldn't separate. That was part of it. We just went on and on....

Vera

People wondered. The first time I met Paul—

Jean

What do you feel?

Vera

I wondered, afterward, what it really was. He seemed to impress me like a powerful motor car stalled in a muddy road.

Jean

Ah. I know!

Vera

Poor child.

Jean

No. You don't understand, I was unhappy, in the ordinary sense, unbelievably so. But that wasn't all. I was alive! I lived as the man lives who faints in the dark mine underground, and I lived as the aviator lives, thrilling against the sun, and as the believer in a world of infidels. That was what he did for me. And slowly, as I learned how deeply the very pain was making me live, I put my unhappiness by. It was there, but it no longer seemed important. It was the lingering complaint of my old commonplace soul standing fearfully on the brink of greater things and hating the situation that led it

there.

Vera

You are a big woman, Jean.

Jean

No, I am a small woman in front of a big thing.
One of the biggest, genius. And the force of it, relentless
as nature, made me what I am. Paul. Oh,
Vera, when I think of his music, tempestuous as the
sea, healing as spring.... And now where is it?
He had what all the world wants most, flight, and
the world stalled him in its own mud. You saw it....
That's why I shall stay here. It's the only
place with his atmosphere. All these things are he.
I face them here in silence, and I bare my breast to
the arrow. Here I am, the only one who knows Paul's
music in its possibility. To the rest, it is a heap of
stones by the roadside. The architect is dead.

Vera

But didn't he ever ... why didn't he...?

Jean

You ask it, of course. You have the right. Sometimes
I ask it, too, why Paul never succeeded. While
we were struggling along, the things that held him
back seemed only details. Only now do I see them
as a whole.

In the first place, Paul never aimed directly at success.
He was all-round. If it had been merely a
question of exploiting his talent, sticking to the one
idea day in, day out, never letting an opportunity
slip by of meeting the right people and getting to
the right places ... that would have been easy.
He had tremendous energy. I used to grudge his
interest in other things. I hated to see him lose the
chances and let them be snapped up by littler men.
He seemed to waste himself, right and left, prodigally.
But it wasn't that, it wasn't waste. It was
all as much a part of him as his music. He detested
the stupidity of wealth and poverty, he rebelled
against laws that aren't laws, but only interests enforced
by authority, he fought against the sheer
deadness of prejudice. How he hated all that! And
why not? You see, Vera, he was sensitive to it not

only as a thinker, but as a musician, too. It was all a part of the discord, and what I used to think his wasting himself was really an effort to create a larger harmony. He used to say that the beauty of music is only the image of beauty in life, and that life must come first. He couldn't endure discords anywhere. Paul despised the musicians who scream at a flatted f but hunger for the flesh pots after the performance. No, he was never that. And people resented it. The very people who ought to have understood.

Vera

But he didn't neglect his music, that is...?

Jean

No. He made enormous efforts to get his violin before the public. And several times he was "discovered" by men who could have made him famous overnight. We all believe that genius will out, despite anything, but it doesn't always. Musicians respected him, but they were afraid of him, too. He criticized them for their shortcomings in other things, just as he criticized others for their shortcomings in art. He wouldn't accept any talent, no matter how fine, if it went with anything small or destructive. You can imagine the china shops he left in fragments! Just think! Once in Berlin it was all arranged for him to have a recital—he was working furiously on his program and I was dancing on air—when just at the last moment he heard the director make some light remark or other about women. Paul was raging! He threw the words back in the fellow's teeth, and made him apologize, but there we were. They called off the recital, naturally. And I couldn't blame Paul. I was just beginning to understand. Another time ... no, he never had luck. Paul had bad luck. I often think of the Greek tragedies.

Vera

Another time?

Jean

Another time—it was in Warsaw—we had gone with a letter of introduction to Sbarovitch—

Vera
The Sbarovitch?

Jean

Yes. It was a chance in ten thousand. We pawned stuff to get there. Well, Paul played like a god. Sbarovitch was quite overcome. He swore he would compose something especially for Paul. We had visions of playing before the Czar.

Vera

But what happened?

Jean

What happened? One night a woman called on Paul at the hotel. He went down, not knowing who it was or anything about her. He said afterward that she started in flattering him and asking him to play for her some time.... Then Sbarovitch rushed in, seizing the woman and cursing Paul with mouthfuls of Slavic hate. So that dream ended!

Vera

But why? Was it Sbarovitch's wife?

Jean

No, worse luck—it was his mistress. Ah, you can't imagine the re-action from such disappointments! The long, slow warming to the full possibility of the occasion, until the artist's mind and body become one leaping flame—and then the sudden fall into icy water. It takes months to work up to the same pitch again.... And then Rome.

Vera

What, again?

Jean

Oh, yes. Again. This time—for a wonder everything went smoothly. I had watched over him like a cat, to save him from others' stupidity and his own impetuousness. It came the very moment when he had to go to the theatre. He asked me if I were ready, I wasn't. I didn't want to go.

Vera

You didn't want to go?

Jean

No. It's difficult to explain, but somehow by then
I had grown aware that the long series of little obstacles,
each one accidental and temporary, seemed
to express something unseen, something impersonal,
a kind of fate ... as if the verdict had gone forth
from the lords of things that Paul was not to succeed.
And everything seemed to hang in the balance
that night. I thought that the fact I was aware of
Paul's bad luck made me all the likelier instrument
for it to work through. So I told him I had a headache....
He must have felt something in my voice.
He dropped his violin and demanded I tell him why
I didn't want to go. His intuition told him it was a
matter of will with me. I hadn't thought to have a
story ready. Besides, I was so worn out that I was
on the verge of hysteria. He stormed, and I sat
staring at him without a word, wondering only why
he didn't forget poor insignificant me and go forth
to his glory. I despised him for considering me at
such a moment. I didn't understand. My opinion,
my feeling, was more important to Paul than the
rest of the world. So, after all, I was the instrument.

Vera

But why didn't you just get up and go?

Jean

As soon as I saw how much it meant to Paul, I tried
to. But it was too late.... We sat there arguing
until three in the morning. An orgy of tears and
self-immolation for us both.... I suppose he might
have explained to the director afterward and arranged
another concert, but those things are never
the same the second time. Well, I forced myself to
get rid of that feeling about his bad luck. How I
ever succeeded I don't know, for Paul caught my
mood and began to believe it himself. But somehow
I did. And then I made him give up his violin and
begin composing. Of course we had to have money
for that. I wrote a relative and demanded, point
blank, shamelessly, two thousand dollars. I felt it
was my restitution to Paul. I received the money.
What the relative thought, I don't know. I suppose
he paid it to avoid getting another such letter from
me. I don't blame him.

So we came over here and Paul started at work. I was fighting for him and with him every moment. How he worked! Six months, like a coal heaver. Then he finished and played it over. He tore it all up. Every note.

Vera

Why?

Jean

He said it was written in an old-fashioned style. It was curious—in his playing he appreciated the most advanced technic, but when be came to compose he found himself imitating the things he had admired when he was eighteen. It had to be worked out of his mind. Well, he did it all through again. This time he said he was only about two years behind. Tore it up again. But now he was convinced he could succeed. And he was magnificent! I would have shared him with the world gladly, but I knew it was best for him to do this work. The hours this room has seen! Well, he made a few notes, stopped a few days to take breath, and then caught the cold that wore him out. Over there, in that drawer, are the notes, a few scraps of paper. The rest of it—the experience of a strong life, a visioning life, are with the mind that is dumb. Sometimes when I sit here I hear it all played, an orchestra ... new harmonies, pure emotion.... The wonder and then the pain of it are almost unbearable.

Vera

Ah, Jean, I begin to understand.

Jean

Over in London there are half a dozen men and women who caught a glimpse of Paul as he really was. In Munich there are half a dozen more. He was at his best in a studio among friends with a congenial atmosphere. They knew... but what is that?

I tell you, Vera, the only way I can explain it all is by seeing two forces, two moralities; the morality of God and the morality of nature. Perhaps in some people they both work together for the same end, but they don't always.... In the sight of heaven,

Paul was an apostle of harmony. In the sight of nature, he was the seed too many on the tree, the bird wrongly colored in the forest. I sit among these things, the fast-ebbing beats of his memory, thinking of what he might have been for others as he was to me, and my heart breaks. Our unhappiness? A cloud passing before the sun—nothing more. And during this past year I have come to love him all over again, not as mate but as mother.

Vera

Ah, Jean, with all his bad luck, he had you! Who knows what might have happened if you had not been there?

Jean

He had me? No, he never had me—he made me.... And that's why I sit all alone with the things that are Paul,—Paul, the flame that was never lit on the altar, the sword that was never drawn from the scabbard.... We talk together, Vera. Paul and I. We talk together, and I wait for him to tell me what to do.

Chronologies
Compilations
Compilations-NSA
Compilations-personal
Documents
East-asia
Encyclopedia
Essays
Etc
Excerpts
Fiction
Glossaries
Guardian
Histories
Introductory
Letters
Maps
Music
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NSA-documents
NSA-letters
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series

chronology