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Practicum

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PRACTICUM

One-eyed Jack is discussing theory with the barber. The barber has nicked Jack's ear.

"In theory, that shouldn't have happened," says the barber, tapping his glass-covered diploma from barber's school.

"That's the trouble with theories," Jack says, "they don't take into account the blood."

Jack winks at the boy waiting to get his cut. Jack was a winker long before he got his eye put out in a fight over a card game.

"Just a friendly game," Jack had said to the others when they caught him cheating. "That's the trouble with some people," Jack says to the barber and the boy, "they don't know the difference between a game and real life—between theory and the hard facts."

The hard fact was the toe of a steel-toed boot. Each time Jack winks, the boy disappears.