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THE STAFF

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super talk to seek
a solution

With the technological impetus of the past seventy-five years, inspired by the tinkering penchant of Western man, or by the lust for power and profit, or by just plain curiosity (you can take your pick), our culture has become so complex that no one man is able to attain a comprehensive grasp of its inner workings. There is a question foremost in the minds of a few of us: “What makes Uncle Sammy run?” Naturally this complex era in which we live is the era of the expert, so, we ask the expert. And the expert does not have the answer!

Probably a huge machine in the depths of the Pentagon does know what makes Uncle Sammy run, but thirty or forty brainy people are necessary to ask the machine this vital question, and, accordingly, there are thirty or forty different answers, each answer having its own special meaning for each of the experts. At this stage of the hypothetical proceedings a conference is held—top security stuff: passes, guards, and swarthy gentlemen from the CIA striving to appear unobtrusive, et cetera. Were the problem at hand not of such a serious nature, this meeting of learned minds would be hysterically funny! Professor Twinkingham, huge, florid, and decidedly pragmatic, booms on about the statistical curve of the lipstick market in relation to the number of newlyweds, while Dr. Slipscalpel, the master dentist, who should have stayed in his snug little office and ignored this fat Washington post, screams something about the disease
vector of infected molars. As these worthy gentlemen profound, their voices form but the humblest counterpoint to the strident yelps of sociologists, UFO specialists, metallurgists, poltergeists, political scientists, and parapsychologists. As we stated before, this is most certainly the era of the expert.

Now, the pitiful aspect of this little conference is that it makes the Tower of Babel seem almost dull by comparison. When our noble Professor Twinkingham quotes a net sales margin from his statistical curve chart, Dr. Slipscalpel has not the faintest idea of what a net sales margin is. From the looks of the object which Twinkingham holds before him, Slipscalpel is reminded briefly of a spoon retractor; to him it is just a mess of messier curved lines of different colors. This basic difficulty pervades the entire conference.

These gentlemen have parts of the answer, and, in a way, all the parts are correct. They cannot be combined, however, because they will not fit with one another, since the gentlemen understanding them do not understand each other. Plainly then, the conference is out in left field.

A look at the newspapers will convince the most uncaring soul that, internationally speaking, the bases are loaded. We do not wish to create a panic or inspire defeatism in the hearts of our readers (some of you must have hearts!), but facts are facts, and, when you come right down to it, our hypothetical conference is quite that hypothetical! Our dreamed-up situation exists today, right here and now, on many levels of society.

The question itself is not the basic problem though; the basic problem is why we are not able to answer it. Well, why?

Our culture is top-heavy. It is complex ad infinitum, but it is not integrated. There was a time when the simple
everyday, basic skills of living and thinking could be satisfactorily mastered by anyone of average intelligence. Then the wrench of fortune was thrown into the works, a huffing, puffing, noisy wrench—the steam engine. From there the snowball started rolling down the icy hill, getting bigger and bigger and rolling faster and faster every second. A complex, unintegrated culture is the result. There is evidence of this right here on our beloved campus. While we, the editors, juggle nouns and verbs about on a piece of paper, the pre-med student on the other side of Smith Hill is poking around with an amoeba in a watch glass looking for Golgi apparatus. Let us assure you that we wouldn't know Golgi or his apparatus if he were selling it, at a special price, in the bookstore. On the other hand, we're willing to give you even odds that the pre-med student has a terrible time constructing a logical sentence.

The cause of this dilemma is, of course, specialization. The Age of Discovery was the funeral dirge of the Universal Man of Letters. Each year the sciences are splitting and re-splitting, dividing and sub-dividing into countless fields of exploration. For instance: in 1850 there was one comfortable, homey field of endeavor known as chemistry. At a university a student could obtain his degree in chemistry. He was then a chemist, plain and simple. Today there are almost as many fields of chemistry as there are aspiring chemists, with new avenues of research opening up every day. The student is forced to specialize because, economically speaking, there isn’t any money to be made while sitting around all his life trying to grasp the whole science.

We realize that this is not the first (nor the last) time the warning buzzer will be sounded. The high brows have been worrying about the situation for a long time. A glance at current escapist literature will disclose an avid low-brow
pre-occupation with the "Superman—Homo Superior" theme. The one-fifty-plus element knows all about the problem, while their lesser world-mates have at least a subconscious appreciation of the difficulty. All of us sense the insecurity and confusion.

There is our problem and its cause. Now, what is the solution? There have been many voiced. They range from ruthless eugenics (groping for Homo Superior) to a forced return to the feudal system (groping for Homo Neanderthalis).

Does the solution lie in education? The system that produced the Universal Man of Letters is dead. Milton today could not study until he was twenty-eight. First, his father wouldn't be willing to support him for that long. His father would live in a little world, circumscribed by the office, the television set, and the daily newspaper. Second, the army would be waiting with hungry paws to grab him as soon as he could shave.

In our estimation, there is no immediate solution to the problem. We will not build ourselves an ivory tower and hint, rather sheepishly, that we have the answer. There just isn't an all-purpose, economy-size solution. We are just as confused as anyone else is these days, and everything we've said applies doubly to ourselves.

Perhaps our readers can offer some suggestions. We'll be glad to print them.

Agenbite of inwit!

J. McLarney
Probably seven out of every ten who are able to take an annual deer hunting trip come home rather pleasantly disgusted. Although I cannot think of anything more tiring and laborious than climbing steep, wooded mountains and trudging through bush, there is nothing more relaxing to the mind than a good hunting trip and especially a successful one.

Last year on a small, peaceful, snowcapped mountain in the foothills of the Adirondacks I met that success. But according to the "experts" at the local sports store it was impossible. Deer hunting, as any other sport, requires abiding by the proper rules in order to play the game correctly. The proper rules of deer hunting as I was well advised by these "experts," are: to have a decent gun well sighted-in, a little experience in firing and handling it, good ammunition, some knowledge of the habitats of deer, red clothing for personal protection, and some knowledge of the area in which you are hunting. "Unless you follow these rules, you will never be successful," were the last words said to me upon leaving the sports store.

I began my long awaited trip with a 30-30 rifle that I bought second hand for ten dollars and a box of shells which was included in that price. I could not practice firing the gun because I could not afford to buy more shells. I trusted
that the ammunition was good because I had no other choice. I had no knowledge of the habitats of deer because I had never seen one. Red clothes were positively out and this was my first venture into the area of White Creek, which might just as well have been China.

We had a party of four: Jimmy Frazier, a native and veteran deer hunter from White Creek, his two nephews, also veteran hunters, and myself, a genuine rookie. The first day, Jimmy briefed us as to the best method of attack, which was for three of us to still hunt on three different levels of the mountain while he went around to the other side to drive the deer. So I still hunted, which is merely standing as quiet as possible, keeping a sharp eye in all directions, listening for the sound of a hunter's dream, and above all not smoking because deer have a very keen sense of smell.

After five hours of still hunting, the torture of not having a cigarette and the discouragingly hard labor of standing in one place, I decided there must be an easier way to fill the freezer with venison. After all, I was on a vacation and could not understand why I should discipline myself at a time like that. But for the rest of that day I somehow managed to do what I was told.

On the day following, however, I was determined to relax a little, even if the deer were so particular about how you had to behave in order to shoot them. This time we split up, and at midday were supposed to meet in a cow pasture. My orders were to go straight to the top of a mountain and then take a sharp left and keep walking until I came to the cow pasture.

Apparently my judgment of going straight to the top of the mountain was a little crooked or my sharp left needed
honing because it was not long at all before I was lost. But
I smoked, made noise and moved around leisurely. The
thoughts of standing a military watch on the previous day
had faded now and I felt more confident of success.

Towards the end of the day I had given up on finding
the cow pasture. I realized I had to go down to get out of the
mountain and before long, I still swear, by the grace of God,
I found the trail I had come in on.

Now you can believe this next part of the story or you
are free to think whatever you wish, but I swear by my life
that it’s true. I reached the edge of the woods and spotted
a fox in a lea. While I stopped to determine the direction
the fox would move, a pheasant ran in front of me. While I
was watching the pheasant, I heard something running down
the mountain. I turned. It was a big buck. I had been
warned about buck fever; so I did not hesitate a second. I
released the safety, started shaking feverishly, aimed, and
fired. But this unusual, obliging, curious deer did not run
when I missed him; he just stopped in his tracks and looked
at me squarely in the eye from about three hundred feet.

Quickly, quietly, and with a numb feeling all over my
body, I tried desperately to reload the gun but could not
ejject the empty shell from the chamber. What probably
was two minutes at the time seemed to be fifteen before I
succeeded. But the deer stood fast and kept his innocent
looking and occasionally blinking eyes fixed on me. Then,
during one of the most anxious moments of my life, I slowly
raised the gun, took careful aim, and—while asking myself,
“How could you shoot such a beautiful, innocent animal?”
—fired. The only consolation I had was a good clean kill,
right between the eyes.
Back at the local sports store the “experts” had gathered to marvel at my success, but it was: “Just luck!” “Beginners’ luck!” “A lucky shot!” “He didn’t even sight his gun in.” “The deer just stood there for him,” and a few other envious remarks. So I asked them how they shot their first deer, and upon finding that they all were among the seven annuals, I stepped quietly into my car and drove very happily to the butcher shop saying to myself, “Bob, don’t ever in your life pretend to be an expert.”
if this be treason

Twice thirty eyes stare blankly at that wall
   Where once their electronic idol stood;
No longer in its bowels Alumnae Hall
   Contains the mystic tubes encased in wood.

Morning Star has fallen, The Guiding Light is out,
   Love of Life has turned to sullen grief;
The treasures of our culture put to rout—
   How tragic has become this Date with Life.

Now tears stream forth from orbs that once were gay,
   Where youthful laughter rang, now all is gloom;
Gad! How they do miss Morning Matinee,
   Swan Boat, Friendly Giant, and Romper Room.

Gone are the challenges of Ding Dong School,
   No more does Small Fry Science fascinate;
Oh! Tell, Ye Fates, how could Ye be that cruel,
   To take e’en those which did so educate?

"The privilege was abused, abused!" they say,
   "To provocation did selections lead."
Yet, who could choose twixt Home and Brighter Day
   And dare to hope that all shall have agreed?
Does Valiant Lady’s ghost no heart inspire?
   Will no one rise to champion their cause?
Have Arthur Godfrey’s words lost all their fire?
   Surely not!! . . . Someone will act . . . Let us pause.

Yes!! Look yonder!! that Howdy Doody fan,
   See how he summons all the Mickey Mice;
I fear it is for violence that they band;
   Harken! one rises; now he lifts his voice.

“As Caesar his Brutus had,
   And Charles his Cromwell too,
So shall Alumnae Hall
   Have its Captain Kangaroo.”
"This is your last day, ain't it kid?" The rasping voice of the foreman broke in on his thoughts, and quick anger rose at the name. Steve only nodded, then sprang into the back of the truck. Kid! That nickname haunted him! He thought this summer might be the end of it. Working for the state, doing pick and shovel work— "A man's work; why can't they treat me like one?" he raged silently. Now it was his final day on the job, and the hated name persisted. Try as he might, they would not call him Steve, or even Adams, but always "Kid! Kid!"

He slumped dejectedly there with the shovels and sledgehammers, the picks and tamps and needlebars. "A man's tools, and I use them as well as anybody. Damnit"— the carefully cultivated man-talk seemed out of place in his thoughts— "will they call me that till I'm ninety?"

Every mirror told him where the fault was. The blond curls, the beardless cheeks, the smooth skin all belied his nineteen years. The things a man has to put up with! He turned his thoughts to happier topics.

"Yes," his mind repeated, "this is my last day, and I am a camera." Easing back as the truck jolted to a start, he scanned the faces of the others. Every crew working for the state seemed to be made to the same recipe. Each had its quota of old men, grizzled and blear-eyed, of loafers scheming to avoid work, "winos" scheming for a furtive drink, and—regarding himself wryly—of college boys. The dirty
men sprawled amid the equally dirty tools, each lost in his own world, too tired even to curse the heat. He took the picture, and closed his eyes to file it with the others.

The whole day was preserved as a series of vivid scenes. The first few were grey with morning and cloaked in morning's feel: cold water and steaming coffee and vacant streets. For him day didn't really begin until the sun came up to break the seal of night. Till then he drowsed through the long ride to work, and watched the soft grey ghosts of mist steal off the mirror-ponds to seek the fleeing darkness. The fields were calm and drugged with dew; the trees, stiff black sentinels across the hills, stretched themselves and shook loose swarms of birds.

The sky put on its brightest garb of pink and gold and blue to greet the sun. This sphere, immense and orange, burst from the trees, then lingered in a farewell kiss with the horizon that pale clouds blushed pink to see.

The western sky, a deeper blue, like her eyes . . . like her eyes! He was caught again! Lately, no matter what the subject was, his thoughts somehow turned to Gayle. "It must be love," he decided grimly—then smiled a silly, meaningless, unconscious smile which meant it was! That pain-fully idealizing love which goes with youth held him. She was, of course, indescribably beautiful, indescribably fair and blond and sort of shoulder-high, making him feel very manly and protective in her company. In the month since they first met he hadn't told her, hadn't dared tell her of his feelings. Fear was the obstacle, fear of losing what she apparently regarded as only an interesting friendship. Some-day, perhaps, when she liked him better . . . but not yet. "She must suspect, though," he pondered, "she understands me so well . . ."
She understood him indeed, and even saw what warped his present life. "You're fighting," she told him once; "you're fighting the whole world, and you don't know why. You think you must prove something to everyone, stand before the whole wide world as a man. Don't try it, Steve. When the time comes, you'll prove yourself a man. Don't rush the time."

The angry roar of a diesel jolted him back to reality. A big yellow gasoline truck sped by with an impatient blast of the horn, and careened along the narrow road ahead. A few profane comments went with it, then the men dropped again into silence.

WHAM! Scarcely had they relaxed when the grinding crash of tortured steel thundered from ahead. Tools and men banged about as their truck skidded to a halt around the bend. Ahead, the tank truck lay on its side like a toy. There was a moment of stunned silence; then the men burst from the truck and started towards the wreck. Already a small bright spot of flame appeared, as fuel trickled from the seams and splashed on the ground. The spot flickered with all the flash and menace of a sword unsheathed, then spread slowly in streams. It ran along the road and flared in puddles. Miniature black clouds already drifted up. The men, confronted with the relentless advance of the fire hesitated, stopped, finally began a slow retreat from the area. The only sound was a hissing, like water splashed on a hot stove, as the flame rolled out on either side of the truck.

"The driver! Where's the driver?" The scream was almost hysterical. It broke the trance which kept the men silent; yet they still edged backwards almost by instinct.

The youth walked by unseen. It wasn't until he stopped a few paces short of the flaring puddles that the boss realized what was intended.
“NO!” he yelled. “Come back, kid!” The foreman started running, but it was too late. Horrified, he watched as Steve, not looking back, blessed himself hurriedly, then ran towards the wreck. Leaping, running, twisting between clutching flames, he found a clear path to the cab. The choking smoke rolled up; the metal of the hood was hot to touch, but he pulled himself up and fumbled at the door.

Within, the trucker lay still behind the wheel. The door moved a little as the hinges squealed, but the handle was strangely slippery. He wiped his sweating hands on the dungarees and thought, “I’m scared! You yellow coward, stop shaking and concentrate on this door!” Again he heaved and again it gave, but not enough. The pool of flame spread faster, closing off escape routes and moving in on the dry circle around the cab. The only way out now was directly in front of the grille. Suddenly fear rushed over him, and for a brief trembling moment the urge to jump and run was strong. His voice lashed out, “You bloody chicken! Stop thinking about yourself and get this guy out of here!” The hissing of the liquid inferno became a steady roar, and the heat began to scorch the workclothes. Sweat poured down, its salty taste mingled with the sleasy taste of smoke that made the throat burn and the lungs scream for air. He moved higher on the cab, got a better foothold, and heaved again, straining every fiber in a desperate effort. Once more. And again. A flash and a roar and a thousand winking lights. The street was rough beneath his shoulders and in a vague detached way he realized something had exploded. The pain came in a sudden red wave he tried to move, then blessed numbness, a dream-like sensation as he let himself drift. The greedy wash of flames snapped him back to action. Beyond his feet the
steel grill and radiator rose; on either side the line of flame crept forward.

Rolling onto his side, he stretched out both arms and tried to crawl. "OHGODOHGODOHGOD, my LEGS! I CAN'T MOVE MY LEGS." A breathless sob and panic as fingers clawed at the pavement, splitting nails and scraping off flesh. The panic ceased as he gasped for air and suddenly there was only the awful reality and the numbness creeping up his legs and the warm sticky trickle of blood from his forehead. Almost automatically he began the familiar words, "Oh my God, I am heartily sorry . . ." He was floating off, getting farther away. For one brief lucid moment the sky was there above the smoke, blue like her eyes, and he felt vaguely cheated. She would never know . . . never know . . . never . . .

The torn body twitched once, twice, then was still there in the gutter. Merciful death reached it before the flames, before the torture.

Through the few minutes of horror and death, the crew stood stunned and silent. Horror and death come swiftly, and the impact is too great for the mind to grasp at once. Dazed, they watched the rising flames . . . .

Unbelieving, somebody began, "The Kid, the crazy Kid, it was his last day . . . ."

"Kid, hell! the boss spoke brokenly. "When the time came, he was more a man than any of us."

Then the smell of burning flesh reached him and he turned his back to vomit on the road.
GERALD POULIOT

on significance

There is inherently imbued in many people the notion that they are significant. Just how significant are these people? We shall examine their significance or lack of it.

First we shall examine the inanimate object, for insignificance seemingly starts there. What of a grain of sand; how insignificant! Combine that grain of sand a million times, may a trillion times and we have the land mass of a country. Raise this insignificant grain of sand to the ninth power and a continent is born. Raise it again and the globe we reside on has come into being; add a drop of insignificance called water, magnify that a thousand thousand fold and the oceans, rivers, and lakes of this globe appear.

How significant?

Next let us examine countries. Are they not products of this insignificant grain of sand. They are called countries simply because some "significant" creature called man deemed it that way. All these countries or nations are made up of that grain of sand to a greater or lesser amount; so let us examine our own country, since to us it is significant because we feel it is the greatest. To our grain of sand, however, there are many greater countries, for though our country be large in area there are those that are larger. So then, in respect to our grain of insignificant sand, our country becomes insignificant by comparison.

How significant?

In the realm of the animate creature, the amoeba is the
on significance

smallest bit of significance. Scientists grope to find a smaller divisible link to our inanimate friend, the grain of sand. If he could succeed, the significant amoeba would become insignificant. Compare to the animal world, the amoeba falls into complete insignificance and pales into nothingness, for these creatures have the ability to sense things. They can by their great powers smell, feel, hear noises, yes, even rise to "anger"! They must stride those grains of sands like behemoths; but no, they fall into insignificane because over even them, a creature lords who possesses, at least in his own mind, significance.

How significant?

We come now to the homo-sapiens, a creature who can rationalize, who can theorize, who can by his superior intellect change all these insignificant creatures below him. How he stands like a Colossus, proud in the fact that he alone is truly significant. But in this very fact lies the greatest insignificance of all. Is he, this significant creature, not composed of the same substance as that insignificant amoeba? Does he not reside and roam on that most insignificant grain of sand? Does he not, by his own superior intellect, create mighty machines of that very grain of sand that reduce him to insignificance? Is not the significance that this homo-sapiens claims a transient gift at best? Will not he and all the creatures that surround him be replaced in the short span of a hundred years by an entirely new group of rational creatures who will look back at his works, his acts, his wars, and utter, "How insignificant!"

Man cannot grasp the folly of this insignificance until at long last he comes, as do all creatures, to that moment when he must face the inevitable man with the scythe. Then his pride falters, for the tide has turned and the significance that was once there for all to see becomes as it always must—insignificance.
How significant?
What is the solution: Who is significant? Who is insignificant?

We have supposedly ascended the logical stairs of created masses, from inanimate inert matter to the rational, animate creature called man; from an insignificant grain of sand to an insignificant homo-sapiens, but this is not so—for the grain of sand is significant, and the rational creature called man is significant—yet only in relation to the reason for their existence. Beyond that, and examined separately from their environment, man becomes that grain of sand and that grain of sand becomes man, each insignificant!

Only God, the Creator of that grain of sand, only God, the Creator of that man, only God, the Creator of the whole universe is significant, and all else, that grain of sand, that man, that almost boundless universe, fall into that undistinguished, unimportant secondary category — insignificance. Through the eons of time, through a millenium of centuries—from that moment when from nothing a universe was born, since then, and through time immeasurable and again going onward into fathomless eternity—there has been only the Creator of it all Who was, is, and always will be truly significant.

How significant?

Be not dismayed, though, at our insignificance, for that same Creator, infinitely significant, must have truly thought us all significant to have brought us into existence from that total void of insignificance and nothingness; and it is in this glorious act that we have our significance, whether we be grains of sand or man. If we as men can cast aside the pride that blinds us to our real significance then we will be in the eyes of our Divine Creator — significant.

This alone is significant!
A moment, friend, I have a tale to tell.
Of what?
Of man.
Of man and deed, of man and words.
There once was one to whom it was given.
All things of earth were his, his own.
He knew all good, all good did he possess.
The serpent spoke to her, and she to him.
And he heard, and he did, and he fled.
He saw himself, and he saw her, and he fled.
And he hid himself, from the eyes of Him.
And yet he flees, and yet he hides himself.
And yet His eyes, as on that first day of flight,
Reveal it. He sees, He knows.
To rail against the barbs of fate,
To groan beneath pernicious Fortune's yoke,
To weep, to wail,
This is our lot.

REVOLT!

To claw at bonds which bind us with the strength
Of Gordian knot,
And like great Alexander, hack at them with blades of non-conformity,
This is our lot.

REVOLT!

To grovel in the dust, and shake the fist on high,
Inveigh against the One Who is,
Invective, sund'ring earth and sky,
This is our lot.

REVOLT!

Fool, fool, desist,
Subside into that dust as all before you have,
And find that sweet surcease,
_uubi Deus est, Pax._
Starched yellowed curtains and heavy red drapes let starved air into the musty chamber. Dead little pieces—autographed fans from forgotten dances, knick-knacks won at noisy carnivals, and roses pressed into death—cluttered the massive, out-moded furniture. The room was dying.

And in this room the only life was little Miss Carter, now an old woman, dressed in fading silk, waiting for her caller, who was late.

The front door-bell rang, and with creaking, labored movement Miss Carter went to answer it.

Mr. Muscle—as Miss Carter had nicknamed him, when he confided that he had once used bar-bells—was leaning impatiently on the door-bell. Mr. Muscle, a college student, was a part of the world, a poor part. He was Old World: not the dashing, bon-vivant Old World, but the gangling, peasant-immigrant Old-World.

As she hurried in her lethargic way to let him in, Miss Carter could easily picture a dock in New York at the turn of the century, a melange of aliens and immigration officials, and Mr. Muscle in his faded blue suit with the too-short trousers. She caught herself looking for the name-tag and the big sack, filled with treasures from the home-land, as she let him in.
"Come in, John."

John bowed slightly and walked silently behind Miss Carter into the living room. Here he felt at home; here he could drop the onus of pretense.

"Have you heard yet, John?"

This simple question had been Miss Carter's opener for several months now. She remembered how he had first spoken of the fellowship he hoped to win, as he perched nervously on the edge of the chair. He had spoken of the little frustrations that made life almost intolerable: the secret laughter of pretended friends, the horror of asking a girl out, and then the lengths to which he would go to break the date. The girl usually broke the date anyway. But with a fellowship he would be able to start again. He could build a whole new world with himself at the center.

She watched him now. His eyes had a hurt hound-dog look. He said nothing, but reached for one of the faded roses, which crumpled under his heavy hand. He looked even more abject.

"Don't let that bother you, John. Someday this old woman is going to clean this whole house. Someday—real soon."

But she was lying, and they both knew it. Each of these pieces was a memory of the time before her "retirement," of dead desires. This room was a museum of a life, cut short by weakness, and Miss Carter moved about the room like an over-conscientious custodian.

"Well, John."

"I don't want it."
the intruder

Reasons came: His parents were getting old; they needed his support; he probably couldn’t make it anyway. The reasons sounded lame and false, but they seemed proper in this room. Yes, here he was home.

“You’re getting old, too.”

John recoiled as if from a kick. He had been in the army, then had worked in an office, but that was boring. Finally he had entered college. His age had never bothered him, until he saw younger people, enjoying themselves. Perhaps youth was the secret of happiness. That was the reason for the bar-bells. Mr. Muscle looked up.

It’s hot in here.”

“Yes.”

They sat in silence. The sunlight began to withdraw from the room, as if it needed some fresh air. The room began to sink slowly into a darkness. The furniture looked softer now, less ugly. The shadows were cool.

Then a ball came hurtling through the window. A little boy yelled from the street. The room was hot again.

Miss Carter, who had been dozing, looked at the intruder angrily—and with a little bit of fear. She retreated farther into the shadows, as if to escape the force from outside.

John scooped up the ball and ran to the front door. He threw it at the little boy, who dodged, caught it, and ran off to start another game. John returned to the little room. It seemed little now, compared with what was outside.

His hand was sticky. It must have been cut by some flying glass. He looked at the blood strangely, and realized that in life there was blood, too.
Miss Carter was moving about the room, rearranging the mementos on the furniture. She drew the curtains closed and turned to John with a sigh.

“That ought to do it. They can’t get in now. I used to be able to go to the door, but that stopped long ago. Somehow I hate the sight of youth. You understand. It’s not so much being young as living, doing things for others. You forget yourself. And then one day you discover that you’re—well, you’re dead . . . to yourself, I mean. I don’t want that. You don’t either.”

She had a hard, cold glint in her eyes. She looked like a dried-out rose, dead and ugly. The room was stifling.

John surveyed the room, a museum. He saw himself as custodian. No. He turned to Miss Carter. She understood and turned away. He walked to the door without bowing.

Outside the air was fresh and clean. He would take the fellowship.
Matins: *Aperi, Domine os meum ad benedicendum nomen tuum*...

The hush of night
is broken
by voices
Praising God.
The vaulted halls
of abbeys new and ancient
echo
and re-echo
the song, the song of men,
some young, some old
together
singing the midnight hymn.

Lauds: *Dominus regnavit, decorum indutus est*...

The Lord,
they chant,
is Beautiful
and greatly to be praised.
from end to end
the oaken stalls
vibrate with solemn phrase:
May He who reigns in Heaven
hear the mortal’s prayer.
Prime: *Ad te levavi animam meam. Deus meus in te confido non erubescam* . . .

A golden glow, creepingly, now spreads
oe’r the line dividing earth
and Paradise;
Again the robed ones gather,
seeking, begging, praying
mercy for mankind.
In solemn cadence
singing, hoping, offering
Prayers to God Most High.

Tierce: *Domine, exaudi orationem meam* . . .

The sun now warms
the tiring earth.
Once more the voices
echo
off the chapel wall.
Bidding the warmth of charity
from God—as all good is—
to fill our hearts,
that men may sin no more.

Sext: *Quam magnificata sunt opera tua, Domine* . . .

Now
Midway
The day has come.
With orisons fervent
they beg blessings
on us
Through God’s great Holy Name
Thanking Him for everything
He has deigned to give.
opus dei

None: Misericordiam Domini in aeternum cantabo...
The doleful hour
long ago
at which the God-man
died
has come once more.
In grief-tinged measure
hooded figures gather
thanks to give
for His great love sublime.

Vespers: Confitebor tibi, Domine in toto corde meo...
Evening now well nigh has come.
In this blessed hour
ages past
the Incarnate Victim-Word
gave us Bread of Life.
Paeans gladly chanting,
they seek, though t'is impossible
for humans,
adequately
Him to thank.

Compline: Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace...
the day has gone;
Opus Dei completum est.
To poor straw pallets
go these men
who for the oft-neglectful many
praise and thank
supplicate and adore
The One God
all the day.
SETTING

A dimly-lit tavern: a semi-circular bar; a small dance floor at downstage center; tables bordering the dance floor, along the walls, and adjoining the dance floor; an entrance at upstage right with a juke-box to the right of it. There is also a television at the upstage left portion of the set which is placed at right angle to the audience.

CHARACTERS

1) Ray: a young man of about twenty-two; well-dressed and a bit flamboyant in his actions.

2) Jan: a young lady of about the same age; conservatively dressed.

3) Frank: a middle-aged man; soft-spoken and prosperous-looking.

4) Howard: middle-aged; more outspoken than Frank; also prosperous-looking.

5) Ollie: the bartender; a huge simian-type man; good-natured.
Three couples: two are in their early twenties; the other, in late thirties.

A few patrons: men seated at the bar, drink and converse among themselves.

**AT CURTAIN**

At the curtain, all the characters are on stage. Ray and Jan and two other couples are dancing, while the others are conversing in tones inaudible to the audience.

Three couples are dancing to soft music; shortly after the curtain, the music stops and the couples file to their respective places, Ray and Jan to a table adjoining the dance floor on the right.

**RAY**

Still pouting, Jan?

**JAN**

If that's what you insist on calling it, yes. You don't seem to realize how I've looked forward to the time when we would graduate and finally get married.

**RAY**

I know how you feel, but we have to wait. I can't bring you with me to Arabia, and I surely can't stay here. I'd never get used to the idea of being just an average guy, a run-of-the-mill, one-suit family man.

**JAN**

And do you think it will be easy for me to twiddle my thumbs until you get back, especially since you're giving me such a limp excuse for leaving?
RAY
Don’t be sassy; you’re acting like a big kid who can’t have his own way.

JAN
I think you’re the big kid: this is as much a dream as when you wanted to be a cowboy or a ballplayer.

RAY
(Exasperated) For crying out loud! This is what a guy gets for being ambitious.

JAN
Ambitious! I think the right word for it is “fantastic.”

RAY
Aw, sweetheart, let’s drop it for tonight. We’ve got only a few nights to ourselves; let’s make them good ones.

JAN
But why don’t you want to marry me; is it some other girl?

RAY
For the thousandth time, no. It’s just that if I don’t make my mark now while I’m single, I’ll never make it under the burden of a family.

JAN
And you think that a few years with that company will give you what you want.

RAY
That’s it exactly.
Only by that time, you’ll probably have forgotten all about me; you could even have a harem.

Now who’s fantastic? Besides, I can just barely handle your little temper; what would I do with a dozen women like you?

I won’t wait to find out. If you really love me, you’ll give up this foolish notion and marry me as you promised.

And if you really love me, you wouldn’t try to stand in the way of my success.

I’m not trying to block your success, Ray; you know that. It’s just that we’re in love and we’d be so happy together. Why don’t we take our happiness now while it’s there for the asking; you never can tell what will happen to us in a few years.

But don’t you see, our love is exactly what I’m counting on.

If we’re really meant for each other, our love will carry us through this period of separation.

That remains to be seen. If the delay was for some worthwhile reason, but for this . . .
RAY

Oh, what's the use!

JAN

That's right; there isn't any point in trying to talk me into accepting your preposterous scheme.

RAY

You're too darned narrow-minded to see my point.

JAN

You're too stubborn to see mine. (Pauses) Since it's pretty obvious we won't be reaching any agreement, I think the best thing to do is leave. (She slips off her engagement ring and drops it on the table) Here, maybe some Arab girl will like this. (Leaves)

As she leaves all eyes are drawn towards her; especially interested are Frank and Howard, who have ostensibly overheard the entire argument; they resume speaking inaudibly. Meanwhile, Ray broods for a short while and then moves to the bar, sitting near Frank and Howard.

RAY

Ollie!

OLLIE

(Walks over to Ray from the left-hand corner of the bar) Hey, where's your girl, did she walk off with some other guy?

RAY

No, she just walked off, period. I'll have a Bud.

OLLIE

(Gives Ray the beer . . . wipes the bar around his place) You had a little fight, huh? That's too bad
... she's a nice girl. But what's the difference; everything will be all right in the morning.

RAY
I doubt it; one of us would have to sacrifice a principle, and, in my case, that would involve my career. You see, I want to go to Arabia with this oil company and make myself a little money before I settle down. I got a pretty good offer, but she can't see waiting around a little while.

OLLIE
Women! The trouble they can bring you! I had dozens of proposals from them, and I'm glad I refused them all.

RAY
(Mockingly) You mean they actually proposed to you? You must have been quite a lover.

OLLIE
You don't believe me, do you, boy? Why, when I'd start spouting love poetry to them, they couldn't resist.

RAY
You're just so darned cute; that must have been your secret.

OLLIE
Among other things. I've been told that I was kind of gorgeous in my prime; still am, in fact. Yessir, I was considered a very beautiful man, the most discussed person in town.

RAY
The most disgusting, maybe; or at least the most conceited.
OLLIE
Naw, that was last year; this year I'm perfect. (Walks to the end of the bar where he serves a few patrons ... returns)

RAY
I can't forget the argument I had. This one's got me worried; it sounded so final when she walked out.

OLLIE
Look at it this way, kid. Oh, wait a minute, will ya. (He walks to the end of the bar to serve other patrons ... returns). As I was saying, you really love each other; don't you?

RAY
(Cynically) So I'm told.

OLLIE
Well, she'll still love you in two, five, or even ten years. So don't worry about it.

RAY
But that's if she helps her love along. What I'm afraid of is that she'll deliberately try to forget me for someone more convenient. She could forget me if she put her mind to it.

OLLIE
I doubt that she could do anything about her feelings towards you. (Draws another beer for Ray) You can't turn love on and off like this tap; it's either there or it ain't.

RAY
I hope you're right, because I'm pretty determined to take this chance of forfeiting her. I hate to do it, but I just can't ignore this terrific opportunity.
OLLIE
If you’re so worried about losing her, don’t let it bother you; love is like the mumps: you can only get it once and, as far as I’m concerned, you’re just as miserable.

RAY
So your advice, doctor?

OLLIE
Take the job. You don’t want to drink beer in a low class place like this all your life, do you?

RAY
If it’s so low class, what’s a supposedly great man like you doing working in it?

OLLIE
(In mock anger) Wise college punk! They need quality folk like me to add a little prestige to the joint. (Pause) Yeah, I can just see you pull up to the country club in one of those big Caddies and instantly be surrounded by droves of classy females, all with designs upon you.

RAY
But Jan’s the only one for me.

OLLIE
So she’ll be there standing in line with the rest of them. Of course, your money will be what will attract them, but ordinary people like you need something extra to attract women. But take me, on the other hand, pure unadulterated sex appeal.

RAY
Get out of here!

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PATRON
Get the fight; it's almost ten o'clock.

Ollie goes to the extreme left-hand corner of the bar to tune in a television set; all except Frank and Howard watch intently. These two converse audibly now, gradually commanding the attention of Ray.

FRANK
That bartender's a real wit, isn't he, Howard?

HOWARD
Reminds me of a guy I knew in Brazil, only that one was a fugitive from the F.B.I.

FRANK
He still had something in common with the bartender, then. He's a fugitive from those swarms of designing girls. (Pause) You know, it seems that everybody you knew in Brazil was running from something or other.

HOWARD
A lot of them were: some actually had a price on their head, while others were hiding from themselves and reality.

FRANK
What do you mean, "hiding from reality"? That money you're spending seems real enough.

HOWARD
That isn't exactly what I mean. What I do mean is that an awful lot of the men down there were out to make an easy million, and that is where the dream comes into the picture; it isn't quite as easy as it seems.
FRANK
I can see that it would be hard, what with the different climate and different people.

HOWARD
The biggest problem is loneliness, Frank. I don't care whether you're in Brazil or in Turkey, you're not just entering a strange country; you're intruding upon a civilization worlds apart from yours.

FRANK
I'd imagine you'd get used to it.

HOWARD
You never do. You may become inured to it in the sense that you forget exactly what is souring you, but you're still miserable down deep, though you don't know exactly why.

FRANK
Can't you get away from it?

HOWARD
You try hard enough. I've seen young gentlemen go down there for a few quick dollars; they're still there for all I know: drunkards, gamblers, sensualists, too depraved even to try to get out of the muck and the misery.

FRANK
I'm surprised that loneliness can do this to a man.

HOWARD
That haunting feeling of being out of your own element makes you do drastic things. If you don't feel suited to a semi-barbaric civilization, you adapt yourself to it by living like the natives.
And so our ambitious youngster becomes semi-barbaric. I guess being barbaric isn't too bad for the barbarians, but for a civilized person, it must really be tragic.

You can't even dream how repulsive it is until you've seen it as I have.

I can't imagine that all men under those conditions rot that way.

Not all do, but you'd be surprised at the number that do become like animals, at least to some degree. The misery makes the weaker ones fall while the stronger survive. But, even for them, it isn't easy.

What about the fallen, can't they ever reclaim themselves?

You've heard about the old mining camps on payday, haven't you? Well, to an even greater degree, money has no value for them, except to give them a rousing time as long as it holds out.

What a vicious circle!

And I almost got caught in it myself. Fifteen years of Hell, Frank; I shudder to think of it.
the lure of quivira

FRANK
Couldn't you tell that Brazil wasn't doing you any good? It seems to me that you could have come home when you saw you didn't like it.

HOWARD
I knew something was torturing me, but for a long time I did not dare keep still long enough to find out exactly what the trouble was. When I finally did face the facts, I was too involved to get out of there right away.

FRANK
A good thing you had a little money saved.

HOWARD
Through no fault of my own, I had squandered very little of my salary compared to the rest of the men. Not that I was any better than they were, but at least I was interested in my work. That fact seems to have saved me.

FRANK
You can consider yourself lucky.

HOWARD
Still, I ask myself why I saved myself—only for complete boredom and dissatisfaction.

FRANK
I should think you'd enjoy your wealth.

HOWARD
Don't think I haven't tried, but I'm still lonesome. I left the woman I loved to make my fortune and now she's married. In fact, she's got a daughter I wouldn't mind taking out. The guy she married is just a cabbie, but he's got more to make him happy than I have.
FRANK
It's ironic, isn't it, Howard? You came to this class reunion a wealthy man. Others look at you with admiration and envy, canonizing you as the most successful of the class, and you consider yourself the least fortunate of them all: you're at once the most envied and the most envious.

HOWARD
You can say that again! I envy every man with a good wife and a fine family.

At the conclusion of the dialogue, Ray, who had been listening intently, drinks down the rest of his beer, and beckons to Ollie to come over to him. Ollie approaches him.

RAY
Hey, gorgeous, if my girl is still willing to forgive me, I think I'll be drinking just plain old beer the rest of my life; the hell with champagne.

OLLIE
Don't tell me you're not going to Arabia now.

RAY
Nope, if the great big U. S. can't support me and my family, I can't see what good going to tiny Arabia can do.

OLLIE
Well, just remember, if you end up broke in a few years, don't be mooching beers off me.

RAY
(Leaving hurriedly) Worry about nothing.

FRANK
(After Ray has left) What a performance! You almost had me in tears.
HOWARD
I suppose I did destroy his illusion of a quaint Oriental paradise.

FRANK
I've got to hand it to you; you were pretty convincing.

HOWARD
Maybe because there was some truth to it; you see, after I left college, I received an offer to go to Brazil for one of those big coffee companies; I thought it over a while and almost reached the point of cancelling my marriage. But Frances talked me out of it and I stayed in the States.

FRANK
(Glances toward the door) Here comes the one who could have ruined your little melodrama, Howard. You'd have looked pretty silly if your wife had walked in during your recital of the woeful life of a lonely bachelor.

HOWARD
I expected her; she's been due for an hour, but she hasn't been on time in her life, and I didn't expect to see the habit broken now. You know, Frank, I was the one who wanted her to wait for me before our marriage, but since then it seems I do all the waiting. (Jokingly) Maybe that boy had the right idea after all. (Wife comes to the table)

CURTAIN
I have a magic word. It is her name,
She who has my heart
Stolen from me. Nor seems the world the same
Since we met. To part
From her gave silent grief beyond control,
Yet, it happened not,
For each moment with her lives in my soul,
In my every thought.

I breathe her name when trouble bears me down.
Care is put to flight,
My creased brow yields up its dark’ning frown
To her name’s sweet light.
I speak her name; it conjures me a dream
Whence flee I from doubt.
In quiet pools there lies life’s angry stream,
Soft green banks about.

I shout her name into the raging gale
Of hate, and I know
For me this mighty word shall never fail
For love slays hate. So,
Triumphantly I say her name, though she
Knows not of my joy,
Nor of my wild love, for she thinks of me
As “just another boy.”
I met her, and suddenly the world
Stood still and watched, as in her
All goodness and truth and beauty came to be.
Love's dead phrases leapt again to life, and
Their life was she, for she is their presence.

She spoke to me, and suddenly all nature
Stood still and listened, as in her voice
All sweetness and comfort and joy came to be
In a symphony beyond composer's work
Or nature's, for her voice shames both.

She left me, and suddenly my heart
Stood still and grieved as with her
All light and grace and pleasure went away
And left but gloom and shadow. What she took
From me I never had, for she was a yearning.

I think of her, and suddenly my soul
Stands still and ponders, as her form
Comes welling forth within my heart to bring
With it all the wonderful things she is.
Those moments spent with her sing in my soul,
Locked in love's memory.
She comes to me often, late at night,
She, all fairness crowned in softest gold.
I stand beside her, and, just as before,
Unspeaking we walk hand in hand across
The fresh and grassy sweetness of the fields,
Up the path that winds around the hill
To end beneath the great oak at the top.
This is the place—our place—where we can sit
And look out on the sweeping sea of grass,
Of furrowed fields, tall corn, and distant hills
Rising proud to meet a distant sky.
The tiny buildings of the farm are man’s,
They and winding walls of servile stone.
The rest is grass and God.

We sit together, sheltered in the shade,
Think the thoughts and dream the dreams of youth
And talk of youth’s great hopes and fears and joys.
A moment’s silence, then, as if by plan,
She turns to me, and I turn to her,
My hand tangles in her spun-gold hair
As I clasp her to me and she laughs
At my clumsy strength and lifts her face
Offers me the sweet softness of her lips.
I bend to her and my lips seek hers.
With that kiss reality's gates swing wide!
I am in blackness, covered over with night,
And she, sweet dream, has slipped away again.

I sit now, in the blackness of my room,
Feeling weak and empty and a little sick
With deep sorrow, unrequited love,
And mutter brokenly, with bitter tears,
"I thought—this time—that it was really she."
I lie awake, soul-weary, through the night,
And grieve. The winds outside caress the pines
Which murmur softly, "She . . . she . . . she . . ."
It is my firm belief that every individual in this turbulent world has one common interest and that is his own self interest—self interest taken not in the selfish sense but under the broader aspect of interest in one's own being. Show me the man who at one time or another has not gazed at a photograph or other mirrored image of himself with an adversely critical or sometimes an admiring eye. In like manner it is almost impossible to find a man who when quoted will admit he had been quoted exactly and completely. We all strive for recognition in our best light although we prefer our best to be thought of as our most average and off-hand creation.

I for one am extremely interested in myself, in my opinion, and in my likes and dislikes. I am equally certain that no one else is interested enough in my observations on life to scribble them down for posterity; but, like most other people, I desire to see myself on paper if only for an audience of one.

I am a male, a Caucasian, an Anglo-Saxon Irishman of ten and nine years, tall in stature, ordinary in visage and mildly explosive in temperament. Unlike some men of my national background I have a profound distaste for hard liquor and burning tobacco in any form. I love God, my country, all mankind, good clothes, apple pie, vanilla ice cream and blond women, in that order.
The first two loves need no explanation: without my God I would have no reason for being and no end to attain; without my country I would have no rights, no freedoms in this world.

The third love I think needs some explanation. The Bible exhorts us to “Love thy neighbor as thy self.” I can truthfully say that in my very few years of dealing with others I have yet to meet the man I could not like. I admit that there are some individuals for whom I hold very little respect; some of these men I think should command my respect purely out of deference to their position of authority. This I realize is a grievous fault on my part and one of which I am not proud.

The remaining loves are purely appetitive drives and of secondary importance, not worth the extra effort on my part to explain.

In regard to my opinions on certain questions of the day—well it must be said that they change from time to time, but then again that’s why we have elections every four years.

I, like most other people, dislike to be referred to as an average person with an average intellect and taste; but in all honesty I must place myself with the Jones’, the Browns’, the common folk—the backbone of our land without whom the extraordinary person would cease to be extraordinary and the exceptional would become very ordinary.
Leaves, many leaves, are falling to earth, yellow and dead. Only the wind strives to give them life again by a forced motion. It stirs them, surrounds them, and desires with a frenzied desire that they dance! And they begin to dance, a dance macabre, And they dance from the rising of the sun until its setting.

Despite their dryness now, their jaundiced, wrinkled faces, They dance, they leap excitedly, But with a grace, as turbulent as children at play. They group themselves, separate, without hurting one another; Light, without desperate exclamations, complaints, without tears. Their lives that were beautiful, ugly disappear without a whimper! And they dance, as if unseen by any eye; inspiring pity, The greatest sorrow of life.

The oak that was the shade for my window, That robbed me of sunlight that I might forget, Continues sad, bared of its rich, verdant mantle; And on seeing it in tatters at its feet, remains lofty and trim, Giving us a great, noble example of courage.
the dancing leaves

But the tattered, yellowed pieces of its cloak continue dancing,
Revolving, exhibiting a forced joy.
Wearied, they lean against the bosom that brought them death.

Some, those that died young,
That in their smallness desired to be great, to be beautiful leaves,
Even these face death with courage.
They leap, ascend high into the air,
And drift to fall somewhere far away,
So that no one might know of their anguish.

Yet, there are still those that were always happy;
They too are falling.
These that were proud of their youth and beauty,
Admired by all who passed;
Those that were overpowered by the adventure of living rebuke themselves,
Dancing face to the ground.
For them, death seems to come the hardest.

The leaves that never matured,
That remained lodged in the narrow crevices of the trunk,
That were subject to the tyranny of the schoolboys tearing them apart,
That spent their lives seeing how high they could climb,
They dance too, with a joy, with enthusiasm,
For now they think they are free, they are independent.

Some dance happily, others sadly;
Some dance clinging to each other, others alone, but they all dance. 
They all die dancing and leaping. 
It is a macabre ball. Impressive. 
Here is death dancing before my eyes. 
Now they surge the last surge of life; 
Soon fall cold and damp to earth. 
When the wind stops, 
When the infernal music ends, 
When the wind goes to its rest, 
They will be at peace, they will die the death. 

Another wind will come, another dance of leaves will take place. 
Yes, for those that come will dance as these have danced. 
Other leaves will come, another life will come. 
Life will go on; the wind will return with its music. 
Then there will be a dance of the leaves I shall not see.
This is Colcestershire. I am an officer of the law and this is my place of employment.

It was about half an hour after tea when a rather flustered butler from the mansion on the hill appeared in my office. We talked quietly for a while and on his way out he told me Lord Reginald had been murdered.

I was soon riding along the quiet country roads to the Victorian mansion which Lord Reginald’s grandfather had built. The grandfather had been a great favorite at Victoria’s court and she was frequently amused at his jokes.

The countryside was quiet and English, the trees bowing softly in the wind, the brooks babbling idiotically, and the rock walls separating manse from manse. It was a day in which Wordsworth would have delighted.

As I approached the house on the hill, a corpulent chap with the face of a pig hurried toward me. Actually he was moving rather slowly, but he thought he was running.

“Rather nasty business up at the house.”

“So I heard.”

We walked in silence into the large hall, filled with little mementos of the family’s bad taste. The floor was black and red marble arranged like some out-size checkerboard, and in the center stood a tall, vampiric woman, swather in black.

She minced toward me.
“Husband’s dead. Servants moved him. Spoiled tea . . . terribly.”

Something about her statement bothered me. She was too demonstrative. Mentally I thumbed through my notes on her. There was little scandal but there had been that bit about the actor. He was thin and brooding, always in black and ideal as Hamlet. She was president of the L.S.P.U.B. (Local Society for the Preservation of the Unadulterated Bard). It was a movement which originated in the last century; Bowdler decided to publish an expurgated Shakespeare and certain women would have none of it. Perhaps it was only natural that there would be talk about the president of such an organization and Hamlet.

I left her in the hall and entered the study where the remaining members of the household were shivering in the glow of the fire. A pudgy business man, chewing gum, slapped his thigh noisily. Obviously American. Across from him a primly dressed woman, her hair tightly in a bun, smiled shyly at the joke. She seemed terribly frustrated. Obviously the sister of the deceased. And, finally, a young man, tennis racquet in hand, bounced nervously about the room.

“How did it happen?” was my first question.

The old maid replied, twitching nervously.

“He was asleep in his room, napping, for about an hour before tea. But you won’t say he was napping, will you? It would make him appear so dissipated. Most people sleep at night, you know.”

“Yes, but how did he die?”

The American, holding his gum in his fist, said, “Well, friend, I think it was poison. We found a tiny bottle ...a...a”

“Vial.”

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“Most murders are. The police back in the States would have the murderer by now, by now. Right, May?”

He nudged the old maid playfully and laughed raucously. I felt nauseous.

“You have been most cooperative and there is only one thing more. Where were you at the time of the murder?”

The athlete motioned toward the tennis court. The American said he had been in conference with the wife of the murdered man. The old maid, perched nervously on the edge of the chair, began to speak, then blushed, and finally rushed from the room.

There were only two suspects, the wife and the sister. Butlers in England wouldn’t think of killing their social superiors.

For the moment I placed the sister out of mind and called in my old friend, a retired mortician, to examine the body. Of choice he went to work in the cellar, a place where his father before him had felt most at home when on the job. My friend had resisted the march of medicine and still chose the cellar.

While waiting for him I browsed through the library. It was just as the grandfather of Reginald had arranged it. Books by females on one side; males, on the other. Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning shared a table in the center. The library was a rather quaint reminder of a more proper day, the day of the Empire.

I was roused from nostalgia by the entrance of my friend, who was chortling with glee.

“Hen’s bane—that’s it.”

It rang a familiar bell and then I remembered that wretched instructor of English in prep school. “Hen’s bane” had taught English for a time. I began to peruse the books of the library.
Late that evening I called the family together. They assembled quickly and soon I was ready to make my announcement. I opened the volume of plays before me and began to read:

Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,
And in the porches of my ear did pour
The leperous distilment; . . .

"Hamlet, Act I, Scene V."

"Correct, my lady, but why did you dispose of your husband in such an obvious way?"

She was hurt by the word "obvious"; apparently she had thought it quite clever. She motioned feebly about the room. Her voice was hollow as she told of her husband's desire to stay here and of her's to leave.

"I've sold the place to this American and at last I'll be free. My Hamlet would have appreciated the whole affair."

"Thank you. But there is one thing more. Why did you, Lady May, leave this afternoon?"

"I was packing my bags to run away with the American. I didn't want anyone to know."

As the murderess left to get her coat, May and the American stood at the door of the living room, looking at the house, their house. The American popped his gum and said:

"It'll make a magnificent roller rink, eh, May?"

May nodded in delight and I left with my captive.