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PRIZE WINNING PLAY
The Young Saviour
PAUL F. FERGUSON '65
CAST OF CHARACTERS
Dr. Horace Kelaghan . .President of Brenton University
Mr. Daniel Matthews ..........Young English Professor
Peter Piaggio .................Student Agitator
Miss Dawson ..................Dr. Kelaghan's Secretary
The scene is the office of Dr. Horace Kelaghan, president of Brenton University. Voices singing "We Shall Overcome" are heard. Dr. Kelaghan is standing at his window watching the student demonstration below. Miss Dawson, his secretary, enters carrying some documents.

DAWSON
Did you call for me, Dr. Kelaghan?

KELAGHAN
Yes I did. Have those papers concerning the Piaggio boy been sent up yet?

DAWSON
No, Dr. But they should be in some time this morning.

KELAGHAN
Fine, Miss Dawson. Would you bring them to me the moment they come in?

DAWSON
Certainly Dr.

KELAGHAN
Thank you.

DAWSON
By the way, Mr. Matthews is outside. Will you see him?

KELAGHAN
Yes. Send him in.

DAWSON
As she turns to go, Dr. Kelaghan remembers some letters on his desk and calls her back. Oh, would you please have these letters typed some time today?

DAWSON
Certainly sir.

She exits. A few seconds later Mr. Matthews, a young professor, enters.
WINNERS IN THE ALEMBIC WRITING CONTEST, 1965

PRIZE WINNING POEM ............... groves of academe
March, 1965 — TERRENCE DOODY '65

PRIZE WINNING ESSAY ............... Proliferation of Matter in the Comic and the Absurd
December, 1964 — PAUL FERGUSON '65

PRIZE WINNING STORY ............... The Still Requiem
March, 1965 — GREGORY PRIOR '65

PRIZE WINNING PLAY ............... The Young Saviour
May, 1965 — PAUL FERGUSON '65
KELAGHAN
Come in, Mr. Matthews. Please sit down.

MATTHEWS
Thank you, sir.

Both he and Dr. Kelaghan sit.

KELAGHAN
Now, what can I do for you? I assume you are here to speak about the student demonstrations.

MATTHEWS
Yes sir. I would like to ask a favor of you.

KELAGHAN
If we can accommodate you within reason, we shall. What is it?

MATTHEWS
I realize your difficult position, but I would like you to meet once more with Peter Piaggio.

KELAGHAN
I am afraid that such a meeting would serve no purpose.

MATTHEWS
I really don’t see how you can afford not to meet with him again, sir.

KELAGHAN
Mr. Piaggio and myself have met three times already this week and have solved nothing.

MATTHEWS
But sir, the students have lost a full week of classes now, and if these demonstrations continue, Brenton might just as well close her doors.

KELAGHAN
Would you really like to see that?

MATTHEWS
No sir, I wouldn’t. I’ve grown rather fond of the University in my two years here.

KELAGHAN
Well then, why do you persist in supporting this movement? You realize, of course, that the only reason the demonstrations have continued is because you have given them your backing.

MATTHEWS
Yes sir. I realize that.

KELAGHAN
Then why have you allowed yourself to be seduced into joining Mr. Piaggio’s questionable cause?

MATTHEWS
Because I believe very strongly in the freedom of the student to voice his opinions in the political sphere.

The Alembic
KELAGHAN
I have no quarrel with that belief.

MATTHEWS
And I believe that the individual student should be allowed to actively support the candidate of his choice.

KELAGHAN
And I have no quarrel with that either.

MATTHEWS
Then why won't you give the students what they ask?

KELAGHAN
Because, Mr. Matthews, there is a great deal more to this matter than the mere question of student freedom. There is first Mr. Piaggio who has conducted himself throughout this situation as a rabble rouser and petty dictator. It appears to me that his motives run much deeper than this so-called student freedom which he says he advocates.

MATTHEWS
That seems a rather hard thing to say.

KELAGHAN
Perhaps. But there also remains the fact that the students of Brenton have never been denied the right to exercise their freedom.

MATTHEWS
They are being denied those rights now. That is why they are demonstrating.

KELAGHAN
The administration is perfectly willing to grant some of their requests, but some of the things that Piaggio has convinced them they need are detrimental to the university.

MATTHEWS
Detrimental? Dr. Kelaghan, on the contrary. Political activity is an integral part of education. It gives the students a practical application of their constitutional rights. I don’t see how you can ignore it.

KELAGHAN
I am not ignoring it. We are willing to condone more extensive political activity on campus. But if we allow it to the extreme Piaggio asks, it will soon interfere with many of the courses we offer.

MATTHEWS
But sir, the things the students ask for are extra-curricular, outside of class and study time. Surely you can’t say that these activities would interfere any more than the football team, or even the debating society.
KELAGHAN
Exactly the opposite is true. Football and debating, as you say, do not interfere, but precisely because they directly involve relatively few people and are, for the most part, non-controversial. Debating is an educational exercise, while football provides a means of physical improvement for the players and relaxation for the spectators.

MATTHEWS
Don't you consider political activity an educational exercise?

KELAGHAN
In its place, Mr. Matthews. In its place. The question is precisely where that place is and to what extent such activity is to be conducted. As it stands here, the activities requested are somewhat extreme.

MATTHEWS
I think you are wrong, sir. On the contrary, these students are merely showing an interest in their government and in the rights of their fellow man.

KELAGHAN
They have indeed shown their interest as well as a willingness to learn, and we commend them for it. But in the process they have made a bigger mistake than ever by hurting the institution that is trying to give them the education they seek.

MATTHEWS
And how have they done that?

KELAGHAN
Supporting our educational standards we have our public image. These demonstrations have seriously damaged that image through press, radio, and television coverage; and since Mr. Piaggio has gained your approval, I am afraid that the damage done is more extensive than it might have been had the students demonstrated alone.

MATTHEWS
I really don't see that.

KELAGHAN
Then I will elaborate. Three hundred students have been arrested since last Thursday. Fifty or sixty faculty members have been hissed and booed by the students. At this moment eight hundred students are marching around Perkins Hall preventing the other nine hundred from going to class.

MATTHEWS
The hissing and booing, I will admit, was an unfortunate incident. But it was proved that most of those arrested were not even students here.
KELAGHAN
In the world outside that is of little consequence. People naturally associate the arrests with Brenton University. Meanwhile Peter Piaggio, the young saviour who is going to lead everyone into the land of milk and honey, stands on an automobile roof before the administration building and proclaims that “we will stay here until the sky falls.” Now what parent in his right mind wants to send his child to a bedlam like that?

MATTHEWS
I think you are exaggerating, Dr.

KELAGHAN
Am I? Have you seen the newspapers and television? They have hailed Peter Piaggio as a second Christ, while Daniel Matthews has been dubbed his John the Baptist. And who are Dr. Horace Kelaghan and the rest of the administration? We are the Judases, the Pilates, and the Herods.

MATTHEWS
I’m sure that the people realize there is a great deal of untruth in the newspaper accounts.

KELAGHAN
Mr. Matthews, we have not had an application for admission in three days. Miss Dawson is busy typing a form letter to send to the few hundred people who have asked that their applications be withdrawn. These are the people who read the newspapers and watch television.

MATTHEWS
(Standing)
I am sorry you feel that way sir. But Piaggio is sincere, even though he may be a little crude and arrogant. And if you will just see him one more time, I think the entire matter can be solved.

KELAGHAN
(Standing)
I am afraid a fourth consultation is out of the question. I have tried to come to terms with him, to meet him half way, as it were, but he is obstinate and wants everything or nothing.

MATTHEWS
Perhaps you haven’t gone far enough.

KELAGHAN
I have gone as far as I can. I can go no further.

(Pause)
I am going to ask you, Mr. Matthews, to place the good of the university above all else and discontinue your support of this student campaign for the time being.
MATTHEWS
No! I cannot, sir.

KELAGHAN
Why not? The students are behind you, not Piaggio. They would return to their studies in a minute if you asked them.

MATTHEWS
I am behind Piaggio, and firmly support those rights requested.

KELAGHAN
But this is for the good of the students and the university. Have you no concern for them?

MATTHEWS
That is precisely why I must continue supporting this movement, because I am concerned.

KELAGHAN
Even if the cause is tainted?

MATTHEWS
But the cause is not tainted.

KELAGHAN
Not tainted? Do you recall the arrests of the non-student demonstrators we mentioned a few moments ago?

MATTHEWS
Yes, of course.

KELAGHAN
Do you recall who those people were?

MATTHEWS
Not off hand.

KELAGHAN
They were members of the Brenton Youth Movement, a Communist sympathizer group.

MATTHEWS
That was unfortunate, but they aren’t with the demonstrators now.

KELAGHAN
Are you certain?
(Pause)
And do you think that Piaggio didn’t know of their presence?

MATTHEWS
I don’t see how he could. And you have no proof that he did.

KELAGHAN
Indeed I don’t. Only a suspicion.

MATTHEWS
You can’t convict on a suspicion.

The Alembic
KELAGHAN
No you can't. But it seems you might have thought twice about this group being present.

MATTHEWS
As I say sir, it was an unfortunate occurrence that has only accidental bearing on the campus situation.

KELAGHAN
(Pause)
You will not change your mind?

MATTHEWS
I cannot sir.

KELAGHAN
(Pause)
Very well, then. I hesitate to do this. You have demonstrated your value to the English department, and I had personally hoped you would remain here for some time. In short, we cannot afford to lose you. But the university must come first. Therefore, Mr. Matthews, I must ask you either to drop your support of this cause or submit your resignation.

MATTHEWS
What?

Dr. Kelaghan resumes his seat at the desk and shuffles some papers.

KELAGHAN
I dislike proposing such alternatives, but we seem to have reached an impasse.

MATTHEWS
But sir, I don't wish to resign. I wish to continue here.

KELAGHAN
And I wish you to continue here. We cannot afford your loss, but we can afford bad publicity even less. Consequently we must ask you to choose one of these alternatives before any further damage is done.

MATTHEWS
How can I compromise my principles? My students would lose respect for me and I would never be able to face another class.

KELAGHAN
You just don't realize, do you? You don't realize that Piaggio is using you, that his student freedom campaign is not for student freedom at all. It is for the destruction of the university and you along with it.

MATTHEWS
I'm certain you are wrong, sir. And if you will just bring him in here, I'm sure I can prove it to you.
It has proved useless so far.

Perhaps we can convince him to accept a compromise.

I seriously doubt it.

But we could try, just once more.

There is a knock on the door. Dr. Kelaghan says “Come in,” and Miss Dawson enters with a handful of papers. She sees that Mr. Matthews is still there and apologizes for the intrusion.

Oh excuse me, Dr. I didn’t know Mr. Matthews was still here. I’ll come back.

No no, Miss Dawson. What is it?

These papers were just sent in.

Kelaghan examines the papers carefully, raising his eyebrows as he notes several alarming points.

Mr. Matthews, I have here some records which might change your mind.

He starts to hand them to Matthews, but suddenly a thought crosses his mind and he thinks better of it.

No, wait. I think they might be more effective if Mr. Piaggio were here. Please call him in.

But what are they, sir?

You will find out in due time. Tell Piaggio . . . tell him . . . tell him I shall consider his demands once again.

The Alembic
MATTHEWS
Yes, sir.

Matthews exits. While he is gone, Kelaghan arranges the papers before him on the desk. Matthews re-enters accompanied by Piaggio.

KELAGHAN
Come in, Piaggio. Please sit down.

PIAGGIO
I'd rather stand, if you don't mind.

KELAGHAN
As you wish.

Mr. Matthews has asked me to speak with you once again in the hope that we may find a solution to the problem at hand.

PIAGGIO
Thank you, Dr. I am pleased that you demonstrate such foresight.

KELAGHAN
It is more a matter of practicality.

PIAGGIO
Then I assume you are ready to meet my demands.

The Alembic

KELAGHAN
I am prepared to discuss them.

PIAGGIO
Nobly said. You know what we want, but for the sake of formality, I will enumerate the demands once more.

(Takes a piece of paper from his pocket.)

I believe you have a copy.

KELAGHAN
Yes, I do.

(Reading)

"The students of Brenton University, in the true spirit of democracy, humbly petition the University . . ." that is you, Dr. . . . "that the following rights be granted: that the students be allowed to actively conduct, on this campus, political campaigns for local, state, and national elections; that the students be allowed to conduct rallies, marches, and demonstrations for national and international issues, such as civil rights and nuclear disarmament; that the students be allowed to welcome speakers on this campus, no matter what the political affiliation of these speakers, to lecture on any topic they choose."

He folds the paper and returns it to his pocket.
These are our demands, pure and simple.

MATTHEWS
The requests are simple, sir, and very reasonable.

KELAGHAN
They do sound so. But tell me, Mr. Piaggio, exactly what is the nature of these rallies and demonstrations you wish? Will they be similar to those that are being carried on now, outside my window?

PIAGGIO
Similar? Yes. Guaranteed by the constitution, the right of assembly.

KELAGHAN
I see. In other words you would have me assume that students working for, say, a ban the bomb movement would be allowed to march around campus?

PIAGGIO
Yes.

KELAGHAN
With placards and signs?

PIAGGIO
With placards and signs.

KELAGHAN
And these students, for the same cause, mind you, would be allowed to sit on the floors in the halls singing "We Shall Overcome"?

MATTHEWS
Now wait a moment, Dr. He didn't . . .

KELAGHAN
Please, Mr. Matthews. Allow Mr. Piaggio to answer.

PIAGGIO
(Pause)
If the occasion ever arose when such activity would become necessary, yes.

KELAGHAN
Hm. Very interesting.

PIAGGIO
Mind you. I didn't imply that we intend to stage sit downs all the time.

KELAGHAN
No. No, you didn't. I did.
(Pause)
Do you intend to set up occasional pickets as you did here to keep students out of class who are aloof to your cause?

PIAGGIO
I resent the implications in that question.

The Alembic
MATTHEWS
Sir, I see no reason for this. You are attempting to brand him as a mere troublemaker.

KELAGHAN
No, Mr. Matthews. He has branded himself. Well, Piaggio, what is your answer?

PIAGGIO
The question doesn’t need answering.

KELAGHAN
Mr. Piaggio, I am asking these questions for the purpose of gaining information. The administration must know precisely what the students want before any action can be taken. Now, will you kindly answer?

PIAGGIO
(Pause)
We want the right to disagree. If that involves picketing, we will picket.

KELAGHAN
Even if it infringes upon the rights of others?

MATTHEWS
But that is not the point.

KELAGHAN
That is precisely the point. How can you advocate freedom while you are intimidating and suppressing people who disagree with you?
(Pause)
No answer? Let us continue then. You mentioned that you wish to welcome speakers, I believe you stated it, no matter what political affiliations they may have. Would you mind elaborating?

PIAGGIO
Of course not. I believe that the students should be able to hear as many divergent opinions on various topics as they can. This would enable them to see the merits and demerits of each. Consequently, it would seem fair to me to allow speakers labelled pink and red on campus so that the students could hear exactly what they have to say without the prejudicial censorship of the administration.

KELAGHAN
Hm. Such liberality would seem to be slightly imprudent.

MATTHEWS
But it is educational.

KELAGHAN
That is questionable. What do we do if we entertain more Communists than anything else? And then there is always the question whether such speakers would have
anything intellectual to offer, or whether their appearance would be strictly for propaganda purposes. Certain of our patrons and trustees would look distastefully on such seeming favoritism.

**PIAGGIO**
I say to hell with the trustees. The students are the important ones to consider.

**KELAGHAN**
We have to consider both because both are a part of this school. Both come under the concept of rights.

**MATTHEWS**
Sir, I am sure that Peter didn't mean . . .

**PIAGGIO**
I meant exactly what I said. It seems to me that you would be completely unfair if you did not allow anyone who had anything vital to express to appear on campus. That is bigotry, Dr. Kelaghan, and is in strict violation of the constitution, freedom of expression.

**MATTHEWS**
I'm not exactly certain that you are completely correct, Peter. At least not in this context.

**PIAGGIO**
(Warily)
What do you mean?

**MATTHEWS**
I am saying that you don't mean, by advocating these rights, that they will be carried to such an extreme so as to destroy the university.

**PIAGGIO**
Why . . . uh . . . no. Of course not.

**KELAGHAN**
(Pause)
Well, now. We have your demands: the right to conduct political rallies, sponsor controversial speakers, stage freedom marches and ban the bomb demonstrations . . . in short . . . the right to turn Brenton University into a three ring circus.

**PIAGGIO**
(Angered)
Are you trying to ridicule my cause?

**MATTHEWS**
(Restraining Piaggio)
Calm down, Peter.

**KELAGHAN**
Your cause? Your cause, is it? A few moments ago it was the students cause. Pray tell, Mr. Piaggio, whose cause is this?

**MATTHEWS**
Excuse me, sir. But I do wish you would try . . .

*The Alembic*
KELAGHAN
... to be fair. I know. I am trying to be fair if Mr. Piaggio will just cooperate a little more.

Kelaghan shifts the papers on his desk, apparently studying them.

Tell us, Mr. Piaggio. How did these demonstrations begin?

PIAGGIO
Well ... a few students petitioned the administration for the right to conduct a rally for the gubernatorial elections and were refused. We tried again, several times, but were refused every time. We finally decided that something had to be done. So we got several students and some faculty support and you know the rest.

KELAGHAN
Yes, I know the rest. But where did it really start? Tell Mr. Matthews. I am sure he would like to know.

MATTHEWS
Know what, sir?

PIAGGIO
I don't know what you mean.

KELAGHAN
I mean the beginning ... the very beginning.

PIAGGIO
I ... I told you how it happened.

KELAGHAN
I had hoped you would be more cooperative. Mr. Piaggio, have you ever heard of an organization known as the Brenton Youth Movement for Peace and Freedom?

PIAGGIO
Yes.

KELAGHAN
About a month ago, Mr. Piaggio, didn't you petition the administration to allow you to conduct a nuclear disarmament rally on campus?

PIAGGIO
Well ... yes, I did.

MATTHEWS
I don't understand.

KELAGHAN
You will, Mr. Matthews. The request was denied primarily because of university regulations. But it was subsequently discovered that this rally was to be conducted in conjunction with this Brenton Youth Movement. And we also discovered that you, Mr. Piaggio, are a dues-paying member of that organization.
PIAGGIO

(Pause)
All right. I can't argue with the records. But that has nothing to do with these demonstrations.

KELAGHAN
Doesn't it? I also have in my possession, if you care to look at them, sworn statements from at least a dozen undergraduates stating that they heard you swear, after your petition was denied, to . . .

(He reads from one of the statements.)
". . . pull something off that will blow this campus sky high."

MATTHEWS
May I see those sir?

KELAGHAN
Certainly.

(He hands them to Matthews who proceeds to read them.)

PIAGGIO
They are lies.

KELAGHAN
That is a possibility. However, we also have disciplinary records from two other universities which you attended stating that you were asked to withdraw for actively participating in political activities not in the best interests of the various institutions. There are also police records revealing three arrests, once for striking a police officer who was attempting to control a civil rights demonstration, and twice for inciting a riot during, of all things, a pacifist rally.

MATTHEWS
Is this true?

PIAGGIO
(Talking to Kelaghan)
They're all phony. You probably manufactured them yourself.

KELAGHAN
Mr. Matthews can verify that I saw these records for the first time just a few moments ago.

MATTHEWS
I am afraid he's right, Peter. If what Dr. Kelaghan has here is accurate, then the situation must be viewed in a different light. Are these records true?

(Silence)

KELAGHAN
Are they true, Mr. Piaggio?

PIAGGIO
(Pause)
Yes . . . yes they are.
MATTHEWS
Well, I don't quite know what to say.
(Pause)
Why? Why did you start this upheaval?

PIAGGIO
Because the Brenton Movement suggested it as the best way of becoming influential on this campus. But I wouldn't expect you to understand, you and the rest of your bourgeois bastards.

MATTHEWS
I don't understand, Peter. Do you mean that the only reason you are doing this is because some youth group told you to do it?

PIAGGIO
That is just about right.

MATTHEWS
And you thought that by destroying a university's prestige you could help the cause of freedom?

PIAGGIO
You make it sound so gruesome.

MATTHEWS
And exactly where did I fit into this plot?

PIAGGIO
I needed someone the students respected, someone they would follow, someone from the faculty who would make the administration look like a group of dictators.

MATTHEWS
So you used me.

PIAGGIO
Yes, I used you. You were the young, idealistic professor, the most . . . how shall I say it? . . . gullible.

MATTHEWS
I believed in you and your principles, and you used me as an instrument of destruction.

PIAGGIO
It could have been anyone, but the students would follow you sooner than they would me. Matthews turns away from Piaggio disgusted and speechless. There is a brief silence.

KELAGHAN
I think it would be best, Piaggio, if you left now. You realize, of course, that you will be asked to withdraw.

PIAGGIO
Gladly. I don't think I could stand another minute in this place. The whole damn bunch of you make me sick.
He exits, slamming the door. Matthews, still holding the papers, stares after him. Dr. Kelaghan goes over to look out the window. Voices outside are heard chanting “freedom.” Matthews turns to Kelaghan.

MATTHEWS
Doctor?

KELAGHAN
(Musing)
Yes?

MATTHEWS
I... would like to apologize for the damage I’ve done.

KELAGHAN
(Facing Matthews)
I don’t think the damages are irreparable. You should have little trouble straightening things out.

MATTHEWS
I’ll speak to the students, sir. I’m sure they will resume classes gladly when they learn the truth.

KELAGHAN
Surprisingly, students do have a tendency to follow the truth.

MATTHEWS
And I will hand in my resignation this afternoon. I doubt if my remaining here would do much good after all the bad publicity I’ve caused.

KELAGHAN
There is no need of that. Students also tend to be very forgiving, especially toward someone they respect.

MATTHEWS
Thank you, sir.

He turns to leave, then turns back.

Is there anything in particular you would like me to say to them?

KELAGHAN
No. You might mention that the administration will meet with class representatives to discuss their requests later this week. But I think you will know what to say when you get out there.

Matthews exits. Dr. Kelaghan watches out the window as the curtain closes.

The Alembic
The Crime
By Peter J. McGuire '65

George Benedict had been sitting quietly for two hours working with his slides. He had dis­covered a few months ago that if he took certain transparencies of animals from his large collection of such shots and arranged them in a cer­tain order, they would, when he flashed them on a screen, tell a story. This time, the two hours before Helen was awake, he had found was the safest to work on his project. If Helen saw him she would keep demanding to know where he took his pictures; game was scarce in the nearby woods and Helen, an avid hunter, sometimes went weeks without finding anything. She wouldn't find his place he decided; it was his secret, perhaps his only secret. Helen wanted to know everything and she usually got what she wanted. She wouldn't find this out though. He smiled.

The creaking of a bed in the quiet house an­nounced Helen's incipient awakening. He esti­mated that he had ten more minutes before she came bounding down the stairs full of her Saturday morning energy. Slowly and meticu­lously he gathered the transparencies into their proper en­velopes wondering why he had married Helen, or anyone for that matter. All he wanted was the time to pursue his hobbies in peace and to get along with people. It was a tribute to him that in spite of his natural reserve, he was on better terms with his neighbors than his more aggressive wife.

Of the women he might have married, he re­flexed. Helen had been the worst possible choice. As he looked at her now, after ten years of mar­riage, she was not what would be called a desirable person. She had long, curly, dirty-blond hair, heavy features, and a shapeless figure usually muffled in the boxy tweed clothes she favored. She said she was a “sensible” person; he supposed she was. She took care of him and of the house and assured that they were not cheated by the grocer, the neighbors, or the public utilities. Lately though, he had begun to wonder if they were all
as anxious to cheat them as she thought they were. He had even gone as far as to protest mildly. But she had swept him contemptuously aside. As he thought back, he could not find the time when she had not swept him aside. Even their getting married seemed to have been her idea. Oh, well, he had learned to duck away from her rages, waiting until she had exhausted her great storm of energy and venom, then going back to do what he had been doing. If only he could divorce her, he thought, this country life would be wonderful. But he had no grounds, and Helen would fight a divorce tooth and nail. He could only wait and hope for the best.

He was awakened from his reverie by the clunking of her heavy shoes on the stairs. It used to be “clunk-creak” as each of the stairs squeaked under her weight, but in the six months they had lived in the house, Helen had repaired many things, the stairs among them. If only she had stayed with carpentry instead of becoming a hunter, he thought wryly. “But we are in the country and one of us has to be the country squire,” she had snapped. The last few weeks she had been arguing that he should join her. She entered the room and he braced himself for the assault. It came in full force.

“You let me sleep too late,” she barked. “You know I have to get up early if we are going to get anything done and you always let me sleep too late.”

“I tried to wake . . .,” he managed before he was cut off.

“You try, you always try. It’s funny you never succeed. You don’t seem to be trying very hard.”

Well, she was trying anyway he reflected, pleased at his pun. Now if she would just eat her breakfast and leave, he could continue where he had left off. But she was still going on.

“You’re not man enough to try very hard. You’re a little panty-waist with no more guts than the rabbits you take those pictures of.”

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What had brought all this on, he wondered as she continued.

“Well, there's one thing that will make a man, hunting. The adventure and competition with the game will build you up, make you tough.”

He looked at her in her lumberman's jacket, heavy boots, and tied-back hair, and started to chuckle.

“That does it,” she shouted. “Stop sitting there giggling and get some boots and old clothes on; we're both going.”

“But,” he protested.

She drowned him out repeating, “You're going and I mean it, so get dressed.”

He wondered, as he hurried out of the room, if he did what she told him simply to escape the noise.

“Hurry up, I can't wait all day,” came the voice from the living room as he struggled into his clothes. The thought of the two of them walking past the farms with their rifles suddenly struck him and he was horrified. He had already told old Loomis down the road of his distaste for his wife's sport. He was sure to be in his orchard near the road this morning and George's subservience would be made plain to him. Loomis' voice was as loud as his eyes were bad; perhaps he had been given more of one to compensate for his lack of the other. If so, it had been a singularly bad decision on the Creator's part. Again his reverie was interrupted, and in this extremity, inspiration came.

“I can't find my boots,” he shouted. “And I'm not going into those woods without them; the whole area is crawling with poison ivy. You go on ahead and I'll meet you near the knoll. That will give you a chance to make one cast for game before I arrive.”

With one more remark about pantywaist, she departed and George sat down in relief. She could only stay out for about four hours, he decided, if
her guests were coming at one o'clock. They were as bad as she was, and normally he dreaded their coming and the clique the three of them made against him. Today, he decided, even they would be better than the hunting. He would delay as long as possible before joining her and would bring his camera, partly as a subterfuge and partly on the chance of a good shot. A small chance, he reflected; Helen generally scared away all the game. Regretfully he began to pull on his heavy boots.

At about 9:30 he was walking down the long dirt road, watching the puffs of sand as his toe struck the dirt and feeling the rhythmic thump of the camera case swinging on its strap from his shoulder. In one hand he carried a paper bag with a snack. If she could be enticed to stop for a bite of food, he felt, the time spent in actual hunting and thus in the possibility, however dubious, of killing something would be cut still further. He spotted Loomis in his orchard ahead and pleased with his foresight, walked jauntily on toward him.

“Where you headed at this hour?” came the greeting from across the fence.

“Just out on my usual Saturday jaunt,” George calmly replied.

“I saw your wife,” Loomis said. “She passed by about a half hour ago dressed like a north woodsman. You’d better make sure that she doesn’t get all the game before you get pictures of it.”

“Yes,” said George, now anxious to break away as he knew Helen would be waiting, but the farmer now had a subject to talk about and he held on like a bulldog.

“Strange person, your wife; all the other women cleaning up the houses Saturday morning and she stamps by with that gun and bag and never a greeting to anyone.”

“Yes,” said George by now desperate to shut him up. “Yes, she is a little unusual, but I’d better be....”
“Unusual all right,” Loomis plunged on monotonously. “I was talking to some people up at the store; they said she was real odd, likes hunting more than most men, particularly strange since you don’t seem to enjoy it much. Now when my wife Susan was alive, she used to have things all set when I came in at noon. Course now, I have to get my own, same as it looks like you will. Your wife looked like she was going to stay out there until she got something in that bag.”

That may be forever, George thought wildly, but she’ll want me with her.

“Speaking of lunch,” Loomis went on, “I feel almost hungry enough for mine. Be a while yet though, I’ve only been out for a few hours.”

“You’ve been out longer than you thought,” said George, suddenly inspired. “It’s almost eleven thirty.”

“Can’t be,” said his startled companion.

“Look for yourself,” George replied trying to stifle a laugh as the farmer wisely lifted up his useless watch and peered myopically at it.

“So it is and I’ve got a lot to do in the next hour. See you tomorrow,” he said as he hurried across the pasture.

George smiled to himself as he watched him go. He hoped the farmer didn’t discover his trick. Loomis refused to believe that his poor sight was common knowledge and would be hurt if he thought George had used his weakness.

The farmer had become a close friend but George’s tinge of conscience was smothered by the relief he felt at being free of him and able to meet Helen just barely in time.

Helen was waiting impatiently for him when he arrived. She looked grotesquely out of place. Her dirty grey jacket contrasted unpleasantly with the deep green grass; the thin branches she had broken off and was peeling to pass the time looked like white open wounds, a sacrilege against nature.
Her game bag sat ominously beside her. He was given no time to comment on this.

"Where were you, did you get lost or something? I've been here for an hour."

His protestations were cut off as she spotted his lunch.

"Where do you think you are going, on a picnic? Drop that bag and come on, we don't have much time."

She stomped out of the clearing carrying her rifle and bag. George walked behind, still carrying the paper sack and feeling not a little rebellious.

Helen had been storming through the underbrush for about a half hour, and George, staggering behind her with sweat pouring down his face, alternated between relief that their noise was frightening away all the game and hope that she would slow down before he collapsed. In the last few moments, the latter emotion had been gaining the upper hand. Suddenly she stopped. George, exhausted, sank in a heap behind her. She turned, panting from her exertion and gasped, "We'll rest here for a minute then move on. There don't seem to be any animals around here."

As she spoke, a section of brush about forty feet away began to rustle and sway. Helen quickly swung the gun to her shoulder and pausing momentarily to aim, fired three quick shots. The motion in the brush ceased, and as George watched in disgust, she dashed toward the spot swinging her rifle beside her. He jumped to his feet and followed, arriving just in time to see her pull a small beagle dog from under a bush. One of the shells had struck him in the shoulder and had passed through most of the length of his body before coming out near his rear leg.

"You didn't even look," George managed to say, "The brush moved and you didn't even look. You just fired. It could have been anything. It even could have been a man, you . . . ."

"A man," she snapped, "a man three feet tall? Anything bigger than that would have shown

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above the brush. I knew it had to be an animal, only it turned out to be this thing,” she said moving the dog with her foot, “instead of something useful.”

“What are you going to do with it,” he said.

“Leave it here, unless you want it for something.”

George, appalled at her callousness, started to reply as a child’s voice was heard.

“Buzz, hey, Buzz; come on boy.” it repeated.

The voice seemed to be moving in their direction and as George murmured, “The child’s dog,” Helen, with a guilty start, picked up the animal and looked about frantically for a place to hide it; finding none, she dropped it in the game bag.

A boy about six; years old burst into the clearing and stopped surprised at the sight of the two people, then trotted forward.

“What ya doing, mister? Have you seen a brown and white dog, not very big?”

George was searching for words to answer his question as gently as possible, when his wife demanded, “Don’t you know better than to walk in where people are having target practice? You could have been killed.”

“But my dog.”

“We saw the dog,” she said. “He was headed down the hill chasing something; it may take you a while to catch up with him.”

“Thanks, lady,” he replied and dashed back out of the clearing in the direction in which Helen had pointed.

Helen turned to George with a grin, “He’ll be out of the way down there and he can’t scare any of the game.”

“But,” George replied, “there’s a bog down there, it’s dangerous for a boy that age. We’d better stop him.”

“Stop him and tell him what,” Helen demanded, “that we killed his precious animal? The boy
is old enough to take care of himself. That's what's the matter with you; you're such a pantywaist yourself that you think everyone else is too. He's not going to crawl into a bog after a cur. That's the sort of stunt you'd pull. You can tell him if you want. I'm going to find something worth shooting."

She walked determinedly out of the clearing, her rifle ready. George followed reluctantly, hoping the shots had frightened away the game.

It was not destined to be his day, he decided a few hours later. Their momentary stay in the small glen after killing the dog had allowed the smaller animals to come back into the area, and as Helen had moved forward out of the glen, they had been directly in her path. She had added three rabbits to the game sack. They lay heaped on top of the dog which, in her haste and excitement, she had momentarily forgotten. George, by now feeling a little ill and anxious to put an end to the carnage, had finally looked at his watch and realizing in relief that their guests were to arrive in an hour, suggested that they return home. Helen refused. This was the best day's hunting she had had in the six months they had lived in the area and she was unwilling to end it. To George by this time, getting himself away from the blood and the gore was more important than ending it, and he finally went home on the pretense of cleaning the house and getting ready for the company.

He entered the house, tossed off his heavy coat and began to wash. He scrubbed his hands over and over, fastidiously searching for the slightest trace of the animal's blood. He had involuntarily laid his hand on the dog's side when he first saw it. He remembered the action now and shuddered.

The cold clarity of the water and the glass, the crackle and tinkle of the ice as he made the drinks in preparation for his wife's guests made him feel better. Everything here was pure, and

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cold, and tart, and seemed to dull the memory of the sweat and the animal’s blood out in the woods. When he thought of Helen at all, in fact, it was with concern. She still wasn’t back and he preferred not to face her friends by himself. He felt uncomfortable in their presence and could think of nothing to say to them. He looked out the window and the mingled trepidation and annoyance that he felt as he saw them drive up the path erased temporarily all memory of the dog and the child.

He got over the original meeting easily enough; he simply explained that Helen was late coming in from her hunt, and then pushed drinks into their hands. He had discovered that offering alcohol to these people was like offering milk to a baby; it quieted them momentarily even if it did give them more energy for later.

Helen ran up the path a few minutes later, saw the car, and flustered, dropped her bag outside the door and placing her rifle in a corner, she dashed upstairs to change. By some miracle, she was downstairs in about ten minutes just as the weather, the only subject that George and the guests held in common, was beginning to pall as a topic of conversation. Helen was full of the news of her hunt, praising her skill to her audience who listened eagerly; they had drunk enough to be convivial and any topic was better than the weather. George noticed that Helen omitted mention of both him and the dog, centering her conversation, as she always did, on herself. No one noticed him as he left the room. He had been sitting saying nothing for the past half hour and the alcohol intake of the other three had been growing steadily greater. He walked slowly upstairs and stretched out on the bed. For three hours he listened to the muffled voices below him.

It was early evening when he finally heard the cries of goodbye and the slamming of car doors that announced the departure of Helen’s two friends. He got up and went downstairs to help Helen in the cleaning up. Most of his wife’s talk—
ativeness had been exhausted and to forestall any rebirth of it, he turned on the radio. The music drowned his own thoughts also, and he moved dully about the room emptying ashtrays and picking up empty glasses.

The news program startled him awake in horror.

The news was from a big city station with little time to devote to happenings in the countryside. It simply announced that volunteers, searching for a boy and his dog, had found the boy’s bruised body in the bog. Police suspected foul play. It noted, as a curious after-thought, that the dog, oddly enough, had not been found with the boy nor had it returned home. An investigation of the death was continuing. George stared speechlessly at his wife.

“We’ve at least got to tell them how it happened. We were wrong, but it wasn’t a real crime. You know how those cops are. They’ll grab some tramp and pin it on him. He’ll have no alibi; he won’t have a chance.”

Helen stared back at him. “You’ll tell them nothing,” she said bluntly. “If you do, I’ll not only divorce you, I’ll flatly deny your story. You have no proof. The cops will think you’re some kind of a crackpot.”

George thought quietly. Helen’s two threats added together seemed fairly attractive but he still would not be able to convince the police. Some poor old man would be punished for what George was sure was an accident.

He walked outside to think. As he stepped down the stairs, he tripped over the game bag and nearly fell. He stifled a curse and started to walk on, then turned and controlling his revulsion, he probed through the slimy bodies in the bag searching for and finally finding the outline of the dog. He tumbled all the bodies out on the ground, then went in the house. Helen, he noticed, had gone

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upstairs to rest. He reached for the phone and called the town police.

The police arrived quickly and without fuss. By the time Helen had awakened and come downstairs, George had already explained how he had opened the bag and found the dog's body. Hearing the news of the boy's death and becoming suspicious, he had called them. The police, local men, who had already heard the stories about her unusual behaviour, seemed inclined to believe him.

Helen stared at George aghast, then raged, "You were there with me all day. You knew what happened. You saw me shoot the dog. You saw me send the kid down the hill. You can't prove anything."

George glanced at the police apologetically. "I was out of the house for an hour this morning with my camera. Phil Loomis saw me leave the house at eleven thirty and I talked to him for about fifteen minutes. Her own friends can prove that I was home by twelve thirty and that she came in alone from hunting. I don't understand this business of her being with me."

"Why, you . . .," Helen screamed.

A policeman put his hand on her arm to quiet her. She saw the hand coming and infuriated, swung with the rifle she had grabbed from the corner. She missed by a good distance, but it was enough. She was quickly disarmed and pushed into the car.

"We'll need you as a witness to her assault of a police officer when that's put with the other testimony."

"Of course," he said. "If I can be of any help, the poor woman."

"The nut, you mean," said the officer as he slammed the door on Helen.

George smiled as the cruiser drove away.
A Natural Sport

By John Mallen '65

Perhaps only in the Carolinas is there to be found surf fishing as fine as that along the gently sloping beaches of Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Many's the hour I have spent on these New England shores seeking the prized striped bass and carnivorous blue fish, and as a result I believe I have gained more than a mere fish or two. More as fringe benefit than by any deliberate action I have come to realize just what a sportsman is. I had certainly never considered it before. Why, I thought, a sportsman is anyone who plays a sport. And sport? It is a game. Everyone knows this, and even the idea of posing such a simple question never concerned me. Yet association with some of these surf fishermen has provoked my admiration for them—and for sportsmen in general. Perhaps it has done even more. Perhaps it has made me more fully aware of what a sportsman is and what sport is.

Surf fishing is undeniably a sport. It is a sport open to all comers. If one is willing to buy or rent the simplest of equipment, he can easily stand on any beach or jetty and cast his lure into the surf—undisturbed by inquisitive game wardens. Both amateur and professional are free to make their own rules, to play the game their own way and no other. But free as the sport is from legislative action, it is not for the amateur. Rather it belongs to those who make surf fishing both their delight and secret life. To these individuals it becomes a mistress to be carefully cared for and nurtured. The fisherman lives with the sport and becomes enchanted with its allurements. So powerful a spell it casts over him, that he must prevent himself from becoming preoccupied with it, for in many cases the simple age old game of fishing has brought about the destruction of an angler's domestic life. The true practitioner guards against this, and never neglects the wife for the mistress. But in his fidelity to the latter he must manifest some dedication. He must know the sport's every
detail—the scientific, the geographic, the fictitious; he must never neglect it; he must continually seek to know it, and once he has gained some of this precious knowledge, he must protect it as a royal secret. He becomes in the pursuit of this knowledge a monarch ruling a state of his own creation.

Take for example the average day on any of the open beaches in southern New England. Here areas famed for their productivity of gamefish attract crowds of men, women, and children—whole families—all piled in contraptions called “beach buggies,” the name for any vehicle from a Jeep to an antiquated panel truck equipped with balloon tires and capable of navigating the sandy expanses. These people are not sportsmen, not the dedicated fishers of the surf! They are the thrill seekers, Sunday drivers of the beach, who come occasionally to enjoy the summer sun, to picnic and play on the hot dusty sand.

Plebeians all! When they do catch a fish it is only because the schools are in—when the fish swim close to shore in droves as thick as the locust-swarms in western wheat fields. The fish are in a frenzy, devouring any bait they can find. It is an easy matter to catch a fish then. But if, as usual, these pseudo-fishermen catch nothing, they care not, for fishing was not their object in coming. They came for fun. It is plain they are not the fishermen I am speaking of. I am concerned with the true sportsmen, men who have made the sport their mistress, and who have labored to keep it in the best of finery through the years, who have developed a love and affection for it, and who have stored it firmly in their souls. I must admit I am not one of them, but as I have said, I have met such men, and by making their acquaintance I have come to appreciate their art, their love for it, and their dedication to it.

You will find that the dedicated fisherman is the true sportsman, but if you look to the sea do not expect to find him on the beaches Sunday af-
ternoons. He comes to his love early in the silence of morning, or stays the night with his mistress; he sleeps with her, waiting for the right tide in the dead of night, or the right hour before daybreak and just after sunset when he knows the fishing will be best. Look to the beaches to find him; look for him at these times.

Last summer at dusk in the hard-packed sand parking lot of the state preserve in Charlestown, I met such a sportsman. Long since abandoned by those who play in the sun’s heat, the earth was cool and open to those who had come to share the desolation of the beach and empty grass fields behind it. Fishermen who had slept through the heat of day waiting—were now arriving, awakening from their hibernation to become the night’s predators, to assume their hideous forms—the fishing garb—forms of a new being. The man I met was one of these.

He was in the process of mutation—donning the waterproof suit worn by the surfcaster: a pair of waders consisting of trousers and boots molded into one watertight olive-green unit that extended from toe to chest, and was held aloft by wide cloth suspenders. Over these he pulled a hooded parka of the same olive-colored material. He was made amphibious. Once dressed to withstand the sea and wind, he assembled his gear, typical of that born by these creatures—half man of land, half of the sea—these dedicated anglers. It requires dedication to wear such a suit! They are efficient only when one is fishing, when he must maneuver in water that is sometimes waist high, yet remain on his feet, and above all remain warm and dry. It is difficult to walk on land in this garb, and if one steps in water too deep the waders become a highly efficient sea anchor! The fisherman does indeed become a new creature in the realm of partly land and partly water.

Yet the suit was only the beginning. Next came the gear. The assemblage consisted of only the necessities for him (though others did carry more): the head lamp like those worn by coal
miners on their caps, the case of artificial bait slung over the shoulder like a school bag, a stout sheath knife clipped to the belt, a pair of pliers next to the knife, and finally a gaff that dangled from a hook on his waist. Slightly thicker than a broom handle, the gaff is a small round stick about eighteen inches long with a forbidding long-shoreman's hook fastened to the end. The hook is used to grasp a fish that has been caught and reeled in to the shore line, as the fish squirms about in a last attempt to escape its fate. Without this instrument the fisherman will often lose his catch at this critical moment.

While he was selecting the lures he would use for the night's fishing, he was talking with me—talking about fish, the beaches, the water, the weather . . . Everything he uttered spoke for his thorough knowledge of the sport. "I don't know." I said, "but I don't think we'll have much luck tonight."

"See over there," said the amphibian pointing at the long white line of waves crashing heavily on the stone paved shore. "Watch the next one—just before it breaks. See the glow. That's phosphorous glowing in the sun. Sometimes—like tonight—there's more of it in the water. And that means good luck," he said with a kind of twinkle in his eye.

"It does?"

"Sure. Anyway, the shore was lined with dead shiners this afternoon. Something's driven them in. I think it's the storm brewing out to sea. Always happens like that."

"So I've heard," I said,

"Well . . . One thing's sure," he said. "The fish'll be feeding good tonight. Pretty soon. You can count on that."

"I'm not so sure," I said. I told him I really thought prospects were poor for the night, because only a few small fish had been caught all weekend. To my surprise he knew how many fish had been
caught, those who landed them, and all other relevant data. But he said the incidents meant little since those fishermen were only lucky, and rather poor anglers at that. He was quite sure the fishing would be ideal this night. But I continued. I related how I had fished all morning and caught nothing, making the excuse that I was "just learning."

"I'm just learning myself," he said with a slight laugh.

"How long have you been fishing?" I asked.

"Oh—fifteen years now. Something like that." Yet he was serious when he said he was just learning, so I nodded in amused humility, and began walking with him toward the jetty that extended some two-hundred feet beyond the mouth of the breechway in the distance. The stone construction was like a sinister finger pointing at the dark water that lay ahead.

We both knew the end of the jetty was the best spot to fish the incoming tide, because there the water was always deep and in a tumult, as the waves dashed against the intruding rocks, and a strong current resisted the tide's attempt to flood the channel. Meanwhile he was still trying to tell me why he was certain the fishing would be good, and all the while I continued to doubt him. But I was aware that fish liked the environment at the head of the breechway; they liked to lurk in the deep water where there was enough agitation to churn the bait up from the ocean floor. Yet from where he stood, there was only the tranquil scene of a few others fishing in the distance. As we approached the beginning of the jetty with poles in hand, dusk was disappearing, and the small moon cast little light on the fine sandy earth. We could see only the glow of a few cigarettes and the occasional flash of a hand light from the end.

We began to fish as soon as we arrived. I chose to stand on a flat rock high above the water where it was dry and I could watch the others. My companion studied the layout briefly and went to the
water's edge—to establish himself on the slippery rocks precariously near the channel where the waves thundered in at his feet. I watched him fish. He chose a certain plug, a blue plastic lure about the size and shape of a cigar with several hooks suspended from the fish-like body and a white bucktail trailing from the end. He attached it quickly to the line, and began casting in expert fashion. His was a style of quick casts made with the flick of the wrist. At first he experimented with his technique, trying several long and short casts. Then he began to work a certain area, casting his plug behind a large rock that lay straight ahead, letting the current carry it out a short way, finally retrieving it with intermittent jerks on the handle of his rod as he reeled in. He was deliberately creating the illusion of a fish breaking water.

He stood there, concentrating his efforts on the same locality, totally involved in his work, for the sport was no mere game to him. It was a challenge he took seriously. He felt it was his chore to induce the fish to strike the lure, and this often had to be done when the fish normally were not feeding, when they had gluttoned themselves on the plentiful food and were no longer hungry. He had to interest the fish in his artificial bait by arousing its curiosity with the antics of the plug—by making it jump, by changing the speed it traveled at, by floating it along the same path repeatedly, so the fish would anger and charge the lure and slap it out of the way with its tail and finally swallow it in a futile attempt to rid the sea of the annoying creature with the bucktail. The gamble was solely the man’s. He had to chance that there was a fish to catch and that it would strike his bait.

Within an hour he landed two stripers—two ten-pound bass, each one over twenty-four inches long, each caught from the same area he had so diligently worked. He was the only one to catch a fish that night. He was not one of the amateurs who dabble in the game occasionally. He was a true fisherman and a true sportsman, not because he had caught a fish as he had all but predicted, but because of what was behind his success—all
his learning, all the years of practice and failure, and all else that went to make up his skill. That single night presented him with the opportunity to match his skill once more against the sea's creatures, presented him with what was perhaps most important—at least to him—an opportunity to issue the challenge.

In a real sense the sport was for him a love and dedication. Because he loved the sport he became dedicated to the learning, the practicing and the failing, dedicated to the development of this one skill. This continuing dedication to perfection is the backbone of all sports. It brings even a common sport such as fishing past identity as being only recreation, relaxation, or pastime. Involved is the perfection of the individual, encompassing the development of skill to the point where the fisherman becomes an artist in the practice of his sport. The fisherman I have described was this kind of artist. I doubt that he realized it himself, or even if he ever thought about it, but he was an artist. Such men can be found in any field of sports, but all sports do not have the same challenge found in fishing. This he could tell you.

In fishing for example there is the difficulty of attaining and perfecting the skill. Even the best fishermen find the ceaseless challenge of nature haunting them. Can he catch one more fish? Can he be more successful in the next hunt, asks the hunter. So a sportsman like the dedicated fisherman or hunter finds in his blood the ever present sensation of quest. The better artist he becomes, the more intriguing he seeks to make the quest. That is why a true fisherman and sportsman such as I have described would rather fish from the shore than from a boat where a hired captain will locate the schools of fish with electronic devices and then chum the waters with barrels of bait, luring the whole school to the surface, so his customers will catch a fish every time they drop a baited hook over the side. For those who do indulge in this type of fishing, the sport is mere diversion. Like the families who come to the beaches on Sunday afternoons, the party-boat fish-
ermen prostitute the sport, seeking either the catch or the recreation connected with it, but not the art. They have made no mistress of the game—though they could have. It may be that many of these amateurs fish with an air of indifference to the sport, but it is possible that in some remote way they have felt the lure of the challenge.

I could say much the same of amateur hunters who make an annual trip to the woods their sole pursuit of this sport. Perhaps they retain a professional guide to insure themselves of some game, or they may be content to fumble indifferently among the pines content with the change in scenery. Yet it is possible they also sense the challenge hunting offers, and if they but had the dedication they could well have made the sport their mistress, their secret love.

At least there is a dignity of some kind connected with hunting and fishing. It is a dignity that is lacking in many of today’s popular sports, which are bridled with controls and saddled with rules. Moreover they are artificial sports. They have been invented by man for many reasons, as pastimes, as means of relaxation, or as means of physical exercise and human competition. Whatever the reasons, they certainly do serve society. But I would continue to call them artificial, sports that are imitations of true sports like hunting and fishing. How for example can games such as football and basketball present the individual with the chance to assess his excellence in the lifelong pursuit of a skill? One can play these games for but a brief period of his life, and even within the game there are the rules to be followed and obeyed; there is the fast action that prevents any chance to philosophize. Many more of these artificial sports fail to present the challenge found in fishing. The fisherman does not fish by any rules, nor does he practice his art in the quest of a winning score or championship trophy. His sport is much too large for these things. His sport is primarily an art, not competition, exercise or relaxation. Though these attributes may be found in

*The Alembic*
fishing relatively, the principal goal of the fisherman—like our surf fisherman—is the perfection and ultimately the enjoyment of his art.

Unlike artificial man-made sports, fishing and hunting are basic to man. Arts once practiced by necessity are now practiced for enjoyment. But we still sense the challenge. In these sports, these true sports, the objective is usually a species of wildlife unchallenged by the individual previously. It is the fish the surf fisherman will wade into the sea after. The challenge? The challenge is the question he asks himself: can I catch another fish? It is also the challenge of the man against the creature in its environment—places not for humans—the woods or the sea. When answering his question a true sportsman must be willing to challenge an unseen adversary, one that is wild and free in its own element. The surf fisherman finds himself engaged in a sport of the widest variables. He can depend only on his skill. He must not only wade into the sea and challenge some unknown fish, but he must also master his adversary in every way. He must somehow coax the fish into making a fatal mistake, a mistake its instincts should prevent. The same is true for the hunter stalking his prey.

Sport then is individual against individual, a challenge issued to nature by man with his intelligence and with his machine-like devices. Intellect against instinct, machine against nature, man against beast—this is sport, its challenge, its art. Man is the sportsman whose chore it is to issue the challenge and make the rules just. But what really is the art after all? Why does a fisherman wade out in the surf? Ask him, as I did the amphibian surf caster, ask him and he will tell you . . . "I don't know. It just gets to you somehow."
One Night I Saw:
(Christmas '64)
A thousand candles burning low
   About a tabernacle cold,
   Upon an altar made of soil,
Adorned with purest linen snow;
A silver door of cold night air
   Before a golden dome of wood,
   With silken veiling made of wool,
And padded walls of donkey hair;
Inside a monstrance made of straw
   Upon soft velvet manger hay;
The leaven God-Form, made of flesh,
Come subject to the human law;
The tabernacle where we see
   The promise that is God's own Son,
The Sacrifice to gain our love,
Divinity—Humility.

Louis C. Emond '65

Could I but sue thee for thy love!
There is no court to hear my plea;
Only the court I paid to thee bears witness—
Accessory post facto. One judge had we,
Robed in partiality, pale winking justice,
Who changed innocents to protect a name
And more, gavelled me guilty through a closed
   door,
Bore no malice, but heard no further claim.
What crimes had I to answer for?
Theft of starlight from shining eyes,
The orchid's glory in an upturned face,
Cloud-climbing to steal the first-born prize.
Sentence was past; my suit rests pending
Appeal before another Judge: of truth unending.

Kevin J. Beebe '65

The Alembic
One, Two, Odd And Out
By Ronald Bouchard ’65

A light breeze ruffled the bright green leaves, splashing the forest floor with flickering pools of bright sunlight. The wood was cool and shadowy, a relief from the oppressive heat of the city. Silence stretched all around me, broken only by my muffled footsteps in the soft, decaying leaves of last fall’s harvest. In the heat of midday, the birds were quiet, and those animals which bustled about in the brush and the lower branches had disappeared, wary of my presence.

The city, by comparison, had been more noisy than usual this week. I smiled softly to myself, thinking of the city, not of the noise and seething violence in the civilized lairs of man.

I remembered, when I first came to the South from my New England home, how shocked I was at the casual use of the word “nigger” by the people of every class, a word which we never dared use in the presence of Negroes for fear of offending. I had felt then a deep sense of injustice at the negative level of existence to which the Negroes were motivated by the law of survival, not by prejudice and bigotry.

I sat beneath a middle-aged oak, resting my back against its rough bark and, removing my hat, lit my pipe. Puffing quietly, contentedly, I listened to the forest come back to life. Birds twittered and called in the trees, squirrels chattered along from one branch to another, nameless little animals made rustling noises in the underbrush, and a solitary woodpecker tried to hammer his way through a big old oak four feet across—an altogether satisfying and soothing symphony, a marked contrast to the noise and seething violence in the civilized lairs of man.

The Alembic
grove had been relegated. In the past three years, I had seen that sense of injustice deepening, and the blacks were now thrashing violently about to right it, to remove the signs “White” and “Colored” from public facilities, to breach the invisible wall which excluded them from the better universities.

Listening to the sounds of the wood, I was impressed with the relative lack of quarrel and hatred. Here, I thought, was none of that discrimination and prejudice so prevalent in the world outside; laws were not needed to segregate or integrate the inhabitants of this area of the world. Here the animals, birds and insects all existed together in simple harmony. The state of nature was, with the exigency of need taken into account, a state of peaceful co-existence.

Now I am not now, nor ever have been a Rousseauist, among my colleagues I would have difficulty finding one who seriously believed that natural man, like these animals, ever existed in a condition of perfect peace. Man after all is an animal, and bodily needs always existed to be fulfilled. But surely man could not have been born with this intense dislike and distrust of anyone having a different color and different traditions, simply because of this color and these traditions. The institutions which man’s searching mind had created were destroying him; had indeed warped his values and created artificial prismatic stratifications within which he lived.

I broke off this train of thought to listen to the sounds and movements around me. Over my head a sudden commotion indicated conflict, and I looked for the source with the curiosity of the nature lover. Not twenty feet from where I sat, two large, gray fox squirrels were fighting over a female, who cheered her rivals on with a loud series of chirrs and squeals. Ordinarily careful to stay well hidden, these squirrels had apparently been gripped firmly by the mating urge, for they were conducting their courtship with the utmost abandon, heedless of my presence. “Ah, love doth make fools of us all,” I said, and laughed both at
their antics and their plight. I observed the mating ritual with interest, enjoying their unconscious parody of man's own mating urge, when something in the scene jostled my memory into action.

When we were young, my friends and I lived near a wood-lot heavily populated with squirrels. Hunting and watching them was a favorite pastime, and we were forever on the watch for their nests and their mating and courting activities. But enthusiastic though we were, we had lacked the patience to sit still long enough to see them either courting or mating. But I remembered a story someone once told, a description of this scene, quite faithful to the details of this scene. With nothing to do but sit and think, I took advantage of my time to reminisce about my youth.

I remembered it as if it were only yesterday. The leaves in front of me blurred and dissolved, and I saw the street of my youth, and the friends of my youth. I saw, not a forest, but a paved city street, a row of two-story houses, and two little boys. . . .

The two boys were standing in the indolent manner of little boys on warm Saturday mornings with nothing to do but amuse themselves. They were standing on the sidewalk discussing, I think, the origin of that mysterious hum that pervades the warm summer air on quiet mornings. As they talked, a younger boy came out of the house across the street, and walked over to where they stood. He was perhaps seven or eight years old, but even at that age he wore, along with thick eyeglasses, an air of wisdom and resignation befitting a much older person. He stood next to the two youths and listened to their conversation, obviously wanting to join them. The two ignored him, and after a while, he spoke.

"That hum isn't the telephone wires; it's a bird."

The stocky, swarthy boy shot a glare from under a beetling brow which plainly said he wasn't
welcome, and, not deigning to reply, scornfully turned his back and resumed his interrupted statement.

"Like I said, Mousie, those hums 're from the phone wires, when someone's talkin'. If you could climb up the pole, as a fact, you could even hear what their sayin'."

"Gee!", said Mousie.

"That's ridiculous," the little boy said, "you'd have to use phone clips and an earphone to do that. And anyway, the hum is the mating call of a bird."

"What kind of bird?" The boy was tall and thin, pale and well-freckled, with intelligent blue eyes and a deferential air. He seemed interested in the answer.

"It's a blue-jay," the younger boy answered, "and his hum is to let the females know that his nest is built and he's ready for a mate."

"Then why don't you hear the hum at night," the boy began, but the friends had moved down the street, in front of the next house.

"Anythin' I can't stand is a wise kid," Charlie said, "Right, Mousie?"

"Right, Charlie."

"Whatta ya say, let's go swimmin'."

"We can't," Mousie said, "the city closed the pond. My father said the water's polluted."

"Polluted, schmolluted," Charlie snorted, "I was there yesterday and the water's great, not muddy or full of garbage, or anythin'. They don't know what they're talkin' about."

"Pollution doesn't mean muddy or full of garbage," the little boy said. He had followed
the two to their new location, and made another effort to join them. “The health inspector said that polio germs had been found in the water off the beach, and closed the pond as a precaution.”

“How did they find the germs when you can’t see them,” Mousie asked. He looked curiously at the little boy.

The little boy smiled and began, “Well . . .”.


They walked down the street and stopped in front of the candy store.

“That’s the weirdest kid I ever seen,” Charlie said. “He talks too much, an’ he knows too much. So quit talkin’ to him, willya?”

He looked mad, so Mousie said all right, and they talked baseball for awhile. Not too long after, the little boy came back and stood four or five feet away, not saying anything. Charlie didn’t comment, but he didn’t look too pleased.

“Look,” Charlie said, “I know what, let’s go to the woods. Maybe we can get a squirrel with our slingshots.”

“All right. Maybe we can even find a nest and see if there are any little squirrels.”

“Right. And we’ll take a bag along in case we find some.”

The little boy sensed that they would not invite him along, and he made a last effort at joining the group.

“I go to the woods a lot,” he said, “and I’ve seen plenty of squirrels. I can show you where they are. The last time I went I saw an albino, and I think I can find him again.”

Charlie’s neck got very red, and he shouted, “Look, you little brat—.”

“Shut up!”, Mousie yelled.

Charlie stopped, turned, and looked at him as if he didn’t believe his ears. “What’d you say.

The Alembic
Mousie?”, he said. He spoke in a low tone, menacingly.

Mousie seemed dumb-founded at his own outburst. He didn’t seem to have the slightest idea why he told Charlie to shut up, but he looked apprehensive, not afraid.

“I just wanted to hear about the squirrel the kid saw, that’s all. What’s an albino, kid?”

“It’s a white squirrel,” the little boy said, pleased. “There were two squirrels quarreling over a female, showing off their mating dances. When they were just about to fight for the female, this white squirrel saw them and came up to them. When the other squirrels saw him, they chased him. They killed him when they caught him.”

In spite of himself, Charlie had been listening to the little boy’s story. When the story was finished, Charlie looked decidedly displeased at being displaced as the center of interest.

“This kid is lyin’,” he said. “How does he know so much when he is too young to even be in the first grade?”

“Oh, I don’t go to school,” the little boy interjected, “my father is a professor, and he tutors me. I can even play the violin,” he added proudly.

Charlie looked at him in disgust, and Mousie looked in amazement. They had been trying to learn to play the harmonica for two weeks, with no success. And not go to school? This was sacrilegious. Everyone went to school!

“Kid,” Charlie said, “you’re a freak and a liar. Everybody goes to school, so you’re lyin’. And you’re too smart and you’re fat and ugly, and you wear glasses like the bottoms out o’ coke bottles, so you’re a freak.”

“Hey, Charlie,” Mousie said.

“You shut up,” Charlie shouted. He was really mad now. “I don’t like this kid, and I don’t like his looks. So I just think I’ll do somethin’ about ’em. How d’ you see without those glasses, kid?”
The little boy was puzzled by this outburst, and said nothing.

“Oh, for once you ain’t got nothin’ to say, huh? Well, let’s see how you make out without ’em.”

And with that, Charlie grabbed the glasses from the little boy’s face and laughed. The little boy was stunned by this sudden tragedy, for he really couldn’t see much at all without them, and he stood rooted to the spot, straining, bug-eyed, to see where everything had disappeared to. His lips trembled and two, great tears welled up out of the depths of his eyes.


Charlie ran off, laughing. Mousie looked at the young boy, crying softly to himself, pop-eyed and staring. Mousie seemed to be very sorry for him, wanting to do something for him. But the little boy did look funny, his face all wet and his eyes popped out and vacant. He looked very funny, and odd, in fact.

I turned and saw that Charlie was waiting for me. I ran towards him, and tried out a little giggle as I ran. It went well, and I giggled a little more. Soon I had caught up with Charlie, and, while the little boy stood in the street crying for his glasses, we ran, laughing as hard as we could, down the street toward the woodlot.

The chattering overhead had stopped, and the wood was quiet once more. I looked for the contending males, and saw that the larger squirrel had won out over the smaller, which had been driven away. He was fast retreating to parts unknown. I watched the male and the female cavort for awhile but, bemused, soon lost interest. I rose slowly to my feet, and began the long walk back to the city and civilization.
Take It From The Top
By Paul F. Ferguson '65

The crowd, heads lifted, formed a semi-circle on the sidewalk, half expecting two painters in baggy pants with dripping paint cans to break through and paint a huge red and black bull's eye on the concrete so that the figure perched on the ledge fifteen stories above would have a clear target at which to aim, should he decide to jump.

The five or six police present mechanically made the motions they always made when the average citizen decided to use the sidewalk for target practice. It was useless, they found, to bid the crowd go home, because to the crowd such an occurrence bore the excitement of a circus and the fun of a freak show. A man on a ledge was a sequined acrobat preparing to dive from a hundred-foot diving board into a soggy Kleenex.

The situation also gave members of the crowd an opportunity to play their favorite game, the game of “I wonder what he’s doing up there?” The rules were simple and the game would begin modestly when the first few passersby stopped to gaze at the silly figure. They would stand, heads back, eyes bulging, mouths open like hungry guppies, and ask the question silently of themselves: “I wonder what he’s doing up there?”

As the crowd grew, a dull murmur would pass back and forth among individuals:

“What in the world do you suppose he is doing up there?”

“Out for his daily constitutional, no doubt.”

“Do you suppose he’ll jump?”

“Yes.”

“Do you think he will?”

“I don’t know.”

There would be a pause.

There would be a few snickers.

“Of course not.”

“He might.”

“Do you think he will?”

There would be a pause.

The Alembic
“Ten says he’ll jump.”

“That’s no bet. He probably will. It’s merely a question of how long he’ll stand there before he does.”

“True.”

“I’ll bet that ten spot he’s up there an hour before he jumps.”

“You’re on. He can’t last that long.”

“Yeah. The cops’ll bring him in within an hour.”

“No. They make one step toward him and he’ll jump.”

“Fifteen minutes. I can’t wait an hour. I’ve got to get back to the office.”

There would be another pause, this time longer than before.

“Do you suppose he had a fight with his wife?”

“No. Probably discovered a boyfriend.”

“Aw you’re all wrong. He’s probably just some kind of a nut trying to get attention.”

The people were no different this time than at any other time, and the imaginary bull’s eye became more palpable the longer they stood.

About twenty minutes earlier Dennis Daly, the man on the ledge, had been staring into the typewriter before him and thinking, as he normally did during his lunch hour, about his many trials and tribulations. Ordinarily they were not insurmountable—merely minor obstacles that caused him “deep-rooted anxieties”—but today his woes were gorgons.

Before him on the carriage had pranced the imaginary actors that reconstructed the melodramatic situation comedy which had occurred the previous night and which now seemed to him a Shakespearian tragedy.

He had come home from work as usual, parked the car as usual, entered the front door as usual,
and, as usual, passed the living room door on the way to the closet.

"Hi sweetheart. Hello Bill."

The closet door was open and his coat half way off before the image finally impinged on his mind that Bill Jackson was sitting on the divan in the living room quite casually kissing his wife.

He pulled his coat back on and shuffled slowly to the door, his mouth open, blinked his eyes tightly twice to reassure himself that the scene was not a mirage resulting from a too long day of hard labor, and stared at the two figures.

They stared back at him.

For a time that could have been seconds or hours, the members of the proverbial eternal triangle formed an open mouthed bulgy-eyed trinity in a tableau that might have been more appropriately situated in an avant-garde wax museum and entitled "Surprise!" The expressions on the faces were vacant, but were at the same time filled with shock, embarrassment, guilt, and many other human emotions that inspire laughter.

The first to speak was Bill Jackson.

"This isn't what you think, Dennis."

Daly jumped as if Jackson had sneaked up behind him.

"N-no?"

"No, it isn't. Stacy and I were just . . . uh . . . talking," said Jackson.

Daly regained as much composure as was possible for him to regain under the circumstances.

"Talking?" he replied, pacing the floor as words and ideas dissociated themselves in his head and spilled irrationally out. "Talking? . . . Of all the . . . You can't . . . Talking . . . What the . . . With my wife . . . GET OUT OF MY HOUSE," he finally cried, aiming his finger at the door. "RIGHT NOW."

Jackson stood, flustered and angry, vengeance and viciousness in his eyes, but unable to speak.

The Alembic
He fetched his hat which had been hunched up in a chair like a sleeping monkey, and stomped out of the house leaving Stacy sobbing on the divan.

Dennis quickly covered his head with both hands, fearing that the ceiling plaster would fall as Jackson emphatically slammed the front door, then ran to the door and yelled at him, “Good riddance, you . . . you . . . CUCKOLD.”

Returning to the living room, his lower lip trembled ludicrously as his eyes met those of his wife who was now dabbing her eyes with a dainty pink handkerchief.

Neither spoke until he approached her and touched her shoulder.

“Honey?”

“Don’t touch me,” she replied, recoiling from him.

“Hon, I’m sorry.”

“Why did you have to barge in like that?”

“I said I’m sorry, honey.”

“That doesn’t make things any different.”

It suddenly occurred to him that it was not his place to be sorry, that his wife was the one who had been unfaithful and who should be begging forgiveness. The entire situation was ridiculous soap opera, and he felt like a moron.

And then he realized that the biggest blunder was ordering Jackson out before discussing things. Perhaps the two were in love with each other.

“Look, Stacy, sweetheart,” he began. He was not going to botch things up this time. “How do you expect me to react? I mean, it’s not an every day occurrence when a man comes home and finds his wife necking with another guy on the living room couch. I’m . . . I’m . . . well, I’m just not used to it, that’s all.”

“You might have knocked on the door before barging in,” she replied.

“Knock on the door? Why should I knock on the door? I live here.”

_The Alembic_
“Well ... it might have saved you some embar­rassment.”

There was another silence for some moments until he decided to speak again while she con­tinued sobbing.

“Look, Stacy. What is the matter, that you’ve got to have Bill Jackson over here?”

She lifted her face until she was looking into his eyes and answered, not quite certain that the answer she was giving was entirely accurate, “I don’t love you any more.”

His mouth dropped open once again, an ac­tion that was becoming cliché with him. He was disturbed.

“What?”

“I said I don’t love you any more.”

He groped for the arm chair as if he were going to faint, sat slowly back, stunned, then stared straight ahead with an expression of total exhaus­tion on his face, mumbling incoherently, “My life . . . all gone . . . everything I’ve worked for . . . gone. Why? Why?”

“Because,” she said coldly in contrast to his hysteria, “because you are such a . . . boob. You have absolutely no idea what a woman needs and you never will, you . . . simp.”

He breathed hard, unmoving.

“I’m leaving you, tonight,” she said. “I’m going to marry Bill.”

“You’re what?” he yelled, jumping to his feet enraged.

“Bill. I’m going to marry him.”

“You . . . you can’t,” he stammered. “I’ll . . . I’ll never give you a divorce.”

“Do you really think we need one?”

“Get out,” he screamed. “Get out of here, you . . . you . . . winch.”

She turned on her heel and left. For the re­mainder of the evening he moped around the house feeling sorry for himself.

*The Alembic*
The scene faded out and he was brought back into the world of typewriters and office buildings and people who walked on city streets.

“T’ve got to do something,” he thought. “But what?”

Arising, he began to pace the office, stopped, bent over and tied his shoe for the third time in a half hour, then resumed pacing as he tried to find a solution to his dilemma. His fellow workers were still on their lunch breaks and would not return for at least another half hour. This gave him time to think things over thoroughly.

Something must be done, an answer must come from somewhere. Every tragedy had a solution of some kind, on some level, something that would bring all problems to an end. Stacy was gone for good, that much was certain. Nothing, not even a congressional resolution, could bring her back. But divorce was completely out. It was against his . . . principles.

Well . . . principles. Principles were mere matters of utility: you could break them if you had to. But no. Principles were matters of principle. They could not be broken. Besides, he would appear foolish if he gave her a divorce after saying he would not. And that was a cardinal sin in modern society, appearing foolish, and since he was a part of society, a member in good standing, you might say, he refused to be subject to sin. After all, he had his pride.

So divorce was out of the question. But what was the answer? He could always try talking to her, make her see that what she was doing was wrong, that she was acting out of passion rather than love, that she really did love him in spite of Bill Jackson’s physical appeal.

But that would not work either. For one, she was not rational enough to talk to, and for another he became easily flustered when trying to use logic. So it seemed the rational approach was useless.

It also occurred to him that he was not even sure whether or not Stacy had ever loved him,
even when she had accepted his proposal of marriage years ago. Thinking back on it, he thought that perhaps her interest in him had been purely physical, that maybe what he had said and done in those days of courtship had meant nothing more to her than a label on a loaf of bread. She had always been impressed by appearances. Maybe she was even telling the truth, that she did not love him any more. In that case divorce might be the best answer.

No. There must be something else.

He walked over to the water cooler, took a cup from the plastic dispenser on the wall, filled it with water, and clumsily allowed it to slip from his hand onto the floor. Perturbed, he filled another cup and drank it down as if it were a shot of whiskey.

He started across the office to his desk, but stopped as his shoe lace came undone once again.

"Damn stupid thing," he said, bending over to tie it for the fourth time. "Someday you damn things will stay tied and surprise the hell out of me."

It was becoming stuffy in the office, so he walked over to the window and opened it a crack. There was little wind that day, so he need not worry about papers flying all over the place.

He returned to the desk and his contemplation. He had to get her back, no question of that. He loved her regardless of whether or not she loved him. It was something he could not explain logically, but he had to keep her.

Play on her pity, that was the thing. He must make himself look like the poor little waif that needed a mother badly, or like a poor soul such as the circus clown Emmett Kelley whom she would have married in an instant the first time she saw him in the ring dressed in those shabby clothes and trying to sweep away the spotlight.

But no, that wouldn't work. She probably had more pity for Bill Jackson, that "poor homeless wretch" who was coarse and vulgar, an animal.
Stacy was sympathetic to homeless animals. Jackson was the underdog in this farce.

It was hopeless, absolutely hopeless. He was condemned to misery, betrayed by his wife, cast into oblivion by two people who cared nothing for him. There was nothing left.

Suicide. Death. Blessed death. End the whole mess. How? Poison was painful, shooting was messy, and besides, he was a poor marksman anyway.

The window. That was it. He would climb out onto the ledge and cast himself to the street below. It shouldn’t be too difficult, and he would probably lose consciousness before he hit the ground anyway.

He moved toward the window. It was a bit chilly outside, so he decided to put on a coat on first, and perhaps his gloves, because his hands felt the chill sooner than the rest of his body, and his hat because he was violently susceptible to head colds. Only when his gloves were on and his hat perched on his head and his coat buttoned all the way up to his neck did he climb onto the sill and out to the ledge.

He edged his way along the side of the building until he was far enough out so that he would be able to kill himself with complete freedom. The air was brisk and clean, and it felt like a day in the woods. To get his bearings, he glanced down casually, but as soon as he saw the autos and people moving back and forth like living beads on an abacus, he felt nauseous and vertigo seized him.

He jerked his head back quickly and pressed himself to the building as if desperately attempting to become a part of it. It was an asinine idea, climbing out here as if he were going for a Sunday stroll. Why should he murder himself? It would solve nothing. Stacy would probably continue to see Jackson, and the two might even have a few laughs together about her jackass of a husband who had splattered himself on the city street like jam on a slice of bread.

The Alembic
If the building across the way had been a living creature, with arms and legs, it would have slapped his wrists for being so absurd. But the building was not flesh and blood, and merely stood unconcerned about his life and death. It was ominous in its indifference.

Dennis Daly was paralyzed. He could move neither left nor right. And horror of horrors, irony of ironies, a minor detail that made the situation more ludicrous than it already was. . . . HIS SHOE LACE HAD COME UNTIED FOR THE FIFTH TIME.

He had been on the ledge about five minutes, long enough to have attracted an audience of office workers like himself, people who might have been up there in his stead had his situation been theirs, when Jackson passed by on the street below, thinking of Stacy, and noticed the crowd.

At first the crowd impressed him little; he had other things on his mind. He had seen Stacy earlier in the morning, and she had informed him that Dennis refused to give her a divorce. This meant they would have to find some other means of eliminating him. Divorce was still possible, of course, but it would mean much expense and waste much time, and Stacy actually had no valid grounds for divorce. It would be ridiculous for her to charge herself with adultery. Consequently they had to think of some other way.

Jackson discarded his divorce thoughts for the moment as he gradually became aware of the people around him. What were they looking at? He lifted his head and saw the man on the ledge and chuckled to himself. Some insecure fool had decided in favor of suicide.

He absent-mindedly made a rapid surveillance of the building and discovered, much to his astonishment, that this was the same building in which Daly worked. For an instant hope surged through him. But no, it couldn't be Daly. That was too much to expect. He counted: one, two, three . . .
fifteen. It was the same floor and the same section of the building.

Squinting incredulously, he identified the dark brown overcoat as well as that unmistakably absurd hat. The figure was indeed Dennis Daly.

Jackson could not believe that Stacy's husband was really standing on the ledge, making a complete fool of himself. Such a golden opportunity to eliminate the enemy did not present itself daily. This was a rare occasion, something that might never happen again, and he rapidly considered how he could take proper advantage of the situation.

He had foreseen it in a way. He had thought after leaving the Daly home rather hastily that Dennis might perform some perfectly inane act. And although he had expected a reaction, the inanity of this reaction exceeded his wildest expectations.

The question now was, would he jump? Would he follow his chosen course, or would he root himself on the ledge until a clergyman or fireman coaxed him in? If the latter occurred, Jackson feared, Daly might be frightened back into manhood from which he had isolated himself for so long, and retaliate. Such a turn might destroy all of Jackson's plans for marrying Stacy, because Daly would never give his wife a divorce.

Thus Daly must jump, or fall. It made no difference which. But Daly, Jackson knew, would not jump. He would be too petrified, Jackson was positive of that. So he would have to fall somehow.

The most effective way of insuring a fall would be for Jackson to climb fifteen flights, feign help, and conveniently allow his grasp to slip. But someone might suspect that he intentionally murdered Daly, and Stacy loathed murder. She was a part of humanity. She approved adultery and accepted suicide, but loathed murder and would never marry a man who had murdered.

Besides, the police would never allow him up there anyway.

The Alembic
The only other alternative would be to unnerve Daly, to make him so frightened that he would panic and fall. But he was fifteen stories above, and Jackson was in the street, a member of the crowd, around the bull’s eye.

The crowd.

That would be his weapon.

The crowd.

Gay and laughing they would take up the cause of Bill Jackson, adulterer-in-chief.

He began slowly chanting to himself, a steady, rhythmical, monotonous litany of “Jump . . . jump . . . jump.” His voice became more audible, not loud enough to be heard five yards away, but loud enough to be heard by the man to his left, by the man to his right, by the woman with the shopping bag directly in front of him. And gradually they began to chant until the chant spread and the entire crowd mumbled the steady “jump . . . jump . . . jump.”

The Alembic

Jackson became enthralled with the chant and mingled among the people and lost himself in them until he was no longer important, and Daly was no longer important, and Stacy was no longer important, and divorce was no longer important, and all that mattered was man, ledge, crowd, and crowd must make man leave ledge.


Above, Daly did not want to look down, or up, or straight ahead. He just wanted to close his eyes and pretend he was not real. He did not want to move right or left, nor did he want to jump. He wanted to be away from the ledge and in the relative security of his office.

A muffled rumbling made its way into his head from the street below and he felt he must look down to see what was happening. Opening his eyes, he lowered his head until he was able to see the semi-circle of pinheads staring up at him from the sidewalk, singing to him, encouraging him to leave his perch and dive into the red
and black target that was becoming clearer and clearer in his mind.

“Hey fella.”

They want me to jump, he thought. They are mad. The absurdity of it all. They are utterly insane.

What the hell am I doing up here?

He wanted to run from them, to run inside so that the people below could no longer play their horrid game, but he was aware that his right shoe was loose on his foot, and if he made the slightest move the loose shoe might trip him up and send him hurtling into their midst, exactly where they wanted to see him, with his own.

Jump. Jump. Jump. It was such a silly phrase.

“Hey fella.”

Someone was calling him from his right. He turned his head cautiously until he could see, protruding from the window through which he had recently passed, a white clown-like face and the blue uniform blouse of a policeman.

“Hey fella. Waddya doin’ out there?”

Daly wanted to laugh out loud, the question was so ridiculous. What did it look like he was doing out here?

“I’m tryin’ to help ya, fella,” said the policeman.

Daly wanted help, but what was more important, he wanted the crowd to stop yelling. It was getting louder and more nerve-wracking, and finally became unbearable.

All right, all right, he thought to himself.

He stepped to the right toward the window and escape, but on his second step the shoe lace lodged itself under his left foot and the movement of his right foot set him off balance so that he tumbled over the side before the police officer

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could grab anything more than the impish hat that slipped from Daly's head.

The crowd whistled from a high pitch to a low pitch as he plunged straight to the ground, and the whistle ceased as abruptly as it began when the human missile struck the target dead center.

One stranger paid another ten dollars, and the people watched silently as the bull's eye faded slowly away, leaving a man.

The police dispersed them and they returned to their offices.
BOOK REVIEW

WILLIAM FAULKNER:  
THE YOKNAPATAWPHA COUNTRY.  
By Cleanth Brooks.  
PAUL FERGUSON '65

This book is not the first, and it probably will not be the last, critical evaluation of one of America's finest and most enigmatic novelists. It is, however, a major work, adequately documented, and should prove a valuable guide for the serious student of Faulkner, or even for the occasional reader.

I must admit that I fit into the latter category and am unable to validly judge Brooks' accuracy in explaining many of Faulkner's works. Thus I must approach Brooks in light of his reputation as a critic of some stature.

Brooks identifies Faulkner as both a provincial writer and a nature poet, and attempts "to suggest the relation of his special world to that of modern man." He does this by carefully analyzing each of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels in separate chapters.

Faulkner, says Brooks, uses the nature motif throughout his novels in several ways. Nature, in some instances, "reflects, and may even generate, a mood in man." In other instances, nature does not reflect these moods but contrasts with them and may even hold some divine force over individuals. Brooks sees this latter element reflected in The Hamlet wherein the idiot identifies a cow as some kind of animal goddess. Says Brooks, "she (the cow) is a principle of fertility, feminine and calmly joyous, and, as Faulkner describes her, she seems to be almost an exaltation of the natural scene."

Yet the quality of such natural divinity is somewhat in question for "the idiot represents man so thoroughly merged into nature that he almost
lacks consciousness, and becomes not much more than a stance of mindless adoration and worship."

Brooks sees as some of Faulkner's major themes the role of the community, the theme of isolation and alienation, Puritanism in the South, tension between masculine and feminine principles, and the relation of characters to the past. Many of these themes are given prominence in perhaps the finest chapter in the book, the chapter concerning *The Sound and the Fury*.

The theme of isolation and alienation is treated first, tracing this alienation through various viewpoints:

"The sense of frustration and 'entrapment' is overpowering. Benjy is obviously a victim in the sense in which an animal is, but Quentin is hardly less so, and even the horribly 'sane' Jason feels victimized, as he shows in his compulsive talk. There is, therefore, as we move toward the end of the book, the sense of coming out into an objective world, a world in which objects take on firmness of outline and density and weight, in which objective truth, and not mere obsessional impressions, exists."

Puritanism is exemplified by Quentin who demonstrates his alarm at the breakdown of sexual morality. Quentin, says Brooks, is so obsessed by this breakdown that he has deluded himself into believing that he has committed incest with his sister Caddy. This obsession leads to a hatred of his mother and his eventual suicide.

The theme of tension exists most obviously between Jason and the second Quentin, Caddy's illegitimate daughter.

Consideration of these themes is not, however, limited to the chapter on *The Sound and the Fury*. In fact, Brooks sees these themes running throughout Faulkner and gives them careful analysis in relation to each of the novels.

Perhaps of equal significance to Brooks is Faulkner's function as a poet. There is a chapter devoted entirely to the Southern author's poetry,
and this element seems to color Brooks' approach all the way through. Each chapter mentions some poetic element, and many go into great detail comparing and contrasting the poetic language of various characters.

There are, of course, many insights offered in this book, each one carefully stated and substantiated through textual analysis. They are, however, of such intricacy that it would be impossible to do them justice in such a limited amount of space.

Brooks' style is clear and economical. He does not consider Faulkner's novels chronologically, but rather according to the interrelation of themes. Consequently, his book reads smoothly.

Apparently this particular book is merely part of a much more extensive undertaking, for Brooks reveals in his preface that a subsequent work will concentrate on Faulkner's development as an artist as well as on several aspects that he claims have been omitted from this work.

Drift

A floating fantasy,

Life's swells and ripples

Heave sighs of restless bliss

A bobbing Cork,

Cresting waves of fluid undulation,

Drifting into cool grey future's fog.

John A. Thompson
Sarah Graves' living room is about fourteen feet square. It has rose colored wallpaper, once beautiful and stylish but now faded and discolored by long yellow water-stains. The rug that covers most of the floor is threadbare in many places, and the ceiling is grey with soot and several long jagged cracks extend in random patterns from the corners.

There is a door on the right wall. On the same wall three feet farther back there is a large window; it has long, lacy curtains and the shade is half drawn. In the center of the back wall there is a fireplace; on the right side of it is an old fashioned floor lamp with a fringed shade, on the right, a dark green overstuffed chair. On the right wall is a maroon sofa in the same style as the chair. In front of it is a large Victorian coffee table.

Sarah is an elderly white woman. All the other characters are Negroes.

AS THE CURTAIN GOES UP, we see Sarah sitting beside the fireplace reading. The doorbell rings; she sets the book aside with a start and goes to the door.

SARAH: Who's there?

VOICE: Just me Miz Graves, Ellen.

SARAH: Ellen who? Answer me, do you hear!

ELLEN: Ellen Harris, Miz Graves. I have the books you said you wanted last week. Don't you remember?

SARAH: Books? Oh, yes. Leave them there in the basket next to the mailbox; I'll come out and get them in a few minutes.

ELLEN: But the money due for them, Miz Graves?

SARAH: Oh, yes, the money. I'll leave it in an envelope for you in the basket. You can come and get it later.
ELLEN:
Miz Graves, if you don't have the money right now, I understand. We all have the same problem. Why last week Bill, you know, the grocer, was up at our house to collect and . . . .

SARAH:
No money. She understands, all have the same problem, chased by their grocer — no better than animals. (loudly) Well, I know about you people, you're all looking for an excuse to get in here. You'll have your money later.

ELLEN:
But Miz Graves . . . .

SARAH:
Get off this porch before I call the police.

ELLEN:
(angrily) All right, but I'll be back later and the money better be out here.

SARAH:
She walks away from the door and moves about the room in her agitation.

Suddenly a ball comes through the open window and lands on the floor, rolling across the room. Sarah picks it up and goes to the window.

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE:
Please, Miss Graves, can we have our ball?

SARAH:
Have your ball? why you nearly broke my window. Now get away from here. I'll keep the ball.

VOICE:
But Miss Graves, please let us have it. We don't have another one, we won't be able to play.

SARAH:
Play? Do you call throwing a ball through people's windows playing? You're just like your parents dirty, shiftless, destructive. Now get away from here.

VOICE:
But Miss Graves, we didn't break anything . . . .

SARAH:
Get away, get away from here I said.

She closes the window with a slam, and the glass cracks from

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corner to corner. She looks at it in dismay then goes to the phone and dials.

Hello, this is Miss Graves next door. Let me speak to Billy. Yes, of course, your father, who do you think I meant. (pause) Hello, Billy? This is Miss Graves. Can you come over right way. Some children broke my window trying to get in and I must have it fixed right away. Good. All right, I’ll expect you in a few minutes. Bring that glass you didn’t need from those last repairs. Thank God you were home! I can’t let anyone else in here.

Sarah goes to the window again and looks out anxiously; then goes back to her chair, sits down and picks up her book but drops it immediately, walks to the door and tests the lock, then locks the cracked window. She hears a step on the porch and goes to the door.

SARAH:
Billy?

Billy:
That’s right, Miss Graves. Let me in.

SARAH:
All right, wait a minute.

Billy enters carrying some tools and a pane of glass.

SARAH:
Which window is broken Miss Graves?

Billy:
Why that one (points to one beside door). Didn’t you see it as you came in?

Billy:
Oh, that one, it’s just cracked. I guess I get used to seeing cracked windows in this neighborhood Miss Graves.

SARAH:
Not on my house you don’t, young man.

Billy:
I stopped being a young man about the time I got of your class at the old school. In my neighborhood you grew up fast.
SARAH:
I'm sure I wouldn't know anything about it.

BILLY:
It would be easy for you to find out, just look out your window.

SARAH:
I prefer not to. When I think of what your people have done to this street. It used to be one of the best parts of town. Why when mother and father and I lived here, about the time I taught you, Billy, people would ride down the street to see our homes. Now they ride down this street only when they have to, and then with their car doors locked.

BILLY:
Not everyone who lives in this neighborhood is a criminal, Miss Graves.

SARAH:
Perhaps not, but there are enough criminals here so that the street isn't safe anymore even in the daytime. I read in last night's paper that a white man was beaten and robbed on the street in the middle of the afternoon and that was only two blocks from here. And the purse-snatchers, they're on every corner.

BILLY:
But things are changing . . . .

SARAH:
Things are changing? Yes, they're changing. This used to be a neighborhood of decent, cultured people. I had friends to talk to. I didn't have to hide behind locked doors and worry about robbers.

BILLY:
If you're so frightened why do you stay here? There are other parts of town.

SARAH:
I was born in this house; I've lived here all my life. I won't be pushed out of this house where mother, father and I lived. I will never have thirty people pushed into it.

BILLY:
How did the boys break your window, Miss Graves.

SARAH:
Why, they threw this (holds up the rubber ball) right through it.

BILLY:
But where is the hole it made, it's only cracked? How did the ball get in?

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SARAH:
I don't know; I mean they didn't exactly break it themselves but they did throw the ball in and cause it. They wanted to get into my house.

BILLY:
I don't understand Miss Graves. How could they cause it?

Sarah:
They threw the ball in the window to frighten me. Then they were going to come in after the ball and rob me.

BILLY:
You mean the window was open?

Sarah:
Yes, but I shut it quickly right after they threw it in.

BILLY:
You must have really shut it quickly to crack it like that.

SARAH:
I had to shut it otherwise they would have come in.

BILLY:
Why Miss Graves?

SARAH:
Why? Why to rob the house.

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BILLY:
If they were the same ones I saw a few minutes ago, they were a little too young for that, and around here the older ones don't play ball.

SARAH:
Everyone tries to break in. They know that I'm the only one who has anything worth stealing. They will try to steal everything and make me go away. But I won't. (starts) What's that noise? Someone in the kitchen.

BILLY:
No, no, Miss Graves. It's those water pipes of yours again. They're too old and they're going to keep on banging like that until you get a plumber to take a look at them. (He sets the window in place.)

SARAH:
Maybe you're right but the pipes have lasted a long time; they'll last a little longer. It's that window I'm worried about. We must fix it so that no one can break in. All the other windows are quite high off the ground and the doors are secure. If only we could fix that window, I'd be safe.

BILLY:
You're safe now Miss Graves. No one has broken in yet and I don't think anyone will . . . .
SARAH:
(ignoring him) We must do something. I know, I read once in a book about a man making a window into a trap, a bandit trap he called it. That's what I need, a bandit trap.

BILLY:
But you can't make a trap out of a window.

SARAH:
Listen to me, it was all explained in the book. Look at those grooves the window slides up and down in. If you could put a wedge in the groove the window would stop when it came to the wedge, wouldn't it?

BILLY:
Yes it would. In fact, if you pushed the window up against a wedge, the wedge would jam in the groove and the window couldn't go up or down. But how would you get the wedge in the window, push it in when the thief was halfway in?

SARAH:
No, of course not; don't be ridiculous. Now listen carefully. The window will be open about six inches as it always is so that I may have some air in this room. We will take two wedges like these (she takes two pieces of wood from Billy's box) and set them in the grooves above the windowpane.

BILLY:
What's going to hold them up there. They'll fall down and jam the window.

SARAH:
We'll use two pieces of wire, one for each wedge. We'll put the wedge in the groove about ten inches above the windowpane, then we'll stick a piece of stiff wire into the top of the windowpane so that it's in between the windowpane and the wedge and holds the wedge up.

BILLY:
It will hold it up but it'll be pretty shaky. One jar and the wedge will fall and block the window.

SARAH:
Of course, that's what we want. The thief will raise the window and get part way in, then the wedges will fall, block the window and trap him. A real bandit trap.

BILLY:
Miss Graves, you don't need a trap and you'll only spring it yourself when you try to lower the window. Then I'd have to come over and take it out before it would move again, some trap.

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SARAH: That's all right. It will keep them from breaking in. (She sets the pieces of wood on the chair.)

BILLY: But who would break in, me?

SARAH (quickly): Oh no, not you; I trust you.

BILLY: Why me and not my kids? One of mine was in the group playing ball.

SARAH: I remember you when you were their age, you didn't throw balls through people's windows....

BILLY: But they didn't throw it through the window.

SARAH (ignoring him): ... you were the only one in that class of little brats who didn't taunt me.

BILLY: Of course they taunted you, you were a white teacher in a colored school and every minute you were there you showed that you hated it.

SARAH: Of course I hated it. I was a good teacher working with incompetents. The superintendent must have thought it was very funny assigning a person with my background to a school like that. But I showed him. I stayed until retirement.

BILLY: If just once you didn't show that you hated that school you might have gotten along better.

SARAH: Don't lecture me about my attitude. It was up to those people to respect me. You can take a lesson from your own parents. I remember when they came to see me in class, they were polite, respectful, they knew their place....

BILLY: They were Uncle Toms. They thought that they could get along better with white people if they went hat in hand.

SARAH: And they were right.

BILLY: Well at least they got me through grade school. Didn't do so well with high school though.
SARAH:
Don’t laugh at them. They made you into the only trustworthy person in this neighborhood.

BILLY:
Trustworthy, what do you know about them, the way you hide in here. What about Ellen Harris who brings you the books, isn’t she trustworthy?

SARAH:
She tried to break in this morning.

BILLY:
How?

SARAH:
Well, I’m not sure now. But it seemed so then.

Billy:
Miss Graves you taught most of these kids’ parents in school . . .

SARAH:
Not that I wanted to.

BILLY:
They knew that well enough Miss Graves, but they respected you anyway because you were tough and good at your job, different from most of the people that taught there. They’re just a little older now and you’re part of the neighborhood.

SARAH:
I’m part of it, I don’t think they are.

BILLY:
But they know you and respect you. The only thing that keeps them from liking you is that every time they get near, you back away.

SARAH:
Of course I back away. I’m frightened of them.

BILLY:
No one likes to be feared, that’s why they don’t like you. Try opening up to them just once and see what happens.

SARAH:
I suppose that if I’m going to stay here I must try.

BILLY:
You can start by giving that ball back. They don’t have another one and there’s no extra money around to buy one.

SARAH:
Maybe you’re right. At least it won’t hurt to return the ball (defiantly). At least if they’re playing with that

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they won’t be plotting to hurt innocent people. (She looks out window.) They’re not there now, I’ll leave it on the sill where I’ll remember it.

BILLY:
All right now. It’s fixed. I’ll leave it open a few inches. When you toss that ball back, tell my son to hop in the house quick. He’s got homework to do for tomorrow.

SARAH:
I’ll tell him, and thank you. (She hands him a bill and closes and locks the door as he leaves.) I wonder if I can still toss a ball like I used to in the schoolyard at recess? (She turns and sees a small hand creep in the window toward the ball.) You, you, what are you doing. I’ll... oh well, he’s gone anyway and he has his ball. At least he won’t be back again. (bell rings)

SARAH:
Who’s there?

ELLEN:
I’m back Miz Graves. I’ve got to have that money now.

SARAH:
I’ve had enough things happen today. With people reaching in the window, and balls coming in. I’m certainly not going to open the door. It’s getting dark and I can’t tell who might be on the steps.

ELLEN:
I told you. I’m on the steps and I need my money. Now.

SARAH:
I mean thieves that might be lurking around.

ELLEN:
So now I’m a thief. (shouts) Give me my money you old bat.

SARAH:
The idea. You people have no idea of how to speak to a lady. In the end you always show yourselves for the animals you are.

ELLEN:
Animals I’ll get my money and it will be a good thing when some night someone gets in and gets yours, if you have any. I’m going over to get Billy; he’ll get the money out of you and from now on you can get your own books.

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SARAH: Thief! get off my property. I'll fix you. I'll fix all of you.

Sarah drags a heavy chair to the window and sets her trap. As she starts to drag the chair back she suddenly grasps at her chest.

SARAH: My heart, it's another attack. (She falls)
A knock at the door.

ELLEN (from outside);
I know she's in there; get my money for me.

BILLY: Wait a minute. I'll look in the window. Look she's on the floor.

BILLY: I'm trapped! I can't move!

SARAH: Billy, I . . . .

ELLEN: It's locked. I can't get in.

BILLY: Go call the rescue squad. I'll go in the window.

Ellen's steps are heard as she runs off the porch. Billy lifts the window and gets halfway in. The window falls pinning him against the windowsill.

Sarah grasps her chest, moves violently, and lies still.