

The mining town of Chippewa lies in a broad swampy valley between chains of squat, bald iron bluffs. The region contains the oldest rocks found on earth, forming a part of the great pre-Cambrian shield of North America. Upon the naked bluffs the towering shaft houses of the iron mines reach up toward the sky, sometimes in the shadows of dusk looking like the spiny backs of ancient, somnolent monsters.

Beyond the town and north to the international boundary sweep dense forests, broken by lakes and foam-lashed streams, by swamps and more hills, covered with pines, slender birches, maples and spruces, balsams, cedars and tamaracks, and bearing mute evidence of the grinding long-ago--rocky, jagged, fissured testimony of the giant upheavals and violent death struggles of tired glaciers.

Rich iron-ore deposits had been discovered at the town site before the Civil War, and there had been some fumbling, ill-fated attempts at mining. But it was not until after the War that dozens of adventurous little bands descended upon the town in search of quick fortunes. These first restless groups believed that the richer deposits lay near the surface, and men tortured themselves to crippled death quarrying out the great pieces of hard ore from the first pits. Stories are still told of the terrible labors of these early miners, of the ~~and~~ crude equipment--of the patient oxen which were used to drag the huge slabs of iron from the pits until their feet were too sore for further service, when they were killed and eaten by the miners.

After years of wild, gouging, slashing mining by these hardy little groups, a large ~~steel~~ ~~corporation~~ steel ~~corporation~~ corporation came to the blustering mining camp of Chippewa, surveyed, drilled, calculated--discovering at last that even richer iron deposits, a soft hematite ore, lay far underground--and then literally bought the town, mineral rights and all.

Gradually a measure of respectability was brought to the town of Chippewa with the advent of the new Chippewa Ore Company, lusty corporate offspring of a great steel corporation, with its head offices in the distant state of Delaware. But the town has never lost its air of being a mining camp; this is evidenced by the rows of frame clapboard buildings with their false second stories that still stand along the main street; by the stout, whitewashed log cabins that continue to house the families of miners within a block of the new city hall; and by the haphazard, winding streets of the town, which are usually narrow, but which sometimes capriciously swell out into brief and pregnant stretches of inordinately broad hematite boulevard.

Points of the compass mean little in Chippewa. Two families might live on the same street, and one live on North Pine Street and the other on West Pine. Some of the oldest settlers, old miners and their wives, declare that the town was laid out late on Christmas Eve by a drunken Scotch engineer during a howling blizzard, and that the only instrument he carried was a smoking lantern, while his lurching assistant carried a jug.

During each successive wave of immigration to the United States, a new racial group was brought to the town, attracted mainly by ready employment in the mines and bringing its own religious dogmas, its own priests and medicine men, its own badges and buttons, its secret lodges and grips and mysterious rituals; until, ~~finally~~ finally, God was neatly carved and divided up among no less than a score of churches, each of which offered its stout little band of followers the one true ladder to heaven.

"Eet's getting so bad," sighed the late lamented LaPointe, who ran the Jump-on-Top Saloon, "that pretty soon the old town she have one church for every goddamn saloon."

The town finally got a new brick high school, a stone firehouse and city hall, a frame ski and snowshoe club, and a sandstone Carnegie library. Then the mining company built a modern brick hospital and there was eventalk of a Y.M.C.A. The solid citizens regarded with deep ~~xxx~~ satisfaction the results of their efforts to make Chippewa like every other small town in America.

But after all it is still a minigg camp, in which one is used to hearing the dishes rattle in the cupboard following the deep, shuddering blasts of dynamite far underground. In the gaunt frame boardinghouses the menus, when there are any, are written in foreign languages. And you can boil in the rugged, luxurious hell of a Finnish steambath, with a stalwart Finn beating you with a wet broom of birch switches to make you sweat.

The first Finnish settlers came to Chippewa in the '80's, but it was in the 90's and at the turn of the century that they arrived in the town and peninsula in such force that they became the largest racial group in the entire region. Most of them had left the little grand duchy of Finland because of the growing cruelty of a diseased and dying Russian empire, and while many of them were attracted by work in the mines, an even greater attraction was the similarity of the climate of the peninsula to that of their native Finland. For these silent, patient, dogged Finnish immigrants loved nature and the soil as much as they loved freedom. And all these things were offered to them in that far northern segment of sprawling America, the upper peninsula of Michigan.

Not all these Finnish immigrants became miners. Some combined mining and farming, while many of them shunned the towns/and settled on the rugged land, in the tangled forests and rocky flats, along the muskegs, the tussocky swamps, and around the many cold glacial lakes--all so much like their native Finland--for miles around Chippewa and throughout the county, a county larger in aread than the entire state of Delaware.

There were also Cornishmen, straight from the tin mines of their native country; Swedes and Norwegians, a considerable number of Italians; followed in lesser numbers by the French, largely from Canada, and the Irish, who were usually railroad men, blacksmiths, machinists, or firemen at the mine's boilers. Then there were a few Scots and Germans, who were mostly tradesmen and saloonkeepers, and rarely worked down in the mines. And, lastly, there were the two clothiers, whose race was none of these, Leopold and Suss, those inevitable representatives of the real pioneers of the earth, who ran the large frame Miners' Store across the square from the Company's bank.

In this square, into which a half-dozen streets converge helter-skelter, stands a tall iron statue of an Ojibway Indian, his bow and arrow ready, shading his eyes and peering into the west, as though searching for some last member of the tribe who once roamed and hunted in the somber loneliness of the surrounding hills and forests until at last they had faded away before the avid digging and restless prying of the whites. In the Ojibway "Nagamon," the tribal lament, the lingering survivors of his tribe thus touch bitterly upon the early years of ruthless mining:

Chapter 1

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They drove in Paul's roadster, following the familiar route they had taken so often when Paul used to call for Bernardine when she was done with her night-nursing duty at the Iron Cliffs Ore Company's hospital. They drove silently past the towering pyramid-shaped shaft houses of the Delaware mine, lit now, since the War, by tall sweeping search-lights. "I wonder how many Jap spies they expect to catch 'way up here by cold Lake Superior?" Paul said. Then he remembered he had made the same remark to her the last time they had been together--the night when it had really been the wrong time of the month...

The little roadster bounced along past the ore-stained dry house, where the miners changed and showered. Paul sounded the horn for two miners, and waved at them. They then skirted Chippewa Lake, its glistening shield of new autumn ice reflecting the lights from the "company" houses across the lake.

"Are you warm enough, Bernie?" Paul asked. He manipulated the car heater and a sudden draft of cold air smote his legs. "Damn!" he said, turning the heater off. "Thermostat's still haywire. Can't get a goddam thing fixed or replaced since this goddam war."

Bernadine spoke for the first time since they had left the hotel. Paul was glad to hear the same old chuckling, dry Irish humor in her voice. "Be brave, Paul," she said. "Carry on. You mining-company lawyers must remember those stirring words: 'I am sorry that I have but one deferment given me by my company!'"

Paul was still laughing over that one as he unlocked the Company's gate and then drove the roadster up the narrow, winding, rocky road to the top of Chippewa bluff. As the car labored over the rocky crest of the bluff first they could see the full moon breaking from behind a jagged cliff of cloud; and then the lake which lay silent and frozen below them; and then the town of Chippewa beyond; the dull face of the town clock and the blinking lights. On the hilly outskirts of the town they saw the piercing searchlights from the mines lighting up the distant shaft-houses. They sat there silently and then they heard the rumbling sound of iron ore falling into the cars; and they heard, too, the insistent jangle throbbing of the great air-compressors that caught and forced fresh air down to the toiling miners who were burrowing there so far beneath them.

The town clock was striking twelve as Paul lit his third cigarette. This silence was getting him down. He didn't want to be brusque, but perhaps it would be easier to get it over with. And anyway, he had a workmen's compensation case hearing in the morning down at Iron Cliffs, the county seat. It was an important one, involving a claim of total disability, and his boss, Walter Holbrook, wouldn't want him to muff it. The home office out in Delaware had been raising hell lately... Paul crushed out his fresh cigarette and turned to Bernadine.

She sat with her hands folded in her lap, her head resting back against the rear cushion, looking up at the moon. Paul at first thought she was sleeping, and then he saw that her eyes were open, wide and unblinking. Then he saw the tears slowly coming down her white cheeks. "If she only weren't so goddam beautiful," he thought.

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She sat with her hands folded in her lap, her head resting back against the rear cushion, looking up at the moon. "Whistler's lovely daughter," Paul thought. Then he thought she might be sleeping. But then he saw that her eyes were open, wide and unblinking. There were tears slowly coursing down her white cheeks. "O Lord!" he thought. "If only she weren't so goddam beautiful."

"Bernardine," he doggedly began. "Bernardine, there's something I've got to tell you."

Bernardine slowly turned and looked at Paul, her head still reclining on the rear cushion. Paul fumbled to light another cigarette. It seemed funny to him, but for an instant her eyes had a sort of trapped and watchful look.

That wasn't like her. Independent was the name for Bernardine: He'd always liked her for that... Paul wondered if she knew, if she really suspected, that this was to be the payoff. He also wondered why people in the clinches always thought and spoke in soap opera cliches. He'd try again. The business-like, leave-us-face-it approach was the thing. Off with the cliches...

"Look, Bernardine," he began again. "Let's be sensible about this thing. Now about our getting married--"

Bernardine was laughing at him! With tears running down her cheeks, she was laughing at him. It wasn't a particularly rollicking or mirthful laugh: just a sort of quietly chuckling laugh, as though she were enjoying a private joke;

"Bernardine," he began again, lamely...

Quickly she placed two chilly fingers over his lips; fleetingly, as a mother might do to a naughty, talkative child. Then she began to speak, in a low voice, quietly, almost musingly. She was looking up at the moon.

"I suppose I should really hear it from your own lips, Paul," she said. "But I'll save you all the floundering and the embarrassment." She turned toward him briefly. "I guess I'm doing that because I'm so proud of you--I can't bear to watch you suffer. I guess I like you so much. Yes, I think that's it."

She paused and went on, again staring up at the moon. "I guess I've felt ever since you got out of law school that things were over between us. Yes, even when you first started out three years ago, in that little office above your dad's saloon, I sensed that somehow things had changed between us."

Paul had a strange sense of shock, a wry feeling of dismay. It was all true, what she was saying, but he had been going to say it, and now she was saying it, she was stealing his thunder. Somehow it gave him a curiously defensive feeling of loneliness and guilt.

"When Walter Holbrook took you into the Company's law office I was proud of you, as you know. Never before had a Chippewa boy been taken into that office. Their lawyers had always come from the East. Yes, it was your grand opportunity... But somehow, after that, the feeling that we were losing each other grew much stronger. Then, with Walter sponsoring you, the mining crowd took you up; you were taken into the country club and the Chippewa Club; you went to their house parties and camping parties." Bernardine laughed. "I guess the thing that really made me realize the extent of the change between us was when you gave up our trout fishing trips. I knew how you loved to fish... You remember the little fly rod you gave me? I still have it. You bought it with the money you made on your first case... Defending a drunk driver, wasn't it?" Paul glumly nodded.

"Please light me a cigarette, Paul," Bernardine said. "Thank you," she said, as Paul held his lighter for her. She rarely smoked and she didn't do it very well. Paul saw that her eyes were dry now. She was even half smiling. She went on, speaking slowly.

"Then, just a year ago--it was just before Thanksgiving, remember--the daughter of your boss, Maida Holbrook, arrived from the East on a short visit to her father." Paul felt himself flushing, and he didn't want to flush, and what the hell, even if he and Bernardine had known each other since they were kids, they weren't engaged, this was a free county, and--

"Listen," Paul cut in hotly. "Maida Holbrook's got nothing to do with it. Hell, Bernardine, you just said yourself you sensed a change long before Maida ever came up here. Not that there ~~was~~ was any change," Paul hastily

added. "Not on my part, at least. It--it's just..."

"Don't flounder, Paul," Bernardine said.

"Look Bernardine, it's just that I feel it isn't right for me to be taking up all your time. Maybe I'm not the marrying sort. At any rate, Bern, it'll be a hell of a long time before I could marry anyone. Don't you see--I'm still just a goddam law clerk down in Walter Holbrook's office. And my mother's all alone now. It would be hard to leave her. Maida's got nothing to do with it. Where'd you ever get such a silly notion? Woman's intuition, no doubt."

"Maida Holbrook is still here," Bernardine said simply. "She tells her friends she's going to marry you." She turned to Paul, smiling. "So I guess that's what she's going to do. You see, Paul, girls like Maida usually get what they want in this world. They never have to sit and wait and dream. They're sure of themselves. They're always so right and so sure. Nothing ever happens to make them unsure. They never smell of choloform or starched nurses uniforms. They're never weary from all night duty and from looking at pain and watching old people die. They've never had to keep a house for a hard-drinking father and four wild brothers. They've never carried bed-pans--"

"Bernardine!" Paul said. "That's not fair. That's got nothing to do with it. You're as fine as any goddam girl in the whole--"

"Paul, please let me finish," Bernardine said. "I am so sure of this, now, that I've decided to go away. I'm going to leave Chippewa. Exit Bernardine. I thought you'd like to know."

"Leave Chippewa?" Paul echoed. Why, oh why, did a woman always have to bring things to a crisis?

"Yes, Paul. I'm leaving home. I've joined the WACs and I'm leaving tomorrow. I--I was supposed to have left tonight--but I wired them today--after you 'phoned me this morning for a date. You see, I did so want to see you once again."

Paul could hear the giant gasps of the air compressors from the mines. "Bernardine," he said. "Bernardine, he dully repeated.

Bernardine spoke softly. "So good luck, Paul. And goodbye."

"Goodbye?" Paul said. Wretchedly he turned toward her.

Bernardine quickly put her arms about Paul. She was hurting him. Then she was tenderly patting his hair, comforting him. Why did she always pat his head like that, as though he were a goodam child? Didn't she know a man couldn't be a lover when he was patted into adolescence? She was whispering to him. "So goodbye, Paul dear... Let's say goodbye the only way that lovers can, dear... Even former lovers... I can be brazen now, can't I?... Let's say goodbye in our old way on our lovely old bluff... Never take her here, Paul... Promise me, please... Oh, Paul dear..."

The moon had nearly set when Paul creaked up the darkened backstairs to his bedroom. He hoped that his mother wouldn't hear him. She knew he had to get up early on that goddam compensation case. And what a bleak prospect that was... Christ, Bernardine was going away. "She's going away. She's going away. I've lost her. She's going away." Paul brushed his teeth so savagely that he drew blood. Fumbling in the dark for the mouth wash, he brushed the bottle off the glass shelf. Cursing ~~at~~ silently, he stood waiting for the inevitable reaction.

"Is that you, Paul?" a woman's voice called anxiously from the front bedroom. It was Belle, his mother, of course.

"Yes, Mother," Paul replied in a sprightly voice, almost gaily. He sounded like one of those bright, naughty kids on the radio programs. "It's just me." Who in hell else did she think it would be? The ghost of his old man, Oliver Beigler? Heaven forbid.

"Are you all right, dear?" Belle called back.

"Yes, Mother," Paul replied, fumbling desperately for the lost bottle. "A mere bagatelle. I just dropped my false teeth, was all. The new porcelain job. Really nothing at all, dear." Pause. "Good night."

Paul could hear his mother's trilling laughter as he glumly fell into bed without putting on his pajamas. "Yes, Sir," Paul bitterly thought. "Always the card, always the wag. Never a dry seat in the house when Polly Biegler's around... Christ! I've lost her. What's happening to me? Damn it, that's what you want, isn't it? What's happening to you, Polly boy?... What was it she said when I drove her home? She was standing in the open door looking so Christly beautiful. I could hear her old man snoring upstairs. I was going to kiss her again and she held up her hand. How had the little imp said it? Oh, yes, and in such quick Irish brogue, too. "Shure, an' why is it, Pawl, me bye, yer always after takin' that there Maida Holbrook to the swell country club--an' the poor likes of meself out to park on the bluff!"

Then: "Goodnight, Paul dear," and she was gone.

Paul buried his head in the pillow.

"Goodnight, Bernardine darling. Oh, goodnight, my love..."

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She sat with her hands folded in her lap, her head resting against the rear cushion, looking up at the moon. "Whistler's bewitched and lovely daughter," Paul thought. She sat so still that she looked as though she might be sleeping. Then Paul saw that her eyes were open, wide and unblinking. There were tears slowly coussing down her white cheeks. Just like in the movies. "O Lord!" he thought. "If only she weren't go goddam beautiful."

"Bernardine," Paul doggedly began. This was it. "Bernardine, there's something I've got to tell you. It's about us--about the way things have been drifting between us."

Bernardine turned slowly and looked at Paul, her head still reclining on the rear cushion. She had a dreamy, faraway look. Paul fumbled to light another cigarette. Paul ~~wondered~~ wondered if she knew, if she really suspected, that this was to be the end. The end? Ah, yes--this was to be the end. Fini. He also wondered why people in the clinches always thought and spoke in soap opera cliches. He'd try again. The business-like, leave-us-face-it approach was the thing. Off with the cliches...

"Look, Bernardine," He began again. "Let's be sensible about this thing. Now about us--about our getting married--"

Bernardine was laughing at him! With tears running down her cheeks, she was laughing at him. It wasn't a particularly rollicking or mirthful laugh: just ^a quietly chuckling laugh, as though she were enjoying some sort of private joke.

"Bernardine," he began again, lamely.

Quickly she placed two chilly fingers over his lips; fleetingly, as a mother might silence a naughty, talkative child. Then she began to speak, in a low voice, quietly, almost musingly. She was again looking up at the moon.

"I suppose I should really hear it from your own lips, Paul," she said. "But I'll save you all the floundering and the embarrassment." She turned toward him briefly. "I guess I'm doing that because I'm so proud of you--I can't bear to watch you suffer. I guess it's because I'm so fond of you. Yes, I think that's it."

She paused and went on, still staring pensively at the moon. "Ever since you got out of law school, I've felt that things were over between us. That's what you're trying to tell me, isn't it, Paul dear? Yes, even when you first started out three years ago, in that little office above your dad's old saloon, I sensed that things had somehow changed between us."

Paul had a strange sense of shock, a wry feeling of dismay. It was all true, what she was saying, but he had been going to say it, and now she was saying it, she was stealing his thunder. Somehow it gave him a curiously defensive feeling; [Ⓟ] one of loneliness and guilt.

"When Walter Holbrook took you into the Company's law office I was proud of you, ~~as you know~~. [Ⓟ] As you told me then, never before had a Chippewa boy

been taken into that ^{hallowed} office. The Company's lawyers had always come from the East. They were all Harvard men. Yes, it was your grand opportunity... But somehow, after that, the feeling that we were losing each other grew much stronger. Then, with Walter sponsoring you, the mining crowd took you up; you were taken into the country club and the Chippewa Club; you went to their house parties and camping parties. You even began to play bridge, and I knew how you despised the game. You still despise it don't you?" Paul grunted and Bernardine laughed. "I guess the thing that really made me realize the extent of the change between us was when you gave up our trout fishing trips. I knew how you loved to fish... You remember the little ~~three-ounce~~ fly rod you gave me? I still have it. You bought it with the money you made on your first case... Defending a drunk driver, wasn't it?" Paul glumly nodded.

"Please light me a cigarette, Paul," Bernardine said. Paul lit two cigarettes at one time. He had recently seen Paul Henried do the same thing for Bette Davis. "Thank you," Bernardine said. She rarely smoked and she didn't do it very well. ^{In the flame of his lighter} Paul saw that her eyes were dry now. She was even half smiling. She went on, speaking slowly.

"Then, just a year ago--it was just before Thanksgiving, remember?--Maida Holbrook arrived from the East on a short visit to her father." Paul felt himself flushing, and he didn't want to flush. Why was she bringing Maida in on this? And what the hell, even if he and Bernardine had known each other since they were kids, they weren't engaged, this was a free country.

"Listen," Paul cut in hotly. "Maida Holbrook's got nothing to do with anything between us. Hell, Bernardine, you just said yourself you sensed a change long before Maida ever showed up. Not that there was any change," Paul hastily added. "Not on my part, at least. It--it's just..."

"Now don't flounder, Paul," Bernardine said. "It's really not becoming."

"Look Bernardine, it's just that I feel it isn't right for me to be taking up all your time. You're too swell a girl to be wasting your time on me." That was always good. "Maybe I'm not the marrying sort. Anyway, Bern, it'll be a hell of a long time before I could marry anyone. Don't you see-- the truth is I'm still just a law clerk down in Walter Holbrook's office. And my mother's all alone now since the old man died. It wouldn't be right for me to leave her now. Maida's got nothing to do with it. Where'd you ever get such a silly notion? Woman's trained intuition, no doubt."

"Maida Holbrook is still here," Bernardine said simply. "She tells her friends she's going to marry you. Some of them have delighted in passing the word along to me." She turned to Paul, smiling. "So I guess that's what she's going to do. You see, Paul, girls like Maida usually get what they want in this world. It's a funny thing, .. Girls like Maida never have to sit and wait and dream. They're sure of themselves. They're always so right and so sure. Nothing ever happens to make them unsure. They are never afraid of competition because they ignore it. They never smell of cholera or starched nurses uniforms. They're never weary from all night duty and from looking at pain and watching tired old people yawn and die. They've never had to keep house for a hard-drinking father and four wild brothers. They've never tried to look nonchalant while carrying a bed-pan--"

"Bernardine!" Paul said. "That's not fair. That's got nothing to do with it. Of all the--You're as fine as any goddam girl in the whole--"

"Paul, please let me finish," Bernardine said. "I am so sure of this, now, that I've decided to go away. I'm going to leave Chippewa. Exit Bernardine. Easy, like that. I thought you'd like to know."

"Leave Chippewa?" Paul echoed. Why, oh why, did women always have to bring everything to a crisis? Their appetite for ^{tense} heavy melodrama was insatiable.

"Yes, Paul. I'm leaving home. I've joined the WACs and I'm leaving tomorrow. I--I was supposed to have left tonight--but I wired them for more time today--after you 'phoned me this morning for a date. You see, I did so want to see you ~~once more~~ before I left."

Paul could hear the giant gasps of the air compressors from the mines. Bundles for Berlin, Bundles for Berlin! "Bernardine," he said. "Bernardine, he dully repeated.

Bernardine spoke softly. "So good luck, Paul. Always, good luck. And goodbye."

"Goodbye?" Paul said. He felt miserable. Wretchedly he turned toward her. Bernardine quickly put her arms about Paul. She embraced him until she was hurting him. God, what a tigress. Then she was tenderly patting his hair, comforting him. Why did she always pat his head like that, as though he were a goddam child? Didn't she know a man couldn't be a competent male when he was patted into purring adolescence? She was whispering to him. "So goodbye, Paul dear... Let's say goodbye in the only way that lovers can, dear... Even former lovers... I can be brazen now, can't I?... It's our last night... Let's say goodbye in our old way on our lovely old bluff... Never take her here, Paul... Promise me that, please... Oh, Paul dear..."

The moon had nearly set when Paul creaked up the darkened backstairs to his bedroom. He hoped that his mother wouldn't hear him. She knew he had to get up early on that goddam compensation case. She'd only fret and fume and try to talk without her teeth... Tomorrow he must try a case. What

a bleak prospect that was... Christ, Bernardine was going away. "She's going away. She's going away. I've lost her. She's going away." Paul brushed his teeth so savagely that he drew blood. Fumbling in the dark for the mouth wash, he brushed the bottle of the glass shelf. It fell with the ^{crash} ~~knell~~ of a temple gong. Cursing silently, ~~and~~ Paul stood waiting for the inevitable reaction.

"Is that you, Paul?" a woman's muffled voice called anxiously from the front bedroom. It was Belle, his mother, ~~of course,~~ and indeed, her dentures were elsewhere. "Are you all right?"

"Yes, Mother," Paul replied in a sprightly voice, almost gaily. He sounded like one of those bright, naughty kids on the radio programs. "It's just me." Who in hell else did she think it would be? The ghost of his old man, Oliver Biegler? Heaven forbid.

"Are you sure you're all right, dear?" Belle called back. Why did she keep trying to talk?

"Yes, Mother," Paul replied, fumbling desperately for the lost ~~bottle~~. "A mere bagatelle. I just dropped my false teeth, was all. The new ^{por} ~~pro~~claim job. Really nothing at all, dear." Pause. "Good night."

Paul could hear his mother's trilling peak of laughter as he glumly fell into bed without putting on his pajamas. "Yes, Sir," Paul bitterly thought. "Always the card, always the wag. I'm like the little guy who made all the whores holler: 'He didn't pay. Yds, sir, there's never a dry seat in the house when Polly Biegler's around... Christ! I've lost her. What's happening to me? Damn it, that's what you wanted, isn't it? What's happening to you, Polly boy?... What was it she said when I drove her home? She was standing in the open door looking so Christly beautiful. I could hear her old man snoring

from upstairs. Good old Barney Tobin; so full of peace and so full of whiskey... I was going to kiss her just once more. She held up her hand. How had the little imp said it? Oh, yes, and in such ^a quick Irish brogue, too. 'Shure, an' why is it, Pawl, me bye, yer always after takin' that swell Maida Holbrook ~~out~~ to dance at the country club--an' the poor likes of meself out to lay on the bluff!'"

Then: "Goodnight, Paul dear," and she was gone. Barney Tobin's snores were blotted out...

Paul buried his head in the pillow.

"Goodnight, Bernardine darling. Oh, goodnight, my love..."

Chapter 2

Paul thought of Bernardine all the next morning. The compensation cases dragged interminably. Another endless case was on from the day before, made static by the pettifogging of the opposing lawyers. It was almost noon before Paul's case was called. He and Gundry scarcely had time to arrange their pleadings and outline the usual admissions and denials when the Deputy Commissioner declared a noon recess.

Gundry was the claimant's attorney, a pleasant young downstate lawyer, a bachelor, who had come to Iron Cliffs County on the legal staff of one of the New Deal agencies; had liked the place and had remained, settling in Chippewa. Lately he had been doing considerable legal work for the local C.I.O. Steelworkers Union, and consequently Paul met him frequently in court on ~~employment~~ comp. cases and over the conference table, hashing over the various grievances of the miners and haggling over the interpretations of various ~~and~~ clauses of the union's contract with the Iron Cliffs Ore Company.

Paul regarded Pete Gundry as a smart and able lawyer. In fact he was inclined to like him, despite the dark warnings of his boss, Walter Holbrook. "Paul, all these god darn shyster labor lawyers are alike. All of them, mind you. They'll smile you to death when things are going their way, but when the squeeze is on, once the chips are down"--Walter scowled with dark foreboding-- "then watch out!" Despite his Harvard education, Walter was a great one for using colorful, man-to-man phrases like that. The picture of someone selling someone else "down the river" was one of his favorites. "Those labor bastards'll sell you down the river, Paul, quicker'n you can say John L. Lewis!"

"The hearing in the case of Bruno Belpedio versus Iron Cliffs Ore Company is adjourned until 1:30," the Deputy Commissioner glumly announced, wearily reaching for a cigarette.

Peter Gundry walked over to Paul's table. "How about having lunch together, Biegler?" he said to Paul, holding out his hand. "Perhaps we can work out a settlement and save everyone a dreary afternoon. I've got you over a barrel, as you know, so why not relax and enjoy it? What do you say, Paul?"

Paul stood listlessly shaking Gundry's hand and wanting to phone Bernardine. He'd have to stop her somehow. What in hell had he been dreaming of to let her go for Maida Holbrook? Why, Christ, man, he couldn't keep Maida in nylons and cigarettes--even if she'd have him. Maida, Maida, that lovely, slow, honey-colored blonde bitch. What was she doing to him?

"I say, Biegler, can you eat with me?" Gundry was repeating.

Paul fumbled for an excuse. He had to make some 'phone calls and check some comp. decisions in the bar library. "Sorry, Pete. I'll have to be some other time. Thanks a lot."

"O. K., Paul," Gundry said, smiling his white, strong-toothed smile. "Don't say I didn't warn you."

~~xxxx~~ Paul drove rapidly over to the Iron Bay Club and hurried to the telephone booth. "Members please use pay phone for out-of-town calls," the sign said.

"Chippewa 664," he told the operator. "Hurry, please, operator. It's urgent." He dully wondered why he'd sat on his prat all morning and now found it so goddam urgent to call Bernardine.

"Fifteen cents please," the operator was saying. "Please confine your call to three minutes. Thank you, Sir."

"Hello. Is this Tobins'. Is Bernardine there?" Paul said. "Oh, hello, Bill, this is Polly Biegler. Is Bernie there?... Gone!... Oh yes, on the Chicago train this morning!... Oh Lord... No, it's nothing, Bill. Nothing at all... Just wanted--just wanted--say goodbye... Yes, sure... Goodbye, Bill."

Paul walked slowly downstairs to the club bar. "Háello, Polly," Niblo the banker said, turning momentarily from the quarter slot machine, then pulling the lever, closing his eyes tightly and putting his hands over the cherries and assorted fruit symbols for a nice surprise which it developed was not there. Paul dully wondered why so many small-town bankers loved to play slot machines; and again, why so many of them got to look like a sort of composite photograph of the ideal embezzler. "Hi, Mr. Niblo," Paul said, brightly, but Mr. Niblo was knee deep in anticipating another ~~surprise~~ surprise.

Pinky was at the bar. "Hello, Mr. Biegler," Pinky said. Pinky was always starched and humorous and pleasant, a good boy. "We got some of your favorite beer today."

"Thanks, Pinky. Not today. I'll take a double scotch."

"What'll it be? Black and White? Haig on a Hag? Vat 69? The salesman said after three drinks you can leap clear into Vat 73, no hands! Ah, that's it." Yes Pinky was a wag, all right.

Mr. Neblo hastily wanted twenty more quarters. From the perspiring reddish glow of his bald spot Paul estimated that he must be out about fifteen dollars.

"Make up another doubler, Pinky," Paul said. "How much is old Niblo down this noon?"

"That's his fourth fiver, Mr. Biegler, But he's a sticker. Like he always tells me: stick-to-it-tiveness will get you there. So I've been a bartender for thirteen years... Thank you, Sir."

Bernardine was laughing at him! With tears running down her cheeks, she was laughing at him. It wasn't a particularly rollicking or mirthful laugh: just a sort of quietly chuckling laugh, as though she were enjoying a private joke.

"Bernardine," he began again, lamely.

She quickly placed two of her cold fingers over his lips, fleetingly, as a mother might do to a naughty, talkative child. Then she began to speak, in a low voice, quietly, almost musingly. She was looking at the moon again.

"I suppose I ~~should~~ should really hear it from your own lips, Paul," she said. "But I'll save you all the floundering and the embarrassment." She turned toward him briefly. "I guess I'm doing that because I'm so proud of you--I can't bear to watch you suffer, I like you so much. Yes, I guess that's it."

"Bernardine," Paul tried again, but she went on, talking and staring at the moon.

"I guess I've felt ever since you got out of law school that things were over between us. Yes, even when you first started out three years ago in that little office above your dad's saloon, I sensed that somehow things had changed between us."

Paul had a strange sense of shock a feeling of wry dismay. It was all true, what she was saying, but he had been going to say it, and now she was saying it, she was stealing his thunder, and somehow it gave him a curious and defensive feeling of loneliness and guilt.

"When Walter Holbrook took you into the Company's law office I was proud of you, as you know. It was your grand opportunity. But somehow, after that, the feeling that we were losing each other grew much stronger. Then with Walter behind you, the mining crowd took you upö you were taken into the country club and the Chippewa Club; you went to their house parties and camping parties." Bernardine laughed. "I guess the thing that really make me realize the extent of the change between us was when you gave up our trout fishing trips. I knew how you love to fish... You remember the little fly rod you gave me? You bought it with the money you made on your first case... Defending a drunk driver, wasn't it? Paul glumly nodded.

"Please light me a cigarette, Paul," Bernardine said.

"Thank you." she said, as Paul held his lighter for her. She rarely smoked and she didn't do it very well. Paul saw that her eyes were dry now. She was even half smiling. She went on ~~xps~~ speaking.

"Then just a year ago-- it was just before Thanksgiving, remember? --Maida Holbrook arrived from the East on a short visit to her father." Paul felt himself flushing, and he didn't want to flush, and what the hell, even if he and Bernardine had known each other since they were kids, they weren't engaged, this was a free country, and--

"Maida Holbrook is still here," Bernardine said simply. "She tells her friends she's going to marry you." She turned to Paul, smiling. "So I guess that's what she's going to do. You see, Paul, girls like Maida usually get what they want in this world. They never sit and wait and dream. They're sure of themselves. They're always so right and sure. They never smell of choloform or starched nurses uniforms. They're never weary from all night duty and from looking at pain and watching old people die. They never keep a house for a hard-drinking father and four wild brothers. They never carry bed-pans--"

"Bernardine!" Paul said. "That's not fair. That's got nothing to do with it. You're as good as any goddam girl in the--"

"Paul, let me finish," Bernardine quietly said. "I am so sure of this, now, that I've ~~dezz~~ decided to go away. I'm going to leave Chippewa. I thought you'd like to know.

"Leave Chippewa?" Paul echoed in dismay.

"Yes, Paul. I'm leaving home. I've joined the WAGs and I'm leaving tomorrow. I--was supposed to have left tonight--but I wired them today after you 'phonedme this morning for a date. You see, I wanted to see you

Paul could hear the rhythmic giant gasps of the air compressors from the mines. "Bernardine," he said. "Bernardine," he repeated.

Bernardine spoke softly. "So good luck, Paul. And goodbye."

"Goodbye?" Paul said. Wretchedly he turned to her.

Bernardine put her arms about Paul. She was patting his head, comforting him. Why did she always pat his head like that, as though he were a goddam child? She was whispering to him. "Goodbye, Paul dear... Let's say goodbye the only way lovers can, dear... Even former lovers... I can be brazen now, can't I?... Let's say our goodbye in our old way on our ancient bluff... Never take her here, Paul... Promise me, please... Oh Paul dear..."

The moon had nearly set when Paul creaked up the darkened backstairs to his bedroom. He hoped that his mother wouldn't hear him. She knew he had to get up early on that goddam comp case. What a bleak prospect. And, Christ, Bernardine was going away. "She's going away. She's going away. I've lost her. She's going away." Paul ~~swx~~ savagely brushed his teeth until he drew blood. Fumbling in the dark for the mouth wash, he brushed the bottle off the glass shelf. Cursing silently he stood waiting for the inevitable reaction.

"Is that you, Paul!" a woman's voice called anxiously from the front bedroom. It was Belle, his mother, of course.

"Yes, Mother," Paul replied in a sprightly voice, almost gaily. Who in hell else did she think it would be? The ghost of his old man, Oliver Biegler?

"Are you all right," Belle called back.

"Yes, Mother," Paul replied fumbling for the lost bottle, "I just dropped my false teeth, was all. The new porcelain job. Really nothing at all, dear. Good night."

Paul could hear his mother's chortling laughter as he glumly fell into bed, ~~wkknk~~ shorts and all, without waiting to put on his pajamas. Yes, Sir, Paul bitterly thought. Always the card, always the wag. Never a dry seat in the house when Paul Biegler's around... Christ! I've lost her. What's happening to me? That's what you wanted, isn't it? What's happening to you, Polly boy? What was it she ~~six~~ said when you drove her home? She was standing in the open door looking so Christly beautiful. He was going to kiss her again and she held up her hand. How had the little imp said it? Oh, yes, and in quick Irish brogue, too. "Shure, an' why is it, Pawl, me lad, you're always after takin' Maida Holbrook to the country club an' the poor likes of me out to park on the bluff!"

Then: "Goodnight, Paul dear," and he was gone.

"Goodnight, Bernardine darling. Oh, goodnight, my love..."

Chapter 2

Paul scanned the headlines and drank his orange juice and coffee sitting in Belle's new breakfast nook. Paul's mother was extravagantly proud of this new addition to the Biegler kitchen. She had always wanted a breakfast nook, but Oliver Biegler, Paul's father, would never hear of it while he was living.

"You might as well hogtie a man in a bloody outhouse an' feed him with a spoon," ^{heri ~~would~~ would} he ~~would~~ announce. "Even the goddam saloons is goin' crazy these days--getting in these two by four ⁱsquirrel booths. When I sit at a ~~xx~~ table I want room to range around ⁱⁿ Breakfast nook hell!"

Paul idly watched Belle ^{busily frowning} ~~fluttering~~ over the new electric range he had bought her just after Pearl Harbor. He had gotten it wholesale through the Company, acting on a tip from Walter Holbrook. A good tip it was, too. You couldn't beg, borrow or steal a new range now.

"I see by the morning's paper that the draft boards are getting harder on these deferments." Belle said. "It's right there on the front page, next to that article about the man who married the thirteen-year-old girl. My, my. What's the world coming to? She should be home playing with her dollies." Paul scanned the article as Belle ran on about the horrors of child marriages. Belle's biggest concern these ~~xx~~ days was that "they" would come and take her baby--that Paul would have to go into the War.

Belle flapped over to the table and sat opposite Paul. Despite her easy life these days she always got up early, and nothing Paul could say would make her abandon the floppy sheepskin slippers she wore in the mornings. ^{Sheepskin and a quilted and flowered robe made quite a combination.} She had always worn ~~them~~ ^{these slippers} when all the boys were home, before the furnace was installed, when the kitchen floor was icy cold when she came down to start the kitchen range.

Oliver Biegler

"Where were you last night?" Belle said. Belle's gray eyes peered at Paul through her blurred pinch glasses that always needed cleaning. "It must have been awfully late when you got in. It felt late."

"With Bernardine Tobin," Paul casually answered. Belle's eyes lit up. She was always glad when Paul went out with Bernardine. "Such a splendid, capable young woman," she always said. "She'd make any man a wonderful wife. ^{Framed} And a nurse, too..."

"Good," Belle said, and again she reminded Paul of what a splendid, wifely girl Bernardine Tobin was.

"She's going away," Paul said. "She joined the WACS. She's leaving today."

Belle removed her glasses and held them pinched to one finger. "My, my, Paul. Now that's too bad. Did you?--did you have an understanding? I mean last night? I mean--"

"Look, Mom, the toast is burning. I've got to get going to court." Belle flew to the ^{smoking} toaster. "We had an understanding, all right. Everything's all off."

"My, my," Belle repeated, as Paul ^{gleefully} read about the honeymoon of the man who married the 13-year-old girl.

Chapter 2

Paul scanned the headlines and drank his orange juice and coffee as he sat crouched in Belle's new ivory-colored breakfast nook. She had extravagantly adorned it with ^{gay and} colorful decorations she had found in one of the ladies' magazines and had applied herself. Belle had always wanted a breakfast nook, but Oliver Biegler, Paul's father, would never hear of it while he was living.

"You might as well hogtie a man in a bloody outhouse an' feed him with a tin spoon," Oliver would declaim. "Even the goddam saloons is goin' crazy these days--installin' these two-by-four squirrel booths! When I sit at a table I want room to range around in. Breakfast nook hell!"

Paul idly watched Belle busily hovering over the new electric range he had bought her a few months after Oliver's death. Oliver had stubbornly clung to the old wood range to the bitter end. His resistance to modern sales pressure had been enormous... Paul had gotten the new stove wholesale through the Company, just after Pearl Harbor, acting on a tip from Walter Holbrook. A good tip it was, too. You couldn't beg, borrow or steal a new range now.

"I see by the morning's paper that the draft boards are getting harder on these deferments." Belle said. "It's right there on the front page, next to that article about that awful man who married the thirteen-year-old girl. My, my. What's the world coming to? She should be playing with her dollies." Paul idly scanned the article as Belle ran on about the horrors of child marriages. Belle's biggest concern these days was that "they" would come and take her baby away--that Paul would have to go to War.

Belle hurried over to the table and sat opposite Paul. Why did she wear those flapping slippers? Despite her easy life these days, Belle always got up early, and nothing Paul could say would make her abandon the floppy/^{sheepskin}slippers she wore in the mornings. Belle's sheepskins made quite a combination with her flowered quilted robe. She had always worn them when all the boys were home, before the furnace was installed, when the kitchen floor was icy cold when she came down in the mornings to start the kitchen range.

"Where were you last night?" Belle said. Paul inwardly winced. Belle's gray eyes peered at Paul through her blurred pinch glasses that always needed cleaning. "It must have been awfully late when you got in. It felt late."

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girl, too... This awful war." Paul gulped his coffee and then read about the honeymoon of the man who married the 13-year-old girl.

Paul thought of Bernardine all that morning. The dreary compensation cases dragged interminably. There was one endless case which had gone over from the day before, made static by the shrill pettifogging of the opposing lawyers. Paul yearned to pull the cord on an ambulance gong just to see them run... It was almost noon before Paul's case was called. He and Gundry scarcely had time to arrange their pleadings and outline the usual admissions and denials when the Deputy Commissioner declared a noon recess.

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"Chippewa 664," Paul told the operator. "Hurry, please, operator. It's urgent." He dully wondered why he'd sat on his prat all morning and now found it so goddam urgent to call Bernardine.

"Fifteen cents please," the operator was saying. "Please confine your call to three minutes. Thank you, Sir."

"Hello! Is this Tobins'. Is Bernardine there?" Paul eagerly said. "Oh, hello, Bill, this is Polly Biegler. Is Bernie there?... Gone! Oh yes, on the Chicago train this morning!... Oh Lord... No, it's nothing, Bill. Nothing at all... Just wanted--just wanted--say goodbye... Yes, sure... Goodbye, Bill."

Paul walked slowly downstairs to the club bar. "Hello, Polly," someone said. It was Scheffler, the banker, turned furtively from his favorite quarter slot machine. He didn't want one of the bank's directors to discover him. Reassured, he was back pulling the lever, closing his eyes tightly and putting his hands over the cherries and assorted fruit symbols for a nice big surprise which, it shortly developed, was not there. Paul dully wondered why so many small-town bankers loved to play slot machines; and again, why so many of them managed to look like a sort of composite photograph of the ideal embezzler. "Hi, Mr. S.]" Paul said, brightly, but Mr. S. was back again with his eyes shut, anticipating another surprise.

Pinky was at the bar. "Hello, Mr. Biegler," Pinky said. Pinky was always starched and humorous and pleasant, a good boy. "We got some of your favorite ale today. It's getting awful hard to get."

"Thanks, Pinky. Not today. I'll take a double scotch."

"What'll it be? Black and White? Haig on a Hag? Vat 69? The salesman said after three drinks you can leap clear into Vat 73, no hands! Ah, that's it." Yes Pinky was a wag, all right.

Mr. S. wanted twenty more quarters. He was in a ^{dignified} hurry. From the perspiring reddish glow of his bald spot Paul estimated that he must be out about fifteen dollars. "Someone must have been tinkering with the machine," Mr. S. remarked. Pinky assured Mr. S. that the machine had not been violated.

"Make up another doubler, Pinky," Paul said. "How much is old S. down this noon?"

"That's his fourth fiver, Mr. Biegler, But he's a sticker. Like he always tells me: stick-to-it-tiveness always gets you there." Pinky shrugged. "So I've been a bartender for thirteen years... Thank you, Sir."

Chapter 2

Paul scanned the headlines and drank his orange juice and coffee as he sat crouched in Belle's new ivory-colored breakfast nook. She had adorned it with extravagantly gay and colorful transfers which she had found advertized in one of the many ladies' magazines to which she subscribed. Belle had always wanted a breakfast nook, but Oliver Biegler, Paul's father, would never hear of it while he was living.

"You might as well hogtie a man in a bloody outhouse an' feed him with a tin spoon," Oliver used to declaim. "Even the goddam saloons is goin' crazy these days--installin' these two-by-four squirrel booths! When I sit at a table I want room to range around in. Breakfast nook hell!" So, until Oliver's death, there had been no breakfast nook in the Biegler home.

Paul idly watched Belle busily hovering and peering over the new electric range he had bought her a few months after Oliver's death. Oliver had stubbornly clung to the old wood-burning kitchen range to the bitter end. His resistance to modern sales pressure had been enormous... Paul had gotten the new stove wholesale through the Company, just after Pearl Harbor, acting on a tip from Walter Holbrook. A good tip it was, too. You couldn't beg, borrow or steal an electric range now.

"I see by the morning's paper that the draft boards are getting harder on these deferments." Belle said. "It's right thereon the front page, next to that article about that awful old man who married the thirteen-year-old girl. My, my. What's the world coming to? She should be home playing with her dollies." Paul idly scanned the article as Belle ran on about the horrors of child marriages.

Belle's biggest concern these days was that "they" would come and take her baby away, that Paul would have to go to War, that she might lose him as she had lost her boy, Lincoln, Paul's oldest brother, following the first World War. Paul could read the fear of Death in Belle's eyes... Paul remembered the morning that brother Link had died. Paul hadn't thought of it in a long time. But there it was, just like on that November morning years ago...

Belle hurried over to the table in her floppy slippers and squeezed her short, plump body into the seat opposite Paul. Why did she insist on wearing those flapping slippers? Despite her easy life these days, Belle always got up early, and nothing Paul could say or do would make her abandon the floppy sheepskin slippers she wore in the mornings. Belle's slippers made quite a combination with the expensive flowered quilted robe he had given her last Christmas. She had always worn sheepskin slippers when all the boys were home, before the furnace was installed, when the kitchen floor was icy cold when she came down in the winter mornings to start the kitchen range. So what was wrong with them now?

"Where were you last night?" Belle said. Paul inwardly winced as Belle's gray eyes peered at him through the blurred pinch glasses that always needed cleaning. "It must have been awfully late when you got in. It felt late."

"With Bernardine Tobin," Paul casually answered. Belle's eyes lit up. She always seemed glad when Paul went out with Bernardine. "Such a splendid, capable young woman," she always said. "She'd make any man a wonderful wife. And a trained nurse, too..."

"Good," Belle said, not failing Bernardine. "She's such a grand girl-- such a--a wifely young woman."

"She's going away," Paul said. He might as well tell her. She'd find out anyway. "She's joined the WACs. She's leaving today."

Belle removed her glasses and held them pinched to one finger. "My, my, Paul," she said, shaking her head regretfully. "Now that's too bad. Did you?--did you have an under-standing? I mean last night? I mean--"

"Look, Mom, the toast is burning. I've got to get going to court." Belle hurried to the smoking toast. "We had an understanding, all right. Everything's all off."

"My, my," Belle repeated, scraping the toast. "Such a fine wifely girl too... This awful war." Paul gulped his coffee and then glumly read about the honeymoon of the man who had married the 13-year-old girl.

Paul thought of Bernardine all that morning. The dreary compensation cases dragged interminably. There was one endless case which had gone over from the day before, made static by the shrill petifogging and endless posturing of the opposing lawyers. They were a couple of professional comp case lawyers, and Paul yearned to pull the cord on an ambulance gong just to see them run... It was almost noon before Paul's case was called. He and Gundry scarcely had time to arrange their pleadings and outline the usual admissions and denials when the Deputy Commissioner declared a noon recess.

Gundry was the claimant's attorney, a stocky, pleasant young ~~down~~ downstate lawyer, a bachelor, who had come to Iron Cliffs County during the depression on the legal staff of one of the New Deal agencies. Gundry had liked the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and had remained, settling in Chippewa. Lately he had been doing considerable legal work for the local C.I.O. Steelworkers' Union. Paul met him frequently in court on comp cases and again over the conference table, hashing over the various grievances of the miners and haggling over the interpretations of various clauses of the union's contract with the Iron Cliffs Ore Company, Walter Holbrook's main client.

Paul regarded Pete Gundry as a smart and able lawyer. In fact he was inclined to like him, despite the dark warnings of his boss, Walter Holbrook. "Paul, all these goddam shyster labor lawyers are alike. All of them, mind you. They'll smile you to death when things are going their way, but when the squeeze is on, once the chips are down"--Walter scowled with dark foreboding--"then watch out!" Despite his Harvard education, Walter was a great one for using colorful, man-to-man phrases like that. He prided himself on possessing the common touch... The picture of someone selling someone else "down the river" was also one of his favorites. "Those labor bastards'll sell you down the river, Paul, quicker'n you can say John L. Lewis! Mark my word."

"The hearing in the case of Bruno Belpedio versus Iron Cliffs Ore Company is adjourned until 1:30," the Deputy Commissioner glumly announced, wearily reaching for a cigarette.

Peter Gundry walked over to Paul's table. "How about our having lunch together, Biegler?" he said to Paul, holding out his hand. "Perhaps we can work out a settlement and save everyone a dreary afternoon. I've got your company over a barrel, you know, so why not relax and enjoy it? What do you say, Paul?"

Paul stood listlessly shaking Gundry's hand and wanting to telephone Bernardine. He'd have to stop her somehow. What in hell had he been dreaming of to let her go for Maida Holbrook? Why, Christ, man, he couldn't keep Maida in nylons and cigarettes--even if she'd have him. Maida, Maida, that lovely, slow, honey-colored blonde bitch. What was she doing to him? He must have been bewitched. And he had a date with Maida that night.

"I say, Biegler, can you eat with me?" Gundry was repeating.

Paul fumbled for an excuse. He had to make some 'phone calls and check some comp decisions in the library. "Sorry, Pete. It'll have to be some other time. Thanks a lot."

"O. K., Paul," Gundry said, smiling his white, strong-toothed smile. "Now don't say I didn't warn you."

Paul drove rapidly over to the Iron Bay Club and hurried to the telephone booth. "Members will please use pay 'phone for out-of-town calls," the little sign warned.

"Chippewa 664," Paul told the operator. "Hurry, please, operator. It's urgent." He dully wondered why he'd sat on his prat in court all morning, ~~xxx~~ being bored to death, and now found it so goddam urgent to call Bernardine.

"Fifteen cents please," the operator was saying. "Please confine your call to three minutes. Thank you, Sir."

"Hello! Is this Tobins'?" Paul eagerly asked. "Is Bernardine there? Oh, hello, Justin, this is Polly Biegler. Is Bernie there?... Gone! Oh yes, on the Chicago train this morning!... Oh Lord... No, it's nothing, Justin. Nothing at all... Just wanted--just wanted--say goodbye... Yes, sure... Goodbye, Justin."

Paul walked slowly downstairs to the club bar. "Hello, Polly," someone said. It was Scheffler, the banker, turned furtively from his favorite quarter slot machine. He didn't want any of the bank's directors to discover him. Reassured that it was Paul, he was back pulling the lever, closing his eyes tightly and putting his plump hands over the whirling cherries and assorted

fruit symbols for a nice big surprise which, it shortly developed, was not there. Paul dully wondered why so many small-town bankers loved to play slot machines; and again, why so many of them managed to look like a sort of composite photograph of the ideal embezzler. "Hi, Mr. Scheffler, Paul said, brightly, but Mr. Scheffler was back again with his eyes shut, anticipating another surprise.

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Mr. Scheffler wanted twenty more quarters. He was in a dignified hurry. From the perspiring reddish glow of his bald spot Paul estimated that he must have lost about fifteen dollars that noon. "Someone must have been tinkering with the machine," Mr. Scheffler petulantly remarked. Pinky assured Mr. Scheffler that the machine had not been violated. "It's simply the nature of the beast," Pinky added, winking at Paul.

"Make up another doubler, Pinky," Paul said, smiling. "How much is old Scheffler down this noon?"

"That's his fourthe fiver, Mr. Biegler, But he's a sticker. Like he always tells me: Stick-to-it-tiveness always gets you there." Pinky shrugged.

"So I've been a bartender for thirteen years... Thank you, Sir."

Paul finished his drink. He found a copy of the New Yorker and went into the dining room to have lunch. They had oyster stew that noon. Paul sat by him-

saif and ordered a large bowl. Oyster stew was one of his favorite dishes. Paul felt better than he had all morning... If only he didn't have the trial of that stupid case that afternoon. If only Bernardine hadn't acted so hastily and gone and joined those goddam WACs... Imagine hiding all that dark beauty in a drab and ill-fitting olive uniform...

Chapter 3

When Paul got back to Chippewa that evening, shortly before six, he went directly to his office to leave off his brief case and read his mail. He parked his car in the city square and walked across the deserted square to the office. He climbed the clattering wooden stairs and unlocked his office door from the outside hallway. Paul unconsciously straightened as he read the gold-leaf sign on his frosted glass door: "Mr. Paul Biegler." He glanced down the corridor and was relieved to see that Walter Holbrook's office was darkened. Thank goodness he wouldn't have to break the bad news now...

Paul hurriedly looked through his mail for a letter from Bernardine. Of ~~course~~ course there was none--she had just left that morning. Paul laughed and lit a cigarette. What a business! Here he'd virtually ignored the poor girl for the past year, giving Maida Holbrook the grand rush, and then the first day Bernardine left town he was feverishly searching the mail for word from her. "I crave but for some sign from thee," Paul recalled that some lovelorn poet had said. This Romance stuff was really very curious, indeed...

Paul found a letter from a former room-mate at Ann Arbor: Sleepy Moore. Sleepy was one of those big, kindly, dreamy handsome, fellows--the waitress's dream of how a college boy should really look--who should have been a channel swimmer or gentleman farmer or something, but who had managed to graduate from law school by some minor miracle. Since graduation Sleepy had been quietly starving in a small lower Michigan farming community. Sleepy had gone to the War, of course. Enlisted, and loved it, too. Then there was a note to call Mr. Williams, the Company's assistant paymaster, at the first opportunity. "Urgent," it said. Probably another goddam garnishment suit against a miner. Mr. Williams had only been handling these cases for twenty-seven years. He was one of the Company's timid and obscure corporate males, the kind who somehow always looked naked and Mr. Williams actually did wear an eyeshade, Paul recalled. faintly immoral when caught without their glasses and eyeshades. / Paul wondered

who Mr. Williams consulted when he felt impelled to visit the bathroom... Paul opened another letter: an engraved announcement from a Grand Rapids law firm. The firm's partners consisted of a long series of muscular and guttural Dutch names. Yes, announcing that another classmate of Paul's was in the Navy; Lieutenant, Junior Grade. Paul thought that by this time half of his law school graduating class must be in the service.

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He opened another letter: a dark and subtly-worded warning from some law book company pointing out the depth of the ignorance any poor lawyer would allow in if he did not immediately fill in the enclosed order blank for their latest definitive work on the law of Marriage and Divorce. Paul crushed the ad and distastefully flung it in his wastebasket. Then there were some bills which he threw unopened into his bill drawer... Ah, there on the bottom was a note from Maida. Unstamped, too; She must have delivered it at the office that day. Paul hastily tore open the envelope. Yes, that was Maida's perfume; her disturbing aroma even permeated her writing paper. Paul closed his eyes. It made a man sort of dizzy. God, when would he ever capture that luscious prize?

"Paul dear,

I'm dreadfully sorry, but I really can't see you tonight. You see, I promised Mark Roberts I'd give him a date before he left for the service. Then Mark 'phoned me today out of a clear sky and said he's leaving tomorrow. Just like that. He'd just got his commission and word of some important technical assignment. It all sounded so secret! Mark's simply thrilled about it all, but he refused to discuss it over the 'phone." ("There we go again," Paul thought. "Every bastard and his little brother with a rating above a buck private is diving into this glorious War bound on some dark and oh so secret mission...")

"I didn't dream Mark would be leaving so soon. He told me Mr. Blair simply begged him to stay, the company needs him so badly." (Waldo Blair was the austere manager of all of the Iron Cliffs Ore Company's properties in Michigan, // Paul would have liked to have been present to witness Waldo Blair begging any man for anything.)

"Isn't it perfectly dreadful the way all the young crowd is breaking up? If they ever take you, Paul dear, I'll just die, I know I shall. ("Now there's a discerning girl," Paul thought.)

"I'm sure you won't really mind, dear. About tonight, I mean. It's the least we mere females can do for you poor boys who must go into this horrible war. By the way, even some of us girls seem to be doing our part. A little bird just told me that an old flame of yours left today for the WACs. Bear up, Paul. Ces't le guerre!

"I'll 'phone you tomorrow, dear.

Love,
Maida."

Paul felt a quick pang of jealousy. And why had the little mixx made that nasty crack about Bernardine? He restrained a hot impulse to 'phone Maida and demand that she break her date with Mark. Then he felt ashamed of himself for thinking of it. Only a heel would do that. And besides, knowing Maida as he did, Paul wasn't too sure she'd change her mind. She had a hell of a stubborn streak in her. What a wilful, headstrong girl--like a blooded racing filly. He'd have to break her like--well, like his dad, Olaver Biegler, used to break his colts...

~~Mark Roberts!~~ Mark Roberts was a young geologist for the Company. For some vague reason Paul didn't like Mark very much. Perhaps it was his tall, dark, good looks--he was even taller than Paul--of which Mark seemed all too abundantly aware. Or maybe it was his elaborate Eastern accent which nettled Paul so unaccountably. Or perhaps it was the fact that Mark was Paul's closest rival for Maida's favor. But hell, he could afford to be magnanimous--Mark had lately fallen rather badly behind in the race for

Maida. And, after all, he'd have Maida all to himself now, with Mark going off on his secret mission to win the goddam war single-handed...

Ah, but just suppose that the draft board caught up with Mister Paul Biegler? Hadn't Belle's newspaper article--the one she had showed him that morning, said that the selective service people were getting plenty tough on draft deferments? Why bother with all the worrying and wonder? Anyway, all the fellows his own age were digging out. It was even getting hard to pick up a handball team over at the Club. Christ, wouldn't it be easier to just up and enlist and have it over with? It'd be tough on Belle, of course, but wasn't it tough on lots of other mothers? Hadn't word arrived just last week that Kenneth Mitchell had got his on one of those lousy Jap infested islands? Poor Kenny not only had a mother, but a wife and a kid, too. Hell, if Belle raised too much fuss he ought to be able to get a nice commission, with his connections, and sweat it out amidst the war clouds hanging over Great lakes or some such place? He still had some good Chicago telephone numbers... Yes, the Navy was the place. And hadn't Paul, with his tall, slender figure and blue-gray eyes, always looked rather nice in blue? Yes, the Navy certainly had the plushiest uniforms. The Navy it was...

Paul suddenly reached for the 'phone and asked for his mother's number. He might as well tell her now... He could hear the number ³³ ~~buzzing~~ and he could visualize Belle running to the 'phone. She always ran to the telephone, like a little plump girl. She'd have forsaken those floppy sheepskin slippers, this late in the day. Wasn't it remarkable how active she was for a woman of her years, and being the mother of ~~xf~~ five sons, too? And it had certainly been no bed of roses for her, considering her tumultous life with Oliver Biegler. There was a wild and wilful German, if ever one breathed... And poor Belle, giving all those piano lessons ^{for} so long to help keep Paul in law school. She'd probably take it hard at first, his going to war, but then she'd get-- --

"Biegler's residence," Paul heard Belle saying. She always said that when she answered the 'phone. ~~She was a great stickler for the proprieties.~~ Paul swallowed and then spoke rapidly.

"Look, Mom, this is Paul. I've been thinking over that article you showed me today and--No, no, I don't mean about the man that married the little girl, I mean about--No, I'm not calling about the compensation case--I lost the damn thing. One of our witnesses went back on us. The old double cross... What? You've been in bed all day? Got another attack right after I left? Oh Lord... Look, I'll come right home... I'm glad Mrs. McGinty is there with you. Doctor Dishno just left? Well, I'm glad the pain's gone away. That's fine...Yes, I'll eat downtown. Now you get right back to bed and be sure to take your pills. I'm glad Mrs. McGinty can stay. You ~~shouldn't~~ ^{should've} let her answer the 'phone. Now don't worry about me, Mom... Everything's perfectly O. K... It's you that counts... I love you, too... Goodnight, Mom."

Paul slowly returned the receiver to the 'phone. Then he packed and lit his pipe. He sat for a moment staring across the room at his framed diploma. Then he ~~he~~ ^{turned off the florescent desk light and} pulled his swivel chair over by the darkened window. He put his feet upon the low steam radiator and sat looking down across the city square. He blew the smoke at the window and watched the heat from the radiator slowly waft the smoke up past the gold letters of the sign: ^{window}
^

"LAW OFFICES

WALTER HOLBROOK"

Just last month Paul's name had been added, in smaller letters, down on the left of Walter's name. Walter had really been pretty ~~good~~ grand to him, Paul reflected. Wouldn't it be ungrateful of Paul to just up and leave him? Young lawyers to run errands and the like were hard to get,

now, with the war on. Of course, if he were drafted that would be a different story. And then there was always Belle. Paul was sure now that it would just about finish Belle if he went to War. Her heart just wouldn't stand it... And finally there was Maida Holbrook. Maida Holbrook was definitely unfinished business, a mission unaccomplished, as the war correspondents might say. But he'd get her yet, by God—even if he had to marry her to do it...

Paul looked across the town square at the upstairs lights of the Chippewa Club. A couple of good slugs of whiskey wouldn't go bad, he thought. Paul saw that Cecil Phelps was just coming out the front door of the club, walking as uncertainly as usual. You could set your watch by Cecil leaving the Club at this hour. He whiled away the afternoon there, drinking choice whiskey and emerged each evening for his nightly prowling of the town's taverns. Paul watched Cecil lurch in his oddly dignified way across the town square and enter Louie's Bar. He would get on a leather bar stool, near a juke box station, order a dollar's worth of nickels, and then sit there drinking until the nickels were gone. Then he'd move on to the next place ^{and the next} until someone ^{eventually} called a cab for him.

Paul concluded that Cecil must be about his age—just over thirty. Paul had heard at the Club that Cecil had been rejected by every branch of the armed forces. That was Cecil's sorrow this year: They didn't want wealthy rumpots in this man's war... Before that it was ^{his} being tossed out of nearly half of the larger Eastern colleges. Paul thought of the things he might do if he had Cecil's dough. The tables might well have

been turned, too. If Paul's German grandfather hadn't wasted his time pissing around with a one-horse brewery and a miners' saloon, and had instead bought some mineral lands, like Cecil's cagey grandfather, ~~had~~, maybe Paul would be ordering his suits from Brook Brothers', too. But one thing was sure: he wouldn't be sitting around in a bleak mining camp drinking himself to death... Paul shook his head and sat staring down at the square, slowly puffing his pipe.

A half-dozen narrow streets converged leisurely into the Chippewa city square. In the center of the square stood a cast-iron drinking fountain. On top of the fountain stood a statute of an austere Chippewa Indian chief. This Indian had a wonderfully unpronounceable name which the curious might read on the neat bronze plate which some W.P.A. art project had installed at the base of the fountain during the depression. This plate also reminded the beholder that both the fountain and the Indian were the gifts of the Iron Cliffs Ore Company.

It did not seem to matter much what the chief's real name was. All the townspeople called him Chief Booxe-in-the-Face. The good Chief stood through snow and rain, heat and blizzards, year after year; clutching his bow with one bronzed hand and shading his brow with the other, peering lean-faced and gaunt, as the W.P.A. plate poetically explained, "as though seeking for the lost members of his tribe who had faded and fell away before the avid digging and restless prying of the whites."

Paul Biegler had always privately felt that Chief Booxe-in-the-Face was merely peering across the square into the offices of the Acme Loan

Company with its inviting neon-lit advice: "Miners! Why Wait for Payday?" That was before the wild Saturday night when some drunk in a Chevrolet had collided with the fountain and had toppled Chief Booze-in-the-Face down upon Main Street. A squad of city employees had rushed to the Chief's rescue with their wooden scaffolding and paint pots. When their job was done the Chief looked better than ever. As usual Paul's father, Oliver Biegler, had hit the nail on the head. "They ^{finally} got him lookin' like a pimp all dressed up for a wedding," Oliver declared. What's more, he had been turned on his pedestal so that now he peered wistfully into the front door of Luigi Purgatorio's saloon. Paul was sure that he detected, at last, a slow smile of contentment on the old chief's face...

The Five-and-Ten store stood on one corner; the new city hall on another; the J. C. Penny Company store on the third corner; and the Miners' State Bank on the fourth corner. The entire upstairs of the bank building was occupied by Walter Holbrook's law offices. Paul's office was the last one at the back, at the top of the entrance stairs. Next there was the filing room, then the law library, then the stenographer's room, and then a large conference room. In the very front, shaded against the sun by Venetian blinds, Walter Holbrook had his private office.

Chapter 4

By midnight Paul was gently drunk. He hadn't expected to hang one on this way. He guessed it had all started over the three double scotches he had had over at the club. Oliver had always warned him against drinking on an empty stomach. "All it does is fill a man with high spirits and low purpose." Of course Paul could have had Fred make up a sandwich or two--the Chippewa Club ~~em~~ served meals only on weekends and on certain "stag" nights--but after three drinks eating had somehow seemed a foolish waste of time and whiskey. He might as well have another one...

About ten o'clock Paul carefully strolled up to the hotel bar. By then he thought it was best not to drive his car. He went in the side door of the bar, not the hotel entrance. He wasn't looking for Maida, of course. No, he just wanted to see what was cooking, was all. But nothing was cooking. The same travelling salesman was still there, putting the same half-hearted make on Martha. Paul thought that a twenty-four hour session of drinking was a pretty hard price to pay for any gal, let alone for Martha. Ah, the sailors were missing! They must be lurking in the men's washroom.

"Hi, Martha," Paul said pleasantly, as he passed the booth occupied by Martha and her salesman.

"Hi, Polly," Martha said, giving Paul a secretly inviting and heavy-
ledded wink. "She's still laboring under the spell of Mae West," Paul thought. He did not pause. A man who was about to become an officer in the U.S. Navy must see what skullduggery these two young sailor were up to in the men's washroom. Duty called. After all, no war could be won in a man's can, could it? But how about the distraught employee in Washington's Pentagon building who had moved his desk into the men's washroom because it was the only place in the joint where the occupants seemed to know what they were doing? That one had been Walter Holbrook's favorite story lately. Walter

had a great collection of stories about the boondoggling and incredible mismanagement in wartime Washington. But this was his current favorite. Paul knew it was because Walter laughed harder in telling that one that at any of his vast fund of F.D.R. stories...

But the two young sailors were not in the washroom. Deserters, no doubt! Paul philosophically parked at the bar and ordered another scotch. As he picked up his change he casually spoke to plump Bertha, the smiling Finnish barmaid. The regular bartender had been drafted, of course... "Have you seen Miss Holbrook around this evening, Bertha?" Paul asked.

"No, Polly," Bertha answered. "Her father was in with some Company big shots before dinner--but no Maida. Can I give her a message if she comes in, Polly?"

"No, thanks, Bertha," Paul said. Bertha was a trifle familiar, but a good bartender and a good kid. At least she seemed to know enough to keep her trap shut about the things that really counted. Paul had never heard any kickback on that night a month or so ago when he had so obviously taken Martha upstairs for a prolonged romp in the hay--that other night when he had been full of high spirits and low purpose...

At midnight Paul found himself slowly climbing the stairs up to Doc Dishno's office over the Rexal Drug Store. Paul had seen Doc's light while making his way over to the White Coffee Pot to have a sandwich. He was immediately filled with concern for Belle. Why hadn't he gone home that evening? Why hadn't he at least 'phoned to learn how she was?

The doctor's bare waiting room was empty, the three naked light bulbs beating down mercilessly on the worn rug, the straight backed chairs and the plain wooden table with its back issues of Esquire. The door to the doctor's private office was closed. There was a dim light showing. Paul softly knocked. He could hear the sound of heavy, regular breathing. Was Doc on one, too? He listened and ^{then}knocked again. He heard a sound of heavy stirring.

"It's Polly Biegler--Oliver's boy," Paul said.

"Come in," Dr. Dishno said.

Dr. Darius Dishno was sitting at his desk with his thick hands folded and looked across his paunchy stomach. There was a quart whiskey bottle on the desk. His head was sagging on his chest and his lower lip, partially hidden by his thick moustache, trembled and pattered as he heavily breathed. His dark eyes wearily regarded Paul from beneath his bushy dark eyebrows. Paul thought that at that moment he looked like a photograph of all the cynical and disillusioned elder statesmen of old France robed in one.

~~He~~ "Hello, Doc," Paul said. "I saw your light. Thought I'd just drop up and say hello, was all."

"Ello, Paul," Doc said. Doc's French-Canadian accent was always much more pronounced when he had been drinking heavily. He motioned Paul to take a vacant chair. "'Ave a drink, Polly! It's ten year ole stuff. I make heam myself las' night."

"I don't mind if I do," Paul said, laughing and reaching for the bottle. Oliver had always said that to Doc when the two were on one of their endless hanging or fishing trips, when Paul was a kid. They sometimes took Paul along to carry water and wood and make up the banks. "I don't mind if I do." It was a kind of formula, like the one about the governor of North Carolina.

"Here's to your good health, Doctor," Paul said. "May you be in Heaven four days before the Devil knows you're dead!" That was another old one of Doc's and Oliver's. It seemed good to be sitting there with his father's old friend--a curious, an ill-assorted friendship that had lasted since old Doc Dishno had landed in the bustling mining camp of Chippewa from Canada, nearly forty years before...

"Now about Mother--this heart condition--" Paul began. "How did you leave her today?"

Doc held up his hand. He was never a man to waste words--especially when there was drinking to be done.

"Polly," he said, pulling at one end of his moustache. "Polly, listen, my boy--dere's notting wrong with your mudder's heart dat anudder draft deferment won't feex. I wish my goddam ticker were half so good..." He paused. "Polly, I ain't seen your mudder in over a month..."

There it was. That was old Doc Dishno every time. So Belle had been playing possum again?--she had sensed what he had been about to say when he had phoned her from the office that night. Why, she had even lied to him!

"But don't tell her I tole you, Polly," Doc added, "else dat leedle Belle Biegler eat ol' Doc Dishno all up! 'Ave anudder drink."

"I don't mind if I do." Paul automatically answered.

Paul dully got more water and poured the drinks. So Belle had lied to him? He sat there watching the old doctor. It was funny how oddly he felt at home with old Doc Dishno. In fact, come to think of it, he was about the only person Paul knew that he could really confide in. Well, Bernardine, maybe but then there were certain things a man couldn't tell a woman--especially a

woman that had meant so much, that had been so close to one, as Bernardine... Doc spoke. He seemed to be reading Paul's thoughts.

"How's everyt'ing between you an' Bernardine? W'en you goin' marry dat lovely girl? You 'aven't been to see me one-two month, now."

Paul stared at the old doctor. Doc's pouched and baggy eyes looked back at Paul, bland and unwinking.

"Oh, God, Doc!" Paul said. He began to talk. He talked to Doc, good old Doc, just as he used to out in the woods when he was a little boy--when Doc was an active, striding, husky bear of a man. He told him about Bernardine, about Maida, about Walter Holbrook and the office. He told him about his draft deferment. He told him about all his classmates that had gone to war; about Belle's fear that he would have to go; about his determination that afternoon to enlist; about Belle's feigned illness.

"Doc," Paul dully went on, "I --I feel like a 'goddam heel--a prime horse's ass. I know I should be in this goddam war as much as any of us should. I'm not entitled to a deferment. I know that and it makes me feel guilty as hell. I know I should go. I really know that, Doc... But, Doc, look Doc--it's just--"

"Yes?" Doc Dishno said softly.

Paul glanced wildly about the little room; he seemed to see all of it at once; the littered desk, Doc's dusty diploma from the Canadian medical school, the stethoscope protruding from his pocket, the fly-specked light bulb, the curious look in Doc's eyes... Paul felt trapped. He needed a drink. He reached for the bottle on the desk. Doc laid a restraining hand on Paul's arm.

"Yes?" Doc Dishno softly repeated.

"Oh, Doc, I don't want to go!" Paul was nearly wailing. "Oh, Doc--I--
I'm afraid! I'm afraid!"

There, he'd finally said it. He'd never even thought it before, but now he'd blurted it out! Christ, it was true... He, Paul Biegler, was afraid to go to War! He'd always been afraid of war--ever since he'd watched his brother Link die from war after World War I... What would Doc think of him now? Doc was Oliver's and his best friend, wasn't he? What would he think of Oliver's boy now? Why didn't he say something? ~~Christ~~ Christ, was he falling asleep? Why did he close his eyes like that? He shouldn't do that. He looked like that bastard Pierre Laval when he did that...

"Hm," Doc Dishno said. His eyes were open. He didn't look like Pierre Laval anymore. "Hm," he repeated. Then he ~~smiled~~ smiled at Paul, and Paul saw that there were tears in his eyes. "Let's 'ave anudder drink, Polly. It's time for anudder drink--right now."

Paul repeated the old formula. "I don't mind if I do," he said.

Doc heavily leaned forward and touched his glass to Paul's. "Polly," he said. "You remember the time you fin' da big black bear onder the white-pine stomp?"

"Yes," Polly eagerly said. "Yes, I remember it just like it happened yesterday."

Chapter 4

By midnight Paul was gently drunk. He hadn't expected to hang one on this way. He guessed it had all started over the three double scotches he had had over at the Chippewa Club. He had gone over there to read, and have just one drink, but as usual all they had to read was dreary stuff like the Chicago Journal of Commerce, Skilling's Mining Review, not to mention the usual array of old copies of Fortune so crammed with photos and sketches^{of men}/of distinction and, of course, with all those beautiful cog wheels and drive shafts adorning the cover, all painted in at least four or five colors... So Paul had had another drink.

Paul's father had always warned him against any serious drinking on an empty stomach. "All it does is fill a man with high spirits and low purpose," Oliver had cautioned. Of course Paul could have had Fred, the Club's bartender, make up a sandwich or two--the Chippewa Club served meals only on weekends and on certain "stag" nights. But Fred was one of the growing new army on the homefront, composed of hyper-sensitive and vastly independent 4F's. They had to be coddled. They would quit a job at the drop of a hat, or even the bat of an eye, always being sure of the choice of a new and even better job. Anyway, after several drinks, eating had somehow seemed to Paul a foolish waste of time and whiskey. He might as well have another one. "Say, Fred, when you get a minute..." You certainly had to humor those 4F's these days.

"Coming up, Mr. Biegler," Fred replied. He smiled at Paul, displaying a glistening gold tooth. Lo, Fred was in a good mood.

Fred had worked at the Club for about a year--ever since the regular bartender was drafted. He had a lean, red-faced, crafty look, and Paul suspected

him of knocking down on the cash register. Too often he failed to give out the proper cash tabs when he sold a drink. Mostly he didn't give out any at all. There, he'd just missed Paul's again... "Say, Mr. Biegler," Fred said, giving Paul another glittering smile. "Did I ever tell you about the time I was drafted?" There wasn't anyone else in the Club at that hour, besides Paul and Fred, so Paul was obliged to sip his drink and listen once again to Fred's dreary account of how he had narrowly escaped military service. Paul thought there ought to be a law barring bartenders from talking to guests unless they were first spoken to. Especially embezzling ~~luxury~~ bartenders... Oliver had never let his bartenders narrate their autobiographies on the job. In those days best-selling books based on the memoirs of barmen were still to await another day... But there was no stopping Fred. His saga had all begun with his local medical examination...

Fred's voice came to Paul through a fog of boredom.

"I tells this local doc, see, that I'm apoleptic, see," Paul heard Fred saying. Paul knew by now that Fred meant epileptic, and he reflected that it was curious and rather sad that Fred could be one of those unfortunates and couldn't say it, while he, Paul, wasn't and could say it. Paul was also a little afraid that someday Fred would get an attack right there behind the bar. He watched the man carefully. He'd heard you had to put something between the victim's teeth to save their tongues...

"But it's getting so bad that these draft board doctors is even passing stiffs so long's the body's still warm," Fred went on, warming to his story. Fred had a low, confidential voice, something like that of a croupier expecting a raid. He paused and blew "hah" at an empty Old Fashioned glass. He then carefully polished it, then held it up to the light, like a scientist

peering into a glass retort. He hummed a tuneless ditty which Paul thought might have been "Stardust," Then he again blew into the glass, and started carefully to polish it again...

"What happened when you got to Milwaukee?" Paul asked. He thought he might scream if Fred blew on that goddam cocktail glass just once more. The ruse worked. It also saved Paul from listening to the harrowing details of Fred's epic train ride to Milwaukee, a trip on which Fred made thirteen straight passes shooting craps. "What happened in Milwaukee?" Paul repeated, taking a good drink.

"What happened when I'm in Milwaukee?" Fred reluctantly forsook his train ride. "Oh! Well, I'm in this big dump, see--an old armory or something--and there's a long line of we draftees, see, all bare-ass naked, see, all standing in this long line, going through our final medical, see. Well, I'm pret' near through the whole goddam line of docs, see, and they's all poked and jabbed and needled hell out of me, it seems like for hours. I'm so burned up by then, see, I don't even tell them bastards I' apoleptic... Then I'm up to the last doc, see. If I gets by him, see, then I'm one of Uncle Sam's soldiers." Fred paused, like a true story-teller, and again raised the Old Fashioned glass to his mouth.

"What happened!" Paul cried. His voice sounded shrill and panicky. He'd have to watch his drinks.

"Oh, that? Don't rush me... Well, I gets up to this last doc, see, and he does his stuff, see, an' I can tell by the funny look in his eye he's all set to push me overboard into Uncle Sam's army, see,"--Fred made an elaborately dainty pushing motion--" when, guess what happened?"

"Yes?" Paul said, trying to look politely expectant. It was coming...

"I gets a seizure, see, an' I ups and throws one of my apoleptic fits. Right there in front of them, see. Yes-siree! I throws a dandy right in front of where all them line of docs can see." Fred shrugged his thin shoulders and smiled. "So that's how I come to be 4F." Fred carefully placed the Old Fashioned glass along side of its companions.

"Say, that was a pretty close shave, Fred," Paul said. He had heard the story a dozen times, and he knew that he was expected to say something. "That's sure a good one. Yes, I guess all the body has to be is warm, like you say." Paul shook the melted ice in his glass. "Say, how about fixing me another one, Fred? I'm certainly glad they didn't take you. You're one of the best bartenders I ever knew. The Club'd sure miss you." It was all a lot of less than idle chatter and Paul wished that he was with Maida.

Fred was deeply touched. He even dropped his eyes. Paul ~~could~~ could see that he was thinking that this guy Biegler was a right guy. Then he looked craftily at Paul. Paul had a feeling that Fred was appraising him; that he was about to add something to his story. The man glanced this way and that, darkly, like a conspirator. Paul wondered what he was up to. He couldn't be drunk, could he? No, but he had something on his chest, all right. He lowered his voice to a hoarse stage whisper. It even seemed to Paul that he leered.

"Say, Biegler," he sibilantly whispered, "How did you manage to make it?"

"What do you mean?" Paul said, knowing. He gripped his glass until his knuckles showed white. The effrontery of the bastard... Paul longed to throw his glass into the man's hateful, leering face. "What do you mean?" Paul repeated.

Smiling: "What do I mean? You know damn well what I mean, Biegler. How come a big, healthy young fella like you ain't in the army? How did you work it?" He was grinning knowingly at Paul. "You're a right guy. Maybe I can help you... Let me tell you how I worked my racket. But mum's the word, see. Natch... He dropped his voice, speaking rapidly. "I'll tell you how I done it. It was this way, see. About my throwing them fits, it was my uncle told me all about this apoleptic gag. He was in the medical corpse in the first war--you know, the one to save the world for the Democrats, see--an' he give me the low-down, see. I can throw a fit right now, see. It's hard to fake, but it's hard to deteck, too. He taught me how to do it, see, so you can't never tell it from the real McCoy... It was dead easy. Want me to show you how I done it?"

For a moment Paul felt that he was going to be sick. Then he fought to restrain himself from clambering over the bar. The man was not only a miserable slacker and draft-dodger, but he even bragged about it. It was uncle an... Paul released the glass from his hand and carefully set it on the bar. His temples were pounding. He spoke slowly and carefully, cold with fury. The man was still smiling at him, waiting for his applause.

"I haven't worked anything," Paul heard himself saying. "I've received a draft deferment from the local board because of the essential nature of my work. It is all a public record. I didn't even ask for it--the Company got it for me. It's only temporary and I'm liable to be inducted into the service any time. As for you--" Paul paused. Then he slid wearily from his bar stool. "Goodnight," he said, hurrying from the bar.

Paul's face was burning as he ran down the Club stairway. At the street level he stood in the open door. He could hear the sound of Fred's

confidential, soft laughter floating down the stairwell. Should he go back and thrash the miserable, lying bastard? Then he heard Fred's sibilant, whispering voice. "Go tell it to the Marines, Mister... Go tell it to the Marines!" Then he again heard the sound of low, mocking laughter.

Paul stepped outside and let the heavy door breathe shut on its pneumatic spring. He stood staring at the sign on the door, breathing deeply, as though he had been running. "Chippewa Club--Members Only." Paul turned away. A light snow had started to fall.

Chapter 5

About ten o'clock ~~Rm~~ after side trip to Luigi's bar, Paul carefully strolled up to the hotel bar. By then he thought it was best not to drive his car. He went in the side door of the bar, not the hotel entrance. He wasn't looking for Maida, of course. Perish the thought... No, he just wanted to see what was cooking, was all. But nothing was cooking. The same travelling salesman was still there, putting the same half-hearted make on Martha. Paul thought that a twenty-four hour session of drinking was a pretty hard price to pay for any gal, let alone for Martha. Ah, the sailors were missing! They must be lurking in the men's washroom.

"Hi, Martha," Paul said pleasantly, as he passed the booth occupied by blonde Martha and her salesman.

"Hi, Polly," Martha said, giving Paul a secret, inviting and heavy-lidded wink. "She's still laboring under the spell of Mae West," Paul thought. Paul was often amused and a little saddened over girls in Chippewa patterned themselves after some Hollywood movie star, until by and by the pattern had frozen and set, and become an integral part of their appearance and personality, though the star might long since have vanished and been forgotten. America must be full of languid and obscure Greta Garbos...

Paul did not pause at Martha's booth. He had work to do. A man who was about to become an officer in the U.S. Navy must see what skullduggery these two young sailors were up to in the men's washroom. Duty called. After all, no war could be won in a man's can, could it? But wait! There was the distracted employee in Washington's fabulous Pentagon building who had moved his desk into the men's washroom. Why? Because it was the only place in the joint where the occupants seemed to know what they were doing... That one had

been, Walter Holbrook's favorite ~~xxxx~~ story lately. Walter had a great collection of stories about the bonndoggling and incredible mismanagement in wartime Washington. But this was his current favorite. Paul knew it was because Walter laugh~~ed~~ed harder in telling that one than at any of his vast fund of F.D.R. and New Deal stories...

But the two young sailors were not in the washroom. Only Kilroy had been there... The sailors were deserters, no doubt! Paul philosophically paused at the bar and order another scotch. As he picked up his change he spoke to pretty Bertha, the smiling blonde Finnish barmaid. Bertha's husband was in the Marines. The regular bartender had been drafted, of course... "Have you seen Miss Holbrook around this eveing, Bertah?" Paul casually asked.

"No, Polly," Bertha answered. "Her father was in with some Company big shots before dinner--but no Maida. Can I give her a message if she comes in, Polly?"

"No, thanks, Bertha," Paul said. Bertha was a trifle familiar, but she was a good bartender and a good kid. And she certainly possessed a beautiful pair of lungs... At least Bertha didn't try to look like Greer Garson and she seemed to know enough to keep her pretty trap shut about the things that really counted. Paul had never heard any kickback on that night, a month or so ago, when he had so obviously taken Martha upstairs for ~~a~~prolonged romp in the hay. That was another night when he had been full of high spirits and low purpose.

At midnight Paul found himself slowly climbing the stairs to Doc Dishno's office over the Rexall Drug Store. Paul had seen Doc's light burning while he

was making his way over to the White Coffee Pot to have a sandwich. He was immediately filled with concern for Belle. Why hadn't he gone home that evening? Why hadn't he at least 'phoned to learn how she was?

The doctor's bare waiting room was empty, the three naked light bulbs beating down mercilessly on the worn rug, on the straight backed chairs, and on the plain wooden table with its dog-eared back issued of Esquire and the National Geographic ~~Geographic~~ Geographic. The door to the doctor's private office was closed. There was a dim light showing. Paul softly knocked. He could hear the sound of heavy, regular breathing. Was Doc on one, too? He listened and then knocked again. He heard a sound of heavy stirring.

"It's Paul Biegler," Paul said. "It's Polly--Oliver's boy."

"Come in," Dr. Dishno said in his harsh, hoarse Canadian-French ~~native~~ voice.

Dr. Darius Dishno was sitting at his desk with his thick hands folded and locked across his paunchy stomach. There was a quart whiskey bottle on the desk. His large shaggy head was sagging on his chest and his lower lip, partially hidden by his thick moustache, trembled and pattered as he heavily breathed. His veinous dark eyes wearily regarded Paul from beneath his bushy dark eyebrows. Paul thought that at that moment he looked like all the cynical and disillusioned elder statesmen of fallen France rolled in one.

"Hello, Doc," Paul said. "I saw your light. Thought I'd just drop up and say hello, was all."

"Ello, Paul," Doc said. Doc's French-Canadian accent was always much more pronounced when he had been drinking heavily. It was scarcely noticeable when he was sober. He motioned Paul to take a vacant chair. "'Ave a drink, Polly! It's ten year ole stuff. I make heem myself, las' night."

"I don't mind if I do," Paul said, laughing and reaching for the bottle. Oliver had always said that to Doc when the two were on one of their endless hunting or fishing trips, when Paul was a kid. They occasionally took Paul along, when Belle would permit, to carry water and wood and make up the bunks. "I don't mind if I do." It was a kind of formula, like the old one about the governor of North Carolina.

"Here's to your good health, Doctor," Paul said. "May you be in Heaven four days before the Devil knows you're dead!" That was another old one of Doc's and Oliver's. It seemed good to be sitting there with his father's old friend--surely a curious, ill-assorted friendship, but one that had lasted since old Doc Dishno had landed as a young man in the bustling mining camp of Chippewa, fresh from Canada, nearly forty years before...

"Now about Mother--this heart condition--" Paul began. "How did you leave her today?"

Doc held up his hand. He was never a man to mince or waste words--especially when there was drinking to be done.

"Polly," he said, pulling at one end of his moustache. "Polly, listen, my boy--dere's notting wrong with your mother's heart dat another draft de-ferment won't feex. I wish my goddam ticker were half so good..."

"You saw her today, didn't you?" Paul said.

Doc paused for a moment, Then: "Polly, I haven't seen your mother in over a month..."

There it was. That was old Doc Dishno every time. "Light from the shoulder. Let the chips fall where they may. So Belle had been playing possum again?-- she had sensed what he had been about to say when he had 'phoned her from ~~kk~~ the office that night. Why, she had even lied to him!

"But don' tell her I tole you, Polly," Doc added, "else dat little Belle Biegler eat ol' Doc Dishno all up! 'Ave anudder drink."

"I don't mind if I do," Paul automatically answered.

Paul dully got more water and poured the drinks. So Belle had deliberately lied to him? She must be desperate... Paul sat there watching the old doctor. It was funny how much he felt at home with old Doc Dishno--old Doc, the maverick, the ~~quack~~ pariah among the local doctors, most of whom worked at the Company hospital. They said all sorts of things about old Doc: that he was a drunkard, that he took dope, that he aborted pregnant women. But when the slick young Company doctors really got a tough case, when it was a case of life and death Paul had noticed that old Doc Dishno was usually called in. Good old Doc. Yes, it was a nice feeling to be sitting having a quiet drink with old Doc... In fact, come to think of it, he was about the only person Paul knew that he could really confide in. Well, Bernardine, maybe but then there were certain things a man couldn't tell a womah--especially a woman that had meant so much, that had been so close to one, as Bernardine... Doc spoke. He seemed to be reading Paul's thoughts.

"How's everyt'ing between you an' Bernardine? W'en you goin' marry dat lovely girl?" He looked reproachfully at Paul. "You 'aven't been to see me one-two month, now. It's getting so bad on'y time da young fellow come see ol' Doc is when dey 'ave a dose... But come, how's my dark, lovely Bernardine? "

Paul stared at the old doctor. Doc's pouched and baggy eyes looked back at Paul, bland and unwinking.

Then: "Oh, God, Doc!" Paul said. "Oh God, oh God."

"W'at's dat?" Doc said.

Paul began to talk. He talked to Doc, good old Doc, rambling on just as he used to out in the woods when he was a little boy--when Doc was an active, striding, husky bear of a man. He told him about Bernardine, about Maida, about Walter Holbrook and the office. He told him about his draft deferment. He told him about all his classmates that had gone to war; about Belle's fear that he would have to go; about his determination that afternoon to enlist; about Belle's feigned illness. He told him all about the confession of that miserable bartender at the Club who had feigned epilepsy to stay out of the War...

~~Warxxx~~

"Doc," Paul dully went on, "I--I feel like a goddam heel--a prime horse's ass. I know I should be in this goddam war as much as any of us should. I'm not entitled to any draft deferment. I know that and it makes me feel guilty as hell. I know I should go. I really know that, Doc... But, Doc, look Doc--it's just--"

"Yes?" Doc Dishno said softly.

Paul glanced wildly about the drab little room; he seemed to see all of it at once; the littered desk, Doc's stained diploma from the Canadian medical school, the stethoscope protruding from his pocket, the dusty old medical books, the fly-specked light bulb, the curious look in Doc's eyes... Paul felt trapped. He needed a drink. He reached for the bottle on the desk. Doc laid a restraining hand on Paul's arm.

"Yes?" Doc Dishno softly repeated.

"Oh, Doc, I don't want to go to war!" Paul was nearly wailing. "Oh, Doc--I--I'm afraid! I'm afraid to go!"

~~Therey~~

There, he'd finally said it. He'd never ever thought it before, but now he'd blurted it out! And Christ, it was true... He, the great Paul Biegler, Oliver's boy, was afraid to go to War! Now he knew he'd always been afraid of war--ever since he'd watched his brother Link die from the effects of shell shock after World War I... What would Doc think of him now? Doc was Oliver's and his oldest and best friend, wasn't he? What would he think of Oliver's boy now? Why didn't he say something? Christ, was he falling asleep? Why did he close his eyes like that? He shouldn't do that. He looked like that bastard Pierre Laval when he did that...

"Hm," Doc Dishno said. His eyes were open. He didn't look like Pierre Laval anymore. "Hm," he repeated. Then he smiled at Paul, and Paul saw that there were tears in his eyes. "Let's 'ave anudder drink, Polly. It's time for anudder drink--right now."

Paul repeated the old formula. "I don't mind if I do," he said.

Doc heavily leaned forward and touched his glass to Paul's. "Polly," he said. "You remember the time out South Camp you fin' da big black bear onder the white-pine stomp?"

"Yes," Polly eagerly said. Did he remember it! "Yes, I see all, just as though it happened yesterday."

The morning following his visit with old Doc Dishno, Paul found himself in the grip of a profound hangover. He sat at his desk trying to work out a ground lease of a gravel pit from the Company to the City of Chippewa. The Company not only owned most of the land in Chippewa, but for miles around it. Accordingly, complicated ground leases were not an unusual order in the law offices of Walter Holbrook. Today Paul was having trouble adopting the usual mineral reservations to this particular deal. Instead he spent most of the time staring out of the window at Chief Booze-in-the-Face and thinking of his father...

On those days which he devoted to the celebration of the unofficial American holiday, the hangover, Paul found himself frequently thinking of Oliver. Today he was thinking of the advice Oliver had give him when he had first left to go away to law school. Oliver had driven Paul and Belle to the Chippewa depot in the old Model T Ford he had purchased form Ed Weiler. Just before the train had left Oliver had drawn Paul aside. Although Paul was then nearly six feet ~~was~~ tall, Oliver had to lean over to whisper his parting advice in his son's ear. As he spoke he thumped Paul's with his big middle finger.

"Listen, boy, mebbe when you get down there at Ann Arbor there'll be times when there's some drinkin' to do--" thump, thump "--an' it's a lead pipe cinch that when you get dry behind the ears an' get to be a real lawyer, there'll be lotsa drinkin' to do. But mark my wordse--" thump "--if you ever fall in with a hard-drinkin' crowd, remember this--" thump, thump "--always drink whiskey, drink the best you can lay hold of, drink it straight--an' don't toss nothin' after it but water!"

Paul tried to recall the various alcoholic concoctions he had drunk the night before. The effort made him involuntarily shudder. There had been scotch at the Club, good scotch, then some sort of rank rye blend at Luigi's, then back to scotch at the hotel bar, then bourbon at Doc's, then, after he left Doc's an interlude of beer at the White Coffee Pot. Then he had gone to the hotel again vainly looking for Maida, of course. The place was deserted, so he had started drinking stingers. That had been the pay-off. He must have gone all to pieces after that. He remembered Bertha trying to get him to go home--Bertha, the barmaid with the beautiful lungs.

"Please, Polly--I mean Mr. Biegler--you must go home. I've got to lock up... No, I can't serve you another drink? Why? Because it's too late and I'll lose my job if I do... Please, Polly, don't you dare drive your car... Oh, Lord, I'll drive it for you, then... No, I'll take a cab home."

So that was how it had happened. But Bertha had not driven his car. Paul had pushed her over and driven himself. And he had not gone home. He had driven Bertha out past the Delaware mine, up the rocky road to the top of Chippewa Bluff. He had shut off the motor. The drinks must have fouled up his technique pretty badly.

"Well," he had said.

Bertha had wanted to leave. She shouldn't be there, she had said. She shouldn't be out with any man, with her poor husband so many thousands of miles away, fighting in some steaming jungle. No, she didn't know where he was. All she knew is that she wrote him in care of the postmaster at San Francisco. She hadn't heard from him in nearly a month. No, they didn't have any children. They had only been married a year when he had enlisted. Yes, he'd wanted to go. He'd always admired the Marines and if he had to get his he'd rather die a Marine than anything else. Of course, she'd begged him not to, but he had insisted. She was living with a married sister.

"It must get pretty lonely," Paul said.

Bertha had started to cry. No, not cried, just plain bawled. What could a man do? Naturally, there was nothing for Paul to do but to try to comfort her, this poor lonely young war widow. In fact it was a man's plain duty those on the home front, if he couldn't be in there pitching, to comfort the brave little women whose husbands and sweethearts were out there so many miles away--yeah, some of them out there, you could bet, comforting some of those dusky native women...

"It must get pretty lonely," Paul repeated.

Paul had very gently put his arm around Bertha. It was just a fatherly gesture. Well, he wasn't quite that old--perhaps it was more big brotherly. The fierceness of her response had sobered him slightly. "Oh God, Polly, you'll never know, you'll never know," she had sobbed... Yes, that Bertha was a genuine American girl, Paul had discovered. Genuine all over. Even those firm, beautiful lungs were more genuine than he would have possibly dreamed...

Chap. 6.

The morning following his visit with old Doc Dishno, Paul found himself in the grip of a profound hangover. He sat at his desk trying to work out a ground lease of a gravel pit from the Company to the City of Chippewa. Like Walton's complete angler, Chippewa was completely a Company town. The Company not only owned most of the land in Chippewa, but for miles around it. Accordingly, complicated ground leases were not an unusual order in the law offices of Walter Holbrook. Paul had worked on scores of them. But today Paul was having trouble adapting the Company's cagey mineral reservations to this particular deal. He'd have to get it right, because the damned thing had to be approved by those legal ravens who sat out in Delaware. But it was no go... Paul stared out of the window at Chief Booze-in-the-Face and thought of his father...

On those days which he devoted to the celebration of the unofficial American holiday, the hangover, Paul found himself frequently thinking of old Oliver. Today he was thinking of the advice Oliver had given him when he had first left to go away to law school. ~~Paul~~ Paul had taken his pre-law work in a teachers' college in the Peninsula. Oliver had driven Paul and Belle to the Chippewa depot in the old Model T. Ford he had purchased from Ed Weiler. Just before the train had left Oliver had drawn Paul aside. The old man was embarrassed. He cleared his throat and said, "Christ!" Paul wondered wildly if Oliver was going to tell him about the birds and the bees... Although Paul was then nearly a gangling six feet tall, Oliver had to stoop to whisper his parting advice in his son's ear. As he spoke he thumped Paul's clavicle with his big middle finger.

"Listen, boy, mebbe when you get down there at this Ann Arbor place there'll be times when there'll be some drinkin' to do--" thump, thump-- an' it's a lead ~~xxx~~ pipe cinch that when you get dry behind the ears an'

an' get to be a real lawyer, there'll be lotsa drinkin' to do. But mark my words--" thump "--if you ever fall in with a hard-drinkin' crowd, remember this--" thump, thump "--always drink whiskey," thump "drink the best you can lay hold of, drink it straight--" thump "--an' don't toss nothin' after it but water!"

"Thanks, Dad," Paul had said.

Paul ruefully tried to recall the various alcoholic concoctions he had consumed the night before. The effort made him involuntarily shudder. Let's see. There had been scotch at the Club, good scotch, then a mild flood of some sort of rank rye blend at Luigi's, during a knuckle-pounding smear game, then back to scotch at the hotel bar, then that raw bourbon up at Doc's. After he had finally broken away from old Doc, there was a depressing interlude of beer over at the White Coffee Pat. Then he had gone to the hotel again, vainly looking for Maida, of course. The place was deserted, so he had courageously started drinking stingers. That had been the pay-off. He must have gone all to pieces after that. He remembered Bertha trying to get him to go home--Bertha, the barmaid with the husband in the Marines, the girl who possessed the beautiful lungs.

"Please, Polly--I mean Mr. Biegler--you must go home. I've got to lock up... No, I can't serve you another drink? Why? Because it's too late and I'll lose my job if I do... Please, Polly, don't you dare drive your car... Oh, Lord, I'll drive it for you, thn... Certainly not... I'll take a cab home."

So that was how it had happened. But Bertha had not driven his car. Paul had roughly pushed her over and taken the wheel himself. And he had not

gone home. Wasn't he supposed to be full of high spirits and low purpose? So he had driven Bertha out past the Delaware Mine, past the lake and up the rocky road to the top of Chippewa Bluff. Quick, like a bunny he had shut off the motor. The drinks must have fouled up his technique pretty badly. He had proceeded with all the subtlety of a bulldozer on the new Alaskan highway he had been reading about.

"Well?" he had said, making a lunge at the girl.

Bertha had slapped his face. She wanted to leave. She shouldn't be there, she said. She shouldn't be out with any man, with her poor husband-- Arthur was his name--so many thousand of miles away, fighting in some steaming jungle. No, she didn't know where he was. All she knew is that she wrote him every day in care of the postmaster at San Francisco. And what could one write about every day? She hadn't heard from him in nearly a month. Sometimes she thought she was losing her mind. No, they didn't have any children. They had been married only a year when he had enlisted.

"Did he really want to go?" Paul asked.

Yes Arthur had wanted to go. He'd always admired the Marines and he'd said that if he had to go to war and get his, he'd rather die a Marine than anything else. Of course, she'd begged him not to go, but he had insisted. She was living with a married sister. No, her sister's husband wasn't in the service, he was a miner. Anyway, her sister's husband was too old to go to war. "He's a lot older than you, Polly," Bertha had said. Paul quickly lit a cigarette after that one.

"It must get pretty lonely," Paul had finally said.

Bertha had started to cry. No, not cried, just plain bawled. Paul had often heard Oliver tell old Doc that a woman in tears was ready for almost anything. "She's got two strikes on her," Oliver had wisely said. So what could a man do? Naturally, there was nothing for Paul to do but to try to

comfort her, this poor lovely, prostrated, lonely young war widow. In fact it was a man's plain duty--those marooned on the home front, those who couldn't be in there pitching--to comfort the brave little women whose husbands and sweethearts were out there so many miles away--yeah, some of them out there, you could bet, busily comforting some of those dusky native women. Paul had lately seen some pretty rugged photographs of G.I.'s and Marines desperately pawing over that dark island stuff... There'd be some fine blue-eyed Zulus inhabiting those islands in years to come. f "It must get pretty lonely," Paul repeated. It was an old formula, like one of Belle's household remedies, but a tried and true one.

Paul had very gently put his arm around Bertha. He'd patted her shoulder and almost said "There, there." It was just a fatherly gesture. Well, perhaps he wasn't quite that old--maybe it was just a big brother. The fierceness and hunger of her response had sobered him slightly. Big brother, hell! "Oh God, Polly, you'll never know, you'll never know," she had sobbed... Then she was suddenly swarming all over him. Paul fought his way out of the clinch. He sighed and guessed he'd started something he'd better finish... Yes, that Bertha was a genuine American girl, Paul discovered. Genuine all over. Even those firm, beautiful lungs were more genuine than he could have possibly dreamed. Those Pacific island lassies had nothing on little Bertha. It all went to show that the boys on the homefront had their problems, too...

Paul Biegler sat at his desk in Walter Holbrook's law office, drawing a picture of Santa Claus going down a chimney. Paul had been drawing the same picture since he was a child; through the grades, through Chippewa high school, and ~~thru~~ then through college and law school at Ann Arbor. His law school note books, to which he still occasionally referred were a kind of illustrated history of his progress of Santa as a chimney sweep. Paul had labelled several of his drawings: "Picture of Santa descending a Chimney."

The office in which Paul sat was a typical small town law office anywhere in America. Sprawled against one wall were the bound volumes of the Michigan reports, of course, now numbering well over three hundred; then the various volumes of Shepards' citations~~or~~, the annotated statutes, the law digest; and several volumes of legal forms; then the books on procedure and the law reviews. In Wisconsin or Wyoming or Rhode Island it would have been the same, except that it would be the Wisconsin laws and cases or ^{those of} Wyoming or Rhode Island.

Paul sometimes shuddered when he looked at all these books; these books which so silently and neatly embalmed the hopes and despairs and quarrels of people, many of whom were long since dead and forgotten. All over the country, in forty-eight states, the presses continued to grind out these reports and cross-reports of decided cases. The constant flood of books was appalling. Paul sometimes wondered just where, in another fifty years, the lawyers and their clients would find room to sit...

Today's drawing of Santa Claus ran in the usual pattern: A square, uncompromising, weathered clapboard house, such as some of Chippewa's iron miners still lived in. In the middle of the roof stood a small brick chimney. Santa had one foot on the roof and the other in the chimney. His pack was full of toys.

Walter Holbrook

Walter Holbrook was one of the few men who helped to shape the policy and what had come to be known as the "public relations" pattern of the Iron Cliffs Ore Company who was not a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Not only were practically all of the Company bigwigs graduates of M. I. T., but, oddly enough, they were also members of the same fraternity at M. I. T. There was nothing in the corporate charter of the Company or in its by-laws that required this union of educational and fraternal background in the official family; it was -- -- well, it was just so, that's all. It had become a kind of unwritten Company tradition. It was felt that this combination ^{somehow} gave one the "Iron Cliffs spirit."

Yes, Walter Holbrook was a glittering exception...

If Walter Holbrook's case was unusual, his friends and business associates were quick to point out that Walter himself was unusual. They would also remind one that Walter's father had gone to M. I. T. and belonged to the same fraternity there -- before the tragic accident which took his life on a summer field trip in New Jersey when Walter was a little boy. Of course it had helped, too, that Walter had been graduated from both Harvard College and Harvard Law School. After all, Harvard had been in Cambridge quite a few years before M. I. T. -- -- two hundred and fifteen, to be exact. Yes, this definitely helped to remove some of the stigma. And, as anyone knew, one could not study law at M. I. T. -- and the Company had to have lawyers, didn't it? It was felt, too, both at the Company's head office in Wilmington and out at the mine properties in Michigan that Walter Holbrook had the "Iron Cliffs spirit." This spirit was something like personality or sex appeal; nobody could precisely define the Iron Cliffs spirit, but it was there, and Walter Holbrook possessed it in abundance.

The manner in which Walter Holbrook came to reside in Chippewa was as unusual as the rest of the man's career. One day he had been an obscure law clerk in the office of the Company's lawyers in Wilmington, running errands and looking law in the vast and dusty recesses of the firm's law library. Then lo! he had been summoned by Mr. Lewis himself. That wasn't Worth Lewis, the son, but old Tattersall Lewis himself, the legal giant who had organized the law firm of Lewis and Shoreham, and who also held quite a sizable bloc of stock in the Iron Cliffs Ore Company.

Walter Holbrook could never forget that interview. "Mr. Lewis is ready," the clerk had said. That was all. Walter felt his feet advancing on the deep pile rug of Mr. Lewis' office; a rich dark green rug, he remembered. There sat old Tattersall Lewis, flanked by the Delaware reports and the U. S. Supreme Court reports, behind a desk which seemed to Walter to be every bit as long and shiny as the bar in the Wilmington Club. The desk was bare save for a model of an old New England sailing ship and a quill pen, of all things, sticking in a container filled with little metal balls the size of birdshot. Walter studied the birdshot.

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Yes, Walter Holbrook was a glittering exception, he had never even attended M. I. T.

If Walter Holbrook's case was un usual, his friends and business associates were quick to point out that Walter himself was unusual. They would also remind one that at least Walter's father had gone to M. I. T. and belonged to the same fraternity there--before the tragic accident which took his life on a summer field trip in New Jersey when Walter was a little boy. Of course it had helped, too, that Walter had been graduated from both Harvard College and Harvard Law School. After all, Harvard had been in Cambridge quite a few years before M. I. T.--two hundred and fifteen, to be exact. Yes, this definitely helped to remove some of the stigma. And, as anyone knew, one could not study law at M. I. T.--and the Comapny had to have lawyers, didn't it? It was felt, too, both at the Company's head office in Wilmington and out at the mine properties in Michigan that Walter Holbrook possessed the "Iron Cliffs spirit." This spirit was something like personality or sex appeal; nobody could precisely define the Iron Cliffs spirit, but it was there, and Walter Holbrook had it.

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law in the vast and dusty recesses of the firm's law library. Then lo! he had been summoned by Mr. Lewis himself. That wasn't Worth Lewis, the son, but old Tattersall Lewis himself, the bewhiskered legal giant who had organized the law firm of Lewis and Shoreham, chief counsel for the Iron Cliffs Ore Company. Tattersall Lewis, by a droll coincidence, also held quite a sizable bloc of stock in the Company.

Walter Holbrook could never forget that interview. "Mr. Lewis is ready," the clerk had said. That was all. Walter felt his feet advancing on the deep pile rug of Mr. Lewis' office; a rich dark green rug, he remembered. There was old Tattersall Lewis, whiskers and all, flanked by rows and rows of law books: Walter recognized the Delaware reports and the U. S. Supreme Court reports. Mr. Lewis was sitting behind a desk which seemed to Walter to be every bit as long and shiny as the bar in the Wilmington Club. The desk was bare save for a model of an old New England sailing ship, an inkwell, and a quill pen, of all things, protruding from a container filled with little metal balls the size of birdshot. Walter stood studying the birdshot.

"Hump," Mr. Lewis said.

"Good morning, Mr. Lewis," Walter said.

Someone had once told old Tattersall Lewis that he looked like King Edward of England. It was a sort of a legend around the office that this someone had been a beautiful opera singer to whom Mr. Lewis had been paying court. That was after the death of his third wife. Walter reflected that in the machine age wealthy men courted with private cars and steam yachts... At any rate, so touched was old Tattersall by the notion that he resembled British royalty that he ~~xx~~ had devoted the rest of his life to nursing the resemblance. In his late seventies he had taken up the hunting of grouse on the misty Scottish moors, but this had only served to aggravate his asthma. Walter found himself picturing old Tattersall Lewis paying asthmatic court to a full-blown operatic soprano--and him with all those whiskers, too.

"How long have you been here?" Mr. Lewis said. Because of his asthma Mr. Lewis made a little nasal snort after each sentence. It gave a sort of emphatic punctuation to all he said.

"Two years and three months--and sixteen days," Walter Holbrook answered.

"Humph," Mr. Lewis said.

Walter didn't really expect Mr. Lewis to remember him. After all, Walter had only met the old gentleman but once--the day he had started at the office, in fact--and had never seen him since. Of late years Mr. Lewis had spent most of his time on an island off the coast of Georgia. Walter wondered if the beautiful opera singer had been transported there. Would it have been by rail or yacht? She must be getting on in years...

"We're sending you out to Michigan, young man," Mr. Lewis said, snuffling the way he did. "With Harry Youngs." Harry Youngs was a junior partner in the law firm of Lewis and Shoreham. Harry was regarded ^{an} as excellent trial lawyer. Walter had lately been "gunbearer" for ~~Harry~~ Harry Youngs in several trials; carrying books and briefcases, checking legal citations, and doing the usual sort of things an eager young lawyer did who was lucky enough to get hooked up with a good trial man.

"Yes, Sir," Walter answered.

"I don't know what in hell's going on out there," Mr. Lewis went on, "but they tell me the Company is taking quite a beating lately in those Michigan courts. It's getting so that every miner that stubs his toe is filing a big damage suit--and collecting big judgments. All a lot of God damn' nonsense. The next thing we'll know they'll be organizing unions out there." Mr. Lewis seemed to shudder and inwardly recoil at the very idea. "Anyway, we're sending Harry Youngs out to Michigan to break it up. And you're to help him."

"Oh thank you, Mr. Lewis," Walter said. "I can't tell you--"

"Don't thank me, young man," Mr. Lewis said. Walter thought he detected a faint smile behind the whiskers. "Harry Youngs asked for you. Said you had the makings of a sound trial lawyer. Lord knows we need 'em. Seems these days the law schools teach you young fellas every God damn' thing but how to stand up on your hind legs and really try a case." Mr. Lewis paused for breath. "Now get out " he said.

"Yes, Sir," Walter said. The interview was ended. It was the last time
Walter Hollbrook ever saw the man that looked like Edward of England.

Paul came gradually to sense that the essence of people's lives was secret and unseen, locked far below the surface in dreams and memories as deep as Hell itself: that the day-to-day ^Rbawling, working, eating, bragging, drinking fellow was but a fragment of the whole man, like the lapped frozen peak to the great submerged iceberg, the quiet cone to the festering volcano, the slender projecting spire to the engulfed cathedral. People simply did not know each other. He did not know his parents, his brothers, his friends: they knew him not at all. And there was no help for it.

For he was haunted, too, by the slow realization that the human modes of communication^{ing} this seething buried life, one to the other, were still but little removed from a series of grunts or the caveman's crude scrawls and drawings on his ancient, smoke-grimed wall.

Must there only be occasional, fugitive, fleeting gleams? How to tell? How to say? How shall I articulate my beautiful, ghastly dream? Who will tell me his? There was slow, quiet terror in the thought: Was not all this the key to the essential loneliness of man? How to tell? how to say? An unhappy Irishman called Joyce had torn out his vitals trying to tell... Was this, then, the reason for the terrible compulsion--why men strive, sweat, blunder, lurch and stumble, blindly fall, yet rise and strive again--to mould, fashion, carve, build, to create? They must try to say, they must try to tell...

Thoughts like these made Paul despair of ever becoming a writer. Christ, what was the use! Laggard words, the ordinary resources of language, seemed ^{but} not faint tinklings and little bells, lost and helpless to convey this vast deep realm of dream and shadow. It seemed to him, sometimes, that entire new symbols, even new modes, of human communication were imperative.

Men did not tell because they could not tell.

"But there is music," he mused, "yes, music--it is the closest we have yet come..." At times, in his monstrous longing towards release, towards utterance, he thought he would try to become a composer.

Ah, that was it! A composer of music.

The thunderous applause subsided. The audience lights of Carnegie Hall gradually dimmed. Only a waiting, rustling hush prevailed. Paul Biegler raised his baton. He was slightly stooped and somewhat gray about the temples, inwardly ravaged by his secret, searing visions, yet still slender and handsome in his evening clothes. Two hundred--count them, two hundred!--trained musicians watched for his signal. Then slowly his arms descended and rose as the string section--or perhaps just the muted first violins--whispered and sighed the haunting, aching opening bars of his latest composition, the tone ~~poem~~ poem "The Burning Earth." No, no, no--that was going to be his book! How about "A Walk on the Ocean Floor"? Yes, that would make a shambling bum out of Debussy... This was its electrifying world premiere...

Strong men broke down and sobbed. Beautiful women tore at their heaving bodices or quietly swooned. For tonight they were made to understand many locked and hidden places of the heart, and shame had dropped away...

Paul gradually came to be shocked at the preoccupation of most people over the dreary business of making a living. It filled so much of their lives, their talk, their recreation. It was not that he regarded earning one's living as a matter for jest. He had seen too much of its earnestness about him. He supposed it was just as brutally necessary as breathing or going to the bathroom. Yet people did not constantly talk and think about those bodily functions. It was a matter of proportions...

He was always to be suspicious and, at times, a trifle envious of the ambitious, the successful; of those who wanted to "get ahead" or those who got ahead. Most of his playmates had their eyes "on the main chance." Paul often wondered what the main chance was. Was one's destiny on earth confined to earning a living, buying a house or a dozen houses, accumulating a bank balance and a lot of stocks and bonds? And then dying? Paul could not believe it. He was afraid to believe it. If he believed he felt he would be lost.

By this time he had read a number of cleverly cynical and satiric books and articles by men who derided this American preoccupation with money and worldly goods. Their diatribes were usually associated with gibes at Rotarians and other uplift organizations. Mencken was their chief apostle. And they made out a plausible case. But Paul did not share with them their apparent feeling of rancour or glee over this sorry state of affairs. His feeling was one of abiding dismay and sadness. He felt sorry for them. He was appalled at the waste of living. There was no fun, no joy...

That was it! It was the joylessness of their existence--the dull, groping, splintered lives they led. There was no hilarity, no spontaneity, no

zest, no giving out... Their occasional fits of laughter had one eye on the clock or the cash box. There was, God dammitt, no honest joy.

It was the one great characteristic of Oliver's that Paul applauded and envied--the thing that made Paul forgive him so much else--the man's Gargantuan capacity for enjoyment. There was a wild goat-like joy in his eating, joy in his drinking, undoubtedly there was joy in his sexual encounters, in his fishing and hunting--even in his epic rages. The man lived...

Paul came gradually to sense that the essence of people's lives was secret and unseen, locked far below the surface in dreams and memories as deep as Hell itself: that the day-to-day ^fbawling, working, eating, bragging, drinking fellow was but a fragment of the whole man, like the lapped frozen peak to the great submerged iceberg, the quiet cone to the festering volcano, the slender projecting spire to the engulfed cathedral. People simply did not know each other. He did not know his parents, his brothers, his friends: they knew him not at all. And there was no help for it.

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Must there only be occasional, fugitive, fleeting gleams? How to tell? How to say? How shall I articulate my beautiful, ghastly dream? Who will tell me his? There was slow, quiet terror in the thought: Was not all this the key to the essential loneliness of man? How to tell? how to say? An unhappy Irishman called Joyce had torn out his vitals trying to tell... Was this, then, the reason for the terrible compulsion--why men strive, sweat, blunder, lurch and stumble, blindly fall, yet rise and strive again--to mould, fashion, carve, build, to create? They must try to say, they must try to tell...

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CHAPTER _____.

The summer that Woodrow Wilson was renominated for President, the town planned to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its formal incorporation. The Chippewa common council generously appropriated money for the celebration and a committee on arrangements was appointed to plan a gala "homecoming." The Iron Ore carried banner headlines on the event. "Parades! Bands! Floats! The U. P. Firemen's tournament! A big outside street carnival, with lovely Zelda Zane who will ascend in a balloon and come down in a parachute! Come back, come back! Don't miss it!"

Relatives sent copies of the newspaper all over the country. Although the town was booming, scores of young men and entire families had left Chippewa during previous slack periods in the iron mines, attracted by the new automobile factories in Detroit: Dodge Brothers and Henry Ford with his five-dollars-a-day minimum pay; others to the iron mines of the new Mesabi Range in Minnesota or to the copper mines of Montana and the far West. This homecoming was to be the biggest celebration ever undertaken in Chippewa. For weeks before the celebration the Chippewa band held rehearsals every fair evening downtown at the open-air bandstand, filling the night air with the music of its laments. Paul never liked band music -- the elephantine marching and braggadocio of Pryor and Sousa left him cold -- and he was grateful for the aura of peace which briefly descended upon the town on nights that it rained.

Little "Diddidum" Crouch, a bowlegged Cornish miner, beat the bass drum in the Chippewa band. When he was harnessed into it, his big drum was higher than himself, and he had to peek around the sides. He also drummed every Saturday night for the Salvation Army as that valiant little band of men and women marched down Magnetic Avenue to Main Street and took up their stand at the side of the Miners' State Bank in the town square. Diddidum not only drummed for the Army but he preached for it as well. The town would be thronged with people: miners and railroaders, lumberjacks, farmers in from the outskirts...

Diddidum resolutely preached for all who would listen, rich and poor, drunk or sober, his big drum turned up on its face to receive the coins of those moved by his burning eloquence. Paul and Fritz rarely missed these early Saturday evening services of the Salvation Army, wriggling their way into the inner circle around Diddidum and his drum, the better to see and hear this fiery little man. When Diddidum invoked the Lord there was none of the interminable dry

and dusty logic dispensed by Reverend Hayward at Paul's church. Diddidum's Savior was soon miraculously right there before Fritz and Paul, raw and bleeding -- "'ammered to the bloody Cross" before their very eyes.

Licking tongues of hell fire and burning brimstone glowed and flickered upon the twilit town square. Dancing with excitement little Diddidum hopped bowlegged about the circle of people, pelting them with words, not merely inviting but challenging sinners and saints alike to step into the circle and testify to their conversion. "'Oo'll be the first lam' to com' aout to the Lard!" he would shout, the cords of his neck taut and distended, glaring at the crowd. "'Oo'll be the first?" This was the part Paul and Fritz especially looked forward to. There was really no telling what kind of a "lamb" might come forward...

Just that Spring "Silver Jack" Remington, an aging lumberjack, had answered Diddidum's call, reeling into the circle, weeping and mumbling incoherently, performing an involuntary alcoholic jig in his hobnailed boots.

"Wot 'ave yew to s'y to the Lard?" Diddidum bridled suspiciously, keeping one bright eye on notorious Silver Jack and the other on the coin-littered bass drum. "Wot 'ave yew to s'y, Mister Jack?"

Jack's unkempt silvery yellow locks were bowed in contrition. He threw out his hands and spoke. "O Diddidum -- I've come back to the fold, I have... Here I've wasted all them years -- fur away from Him -- drinkin' an' gamblin' an' whorin' -- --"

"'Ere, damme," outraged Diddidum broke in, wheeling on his burly assistant, "'eave thee bloody booger aout fer sayin' 'ourin'!"

The Homecoming was to be officially launched on the morning of July 4 by a huge parade which was to start from the vacant lot by St. Xavier's church on South Main Street, thence proceeding north up Main Street, across the tracks and past the Nelson House on East Canada Street, thence back across the tracks on Second Street, thence west on Magnetic Avenue to Main Street, thence South on Main Street to the point of beginning, the vacant lot by St. Xavier's church.

Every mine, business house, church, lodge, and school in town was to be represented by a float either depicting some scene dear to its heart or some phase of the fifty-year growth of the town. Generous prizes were to be awarded and originality was to be the prime requisite

of each float. Organizations entering floats were required to file their entries with the Float Committee, to avoid duplication, and by mid-June the lists showed that this was to be far and away the biggest parade ever held in Chippewa. There was only one minor fly in the ointment: The Sons of St. Hubert, a lodge composed largely of Cornish miners, described its entry simply as "The Mystery Float" and stoutly refused to divulge the nature of its float beyond assuring the Float Committee that nothing like it had ever before delighted the weary eyes of man. The Iron Ore featured this mysterious entry in its columns and consequently Paul and all the townspeople were consumed with curiosity and speculated for days on the probable nature of the offering by The Sons of St. Hubert...

In addition to all this, each fraternal lodge and each grade in all the schools were going to send a chosen delegation to march in the parade. Then the Chippewa Fire Department was to have a float and march in a body, not to mention the visiting firemen who were to be there for their annual U. P. Tournament. With all of the people that were going to be in the parade, marching, depicting and driving, Paul wondered just who was going to be left in town to view the spectacle. Presumably, he concluded, that was where the "home-comers" came in. By special arrangement Lyman H. Howe was to have a movie photographer in Chippewa to record the spectacle for posterity.

Paul was dismayed when he learned he was one of a select group picked by his teacher, Miss Lindquist, to march in the parade with his Grammar School classmates. How could anyone see a parade when he was in the bloody thing? How did it happen lucky Fritz Bellows didn't have to march? Why, how could a fellow ever see The Sons of St. Huberts' "Mystery Float"? Paul was sick over the prospect. He spoke to Belle about it.

Belle sat by her window in the sitting-room in her creaking rocker and listened to Paul's lament. As Paul unloaded his troubles Belle sat creasing her house dress down to her knees, then smoothing the crease with the palm of her hand. Paul reflected that Belle's busy hands were rarely still... "Oh, Mom -- can't you figure out a way for me to get out of that parade? I don't want to hurt Miss Lindquist -- she's been so swell to me... But, gee Mom, I don't want to miss the 'Mystery Float' and all..."

Belle smiled and nodded her head. Sometimes when she smiled her face shone with an odd sort of interior glow. "That's funny, son," she said. "That's really a coincidence..." She was carefully creasing her dress again. "I was just thinking the other day -- why, it was just yesterday -- that with this big homecoming and all you could sort of -- -- maybe you could do

something -- make some money." Belle's eyes lighted up and she pressed her lips and rocked vigorously. She had become a woman of business, unfolding a careful plan. "Just last month I was reading an article -- was it in Leslie's? -- why, son, there's a big profit in selling articles to entertain a crowd. They don't have to cost a lot. Turnover's the thing... Look at what Woolworth is doing. I've got some extra music-lesson money laid aside... Do you want to try it, son?"

Belle's enthusiasm was contagious. "Why, Mom," Paul gasped. "It -- it's simply swell!" Belle ran on. "And we won't tell a soul about it. I'll write Miss Lindquist to excuse you from marching in the parade. And you can see the whole thing" -- Belle had parted her plump arms, her palms up -- "and make money at the same time." Paul was enchanted over the prospect. Belle grew stealthy. She leaned over the arm of her rocker and peered out in the dining-room. Paul looked out but saw nothing. Belle whispered. Paul moved closer to her. "You see, son," she was whispering, "you and I have got to start planning now..."

Paul looked at his mother. "Planning?" Paul said. "How do you mean, Mom?" Belle again quickly peered at the dining-room. "Sh, son -- not so loud -- we've got to start planning now for you to go to college!"

Paul gradually came to be shocked at the preoccupation of most people over the dreary business of making a living. It filled so much of their lives, their talk, their recreation. It was not that he regarded earning one's living as a matter for jest. He had seen too much of its earnestness about him. He supposed it was just as brutally necessary as breathing or going to the bathroom. Yet people did not constantly talk and think about those bodily functions. It was a matter of proportions...

He was always to be suspicious and, at times, a trifle envious of the ambitious, the successful; of those who wanted to "get ahead" or those who got ahead. Most of his playmates had their eyes "on the main chance." Paul often wondered what the main chance was. Was one's destiny on earth confined to earning a living, buying a house or a dozen houses, accumulating a bank balance and a lot of stocks and bonds? And then dying? Paul could not believe it. He was afraid to believe it. If he believed he felt he would be lost.

By this time he had read a number of *cleverly* cynical and satiric books and articles by men who derided this American preoccupation with money and worldly goods. Their diatribes were usually associated with gibes at Rotarians and other uplift organizations. Mencken was their chief apostle. And they made out a plausible case. But Paul did not share with them their apparent feeling of rancour or glee over this sorry state of affairs. His feeling was one of abiding dismay and sadness. He felt sorry for them. He was appalled at the waste of living. There was no fun, no joy...

That was it! It was the joylessness of their existence -- the dull, groping, splintered lives they led. There was no hilarity, no spontaneity, no zest, no giving out... Their occasional fits of *wet* laughter had one eye on the clock or the cash box. There was, God dammitt, no honest joy.

It was the one great characteristic of Oliver's that Paul applauded and envied -- the thing that made Paul forgive him so much else -- the man's Gargantuan capacity for enjoyment. There was a wild goat-like joy in his eating, joy in his drinking, undoubtedly there was joy in his sexual encounters, in his fishing and hunting -- even in his epic rages. The man lived...

Paul came gradually to sense that the essence of people's lives was secret and unseen, locked far below the surface in dreams and memories as deep as Hell itself: that the day-to-day brawling, working, eating, bragging, drinking fellow was but a fragment of the whole man, like the lapped frozen peak to the great submerged iceberg, the quiet cone to the festering volcano, the slender projecting spire to the engulfed cathedral. People simply did not know each other. He did not know his parents, his brothers, his friends: they knew him not at all. And there was no help for it.

For he was haunted, too, by the slow realization that the human modes of communicating this seething buried life, one to the other, were still but little removed from a series of grunts or the caveman's crude scrawls and drawings on his ancient, smoke-grimed wall.

Must there only be occasional, fugitive, fleeting gleams? How to tell? how to say? How shall I articulate my beautiful, ghastly dream? Who will tell me his? There was slow, quiet terror in the thought: Was not all this the key to the essential loneliness of man? How to tell? how to say? An unhappy Irishman called Joyce ^{had torn} ~~tear~~ out his vitals trying to tell... Was this, then, the reason for the terrible compulsion -- why men strive, sweat, blunder, lurch and stumble, blindly fall, yet rise and strive again -- to mould, fashion, carve, build, to create? They must try to say, they must try to tell...

Thoughts like these made Paul despair of ever becoming a writer. Christ, what was the use! Laggard words, the ordinary resources of language, seemed but faint tinklings and little bells, lost and helpless to convey this vast deep realm of dream and shadow. It seemed to him, sometimes, that entire new symbols, even new modes, of human communication were imperative.

Men did not tell because they could not tell.

"But there is music," he mused, "yes, music -- it is the closest we have yet come..." At times, in his monstrous longing towards release, towards utterance, he thought he would try to become a composer.

Ah, that was it! A composer of music.

The thunderous applause subsided. Only a waiting, rustling hush prevailed. The audience lights of Carnegie Hall gradually dimmed. Paul Biegler raised his baton. He was slightly stopped and ^{somewhat} gray about the temples, inwardly ravaged by his ^{staring} secret visions, yet still slender and handsome in his evening clothes. Two hundred -- count them, two hundred! -- trained musicians watched for his signal. Then slowly his arms descended and rose as the string section -- or perhaps just the muted first violins -- whispered and sighed the haunting, aching opening bars of his latest composition, the tone poem "The Burning Earth." No, no, no -- that was going to be his book! How about ^A "Walk on the Ocean Floor"? Yes, that would make a shambling bum out of Debussy.... This was its electrifying world premiere...

Strong men broke down and sobbed. Beautiful women tore at their heaving bodices or quietly swooned. For tonight they were made to understand many locked and ^{hidden} ~~secret~~ places of the heart, and shame had dropped away...