

in its own orbit, with its own stellar system. It's a thing, it's a being, it's a colossus; it's a ferocious thing, it's a friend. It's good, it's bad, it's frowning, it's smiling; it hates, it loves. It's dark, it's light! It has all the angles and the facets. And you take them ~~all~~ according to your own appreciation, attribute, and attitude. But take them you must. One moment you are a hero, you strut ~~with~~ your ego, for you are one of that great body that comprises this little compact universe with its own medicum of laws and regulations. In another moment you are the lowly freshman with the stigma of the fresman cap, and the bowing and scraping to the sophomore, who has you in his immediate clutch. But you derive a sort of vicarious pleasure ~~from~~ from the pricks and needles from your immediate superior, the Sophomore, who is ~~in~~ ~~charge~~ charge of you for the rest of them, especially the Seniors, who had become senile and slothful with age. It's not a martyrdom, nor the good-neighbor policy, nor turning the other cheek; but sort of a communal feeling, of being in the midst of things no matter what they are. Not to be conspicuous.

Some rebel, and become conspicuous, because they are intolerant. And so is intolerance ~~even~~ greater evoked against them. And the regulations more stringent, and even vengeful. The rebel becomes an outcast, and wee to him on the traditional hazing night, Bloody Monday Night, if he is anywhere to be found, on or off the campus.

Chapter III

Bloody Monday Night

The pomp and circumstance, the chastisement, the ennoblement, the pride, the compulsion, the motivated and the blind spirit, ~~the~~, the dominating eruptive force, the submissiveness, the ennu and the clash of passions.

In the ritual and modality of a night of hazing! At Beely it was a yearly occurrence on the second Monday night in October. It was Beely's Bloody Monday Night.

Actually, though, at least at Beely, unless things get out of hand when spirits rebel or pssians clash, it was mostly a night of mild pranks played upon the green incumbents; and the herrer-name was designed just to impress and keep them abit on edge. On that night every freshman was required to present himself at the gymnasium with his own instrument of torture, most often a wooden paddle fashioned by the victim's own hands, with which his lord and superior, the Seph, could paddle his nude rump. If a freshman was caught, during his probation period, to be too fresh, this was the time to repay him. Such a one would receive a coat of paint, green in hue, and plastered with either a blank sheet of paper the size of his whole back, or in red letters, emblazened, enumerating his "qualities". Some received a few extra whacks as a method of warning. Nude and shivering a bit in the chill of the gymnasium they all stood in their serried ranks to await their privileged time to crawl between the legs of a long line of sophomores to receive their smacks. A good deal of humorous repartee went on during this engagement, the more the humor the less the whacks. Mostly it was in the nature of good sportsmanship, very seldom was there an incident of rough treatment, unless of course one incurred the resentment of his upperclassmen, the Sephomere class in particular.

Within recent history of hazing at Beely there was only one incident when a freshman had ^{been} dumped into the Kennebec, and that was hushed over so that it never reached the ears of the authorities. At least the sophomores had a precedent to go by with this latest rebel, who would neither wear a freshman cap, nor abide by the rest of the code. He had been seen brazenly displaying a sweater with the lettering of his alma mater high school emblazened on it. And on the campus ground! Walked on the wrong side of the street and never saluted a Seph with enough of obeisance. Talked with coeds on the campus

He was impudent, he was defiant, he was impossible. The problem of what to do with him was more complicated, since he lived off the campus. Some of the sophomore class were for ignoring the whole thing. And ignore the fellow withal. Ostracize him. But most of them were for punitive measures for the whole tradition and structure of sophomoreic supremacy would topple. At a consultative meeting of Sophomores the night preceding Bloody Monday Night at which a few Freshmen, including George, were invited, the matter was discussed again. George was one of the minority who argued for dismissal of the affair. "After all," George added jokingly, "he has been guaranteed by the Constitution to Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, let alone Life. If he wants to live that sort of a life and if he believes he is happy, let him. I believe he'll bend his stiff neck..."

"Sure, after the time for Freshmen is up," a little sophomoreic Sophomore piped up.

George looked at him and smiled, "The littler the better," he said, "or more ^{ge}revengeful." To himself he thought that the little guy wouldn't stand a chance with the burly Freshman-offender, not for half a second. However, George regretted his hasty remark. "No offense meant," as he extended a hand to the vengeful little fellow.

George of course knew that his argument was weak, that the fellow was a disrupter of the peace and hegemony of the Sophomore class, and highly repugnant to them. But knowing ~~the fellow~~ ^{him} George was worrying about likely consequences if they tried force. Stubborn and hot-tempered, he might become violent. The clash of passions! George resorted to pleading. "Give us, the Freshman class, the opportunity to take care of him. After all the disgrace is ours - if a disgrace it be. I'll see to it that he is well taken care of."

"Believe us, George," the president of the Sophomores said, "that fellow is a prig and he deserves his desserts. But we won't be unduly harsh, I promise you. Just enough to show him that he is no different than any other

freshman. Now with a fellow like you, even if you ^{had} overlooked..."

"Not me," broke in George, "I am a strict conformist when it comes to Freshmen regulations..."

"We wouldn't hold it against you," the other continued ⁿuninterruptedly, "even if you didn't show up to-morrow night. As a matter of fact..."

"Not on your life, my boy," George cried, "I wouldn't miss this thing for anything. Besides, my behind is no different than anyone else's. You'll find out tomorrow night. I have already fashioned my instrument of torture. I am surprised at my own skill. You should see the paddle, the handiwork of a professional. Though I must say it was necessity that was the mother of my ingenuity. The more smooth the less chance of splinters in my backside. And it's a piece of the hardest of woods."

"Oh, keep your pants on," a good-hearted Seph volunteered.

"Couldn't oblige," George quipped, "my father in heaven would frown on my queasy queachy squeamishness and my quaky cowardice. But seriously, fellows, why not lay off on that guy."

"Why are you so insistent?" came ^ua ^ochrus.

George hesitated a moment. "You know," he said at last, "you know he's quite alone..."

"Three more Jews in college," some ^{one} shouted.

"An insilent Jew!" someone else cried out.

"That's quite unnecessary," the president rapped sharply. "I see what you mean, George."

He obviously was leaning toward George in dismissing the whole affair, but at the last he was overruled. "All right," he said, not without bitterness in his voice, "if we are going to punish that fellow we cant let one of our own go undisciplined. Unless he wants to apologize."

The unfortunate Seph, his face flaming crimson, did apologize.

George felt some reassurance that perhaps after all the issue would be no issue, and that things would take their normal course after tomorrow night, that nothing untoward would happen.

Came Monday night and all went well except for one thing; but George didn't know, until some time later. It was a chilly night and George and Foster waiting in the serried lines in the heatless Gym were shivering slightly.

"They should let us warm up a bit while we are waiting," Foster grumbled, "let's do a few turns on the rings."

"Against the rules." George's teeth were chattering. "Besides, this is part of the hazing, to shrink our hides with goose-pimples before tanning it."

"Hah, ha, funny isn't it? Well, I don't see it. All right I'll let myself be paddled, but I'll be damned if I'll stand here and freeze and be meek like a lamb."

"Like a lamb before the slaughter, that's it. It's good for you. Forget your heroics on the playing-field for a while and learn your lesson in humility. You are now like every other freshman in your class."

"I don't have to have it rammed down my throat."

"I can assure you you wouldn't have it any other way. I think they are doing a splendid job. On you especially. If you know what's best don't show your teeth. They are liable to be knocked out."

"Like to see somebody try it," as Foster's hands clenched automatically.

"Drop these foolish fists,"

"Coward?"

"No, just prudent. Perhaps a bit wise too. You know when you are in Rome do as the Romans. Besides, I think it's mighty good sport. You'll have your turn next year."

"If I don't catch pneumonia."

"Don't be so worried about your precious self."

"Well, you are old with wisdom, but I am young and foolish, so I am worried."

"Rather aptly put," George said with a meek irony.

Foster smiled and was doing a few hop-skips. "Wonder what the girls are

doing now, think they have hazing?"

"I wouldn't know. The only ceeed I know is Cynthia, and I see very little of her."

(Yes) (so) "No, I suppose not," Foster smirked. "No sarcasm. Just that I take up most of her free time. Heard from Blanca?"

"Had a letter. 'Weather permitting,' she says, 'I'll drive over before the snows fly'".

"Het diggety! Imagine what a splash she'll make when she drives up in that new Hudson."

"That's it. If I can help it she won't."

"Meeting her outside somewhere? Don't be mean."

"I won't be meeting her at all."

"A beautiful red-het brunette manipulating a horseless carriage all by herself! How many femmes like her? The sephs, up to the seniors, will be green with envy. I wouldn't miss such ^{the} an oppertunity."

"Brother, you can have it."

"You ain't kidding?"

"No, I ain't kidding," George macked him, his voice rising. "There is no rope around my neck ^{any} more than on Blanca's, nor on Cynthia's for that matter, ^(as) so far as I am concerned." As Foster glared at him. "Den't raise your supercilious eyebrows, and den't ruffle your fine feathers. Don't kid yourself, Foster, if I were serious about Cynthia I wouldn't step aside for you or anyone else without putting up a good scrap."

"Now you are getting insolent."

"Did I insult your ego because I said I wouldn't fight for her?"

"Maybe."

"And maybe you think she isn't such a bargain after all, if you can't act the conquering hero?"

"Cut it. You are..."

"The madder you get the better! Maybe you'll understand me better. Your wits will be sharpened. What I am going to say begged to be said long ago. Now is as good a time ~~any~~ as ever. Den't you ever forget this. Measured by any

standard other than your own ego, Cynthia is too good for you. She is sweet loveable and intelligent. And you... No, no, not here. Unclench those knuckles. If you must repay for what I said wait till we get outside. I can take care of myself. What I have to say is good for both of us. So drop that foolish fist. The truth is, if I allowed myself, I'd be in love with Cynthia as of this moment. It's no hard to believe, is it? But you see I can't afford the luxury of love. I caught myself in time. It wasn't too hard to give up a sweet, serene, honey-haired girl if you have a dashing Brunette at your side. Blanca! But you must remember, I care a lot for Cynthia and always will. Can you understand that?"

"Is it so hard to understand? Unless... Unless you mean -!" And his face was a suffused crimson, his eyes a glowing threat.

"Come off your high, Foster," George grinned, "You can't get your woman with the old cave^{man} method. Forget your muscles and that you are a football hero. Maybe a good thrashing would be good for you. It would be a pleasure to ^{ad}minister - I, your best friend." Foster lowered his eyes and said nothing. "Forgive me if I have been a bit brutal. I am your older brother."

George put out his hand. Foster took it.

Foster said, "I am a fool. An ungrateful fool! I should remember the House, the House on Pacific Street - my background. My Jewish mother! You stood by me. I learned well. I saw the suffering she must have gone through on that Street. Her innocence. What a lovely, beautiful mother. And so easy to love. ~~She and the rest of the family were in the same way as the rest of the family.~~ You took the crooks out in my path, and made it smooth for me. And straight."

Then it was Foster's turn. He was one of the few frosh on whom they stuck a poster plastered with green glue. By the time Foster got through scrubbing himself George was through with his turn with the paddle and joined him under the showers.

"George, I haven't seen or heard of that guy," Foster said. "Have

you while I was out of circulation... the one they are after.?"

"No, not a sign of him. And not a word. I am worried. Let's hurry and get out."

It was after eleven when they got out. The campus was veiled in a semi-translucent darkness, like a white mist, or perhaps a moon hiding under a cirrus cloud. There were myriads of pinpoint lights crystallized in blazing rays of scintillating stars, at once bizarre and immense, coming from dormitory windows and frat-houses. Otherwise the campus slept. Foster and George felt like a pair of stragglers, like thieves in the night, as they shuffled through dry leaves. There was nothing they heard or saw. The front campus was as quiet as death, not a footfall. The silence made deeper by an occasional, distant huzzah from the gymnasium, where the rites of Bloody Monday Night were still in progress.

"Hopeless here," said Foster in a whisper, as if reluctant to interrupt the silence, "let's look in at the DKD on University Avenue. Many a seph parks there..."

"Listen!"

Foster broke off abruptly to listen to faint sounds. "I heard it."

"Let's go. It comes from that direction." George pointed to the back of the campus. "Fool, not to think of it."

The sounds of a scuffle and muffled voices came to them as they ran into the heart of the campus hinterland. The trees, the shrubbery and vines entangled their feet and made them stumble, causing bruises and abrasions from thorns and roots. In silhouette at the river's edge there was a group of five or six. Before they could reach them they heard a splash, as of a heavy object being dunked in the water. It was he! Out of the water, dripping and cold, he came out crouching like a wild beast. He was coming forward steadfastly and ruthlessly. He was coming for one or all his tormenters. Like a Mammoth pointing toward its prey, with the instinctiveness of its ferocious power, and the complete unawareness as to surroundings, or the

the issue and consequence of struggle; only the instinct (or perhaps a consciousness in the human) ^{for} (of) satiation and passion for revenge.

There was a flash, as a gleaming object caught a ray of a distant light. "Look out, a knife!" George screamed as he threw himself on the fellow. George held him tight in his arms, until the fellows came and held him from George. George received a nasty gash on his wrist.

"George, you are bleeding!" Foster wailed as he came running to his side. "I think the wound is superficial. I'll take care of it. Just see the fellows let him go unharmed. They have done enough already. I got his knife."

"Better see a doctor right away," Foster was pleading. "And face a barrage of questions? This thing has to be hushed up. Go ^{to them,} I'll be all right."

"You sure?" and his voice was tragic ^(as) as the whine of a faithful dog before his wounded master.

"Now don't be an idiot. Not that I don't appreciate your concern." "It's not just concern. The damn jackass I was ^{to} not see you for the guy you really are."

In the gloom of next evening the bell on ~~Pittman~~ ^{the} Hall was telling. The clanging metal tongue spoke a language of its ^{own} a mournful language that went straight to the heart of every student on the campus. ^(resounded) It went outside the campus so that the prefs heard it, and were roused from their usual tasks. If they were at their dinner table they stood up, if they were at routine work, they dropped - papers or books, or whatever was at hand. The bell at this unusual hour meant a summons to the chapel - faculty and student alike.

They all came. Most students knew what the summons meant. Many in the faculty suspected something wrong, a few understood. There was a whispering in their seats, a restless informing, neighbor to neighbor. Then there was a hushed silence as the president mounted the rostrum.

He stood erect, his face dark and haggard as he looked over the heads of the assembled with unseeing eyes.

Without any preliminaries, as if anxious to be done with, he plunged into his tirade.

"A reprehensible thing occurred on this campus last night, for which we are all responsible." He stressed the "this" as if it could never happen anywhere else. "I didn't think it could happen to my boys, but that it did I take the blame myself, or at least a great part of it." He stressed the "my" as if he wanted to tell them that in spite of what had happened they were still his boys - his own sons. "Somewhere along the line I have failed them. Haven't impressed them enough with certain virtues and ways of life. Maybe I didn't know how. But you all have to share my regrets, because in a sense we have all failed.

"Things have gone on and taken such a turn that a student found it necessary to leave college. Whether he should have done it, whether he was guilty of violation of class rules, or whether such rules are at all justified, and whether they can be broken with impunity is not the question before us. Not even the fact that he drew a knife; not even, as had been said of him, that he had been snobbish, defiant and even impudent. No, nothing justified the treatment and roughness he received. As I ^{have} said before, it is very much regrettable, the more so that he comes from a minority race. Had he been singled out because of his race! I pray to the Lord it wasn't so. Had I any suspicion that such an evil is possible on these grounds I would root it out root and branch. Close the doors and fumigate the place. For what purpose can a college or any school serve if it harbors the evil of bigotry, the negation of every principle of human rights, indeed the existence of humanity itself! Be this a republic where we assume with our founding fathers that all men are created equal, that man may find his sanctuary here from persecution, or be it a people become itself a hotbed of persecution! Would you be a Jacob, from whose loins issued the Twelve Tribes, who were later to promulgate the Hebraic ^{code of} religion, which was to become the conscience of the world, the standard and measure of civilization of any country and land - or

an Esau who sold his birthright for a pot of pottage! It's so easy to mimic and mock and even tear down and persecute one who is just a bit different from us in manner or speech. Maybe because he comes from another clime or environment. What a sport, and a cheap sport too, because one is the stronger and has the upper hand! The virtual oppressor. The sport that caters to the lowest of human instincts - that of baiting!"

He stood and glared in silence for a while, his eyes burning, all the while shielding them with his right hand, as if they were affected by the light of the faces before him.

"Justice, fairness, have we forgotten them so soon? And our fathers have builded with such hope and confidence! Oh, we have traveled fast down the road since that bright day of our founding. We have become false to them and to ourselves. And so weak we follow any demagogue or false prophet who preaches a sweet song in our ears of a humbug form of patriotism. Who waves a flag ^{at} to us! The bulls of the arena of cowardice and ignorance!"

What would he do about such offenders in the halls of his own Beely? He soon made it clear.

"No, I shall not punish the evil-doers. Neither will I expel or suspend them. Let them stay on here if they so wish and be the victims of their own evil. Let them ^{live} in the vengeance they ~~live~~ ^{have} themselves wrought, and which will plague them. Rather, I should punish myself for having failed them. And I have during the lonely hours of the long night. The whole thing is so degrading to one's dignity as a human being that one hardly knows where to begin to remedy it. But one thing I decree: No more Bloody Monday Nights, and no hazing of any kind. The fraternities take notice too that there are no superior classes in this land. If you ever tend to forget it, remember the humbleness of Jesus, and the skin-clad Prephets who preached the Bible. Need anything more be said?"

As if he himself deeply felt the earnestnes and truth of his own words, he hung his head and walked slowly out of the chapel. There was a tiredness

and lustre-lack expression on his face as if it had been drained of all emotion and feeling and had been replaced by a bland vacuum. It was reflected in his whole bearing as the once proud and majestic figure drooped listlessly as if doubled under an unbearable load of desperation and hopelessness.

Said George as he and Foster were walking to their dormitory: "That was a stinging rebuke to the snobbishness of the fraternities in general and the DKD in particular."

"Well, you might as well have been treated by an M.D. for all the good it did you. How is your hand?"

"It'll be all right."

"It beats me how quickly he uncarted things. Hope he doesn't find out our part."

"I don't know about you. But he called me into his office this afternoon."

"He did?" Foster gaped. "What did he say?"

"Just said he knew all about my torn hand, and advised ^{me} to see the school physician. But I assured him everything ^{was} under control."

"Anything else, about me?"

"No, he just smiled his famous smile, sneezed loud and told me I may go. What a man! He alone is worth the price of going to Beely."

"Yeh, his countenance seems to shine upon you..."

"Well, it's there for the taking."

"I am not his kind."

"I am no teacher's pet, if that's what you mean."

"Maybe his monologue impressed ^{you} tonight!"

"I'd expect nothing different from him."

"Well, instead of the long, uh- spiel, he should have expelled the guys and be done with it. It would have struck fear in the hearts of the rest of us. Instead, this fine talk..."

"What you mean ^{is} that all reason and fine talk wouldn't change the lec-

pard's spots unless you skinned him. Especially bigotry's spots!"

CHAPTER IV

The Goal of the Soul - and the Flesh

In George the conflict was mighty because the soul had no definite goal but a nostalgic hope and dream, whose origin though in the nimbus of the gods, lay frustrated and uncertain in the mist of limbo^(the?) of the future, between heaven and hell.

George's flesh was like the sea in whose virgin bed all life sprang; but unlike the sea it has never known calm, for its burning soul was ever striving upward, and like the sunrays on the flat of water caused it to boil into the whirling vapor of ^a tornado. But yet it stopped always short of destruction, for it had the power of will: "Thus far and ^{no} further", He said it when he was with Geraldine or Blanca, but the command of his will did not have to be called ^{upon} in the presence of Cynthia. For with Cynthia it was love transcending all loves; a fondness and understanding of another's presence that makes a chemical cohesion and affinity of the mysterious whole.

Blanca is practical. Love and passion to her have the dull edge of materialism, like playing with a flame that would in the end exhume you and set you down at the altar of matrimony. But there is pudgy Harold, still in the penumbra of Blanca's glory, coming slowly to the fore. And to the rescue! Harold, the whole and finished man, the future auto tycoon, one with the mechanical ^{built into him} robot because of his mechanical bent, and like Blanca, of the world of business, of similar interests. ^{was alone of} There, insistence in her letters to ^(that she?) George to come to Wheelport, "weather permitting". Weather or no, he was sure she'd come anyway. Something she had to settle with him. Would it be a parting?

In late October Blanca drove into town in her new streamlined Hudson. It

College

...streaked through the ^{clear} Sunday silence of ~~University~~ Avenue like a gleaming black meteor, halting before an imposing red-brick structure, the women's dormitory. After a brief stay in the building, she ~~and~~ Cynthia ~~drove~~ ^{were} to the campus, where they have been awaited by George and Foster.

Blanca was her captivating brilliant self, and the flush of her consciousness of it was heightened by the exhilarating trip, the new sights and experiences - and the presence of George.

George bent down slightly to talk to Blanca through the car window on the left, where she was sitting at the wheel, while Foster was on the other side talking to Cynthia.

George felt it his duty to express ~~his~~ admiration of the car. Surely she must be proud of her new acquisition. And who wouldn't! "It's a beaut, Blanca," he said. He took her hand.

"Didn't come to show off the car," she grimaced, the mischief burning in her eyes.

"Well, yourself. too. Never looked lovelier. Sleek and vital as the automobile - or the spirit of it."

"Stop your ^{pandering} nonsense for once, George," Blanca cried, her nostrils flaring with suppressed anger. "Can't you ever be serious?"

"But I am serious," dissimulating being offended, "why, to listen to ^{you} one would take me for the perfidious liar that I am not."

"To think that I came chasing eighty-three miles here to be poked fun at! If that isn't chasing after you, I don't know what is?"

It was a bold statement even coming from Blanca, who evidently was pressing for some definition of George's attitude toward her, or ~~even~~ hers toward him. But he was still far removed from the state of definiteness in any phase of his life, had not even reached the stage of bargaining, so to speak. So the best policy was to continue in the vein of levity, until at least circumstances permitted. He said, "It must

be out of sheer benevolence and kindness of heart that brought you here to cheer up for a bit our state of dreary loneliness."

Blanca bit her lips and said nothing.

Cynthia looked at Blanca's pale drawn face and said, "Blanca couldn't have picked ^a better day even had she bribed the weatherman."

"Blanca gets her wishes," George said. "Didn't she write 'weather-permitting', well it did."

"Aw, lay off, George, will you?" Foster bawled from his side of the car.

George took his head out from the window and looked around. "We are being observed with sharp curiosity," he said. "We are on forbidden ground - the campus."

"Why?" Blanca looked up surprised.

"Because," George said, "the campus is hallowed ground where only the upper classmen may be seen with the opposite sex. Especially if they are attractive, and if one of them is driving a brand new Hudson. They'll be pale with envy."

For an answer Blanca pulled down George's head to her through the window by his ear, and whispered: "You could at least treat me to a hot dog. I am starved."

"How cruel of us. Foster, we mustn't forget to take care of two starving young ladies, must we?"

"We mustn't," Foster agreed smiling. "As a matter of fact we have a dandy spot picked out for lunch in a farmhouse about twenty miles out."

"Let's be off then," George said anxiously as he took another glance around.

George felt relief when they left town; and speeding through the countryside he couldn't help feel an elation, a lifting of the mood at the swift movement of the car, and the expert hand ~~(that was)~~ guiding it. He felt the warmth of her body close to him, and looked up with admiration at the handsome efficient creature beside him. "A beautiful Amazon", he

whispered to her. She held her eyes on the road and smiled. Perhaps it was a momentary aberration of the mind, when she relaxed her grip on the wheel, or maybe an unevenness in the road; but at that very moment the front wheels made a sharp turn to the right, ^{and} hitting the soft shoulder of the road caused the car to skid ⁱⁿ a semi-circle, ^{finally} coming to a halt at the very brink of a deep ravine. The suddenness of the thing was so complete that it failed to strike fear in the hearts of the occupants until moments after the vehicle had been brought to safety.

Blanca was the first to recover from the shock. Perhaps she had been in tight scrapes before, and this was just "one of ^{those} things", her nerves hardened with experience. Regaining her composure very quickly with a shrug of her shoulders, and, "Phew, that was rather close", she was off again with not another word.

George at her side, who had full view of the proceedings, remarked, "Quite a creditable performance. Cool, quick action - sound reflexes." Smiling a bit wryly he added, "Couldn't have done better myself....."

"A prime show," Foster declaimed from the rear, still a bit shaken.

Cynthia sitting with Foster moved forward and patted Blanca's back. "Imagine where ^{we'd} be," she said huskily, "if I had been at the controls."

"No worse than if Foster had been at the wheel," George turned back as he looked at the two in the rear and smiled.

"Don't you worry, Foster is a good driver," Cynthia laughed heartily, as if glad that she is alive after all, "aren't you, darling?"

"That maybe the reason he isn't driving his car, or leaving it behind at Portgrave," George was cynical. "No offense meant. Just a good reaction from the scare."

Foster looked at Cynthia, as if to advise him whether a reaction on his part was due. She just smiled to him, and took his hand and patted it. He sat back and relaxed in the pleasureable sensation of the warmth that flowed to him from the touch of her hand.

"A whimsical reaction, no doubt," he said finally, leaning forward. Then as if he ^{had} said all there was to be said he pushed back and sunk deeper into the upholstery to enable him to get back into the mood of exquisite communion with Cynthia's palm to palm clasp.

George discerned a slight scowl in Blanca's profile, as with eyes straining forward, jaws set and ~~was~~ lips taut, in a thin line she gripped the wheel in a new burst of speed on the hilly, winding and narrow scabrous roads. A speeding automobile under the circumstances became a hazard, and driving precarious, yet she resolutely kept on her fast course. Was it because she wanted to show them that the incident happened only in an off moment, or was it something else? Was it the transcendent spirit of love-making in the rear of the car that emanated and arose to torture her?

A new Blanca was revealed to George, that both attracted and rebuffed him. There was grace, poise and plenty of charm in that slender compact girl at his side, but also there was a hardness in that brown oval-profile, and a fierceness of gaze that ^{he} had never seen before. She may be tired ^{from} (of) the long morning drive, and may be ^{it is} only the vehemence of watchfulness of the deviations in the road as she was speeding along. But she was a grown woman ... and ripe for ^{a man's} love, and he ^{but} a panderer to obscurities in her eyes!

Instinctively he knew that the old status of "boy-and-girl friend" ~~ship~~ between them was going, if not already gone. And he was helpless to reverse the trend. He could not love her without fear. And the things to fear were immutable and unsurmountable.

She took a quick glance at him: "Why the deep concentration?"

"Taking in the scenery," George said absent mindedly.

"Don't seem so to me. Unless you are contemptuous of it - by the look on your face."

"Just absorbed."

"Who was it this time?"

"You."

"Not very flattering by the ^{grimace} on your face - almost snarling."

He felt a slight tremor go through her body. Was it anger, hate or love? It's all the same, ^{he thought.} She added after a pause, "Wait till I see you alone tonight."

"Didn't know I was going to see you - alone tonight."

"But you will."

"Very masterful, almost imperious," he said sardonically, "but..." and he looked at her almost defiantly as he paused abruptly. He thought ~~to himself~~ that he was being silly to take the whole thing seriously. "Well of course, I'll see you tonight. And alone." And he smiled almost derisively. But ^{at} that moment her eyes were implicitly on the road, and she didn't see it.

CHAPTER V

When We Are Alone Tonight

The pungent apple cider, with its autumnal freshness, teamed well with the crisp bacon and tangy ham and eggs, just come from the henery; the great white pitchers of milk and cream, covered with fresh white cloths, proved a satisfying and an admirable counter-balancing bland-elixir that cooled their gullets. The farmhouse, accomodating an occasional tourist, was spruce and clean and smelled of hay and harvest and cows and horses, and the acrid burning of fall leaves. The scene, the tempting display of food was enough to whet a jaded appetite, let alone four youngsters out on a spree.

George appropriately blessed the earth and the fullness thereof between gastronomic mouthfuls, and vowed that within sane or insane memory he had