

evil thing that's growing within her. The Thing growing in her - in the secret (once sacred, now polluted) depths of her body. She was (slightly) benumbed, dazed, but she must dance on. She must torture her body. More effort, more exhaustion and she would throw out that thing from her insides. Yes, every step must be a strenuous step. The battle of the demon! It's he or she. Dance after dance, the battle must go on to the finish. A sudden, tightening of her insides and a searing pain! Aha, the demon is loosening his claws and is tearing her flesh in revenge. He is being exorcised. Pain, pain, the joy of pain! Was there ever a pain of greater joy? What exquisite sensuality! Pain of the menses multiplied a hundred fold. The blessing! The pain has passed like a tidal wave, but left her dry. Where is the bloody tide? Alone again she is on the deserted arid island. The battle, it must go on. And she circles round and round, and she steps high and jarring, and she is as swift as the demon within her. And she exaggerates the two-two, and the one-two, and the three. And she flops and rises, and she splits, and she throws herself around like a wild beast. A beast at bay. The last hope. The dancers' attention is attracted to her. Foster whispers into her ear: "what is it, darling!" Suddenly he is afraid. Has she gone mad? And the whole thing is a mad whirl. And the pain, it's there again. Or is it? She swoons in his arms.

CHAPTER IV

If At All You Live

If at all you live in that gray cold February morning. If at all you live when you find that nothing inside you has changed. If at all you live after that night...! The shame. The scandal!

If at all you live!

Oh, but Cynthia, you are young, sinewy and resilient! The buds of life just beginning to open, and you want to smother them! Don't walk on the precipice of fate, and don't look down into the bottomless pit of despair. It's all wrong, the illusion is false. For it's dark there in the pit. Look up into the sky. No, You can't shake off the ^{gh}nightmarish delusion of the night? And it's a gray morning. The chill of the night is still in the room, for the full force of the steam had not yet made its appearance in the pipes and radiators. But yet the cheering ^Kcrackling note in the pipes and the whistling in the valves, the oncoming head of steam, should sober you. You shudder as if there were no warmth in the room, as if you were drawing rawness from the outside, as if the walls were no barrier between you and the falling feathery flakes. Falling snow always awakened a sense of well-being in you, a tingling, a flushing of the blood, but not now. You think ^{to} back of your first appearance in New York, when you ^{had} stepped out fresh from Grand Central. There were flakes and light and gaiety, and your heart responded in kind. But short six weeks ago. Could the human ^{heart} undergo such a ponderous change in so short a time? Flakes are but cold nakedness to you, in a grey cold clammy day. Funereal! Dead little souls. But on the other hand, Cynthia, aren't ^{you} you carrying out Nature's mandate, first and foremost ~~as~~ ~~MOTHERHOOD~~ ^{you} Surely you can't fail to appreciate that fact, you above all. You can feel, you can think. You are no slut, no harlot. It happened in a moment of love. Ah, was it love? That's what's torturing you, Cynthia. All right, a moment of passion. Even so you are but a creature of nature. All right then. The first mandate, motherhood. You are the Mother of mothers that created the world. You are The Mother. You have a right to be. Your right, the pain and agony of countless mothers in their last hour. The joy of countless mothers in their first hour. You are one with them. But you are condemned. And there are countless ones, mothers - mothers in their agony - who were and are still ~~condemned~~

condemned. Because Nature elected to elevate them to the highest of its functions, because it put the sign on them - to carry on. Because Mother is Nature's first and right hand. Because Mother creates with Nature. Because Mother is Nature's partner. If Mother sins then Nature sins. Because Mother is nourishing seeds in her, seeds of the race; as the trees, the hogs and the hens. Mother's fate to carry and nourish the seed, whether to fruition or perdition. And it's man's fate to be free. Free in his levity, and in the pleasure of casting his seed to all and sundry. Free to laugh and deride. Free to err, misjudge and judge. Free to condemn! And to Murder! Murder Whom - the Mother! The mother that bore and died a hundred agonies for him! That's your fate, Cynthia. You understand, Cynthia. You can think and feel. You are in the category of Motherhood, no matter the fate.

But you don't want to have a fate. You are ^{still} a child and you have a yearning and longing for the young free life. Like your classmates. Like those in the dorm with you. Who can laugh and sprint about in their negligees. You want to be like them. Motherhood is all right, but that's for later. Later. You can't imagine yourself in the same category with your mother. Your image of Mother is not you. You are a girl in the teens. You are a freshman in college. Life in College beckons to you. Proms, dances, love, imaginary and real. And George! What about George? What a change in ~~you~~ you at the very thought of George. Somehow, and you don't know how, you think it would be different if it had happened with George. Something sacred, and not everyday and profane. Is it... and you hesitate... is it because you really love George? Are ^{you} just becoming conscious of it, after - after it happened? You can think of blue sky and sunshine when you think of George. As if lying with him is no sin. Oh, what am I thinking about?

One solution would be to marry Foster. Would that mean freedom? No, worse slavery. Tied forever. You don't really love him. Young as you are there is something in you that yearns for someone different than Foster. What are the qualities that repel you? What is there in Foster that would

makes you turn around with disgust - Hatred! Is it the memory of that ...
 Night! Your limbs threaten and pull back on you! Ah but the sun is coming,
 and you feel it. In you. A new... and a new hope. Can you be happy again!

You remember the story of that young woman struggling! And now you
 don't care. You are with her, and with the sun... A new life creeping in you-
 a blessing to you from upstairs, from where all good things come. And the
 bad ones... The story in the Bible comes to you where she was almost excom~~mu~~
 unicated for "THE SIN", until she said: "TO WHOM THESE BELONG!".....

And with these words she went free... and she belonged with that young
 woman. But how was it? Two girls and... King David...! That was was it!
 Come let's walk together ./ until sundown.

Oh, the sun is just coming, we'll live together - Ah but is too long...

Soon though she thinks that for a short while she'll wrap herself in
 in the warm blood that's coming up to her.

All right let it go. And she felt better - if only for a short while...

In no time she was through with the questions on the examination paper
 before her, and in no time she was out of the school. Sure sure she was out.

But where does she go now? Home!

Home, yes!

But what's after?

Will think after... She thinks of Dr. Capen! How good!

A few things put together, and she is away,

She was up and into the train.

Too busy to think of anything in particular. Until they reached.../
 Midway... to Portland... !.But Portland is not Midway!

Yes, ^uAgusta is...

Agusta... Yes it is ^uAgusta...!

Augusta.

Then there was the heavy puffing of the locomotive, and the hard me-
tal clanking of the ^{huge}wheels as they churned on the ~~rails~~ rails
with the first powerful impulse of the steam. They were off.

In the outskirts the houses sway and move in swift succession, and
above and behind them in constancy of the oncoming twilight is the red-
dening of the horizon. Above, it already is becoming purple with the sun
sinking ~~to~~ below the hills. February was the harbinger of spring, the
herald, the first messenger. And she loved the month for it. It's just the
first hope of spring, in which you can see the longer and lighter days,
feel ~~the~~ life and power in the sun beams. Also it was the month of Valen-
tine. All of dead memory now.

As if she were on a strange planet. A wind swept planet, hard and unre-
lenting. And she was alone.

In the dusk of twilight in the car, before the lights went up, she
addressed herself to the face in her dreams. It was in kind a rehearsal.
She would have to face that face, so to speak, face to face. She has an
urgent message, a communication, a baring of her innermost self before
him. To stand naked, so to speak. And she must ask, ask... mind you, ask
that face for help. Go down on her knees and bare her soul. A supplicant
for her very miserable life. To save that life. To morrow! That's for
tomorrow. Now she is in easy communication with the face, on easy terms,
so to speak.

And yet. And yet she hardly knows the man. She knows the face. ^{From her first born days. Like a dream.} For
^{it} since she had seen the first time it had etched itself on her memory, her
(arching over her like a rainbow),
brain, and left a lasting impression. But the man, the flesh and blood,
she hardly knows. She could only appeal to the face. The face in her
dreams, and now (become) a reality. It must become a reality. She'd pull
it out from her bag of tricks, from that realm of dreams, to make it a

she redeemed the clean antiseptic smell. And she feels his presence already. And the kindly face is smiling down at her, and is reassuring. All her worries are wiped away. A lonely, lost maiden, alone in the wilderness, craves reassuring. And that fleeting feeling and the smile...

The lights were up when she reached her home.

Her mother exclaimed with joy at seeing her daughter. She hardly noted the pale anguished face. Hadn't given a thought to the unusualness of her daughter's coming, since it was only a few weeks before that she had been home. Then dinner was to be gotten ready.

Her father was a bit more discriminating when he had arrived after a hard day's work of haggling with his customers. He was happy to see her, but he was also puzzled. This extra expense of a trip when his daughter knew his hardship in keeping her at college. But he appeared gay when he took her in his arms and kissed her. It was good to have her. Then he looked in her troubled eyes and knew that all wasn't well with his daughter. In fact he was sure that her coming was an ill omen. He felt shaky. Then his wife came in with a platter of hot food from the kitchen, and her face was flushed and happy. Maybe he was all wrong.

"Aren't we a bit early?" she bantered. "I see that already you introduced yourself to our unexpected guest." She rambled on in a gay mood. "Hardly had time to say 'hello', and ~~gave~~ a quick hug and kiss, and off ~~to~~ to get food for that hungry bear of a husband of mine. And... for our daughter. Sure must be hungry and tired after the trip. Didn't have a good look..." Then she looked and stopped her babbling, as if stricken with a faintness. And she looked ~~to~~ to her husband. And he knew that now, if ever, it was time for him to act the man of the little family. Rubbing his hands in pretended glee: "Uhhh, I smell something delicious. My favorite dish, too. It's a prodigious act of mercy to welcome that animal of a husband, cold and hungry, and feed him and coddle him with brightness and warmth."

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Now, Tena, where's that kiss. The most important part of ^{the} "welcome home". He held out his cheek to her which she poked lightly. "That wouldn't do, a little more heart in it." It was his turn to gab, and gabble fast. "A little more warmth, my darling, it's cold out. I'll punish you with another kiss. Right on the kisser. Now, that's better. Now I'll return the compliment....." And so on until he succeeded in bringing a smile even to Cynthia's lips with his antics.

She was grateful to him for his love and understanding. She embraced ~~him~~ and kissed him hard. Now she could ease ~~her~~ her pent up feelings with a trembling tear. For surely it'll be taken for an expression of filial love.

"After all these years," he said laughing, "your mother still loves me, as you had the evidence before you. To be sure she needs a bit of coaxing sometime, to bring it to the surface, but it's there. No amount of prodding would help if it weren't there. Come over here, my spuse. We'll be a three ring circus, each offering something to it. Better still, let it be an altar, and each of us offer our own, individual love on it. A triple chain, triple strength, that never'll break... And now to the feast we go!"

She rang the doctor's bell quite early next morning, as if she were in a hurry to commit the act and not give her doubts a chance. Dr. Capen himself went to the door.

"Why, Cynthia!" he exclaimed with a note of definite elation in his voice.

"Sorry to startle you so early in the morning," she said.

The hesitation and the thickness ^{of} ~~to her~~ voice made him glance at her, and what he saw took his elation down a notch or two.

"Well, come in. Welcome even that early."

"Thank you."

As he took her ~~in~~ into his inner office, he bade her sit down and make herself comfortable. In the electric light of the dull morning which began

to compete and challenge the advancing daylight she looked up into his face and smiled. "It's the same face," she said to herself. Her lips were moving but her voice was not audible.

"Did you say something?" he asked.

"Just nothing - at least nothing to you. A girl's plight, a girl's confusion, and her dream. The dream, when the noose is tightening around one's neck. And the dream that beckons back to life. It's the face in the dream. The hope in the nightmare."

"My dear, I do believe I understand. Tell me all." Then trying his best to take the burden off her he said in jovial mood, "tell it all to uncle Capen. To that face in your dream. How presumptuous of me. It was my face, wasn't it?"

"It was!" And she fell silent for a while and then after collecting her courage and senses she told her story.

"And you are... I suppose..." He couldn't bring himself to say the word. He who had seen and heard and eased the burdens and the strains and stresses of the ~~Arms~~ ^{victims} in life's chances! But that was long in the past. He had long written it off. ~~And~~ And had forgotten the wail of despair, even its echo. He had spurned it for his own safety; though in the quiet of his home, even his office, he condemned himself for it. Who was he, with his dear little self, pampered little self, to shut his ears to the cries of help of those drowning souls? Drowning in the sea of ignorance! ~~His own safety!~~ His own safety! Well, those souls sinking, dying, and he turning his face away. And so he had to compromise with the call of his own conscience, and come to the rescue of a lost soul here and there. But of late, perhaps three or more years, the lost souls have lost their way to his office, and he heard their cries no more. Even the echoes had vanished. And he was a happy man, a whole man, who could live with his conscience. And now this. Cynthia! He, the face in her dreams, he, the worker in miracles, her ^{we} benefactor, he, the worker in benevolences. He...!

no understanding. It's the will of the cruel and the sinful who put the stigma on her in Thy name. The unctuous hypocrites! It's they who commit rape in the market place, who ravish in secret, who defoul under cover: it's they who shout the loudest, who throw the first stone. They who commit all sorts of perversities, who demolish with the breath of their hatred. They..... the powerful ones, who cover up, and are forgiven, or never ~~are~~ brought before the public eye, before the bar of justice. The very ones, with the most ~~abominable~~ heinous acts! They walk the jungle of our streets and homes, and destroy them.

He walked to the window and tore the curtains apart with the violence that was within him. Still raging he jerked up the window to get ^{air} fresh, to clear his mind.

What to ~~do~~? What can he do? How he wished his hands were free to use his skill. This piece of inert matter in her, this plastid, plasm, which has less consciousness than the wriggling earthworm we step underfoot, certainly a million times less than the cow, the sheep, the hog that we slaughter for our pleasure - this mass, this piece of slime is supposed to be possessed of a ~~type~~ a consciousness (even a soul) - and so you commit murder if you remove it to save the honor, yes, the virtue, the life of the innocent one. How many lives have been laid to this Moloch of perversion! How many to his own knowledge because he had refused to use his science to save them! God, must he permit her to go to the quacks that she'll surely find, as the others did in their desperation, and go the way they did? Why must he be responsible for the misfortunes and fatalities of some of our fellow-beings, because of the ~~stupidities~~, stupidities and blindness of our other fellow-beings?

There was the busy morning traffic below him. The sun was breaking through, gleaming in fresh pools on the white snow. It gave new energy to the passers-by. What a contrast to the bundle of tragedy, lying back of him there in the office!

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He remembered with a wry smile on twisted lips the last case he aborted. The last one he saved. A gaunt elderly woman, the bread-winner, and loaded down with six children. "My good-for-nothing-husband," she wailed, "he did it again. He has nothing else to do but think up schemes daytime how to violate me night-time. Scrub my house, and scrub houses for others. Drudgery all day. And at night! If only I could get away from him. Hide somewhere. But where? There is only one bed in a small closet-like room. And I have to bear it in silence. With all the children around. Drudgery in the day and the battle at night. There is nothing else - but commit suicide." And he knew that it was reasonable on her part. And he knew that she would do it. And he knew that he would come to her aid. And he also knew that he would be persecuted. And he was. But in spite of his enemies his name was cleared. He had a good name. And had received no remuneration. True, he had powerful enemies, but he also had powerful friends. For he had done well in the past for those who would sit in judgment of him. But that was more than five years ago. He is older now. He couldn't stand such another imbroglio.

Well....

He was still debating with himself, when he felt the soft touch of her hand on his shoulder. He turned and looked at her. Her eyes were dry. A little demure, but not sad. Her face quite composed as if she had resolved upon some course, made a definite decision. She held up her face to him.

"May I kiss you before I go?"

It was the simplest thing to say. Of all the other things this was the simplest, and says what she wants to say. The face in the dream. It's still before her, kind and guiding. But she can't employ that face for any other task. It would be sacrilegious, pure profanity. She wouldn't run the danger of contorting that face in her dream, with, with.... She'll go somewhere else with her burden. And if that burden pulls her down, then so much the better. Wasn't it presumptuous of her to come to him? True, the

man in her dreams, but she hardly knows the man. A silly little girl, ~~in~~ in despair, presuming! Coming to a well known surgeon to perform for her. But she must kiss him. The man of her dreams. To make up for the near... she brought upon him. Involving him, taking his time...

"But you are not going --- not yet." He took her hands and walked her back to the couch. "Sit down, let's talk it over."

True to the core of her dream of him, and of what George had said of him. Now George comes into the picture. Always George. But true, George will always be there. Wherever she is. Foster is somewhere in the deep, dark recesses of her mind. But George is prominent before her eyes' vision. And George spoke this and that, and of Dr. Capen. And that's how the face came into her dream. More his words than the sight of her eyes. She had only seen him less than half a dozen times in her whole life. But it was George's words that put the face in her dream, in her hope. And now she must give it up.

She shook her head, and pecked him on the cheek. ~~D~~eterminedly she turned toward the door.

"Can't let you go like this," he tried to restrain her.

"Already I have importuned. Now I must go. Silly trying to involve you. You are more important than..."

"But wait, let me at least advise you. There are good men, safe men."

"They are expensive. I have only twenty-five dollars..."

At least he could give her the money and provide her with a good man. But he ~~r~~ecognized the ^tsubborn type in her. Stubborn for her pride. She wouldn't accept ~~///~~ money. ^TFurther, he hardly could keep her another moment with him. Once she had decided, she was bent ~~on~~ carrying out her decision at once. No matter the price. How true to form he thought. He was quite helpless. But was he? If words are of no avail, then... Yes, then what? Force! Even that wouldn't help. She'd fight like a tigress... when ~~she~~ ^{she} was on the verge of insanity! And she may be.

She was at the door.

"Look up Dr. Monarch," he almost shouted, "and tell him in my name." He trembled with the words and with their urgency. He hoped she ^{had} heard him right. "Dr. Monarch," he repeated. And she was gone.

CHAPTER VI

Over At The Campus

Over at the campus they were having their third respite of the year, and those fortunate enough to get through with their finals early could take a modest vacation until the new semester rolled around. It could be as long as ^{ten} ~~three or five~~ ^{even} ~~longer~~ days, and if one was willing to chop a few days off the ~~half year~~. A silent understanding, a compact, between student and faculty to blink at such shortcomings. No roll call for at least four or five days. Let the tired mind and the heavy eyelids thaw out another few days.

A few lucky ones, ⁿ indeed, had left the day before. Their exams ^{had} come together and early. Others left with Cynthia, still others will leave the next ^{day} and others not at all.

A small exodus. Everyone visiting his or her shrine, fulfilling a nostalgic urge, a certain tug of the heart, or maybe a definite aim. Or maybe a simple desire of getting away from the old tortured haunts to better and fresher scenes, old scenes that have recouped a new freshness and charm, much younger than the newest experiences at college. What an interminable age one semester to a freshman, even ^{to} a sophomore?

What's the good old town doing? And what is he or she doing? Your mind is unclouded and free, and can think of other things than courses and exams.