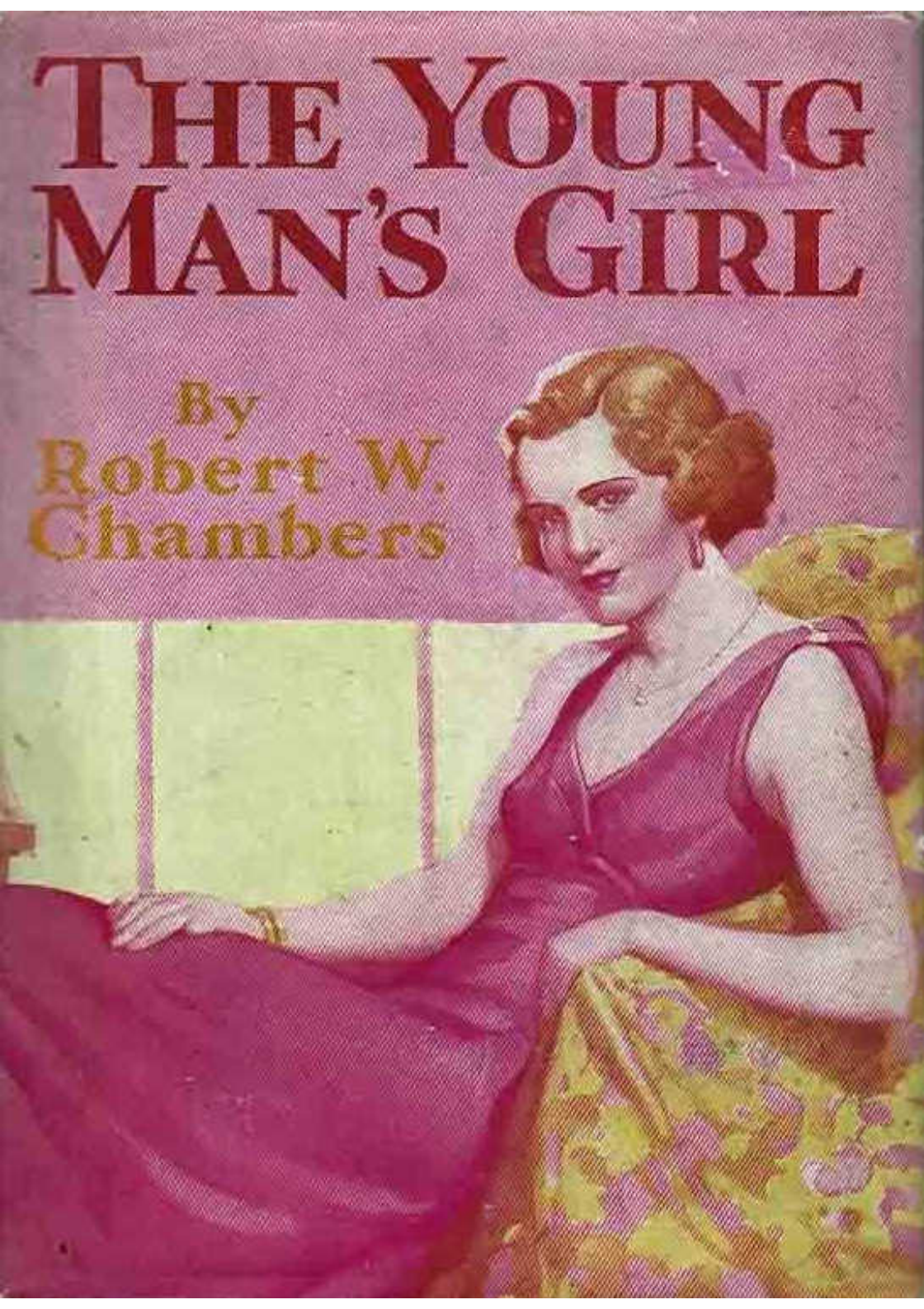
THE YOUNG MAN'S GIRL

By
Robert W. Chambers



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By

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

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PART I

THE SHAPES OF THEIR HEADS

CHAPTER I
GREAT DAYS

The great war had ended, and the two great booms had started—the great financial boom and the great moral boom. Everybody was making or taking money and spending more than they took or made. So was the United States Government, and the governments of every state and every city—all joyously appropriating and spending the incomes of people who gaily squandered what was left.

Everybody was acquiring money. Everybody was learning to drink.

Out of the hysteria of the Civil War, sixty years before, the Fifteenth Amendment had been hatched from a chick-egg by a band of bigots. Emotional fanaticism was rampant in the North. God dealt wickedly by his bigots, then.

Out of the hysteria of the World War, bigotry and stupidity hatched the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Amendments, piously planting the tares and thistles of moral and financial ruin. Who could guess that these tender seedlings were young upas-trees?

"God wills it!" bawled a bastard bishop.

These are great days for man and God, they said. Great days!

So a purified nation, state, and city, elbow-deep in other people's money, dug it out in double scoopfuls and flung it east and west and north and south. And the dirty politicians with their dirtier ambitions took toll in double handfuls.

Great days for just and unjust. Dazzling days for world and underworld alike. The buccaneers and their gilded galleons had vanished long ago in the sunset blaze of Spanish splendor; but now a new race of racketeers arose to replace them, and to fly the same old Skull-and-Bones and set sail for Plunderland through a hurricane of flying gold.

Great days! Blood and Gold and God! World and underworld gave rein to a loosened frenzy, seizing, confiscating, spending.

Nation, states, cities decreed huge appropriations, vast projects, enormous sums to finance monuments to progress and to the only genuine and Yankee God.

The underworld robbed and bribed in millions; the sub-underworld of zealots squalled for the Inquisition; an ox-brained public, bitten by St. Vitus, capered and bawled approval.

In the City of New York a hundred speakeasies replaced every decent bar; ten thousand potential drunkards crooked elbows at home where there had been none before; citywide promiscuity succeeded the few brothels known to public and police.

It was the era of the Bigger and Better; a bond robbery netted five million dollars; a Mr. Rothstein cut cards at forty thousand dollars a cut. Eight hundred thousand dollars was won on a single horse. It was the reign of Nicky Arnstein, of Bill Fallen, of Dapper Don. The lively days of crooked magistrates and women politicians; of furtive clergymen bullying crooked politicians who submitted in terror of being blackmailed. The colorful days of poisoned liquor, of legal murder, of bigotry and bishops; and of breakers ahead!

Toward which the Ship of State drove on, hell-bent, under full sail, with all hands mustered below to dance a hornpipe. And the stock market a mounting skyrocket.

Great days! A president had gone to Paris. His congress had flouted him.

The troops had come home from overseas. They found liberty in the lockup and the country prosperous, pious, booming. They found a potential drunkard in every school-boy and a potential prostitute in every school-girl. They discovered that everybody was growing rich enough to mock the laws that mocked them. They discovered that the humorous elements of lawlessness, of treachery, of lying and deceit were being taught to a hundred and twenty million jackasses by jeering press and waggish stage.

Great days! Breakers ahead. And the red glow of anarchy flickering beyond far horizons.

Great days. Great days!

Two young men returned home on the same troop-ship, one a lieutenant, educated to be a sculptor, the other a captain and a graduate of a medical college.

The sculptor's name was John Wyndward. The medico's, Terence Quinton.

The Statue of Liberty looked rather dubious to them, towering in the golden sunset with up-flung arm. As though to halt and not to welcome. Cop-like, forbidding, menacing the whole world with a moral ticket.

They had thoroughly enjoyed the World War; liked the Germans better than the French; were in fine health and eager to get back to their civil avocations and begin to make reputations and share in the torrent of money deluging the Western World.

Wyndward took a large, damp studio, went into several competitions and finally landed one, winning a splendid commission.

Quinton went to Calvary Hospital as an interne and continued there awaiting opportunity for original research or for private practice, as luck might offer in an overcrowded profession.

Wyndward had served in an American regiment with the British Army, brigaded next to an Irish regiment in which Quinton served.

Their friendship, and Quinton's aspirations for American citizenship, dated from that contact; withstood income tax and dry laws; and had endured, now, for more than two topsy-turvy years.

On that late afternoon in June, John Wyndward, needing a walk, sauntered out of his studio and footed it as far as Calvary Hospital in order to foregather with his comrade, Terry Quinton.

He was just in time to swing aboard the ambulance step beside Quinton and go wailing away toward a considerable blaze on the waterfront where somebody had been hurt.

CHAPTER II
PATRICK PASSES

Startled shouts burst from the rolling smoke; there came a crash in darkness followed by a reddish flare.

Battalion Chief Patrick Aloysius Clyde died then.

Sinister throbbing, droning of engines; rubber-coated firemen disengaging the dead man from a steaming heap of bricks. Through obscurity thick with flowing sparks an ambulance bumped across twitching lines of hose to where the battalion chief lay on a rubber blanket.

John Wyndward and Terence Quinton dropped off the tail-board of the ambulance. The latter's examination was perfunctory.

"Dead," said Quinton. He looked around through flame-shot obscurity at the helmeted firemen in their wet rubber coats and boots.

"Pat's gone," he repeated; and added to a policeman who was starting off to find a priest: "Never mind, Mike; I'll take him home."

They had to make swift work of it, for the waterfront fire was spreading, and a cascade of bricks fell from a swaying wall. As they lifted the dead man, there came a muffled explosion; a murky glare lighted up the smoke, and torrents of sparks rushed skyward and rained over the river. Then, from the fire-boats, great gray walls of water swept inland.

So Wyndward and Quinton swung aboard the rear step again; the ambulance whined loudly for right of way and moved off through the smoke fog where police were pushing people back from fire lines.

Amid a din of bell and gong and siren, more engines, battalion cars, hose carts, hook-and-ladders, water-towers were arriving. Past them, with a strident wail, sped the Calvary Hospital ambulance headed northward where, beyond the smoke, a clear, honey-colored moon looked down upon miles and miles of electric lights shimmering from river to river and from the Sound to the sea.

Thus Battalion Chief Patrick Aloysius Clyde returned to his home on East 105th Street, and was laid upon his own bed and presently attended by Family Doctor O'Rourke, Undertaker Adolph Schmalz, and by Father Shaun Sullivan, hurrying from Saint Bridget's Chapel to ease a decent man's soul through Purgatory.

The dead fireman's wife had remained silent under the blow—a pale, thin, inarticulate woman born of a silent race, and who had transmitted this racial characteristic to her only child to counteract a natural loquacity. For Pat Clyde had been talkative, loving laughter and his fellow men. Death did him a dirty trick when it stopped his jesting tongue.

The only child was playing in the streets somewhere, and had to be found, fetched home and introduced to Old Man Death.

When the ambulance drove back to Calvary Hospital John Wyndward remained to help hunt up this youngster.

All 105th Street clustered about the apartment house where the Clydes lived. Awed children and emotional Irish and Jewish mothers crowding sidewalk and stoop told Wyndward that the child, probably, was roller-skating somewhere under the New York Central Railroad viaduct or else along Central Park wall. He learned, also, that she bore the odd name of Chiyu.

Morbid bands of her small comrades started off eastward and westward to look for her.

Wyndward walked in the direction of Central Park.

Escorting him, a riffraff on roller skates scuttled across Fifth Avenue ahead of him, but they scattered out to the southward. So, on a chance that the little girl might be skating in the other direction, he turned northward toward 110th Street.

The poor were promiscuously abroad, swarming under the June moon in smelly masses. Passing buses were loaded with them; so were all wall benches along sidewalks under the unhealthy-looking elms.

He passed a number of roller-skating urchins and stopped several; but their names sounded more like Levinsky than like Clyde. One of these young Hittites, however, told him that the girl was skating somewhere near the park entrance at 110th Street and Fifth Avenue. When he arrived there he noticed a barelegged little girl wearing battered roller skates, sitting on the park wall and looking up at the summer moon.

"Is your name Chiyu?" he asked, pausing beside her dangling skate-shod feet.

Under tangled locks of raw-gold color two shadowy sapphire eyes surveyed him.

"Are you Chiyu Clyde?" he repeated.

The child nodded.

There was no expression, no animation in her face. But the shape of her tousled head revealed intelligence.

He was wondering how to break the news to her. He had a friendly way with youngsters, but there seemed to be nothing responsive about this child.

From her perch on the park wall she gazed down at him in delicate, expressionless stupidity.

"Chiyu," he said, "your mother needs you at home."

She slid off the wall at that, landing skilfully on both skates.

"If you like," he suggested, "I'll walk back to 105th Street with you."

She took his offered hand and skated along beside him.

"How old are you?" he inquired pleasantly.

"Nine." No animation in her voice and face, no slightest interest.

"Do you go to school?"

She nodded.

"What do you study?"

She shrugged.

The child's mind seemed to be as empty as her too perfect features. And yet the shape of her little head was clever.

With merciful purpose in view he told her that he felt sure she was a good Catholic. She skated silently, skilfully over a gutter, her hand clasping his.

He spoke of the Catholic religion as a very happy faith and full of consolation for the afflicted.

He was not at all sure she was listening, but, with gentle purpose persisting, he went on talking to her, always edging toward the tragic message in his mind. He said: "If anybody you love should die, you know that some day you are going to see them again, don't you, Chiyu?"

She continued to skate along slowly, silently, beside him.

"For example," he ventured, "if your mother or your father should die, you would be certain to rejoin them—some day—when God called you. Wouldn't you, Chiyu?"

The child looked up presently, not at him, but past him, at the full moon sailing overhead.

"What's up there?" she inquired.

"Do you mean, what's in the moon?"

"Yes. What?"

"It's a dead planet—"

"For dead people?"

"No—"

"Angels, then?"

"I hardly think so—"

"What, then? Devils?"

"Oh, no—"

"Well, what? I'd like to see a devil."

"Nobody knows exactly what is in the moon, Chiyu—"

"Would it be dangerous to go up there in a balloon and find out?"

"Probably."

"I wouldn't be afraid. I like to live dangerously."

For an instant the child's colorless voice had become vibrant, and he felt a slight tightening of her hand clasping his.

Such sudden and spirited loquacity in so dumb a youngster was rather startling. Had it, after all, been shyness, not mindlessness?

"Do you like to have dangerous adventures?" he inquired.

"Yes. I never had any, though."

He said: "Why are you skating around here all alone instead of running about with your friends?"

"The gang considers me a washout because I don't talk."

"You talk when you get started, Chiyu."

"Yes. To *you*."

"To me?"

"You see I do."

“But why to me, Chiyu?”

“I don’t know. I don’t remember ever talking to anybody else.”

“You talk to your mother and father, don’t you?”

She shook her head, and took a firmer clasp on his hand; and they started together across Fifth Avenue when crimson signal lamps glowed out southward as far as the eye could see.

When they landed and entered 105th Street, Wyndward said gently: “I have to tell you something, Chiyu. Your father is ill. That’s why your mother sent for you. Because your father is quite ill. . . . Dangerously ill.”

After an uncanny silence the child looked up at him without any expression in her face.

“He may not live,” said Wyndward. “I don’t believe he is going to get well, Chiyu.”

Along noisy, swarming sidewalks, now, everybody was gabbling and whispering and staring at them. But nobody spoke to Chiyu; the throng around the entrance of the apartment house parted in silence to let them enter.

The child sat down on the uncarpeted stairs to remove her roller skates. There was no elevator. With skates dangling she walked up the three flights beside John Wyndward.

A group of shadowy figures at her doorway moved aside to let them pass into a dim room smelling of onions. Mortuary candles already lighted the dead man lying in the middle of a double bed. The child saw him and stopped; her expressionless face grew white.

Then she continued on across the taper-lit room to where her mother was kneeling by the bed; and knelt down close beside her.

CHAPTER III

A JOB

Where that buck-toothed brick heap known as the "skyline" of New York parallels the Palisades—at the tail-end of them—a site for the fireman's monument had been selected.

It was not far from the squatty tomb which, architecturally, resembled the great general himself.

Here, overlooking that splendid sewer, the Hudson, and the haunts of numberless nursemaids, preliminary operations had been completed. These included three marble pedestals, a terrace and balustrade, and double flights of steps descending to Riverside Drive.

All these awaited sculptured groups, now in the making.

In the competition among sculptors for this proposed memorial to the heroic dead of the New York Fire Department, the prize had been carried off by John Wyndward, a young man born of an English father and an American mother; and who had become an American citizen in order to take the R.O.T.C. course at Plattsburg and later to serve the United States overseas.

His father, a widower who lived in London, was the Honorable Lauris Wyndward, M.P.; and he had a number of other assorted English relatives in all stages of mental, physical, and financial decrepitude.

The plastaline model which young Wyndward had submitted to the jury was an unusual composition, neither gloomily monumental nor grandly obvious.

It was a gay, fanciful, almost playful memorial not only to the dead but to those faithful horses that had made picturesque an era now ending in unromantic mechanization.

Every one of his fellow competitors had shown variations of the obvious—a bronze fire engine drawn by three bronze horses driven at terrific speed by a fearless, bareheaded fellow cast in glistening bronze.

But John Wyndward went back to the tranquil humor and leisurely beauty of ancient Greece with its marbles exquisitely accented here and there by tinted azure, rose, and gold.

Composed and arranged in the manner of a quadriga, and flanked and linked by balanced groups to form a triptych, the central pedestal was

dominated by a lovely, laughing Victory who controlled three garlanded and proudly stepping horses harnessed with ropes of roses to an old-time fire engine, itself almost covered with flowers. Astride each horse a charming, naked child scattered flowers—a little boy on the middle horse, a little girl on each of the others—merrily flinging their blossoms in every direction. Father Time sat on the rear step of the engine consulting his hour-glass, amazed to see that scarcely any sand had run out of it.

On flanking pedestals to right and left two smiling, symbolic figures representing Duty and Devotion advanced lightly, bearing the flower-entwined banners of New York City and of the Fire Department, surrounded by clinging children. Among them were two colored youngsters, a boy and a girl, most delicately done in dusky golden marble.

How it happened that an almost mindless jury of politicians and art-infected bankers had chosen young Wyndward's bewitching design, is something that—as Lord Dundreary once remarked—"No fella can find out."

Sometimes the meager mind suspects genius in what it does not understand.

So for more than a year, now, John Wyndward, guided by his group models in plastaline, clay, and tinted plaster, and by scores of sketches and studies in wax and clay detail, had been working on the full-sized central group, already far advanced.

In a glass-roofed basement studio, which had once been a garage, he posed his models, including three handsome and lovable horses recently discarded from the Fire Department.

Models of all kinds, shapes, color, and ages came and went. Some were professionals and knew their jobs; others with ambition for the stage or movies were trying to earn enough money to exist or while marking time.

For his lovely young Victory he had used four models—a professional for the torso, a chorus girl from the Frivolity for arms and legs, and an obliging and handsome hospital nurse for the head and neck. The composite result was bewitching.

Other adult figures were composed from acceptable fragments of selected young women. As for the children, little Wops, Yids, Squareheads, Micks, Dutch, and Pickaninnies from the Black Belt came in coveys to strip for inspection accompanied by fathers and mothers and elder sisters and brothers who noisily urged the pulchritudinous desirability of each.

But there were few suitable, even for composite types, being either dumpy, rickety, or as skinny as a plucked gosling.

One little black girl of ten was enchanting, and he used her as she was, without borrowing anatomy from others. The little black boy had poor legs, but he found another to supply better ones.

As for the white children, he managed to model a variety of composite types as studies, but the child riding the middle horse did not satisfy him, and he finally discarded the several studies, composite and individual, which he had made in day for the ultimate marble.

Quinton, stopping in one evening, told Wyndward that he had seen a kid in the Morgue—a hit-and-run victim, who looked like a little she-Ganymede.

"You're helpful," remarked Wyndward, watching two studio assistants laying wet cloths upon the shadowy clay group towering above them.

"Can't you find a girl-kiddie for the middle horse?"

"Find plenty, but none of 'em suit me."

"You're too particular," said Quinton. "You turn down lots of models just because you don't like the shapes of their heads."

"I do. The shapes of their heads tell the whole story."

"Like thumb prints," remarked Quinton, "no two are similar. What type are you looking for?"

"I'm looking for a kid the shape of whose head suggests beauty of mind, of spirit, and of body."

Quinton shrugged. "This isn't ancient Greece, you know. You'll have to use half a dozen models and patch up a saccharine ensemble from the best points in each poor human kid."

"I don't want a sugary ideal; I want a beautiful human kid. They exist. If I needed gargoyles I'd know where to go for human models."

"Where's that?"

"To Washington. Have you ever sat in the galleries and gazed upon our Congress? Did you ever notice the shapes of their heads? Lumpy heads, dumpy heads, under-bred heads with lop ears set too low; narrow, vulpine heads with button ears; pudding-shaped heads with Iowa ears; turnip-type with Nebraska ears; pointed, hairless heads; flat, bushy heads; the seal-like

skull of the sycophant; the bulging bean of the pompous; and every head reminding one of some bird or animal. Their country may not need them but Gothic architecture does."

"Do you think there are any better shaped heads in Parliament?" inquired Quinton, smiling.

"Fewer vulgarly shaped ones. Tell me, Terry, do you think of any girl-kid eight or nine years old, with a lovely little head who could strip like an infant angel?"

"Not in any of our wards. But there are lots of charming children of the poor—" He hesitated, then: "What about Patrick Clyde's little girl? You remember?"

"I've never thought of her since."

"Her mother really needs the money," said Quinton. "Do you think the shape of the Clyde kid's noddle might suit your fastidious taste?"

"I believe it might," said Wyndward with an absent-minded glance at his life-sized clay horses.

"Well, then, it would be a real charity if you could use her," insisted Quinton. "The pension her mother draws is very small. And she's too frail to work out."

Wyndward handed up a large, coarse sponge and a bucket of water to one of the Italians who was standing on a ladder to wet down the great clay horses and cover them with soaked cloths.

"You be damned careful on that slippery ladder, Angelo," he said. "And it isn't breaking your neck that worries me, either."

Angelo's white teeth sparkled in a laugh.

Wyndward watched operations for a few moments, then turned to Quinton: "That Clyde kid seemed to be rather a dumb youngster," he remarked.

"Inarticulate or stupid?"

"I don't know. She did talk after a while."

"Don't you believe you could use her?"

"Not for the important central figure. However, as I recollect, the shape of her head is quite charming. She might strip well, too. She might even

prove intelligent. I've got to have intelligence as well as physical assets for that model."

"Why not give her a break, then? Try her out on the middle horse up there. She might be just what you're looking for."

Wyndward, watching his two Italian helpers on the ladders, began to fill his pipe. After a while he gave Quinton another absent-minded glance.

"It would be very appropriate, too," suggested Quinton—"the poor little child of a dead fireman figuring immortally on your fireman's monument. A kind of poetic and divine recompense, you know. . . . If you like, then, I'll stop in on my way to the hospital and tell her mother to send the kid around."

Wyndward's eyes were remote. "All right," he said vaguely, "send the kid around."

"I'll do it. Good night, John."

But Wyndward, watching his pair of busy Latins on their shaky ladders, with habitual concern, was telling Rocco profanely where to lay a fold of wet cloth; adding that if he fell on the horse during the operation he'd kill him if the tumble didn't.

And little Rocco, burdened with sponge and cloth and bucket, laughed good-naturedly as he climbed about with Italian agility, sopping, sponging, catching the wet cloths hurled at him by Angelo and laying them expertly exactly where needed.

No clergyman herding souls, no cat supervising kittens, was more solicitous than was Wyndward over his clay horses and the clay-modeled figures of the huge group looming above him.

"Good work," he said when Angelo and Rocco finally climbed down; "you always scare me but there's nobody like you. So lock up the place and be on the job early to do some casting. Good night."

"Goo' night, Mees' Wyndward," they cried gaily; and he put on his hat and left them in possession.

The Buccaneers Club was his destination—matter of a cocktail and a game of pool before he went to his Park Avenue penthouse to dress.

He didn't recollect just what party he was dressing for. Coe would remind him; lay out a black tie or a white one, significant of what impended.

He was tired, but he always had to go out. Sculptors, in particular, have to go about. Only wealthy folk order garden bronzes and marbles and sculptured tombs. When the day is done, and work is done, the real day—and, often, work—begin.

And so, to the club. *Aut* cocktails, *aut nullus*. It was necessary to keep going. One way to accomplish it was to walk downtown to the club. It kept him fit. Clear skinned, agile.

Also he could think about things better when walking through the drab streets of the stupidest capital in the world. Nothing to distract his attention other than some fresh architectural atrocity mushrooming over night.

Damn those clay horses! They'd have to measure up to Shrady's standard before he was through with them.

The whole business bulked big and menacing. It always did at the day's end. He hoped it was "noble discontent" that always depressed him at sunset. Anyway he'd feel better in the morning. View with a fresh eye the Sisyphean mass.

But, unlike the son of Æolus, and spouse of a giddy Pleiad, he loved his uphill job very fiercely. God—or whatever it is—had condemned him to it. He never had wanted any other sentence.

God—or whatever it is—selects a man's vocation. Man merely selects his avocation. And it were better for man that he agree with God—or whatever it is—who orders things prenatally.

Well, he had indorsed his Creator's choice. And, at twenty-two, unmindful of outer-folk and of their gabble and applause, John Wyndward was wondering whether he might have made a better soldier than a sculptor.

His British father preferred the army for a son not likely to come into anything materially very splendid. Not that the young man didn't have his mother's money. American money, and enough.

But a sculptor! Rather a seedy lot these arty people. Even the successful ones. A queer, dreary lot. Finger nails always suspicious from clay or paint. Careless about dress. Strange habits and vocabularies.

As John Wyndward swung along through the ruddy golden sunset streaming through dingy cross streets, he thought about his sporting, well-groomed father and wondered whether he should have gone into the 10th Hussars or the 16th Lancers. Or the Household troops, perhaps.

Wondered why he had become an American citizen. And a sculptor.

If a number of rather healthy people, including his father, should die, Parliament was possible. Several large houses, too. And a decorative title. The Honorable John Wyndward, to begin.

But all that was going to hell anyway.

No; his nationality and job suited him. He had to make good; that was all. Make those damn horses what they ought to be. So that Shrady, had he been alive, might nod approval. . . . Oh God, what a job!

When he was near his club, swinging lithely along, he thought of a girl he had met recently. Rather a goddess. Aphrodite with Minerva's mind. Some jane!

However his fixed dislike of marriage excluded any serious surmise concerning such girls. Concerning this one, Narcissa was her name, he recollected. Oh yes, Narcissa Grey. Narcissa Belinda Grey. What an 1830 name!

When he walked into the portal of the Buccaneers Club, under the suspended Golden Galleon, he was thinking about his horses.

He had quite forgotten the child who was to come to the studio in the morning looking for a job.

This forgetting what Chance is devising and Destiny preparing is the usual beginning of all earthly troubles, from boredom to tragedy.

Fate, superciliously picking at a million threads, took up two at random and idly entangled them.

Meanwhile John Wyndward thought of his horses while the bartender in the Crypt prepared what was popularly known as a "Yes Dear," because it seemed to agree with everybody.

He was still brooding over his horses when Scott Dundas, flirting with a gin daisy, suggested pool.

Up in 105th Street a ragged child returned from solitary roller-skating to a supper of butterless bread and Grade C milk.

Her pallid mother laid a slip of greasy paper beside her spoon.

"Remember the gintleman who fetched ye home the day your papa died?"

Chiyu nodded.

“Go see him to-morrow morning at nine o’clock,” said her mother listlessly.

“Why?”

“Dr. Quinton says for ye to go, and that’s the why.”

Chiyu looked at the written address on the slip of paper.

“Maybe,” added her mother, “the gintleman will give ye worrk to do.”

“I don’t know how to work,” said Chiyu.

“Arre ye too dumb to sit naked and nivver stir? Is that worrk?”

The child gazed at her mother wide-eyed.

“Sure that’s no worrk at all,” said Mrs. Clyde fretfully. “’Tis no more than if ye lay abed of a Sunday mornin’. G’wan an’ drink th’ milk an’ don’t be askin’ me for tay. I’ve no tay in the house for ye.”

Chiyu, still staring at her mother, began to crumble her crust into the bowl.

Her mother said: “Ye know the new monnymint foreninst the Drive? The fireman’s tomb they call it?” And, as Chiyu continued to stare at her in silence: “Wisha then,” repeated Mrs. Clyde impatiently, “’tis the big tomb they’re after buildin’ to the glory of the Fire Department! Ye do so know it! G’wan, now; ye’re not that dumb, nor half the fool ye look.”

The child dropped her eyes; slowly stirred her bread and milk.

“’Tis Misther Wyndward is after makin’ it,” explained her mother, “the same that fetched ye home the day ye’re father died. And it’s a baby angel he is wishful f’r to make of ye. On a fire horse! Think o’ that, darlin’! A baby angel out o’ marrble!”

The child lifted her perplexed eyes in silence.

“Ye may be dumb,” said her mother, “but ye’ve the lovely look of a cherub. I’ll wash the hair of ye this night, an’ ye’ll be afther takin’ a bath an’ no worrds bandied.”

Two tears stole down Chiyu’s cheeks. But whether in fear of the job ahead, or in terror of a bath there is no knowing.

CHAPTER IV
CHIYU

To the left of the heavy double garage-studio doors was another smaller door opening into a carpeted reception room for tradesmen, models, and visitors.

Here John Wyndward's efficient secretary, Miss Kenner, presided at her desk and transacted John Wyndward's business for him.

Behind her swivel chair a door led into a large shop where Rocco Tocato and Angelo Cavalla, and sometimes other expert helpers worked for Wyndward in wax, plaster, metal, and wood, making models, props, staging, armatures, and the various and strange looking properties required by a busy sculptor. Here, also, on rollers, were blocks of white or various tinted marble; shelves full of sculptor's tools; a gilder's and metal-worker's bench; a carpenter's bench; bags of plaster of Paris; cans of wax and plastaline; planks of soft pine, deal, beech, and oak; a forge, an anvil, and a stove.

To the left of the garage doors was Wyndward's comfortably furnished study, where were his books, photographs, drawings, sketches in wax and plaster and bronze. A door led back from it into a dressing-room and toilet for the use of models.

Everybody in the establishment was supposed to be busy by nine in the morning. Rocco and Angelo made plaster of Paris casts; Miss Kenner was typing, paying wages and bills, turning away undesirable models, telephoning appointments for desirable ones, answering letters from ambitious school girls and chorus girls who desired some sculptor to perpetuate their corporeal charms.

Mike Stewart, the contractor for the pedestals and terrace stonework of the Fireman's Memorial, dropped in to leave some scale drawings for Wyndward's inspection; and would have lingered—Miss Kenner being agreeable to look at—but was not encouraged. As he opened the door to depart, a little girl came in, as bewildered as a lost dog.

Miss Kenner smiled at her. "You're Chiyu Clyde, aren't you?" she asked.

Chiyu gulped and nodded.

"Mr. Wyndward is all ready for you," said Betty Kenner encouragingly. She opened a small door which led into the garage-studio: "Chiyu Clyde is

here, Mr. Wyndward."

Wyndward, in clay-stained trousers and rolled up shirt sleeves, came into the office presently.

"Hello, Chiyu," he said.

"Hello," said the child in a scared voice. But she took the freshly washed hand he extended and walked along beside him into the studio where a horse stood held by a ruddy young Irishman.

She looked at the horse, looked up at the ladders and scaffolding which spider-webbed the great clay group above her.

"I have a basket full of roses for you," said Wyndward, "and I want you to sit on that kind old horse and throw those roses at me and at Marty O'Mara over there. Every time you hit us you get five cents extra. Do you like the job?"

She nodded uncertainly.

He said in his friendly way: "It will be necessary for you to undress, you know. Little girl angels don't wear clothes."

After a short silence she pulled at his hand and stood on tiptoe to whisper in his ear:

"I don't want to undress if *he's* here."

"But," whispered Wyndward in return, "somebody has to hold the horse."

"Can't you hold it?" she whispered back.

He considered a moment then: "Marty, roll out one of the dummy horses. And you may lead old Jim back to the stables; I shan't want him today."

He walked across the wet floor with Chiyu, and entered his study.

"In that back room," he said, pointing, "you'll find a nice, new little pink bathrobe and a pair of pink bath slippers. I'll be waiting for you in the studio."

Marty O'Mara led away old Jim the ex-fire horse and closed the garage doors behind him. Wyndward laid a saddle cloth on the dummy horse and placed a small step-ladder beside it.

There was a basketful of short-stemmed yellow and white roses in the sink. He was sorting over these when the study door opened and Chiyu

appeared.

Totally destitute of clothing, the child walked toward him carrying the little bathrobe and slippers in her hands. The sheer loveliness of her left Wyndward silent.

"Is that my horse?" she asked, placing one small hand confidently in his and lightly mounting the step-ladder.

"Isn't he a fine horse?" said Wyndward.

"To-morrow," she remarked, "I'll ride the live one. Where are my roses?"

Sitting astride the velvet saddle-blanket she took the basket from him and, as he retreated backward, carrying the step-ladder, she aimed a plump orange-yellow rose at him which hit him in the face.

"Did it hurt?" she asked with a frightened smile.

"That was a good shot," he replied, laughing; "now throw your roses at me or at anything else you see. That's the way"—catching the swiftly thrown roses, now and then, from the fast fusillade of blossoms directed at him.

And all the while he was thinking exultantly: "Well I've got what I want in this kid. . . . If only she doesn't quit me. What a head and body! What exquisite little arms and fingers and legs and toes. *Everything* in one model. What amazing luck!"

Chiyu's roses had all been aimed and thrown, now; and while Wyndward sauntered about picking them up and refilling the basket, he talked to her about the Fireman's Memorial in an easy, friendly way, explaining what an interesting part she was going to play in the making of it. The child followed his casual narrative with visible interest and intelligence, though, as usual, she remained silent.

He explained to her how necessary were models to painters and sculptors; how important it was for him to study her in action while she was throwing her roses at him.

"Now go ahead and throw them again," he added gaily. During the second bombardment, he stopped her now and then and made her hold the arrested attitude and gesture for a few moments.

And now that she began to understand the rôle she was to play, she instantly obeyed his uplifted hand and maintained the posture until he told

her to take another flowery shot at him.

Such lithe and supple and unconscious grace! The eternal feminine in embryo to the nth degree! He was delighted with his discovery.

He picked up a carton and a stick of charcoal, and, standing, made sketch after sketch of her—swift impressions where the arrested action was too fatiguing to maintain—more leisurely sketches when she was in repose.

The child was extremely curious to see these, and frankly disappointed when she did.

"You don't make very good pictures," she said.

"Don't I?"

"I know I don't look like those," she insisted.

"You don't. They're only shorthand notes. But later I'm going to make you just as pretty as you are."

She considered that for a while: "Am I?" she inquired.

"What?"

"Pretty."

"Certainly. It's quite natural for you to be pretty—as natural as having fingers and toes. So you mustn't be vain of your good looks."

"Vain?"

"Proud. Pride is a cardinal sin, you know."

"Oh. You mean that I mustn't show off? Once I had a new blue dress and blue shoes; and I took a walk through our street on Sunday afternoon. I didn't know it was a cardinal sin, but I'd have done it anyway."

"Oh that was all right," he said smilingly. "Father Sullivan would tell you so."

"I don't tell Father Sullivan everything. Some things I don't tell anybody."

"You ought to tell Father Sullivan everything."

"I tell him when I'm bad. Once a big boy hit me, and I hit him and knocked his tooth out. I told Father Sullivan that. I did penance, too."

"What kind of things don't you tell people?"

The child's face became pink, and her entire body glowed faintly.

"I don't have to tell anybody what's in my mind, do I?"

Her flushed defense of her privacy touched him. "There," he said, "is the only freedom left in this law-ridden world—freedom of mind."

Of course, the child did not understand him, but he was aware that, in her delicately molded head, a restless intelligence was alert.

After a long interval she said unexpectedly: "I don't tell my mother and Father Sullivan very much. But you are different."

He looked up at her in surprise and amusement.

"You are the only person I talk to," she said.

"Why don't you talk to other people, Chiyu?"

"I don't know," she murmured, picking at the wilting roses in her basket.

"Are you shy?"

"No."

"One thing," he said, "I know you're not dumb."

"Oh no," she assured him.

"Don't you like people?"

"Not much."

"Haven't you any playmates you like?"

"I don't like kikes and wops."

"Aren't you lonely sometimes, Chiyu?"

"Not very. I'm so full of thoughts—good ones and bad ones. . . . After I'm dead I'd like to go to hell and see what's there. It would be dangerous, wouldn't it? I don't care. I like to live dangerously."

He recollected that she had said this the first time he ever saw her.

"To live at all," he said, "is dangerous enough."

"You mean," she said, "I might get run over by a taxi or swallow a pin or be kidnapped and sex-murdered in a dark cellar?"

"Those are some of the dangers of modern existence. Where did you ever hear of such things?"

"Sex murders? There was one in the next block," she said carelessly.

He said gravely: “Well, I suppose children can’t avoid knowing things.”

“Oh,” she said disdainfully, “every kid on our street knows what it’s all about.”

The child’s unhappy wisdom left him silent but scarcely surprised. For at twenty, returning from the new freedom overseas, he had found the portals of reticence and license wide open and only liberty in jail. And on Fifth Avenue and Park, a sorry wisdom bloomed in the nursery, and flamed to poisonous florescence amid the warrens of the poor.

Yet, so far, he had observed no harm of it save in his own disillusion and wilted ideals.

As he glanced up at Chiyu, the child smiled at him.

He opened a fresh can of plastaline on his modeler’s stand and began to study her, twisting the wires of an armature this way and that.

He thought: “Here is a little girl angel with a gutter-snipe’s wisdom and a heavenly smile. What chance has she ten years hence?”

He said, busy with his armature: “God makes our eyes; but we ourselves shape our mouths and give expression to our faces. If you think about evil things, some day it will surely show in the shape of your mouth and in the expression of your face. Did you ever hear that, Chiyu?”

“No.”

“Do you believe it?”

“Yes,” she said simply, “if you tell me so.”

He worked rapidly for a while, sketching the arrested action of her head, body, and limbs.

“Tell me when you’re tired,” he cautioned her.

After another ten minutes: “Now,” she said, relaxing, and flexing her body and arms.

He set the step-ladder for her to descend, and she wriggled off the horse and came padding over to watch him stick little lumps of smelly plastaline upon the toylike figure astride the little wooden-jointed mannequin of a horse.

“That doesn’t look like me either,” she observed.

“Not yet.”

"Will it?"

"It will."

She watched a while longer, then wandered about at random examining casts and scaffolding and water buckets, and the huge clay group towering overhead.

"Better put on your slippers and bathrobe," he advised her.

But the child was enchanted with her bodily freedom, and she minced and pirouetted and danced about over the cool, damp floor until it was time for her to mount the dummy nag again and throw yellow roses at her employer.

By now Wyndward had made a number of charcoal sketches and plastaline impressions of her. He would make others before he began any detailed study in wax or clay.

"Did you bring your lunch?" he inquired.

It seemed that she had an egg sandwich in the pocket of her dress.

He said: "Put on your bathrobe and I'll give you some hot soup in my study."

Angelo Cavalla was an excellent cook. Wyndward went across to the office and told Miss Kenner to send over lunch for two.

"Is the youngster satisfactory?" inquired the girl.

"Extremely. Terry Quinton suggested her. You know who she is, don't you?"

"Yes—poor little thing. Are you working late to-day?"

"I don't know how long the kid can stand it. She's so fascinating that I could go on sketching her forever. But I don't want to kill her the first day."

"You asked me to remind you of your dinner party at eight."

"Where is it?"

"At the Côte d'Azur, Shallow Beach. You're driving down with Mr. Dundas, you know."

"Oh hell—oh sure. All right—" He looked at her with the slightest twinkle: "Probably I'll see you there?"

"Probably."

He went to the washroom to clean up for luncheon. When he returned, Miss Kenner had gone out to lunch and Angelo already had set the table in the study, served luncheon, and was off somewhere with Rocco to toy with spaghetti, onions, and Chianti.

When Wyndward seated himself at table, Chiyu peeped around the corridor corner at him.

"Is he gone?" she asked in a loud whisper.

"Who?"

"That wop waiter?"

"Yes. Why don't you put on your bathrobe?"

But the child calmly seated herself without a rag on her and started to enjoy her hot soup.

"I never sat at a table like this," she said, enchanted. "It's quite pleasant, I think. I wish I didn't have to wear clothes."

"I thought you liked pretty blue dresses?"

"But I have none, now."

"You'll earn enough money to buy one before very long."

"Will I?"

"Yes; you've already earned two dollars and a half to-day; and you hit me thirty-one times with your roses; that makes a dollar fifty-five more. So you will go home to-night with four dollars and five cents, Chiyu."

"And a free lunch and my egg sandwich."

Then, for the first time, Wyndward saw and heard the child laugh.

They had chicken soup, poached eggs, salad, strawberries, and ice cream; and Chiyu was extremely busy.

Her table manners turned out to be extremely sketchy. Occasionally her grammar and intonation became undesirable; but, in the main, Wyndward concluded, seemed to have acquired considerable refinement of speech at school, even if her home life and her mother's dialect offered her few cultural advantages.

When luncheon ended Wyndward said: "You're entitled to a full hour. You may go and lie down on the sofa if you like."

"Do you want me to?"

"I think you'd better."

He had a letter to write. Busy with it he could hear her singing where she lay on the lounge in the sunny dressing-room:

"I love a boy with naughty eyes,
Him and me's a-neckin'
And a-peckin' all day.
I ain't lovin' no other guys;
When we're together
Then the weather's Okay!
Oh my darlin' hold tight!
Turn out the light,
Turn out the light!
Don't tell nobody what we do
While you go with me and I go with you!"

The combination of angelic voice and gutter-snipe words made him smile as he wrote.

He gave her until half-past one. When she resumed the pose selected she seemed to feel entirely at ease with him, at home in the studio.

Sometimes she sang in an enchanting way:

"Little Nelly Kelly
With freckles on her belly—"

And sometimes she sat astride her horse in preoccupied silence, sorting the limp roses in the basket.

At four o'clock he paid her and let her go, with her promise to return on the morrow.

She was dressed and had got as far as the door before she remembered her manners. Then she came back to where Wyndward still stood fussing with his plastaline, and held out a shy hand. But changed her mind as he bent over her and put both arms around his neck.

CHAPTER V
A RETURN AT DUSK

During July, August, and September John Wyndward rapidly brought his clay work toward completion.

He finished with Chiyu Clyde in August, fortunately, because, in September, the child was obliged to go back to school.

Already Angelo and Rocco and other assistant adepts were making plaster casts from the clay, and assembling and mounting them by sections. Everywhere were lying plaster limbs and bodies and heads of horses and human creatures. There was a perpetual racket of chisel and mallet in the place where several sons of sunny Italy were already pointing up and attacking large chunks of marble.

And through all this tumult and confusion, every day and all day long, roamed John Wyndward, thinking of, and doing, numberless things at once —which everybody must do to accomplish anything.

It was his first important commission; he had been at it for eighteen months. He had not spared himself. He was not sparing himself now. His well-knit young figure, splashed with plaster and clay, moved about with undiminished energy amid a storm of marble dust and chips, in a garlic-tinctured offensive from the Italian front.

But always the light was good; an efficient heating plant melted the snow and ice on the glass roof in winter; in summer it could be raised. But Wyndward often worked stripped to the waist in midwinter as well as in summer; and often the naked models perspired and became dizzy in the damp heat, cigarette smoke, and fumes of garlic.

So it was no lounging place for the typical studio bore, male or female, to linger in, and Wyndward was not much pestered by idle friends.

With half a dozen apprentice sculptors at work pointing up and roughing out; with casting and carpenter work keeping pace, early spring saw the memorial in plaster; and the great marble blocks showing vague and snowy contours suggestive of the later and shadowy ensembles of Rodin.

In those days Wyndward was still a boy sensitive to the fresh, unspoiled pleasures, fears, enthusiasms, trepidations, and excitements of his début. Never again could he feel these emotions and sensations as he felt them then.

From the moment that his first nervous fistful of clay had been slapped upon the first armature, down to the day, six years later, when the last marble chip flew down under his sculptor's steady chisel, he had lived his real life only in his studio.

All else outside of it during all those years, seemed unreal—the routine of rising in the morning and retiring at night; all his extraneous life—the mechanics of dressing himself, of undressing, of eating, moving about indoors or in the streets; contact with friends; his varied distractions and amusements; the coming and going of winter, of spring, of summer; every phase of human and terrestrial life and communication, involving him, seemed to wax and wane and leave no more impression than a breath on a frosty pane. For wherever his body chanced to be, his mind and spirit remained in the big, damp studio, haunting the looming shadow of that huge clay mass towering to the starlit glass above.

That spiritual atmosphere, in which the mind, like a drop of water in a jewel, remains cold, clear, and intelligent, is the stratosphere through which the creative spirit cruises aloof from earth.

Yet to earth it must descend again for inspiration after all is done.

Not that John Temple Wyndward didn't have a good time when severed from his work. His was, normally, a gay and jocund heart with a little mischief in it. He loved brilliancy and laughter; and he liked pretty and careless women. But they who knew him in those first creative years, knew him only as one knows a graceful, attractive figure moving on a silver screen —a painted shadow of the cinema with the vanishing talents of a specter and an unreal voice. Nor had the gravity of achievement yet sobered him, nor the reaction to it sophisticated a soul both ardent and impulsive.

But never again would this young man know the ecstasy and terror of first achievement. Nor ever would he be able to remember much about that dazzling blue sun-drenched day in May, three years later, when the bright flags fell away from the shrouded marble, revealing the great memorial in all its strange and imposing loveliness.

Father Sullivan blessed the monument.

Fat-bellied city fathers made speeches; hard visaged fire-department officials spoke; the band of the 165th Infantry played with wild abandon; the Drive was one long processional of glittering fire engines passing in review.

Well, his work was ended at last. Done. All over. Five years of it—and of John Wyndward—were with the yesterdays of life. Gone. Vanished.

Leaving the young man weary to the bones.

As though half stunned, that day in May, he groped his way along the wooden handrail down the wooden steps of the temporary grandstand. Gentlemen with new shiny silk hats, sword-encumbered officers heavily encrusted with gold; clergy in surplice and cassock, lithe handsome women, brilliant-eyed and breezily perfumed, extended congratulating hands and said laudatory things to him.

How he became disentangled from those gloved hands and incessant voices he never could remember—only that there were tender new leaves on the trees along the Drive, and the sun glittered over the river where tall gray fountains jetted from fire-boats dressed rainbow fashion.

Only that impression registered while moving at random amid milling throngs, where he could see the brass instruments of the old 69th Infantry—now the 165th—and the emerald green bands on their jaunty caps as they marched back to their armory playing "Brannigan's Band":

Whin Flannagan dhrums ye dumb,
'Tis Hannigan blows the fife;
Lannigan hates th' big bass dhrum
An' out of it lathers the life,
Till ye hear the bugles moan,
An' th' poor ould thrombone groan
Like a naygur's saxophone
Ochone!

Oh God, it sounds so wild an' grand
Wid Flannagan, Hannigan, Lannigan,
An' Brannigan leading the band!

Dusk, and his shadowy studio. Empty. The companionship of all he had wrought and lived with and loved intimately, gone! Up there on Riverside Drive in shameless exhibitionism. Public property—all that he had caressed and cared for so passionately through the privacy of youthful years. All that he had cherished, watching growth out of nothing into magic marble maturity!

He could not lay a finger tip on all that marble and not touch a snowy spot that he had once caressed—that had not been born out of his own mind, and been made by his own hands in the intimacy and solitude of this empty place.

Now millions of strange eyes would leer and a million clacking tongues comment on all he once had sheltered and cared for and brooded over through the most poignant years of his life.

An immense loneliness invaded him; filled him with restlessness when he paced the empty studio. But too many ghosts walked with him; he went across to his study, turned on the lamp, stared vacantly about him, turned it out. Then, in darkness he locked the study door; returned and locked the studio doors and barred them; extinguished the great, moon-white arc-light above, and walked slowly into the empty office.

There was some mail for him on Miss Kenner's desk. He shoved it into his pocket without reading it.

Then he dropped into the swivel chair and, elbows on the desk, rested his chin between both fists. There may have been lonelier men in the city.

He thought, with pleasure, about the new commissions offered him. Ambition, interest, energy seemed dead. He was done for. Spent. . . . At twenty-seven?

Well, probably not. But he was through for the present. The very thought of work sickened him. Those two goddam tombs! With their damfool symbolical figures—Grief, Hope, Piety—hell! And the two rich widows who had ordered them!—one fat and flirtatious; the other thin-lipped, sinuous, with a pale parrot-eye far too aware. He couldn't even do those two cursed sarcophagi. Or could he? Some day? Some day very, very remote?

And there were three silly fountains for Long Island, Palm Beach; and for an estate where a profiteering millionaire now denned in northern New York. And there were several portrait busts to be done—a militia general, oh God, with epaulets!—and a pious public benefactor of sorts; and an old, old lady; and several brat-like children. He was thinking: "I can never work again; I won't know how; I don't know how, now. What I've done is rotten. Rotten! . . . Those fire horses up in the Drive!—what would Shrady say to them! And Miss Hyatt. And Frémiet. And Barye? What would Manship say to those kids? What would Nadlemann say; and Mario Corbell, and Harriet Frishmuth. And Carpeaux. And Rodin!"

He buried his face in his sinewy fingers. "God," he thought, "how tired my mind is."

A slight chill passed over him. And, when again he raised his head he noticed, through eyes blurred by finger-pressure, that the street door stood

partly open, and there was a cold draught; and somebody had come into the office.

"Well?" he inquired, rubbing his eyes listlessly. Then he sat up straighter on his revolving chair and peered at the young girl who stood looking silently at him.

Somewhere or other he had seen her before. A sculptor looks over hundreds and hundreds of models every year—many youngsters of sixteen or seventeen. Like this one.

He asked her to be seated; got up, closed the street door, returned to the desk chair.

"Sorry," he said, "but I don't need any models. You may leave your name and address if you care to—" he fished about for Miss Kenner's record book, pushed it and pencil toward her.

The girl took the pencil and wrote, bending low over the desk.

When she finished:

"Thank you," he said wearily and rose without looking down at what she had written.

She bade him good night in a low voice.

"Good night, Miss—" he glanced down at the open record book. The girl was already opening the street door. "Why, Chiyu!" he said.

She looked back over her shoulder, her fingers resting on the knob. His tired eyes had lighted up with a friendly smile, and he stepped toward her offering his hand.

"Is it really you, Chiyu? How can it be? You were a kid only yesterday —"

"Six years ago this June," she said. "I am sixteen."

"Fifteen you mean."

"No; I was ten the day after you put me on the horse and made me throw roses."

"You were the most beautiful child I ever saw," he said. "You are extremely pretty now, Chiyu. Have you seen yourself in marble as you used to be, sitting astride one of those marble horses up on Riverside Drive?"

"Yes."

"Then you were there when the memorial was unveiled to-day."

"Yes."

"Did you have a good place to see?"

"I was on the grandstand quite near you."

"Why didn't you speak to me?"

"I don't know," she said.

He was smiling now, no longer tired, his own youthful, animated self again. He offered her the chair once more, and when she was seated, resumed the swivel behind the desk.

He said: "You are renewing my youth, Chiyu, by coming into the office like this. You certainly were a pretty, friendly child. You're even lovelier now—in the same way. It was stupid of me not to recognize you when you came in."

Then Chiyu's rare smile glimmered shyly.

He said: "That was very mischievous of you not to make yourself known to me. Would you really have walked out on me that way?"

Her smile became enchanting: "But I left you my address," she ventured.

"You used to like me once," he complained. "You used to kiss me good-by. And to think that you'd have walked away without a word!"

Her smile faded a little but still remained as a glimmer.

"Don't you remember what firm friends we became?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Well, then, why leave your card under my nose and march out?"

At that she laughed a little, but offered no further explanation.

He was very wide-awake, now, stimulated by this unexpected encounter. Nothing ever had been more grateful to him than this pretty apparition of the past invading his depression and loneliness.

The pleasure of seeing her in this place where she had once been a part of it all—a charming, inspiring, necessary part—was becoming a real solace—a comfort and balm for a bruised ego.

Happily, eagerly he recalled those blessed days, recollecting and reminding her of a hundred little incidents long forgotten. She remembered

everything.

They talked about Miss Kenner, about Marty O'Mara, about Angelo and Rocco and old Jim the fire horse.

"What became of him?" she asked.

"Pensioned, and given a juicy meadow in Westchester. Dear old Jim. I drive up to see him now and then. I'll drive you up some day, Chiyu. Would you like to see old Jim again?"

"Yes."

"And Rocco and Angelo?"

"Yes."

"And all these years you never came in to pay us a friendly visit!" he added reproachfully.

"We went to Baltimore to live."

"How did that happen?"

"The Department sent my mother to Johns Hopkins."

"Oh. I hope she was cured, Chiyu."

"No, she died."

After a silence: "The Department sent me to school there."

He nodded: "To a convent, I suppose."

"Yes."

"The nuns have taught you to speak very charmingly and correctly."

That seemed to embarrass her, and she flushed slightly, looking down at her interlinked fingers.

"Well, then," he said, "you've finished school?"

"Yes."

"And now—what?"

"I've been to see Mr. Ziegfeld."

Wyndward laughed. "And what did Mr. Ziegfeld say to you, Chiyu?"

"He said he'd keep me in mind."

"I see. And, in the meanwhile, you are going to help sculptors and painters by being beautiful?"

She looked up shyly, saw he was laughing and laughed too.

"No," she said.

"No? But you came here to register, didn't you?"

"No."

"Did you really come to pay me a little visit?"

"Yes."

"Then I forgive you these years of neglect."

"But I was in Baltimore."

"You might have written—" But the wide, hurt eyes she lifted made him end his teasing.

"I'm just joking, Chiyu—"

"But I *did* write to you!"

"Did you?"

"Yes, a great many times. Only I never sent them."

"Why not? I would have been delighted."

But she only shook her head in silence.

"Anyway," he said, "it was very nice of you. And I'm very glad to see you. Now tell me what you are going to do until Mr. Ziegfeld sends for you."

"I am in a department store. Macy's. In the toy department."

"Oh. That's a good idea. And where do you live, Chiyu?"

She looked at the record book open on the desk, and he glanced down and read the address.

"It's a walk-up," she said. "I have a room and a door key. And I have breakfast and dinner in the boarding house next door."

That reminded him of his own dinner. He looked at his watch.

"Good Lord," he said, "it's nearly ten o'clock! I can't believe we've been here talking all this time! . . . And, what about your dinner? It's too late isn't it, Chiyu?"

"I don't mind," she said.

"Well, I do." He hesitated, glanced at her instinctively. The girl was neatly dressed in black, neatly and tastefully hatted and gloved. It really didn't matter, anyway, to him.

"We'll go to dinner," he said.

"No, please—"

"Why not, Chiyu?"

She colored painfully: "I had rather not go to eat where you go."

He understood immediately.

"Well," he said, "I'm not dressed for the Plaza, either. So we'll go to an easier place."

She was very uncertain about it, disturbed, anxious, silent as they entered a taxi on Fifth Avenue and went off swiftly east and then southward.

Their destination, it presently transpired, was Le Vieux Carré, not, so far, raided and padlocked, where food was French and good and there was neither music nor dancing.

She seated herself, shy and breathless, afraid to look about, almost afraid to speak.

Few people remained in the pretty pink and white room.

In deference to her reticence and troubled face Wyndward did not consult her, but ordered Beluga caviar, filet of imported sole, new peas, asparagus and potatoes, a salad Doucette, and an ice.

"Are you hungry, Chiyu?"

"Not very."

"You used to eat very gaily with me in my study."

She smiled at that, looked up at him, ventured to look around at the place.

"It's pretty," she said.

"Quite." He signaled a waiter who said: "Yes, Mr. Wyndward."

"I think I'll have a cocktail—" he glanced at Chiyu, hesitating:

"Would you like one too?"

"Yes."

"Two then," he smiled. "And you might bring some of that Chablis which Monsieur and Madame reserve for themselves."

The waiter smiled and sped away.

"How long have you been flirting with cocktails, Chiyu?" he inquired.

"Oh," she said carelessly, "when I lived in New York all the kids had drinks."

"Where did they get them?"

"Most anywhere. A lot of little shops had booze."

"Whisky?"

"Gin, whisky, beer, cocktails—everything."

"So you're accustomed to it?"

"No, I liked candy better. And sometimes they talked dirty to you in those shops."

"It's strange," he said, "that the police didn't clean them up."

"Father Sullivan tried. They sold snow, too—cocaine, and cigarettes that doped you."

"You tried those?"

"No, I didn't care for them. I didn't bother, much. You hear all kinds of talk in such places. Men came in that frightened me. I didn't like kids that talked bad, either. So I stayed by myself."

She liked her cocktail, a mild one made mostly of Dubonnet.

She liked the caviar and watched Wyndward, to know how to manage it. She liked everything else, too; and he was edified to observe how carefully the Carthusian Sisters had instructed her in table manners.

The Chablis was vastly to her taste, also, and Wyndward gave her a lecture on the wholesome ways of a little wine at dinner, and the vulgar iniquity of prohibition which was driving a spirited, liberty-loving people to everything forbidden by the bigots.

"Better fight shy of cocktails and spirits, Chiyu," he added, "but a glass of claret at dinner would never harm you."

He watched her eat her ice; then coffee came, and he opened his cigarette case.

"You too, Chiyu?"

She took one; was very dainty about it; liked it and looked about the room with smiling courage.

"Some day," she said, "I hope I shall live like this."

She waved her cigarette.

"How do you mean?" he asked, smiling.

"I mean I hope I shall have money enough to invite you to dinner. In a pretty place. I think it may be quite soon, too."

"When Mr. Ziegfeld sends for you?"

"Yes."

After a silence: "I shall save my money and behave myself."

"That's the idea."

"Yes. That's why I won't neck or let boys get fresh. Because wealthy men marry Ziegfeld girls."

"They do," said Wyndward gravely. "And will continue to as long as the world lasts."

"I hope so."

After a while Wyndward looked at his watch.

"You have to be up early," he said, "so I am going to take you home, Chiyu."

"I don't want to trouble you," she said. "I could go on a bus—"

"Nonsense." He summoned a waiter, regulated the account while Chiyu retired to redecorate with lipstick and powder.

When she rejoined him they took a taxi to her walk-up in the far east Fifties—a ghastly street, arid, dirty, suspicious.

The grimy house was dark; she fitted her key swiftly, turned to him, venturing to extend her slender hand.

"I can't t-tell you—" To her consternation her voice broke childishly and her fingers closed convulsively on his.

“I can’t tell you, either,” he said, “how welcome you have been, Chiyu. Don’t quite forget me.”

“No, I won’t.”

After a moment she lifted her face and they kissed, lightly.

CHAPTER VI
LONELINESS

In youth life's rivulet is always in spate.

In youth the rush of life is like a spring freshet to a fingerling fish. His watery world widens and is all aswirl with strange, attractive things afloat. At which, excited curiosity impels him to rise and grab; and sometimes he lets go in time, and sometimes he gets hooked.

Until John Wyndward was nearly thirty the agreeably spinning world remained a Luna Park to him, including everything from Shooting the Shutes to The Barrel of Love.

Success had been easy. He and his work had quickly become fashionable. He already possessed a little money; he made a great deal more. Smart New York, too busy to bother with death, squared conscience by ordering elaborate mausoleums for those neglected while alive. Which eased conscience and made no difference to the departed.

But the old-fashioned broken column and the cemetery angel were out! Tombs now were guarded by Sybils, Griefs, Thinkers, and portrait busts.

Sculptural elaboration of mortuary villas kept John Wyndward and a large studio force, busy. He did little more than design and sketch the composition, stick a few plastaline pellets on armatures, knock a few marble chips off the jowl of some dead dowager, or sketch in the whiskers of some financial moron.

He did a little more than that in garden sculpture, the taste for which now raged among the rich whose impersonal gardens bristled with dahlias, cannas, chrysanthemums, marble fauns, dryads, naked nymphs, and Manshippic Dianas.

On family portrait busts he was obliged to do almost the entire and repugnant job, dirty work and all. He hated them—the shaven captain of industry; the son and heir with marble curls, and his bobbed brat of a sister; and the fashionable young thing whose featured fingers invariably called attention to her breasts.

Commissions and dollars rolled in, and the merry years of plenty rolled on.

Those were the heydays for making hay. He could have doubled his commissions and his office force, so wholesale became the profiteer

situation and the hysteria in Wall Street. There were projects for municipal triumphal arches to keep an eye on in the offing; quadrigas, heroes in cocked hats, cupids, caryatids, borough presidents, and capering nymphs for the interior of movie palaces, all looking distantly receptive, and some even holding up a hooked forefinger at him.

Wyndward, long ago, had shortened his working hours. The studio was becoming, to him, something between a business office and a resort for physical culture.

His attitude of mind toward it had become fixed.

His profession became a routine, but he still liked to go to his studio and work unless something more important prevented.

The clever always take pleasure in their facility and skill, accomplishing technical triumphs mechanically, and with a kind of amiable disdain. With the time-honored "twist of the wrist." Which drives better men to bitterness.

For his was an unholy mastery of technique. His understanding and his touch had become both delicate and unhesitating. What he looked at he saw; his intelligence remained cool and crystal clear; his mind was master of his emotions. Yet, never, since the Fireman's Memorial, had anything more than an enormous skill inspired and guided the mind and eye and hand which had understood divinely and faltered humanly in the marble embrace of a first youthful passion.

At thirty he was a good-looking, well-knit young man about town of whom the social columns took friendly notice and whose name was familiar to the classified and unclassified alike. He liked everything that was fashionable, both from inherited instinct and personal inclination. He dashed about Virginia in a pink coat when some unhappy fox was afoot; he golfed from Piping Rock to San Diego; he went once or twice to Scotland to shoot grouse with his blond and fashionable father; he bet at Belmont and Saratoga; he slugged a tennis ball on Newport courts; he hammered another ball at the Racquet Club; he played Cowboy at the Buccaneers.

He liked the opera, theaters, smart parties and gaudier revels. His lithe, well-made figure in its glittering gold-scaled skin, gold half-mask, and golden bicorne, was widely remarked at the Beaux Arts Ball. So was a tango he engaged in with Queva d'Arrios—loveliest of exotics—at a party in the private ballroom of the Parthenon Theater, sponsored by the Sport and Hittite population of Broadway.

The nation-wide yelping of the younger generation demanding freedom to "live their own lives" found him fairly sympathetic. He really didn't care much; the reaction against postwar incompetence and American bigotry had been inevitable. He viewed it with equanimity.

Nothing ever really troubled this extremely popular and successful young man except the memory of his memorial on Riverside Drive, and of the five blessed, youthful, happy years while he was accomplishing it. Those hopes and fears and trepidations and passionate emotions never were to be duplicated. The boy in him was dead. And it annoyed him when people referred to it as his best work.

Why? What had failed him? His work was mature, beautiful, brilliant and in demand. Technically his creations and interpretations were splendidly adequate. How, then, could he be one of those unfortunates whose bolt is sped in the first effort—one of those who write only one book, paint only one picture—one of those remembered only by a single opera, a solitary song?

Nevertheless, he knew black moments of doubt when memory of his Fireman's Monument and of those youthful years smote him suddenly like a slap in the face, knocking every atom of equanimity out of him, presenting a depressing picture of himself as a jaunty juggler with clay and marble, dexterous and glib and suave as a three-card expert at a fair.

In one of his not too infrequent and fugitive heart affairs—Queva d'Arrios being his careless preoccupation of the moment—she emerged exasperated and prophetic from an April storm of tears: "The trouble with you, Jack Wyndward, is that you never have known the grief of love, only its laughter."

"When I'm agreeably in love I don't blow up like a pack of fire-crackers —"

"God knows you don't; what's a kiss, a caress to you? A friendly pastime! What does a girl's heart afire—her brain afire—signify to you? That it is the time to squirt your common sense on it and try to extinguish it, kindly."

"Well, hang it all—"

"Yes, hang it all, what about it? I am not trying to marry you, am I?"

"No. But I don't quite understand—"

"You don't understand what a girl—any girl wants when she's in love? I'll tell you: She wants you to love, too, and raise hell about it!"

"I don't raise hell, you know—"

"You will if you ever are really in love—"

"Oh, no—"

"Oh, *yes*! I am of Latin blood. I know. I know too that your beautiful, nerveless, heartless and artistic work is no better than an instinctive trick which you have cultivated and which has no other value."

Tears blinded her again, and she had trouble with her lovely, impassioned voice. "I am not complaining; I know it was only a game we played. I've often played it; so have you—not so often. It's my fault. My own funeral. But one can't help taking one's own funeral a little seriously."

It was merely an April storm. Queva d'Arrios was married, anyway, to a Hittite—one of those kept husbands inevitable to women preëminent in their professions. As inevitable as pekes and poms; and serve a similar purpose.

Another erotic row with a fool débutante who wanted to "live her own life" for a while with him. She was a soft, fragrant, white-skinned, lovely little thing with thick pale platinum hair. And had passionately mistaken a kiss or two which he could scarcely have decently avoided.

So he told her immediately that the very word marriage was perfectly obnoxious to him.

"All right then," she said sturdily, "that goes for me, too. After all it's my own affair and nobody else's—"

"That's the trouble," he explained. "It's preëminently the business of your parents and every relative you possess."

"It's my own life," she retorted hotly, "and I'm free to—"

"Oh Lord," he said, "I'm deathly tired of that sort of prattle. Nobody ever lived on earth whose life was their own business."

The youngster became furious. "Evidently," she said, "your reading has not been abreast of the times!"

"Yes," he said, "I know all about Flaming Youth, and I've perused those shabby books written by dingy doctors and putrid philosophers; and all

those novels by writers whose social experience has been limited to that intellectual Ghetto where everybody is abnormally prolific before puberty."

The girl wept. Frustration incubates temper. She was mad as a hornet.

"—And, as for marrying you," she sobbed, "you're not such a hot catch, you know. There are several healthy, highly colored young cockneys between you and the title; I've met them in England. Besides, you've never done anything remarkable except that one b-beautiful m-memorial. Artistically you are a s-stuffed shirt—" She broke down, hating him, leaving her sting imbedded.

Marriage! That stupidity? It seemed to be lodged in the minds of all women except the very richest. Plenty of them had made that plain to him, even with his modest income. But he had a real horror of being hobbled with handcuffs and leg-irons. Lighter liaisons were often as galling. Paralyzing. The episodic was the easier, the hit-and-run. They were a damned nuisance anyway. Desirable sometimes, but always damned.

As for the lady's sting regarding his work—"What in hell's the matter with it?" he wondered. "Am I really only a contented cud-chewer of a *bonne bouche*? The stuffed prophet of all that is smooth and smug? My God, I sweated once. And knew despair."

He thought of the American sculptor, Revell Reckness, glorious once, youthfully great; now degenerate to a public jest. Now only a mop of hair, still golden, shadowing a ghastly caved-in face. But it had been asinine dissipation that had infected the once superb work of Revell Reckness; and had nearly finished him, now.

"What a fall!" he mused—that lean, six-foot Lucifer of flame and light, stricken amid physical and domestic wreckage, tumbling through the social void down into the nasty bog of modernism.

Modernism, the cult of the gargoyle. Refuge of inverts lusting after ugliness. The Contortionist School of Bleistein and Del Garcia, plastering civilization with abortions while a bat-eared public gaped. . . . Reckness, scrabbling there in slime!

One evening, in his Park Avenue penthouse, still wearing a silken lounge-robe over his white evening waistcoat, he stood before his mirror pulling and twisting a white evening tie to suit his taste.

Something made him think of his marble group on Riverside Drive; he gave a last nervous, irritated tug at his tie; then, as though his reflected features suddenly sickened him, he turned away and stood with lowered head beside the lamp-lit table, gnawing at his upper lip which was decorated with the tracery of a small mustache.

What on earth had brought this unbidden recollection of happier days into his shapely head? To sadden a gay evening. To embitter his pillow later.

He dropped into a deep arm-chair and rested his freshly shaven cheek against one strong young fist. Zest for anything impending had vanished.

Was the fact that he once had done something fine—and only once—going to haunt him for life? Pop up without notice like a cursed jack-in-the-box? Couldn't this nagging memory of his let up on him, for God's sake? Because he realized that he was emotionally unable to do anything of that nature again.

It wasn't that he had turned unduly lazy—needed urging or stimulation or other incentive. It just wasn't in him any more—was no longer a part of him. A mature and dexterous brain and fingers had supplanted a boy's eager, uncertain touch and passionate endeavor. He had become a sort of robot, a technocratic, efficient automaton.

"Damnation," he muttered aloud, "I'm burned out! I'm all in. I'm through! That's what's the matter."

His man, who had been holding his spike-tailed coat and observing his young master with perplexity, inquired respectfully whether he might offer a cocktail before departure.

Wyndward had quite forgotten him. Now he looked around, scowling; then smiled with an effort.

"Thank you, Hanley, no. I don't believe I'll go out to-night."

"There's no dinner ordered at home, sir; and cook's gone."

"It's your night off, also, isn't it?"

"I don't mind stopping, sir—"

"No, go along. There should be plenty in the pantry and icebox."

"There is, sir—"

"Where are Sarah and Minnie?"

"In servants' hall, sir—"

"Well, tell them to take an evening off, too. Tell Sarah to turn down my bed; that's all I shall want to-night."

"Very good, sir—"

But Hanley of the sharp beak and ginger side-burns still hesitated and hovered until Wyndward looked up again with his engaging smile: "I'd really like to be alone in the place. Good night."

He pulled tight and knotted the belt-ends of the silken dressing gown cinching his lean waist—as though preparing against famine. As though the hunger were elsewhere than in mind and spirit.

He had admitted that he was done for. Impotent. But the dull alarm within him still persisted. Fear always is a symptom of hope.

Somehow or other he must pull out of it. There must be *some* way. All of adolescent curiosity and imagination—everything of eager, impatient youth a-quiver with creative instinct could not be entirely atrophied within him. Surely he had something more to say worth recording in clay or bronze. Something other than mortuary manikins and the mugs of millionaires.

"I'm not awake," he thought; "I've never been awake except that once. Then, only half awake."

He never had known any deeper emotions than the boyish joys and pangs of first effort. This later misery and discontent was the deepest. The tender solicitudes of family life never had touched his solitary existence; no great love for any woman had stirred his depths; no spiritual passion or renunciation had refined him.

All this he was vaguely conscious of now, where he was seated with tense young face bedded between clenched fists.

Were any of these emotions necessary to awaken him? Could any of these resurrect what lay insensible within him—or, perhaps dead? Was he, unconsciously, awaiting a coming spiritual summons—

The sudden clamor of the house telephone at his elbow startled him.

He picked up the transmitter, sullenly:

"What?" he demanded.

The reply from the doorman twelve stories below seemed to perplex him.

"*Who?*" he repeated impatiently.

"Miss Clyde."

Memory, slumping, non-resilient; and suddenly assailed, awakened slowly, irritably from the poke in the ribs. Clyde? It must be Chiyu Clyde. He had not heard of her nor thought of her in years. In six or seven years.

"Ask if the young lady is Miss Chiyu Clyde," he said.

After an instant: "Yes, sir."

What did she want? Then suddenly he was remembering that once before this same girl had come to him when he was very lonely; and a slight warmth tempered the chill of his voice.

"Ask Miss Clyde to come up," he said.

From his bedroom he went into the living-room where a grate fire burned, and turned on the lights. Almost at the same moment he heard the ascending lift outside, and the click of the arrested cage and opening door. And he stepped over to the door and opened it.

"Well, Chiyu—" he began, extending a friendly hand; and fell silent before this slim, reddish haired stranger so slenderly elegant in her dark fox furs and fragrant gardenias.

"It *is* you, Chiyu, isn't it?"

"Yes."

He retained her gloved hand and led her across the threshold into the lighted living-room.

Then, slowly, vaguely smiling recognition succeeded the strangeness in their encountered eyes.

But she was charmingly changed; the thick, pale-gold hair had become fulvous with coppery glints; the purplish eyes he thought he remembered were really a deep golden, shadowed by purple-black lashes. The mouth, full, delicate, vivid was still the mouth of a child.

She had grown tall—nearly as tall as he. The shape of her head was exquisite.

He said: "This is nice of you. I've wondered—"

"I have, too."

"A long time."

"Seven years," she said.

He took her furs; offered to take her hat. She decided to remove it; stripped off her gloves, too.

After that he poked up the cannel-coal fire, laid another slab on it, punched it with the tongs until it crackled into flame. Then he took a padded arm-chair opposite the one where she had seated herself.

"Out of the happy past," he said cordially, "once more together! The engaging phantom of the little girl I once knew will always haunt me—and always cling to you like a gracious shadow."

"I am nearly twenty-one," she said.

He considered that. "Yes, twenty-one. You have grown beautiful, Chiyu. You are quite aware of that I suppose."

She looked at the fire. From the glowing coals a rosy light tinted the contour of her cheek and throat.

"I've often wondered," he went on, "whether Mr. Ziegfeld ever did send for you."

She nodded.

He said: "Somehow or other I've missed his shows during the last few years. Are you still with him?"

"No."

"Where, then?"

"In musical comedy."

"On Broadway?"

"With a number two company on the road."

"Have you had any parts?"

"Small ones, sometimes."

He looked at her string of pearls and his glance fell to her ringless hands.

"You never came to see me again, Chiyu."

She looked steadily into the fire.

"You never even wrote to me. Why?"

"I don't know."

“Anyway,” he concluded, “things have gone very well with you, haven’t they?”

She turned her head slowly and looked at him.

“No,” she said.

“What has gone wrong, Chiyu?”

She considered for a while, her fingers restless in her lap. Then she shook her head, slowly.

“I shouldn’t be alone to-night. But I am.”

He did not understand; and what he presently surmised cooled him.

He glanced again at her pearls, at her white fingers, restless as troubled petals in a wind.

“Tell me, Chiyu.”

She said: “I was married this morning. . . . We went to his apartment for lunch before sailing in the *Niobrara*. . . . He’s there now, drunk.”

“Too drunk to sail, you mean?”

“Yes.”

“Offensively?”

“He locked me out and told me to go to hell.”

Wyndward offered her a cigarette, lighted it for her, lighted another for himself.

“Have you always been aware of his habits?”

“No.”

Wyndward was thinking: “What a charming wedding night for a young girl!” He said: “I suppose you are very much in love with him, Chiyu.”

She shook her head.

“Well you *were* in love with him I suppose.”

She shook her head again.

“You see,” she said, “he is quite celebrated, and he has a good deal of money, and he seemed quite nice.”

“Oh.”

"And he said he was very much in love. It's been continuing for nearly two years now. . . . And I wouldn't consider anything silly. . . . Although I wasn't getting anywhere. You know what we are paid?"

He nodded.

"So—that was the way of it," she concluded; and gazed into the fire.

He sat looking through the cigarette smoke at this youngster who had been locked out on her wedding night.

"Chiyu?"

"Yes."

"Was he drunk when you married him?"

"No. Afterward he drank quite a lot of whisky. I didn't know he was getting drunk."

Wyndward said nothing further. Chiyu stared at the coals.

What was she planning to do about it, he wondered. And who did this celebrated souse of hers chance to be?

As though in answer to his unasked question the girl looked around at him and said: "He once told me that he had met you."

"Really."

"He says that you and a Mr. Scott Dundas sometimes came to the rehearsals of his shows—his musical comedies, you know."

"Sometimes Dundas and I went to rehearsals—" He remained silent for a few moments, then: "You don't mean that you are married to Warren Trenholme!"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

Wyndward merely gazed at her.

Warren Trenholme, a young fellow of excellent family, had written several successful musical comedies during recent years in collaboration with Barney Drislin who scored the shows.

Trenholme, something of a black sheep in an austere and socially recognized old New York family, had gone his own breezy, intemperate way to Broadway and there had made money and reputation with his first accepted comedy: "The Bat in the Belfry."

Wyndward had scarcely a nodding acquaintance with this highly colored, noisy, jocose young man who preferred the reek of theatrical Broadway to the dull joys and respectabilities of Tenth Street and points south. He had one of those round Balkan-shaped heads with no back to it. Like the noddle of a musical moujik.

Somehow or other the marital conjunction between Battalion Chief Pat Clyde's offspring and a swaggering, renegade scion of old New York, seemed funny.

Chiyu tossed her burning cigarette into the grate and sat with clasped hands watching the flames play over the coals.

"I suppose you've dined?" he inquired.

She hadn't.

"Neither have I," he rejoined amiably. "Shall we take an inventory of the pantry?"

"You're dressed to go out—almost—"

He remembered his lounging robe, then, and apologized.

"Don't change," she said shyly. "It's quite becoming."

She was smiling a little, and he took her by her slender hand and led her into the pantry—but not with quite the paternal condescension that suffused him when, ten years earlier, he had told her to undress and sit on a dummy horse and throw real roses at him.

It's a small world, as Trenholme used to say, but it can give you a big kick—in the pants. A fair sample of his humor.

It was Warren Trenholme, too, who—when reproached with anachronisms in his stage settings—invented the furniture of Louis the Limit. And he would add in his bellowing voice: "Let me toss the flapjacks of my country and I care not who greases the griddle!"

CHAPTER VII
A PENTHOUSE

Wyndward shook up two Golden Oriole cocktails; Chiyu discovered and laid a cloth on the pantry table, set two places—went back to the living-room at his suggestion, and brought a jar of yellow jonquils for a centerpiece.

When the silver shaker showed a deep coating of frost under swathed napkins they sipped their cocktails and fed themselves with Beluga caviar spread thick on gluten toast.

"This is the life," said Wyndward, "the good old irresponsible life, and the only real one. Too bad you bothered with marriage, Chiyu."

She had almost forgotten his formed habit of jesting and diffidently accepted it again.

He had, now, a chafing dish full of red-hot green-turtle broth well irrigated with Amontillado; and he filled two bouillon cups.

"I had no idea I was hungry," he remarked.

She herself had been half famished, but she did not mention it.

There was a cold capon to follow, and a salad, and a bottle of champagne which he fished out of a refrigerator and uncorked with a flourish.

"In the good old days of our youth," he said, "I used to let you have a sip or two of claret when you lunched with me in the studio-study. Do you remember?"

"Yes."

"You were so cunning, Chiyu—with your little legs hanging down above the floor—" He began to laugh: "This is a naked age in dinner gowns, but in those days you went them one better."

"You mean that first day when I had no clothes on at lunch?"

"I do. And you were nine years old and adorable."

"I was ten. And I've felt far more naked on the stage," she admitted.

"Do you like the stage?"

"Not much. But it was the only way I knew to—to—"

"To get on in life?"

"Yes, to marry and—" She fell silent.

"Marry and—what?" he insisted.

"And to learn how to live pleasantly."

"So that's why you married?"

"Yes. I wanted to live nicely and go to Paris and Palm Beach."

He smiled: "And become fashionable?"

"Y-es." She also was smiling a little, but timidly, as though a little afraid of his ridicule.

And he was aware of it.

"Material and social ambition are all right," he said. But he was thinking that she wouldn't get very far with either in company of Warren Trenholme who was a waster and a social derelict. However the girl had mounted one rung in the ladder leading upward from 105th Street and Ziegfeld's backstage salon. And God knew Palm Beach was not very much higher.

"Yes," he said, "a girl should marry to better herself. That pre-war love stuff is out. You had the right idea, anyway. You might have done worse. You might have married some Broadway crooner. Or some college student you'd have to keep. Still it's rather too bad you got married, only to—to—"

"Only to be locked out and told to go to hell?" she finished in a childish voice that seemed little more mature than the troubled treble of studio days.

"The silver lining to that dose of 'smoke,'" he replied, "is that you and I are together once more. And I hope it will bring you luck. Are you really and truly glad to see me, Chiyu?"

She gave him a shy, uncertain glance.

He said: "We always have been lucky when we've been together. I believe your visit will bring you luck. Do you believe it?"

"It has already."

"How do you mean?"

"Because I'm here."

"And you say that on your wedding night?"

"Yes."

"You're quite as adorable as ever," he said lightly. "Touch the rim of my glass with your lips for all of the luck I wish you. I have much more than I need, Chiyu; help yourself to some of mine."

She leaned over and touched her lips to the rim of his extended glass. It was the last of the champagne.

So, as she wished for no more, and he himself was very moderate, they divided a large cluster of hothouse grapes. And then he made coffee.

"High life in the pantry," he laughed. "Isn't it rather nice, Chiyu?"

"It's wonderful."

"But, like the chorus, it doesn't get you anywhere," he added mischievously.

She laughed for the first time that evening. The color in her cheeks was very lovely.

"You're quite right about life," he said; "every step ought to get one ahead. Do you play backgammon?"

"Yes."

"Then you know what I mean. You'll lose out if you fiddle and dawdle. The dice don't always tell the story, you know."

She nodded.

"Yes," he repeated, "every step in life ought to push one along."

There was the slightest bitterness in his voice and she raised her gold-gray eyes, and he saw the deep green glint in them.

"Chiyu?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever happened to see any of my work since the days so long ago when you posed for me?"

"Oh yes," she said. "I always watched the newspapers, and I always go to exhibitions where you show."

The girl's unfeigned candor touched him.

"What a loyal friend you really are," he said. "I wonder whether you have liked what I've been doing lately."

"I like everything you do."

“Really? As much as you liked the first memorial?”

“Not quite as much,” she admitted.

“Not quite as much, Chiyu?”

“N-no.”

“Why?” he asked with the slightest shade of impatience.

“I don’t know.”

“Don’t say that. There must be a reason. What was there about that first memorial that you liked particularly?”

She considered the question with knitted brows. “It seemed so—so friendly,” she said.

“What?”

“All the figures in it seemed so lovely and kind—except Father Time—and even he was not—frightening.”

“Oh. Does my work, now, seem unkind and ‘frightening’?”

“Sometimes the expressions—the eyes and mouth—I think—seem—seem—”

“Yes?”

“—The expression—I don’t know how to explain what their effect is—”

“Hard?”

“Not exactly. But one feels a little uneasy. Not afraid; only timid. The way you feel when a famous person is frightfully wise and clever and doesn’t condescend to notice you much. Sometimes I—”

“Go on, Chiyu.”

“Would it be rude,” she ventured, “if I say that they all seem to have an expression that I have seen you have sometimes? I don’t mean that you are not always friendly and kind—”

He said deliberately: “Do you mean my work is cleverly executed, but that something young and sensitive and warm and familiar is lacking in it?”

To criticize him at all was evidently embarrassing her.

She said: “Everything you do is wonderful. . . . But I love the children and horses and young goddesses—and even old Father Time himself—on the Fireman’s Memorial.”

"And you couldn't *love* the people that I do now because they have *something* about them that you've noticed about me?"

"Oh," she protested in flushed distress, but he interrupted:

"You couldn't love me, either, I suppose."

Her face became scarlet, and she looked at him in speechless appeal.

"No," he said, "you couldn't, because my face is only a clever surface to camouflage a merely technocratic mind; and the trouble is that if you looked closely into my eyes you'd *discover* nothing to see in them. . . . And I've a mouth to confirm it, I suppose."

His bitterness was scaring and dismaying her. She gazed at him in dumb confusion, her full lips parted and faintly tremulous.

"Your m-mouth is b-beautiful," she stammered.

"Chiyu," he said, "something really is damned wrong with my work and with me. And I am fearfully unhappy about it."

She said nothing. She trembled slightly once or twice.

He went on: "I can't do the kind of things I did when I had you to help me out, and that's a frightening fact. I don't know how to do them any more, Chiyu. I'd like to, but I don't know how to do them. Something that once was in me has flickered out. And that's the damning truth."

After a long silence: "Well, then, that's that," he concluded. "You seem to be a little chilly. Come into the living-room by the fire. . . . What is the matter, Chiyu?"

She had risen and was shivering. As he passed his arm around her, he saw that her mouth was quivering and kissed it. He did such things easily, almost unconsciously, and, so far, without feeling much reaction.

This time he did, however, and was aware of a swift warmth in his face and breath at contact with the tremulous warmth of hers.

He started to speak; something interfered with his voice; and he was sufficiently ill-advised to kiss her again. That was warning enough, however, and he did not repeat it.

They moved off slowly together to the living-room, where he took his arm from her supple waist, held her chair for her, poked the coals and seated himself opposite her.

That had been a curious sensation. Unexpected. One did such things with careless confidence that any reaction would be confined to the party of the second part.

She was staring at the fire, and he took a long, searching, not too friendly look at her.

Beautiful, certainly. Really beautiful from her exquisite head to her enchanting little feet. But he'd been in contact with mere beauty before; with daintily bred beauty of unqualified mint-mark; and his mind had always controlled his emotions. Instinctively, almost humorously. And he always had known exactly what he was doing.

Not this time. He hadn't intended to kiss her twice. Not after the odd reaction from the first kiss.

His curious eyes appraised her, coolly, almost resentfully, trying to discover in her what had stirred him up. Because there never had been anything sensual in him. Nor in his work. It seemed incredible that Pat Clyde's child could sensually upset him.

Yet here was danger, somewhere. Something different and new. Danger to *him*! And genuine, too. He could not ignore that. Was not going to ignore it.

He chose, however, to analyze it as accidental. Episodic. Not likely to reoccur.

He was not happy over it. That glimmer of unlooked for emotion in a casual caress perplexed him. Genuine emotion, too. Even sensual. Taking him by surprise. Unbalancing him for an instant.

"Chiyu," he said, "do you feel all right now?"

She nodded.

"You are quite warm again?"

A vague motion of the beautifully made head.

He never had seen a more perfectly constructed and proportioned head. According to him, the head told the whole story. Doubtless, had her circumstances been different, this girl's potentialities had been nearly infinite. Born to caste she might have glittered. Might have been a power. Dominating, in time. . . .

"Would you like a little glass of Chartreuse, Chiyu?"

The slightest motion of her head was negative.

"Port?"

"No."

"Anything, Chiyu?"

She thanked him in the ghost of a voice, her eyes always fixed on the fire.

He looked at her uneasily, from time to time, wondering what she intended to do about this wedding night lockout? It was getting on toward midnight, according to the mantel clock. . . . What a lovely head this girl had! That was the trouble with most women—they had the damndest skulls. Rabbit skulls, cat skulls, hen skulls—trusting to their hair to correct and camouflage aboriginal, degenerate, degraded, imbecile, simian, predatory, lascivious contours and proportions. . . . Fussing with their hair through uncounted centuries—always monkeying with it, depending on it to conceal congenital defects with permanent waves, bangs, pompadours, love locks, waterfalls, illusions, bobs, lank locks à la Bolshévique, plaited masses of pigtails. . . .

Through all the ages eternally fussing to disguise inferior skulls. . . .

One in fifty possessed properly constructed heads. . . . He knew one youthful dream of pulchritude whose beauty already was celebrated; and her ears were set an inch and a half too low, and had animal-like lumps behind them, and the cerebellum of a congenital criminal. Only she and God knew what her heavy golden hair concealed.

And, at that, he thought, women averaged better skulls than men did. Walk up Broadway, up Park, and see what you'll see! Big thin macaque ears with no helix, crumpled ears with too much, bat ears redly translucent, faun's heavy ears, lop ears, the characteristic "Ear of Hermes," the neat African ear, the long-lobed "Ear of Buddha," fox ears, Satyr ears with points, rat ears, ears belonging to gibbons, orangs, aye-ayes. . . .

Believe it or not; but the proof will cost you a long walk and no more. And you return to dinner an anthropologist.

Gaze upon passing anthropoids in pants. Upon frontal planes of lower primates. Upon restricted nasal roots; upper ridges of orbits surmounted by excess of bone.

Here is the rhinorium that should have been a nose—this one swinish, this pointed and peppery, this ducklike, or bulbous, or obtrusively valorous,

or stupidly good-natured; the gallinaceous beak, fox nose, orang snout; the hooked, negroid septum, mongoloid, sinus-doomed, weevilesque. . . .

And the shapes of their heads! Here is jaw development at the expense of the brain case; here a snout-like profile with heavy temporal muscles, condyles and an occipital foramen tilted backward; here is microcephaly in every phase including prenatal *clôture* of sutures; here is a head practically all parietal, another all occiput, another professorial and all frontal area; another principally posterior with sagging cerebellum and cauliflower ears. There are brachycephalic globular heads; hypsicephalic with flat occiput and pointed; mesocephalic mongoloids; Armenoids; Nordics; the dolichocephalic Mick; the prognathous, chamaeprosopic Chink. . . .

Wyndward, perversely pursuing his hobby to death, suddenly grinned as the ribald verses came into his mind:

Her arms and legs and hands and feet
Appeared symmetrically neat,
There was no guile
Within her smile.
So brachycephalically sweet;
But chance confirmed my secret fears
When accident revealed her ears:
I'd rather live my life unwed
Than see those bat-like ears in bed!

He almost laughed as he raised his eyes to the girl by the fire; and discovered that she had been watching him with shy interest and was smiling in sympathy with his errant thoughts.

"What amuses you, Chiyu?" he asked, grinning.

"Your face—and my wedding night."

"I was thinking about the shape of your head and thanking God for it," he remarked.

"Ought I to, also?" she ventured.

"And on your knees, you pretty thing! And thank him very particularly for your ears."

"Ting!" went the little mantel clock—not for the half-hour but for one A.M. of another day.

She looked up at it, still smiling; looked at him.

“Chiyu,” he said, “you don’t intend to go back to the merry bridal suite, do you?”

“Must I?”

“Not on my account,” he said airily.

“I don’t know what to do,” she said.

“Do you think he’d let you in?”

“I don’t know.”

“I’ll call up and find out,” he suggested. She gave him the number. The operator reported that the number did not answer. He called the office of the apartment house and sent the night doorman up to investigate. The doorman reported the door locked and no response.

Wyndward sauntered back to the living-room where Chiyu stood with her back to the sinking fire:

“I could take you to a hotel,” he offered, “or you may stop here.” His voice remained carelessly friendly. There was a slight access of color in his face.

As she did not answer: “Would you care to stay here?”

The slightest affirmative inclination of the small head.

“All right,” he said, “let’s take a look at your quarters.” He slipped one arm through hers; side by side they walked leisurely through his adjoining bedroom into the bedroom beyond, where he turned on the lights.

It was a gay and feminine bedroom, with saucy bath and boudoir, done in silver and shrimp pink—doubtless by some decorating lady who knew what she’d like to have for herself. Everywhere were gadgets adored by women. Any man would have hated the soap and cursed the towels.

“Do you like it?” he inquired ironically.

“Yes, it’s lovely,” she said.

He was honest about it and invented no mitigating female relative to account for such a room in his apartment.

He politely drew her attention to an arsenal of cosmetics containing every variety, color, and tint suited to feminine caprice.

Other essentials were coyly guaranteed by virginal and intact cellophane containers.

It was not the man but the girl whose face had flushed before this beauty shop ambushed in a bachelor's rooms.

But though this young man's unembarrassed self-possession bordered, perhaps, on effrontery, he was beginning to be aware, once more, of that same new and unfamiliar excitement subtly meddling with the regularity of his normal pulses.

It would really seem that here was one girl with whom any bodily contact might become a trifle demoralizing to him. He withdrew his arm, carelessly, from hers. But her hand, hanging idly at her side, accidentally touched his; and he was conscious, again, of accelerated pulses, and a slight constriction of throat and breath. And of her nearness; and of the scented youngness of her, and the softness and warmth. . . .

"Perhaps," he managed to say without gulping, "you'd care to turn in."

She shrugged.

"Don't you feel rather weary?" he asked, and rashly, deliberately, linked his arm in hers again. "It's been a distressing day for you," he added.

Her slight nod assented.

"Well, then—good night, Chiyu—"

His arm, in hers, had slipped out and around her body; his throat had quite closed up and was hard-strained and with tense pulses. . . . Here was a hell of a discovery! Couldn't he even touch her—

"Good night, then—" he managed to say.

Her parted lips scarcely moved in reply. . . . Stirred nervously under his kiss, perhaps in protest—or unaccustomed to such long endurance. . . . Pliable and warm; scented and pliant the breathing youngness in his arms. . . . Gray-gold eyes closing; sealed by soft lashes fringing cheeks where childish color waxed and waned.

Through every vein of him the quickening tides were warning his senses—wave on wave warm with mounting menace of intoxication.

"Good night—good night, dear Chiyu," he breathed against her parted lips.

Her lips quivered, faint, voiceless; and he let her go and turned blindly away through the open door into his own dim, lamp-lit den. . . .

Here was a very damnable business materializing out of nothing to astound him. Demoralize him by the mere discovery of its existence.

What in hell, then, was it that had suddenly escaped his mind's long-accepted tyranny to run riot at slightest contact with this girl?

Even in adolescence there had been nothing sensually reckless and headlong about him. He always had known quite clearly what he was about.

So what, then, was all this uncontrolled emotion about? What was happening to him, at thirty-odd, to threaten what, habitually, and temperamentally, always had remained under lock and key of mind and will?

Pat Clyde's daughter! And yesterday he would have laid odds on himself against Cleopatra and the Queen of Sheba. Against immortal Aphrodite herself!

He lay awake for more than an hour before he chose to face essentials. Incensed to face them. Even to admit them.

Very well, then, did he want a mistress? Did he? Yes or no! For there was no other thinkable solution to the phenomenon. . . . Unless he kept entirely away from the girl who lay asleep in the adjoining room. . . . Unless he minded his business and kept away from her. . . .

No, he didn't want a mistress. That was becoming profanely plain to him. It was too much like marriage. More so, even—

Well, then, he probably retained enough sense to keep away from her. Whether he wished to or not, no doubt he knew enough to keep away. No doubt of that, he hoped.

But the ideas hatching there on his tumbled pillow may not have been very agreeable to him, for he shivered and closed his eyes, composing himself for sleep.

He heard the living-room clock strike four times. At five it struck five times; and he didn't hear it.

Hanley awoke him about half-past seven and ministered to him with a slice of lemon swimming in a tumbler of hot water.

He gulped it, half awake.

"And the young lady, sir?" inquired Hanley respectfully.

"Let her sleep till she rings for Sarah."

"Very good, sir. Would you wish your bath turned on?"

"All right," he yawned.

By the time that Wyndward was bathed, shaved, dressed and had swallowed coffee and grapes, he knew what he was going to do. He walked leisurely into the living-room and called up Mr. Trenholme's apartment. And presently got a hysterical servant on the telephone:

"Is it the hospital callin'?" demanded the Milesian voice.

"No, it's a friend calling for Mrs. Trenholme. What hospital are you talking about?"

"Sure they do be takin' him away to Calvary Hospital, the poor sick man!"

"Is he ill?"

"Ill is it? He's afther smashin' up the place entirely. An' God only knows what he done with his new young wife—"

"Wait! What's the matter with Mr. Trenholme?"

"Fits, sorr. He's crazy—"

"You mean he's had an attack of delirium tremens?"

"Yis, sorr—"

"And you say he is in Calvary Hospital? In the psychopathic ward?"

"God knows what ward he's in, but it's Calvary he's in this blessed minute, an' it tuk six big men to do the job—he was that wild. Didn't I see it comin' these three weeks gone? Sure 'twas meself was afther warnin' the servants a week ago come Monday—"

"All right," said Wyndward and closed the conversation. Then he looked up Calvary Hospital and called Terry Quinton. He was out, but the office answered.

"I'm inquiring on behalf of Mrs. Trenholme," he explained. . . .

"Yes, Mrs. Trenholme would like to know what his condition is.

". . . I understand. He's not in any condition to be seen. . . . Won't be for some time. . . . I understand.

". . . Oh. You say he's managed to break his leg, also? Danger of pneumonia?

". . . Yes, Mrs. Trenholme will be at their apartment, and the Hospital authorities may communicate with her there. Thank you."

A pretty situation, he thought, and rang for Sarah. When she arrived: "How is my guest?" he inquired.

"The young lady has had her breakfast, sir."

"What is she doing?"

"Reading a book, sir."

"Please say to her that I am in the living-room. Is the fire burning?"

"It is, sir."

He lighted a cigarette, squirmed out of his lounging robe, put on his coat, and strolled into the morning room.

Chiyu, warming her slender back against the blaze, lost color at sight of him but let her hand remain in his.

"Did you sleep?" he asked.

"Yes, some."

"Not well?"

"Not very."

He relinquished her hand. It seemed he couldn't trust himself even to shake hands with this girl. Such damned nonsense!

She did not care for the offered cigarette. She continued to gaze at the window and to warm herself. It was snowing; wet flakes blotted the panes; a dulled scraping of snow shovels came raucously from the street.

He had come into the living-room, meaning to tell her bluntly and briefly what had happened to her new husband. But realized, now, that a man couldn't be brusk with so young a thing.

"I'm wondering," he speculated amiably, "what you propose to do about this impulsive husband of yours."

Her gaze reverted from the snow-blotted windows to him.

"I had better call him up, hadn't I?" she suggested calmly.

"Have you decided to return to him?"

"I don't know what else to do."

"You may stay here if you choose—"

What on earth was this unruly tongue of his about, defying the very mind that once had governed it!

"I couldn't do that," she said. "He'd divorce me."

"You could divorce him, too, you know."

More tongue-mutiny. He felt like biting the fool thing into silence.

"What would be the use of divorce?" she murmured. "He was only drunk. He's like other men, I suppose. I think I'd better call him up—"

"Chiyu," he said, "your husband is in the psychopathic ward in Calvary Hospital."

She gazed at him dumbly.

So he told her, then, exactly what had happened in the bridal suite.

When he ended the girl drew a deep breath and stood with lowered head twisting her small handkerchief in silence. Once or twice she raised her eyes to him—once as though mutely asking something; and again quite hopelessly.

"I think I'd better go," she said at last.

"Your servant told me that things are rather smashed up in your apartment."

"I'd better go," she repeated.

"As you choose, Chiyu."

She walked slowly into her bedroom, put on her hat and furs and gloves. When she emerged he already had telephoned to the doorman for a taxi.

She was rather pale when she said good-by. He took her offered hand coldly. But whatever he had started to say was suddenly strangled in his straining throat, and he drew her into his arms and kissed and kissed her until her stiff, chilled lips flamed to a clinging response in the swift passion of their embrace.

And at last, when he released her, she opened the door without a word and was gone like a shadow. The gilded cage of the lift had vanished with her when he went out into the silent corridor.

"—Whatever this damn thing is that got me—" he thought, staring at the shadowy wire cables, swaying above the vanished cage descending into

viewless depths below.

CHAPTER VIII
MAN AND WINTER

The nose of an aging trout develops a hook and grows downward.

Man's nose also, in later life, thickens and grows downward. And pale circles ring the iris.

However, except for these two symptoms, nobody could suspect the age of Captain Jauncy.

He was slim and cocky and had all his hair and teeth.

He knew everybody, went everywhere, ate and drank everything and gave parties.

Both kinds.

When four-in-hand was the way to drive, he drove that way. So had his father. He had thick, vigorous white hair and a waxed white mustache.

It was said of him that he suffered an irreparable loss when Revell Reckness hit him on the head at polo.

He still played squash and tennis with Nordic sovereigns and bow-legged championettes.

London, Paris, the Riviera, New York, Palm Beach knew him as a social giant. A nimble, busy, and very kindly man whose age was known to God alone.

The kind of parties he gave might be labeled Party of the First Part and Party of the Second Part.

To the first were bidden fashionables of both sexes; to the second, fashionables of the male sex only.

It was one of the latter sort of parties that John Wyndward decorated about two weeks after he had met Chiyu Clyde the evening of her transmogrification into Mrs. Warren Trenholme.

It was a gay party. Principals and chorus of Trenholme's latest success, "The Injun and the Ingenue," contributed vastly to the gaiety of the evening aided by delegates from the Racquettiers, Patroons, and Buccaneers Clubs. Number Three Ballroom of the great Hotel Empress, turned into a huge bower of flowers, resounded with music and wassail; and a discreet corps of flunkeys kept the public off that entire floor. No use stirring up the outer

world staggering and stumbling under darkening financial skies and muttering about depressions and dictatorships.

In the height of the joyous tumult, jaunty Captain Jauncy, strutting a two-step with Queva d'Arrios, called across to Wyndward who was gallivanting with a limby, lissome lady who looked better on the screen than off: "I say, Jack, Terry Quinton is looking for you with that little Chiyu peach!"

Wyndward's handsome face reddened, and his agility in getting rid of his partner left her dazed, and his enemy for life.

It was almost impossible to find anybody in that jam, but finally he discovered Dr. Quinton at a table for six; with him were Revell Reckness, Scott Dundas, the English dancer, Phyllis Severn, Miss Beltram of the Follies, and a third girl so bewilderingly lovely that at first he did not recognize Chiyu.

They all stood up and shouted at him when Dundas caught sight of him, waving glasses at him and singing the popular song from "The Injun and the Ingenue":

Every blonde would be brunette.
Every brunette be a blonde;
Blue eyes envy eyes of jet,
Jet eyes viewing blue grow fond;
Golden hair and hair of brown
Long to scalp each other's crown!

So I'll paint, paint, paint
Till I look like what I ain't;
For no saint or sinner knows
What is hidden by my clothes!

When he had shaken hands with everybody, Quinton said to him: "I made Chiyu come. No good sitting all alone at home or hanging around the hospital when her husband can't be seen, is there?"

"How *is* he?" asked Wyndward.

"I'm telling you; he's in no shape to be seen—"

"Here, ducky!" cried Phyllis Severn, filling a champagne glass for him, while Lola Beltram noisily demanded that he drink from her glass. But he backed away from both and sat down beside Scott Dundas.

"Give him the works, Chiyu," said Dundas thickly, indicating a decanter of Irish and a bottle of White Rock with wavering finger.

Wyndward looked at Chiyu, then; and she looked back at him as though scared. Like some snowy, copper-haired Dryad with golden eyes caught in an indiscretion.

Scott Dundas—though dancing had already become perilous to him—desired to and persuaded Phyllis Severn, who was big enough to salvage him. Lola Beltram went off with Revell Reckness, and Quinton stood up looking about for Queva d'Arrios.

He said to Wyndward: "You look out for our little Chiyu and give her a good time, for she needs it."

As Quinton passed him Wyndward said in a low voice: "I'll see that she gets home, Terry."

"Okay," said Quinton, "and see that it's her own home and not yours. No philandering with our little Chiyu."

He spoke jestingly, but there was something in his eye that glinted.

He departed, dancing a step or two as he went, and deftly avoiding stray waltzers who came drifting out of the ballroom's glare into the dimmer, flowery catacombs and refectory beyond.

Wyndward went over and seated himself beside Chiyu. He had every opportunity to behave himself or make an ass of himself. With the former purpose in view he carefully refrained from touching even the hem of her gown.

"Awfully glad you came," he said. "This is *the* party of the year, you know."

"Yes," she said faintly.

"Would you care to dance?"

"Captain Jauncy would cut in. I promised him next."

"If he gets you away will you come back here afterward?"

She made no reply.

"Will you, Chiyu?"

"I'd better not—"

"Why?"

She gave him a lovely, distressed look. He saw the appeal in it; then the gray-gold eyes showed green glints in them; and she rose and took his arm; and they walked very slowly out to the floor.

Here, before long, Captain Jauncy claimed his privilege; and Wyndward, despoiled, encountered Quinton who was still stalking Queva d'Arrios through the glittering, whirling human jungle.

"Terry," he said in a guarded voice, "what really is Trenholme's condition?"

"That fellow," replied Quinton, "is one of those congenital drunkards who end, periodically, in a strait-jacket. His grandfather ended that way."

"Is he out of danger?"

"Coming out. He's a God-awful wreck—what with that broken left leg and bronchial congestion to complicate things."

"Pneumonia?"

"Not so far."

"You expect to pull him through?"

"Probably, this time."

"A raw deal he handed Chiyu," said Wyndward carelessly.

"Well, yes, I suppose it's raw in a way; but, normally, Warrie Trenholme is a kind, good-natured man. Noisy and clever, kind and generous."

"Really?"

"He really is. Our little Chiyu has, in a way, bettered herself. Pulled herself out of Flo Ziegfeld's by her garters, and into a musical comedy hit. And now she has hoisted her pretty self out of musical comedy by her own little bloomers, and into a thrifty marriage."

"I see."

"Maybe you do. Warrie Trenholme makes a good deal of money. And he's genuinely fond of Chiyu."

"He turned her out of doors."

"He had the D.T.'s."

"He'll have 'em again, I suppose."

"It's likely. Some have 'em; others enjoy periodical attacks of other afflictions."

"Has Chiyu been to see him?"

"He's in no condition to be seen. I told you that. But he's sane, now. He blabs about her incessantly in his noisy way. He shouted at me this morning: 'I want to see my wife and apologize! My family tells me she's a common slut, but she suits me!'"

"Where is Chiyu living?" asked Wyndward coldly.

"In their apartment. That's the only address we have—"

Other people intervened, then, separating them; and Wyndward wandered off to dance with some girl who seemed to resemble the majority of girls, and who would afford him leisure to think.

Because he was wondering why his telephone inquiries for Chiyu at her apartment always were answered with: "Who is calling, please? . . . I'll see. . . . Mrs. Trenholme is out of town."

It was just as well, probably. He had wanted to see Chiyu, and he knew he had better not. At times he wanted to see her so much that he telephoned; only to receive an unvarying answer when he gave his name.

Well, maybe Chiyu had been afraid to see him. If so she was wiser than he who should have been afraid of himself.

He hadn't wished to think about her, but he always was doing it.

He had all sorts of work to do, too—a couple of tombs with a "Thinker" squatting atop of one and "Joy" and "Grief" clasping hands over the other. Then the Carthusian Sisters wanted a large marble Crucifixion for the garden-close of the Mother House up the Hudson, somewhere. And there were several portrait busts of old people and brats. . . .

Rocco Tocato and Angelo Cavalla could take care of all the dirty work excepting only portrait busts in wax or clay. He had to do those jobs himself.

When he went uptown to the studio every morning at the usual hour and looked without pleasure upon the several works in progress, he thought of Chiyu and happier years. But impersonal efficiency now reigned everywhere in his busy domain; mallets thudded mechanically; chips of Carrara marble flew; a warm, moist odor of plaster pervaded the place; an aura of garlic enveloped Angelo and Rocco which cigarette smoke could not kill.

And so, every day, he went about from one bit of sculpture in construction to another, sticking on a few masterly pellets of clay or knocking priceless chips out of some pious old gander's bald head, or correcting, modifying, coaxing into construction some small model reeking of plastaline which he had recently sketched in.

And every day he prowled through the carpenter's and casting shop, criticizing, suggesting; examining architectural renderings and blueprints—the former invariably portraying masses of enchanting foliage which did not exist but which vastly enhanced the architectural and sculptural charms of the tombs and assorted "Thinkers."

And everywhere the draughtsman had drawn pretty girls strolling with fashionable young men, to give scale.

According to these gay folk, cemeteries were lively resorts frequented by pulchritude and style alike. . . .

He had wandered rather far—as far as a graveyard—in his absent-minded musing while he two-stepped it with a girl he didn't even look at.

And then the girl with whom he had been so imperviously dancing, asked him what he was thinking about; and asked him so many times that, getting no reply, she flounced angrily into the receptive arms of somebody else and vanished with eyes aflame.

Wyndward, so preoccupied that he scarcely noticed her disappearance, threaded a graceful way out of the crush and into the welcome dimness of the table-dotted labyrinths where presently he discovered Chiyu in conversation with a chuckle-headed youth of financial importance.

He seemed to be one of those ambitious young men characteristic of the Racquettiers, and was, evidently, begging of Chiyu the privilege of writing something upon his own cuff.

So Wyndward made short work of him and presently found a secluded table for two where Chiyu consented to a tiny glass of iced mint.

When, eventually, she picked up two straws and slowly imbibed, the while her eyes rested on John Temple Wyndward across the table, he said:

"You know, of course, that I have called you up every day, and sometimes twice and three times a day."

She released the straws and used one of them to stir the ice.

"You know it, don't you?" he repeated.

A slight inclination of her head admitted the accusation.

"Why?"

She lifted her eyes to his—a silent answer and an inquiry to be deciphered: "Who but you should know the reason why?"

Wyndward could be hard-boiled when irritated. He was irritated now.

He said bluntly: "After all, nothing happened. I'm sorry it didn't."

A slow scarlet stained the girl's face.

"Forgive me, Chiyu," he said quickly, "I really didn't mean that."

The scarlet lingered, subsided slowly. The damage was done, however. Both knew it.

"I suppose," he said, "when your husband gets well, I'll not see you again."

"It would be all right, wouldn't it, after he gets well?"

"Of course," he replied, reddening, "if you wish it, Chiyu."

"I do."

"But not until he recovers?"

Again the silent inquiry of the lovely gray-gold eyes.

"Do you dare?" he asked in a low voice.

"Do *you*?"

Here was the supreme chance to make a fool of himself and he took it.

"Would it make you unhappy, Chiyu?"

After a long while she slowly shook her head as though the answer were beyond her. A slow match eating its burning way toward tinder.

Her hand rested on the table touching her glass. He covered it with his own. A terrible stillness reigned in her mind, oblivious to the dull jarring of her pulses.

"Then," he said, "you think we may venture to see each other sometimes?"

She rested her head on one hand, looking at him under drooping lashes weary with perplexities that her young heart had solved long since, but not her blinded mind.

Long, long ago she had told Father Sullivan that she was in love with a man who never would marry her; and the priest had warned her.

After that, when she was sixteen—that day after the unveiling of the Riverside Memorial when she had found Wyndward alone in the studio—and he had kissed her when they parted—she told Dr. Quinton that she was in love with John Wyndward.

"Well," said Quinton, "the cards are stacked against you, Chiyu. He's no marrier. If he lives long enough he'll wear a British title and take his seat in Parliament—if he chooses. Anyway England always keeps that gate open as long as the man's alive, whatever he may choose to do about it."

"Sometimes," she ventured, "men like that fall in love, don't they?"

"They do; but not to marry."

"Never?"

"Never."

"In books—"

"To hell with books!" he said savagely. "They don't marry; and that's that!"

And so, when Trenholme had locked her out, she had a vague idea of what she was doing when she went to Wyndward's apartment. But, also, she had gone so long—so long without seeing him—without venturing to—and had even married a man. . . .

Now she was sitting there with this man, her cheek on her slender hand, excited, irresolute, aware of his passion, and frightened by her own.

He never would have married her; she entirely understood that. But she also understood what generally happened when a girl became her lover's mistress, or slipped into more promiscuous relations.

Practically all the girls she knew had drifted that way. And one did not get on in life that way; and happiness was fitful and intermittent. And misery was the aftermath, as far as she had discovered.

How strange were human lives and loves, interlocked legally or illegally, yet vainly and impermanently. . . . Not in books. Not in a young girl's dreams and aspirations. Not in the teachings of the church. But almost always in reality.

She had been in contact with such things since adolescence, everywhere; faith turned faithless; passion passionless; interest disinterested, then resentful, verging toward hatred.

She looked up at the man opposite; and her fingers, interlinked with his, tightened slightly.

"Shall we go?" he said.

"Don't you care to stay?"

"Do you?"

"No," she said, "I'm tired of it."

But it was not as easy as that. Every man they met objected when she nodded her farewell; and Dundas was noisy about it, Revell Reckness indignant, Quinton inscrutable, and Captain Jauncy skipped about her, in amorous and reproachful protest.

Afterward, in his car, he mentioned, laughingly, the unwonted assiduities of Captain Jauncy, and was amazed and a little troubled to learn how recklessly that stickler for social rigidity had hopped over lifelong barriers to plan a pleasantly irregular career for her under a dazzling contract to be executed by his own attorney.

"How long has that been going on?" he asked coldly.

"He introduced me to Warrie Trenholme and made him put me into musical comedy."

"Is Jauncy backing that new show?"

"I understand he lent Warrie the money."

"Well," said Wyndward more coldly still, "where did you meet Jauncy?"

She did not resent his question; she said very calmly: "You know how we meet men of his kind, and yours; don't you? Not where your friends' sisters dance."

He remained silent.

She said: "One man introduces other men; girls introduce men. One meets most of the agreeable men in town at parties like Captain Jauncy's. Or at teas or suppers. I've known Captain Jauncy for four years."

"He's damned ardent," said Wyndward.

Chiyu laughed for the first time that evening. “Aren’t they all?” she asked.

“No doubt. I realized to-night how attractive all men find you. I might have known—”

He relapsed into silence. Quinton was right; Chiyu had bettered herself. After all, Trenholme’s family had a position in New York. A stodgy one, perhaps, but real. One needn’t bother with Old New York stock, but one can’t deny them. . . . And if Warren Trenholme ever chose to recant and return to the dingy respectability of Old New York, his wife would have a certain position. A rung of the ladder much farther up. A good rung to start from. A surprising height from which to look back, and down into 105th Street.

And, if a young man be amusing, and a girl be beautiful and enterprising, and there is money enough, much of Park Avenue and Fifth Avenue might not be unattainable. And every bit of Palm Beach. . . .

His car had stopped at her apartment house, but neither of them had moved.

She wanted him to come in; she dared not ask him. It was half-past four of a wintry morning. He was thinking, sullenly, that he had better make an end, now, and be done with it.

“Had you rather I didn’t come in, Chiyu?” he asked carelessly.

“Do you mind not coming?”

“No.”

He got out, lent her his arm, guided her across the slippery sidewalk into the vestibule. Here, hat in hand he said good night, his gloved hand fumbling with hers.

She remained silent, excitedly aware of his emotion. He started to say something and checked himself, the pulses hammering in his closing throat threatening incoherency.

Suddenly Chiyu could not let him go.

“Could your chauffeur come back for you?” she asked in a ghost of a voice.

“Yes; he’s had the day to himself—”

“Then if—” but it ended breathlessly with “if.”

He went out into the snow and told the chauffeur to drive the car to the garage and go to bed.

When he returned Chiyu was shivering in her white furs. A sleepy Negro doorman let them in and took them up on a smelly lift.

It was the sort of apartment one might expect of the playwright who invented Louis the Limit. The gas hearth fire, however, was warm enough to wilt the freesias on the mantel.

"Shall we do what we did in your apartment—investigate the refrigerator?" she ventured, holding her gloved hands to the incandescent asbestos mess.

It was a depressing place with its terrible tasseled furniture and fringed lamps. She went into her bedroom to divest herself of her furs; he followed, and she showed him an adjoining bedroom—her husband's without a doubt. For it was plastered with photographs of actresses and of Broadway gentlemen. In which doubtful environment his own family photographs were huddled together aloofly as though for mutual protection.

He looked around at this bedroom with its modernistic furniture and nasty blue curtains tinted like the sunken eye of a dead codfish.

Well, then, here he was. And didn't know where he was going. But he'd go ahead. . . . Just to see where he'd land. . . . Heretofore he had always known where he'd land. Not this time.

He wandered back to the gas heater and glowing asbestos foliage where, presently, Chiyu rejoined him and led the way to the pantry.

There was plenty of Scotch whisky and soda there. She herself didn't care for it, but there was pâté in a crock, sardines, jam—that sort of thing.

Neither wanted any. He fixed himself a highball and they turned off the light and went back to their asbestos and gas.

There was only one arm-chair. She made him take it—a hospitable mistake!—because he drew her down into it, too, and passed one arm around her.

The girl remained very rigid and still, but the strain of the position became irksome, and she relaxed against his shoulder, her soft young body molded to his and their heads and cheeks together.

He tasted his highball from time to time, remaining unnaturally tranquil and undemonstrative. He spoke of the remote past and the days of roller

skates and dummy horses; and wondered how, through separation and dim years, it had led them both to this gas-lit fireside. And, from this brief resting place beside her fire, he invited her—a little mischievously—to guess where and when they two would come to journey's end.

"This is the end," she said.

"Every time we meet and part we think it is the end."

"I must go on," she murmured.

"Where, Chiyu?"

"To—better things."

"What are they?"

"I don't know."

"Yes, you do. You mean to brighter scenes if not better. Paris and Palm Beach."

"I've seen what is called brighter scenes. I never really liked the theater. I mean the life there."

"You liked the party to-night, didn't you?"

"Yes. There are better ones, though."

"Better if not brighter," he suggested humorously; "dingier and worthier. I'm not so sure. Respectability and bigotry are doing the world to death."

"You don't really think so." Their cheeks in contact told him she was smiling.

"I don't know. Respectable bigotry is the tyrant in this country, strangling every attempt of decent folk to better the world. Are the sober citizens of Manhattan outraged by political dishonesty? Bigotry rushes up to head the revolt, and they sicken of it. And graft goes on.

"Is a national law flagrantly violated, angering all good citizens to protest? In rush the bigots with remedies worse than the disease—cranks, quacks, mindless ministers, busted bishops, bawling politicians, fat old women in eyeglasses—"

The girl was laughing so that he leaned over and set his highball glass on the hearth.

"Chiyu," he said, drawing her closer, "you are very good for me. Do you know it?"

But that stilled her.

"I wonder," he said, "if you helped me again, whether I could get back any of that—anything that seems to have gone out of me."

"Do you mean, pose for you?"

"Would you?"

"Oh I couldn't, now." He felt her cheek flame against his. She never would help him that way again. All the innocent unconscious purity of that golden age had exhaled like the remembered scent of vanished flowers. The gates of Eden had long been locked against them.

He said: "I wasn't thinking so much about your posing for me. . . . You would be lovely beyond belief, Chiyu. . . . But it occurred to me—just to have you there—to see you—"

He felt her body trembling a little against his.

"Because," he said, "once or twice, now, since I—since we have rediscovered each other—and discovered each other—I have felt at moments, something of that same youthful incitement—excitement."

After a silence: "Do you mean inspiration?" she breathed.

"Whatever it is. . . . If it was creative excitement, it was very vague and faint. . . . It stirred, after—being with you."

A heavenly warmth suffused her. She was not given to tears, but suddenly was near them.

He said: "There were things I wanted to do—very, very long ago. In silver bronze—one; another in tinted marble. . . . I thought of them—that night at my place—after you were asleep. . . . After you had left in the morning, too. . . . That whole week I prowled the studio like a cat on a strange back fence."

She said huskily: "You are just the same as you were then. You can do anything."

"I am over thirty, Chiyu."

"That's nothing. You are the same."

"I almost wish *you* were!"

"But I am. Exactly the same."

After a moment he laughed. “All right. I’ll buy you a pair of roller skates.”

She said, always with a tremulous undertone of excitement in her voice: “I hope you go often to look at your Memorial on Riverside.”

“Do you go sometimes?”

“Yes, often.”

“Shall we go together?”

“Yes.”

The big bulb burned out in one of the atrocious lamps and Chiyu shyly released herself and rose to replace it. Between the folds of the chenille curtains a bright gleam of daylight fell across the carpet, and the girl, surprised, parted the curtains and was struck in the face by a shaft of sunlight.

Dumb with astonishment she stood there in the morning sun; and Wyndward, coming behind her, clasped her in both arms till her copper-tinted hair lay in thick disorder on his shoulder.

“I’ve got to let you go,” he said; “I’m always letting you go. . . . And it’s damned lonely without you, Chiyu.”

She said in a voice scarcely audible, looking up at him from his shoulder: “Wouldn’t it be better if you married somebody?”

“Good Lord, no! It’s the last thing in the world I’d do!”

“I thought it might—help—”

“It would kill anything creative that’s left in me—if anything really remains. . . . Anything like that—any drab responsibility—dead weight—”

He looked down in the gray-gold eyes exquisitely flecked with green: “You mean more to me than anything like that, Chiyu.”

A heavenly warmth invaded her again, and in her young breast beneath his clasp her heart was racing.

He said, looking down into her eyes: “You mean more than any woman has meant, so far.” He said it slowly as though tracing the reason for it, tranquilly surprised by the inconceivable.

She could have told that she always had been in love with him. She said nothing, and her eyelids closed under his kiss.

It all was becoming too poignant for her—and her young heart wild against the hands embracing her. . . .

Faint incoherence from her clinging lips, a checked sob, and the supple body twisted around to his, molded and melting into his intense possession. . . .

Suddenly frozen, paralyzed by the clamor of the telephone at their elbows.

She stepped toward it, swaying as though drunk; could scarcely hold it up in her shaky fingers:

"Yes? . . .

"Yes, this is Mrs. Trenholme. . . .

"Yes, Dr. Quinton? . . .

"No, I was not asleep. . . .

"Yes, I can hear you. . . .

"Is he worse? . . .

"Yes, I can come immediately. I have only to change—I mean dress—

"Very well, I'll be at the hospital in twenty minutes—"

She set the instrument aside, stood a moment with clenched white hands, looking at Wyndward.

"He's very ill," she said. "It's pneumonia."

She turned and went into her bedroom. He followed, but she seemed indifferent to his presence; went to a closet and found a dark street gown, discarded the frail dinner gown and flung it on the bed, stripped off her silk slippers and sheer stockings and pulled on pale brown ones.

In an incredibly short time she was ready, into a mink coat, adjusting her small hat at the glass.

"Can I do anything?" he asked quietly.

"I am glad you are here."

"May I send for my car?"

"No, just telephone for a taxi—" fumbling in her purse, then dropping it into the silken wrist bag.

He went into the living-room, telephoned to the doorman, pulled on his fur coat and picked up his hat—scarcely the proper rig for outer morning sunshine.

She came in presently, pale, frightened, and her face was chilly against his.

"Call on me if you need me, Chiyu."

She shook her head slightly.

"Won't you let me help—"

"Not now." She had closed her eyes for a moment. Now she opened them and looked at him. There was a vague hint of terror in them. As though their parting were a final thing.

"Whatever happens—" he began, but the telephone cut him short. It was the doorman announcing the taxicab.

They went down together in silence, leered at by a Barbados nigger in gold and green.

"Tell the driver to drop you at your apartment," she whispered; and he did so, and they got in.

Early sunshine glittered on snowy streets which an army of shivering unemployed was beginning to clear away.

She sat with one hand fast in his, looking out at the silver-white city with its silvery skyward towers glimmering sunshine from every window and gilded spire.

The sparkling, snowy stretch of Fifth Avenue, then Madison, flashed into view as they traversed them; then the cab swung north into the gray stone magnificence of Park Avenue, skimming uptown past club and hotel and church and apartment house; and those few private marble mosques where the solitary faithful worship self.

"Dear Chiyu," he murmured, lifting her small gloved hand to kiss it as the cab stopped at his apartment.

She said nothing, but all she could have been to him was in her eyes where sorrow, and fear and helpless insurgence contended with the ashes of recent passion.

"Well, then—" he began; but fell silent. Then he got out, directed the driver to Calvary Hospital, stood hat in hand as she drove away into the

brilliant wintry morning.

CHAPTER IX
A LEE SHORE

Warren Trenholme died at his leisure. In life he never hurried. He took his time about dying.

Chorus girls and Broadway bums discussed his passing. The world he had adopted discussed it—barbers, manicures, men about town, ladies of the town, sporting men, jobless Thespians, assorted literary pimps. In respectable theatrical circles it was merely mentioned. The world which he had abandoned scarcely noticed it.

Trenholme died slowly. It took him nearly two weeks. His brand-new wife was always with him. The only conscious emotion he betrayed was a kind of sardonic pride in her. To her were addressed his last coherent words: "You tell my family to go to hell!"

Quinton, talking about it to Wyndward at the Buccaneers Club a week or two later, spoke of Trenholme's physical endurance through the losing battle for life.

"A vigorous man in spite of his dissipations," he said. "He put up a desperate fight. He was crazy about his wife, you know. That's why."

"Was he really?"

"Yes, he was. Crazy about her, poor devil. After all, John, he had been born a gentleman. Which perhaps is why he had the courage to marry where he loved."

"He had the courage to make Broadway his profession, also," remarked Wyndward "—if that is courage."

"Well, it was in him, anyway."

"So was his vulgarity."

"I don't know where he got that," continued Quinton; "his ancestry and family fairly stink of offensive respectability. He himself was loud and noisy and convivial. And clever."

"The kind of cleverness that sets Broadway in a roar," nodded Wyndward.

"Perhaps. But everybody can't make it roar. Anyway, I'm sorry he's dead. He was not a bad fellow."

"They say he was kindly and generous," said Wyndward. "I hope he has provided for his wife. Do you know?"

"He left her everything. I'm sorry to say it wasn't as much as one might expect from a man who has written several Broadway hits."

"Is it enough?"

"Well—yes. That is, Chiyu has a very modest income. Enough to travel a little. I sent her to Bermuda."

"Oh. That's where she's gone."

"Yes, that's where she's gone," repeated Quinton with a hint of malice in his tone.

"Was she worn out?"

"Not at all. But I thought it would be good for her."

"I see."

"Do you? Well, she's a pretty thing in black I can tell you, John. Mrs. Trenholme is a good name for any widow. Your respectable snobs and snoopers can trace it back to the Washington Square region. It's a good passport for a young and attractive widow. And Chiyu's face, figure, voice, and manner indorse it. Some day I hope she'll meet a real man, somewhere. Your kind. . . . No, not exactly your kind—"

"What do you mean?" said Wyndward dangerously.

"I mean you're too goddam self-satisfied—what with the shadow of Parliament and a rickety coronet tagging you like tin cans tied to a lost dog —"

"You know damn well I'm an American citizen."

"Oh yeah? Oh no! Didn't Cecil Fairmont go back, finally, to be a baronet? He was a Yankee citizen, too. Didn't Montagu Mellew go back? And Percy Kirk-Riding? And you'll go too if you outlive that kennelful of pups over there. But would *I* go back? Not if they hand me Kilcarrick on a pewter salver. And me a poor doctor and a Mick at that!"

"You're a Mick all right, but Kilcarrick Castle is a pretty place for a poor doctor to loaf in."

"Yeah, as pretty as De Valera's nose. Can you see *me* in the Dail Eireann? I'd be a damned fool to go if ever the opportunity flirted with me. Though I mistrust I'm a snob; and I know *you* are."

"I'm no snob," retorted Wyndward tranquilly.

"And why not? You don't consider any girl in the country is good enough for you to marry. What's that but a snob?"

"I don't consider any girl for that unpleasant purpose."

"Oh I don't mean that, either. And, although you never mention it, you're solemnly impressed by your family history—which, I admit, is part of England's, too. Anyway you're stuck on your social, elegant, educated self."

"An absolute lie."

"G'wan ye treacherous Sassenach, y'are so! No colleen is good enough f'r the likes of you!"

"Who the hell do you expect me to marry?"

"Begob, I dunno if it's a marchioness or a manicure! All I know is, where love is, marry! But ye've not the guts to do that."

Quinton's raillery began to irritate him a little:

"Never mind about my guts, Terry—though I admit you've probably dissected a tubful in your day—"

"I have, an' more!"

"All right then; and you may marry a manicure, too, if you feel that way —"

"Listen to him, the silly Sassenach, whin he knows what the British peerage marry—"

"Oh no, they don't—"

"Oh yes! Begorra, then, I could thumb Burke's all day and show you barmaids galore!"

Very, very vaguely Wyndward was conscious of something occult in all this badgering—something evasively personal. And yet it seemed unlikely that this man—or any other man—could have the impertinence to hint at any serious possibility between Chiyu and himself.

Anyway, whatever Quinton meant by it, he'd had enough of it—too much of that sort of banter.

Besides, he was sore at heart concerning Chiyu who never had communicated with him from the day she had dropped him at his apartment

that snowy morning to the present moment.

He had not known Trenholme well enough to go to his funeral. So he didn't go.

But when he concluded that decency permitted him to telephone Chiyu, he had telephoned. Only to find she had left the city leaving no address.

Now, according to Quinton, she was basking in Bermuda, somewhere.

"Perhaps," he said carelessly, "you have her address."

"Whose?" inquired Quinton blandly.

"Chiyu's," snapped Wyndward.

"Yes," said Quinton affably, "I have her address." And that's all he said; and Wyndward was too provoked with him to pursue the matter.

More than a month later he ventured to mention the matter to Quinton again, requesting Chiyu's address.

"What the hell do you want it for?" inquired the latter.

"Well, why shouldn't I want it? We're good friends. And I thought I'd write her a friendly letter—"

"Did you so!"—Quinton loved to relapse into the Milesian—"Well, then, I'll read you a letter I have from the same pretty lady in yesterday's mail; and that should save you the trouble and pains of writing her with your own fair hand."

He pulled out an envelope with Bermuda stamps and postmarks, on it, and covered with a superscription in long, slanting handwriting. And it occurred to Wyndward that he never before had seen Chiyu's penmanship; and he thought, with odd surprise, that it looked fluently fashionable.

"Listen, you!" said Quinton:

> DEAR DR. QUINTON:
>
> Your letters are all so kind and so cheerful that I am always pestering the postman for another.
>
> It is beautiful here to-day; the flowers everywhere are glorious, and so are the flowering vines—all those different tinted bougainvillaeas, and the flaming bignonias, you know.
>
> I was so surprised to see Mr. Reckness, Mr. Bullup, and Captain Jauncy. The Reckness yacht is a beauty. I lunched on

board, Thursday. I met such a nice boy on board—Lord Kilcarrick.

I thought him shy; but after we came ashore and I had taken a long walk with him he begged me to call him Linley. His name—one of them—is Linley. Linley Quinton, Earl of Kilcarrick. He's attached to some sort of military mission to the British West Indies. I was so surprised when he told me he is a relative of yours and that you had written to him and told him to be polite to me.

His friends just call him Kilcarrick or Linley; but servants say "my lord" and "your lordship" to him.

Captain Jauncy is quite amusing in his funny, sprightly way. His conversation always reminds me of a nervous little boy jumping up and down. He is usually with a lot of fashionable people, whom I don't know and am not likely to.

George Bullup with his blond, stiff hair brushed high, rushes about after pretty women from dawn to dark. They say his wife is in Paris divorcing him. But he seems to be very nice although frightfully ardent if you give him a chance. I've learned better than to do that.

Revell Reckness is his usual, languid, handsome, self-satisfied self—perfectly certain of nailing any girl he condescends to saunter after.

But I told you in my last letter about one girl he didn't nail. And he's quite nice to me now; and keeps looking at me in such a puzzled way, as though to say, "How on earth did that kid escape?"

He said a funny thing to me to-day. He said: "You ought to make friends with your late husband's family. They're terrible, but they might be useful to you."

I explained to him that they had made no advances.

"What of it," he replied. "If you wish to take the trouble, and put up with their fishy manners, and swallow their bigotry, you can sit with them in a desirable box, at the Metropolitan Opera, meet the musically minded musickers at Carnegie Hall and go to a deadly party, now and then, among fashionable mummies of a forgotten era."

I said I'd consider it.

"Anyway," he said, "you've one useful friend at court."

"Who?" I asked.

Then he laughed and said: "Captain Jauncy. He's taking you seriously, Chiyu."

"He's very polite," I said.

"Polite enough to dog your heels all day," he said. "I've never seen the old gentleman so perpetually busy."

The few women I have met through him and through Revell Reckness do not seem inclined to be friendly, although they nod to me politely when we meet and pass.

I had a curious letter from Warren's family. His maiden sister Seraphina wrote to say that the diamond earrings left to me by Warren were family heirlooms, and the family would like to buy them of me.

So I sent them with a little note saying that I could not sell them to anybody but was happy to restore them to my late husband's family.

I haven't heard from them since. But the earrings were insured.

There is an excursion steamer which touches here Monday—the big liner *Bessarabia*—on her way around the world.

One of the cabins was turned in before she left New York. I find that, with economy, I can live as cheaply on the *Bessarabia* as I can here. And there is an English maid at the hotel who begs me to take her with me on very small wages.

The United States Consul has fixed up the passport which you so kindly assisted me to procure in New York; and I have decided to sail on the *Bessarabia* on Tuesday, to be away three months.

It will be exciting. The Reckness yacht is sailing too, and Captain Jauncy says that our two ships are certain to meet somewhere in some port or other.

Lord Kilcarrick, also, is leaving on the English cruiser. He says he means to chuck the army and come back to New York to learn the banking business. He said to tell you that you are a good egg. He seems quite fond of you.

Now I must close because I am to take a walk with Captain Jauncy.

I will write to you from every port.

And believe me, dear Dr. Quinton, I shall always remain gratefully and devotedly your friend

CHIYU.

Quinton folded up the letter briskly and shoved it into his pocket.

Wyndward, lying deep in a leather arm-chair, was looking out of the window. There was nothing to see out there except taxicabs and slush, and dingy people under dingier umbrellas.

"So," remarked Quinton, "if you wish to write to her, she'll be aboard the *Bessarabia*."

After a silence: "What's Kilcarrick doing out here?" Wyndward asked.

"What does any subaltern do when he's tied to the tail of a military mission?"

"Perhaps he's chucking the Guards to join your Republican army," said Wyndward ironically.

"No, you sneering Sassenach, he's going to learn banking before they tax him out of his title and his cattle. And I thank God I'm a doctor, whatever else happens to me."

"What scares you, Terry, revolution?"

"Nothing scares me."

"Well, I'll tell you this; if there's a revolution I'll chuck sculpture and go back to the army. I'd not mind taking a shot at a mob."

"Sure, that's *you*! Arrah, then, there's a pill rollin' f'r to purge th' aristhocrat. 'Tis Poverty they call it, and we'll all have to swally it. Me an' you, an' Linley, too. An' there'll be no more aristhocracy; no, nor gentry; nor millionaires. We'll all be workin' men an' marry workin' girls an' raise gossoons who'll marry what they love and thumb their noses at their grandfathers!"

"No doctors or sculptors?" sneered Wyndward.

"Sure. They're workin' men too. Ye're no more than that, now, John."

The other reddened: "A dirty crack, that. But you're right."

“Listen to me, ye poor pooch! Wanst ye were a artist! Ye were so. An’ artists is workin’ men, too.

“What killed ye? The static pride and conceit in th’ bowels of ye! Wanst ye were naked-human. Ye saw, ye felt, ye suffered, hoped, ashpired, pershpired, prayed—for all I know.

“What th’ hell did ye turrn into? A shtiff-necked, harrd-b’iled machine shtuffed full o’ self-satisfaction an’ afeared to be anny wan but ye’re grandfather’s grandson.

“Church of England, creased pants an’ topper, an’ no morals. An’ turnin’ out plaster busts be the ton like anny Wop!

“Take shame on ye, John Wyndward, an’ look well to leeward, where there’s lanterns lit to no good purpose, an’ the red wreckers a-squat in the dunes!”

He was laughing when he got up to go. Wyndward was still looking out of the window.

CHAPTER X
SAFETY FIRST

One day in April Wyndward cleared out his workmen and models and opened his studio to his friends and acquaintances.

He did this once a year, from policy. And it paid. And now, particularly, with the dark shadow of depression spreading through the newspapers and even invading safe-deposit vaults, his instinct for business warned him to show his samples while the sun was still shining.

It was a cocktail party—tea if you wanted it—and an inherited armorial silver punch-bowl full of Fish-House punch. And there was Irish on the side; regimental stuff. Fusileers, but no fusil.

Youth and beauty, fashion and age thronged studio, office, workmen's shop, and study; and even invaded bedroom and dressing-room, goaded by that insatiable public curiosity which envelops all artists and artists' dens with a sort of unmoral mystery.

All of what Quinton called his bag of tricks were on exhibition—models of fountains, garden figures, tombs, Thinkers, symbolic figures, portrait busts.

Flowers and food and drink were plentiful; there was even a radio and a waxed floor in the carpenter shop where the too-heavily laden brain, sagging with a plethora of undigested art, might be revived with a little jazz.

The rowdy débutante and rather nasty flapper of the 1920's were out of fashion in the 1930's; and alarmists whispered darkly prophesying a revival of piety and pantalettes. However, if the same young persons were less blatant and promiscuous, they continued the traditions intermittently. And the decent, as before, remained decent.

All that warm, sunny April afternoon his visitors came and went or lingered to dance and recover their mindless and healthy normality.

There were one or two who got tight on Fish-House punch and sat on the bed; there were elder sisters willing to endure art for an opportunity to flirt with the desirable young man who had perpetrated it; matrons frivolously inclined, ready for anything with anybody; elderly ladies seriously conscious of the mortuary statuary and inclined to be reflective, and even timidly receptive to mental suggestion that man is mortal and maiden ladies no less so.

There were well dressed, polite young men, who ventured guarded comment— "Oh I say, that's rather a jolly tomb, Wyndward!" There were, later in the afternoon, well tailored, carefully groomed business gentlemen, chary of speech, who realized they were fast in a strange bunker where honest cursing would not help them out. There were nice, courteous old gentlemen, ruddy, kindly, foxy, who talked pleasantly about everything including art, the uncertainty of life, financial vicissitudes; and even inquired after Wyndward's father and the Carleton Club.

Well, it was out of such social stirabout that Wyndward's wooden spoon always emerged dripping to nourish him. There were the people who bought —or would some day buy—fountains and nymphs, Thinkers and tombs.

Iris Thralling, who thought she was engaged to Scott Dundas, tried to pump Wyndward concerning the whereabouts of that elusive individual. And was left at the punch-bowl; and no wiser. Not nearly as wise as Queva d'Arrios, perhaps.

Miss Charlotte Trenholme came to speak to him, stiffly, timidly: frost in her voice and joints.

"I understand," she said in a hollow voice, "that my late brother's wife was once your model. We never met her, you know. Perhaps you could tell us something about her, Mr. Wyndward."

"I can," he replied carefully. "She is a very beautiful, attractive, modest girl."

"And a model? I mean an artist's model?"

"She posed for me when she was a child, Miss Trenholme."

"Oh. We understand she also has been an actress, or chorus girl, or something. Really, Mr. Wyndward, we know nothing at all about her—"

"You know that she can be generous, I believe," said Wyndward pleasantly, and saw the dull color flood the unattractive face.

Probably he lost a family tomb by that snub. And the whole Trenholme family was aging and edging heavenward.

Then there came to him fat Phil Bailey and Narcissa Belinda Grey—the ever faithful swain and the flibbity-jibbity shepherdess who flouted him and five millions.

"Too much tomb here to suit me," said Bailey. "Under the weeping willow never made much of a hit with P.H.B."

"It will, though, if you don't stop eating," said Wyndward cruelly. And Narcissa Belinda Grey laughed.

"I'm going to White Sulphur Springs," retorted Bailey, "and George is going to operate. And I'll lay you a thousand to five hundred that I lose twenty pounds. Book that, Johnny, or shut up!"

"I'll shut up," said Wyndward.

"No, take him," insisted Narcissa. "I know him. He can't resist anything starchy and sugary—"

"I can't resist *you*," said Bailey.

"I'm not fattening, Phil, so I won't hurt you—"

"You *do* hurt me, damnably, all the time—"

The girl laughed, "You are so reticent about it that the entire United States will become acquainted with your state of mind. Let me alone, Phil. Go off and dance with some of the freshly hatched; or take another slant at a cheery tomb or two—"

But the dismissed young man headed for the table, and Narcissa shrugged and turned to Wyndward.

She looked the patrician she was. At sixteen she had been a self-possessed youngster, all stream-line and race; and Wyndward had thought that perhaps, when she grew up, he might consider her as a breeding possibility for the House of Wyndward. That was ten years ago this very April.

"Come on and personally conduct me, Jack," she said. "Behave like a Vatican guide and show me all your statoos, please."

"A little food, first?"

"No. What's in that big silver bowl?"

"Fish-House punch."

"No, thank you."

"Irish? Dublin Fusileers' own?"

"Have pity on my complexion, please. Look at this mob! Are you going to sell tombs to all of them?"

"I'd like to. I'd even provide free tombs for one or two of them."

"I hope you're jealous and mean Phil. Do you?"

"I might."

But the girl smiled, shook her charming head and walked on slowly with him from one sculptured group to another, listening in silence to his brief data concerning each.

When they came to the last exhibit: "You're as industrious as ever, aren't you?" she remarked. "Let's see who's dancing." That was her brief critique.

She merely wished to see and capriciously refused his invitation to foot it amid that mess of milling youngsters.

However, she took his arm to stroll through the plant; and presently they landed in his study, which she never before had seen.

Like a beautiful Persian cat in a strange room, Narcissa moved noiselessly about examining everything in detail that the four walls contained.

Wyndward, who liked her exceedingly, and who sometimes sentimentalized with her—and she with him—framed her supple waist with both hands when she strolled back from her investigations to confront him; and the girl put up her lips to be kissed.

"Is all quite well with you, darling?" she inquired. "You do seem a little thin and shadowy, you know."

"So they tell me. I feel all right."

"Overwork?"

"Oh Lord, no!"

"Overplay?"

"Not even that."

"In love, then?"

"Always with you!"

They kissed, tenderly.

"That damn Bailey," she remarked. "And I'm getting on, Jack; I'm twenty-six."

"You're lovelier even than at sixteen."

"Thanks. But I don't suppose you'll do anything about it."

"I might surprise you some day."

"Old age will do that before you do." She smiled humorously, adorably: "What the deuce is your objection to marriage, anyway? I'm not particularly urging you to make an honest woman of me, Jack. I merely inquire on general principles."

He said, smiling also: "All women wish to marry; few men would unless obliged to. It's horrifying but true. If, without marriage, a man could monopolize the woman with whom he believes himself temporarily or conclusively in love, he'd seldom bother clerk or clergy—"

"Old stuff," said Narcissa, coolly; "we all know that. Would you like me for your mistress?"

"Probably."

"Probably I would, too. One trouble is, it's démodé. Another objection concerns the bar-sinister."

"Change the laws, then."

"What would become of nice heraldic families—old ones like yours, Jack?"

"Let papa's son succeed," he suggested.

"Suppose papa and mama called it a day and quit. And went off and had other assorted offspring?"

"First come first served."

"You'll have to fix up the law of entail, then."

"Why not? All laws need fixing."

"But the junior kids? Who butters their muffins, and with what?"

"Oh well," he explained smilingly, "everybody says there's going to be a revolution, so there'll be nothing to entail anyway. No butter. No bread either. . . . Narcissa, you are indescribably charming."

They kissed, tenderly; then she took his arm and they sauntered back to the studio.

When the last girl had gone and the last limousine had sped glittering away, and when the caterer folk had cleared the place of the last crumb and last empty bottle, and had retired with their food and liquid perquisites, Wyndward went into the empty office and sat down in the swivel chair all alone.

There was some mail on the desk at his elbow, but he shoved it aside with that same elbow and took his face between both hands.

It had been a night like this, and about this time of year, and in this same place that Chiyu had appeared to him as a girl of sixteen after years of absence. During which, when he thought of her at all, he remembered her pleasantly as a lovely child of ten.

Now she was nearly twenty-one.

There was, now, a strained expression in his eyes and a badgered one, too, that made his mouth sullen. The reason was that he couldn't put this girl out of his thoughts. When he managed to do so, for a little while, she returned unbidden to occupy his mind, and bother it. And it concerned him, because the lapse of time neither obscured her image nor diminished the frequency of her visits. And this thing had been going on since the morning that she had been summoned to the hospital and a moribund spouse.

It was a curious thing, he thought, that such a man as he could not be autocrat of his own mind; keep out of it what he chose to keep out; shape his thoughts unfettered.

Instead of that he was perpetually trying to evade and avoid this persistent phantom who was constantly returning uninvited to occupy the silent chambers of his brain—her loveliness and youth undimmed, the poignant memory of her scented mouth and body more exquisite and fresh with every ghostly visitation.

Probably, had she remained in New York, he would have fallen in love with her, in a way. Rather passionately, in a way. But not recklessly. Like some adolescent calf. One doesn't become reckless to the point of legal commitment with even the loveliest of Chiyu Clydes. Unless one is a predestined jackass. . . . What fool was it who made Lady Hamilton out of a kitchen maid? Lord Nelson knew better. And loved her better, too. . . . Nelson and Brontë. And Emma Lyon.

He leaned his head wearily on one lank hand. He was tired. Not that the day's festivities had fatigued him. He was tired in his mind. The mind which once had been his to order; and into which the ghost of this girl was always drifting, now.

Recently he had written to her, addressing her on board the S.S. *Bessarabia*, now cruising in Far Eastern waters. His letter hadn't had time to reach her. . . . Well, he had been damned careful of what he said. . . . Not that Chiyu was that sort. . . . But *noblesse* was not under obligation in the House

of Clyde. . . . And it was not always among the *vraie noblesse*. Witness a recent court-room scene in London. . . . However, he wished now that he had written less cautiously. A girl who had returned those earrings to the Trenholmes was not likely to misuse confidence.

He wished he had been less careful. Franker. Even affectionate. God knows he felt affectionate enough when he wrote her. Rather hotly so. He recollected what sort of letter he had written, and it seemed stilted to him, now. Even fishy. . . .

And what the hell was that dapper little ass Captain Jauncy doing out there in the Orient—skipping perpetually around Chiyu, dancing at her heels!

Quinton had read him a letter from Revell Reckness—a cynical and rather merciless account of the doings aboard the Reckness yacht, *Niobrara*:

> Skippy's gone ga-ga. [Captain Jauncy's Christian name was Skipton.] The *Bessarabia* came barging into port crammed with tourists and your pretty friend, Chiyu. Very fetching youngster, no doubt, but is acting fatally on Skippy.
>
> Can you fancy Skippy the jaunty, the waxed and immaculate, a judge at the bench show for débutantes since before the Christian era, mentor of the elect, consoler of dowagers, infatuated with your ex-model and insisting upon the Trenholme aspect of the young lady?
>
> And I'll tell you what he's done. You remember the Sedley-Biltongs—you know?—busted for years but clinging on; and the Missus guaranteeing an entrée in New York social sanctums, to a limited number of bi—forgive my Westminster Kennel language! —I mean, to a limited number of beauties, at ten thousand dollars per beaut?
>
> Well, Ma and Pa and daughter Sedley-Biltong were aboard the *Bessarabia*. And what the hell does Skippy do? He engages the said Sedleys, and Chiyu, to quit the excursion steamer cold, and come aboard the *Niobrara*, promising to shoot them back into the *Bessarabia* again at Singapore!
>
> And did I stand for it? I did. Skippy could be nasty to me if he chose.

So here we are bouncing about the seven seas with all hands soused except Chiyu and the S-B's; and Skippy who chases poor little Chiyu from dawn to dewdrop time.

What that old Miss Nancy wants of her, nobody knows. We all tried it on her—George Bullup, Sedley-Biltong, and I; and fanned three times and out.

I believe the girl has had a sort of scared affair with that young lad Kilcarrick, for he keeps on the radio rather frantically, and his cruiser went through the canal behind us.

Anyway there's mischief in her—I mean in Chiyu—though she's a disarming kid. But it's very evident she isn't marking herself down or decorating any fire sale. And I honestly believe she'll land something financially plump and legal.

Well, by-by; ropes, spars, and rigging require constant splicing—including the main-brace, and I've got to help!

Yours full of Bombo,
REVELL.

That was the letter which Quinton read to him.

"Why the devil did you bother to read it?" Wyndward had inquired.

"I thought," Quinton had replied, "that you were interested in Chiyu. I won't read you any more."

"Oh it's all right to read them," Wyndward had muttered.

And it was following that—the same evening—that he had written to Chiyu aboard the *Bessarabia*, which she should have rejoined by the time the ship spoke Aden.

He leaned more heavily on his hand. He was curiously tired, restless, depressed. Sullen when he thought of the *Niobrara*, the tub-shaped Mrs. Sedley-Biltong; of her old reprobate husband leering at Chiyu; of George Bullup, professional good fellow, blond, wiry hair on end, badgering the girl; of Revell Reckness, disillusioned, graceful, and dangerous, appraising her through oriental-lidded eyes.

As for Captain Jauncy, he couldn't make out that at all. Jauncy was the kind of silvery-headed, black eyebrowed, jaunty dancing master who never skipped about for anybody who was not born of the elect. What the devil was he skipping for now?

Well—hell, then. He'd buck up and lock up and go home. No, he wouldn't. . . .

He scowled at the stack of letters, tipped them over with a slight movement of his elbow, glanced at them sideways.

The writing on one was long, slanting, and fashionable; and the envelope bore Philippine stamps and was engraved in the corner with crossed flags and the name of a ship—the *Bessarabia*.

He was aware that the blood had settled hotly in his face and that his fingers trembled a little as he opened the envelope:

DEAR MR. WYNDWARD,

Need I explain why? Two words will do: *Safety first!*

I fled.

It cost me something. You'd know what. And after all I am not very far away; only as far as Java. That isn't far enough. But I'll never get far enough from what I want, and am afraid of. Not much afraid. Not enough.

I'll never entirely escape what I ran from. You know that, so I might as well admit it.

I've been thinking of you to-day. It's not unusual for me.

I hope you'll go up to Riverside and look at our memorial. Go often; it's beautiful. Please go.

Everything I decline to say in this letter you already are aware of. So

Good-by

CHIYU.

PART II

WHAT EYES CONCEALED

CHAPTER XI

ON ACCOUNT OF A COUNT

John Wyndward's efficient secretary, Betty Kenner, was now thirty. She always had been good looking; she was even more attractive now. Her brother, a year or so older, shared the family's good looks.

Their social position was perfectly good; the estate of the late Maitland Kenner provided them sufficient income. But they belonged to an increasing number of well-bred, well-to-do young people who had been fed up on a generation of idlers and wasters, and who preferred to work.

For ten years, now, Betty Kenner had been secretary to John Wyndward. Her brother Kenelm edited *The Red Republic* which had always lost money and was kept alive, witty, and mildly virulent by its editor, whose private income took care of a yearly deficit and afforded him the time of his young life.

He hit everything he didn't like: President, Congress, Hollywood, Prohibition, Tammany Hall and its affiliated Republican organization, the selfish East, the sullen West, the bigoted South, the Soviet; and all American universities, colleges, schools, and religious sects.

His remedy: Abolish everything; then mind your own business twenty-four hours a day.

And he had his hands full.

"I'm red as hell in my own way," he explained cheerfully to Wyndward. "When I get mad I *see* red. And then we go to press."

"You believe in mob rule, don't you?" murmured Wyndward, politely bored.

"Mobs don't rule. Their dictators do."

"I suppose you'd like to be one," remarked Wyndward, washing clay from his hands and drying them with a fresh office towel.

"Why don't you use your own towels?" suggested Betty Kenner. "You confuse my laundry lists."

It was after hours, and she and Wyndward had resumed social relations.

Kenelm said: "Certainly I'd like to be dictator."

"That wouldn't be minding your own business," remonstrated his sister.

"I'd make everybody's business my business. Then I'd make 'em mind only their own. And," he added, "what America has lost in me as a universal fixer is nobody's business."

"You'd sweep out the half-witted Congress first, I suppose."

"No; the incredible White House occupant would go first."

"And then you'd move in yourself?"

"Instantly."

"And then?"

"Then I'd order a murderous reduction."

"Of expenses?"

"Of population. I'd cut our useless population from a hundred and twenty million morons to five millions."

"Wholesale assassination?"

"I'd rub them out."

"What have all those poor people done to you, Kenelm?" demanded his sister, yawning.

"What have they done to *themselves*! That is the terrifying question. And that would be the test. God made their eyes. What have they made out of their mouths and expressions? What are the shapes of their heads? What *are* they?"

"John's been stuffing you," remarked his sister.

"What the eyes conceal," he continued, not noticing her, "the silent mouth reveals. We all have the making of our own mouths and facial expressions. When I become dictator, everybody not up to sample will have to go."

"Where?" inquired Betty listlessly.

"Wherever people go. This would be a wonderful world if New York had only a hundred thousand inhabitants; if the continent contained only a million or two. In a hundred and fifty years we'd have our forests back, fresh air, pure waters, prairies swarming with buffalo and wild horses and flowers; no pulp periodicals, no book of the month, scarcely a newspaper; no taxes; few automobiles, no Radio Cities, no portrait busts—"

Wyndward, who had been shaking up a cocktail, handed him one.

The dictator accepted gratefully what his sister had declined.

"Would you entertain racial prejudices, Kenelm?" inquired Wyndward.

"None. I'd keep Italians and do away with wops; cherish Jews and kill kikes; remove niggers and retain Negroes—all depending upon the shapes of their heads and the testimony of their faces. . . . Another cocktail if you please, dear friend—"

"How about the shape of my noddle? Are you expecting to knock me in the head some day?"

"Your bean is okay. Better watch your mouth."

"What's the matter with it?"

"Tendency to sulk. Growing a bit grouchy. I don't wonder—with all those marble slabs for wealthy stiffs. Why live off stiffs?"

And he chanted in a whining voice an imbecile sectarian hymn:

"Why clasp woe's hands so tightly?
Why sigh o'er blossoms dead?
Why not get gay and sprightly
And turn to jazz instead?— Lightly-lightly-lightly—"

Betty laughed.

"You don't like to hear it, John," he added, "but you've never done anything since the Memorial. I suppose you know that."

"What in hell do you expect?"

"I never expect."

Betty said: "You are as mean as a mink. Punch his face, John."

"Not that grinning gargoyle. But I can continue to poison him—" pouring out another cocktail.

"By the way," remarked Kenelm, "the *Niobrara* anchored off 110th Street this morning. I saw George Bullup at the club."

"The Buccaneers?"

"The same. I breakfasted on one tomato juice cocktail with him. We divided it. They had a swell cruise; they're back to sober up.

"And here's some Paris gossip; you remember that pretty Chiyu? George says she's going to marry a French count! A genuine but rather nasty one."

After a silence: "What French count?" asked Wyndward. Betty who had been looking at him, looked away.

Her brother said: "John, don't you remember that fellow with whom old Mrs. Grandcourt became infatuated?"

"No."

"Yes, you do. She lifted him out of Renard-Schwartz—the fancy fur importers, and fell for him all there was? And left him her money? And he became a kept count; and you bet she kept count on him: Charles d'Oran? Crazy Charlie?—that mean-faced bird one saw hopping about town taking care of the Grandcourt when they were going places and she got soused?"

"Yes, I recollect," said Wyndward stonily.

"He's got an awful cousin, too; the Prince de la Roquettaire, perpetually bankrupt. And Crazy Charlie and Roquettaire are both quarreling over Chiyu. Ugly about it. Threatening duels and things!"

Wyndward made no comment.

"The racy part of it," continued Kenelm, "is that old Jauncy appears to be broken-hearted. George says he wanted to marry her. Skippy! And Chiyu! Can you see it? He's gone ga-ga all right."

Betty had risen and was pulling on her hat. "Are you two gabbling gossips coming?" she inquired.

Her brother picked up his hat and stick and joined her at the street door; Wyndward said carelessly: "I'll stop here a bit longer," and muttered something about looking through his mail.

When the Kenners had disappeared, he leaned forward resting his head on his hands and covered both eyes with rigid fingers.

What Kenelm Kenner had said about Jauncy seemed incredible enough. That old dancing beau! Inspector of débutantes. Arbiter in the solemn 80's of who was and who wasn't. Wanting to marry Chiyu? Well, he always had been as complete an ass as the other vulgarian who invented New York society and peeped in at Queen Victoria's kitchen.

To British and Continentals American social distinctions always had been tiresomely negligible. Boston Brahmin, New York Knickerbocker, Philadelphia blue-blood, Southern cavaliers, and assorted Western aristocrats were, in the British brain, lumped together with pork-packer, shopkeeper, and Yankee "magnates" of one species or another.

All looked alike as Chinamen to exotic Aristocracy. Their daughters' wealth only differentiated them from a general peasantry.

Wyndward poured out a watery dividend from the cocktail shaker; threw it, untested, into the fireplace; lighted a cigarette; flung it aside.

Well, why shouldn't Jauncy marry a girl like Chiyu? All Americans, in a last analysis, were made of the same raw material; the only difference seemed to be in the gilding.

He got up and poured himself some Fusileers Irish. He seemed to need it, savagely.

It was agreeable whisky, but his gloomy face darkened to a scowl.

Captain Jauncy was one thing and Charles d'Oran was another. Crazy Charlie! That canaille?

After Magnelius Grandcourt had died of overeating, his large, voluptuous, yellow-haired young wife used to get violently drunk in their beautiful limestone palace and fall down the grand staircase. Once she broke one of her shapely legs doing it; and Crazy Charlie took her to the Nazarene Hospital in a taxi.

And one day, before that, being sober and bored, she drifted into Renard-Schwartz and handed herself a thirty-thousand-dollar sable coat and another fifty-thousand-dollar one of chinchilla. And there, for the first time, beheld Charles d'Oran who waited on her.

It didn't take long. The lady took to him; took him; kept him; cursed, quarreled, fought with him all over that lovely palace of gray limestone. And eventually died of something gruesome; and left d'Oran eighteen millions.

Wyndward began to remember him, photographically, now; a tall, swarthy fellow with Vandyke beard, shoe-brush eyebrows, mean lips, a meaner mouth; and the hangdog presence of a sullen and furtive lackey. Yet he was, nevertheless, a real Count. Not Napoleonic either.

It was rather ghastly to learn that this man had been quarreling over Chiyu with his dingy, indigent cousin, the notorious Prince de la Roquettaire.

To think that Chiyu. . . .

But thinking was upsetting Wyndward. He lifted a strained and colorless face from between clenched fists and stared about him as though expecting to see a ghost.

There were ghosts enough haunting his mind and threatening to destroy its complacent equilibrium—charming and changing phantoms of this same young girl in all her lovely phases and in every colorful incarnation. First as a blond and naked child throwing roses at him; or airily seated at table without a rag on; exquisite and unembarrassed. Then the next phase—a shy, a slender aspirant for the Follies. And then that enchanting young thing who had sought him on her wedding night. . . .

Wasn't there anybody anywhere to tell her that, though even the Yankee world might salute her as Comtesse d'Oran, it would salute ironically and with its tongue in its cheek!

He wandered into the Buccaneers Club late that evening and discovered George Bullup paying Revell Reckness four hundred and thirty-five dollars for backgammon debts.

"Hello, John," said Reckness cheerily, "want to take me on?"

"No, I don't."

"Give you a dollar every time you hit me," insisted Reekness, rattling the dice in the cup.

"No, thanks," repeated Wyndward and sat down. "Is Skippy back?" he asked carelessly.

"No," replied Bullup, "he remained in Paris. Poor old Skippy."

"Poor old cuckoo," added Reckness, throwing trial dice noisily.

Bullup said: "I suppose you heard that he asked Chiyu to marry him."

"When?" demanded Wyndward.

"Oh about a month ago. When the *Niobrara* docked at Dieppe, and we all ran up to shake hands with Paris. And there was the tourist bunch from the *Bessarabia*; and the Sedley-Biltongs with poor little Chiyu in tow."

"Haven't you heard," yawned Reckness, "that they introduced d'Oran to that child? Business is business with the Biltongs."

Wyndward reddened.

"Rather raw," remarked George Bullup. "'S'all right to be a female social introducer at ten thousand dollars per introduce; but only a born Madame would take d'Oran's money."

"You mean he paid Mrs. Sedley-Biltong to introduce him to Chiyu?" demanded Wyndward.

"Or Chiyu paid her. Sure. It's done in England, too; Lady This-and-That has Miss Pit-a-pat for sale with twenty thousand dollars a year and no anatomical questions asked."

Reckness said: "Warrie Trenholme didn't leave Chiyu much. Mrs. Sedley-Biltong probably took a flyer and d'Oran fell for it. She wouldn't touch d'Oran for less than fifty thousand dollars down, and fifty thousand dollars contingency. She's done a clever business. Old Jauncy nearly fainted when he heard of it."

Bullup laughed: "Believe it or not, John, but Skippy had concluded to marry Chiyu and put her over in New York. Poor old Skippy! When he told us so his voice cracked. He said he could put over any Trenholme. He said she was not only young and morally pure, but both clever and kind. He said he had arrived at an age where he needed kindness. That he could give her a position, and money to maintain it when he stepped out. Poor old egg!

"Revell and I fixed him all up the evening he proposed to Chiyu," continued Bullup grinning his blond grin. "I tied his dinky tie. Revell shook him together, dusted him off, and made him gargle Listerine. Every little while Revell and I had to step into the next room and laugh—"

"She was with the Biltong outfit at the Hôtel d'Athos," explained Reckness. "Skippy cantered over there like a rickety old selling-plater all het up—"

"And she turned him down!" added George Bullup; and lay back in his stuffed chair, roaring with laughter.

"Skippy," continued Reckness, "came rocking and tottering into our sitting-room about two hours later—a forlorn, chalky-faced, collapsed old manikin—"

"—And do you know what that girl said to him when she let him down?" cried Bullup hilariously. "He was crying when he told us. She said: 'Thank you, Captain Jauncy, but I couldn't do that to you.'

"'My God,' says he, 'I'm asking for it!'—or words to that effect.

"'No,' says Chiyu, 'I'm in love with a man I can't marry, so I'm going to marry to get on in the world. But I won't make a convenience of you.' Or words similar and full of sobs. They sure spilled it pretty acting up noble and

magnanimous—anyway that's what we gather from poor old Skippy. I'm still all sore with laughing—"

"You mean she actually is engaged to marry d'Oran?" demanded Wyndward harshly.

"Don't you ever read the evening papers?" inquired Reekness, languidly throwing his dice.

"I read Wall Street closing. Why?"

"Chiyu married Crazy Charlie this morning. It's in to-night's papers."

Bullup added: "He had to marry her to get her. That's some satisfaction, anyway. Revell and I tried to make her, but I guess she's straight."

Wyndward's eyes were murderous. He seemed to realize it and looked away. Bullup winked at Reckness. The latter looked curiously at the man by the window.

After a while Wyndward got up in silence and started for the reading-room where the evening newspapers were laid out. Here, slumped deep in a cane arm-chair, he read the brief notice of the marriage in Paris of an American widow, Mrs. Trenholme, with the Comte d'Oran, wealthy scion of an ancient royalist family of the Côte d'Or. The Count—the notice went on—was devoted to racing, and was well known in New York society. He and the Countess were planning to acquire a residence in New York, assemble a racing stable and show their colors at Belmont and Saratoga.

All the other morning and evening papers carried the same dispatch.

When he had read carefully, painfully, every paper, and had found that they all printed precisely the same news, he sagged deeper in his chair, trying to adjust himself to what had happened.

It was no good pretending that it didn't matter. It was saddening him immeasurably. Or disgusting him; or angering him. He didn't know which. But he felt the repercussion of the shock in depths unsuspected, unexplored, where dwell *perdu* the profounder passions, spiritual and profane.

These, now, were awake and stirring in their viewless depths. Fundamental passions of which he never before had been aware. Even now he did not suspect their power.

What he was aware of was the amazing misery in his mind and the heavily beating anger and anguish in his breast.

He had been so entirely unprepared. He had written her four letters; had three from her. And a fourth about due. . . .

In his last three letters he had made it plain that he was passionately attached to her.

Her replies excited him with their shy, yet unguarded awareness.

It had rested perilously that way between them until this damnable interruption—his avowal of passion, her diffident yet clear response admitting all—leaving all in delicate suspense—and whither it all had been leading he had not asked himself. Nor had this young girl asked him. Already the enchanting phantom of this girl was growing like a vine, enveloping him with virile and caressing tendrils. Holding him to her memory more exquisitely and fragrantly every day.

It was, perhaps, the artist in him, clothing thought magnificently, and transfiguring the reasonable and real into the impossible and ideal. It is the way the creative mind falls in love.

But it was when Wyndward went home that the whole thing surged up, overwhelmed, engulfed him.

For there was a European mail on his table and a letter from Chiyu:

> My dear,
>
> I am going to marry. It is a matter of insurance. A policy I take out to protect myself against myself. Against what so charmingly threatens me. Against what I might so easily and passionately become.
>
> But I know in my soul that though my heart would welcome and endure so happy a fate, my mind and spirit could not tolerate it.
>
> Because I have, from childhood, been acquainted with such a situation and have had every opportunity to see and watch it in its every form and phase.
>
> Were I more sensual and less sensitive; more ignorant and less experienced, the unknown perils of it all would charm me. Because I am, by nature, inclined to live dangerously.
>
> So it is neither fear, nor an unwillingness to face what would lower me, that has decided me; it is my sheer inability to endure

what eventually would come: our certain parting.

From the brief experience I have had with you in that regard I have learned, vaguely, what so intimate a final separation might be like.

You see I know you, a little; and I know myself most terribly.

This letter will hurt you. I don't really know how much. But afterward you will be more than contented to have escaped. Because I am one of those luckless girls who remain unchangeable all their life. And that exasperates most men, married or unmarried.

So this is what I have to say to you. You already know all that I have left unsaid. And I never shall forget one single word that you have said to me.

Good-by.

CHIYU.

P.S. I forgot to say that I am to be married to a friend of Mrs. Sedley-Biltong, a Count d'Oran.

CHAPTER XII

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wyndward slept poorly. When he awoke and had shaved, bathed, and dressed, Hanley brought coffee and the morning paper.

There it was!—not in the dignified columns devoted to fashionable weddings, engagements and other social gyrations of the elect, but splashed all over the front page in flamboyant type:

DUEL FOLLOWS WEDDING OF MRS. TRENHOLME AND COUNT D'ORAN!

COUNT TERRIBLY WOUNDED BY COUSIN, PRINCE DE LA ROQUETTAIRE

Slapped in the Face after the Ceremony

Fierce Duel Follows the Same Afternoon

Followed the locality and date, and the Associated Press dispatch:

> A duel was fought yesterday afternoon in a *carrefour* of the *chasse* surrounding the Château d'Oran, between Count Charles d'Oran and his cousin, Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire, immediately following the marriage of the Count to Mrs. Trenholme, of New York.
>
> There seems to have been bad blood between the two cousins who, it is said, have quarreled frequently over financial matters. They were also, it appears, rivals for the hand of Mrs. Trenholme, a young widow who was traveling in France with Mr. and Mrs. Sedley-Biltong, well known to New York society.
>
> Following the civil ceremony on Wednesday last, there was a violent scene between Count Charles and Prince Amadeo in which the latter publicly reproached his cousin with misappropriating money and also with supplanting him as a suitor for the hand of Mrs. Trenholme by scandalous misrepresentations of his character.

This painful scene took place in the office of the local mayor, but was apparently adjusted before blows followed insult.

The religious ceremony was performed in the chapel of the Hôtel d'Oran. The Count and Countess had planned to motor to Paris, catch the boat-train there and sail for New York on the *Saturnia*.

What then happened was swift and tragic. The young Countess had retired to change to a traveling gown; the Count, on his way to his own quarters, encountered his cousin who struck him a terrific blow in the face and spat on him.

Witnesses report that the two then clinched and rolled all over the ancestral hall, fighting, biting, cursing until pulled apart and overpowered by friends.

A challenge, of course, became inevitable. There was scarcely time for a duel before the proposed motor trip to Paris, but both men were now beside themselves with rage, demanding instant satisfaction; and there were plenty of seconds to be had among the wedding guests and doctors, too, to regularize the affair.

Half an hour later they were at each other with tigerish ferocity, fighting with rapiers in a grassy glade surrounded by the forested game preserve of the Count d'Oran.

Witnesses say that their swordsmanship left much to be desired, but that the fury of the onset amply compensated for what otherwise had been a tiresome spectacle.

Wounded repeatedly, Prince Amadeo finally hurled himself upon the infuriated Count, delivering a terrible thrust in the groin where his sword-blade snapped off.

Foul or fair, the business ended then. The Prince left hastily with his seconds; the Count was carried to the Château d'Oran where his young Countess sat waiting for him in an automobile laden with steamer baggage.

An emergency operation was immediately performed, and specialists have been summoned from Paris. The nature of the injury provokes gravest doubts concerning the recovery of Count d'Oran.

Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire has disappeared.

Wyndward went to the studio, arriving late. His workmen thought he was ill, and they whispered together about his ghastly appearance.

He went mechanically about the work in hand; Rocco and Angelo consulted him; Miss Kenner gave him his mail, not looking at him, pretending to be busy with the pay-roll.

He was sitting in his study about five o'clock in the afternoon, doing nothing, when Angelo brought him an evening paper. The good little Italian was greatly excited over the magnificent fortunes and misfortunes of their pretty little Chiyu of so long ago.

Wyndward thanked him and forced himself to read what was printed there—all about who Chiyu was—a beautiful actress who had married the late Warren Trenholme, and who, as a fascinating widow, had been received into the most brilliant and aristocratic society of European capitals, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Sedley-Biltong of New York. . . .

> Married at three o'clock to the wealthy Count Charles d'Oran, and on the verge of widowhood again within the selfsame hour, she was too completely crushed to see reporters and remained in grief-stricken seclusion with Mrs. Sedley-Biltong, awaiting the verdict of physicians from Paris who now had the desperate situation on their hands.
>
> The nature of the wound rendered the affair tragic beyond description; and it was unlikely that the Count could recover if an operation were considered inevitable.
>
> The Prince de la Roquettaire had disappeared completely and was, no doubt, already beyond French frontiers. Whether or not extradition would be possible under the circumstances is disputed.
>
> If the Count d'Oran dies, his young widow will inherit a fortune.
>
> Mrs. Trenholme's father, the French newspapers report, was an American officer. His rank coincided with the rank in the French army of "Chef de Bataillon." The Countess d'Oran was a Miss Clyde. She was born in New York and educated in the convents of the Carthusian Sisters in New York and Baltimore. Beautiful, spirited, cultivated, and talented, she chose the drama as her vocation in life, appearing with success under the management of her late husband, Warren Trenholme.

After a brief but brilliant professional career she married Mr. Trenholme whose unfortunate death is an irreparable loss to America drama.

A reporter from the *Evening Observer* called upon Mr., Mrs. and Miss Charlotte Trenholme of the exclusive Washington Square area, but was refused admittance to that Knickerbocker sanctum.

Late reports through the Associated Press promise little or no hope that Count d'Oran may recover, although an operation has been performed and the Count is still alive.

In the Buccaneers Club that evening, George Bullup dining with Revell Reckness, read aloud from the evening paper and laughed so violently that he couldn't eat his dinner.

"Oh Lord," he said, "Chiyu and the drama! Do you recollect her in the White Kitten number?

'Play that I'm your Kitty-cat;
Pet me pretty—just like that!

'Kindly lift and gently lug me
In your arms and softly hug me
Till I purr and blink at you
Feeling warm and good all through!

'Come and pet your Kitty-cat
Softly, gently, just like that!'

"Don't you remember Chiyu in the Kitten ballet, and that God-awful song she used to pipe?"

"Sure I do," said Reckness, sorting out oyster-crabs from the white bait. "And then that pie-faced comedian would grab her, and she'd spit and scratch and run upstage on all fours—"

And they laughed and laughed until their Chablis slopped the cloth.

"Oh *la la, quelle Comtesse*!" gasped Bullup.

"*Quel rasta quouère de Comte!*" added Reckness, "*et quelle chance pour elle!*"

"By God," said Bullup, "if he hops it, I'm damned if I don't marry her myself."

"Try to do it," said Reckness.

"You mean you'd try to make her legally?"

"Eighteen millions? Perhaps."

"I'll lay you five grand I beat you to it!"

Reckness nodded, fished a little gold-cased memorandum pad out of his waistcoat pocket and noted the bet.

"The poor guy isn't dead yet," he remarked. "I'll lay you three to one he hops."

Bullup and he noted the wagers. "If neither of us make her the first bet is out," he explained.

"Right. But believe it or not, the Sedley-Biltong has put her on the map. And I don't mind prophesying that there's many a good guy in town to-night who wouldn't mind dropping his shoes outside her door and ringing room-service for another pillow. I wish I'd had the guts to do it before Crazy Charlie did. I'll hand that much to him."

"You're a common little beast," said Reckness affectionately, "aren't you, George; vulgar, vile, vainglorious, and virulent—"

"*And* wigorous," added Bullup brightly; "all wim and wigor and—well, try to get her away from me!"

"Sez you! And that poor, mutilated devil fighting death for her over there—"

"I'm damned if I'd fight, under the circumstances," retorted Bullup. "And that reminds me, Queva d'Arrios and some other jane wants us to come over after the show and join in prayer—"

CHAPTER XIII
DEPRESSION

Dr. Terence Quinton who had been attending a medical convention in Indianapolis, encountered Wyndward in the Patroons Club.

"Hello; you look sick. What's happened, John?" he inquired blandly, dropping onto a chair in the window corner.

"Nothing," replied Wyndward; "what the hell's the matter with you, you damned Irishman?"

Quinton patted him on the shoulder: "There, there," he murmured maliciously, "ickle toofies hurt when baby's teething. Get a morning paper and bite on it, Johnny."

Wyndward, slumped as usual in an arm-chair, fished out his watch and stared at it.

"Well," he said, "I'll be going back to that cursed studio, I suppose."

"Why cursed, when it's crammed full of your life's masterpieces—"

Wyndward colored faintly but seemed too spiritless to retort.

"—Full of Barnyard Thinkers and garden Dianas à la Winship," added Quinton.

"I wish," said Wyndward, "I were out of it and selling neckties or bonds."

"Nobody's buying any, John."

"I know it. So quit smearing me."

"Cankers require caustic," remarked Quinton, lighting a cigarette and pouring out his coffee.

"Mine's a cancer."

Quinton's clear, clever eyes flickered toward the younger man an instant.

"Oh yeah? Well, you know, we cure 'em now."

"Not my kind."

"How do you know? Are you a Doc?"

Wyndward stared out of the window. Sunshine flooded Fifth Avenue which was choked with glittering automobiles. But, although the sidewalks,

also, were flooded with the human tide in perpetual northward and southward surge, there lingered only a rusty backwash of window shoppers, and the goods displayed seemed tarnished.

"Nobody's buying anything," remarked Wyndward. "We'll all be in the bread line by next year."

"I thought your motto was:

"I sell
Like hell—"

"So I did. But I can see the end. It's here, now."

"Pious people will continue to hop heavenward, John—"

"Tombless. They've countermanded the Stanley Charteris mausoleum. It's out. So is that goddam Thinker for old Simon Waulstein. And the Clippertons have postponed that nymph and satyr mess for their Long Island garden. And Mrs. Van Curler doesn't want the portrait bust of old Dirck."

"All the same," rejoined Quinton, "you should have cleaned up an agreeable little competence by this time—"

"I did clean it up."

Quinton glanced at him inquiringly.

"You read the newspapers, don't you?" said Wyndward carelessly, still staring out of the sunny window.

"I'll bite. Yes, I read the newspapers."

"That competence you have just mentioned is mostly in Colonial Products, Esperance Light and Power, and Empire Waterways."

After a moment Quinton said: "Colonial Products and Empire Waterways have passed their dividends, haven't they?"

"They have. And Esperance Light and Power is cutting theirs to a quarter."

"Well," said Quinton, "you've always got your business—"

"I've just enumerated for you the commissions that have been canceled. And there's no other business in the office."

Quinton gave him an astonished look over his poised coffee cup.

"Do you need money?" he asked bluntly.

"No."

"How about your overhead?"

"I'm giving up my penthouse and car."

"Where are you going to live, John?"

"I've a bedroom and study at the studio, you know."

"Rather tight quarters for a gay young blade," said Quinton.

"They're all right. I'm letting Hanley and the servants go. And the chauffeur. And the entire studio force."

"Miss Kenner, too?"

"Yes, Betty."

"Isn't this all rather sudden, John?

"Very. But my overhead always has been heavy, and I've lived up to my income. And almost all I have left are bonds and blocks of stock for which there is no market at present. But I have, also, some Government bonds; and on the interest from these I've got to live until I have more work."

"Is that what makes you look so thin and white and all bunged up, John?"

Wyndward turned from the window and looked him squarely in the eye:

"Do I look like a last year's shad?"

"You do."

"Well, I'm sick of everything."

"Nobody," remarked Quinton, "is feeling any too well in these times."

"Oh, it's not the times, particularly," said the other. "I'm thirty-three years old, Terry, and my best work—my only really decent work—is ten years behind me. . . . I was only nineteen when I got the job; only in the twenties when I finished it. And I've never done that sort of thing since."

"You've done a lot of clever work—"

"So have a million industrious bricklayers. They knew how. So did I. . . . Well, it's not pleasant to brood over."

Quinton said cautiously: "How do you feel about a comeback?"

"I don't know. I've begun to grope about a bit, blindly. . . . I don't know, Terry."

"Sometimes," ventured Quinton, "a jolt will do the trick for a fellow. Bounce him out of himself, you know."

Wyndward's tired eyes reverted to the window.

"By the way," said Quinton, "what do you think of our little Chiyu?"

He watched the slow red color settling under Wyndward's cheek-bones.

"Some headliner, isn't she?" continued Quinton. "I see by this morning's paper that d'Oran is holding his own, so far."

Wyndward remained silent.

"Marrying Chiyu," said Quinton, "may become an unpopular sport. One's dead of it and th' other's dying; and neither have been her husband."

The heavy color deepened in Wyndward's profile, invading his neck and hair.

"What romance," murmured Quinton smilingly—"from gutter to coronet! From misery to millions! It's funny the tabloids are not onto her history. You know, John, if you're ever busted, you can sell that story. Show 'em Chiyu on the horse up on Riverside Drive. Explain to them the difference between a 'Battalion Chief' and a 'Chef de Bataillon.' There's a wad of money in it, John."

Wyndward said in an icy voice: "Did you know she was going to do this?"

"Marry d'Oran? I did. She wrote to me that she was going to."

Wyndward swung around on him: "And you let her do it?"

"Why not?"

"That beastly—"

"Wait a moment. He isn't beastly, you know."

"Didn't Mrs. Magnelius Grandcourt fish him out from behind the counter at some fashionable furrier's—"

"Renard-Schwartz? She did. They were genuinely in love. She treated him like a dog which was her way of showing it. Her species show it that way."

“The lady kept him in cigarette money, I understand,” sneered Wyndward.

“He earned it. She wouldn’t marry him. A born tart. Insanely jealous and wouldn’t let him remain in business. Drank like a fish, cursed him, beat him up and threw fits. And he gathered her up, soothed her, put her to bed, nursed her through screaming delirium, remained patient and kind and devoted during dreadful months when she was slowly dying of something rather horrible that smelled badly.”

“Waiting for her money?” said Wyndward.

“No. She gave him a million outright the morning after the beginning. He could have checked out any day. Some scram, some don’t. He stuck it.”

“How do you happen to know all this?”

“I was her physician.”

Wyndward looked at him out of haunted eyes:

“Well, beside being grateful, and patient with a fashionable prostitute, what else is he?”

“He’s decent enough to ask Chiyu to marry him.”

The sluggish flush in Wyndward’s face deepened: “You believe that can compensate Chiyu?”

“That and his money. He’d make her a devoted husband if he lives.”

“What kind of hell would that be if she doesn’t love him?”

“She doesn’t. And it wasn’t entirely his money, either.”

“What, then?”

Quinton smoked his cigarette reflectively, screwing up his clever eyes; then he dropped the cigarette butt, sizzling, into his coffee cup and set it aside.

“I’ll tell you in confidence,” he said. “Chiyu is in love with a man who isn’t man enough to marry her. She wasn’t afraid of being his mistress; but she was unable to endure the separation which, in such alliances, inevitably ensues.

“It’s purely a matter of individual idiosyncrasy, you see: Some take scarlet fever lightly, and quickly recover; some are deafened, blinded, or otherwise mutilated by it; some die of it.

"In the spirited, the spirit never dies; but it may linger on, a hopeless cripple. With the mind it is a more serious matter. A healthy mind knows what will wreck it. And will try to avoid it.

"I think something of this philosophy influenced our little Chiyu to marry Warrie Trenholme. And to marry d'Oran. . . . After all there is much to get out of a life that has to be lived—with love or without it. . . . And no doubt she believed that d'Oran would be kind."

After a few moments Wyndward said heavily: "You approve, then?"

"Well, it's a half-loaf, at best. . . . You remember my cousin, Kilcarrick?"

"Yes."

"Well, there's another one."

"You mean he asked Chiyu to marry him?"

"He wrote me that he was trying to reconcile his family to the idea. Of course they raised hell. But I believe he'd have asked her if d'Oran hadn't forestalled him. . . . Chiyu liked Linley. But she wrote to me very frankly that he was too young and downy to fall in love with. It was just a joke. The child never dreamed that he would ask that of her. . . . Well, she may take him yet. Who knows?"

"You think d'Oran will die?" demanded Wyndward.

"Probably, if de la Roquettaire's sword was dirty. They were a long time arriving from Paris with their flushing solutions. Even Carrel thought twelve hours was too long. I saw a lot of that in France. Too much to be optimistic. Still, one never can tell."

After a little while Wyndward got up, listlessly, saying something about the studio.

Quinton, being still on his vacation, went off toward the billiard tables.

It was the end of September before Quinton saw Wyndward again; and then he had to seek him out.

He discovered him in his studio seated near a small, unfinished group in wax on a revolving table. Wyndward was turning over the pages of a steamship sailing schedule when Quinton opened the office door and walked in; and his face looked shadowy and sunken when he looked up in the fading light.

"Hey," said Quinton, "this is rather a nice thing you're doing, John!"—twirling the table to obtain views fore and aft.

"You like it?" asked Wyndward wearily.

"I do. It's swell. What do you call it?"

"If I do it, I'll call it 'The New Freedom.'"

"I see. It's a charming composition. Captivating. For whom are you doing it?"

"Oh, just for myself. . . . I don't know, though—"

He looked down at the steamer folder on his knees. Quinton's eyes followed his.

"Are you thinking of crossing?" he inquired.

"I don't know. There's absolutely nothing doing here. I could close up shop for a month or two."

"Why not? You've had your good-looking nose to the grindstone for a long while, John."

"Maybe I'll go," said Wyndward. There was no animation in his voice.

"Do you care to dine with me at the Patroons?" asked Quinton, cheerily.

"I've resigned."

"Resigned from the Patroons?"

"From the Racquettiers, too. And I'm wondering about the Buccaneers —"

"Don't do it! No man ever should resign from a club—"

"Four hundred members have resigned from the Patroons," remarked Wyndward. "What else is there to do except be dropped for non-payment of dues?"

"Are you as badly hit as that, John?"

"I've something to scrape along with. But I had to let the apartment, car, and servants go. And you see I'm quite alone here."

"You don't make your own bed, I hope."

"Yes, I do."

"And cook?"

"Quite well, too." He laughed a little. "Don't be sorry for me; I rather like it."

"Oh yeah?"

"Anyway, I don't mind it. . . . All this stringency will pass, of course. Everybody's in the jam more or less—"

"No, they're not, John. Palm Beach will be crawling with lousy wealth this winter."

"Let it crawl. You know it's really quite nice here. I like my studio when there's nobody in it except myself."

"Meaning for me to scram?"

They laughed. Wyndward went over to wash the clay from his hands and to remove and hang up his sculptor's smock.

Quinton watched him. He was the same lank, graceful, well-knit man who wore clothes and hats well and who doubtless would look fashionable in patched pants, thought Quinton. But there was a shadowy something in his face—not physical gauntness—but as though the features had been subtly refined—by pain, perhaps.

Wyndward put on his immaculate waistcoat and pants and sauntered back to where Quinton stood, twirling the wax group on the revolving pedestal.

"Discovered any superlative models, John?"

"None. There's a rush on, too; lots of young men and girls out of jobs, ready to do anything. Every time a show flops, I get a rush, here. Poor devils, it's saddening."

"And you can't give 'em any work?"

"Scarcely any. I'm doing one garden group over there—" he indicated a shrouded shapeless thing swathed in wet cloths.

"Who ordered it?"

"Damned if I know. The order came through Rosenquest."

"The art dealer?"

Wyndward nodded.

"Is it for him?"

"I don't know. It's an order, anyway. He said there might be another this winter."

"That's something, then."

"Something. . . . But I'm damned tired, Terry. I'd like a month off before I start anything."

"Take it. Hop a ship and pay a visit to papa."

"Yes, I'm going to."

"Then pat papa on the back for me and tell him he's elegant and ornamental and a pillar of the Empire."

"I will," said Wyndward, laughing.

"Then look up Kilcarrick."

"Why?"

"He'll give you some shooting."

"I'd like some. All right."

"And then," said Quinton blandly, "you might look up Chiyu."

They were moving toward the door together. Wyndward pulled out a key when they reached the sidewalk and locked the office door behind them.

"The child would be glad to see you," said Quinton. "It would be a kindness of you—what with the loneliness of that great house and forest, and the strangeness of everything in France, and a sick man who can't stir except when his doctors and nurses turn him over for a moment—"

He started to signal a taxi, but Wyndward shook his head, and they walked on together through dingy, muggy streets swarming with the children of the poor.

After a little while: "You think Chiyu would—" But he got no farther. And Quinton took it up: "And why not? You've been kind to her, and you like her, and she's your friend, isn't she?"

"Yes. . . . I think so. . . . I had no use for d'Oran."

"You knew him?"

"Scarcely at all."

"You wouldn't. But I did. He was not a bad sort; I've told you that. Well, if you ever snubbed him in the good old days, John, he's in no shape to

resent it now. Not even to remember it, probably. . . . But 'twill be a real charity to call on them. I've letters from Chiyu that I read to nobody. And I'm telling you, go to France if you're going across, and go to see her."

They walked on together in silence, threading their way between noisy youngsters on roller skates darting recklessly to and fro. And Wyndward thought of that night so long ago when he saw Chiyu for the first time staring up at the summer moon.

A week later John Wyndward was at sea, bound for Southampton and his surviving parent.

On the ship he ran into a joyous party of choice sports from the Buccaneers—Scott Dundas, Phil Bailey, Revell Reckness, and George Bullup—who hailed him with every demonstration of rowdy pleasure and carried him off to Bailey's stateroom.

They had rented a Scottish moor, it appeared, and were noisily bound thither to sample the Scotch grouse and capercaillie and the smoky *vin du pays*; and they invited Wyndward to inhabit with them a large, chilly edifice known as Cairngorm House where, God willing, they all would hold high revels and eat haggis to the wail of be-ribboned bagpipes.

"—Till the cows come home, old fellow," explained Dundas affectionately, "and there'll be lasses and glasses and gold demi-tasses—"

George Bullup, waving his highball, began to sing "McCorker's Party":

"After the dinner was over
They frisked them for the spoons,
They found the salts and peppers
In Cassidy's pantaloons,
O'Reilly had the tay-pot
His wife let out a scream
Whin a broth of a felly
Made free with her belly
And found the soup tureen—"

It was too much party for Wyndward, and he went on deck escorted by Scott Dundas in all the dignity of incipient inebriation:

"Moon," he said, leaning on the port rail, "perf'cly beau'ful. Roll on thou deep'an something ocean, roll! Get me, John?"

"Yes, I do, Scott. Thank you so much—"

"Notatall! Tell you something. Stric' conf'ance. Jolly li'l countess 'vites us all come'n' shoot! Countess Chiyu. Gotta letter. 'Vites us come'n shoot. Shoot everything! Shoot like hell. Jolly li'l Chiyu. 'Member her?"

"Yes."

"Her hubby's on the blink. Wants to see me. 'Vites us come 'n shoot at the old Chatoo! Poor old bird. Lonely. Know him?"

"Very slightly."

"I knew him. Knew'm well. Pals. Knew's girl, too. Some mama. Got Chiyu now. Too late. 'Sno good. All stove in. Kind old scout. Lent me five grand once. You len' me five grand, John?"

"I haven't it, Scott."

"Whothehell has? 'Sall right. You wassome money, John?"

"No, thanks."

Dundas, hanging to the rail, lifted his thickening voice in song:

"Chiyu
You're my li'l gal,
Chiyu
You're my li'l pal,
When you neck me
You just wreck me;
Why you
Chiyu
What you doin'?—
Ima total ruin—"

Wyndward shook him hard—shook the melodious bellow out of him.

"Scott! Do you hear me?"

"Whazzer mazzer?" inquired Dundas gravely.

"Are you—are those buffalo below—going to shoot at the Hôtel d'Oran?"

"You betcha. Shoot like hell. Shoot everything—birds, boar, craps—"

"All right," said Wyndward, "good night. And you'd better turn in, too —"

"Never," said Dundas firmly.

So Wyndward left him addressing the moon with impassioned song, and made his way toward his stateroom.

For a few moments, outside the partly open port of his abode he stood looking up at the windy moon. An unwonted pulse was running high in his veins. Then, before turning away, he looked across darkness toward France.

CHAPTER XIV

AT SEA

The *Samaria* carried a small list of passengers; the majority of Americans were headed the other way toward God's Country—the Yankee God's.

There was a watery gray sky clotted with clouds and an oily sea most of the way. Had it turned out otherwise, Wyndward might have had the ship to himself—that is the decks—because the boisterous Buccaneers were inclined to carouse below, and the balance of passengers didn't look like rough-water folk.

As it was, however, with no wind and the sea like a platter of greasy soup, he found little privacy aboard.

George Bullup, *toujours chasseur de femme*, retrieved one from a rather dingy covey bound for Paris to make a sociological survey of that city and engineer a revival among the American students of the Left Bank.

"Miss Dare is in the Left Banking business," explained George solemnly when he lugged her up and presented Wyndward before the latter could escape.

The girl had burning eyes and no experience except in Yonkers; and George picked her up when her group was singing hymns in one of the little music rooms where religious noises were permitted.

"Mr. Wyndward," he continued blandly, "is a sculptor, and I have no doubt you will find him helpful in describing for you the temptations and dissipations so unhappily prevalent in the Latin Quarter."

Wyndward thought it mildly funny, at first, but changed his mind when Miss Dare insisted on presenting him to the others in the music room, where George whispered in his ear: "Pick yours; it's a cinch."

"Mr. Bullup," said Miss Dare earnestly, "tells me that you are melancholy because you make tombs."

Wyndward shot a deadly glance at the celebrated social clown, who returned it with pious resignation, his mischievous tongue in his cheek.

"The tomb," said Miss Dare fervently, "is not the end, Mr. Wyndward, no matter what modern skepticism preaches. There is something beyond the tomb. There is Hope!"

"Sing him that beautiful mortuary hymn that you sang to me, Lallie," urged Bullup. "And listen, John; this will help your tendency to be melancholy when you are chipping away at mausoleums for millionaires."

Wyndward glared at him; Miss Dare seated herself at the parlor organ and lifted up a feverish, reedy tremolo.

But, in his ear, the reprobate George sang his own parallel and perverted version of an already silly hymn:

"Trip lightly over trouble,
Skip lightly over gloom;
There's tears to string of gladness
Beyond the goddam tomb.
Why clasp woe's hands so tightly?
Why yell because you're dead?
Why not behave politely
And take a drink instead?"

"That ought to comfort him," he added aloud, as the girl turned around on the piano stool and let her burning eyes rest on Wyndward.

Afterward, in the smoking-room, he said to Bullup: "Somebody ought to string you up to the yard-arm, George. That girl's one of those emotional fanatics that end in a cloister or a brothel. You better let her alone."

"Dear friend, she's rapidly reaching a point where she doesn't want to be left alone—"

"Shame on you!—a poor little dislocated cerebrum like that!—"

"If she's going to be a missionary," retorted Bullup, "she ought to know what it's all about—"

"If you teach her you're a scoundrel."

Bullup grinned: "She had a highball in my stateroom and didn't know what it was. And liked it." He shrugged. "I ask you," he concluded, and went off to hunt his quarry.

It was a dull, gray crossing and a dreary tramp around the decks; duller still in the Buccaneers' cockpit whither they had now persuaded the four sociological workers to join in a hilarious campaign of self-education; with which brief semester Wyndward declined to associate himself, although the Buccaneers urged that their sociological ladies were not so bad-looking, and

that "George's girl" was positively comely. "After all," they added, "there was nothing else aboard except some decrepit stewardesses."

One day when there came a pea-soup fog, and they narrowly escaped cutting in two a fishing schooner—the only excitement aboard the *Samaria*, so far—a man whom he had not before noticed took the deck chair next to him and spoke to him politely with the slightest trace of a French accent.

"You know my cousin, d'Oran," he began blandly. "I'm de la Roquettaire."

Wyndward, lying on his chair, laid down the mystery novel he had been attempting to read and sat up straighter under his steamer rug.

"I've been in New York incognito," continued the other naïvely. "Very embarrassing. Short of funds. And all that uproar in the newspapers. Well"—he lifted his shoulders and spread his hands—"that is life, my dear sir. What would you?"

Wyndward "wouldn't" anything.

The cold impudence of the fellow only slightly annoyed him. And such eyes! The tiny bright beads of a rat. If God made them, he had done a cruel job. And the man's mouth under his artificially curled mustache was loose and red-ripe, and unpleasantly wettish. And if that were his job, he'd made a sorrier work of it than had his Creator.

"It has been exceedingly boring, this trip to America," said Monsieur de la Roquettaire with resignation. "But," he shrugged, "when honor is involved, one must suffer everything. . . . The newspapers have been very unfair to me. You know?"

"Yes," said Wyndward, "they criticize you."

"But how unfair! That thrust? I aim him at the breast. What does my cousin? Like this!"—he began to gesticulate, his English suffering as his excitement rose—"*Vlan!* I thrust! *Vlan! Riposte en tierce! Parade! Vlan!* I feint *en quinte* and *pass en quartet! Vlan!* he lose his head, and he strike at me with his hilt—so!—down like a boxer who chop, as you say. W'at 'appen? *Je vous*—I ask you, sir? *Naturellement*—naturally—w'en his fist strike my blade, my blade it is deflect! It plunge down, Monsieur. *Et j'ai l'honneur de vous demander, Monsieur*—w'at else could 'appen if my sword is push down w'en I thrust *en quarte* with *élan*?"

Wyndward offered no comment; and, when pressed, explained politely, as neither England nor America tolerated dueling, his opinion could be of no

value.

Anyway, he added, there was a tribunal where such matters were sifted out, and to which, he had no doubt, Monsieur de la Roquettaire would confidently appeal.

After a long silence: "That goddam d'Oran!" said de la Roquettaire. "Millions, Monsieur. *Et moi dans la dèche—*"

His large thin nose was quivering. Wyndward thought that Frenchmen worked their nostrils like animals. In the Anglo-Saxon overseas armies, camp songs concerning them and their habits were not complimentary.

In mid-ocean Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire attempted to borrow fifty dollars from Wyndward.

Failing, he picked up the Buccaneers. With what result remained unknown to Wyndward who contrived to remain by himself until the *Samaria* raised the Lizard.

And when, at last, he got ashore and through the Customs he lost his fellow voyagers with a cleverness that left him baffled.

"Sheep and rain," as the poem says, were about all he saw from the London bound train; and when he arrived in that metropolis he saw nothing at all for thirty-six hours.

After that the fog disintegrated, and he saw his father. No older. Tall, lean, lankly graceful, top-hatted and spatted. And was put up at his club.

But the son declined further intrusion and stuck to the Berkeley where he could see the merry world wag to and fro and the household cavalry trotting up and down.

But, oddly enough, with every—almost annual—visit, Merrie England appealed less and less to this scion of the House of Wyndward.

He went to pay his respects to the old Earl who showed him, for the hundredth time, his collection of butterflies. For the hundredth time, also, that good old gentleman described in a tremulous voice the tragedy of the disappearance, and probable extinction, of Lycæna dispar, the Great Copper, from the fens of Suffolk.

Wyndward knew what was coming next. It came; the triumphant recital of the old gentleman's personal experience with Vanessa antiopa, the Camberwell Beauty.

It was an epic—like the pursuit of Apatura iris, the Purple Emperor—by Sir Joseph Banks.

Followed—and Wyndward knew it was going to—a glass of port and a biscuit. Later the kindly parting—brief, emotionless save for the trembling clasp.

Assorted relatives forming a living and healthy barrier between him and the title offered civilities of sorts—cordially declined on the usual plea of impending departure. It was all pleasantly understood; he couldn't endure them; they couldn't stand him. And no harm done.

Kilcarrick he met at his own junior club—one of the few links remaining to him.

They lunched where women, traditionally, were not discussed.

But Kilcarrick insisted on accompanying Wyndward to the Berkeley, and here the boy burst into confidences concerning himself and his first, headlong passion. The miraculous object of his adoration being Chiyu.

Pursuit of her, he explained naïvely, had been his plan, and a fiery declaration of honorable intent. In fact he had, virtually, proposed to her by radio from his own cruiser, but she had not seemed to understand him, and he was afraid of being ridiculed if he became more obvious aboard the *Polydamia*.

When he arrived home he asked his colonel for leave and broke the happy news to a hostile family. Complete frustration ensued all around, in the regiment as well as at home. Conspiracy! No doubt of it!

"And then," he said sadly, "she married that bounder of a Frenchman! And take a look at what he's done to her, old chap!"

"You're happier as you are," said Wyndward shortly.

"Oh yes; they all tell me that. But *I* tell *you*, John Wyndward, a man of my age doesn't easily get over that sort of thing. If you ever have been in love, I dare say you'll understand me."

"Yes," said Wyndward, "I understand you, Linley. One can suffer at twenty-one."

"I could tell them that," said the boy passionately, "but I'd never let them see how I suffer. . . . I wish I'd taken French leave to France and nailed the matter."

"Not a desirable regimental record for a sub, you know."

"I suppose not. . . . I was minded to chuck the service and learn banking in New York. I told her so, and she ought to have understood. She didn't, I suppose."

"She has had little social experience, Linley; she is very young."

"Isn't she lovely? God!—so innocent and sweet—"

"Well, you know she is rather sophisticated too—in a way—"

"Innocently wise and unashamed. Yes, I could see that. There was fashionable raw talk and *double entendre* at table aboard the *Niobrara*. The enchanting thing about Chiyu was that she understood it and was bored. . . . Can you blame a chap for falling in love with her?"

"No."

"Well, it's all over now, of course. . . . I had a letter from her."

"Yes?"

"A kind one. I have it here. I'm sure she wouldn't mind my reading it to you—"

He fished it out of his pocket and read:

DEAR LORD KILCARRICK,

My husband is an invalid and bedridden, and unable even to move unless assisted.

But he loves to have people about him; and he has begged me to write to some of my friends and ask them to Oran House for the shooting.

There is quite a large *chasse* here; and if you care for driven partridges and pheasant, and roe deer, stag, and boar, there are plenty in the fields and forests of Oran.

He wishes me to say that we do not hunt the boar mounted, at Oran, but use the rifle.

I hope your inclination and engagements permit you to come to us in October.

Sincerely yours,
CHIYU D'ORAN.

After a little pause, Wyndward nodded:

"You should go, Linley."

"My cousin—Terry Quinton, you know—cabled me to go. She writes to him every week. . . . It is likely to hurt, I suppose. . . . I rather expect I shall turn up at the cursed Château. . . . I say, have you been asked?"

"No," said Wyndward.

CHAPTER XV
CHÂTEAU D'ORAN

The Château d'Oran—a great, sprawling place on rolling meadows surrounded by woods—had been restored and modernized as far as heat, water, and light were concerned, by the late Mrs. Magnelius Grandcourt's millions.

The forested road to it, from the highway, ran for nearly two miles before it emerged into fat meadows where the vermiculated course of a little river made of the château and gardens a *presqu'ile*.

The only fish in the stream and moat were coarse—fish of sorts, preyed upon by large, fierce *brochet*—which also grabbed an occasional dabchick and moor-hen for a piscine meal.

The farm lands were extensive, full of little willow-bordered brooks where woodcock fed at night. And there were partridges among the cabbages and pheasant in the stubble; and, in the forest, stag, roe and *daim*; and big, shaggy wild boar which sometimes came out in the twilight to root up potatoes and crunch fallen apples in the orchards.

Two station cars had driven down that morning to meet guests and now had returned and dumped out the Buccaneer contingent and their luggage, fresh from Cairngorm House and a hilarious sojourn on the Scottish moors.

What they saw were servants in gray and silver livery scurrying to handle their baggage; and, on the gray old terrace above, against a blaze of autumn flowers, a slender, solitary figure to welcome them to the Hôtel d'Oran, the master of which lay helpless and unstirring on the curtained and gilded bed of his noble ancestors.

She welcomed them with a simplicity so entirely without self-consciousness that it knocked out of them any inclination toward patronizing familiarity.

Piloted by nimble and efficient house servants, they trooped off to their quarters considerably subdued. Even George Bullup's jocosity struck the wrong note; and Revell Reckness made a cruel comparison, remarking: "Chiyu has the grand air and you the Grand Street air. You'd better can your clowning, George."

Later, when the Buccaneers were in their knickers, Chiyu led them through a maze of halls, corridors, and apartments to the great, sunny

bedchamber where the remains of what had been a man lay on a gilded bed looking at them.

He was quite paralyzed. Chiyu lifted his right arm and the Buccaneers, one after another, solemnly shook hands with him, said they were glad to see him, thanked him for asking them and told him he was looking extremely well.

In hollow eyes set in a bony, bearded face, a smile glimmered, faded, went out.

"My wife and I are happy to welcome you," he said quite clearly. "Your arrival brings with it the first fresh breath from America, of which I cherish souvenirs most agreeable."

"My husband," said Chiyu, whose hand d'Oran retained, "is an ardent sportsman; and he looks forward with pleasure to hearing from you every detail of your experience in the Chasse d'Oran."

The girl's friendliness, sweetness, and dignity petrified Mr. Bullup and left fat Phil Bailey wordless. But both Reckness and Dundas, being more intelligent, began to understand an unlooked for situation and took their cues. And the conversation became easy and general around the gilded bed of the Count of Oran.

Reckness told him all about Cairngorm House. Bullup came to and added the ridiculous touch to their moorland experiences; and the smile flickered fitfully in the sick man's eyes.

"You were too late for the grouse," he said; "you should have arrived before the twelfth of August."

Then Bullup, always the comedian, described their attempts to stalk a stag in a deer "forest" entirely destitute of trees. He pictured the misery of Scott Dundas who, in memory of Caledonian ancestry, wore the Dundas tartan, and kilts which nakedly exposed his Yankee legs to the mercy of whin and thorn. And the paralyzed man on the gilded bed laughed thinly and looked up at his wife as though to share with her his unaccustomed mirth.

Reckness thought, "The fellow's horribly in love."

"You are very good for my husband, Mr. Bullup," said Chiyu, smiling at him. So he related further adventures amid heather, heath, and broom.

Then Chiyu asked rather shyly whether anybody would play a game or two of backgammon beside the bed, because Charles liked to watch it.

So a table and board were fetched, and Reckness and Bullup—old enemies at the game—played a couple of swift ones.

D'Oran's sunken eyes sparkled, but he was beginning to feel the unwonted excitement.

A few moments later a trained nurse came into the room. When the gentlemen had been introduced, Chiyu smiled at her husband who was looking up at her; and, understanding, let her hand rest an instant against the drawn lips that saluted it.

Then they all said *au revoir* in suitably cheery tones and trooped out after Chiyu to the grand stairway, to the great hall, and out to the terrace where luncheon was served, presently, amid oleanders and orange trees in tubs.

After luncheon there was much to be seen—stables, kennels, glass-houses, the dairy, and, from a low hill, a general view of the farm, open coverts, and cultivated territory beyond.

By the two o'clock train another guest was due—young Kilcarrick—but when he arrived with guns and baggage it was too late in the afternoon for him to be presented to the Lord of Oran on his gilded bed, who had had his full dose of unaccustomed excitement for the day and for the impending night.

Chiyu went to him once more; then the nurse drew the vast curtains at window and bed, stood by the tiny blue flame of the night light until her patient slept, then stole out to the dressing-room to read until the night nurse arrived to relieve her.

Chiyu met Kilcarrick in the great hall, and the boy took both her hands impulsively and pressed his lips to them—Chiyu quite pink and laughing, and her gray-gold eyes brilliant and friendly.

"I am so grateful to see you," he repeated excitedly; "how perfectly beautiful you are, dear Chiyu!"

They stood happily together, gay, animated, asking and answering under the faded foliage of pendent banners drooping above trophies of scoured mail.

"I hope," he said in a stilted, boyish voice, "that Monsieur le Comte is recovering."

"He has been very ill," she said.

"But he is better, I trust?"

"I don't know, Linley. De la Roquettaire's sword fractured his spine."

"God bless us!" blurted out the boy. "I had no idea—"

"Yes; it was driven savagely and deep. He has lost all power of motion. If he grows stronger there may be an operation. The doctors don't know, yet."

"This is rather awful for you, Chiyu."

"It is terrible for him. He was so tall and powerful. He could lift one of the farm ponies off the ground! And always he was out in the open air, riding or shooting or with the foresters or farmers or *gardes de chasse*—"

"I suppose he was in the army, once."

"Yes, *capitaine de grosse cavalerie—dans le 40ième de cuirassiers, vous savez*—"

He said in lighter tone after a moment's pause: "You seem extremely proficient in French, Chiyu."

"Yes," she replied indifferently, "I was at school with the Carthusian Sisters who are French nuns; and we were expected to be as fluent in French as in English."

She lifted her frank gaze smilingly. "Otherwise," she added, "I might have spoken with something between a brogue and a 105th Street patois. It was a very narrow escape for me, Linley."

"It would have made no difference to me," he rejoined hotly, "if you talked only Choctaw!"

At that the girl laughed outright. "You are such a dear," she said, taking his arm. "Shall we find the others on the lawn? I think they are clock-golfing or something."

On their way thither, Kilcarrick, gossiping of his regiment and his future, chanced to mention his encounter with John Wyndward.

"Did you tell him you were coming to us?" she asked in a strained voice.

"Yes," said the boy, "and I think he was envious. He's an odd chap, John Wyndward, but really a good sort, you know."

"I know. . . . Do you suppose he would come to Oran if I asked him—" Her voice had become husky, almost breathless as though they had been walking too rapidly across the formal garden.

"Well, he's not far away if you wish to ask him," said Kilcarrick. "We came down together from Paris, and he's stopping at Oran-sur-Astrée on his way to Spain, where he hopes to get a bit of ibex shooting."

"Do you mean that he is in the village outside our gates!"

"At the Coq d'Argent. I suggested he run in to say how d'you do, but he seemed rather shy about it. You can understand that, Chiyu, with a party gathering, and not being asked, and all that—"

The crack of a gun told them that the Buccaneers were peppering clay targets in preparation for serious work on the morrow.

As they walked across the lawn toward the traps, a servant passed them, and Chiyu said something to him in a low voice; and walked on beside Kilcarrick.

The Buccaneers hailed them with broken guns, then Bullup blazed away at a skimming target which came back boomerang fashion and hit the turf unscathed.

Phil Bailey politely handed his gun to Chiyu, who gave him an absent-minded smile and declined.

A little later a sport car rolled up on the drive, and Chiyu in her sport clothes of pale brown and gold touched with orange, sprang in, waved her hand and sped away leaving five young men with broken guns and disconsolate faces looking after her in the rosy glory of the declining sun.

At the Coq d'Argent in the stony little village clustered along the river Astrée just beyond Oran Lodge and the great gilded gates, the girl arrived with her red-gold hair burning in the wind and the rosy sunlight dappling her throat and arms.

The host of the Coq d'Argent hustled fatly to greet Madame la Comtesse and obey her desires.

"*Mais oui, Madame, Monsieur Veendvard est chez lui! Il vient de rentrer* —"

Wyndward, in knickers, strolled out at the moment. He did not recognize Chiyu for a moment. Then he went scarlet to his hair.

"I would have asked you," said the girl breathlessly, "but I supposed you were in America. Oh please—"

He came forward quickly and took her outstretched hand. Then, red as a beet, touched his lips to it Continental fashion.

"Linley just told me," she said huskily. "You know my—husband, Mr. Wyndward. You will come, won't you?"

"It is kind of you, Madame—"

"Oh don't—" He saw tears glimmer suddenly in the gray-gold eyes; caught the checked breath which was almost a sob.

"It is wonderful of you, Chiyu," he said. "When do you want me?"

"N-now."

"I—" he laughed.

"I'll send for your luggage."

To the interested landlord: "Please telephone our garage for a station car and send Mr. Wyndward's baggage. It would be very kind of you—"

"Hadn't I better—" he began.

"No," said the girl, "a servant will come and pack for you. Please ask them to send a valet, Monsieur Nodier. Thank you so much—"

Wyndward went out into the street and climbed into the seat beside her. The girl was trembling all over as she backed out in a wide arc, twisted the wheel and swung the car back toward Oran Lodge where the gilded gates, presently, opened full width, and the car rolled into the forest.

Sunset rays pierced the yellowing foliage barring tree trunks with rosy light, gilding bramble and bracken and mossy rocks.

Chiyu's eyes were straight ahead, her reddish-gold hair disheveled, a wild color in her cheeks that ebbed, waxed, waned, with the wind.

She drove fast at first, then with diminishing speed after she had stopped trembling so; and now, slowly.

"Bullup, Reckness, Phil Bailey, Scott Dundas, and Lord Kilcarrick are here," she said.

"I heard so."

"Everybody will shoot to-morrow. Our head gamekeeper has warned the village beaters."

"That will be jolly, Chiyu."

"Yes. . . . They are out to locate a big boar, also."

"Who is?"

"Cliquart, our"—she flushed a little—"he is Grand Veneur. My husband keeps up some of the old-fashioned offices—"

"That is delightful." She glanced at him as though fearing he was laughing at her, but gathered confidence when she saw his face.

"I know, of course, very little about hunting and shooting and the art of *vénerie*. My husband, of course, was bred to such things. So he maintains kennels and stables and *piqueurs*. . . . The huntsmen have been very kind to me."

"Yes?"

"You know that my husband is—an invalid? You've heard of it, no doubt. So you understand he cannot ride with me and show me over the estate. . . . So, because my husband wished it, Cliquart taught me to ride; and I ride with him or with one of the *piqueurs* every day. That is how I am learning about the Forest of Oran—"

She checked herself and the car, too, until it stood still in the forest with the engine running:

"But tell me," she asked impetuously, "how you are, and how is your work? I have so longed to know, but Dr. Quinton doesn't answer my questions about you—"

"Well," he said smilingly, "we are having rather a poor time of it in America."

"Yes; here also. I hope the—the hard times are not—not hard on you."

"Nobody escapes," he replied cheerfully.

"You have plenty of work, I hope."

"I haven't any. . . . Well, yes. I have one commission. It came through a firm of art dealers. I never thought I'd feel very grateful for a job, but I do, Chiyu." He spoke humorously; but her face remained grave.

"You know," she said, "this is a fearful thing that has come upon the world—all these quarrels about war debts and reparations and armies and navies—and all the poverty and misery and the sullen waiting for God knows what!—and all the unkindness and misunderstanding—France angered against America, her old friend; angered against Italy and Germany and Austria; England cold toward us—and France; Italy always bristling; and Japan in a rage with the whole world—"

"You seem to be extremely well read, Chiyu," he said in his old, well remembered and bantering way.

"There is little to do except to read," she said naïvely. "I am so glad the"—she laughed—"the Buccaneers have arrived. And Linley. And you—"

She turned to him impulsively, the flash of tears in her eyes and her mouth quivering, and caught his hand in both of hers.

An overwhelming rush of emotion swept them, left them dumb with desperate fingers intertwined. Then, in silence, their hands fell apart; she turned to the wheel, her slim foot fumbling, her nerveless hand on the clutch.

Past them sped the station car from the Château on its way to retrieve his luggage.

She said: "I think I must have been crazy to bring you here. But I'd have gone crazy if I hadn't. . . . You'll help me, won't you?"

"If you'll help me."

"Yes, I will. . . . I tried to do all I could. But I'm so g-glad to—see you —"

The car slowed to a stop; the girl rested one bare arm across the wheel and dropped her head on it. It was the first time that he ever had seen her weep.

And to see her crying was an ungodly bitter business for this man who once might have had her on terms he thought he could not tolerate—terms which others would have been grateful for had she accepted them. Such terms as Jauncy had offered, and Kilcarrick; and this man who was now to be his host—Charles d'Oran. . . .

He could have had her on such terms. . . . He could have had her on any terms. He knew that she had known it, too; and had been afraid—not of loving him, but of the parting which life had taught her always was inevitable.

After a little she lifted her head, fished out a handkerchief and scrubbed her eyes.

"Sorry," she said and tried to smile at him.

The car moved on again, slowly; stopped for a little to permit her to use her compact and repair the stains of grief. Grief, the accursed dry-point artist ever etching fear and pain.

After a little the bruised look was gone and the gray-gold eyes were clear again, and the gold-red hair twisted back and knotted low on the snowy nape.

"Well, sir," she said, "shall we go home, now?"

The afterglow still stained the zenith when the remainder of the guests began to arrive. First, from Ept, the demoiselles Clairette and Claudine d'Ept, twin sisters, cousins of the d'Orans in some French degree.

Two other "cousins" followed, Madame de Vicq and Mademoiselle Lucie d'Azyr. They were followed in turn by the Baroness de Serret and a Madame Brindes, all, in vague degree, kin to the House of Oran. And all were young and vivacious—not pretty, but better than that—with the nameless, provocative awareness of Latin and feminine youth always and wisely educated to "please." And George Bullup nearly went off his head at first glimpse of so promising a field of activities.

The state dining-hall was far too large for so limited a house-party, but the family dining-room was very pretty with its gilded *boiserie*, brocades, crystal chandeliers, old silver and glittering modern glass; and the majordomo in gilded chains, the butlers and footmen were extremely effective and efficient.

After everybody had met everybody, and caviar and "coquetelles" had been breezily discussed in the music room, Chiyu gave her arm to Wyndward; and Revell Reckness, *in loco de mari*, led out Madame de Vicq; and the others paired according to plan.

As everybody, it appeared, was capable of both French and English in varying degrees, the chatter immediately became animated, and excellent champagne from Oran cellars jacked it up to a fluttering and melodious tumult accented by delightful hurricanes of laughter.

Wyndward, who had been tensely curious to see how Chiyu would manage matters, relaxed with relief where he was seated on her right; and, catching the critically sleepy eyes of Reckness at the foot of the table, smiled his reaction, and smiled again at the other's scarcely perceptible nod of approval.

Kilcarrick, on Chiyu's left, was becoming so loquacious that she gave him a hint to talk to his attractive neighbor, Clairette of Ept, and turned to Wyndward for the first time.

"Do you remember our first meeting at any table?" she whispered.

"Yes, you wore nothing, you beautiful thing!"

"I know it. And I feel far more undressed now. Isn't that curious?"

"Your gown is perfectly wonderful, Chiyu, and you are the loveliest woman in the world!"

"How extravagant! Really do I look all right? I've no back to my gown, and not much in front. It's my first formal dinner in this house, you know."

"On account of Monsieur d'Oran's illness?"

"Yes. Only relatives have dined here, and my gowns were conservative. But this makes me feel like the first row at Ziegfeld's."

Unfeigned candor was her charm, and he thought that there was something "to the manner born" in this girl's unwillingness to ignore or gild a squalid past. He had known those who did not, and who wore coronets, too; but there never had been any spiritual cowardice about Chiyu. It gave him an odd feeling as though this girl, from childhood, had been enduring and quietly awaiting what now seemed to have come to her as her reparation and her right.

"Do you go up to Riverside to look at me, sometimes?" she asked in a low voice.

"Often—since you went away, Chiyu."

"And has it—"

"I think so. I have, recently, felt a flickering of the old creative desire—a faint excitement—almost like a breath of youth—"

"You *are* young. You know it! You *must* be!"

"Well, I have started one or two things—for the mere pleasure—the simple desire to try—"

"Oh," she murmured, "that is good news!"

"You are so sweet about it—" But his face had grown flushed and somber.

"What is it?" Her lips barely moved.

"I was wondering whether youth and incentive were to be recaptured through loneliness and—grief."

"Grief?" she breathed.

He said nothing.

She spoke again presently:

"I'll say this; then you must talk to your neighbor. . . . If sorrow is the price we must pay to be what we ought to be, then we had better pay it."

She lifted her small head serenely, gave one enveloping glance at her table and her guests and turned to Kilcarrick, smilingly.

Only the clean-cut edge of her lower lip quivered a little.

CHAPTER XVI

A COUNTESS ENTERTAINS

After breakfast all the guests assembled around the gilded bed of Charles d'Oran; and to each, Chiyu lifted the bony, nerveless hand of her husband so that each guest might clasp it and tell him how well he looked.

That was the doctor's prescription for all visitors: tell him how well he was looking. What George Bullup called "Coué stuff" or "Pollyanna piffle."

"That poor devil's dead in bed," he said to Reckness, "and if somebody doesn't tell him and he discovers it for himself, the shock may kill him."

Thus the clown, rather hopeful under his grin; because both millions and Chiyu were well worth hoping for. And, man and broker, he had dined on hope for the last four years and was almost starved.

Tables were fetched; Reckness and the blonde Lucie d'Azyr, already on excellent terms, played backgammon where the sick man could watch them rattle the dice and shove the ivory counters to and fro.

At two other tables the newest kind of contract was started amid animated discussion of latest rules.

George Bullup rashly taught Sesia de Serret craps; and the snappy little brunette Baroness began to roll such expert dice at such ruinous stakes that Mr. Bullup's stiff blond hair stood stiffer, and his lively eyes of a born comedian were inclined to pop.

But it was too late to discover that the sophisticated Madame de Serret had been spilling the bones about for several profitable years; and the massacre proceeded.

Through the open doors of the small adjoining salon, the twins, Clairette and Claudine, played on harp and piano and sang with excellent taste, attended by Kilcarrick who couldn't read music but turned the pages excitedly when Claudine's lively "now!" parted her marvelously brilliant lips in a devastating smile.

Chiyu had laid her husband's nerveless hand in Wyndward's strong, brown one.

"Thank you for coming," said the motionless sick man, his hollow eyes rolling toward Wyndward. "I retain agreeable recollections of you, Mr. Wyndward. A gay dinner at the Buccaneers Club given by Mr. Reckness in

August, 1929. . . . Before the crash came? When everybody and his janitor were very, very rich? You do not remember, I see."

"Yes, I remember. You were wonderfully clever. You did the most astonishing tricks with packs of cards! Really, Monsieur le Comte, it was past all belief what you so gracefully accomplished with those cards, and on the spur of the moment, apparently."

D'Oran's slow, weak smile and upward glance included Chiyu. "No, Monsieur, it was all prepared in advance. I'm sorry to disillusion any soldier whom the war has not disillusioned."

"Sit down beside him," motioned Chiyu; and her eyes added: "He likes you."

"Speaking of soldiers," said Wyndward, seating himself to make conversation beside the sick-bed, "you, Monsieur, are a professional one—or were; but I was merely a volunteer; and perhaps I didn't know enough to be disillusioned."

"Perhaps you did not see enough, Monsieur. I did not mean the disillusion which comes from observing wholesale death and wounds and ruin and desolation."

"I don't quite know, then—"

"No, you had not yet arrived. Yet you arrived none too soon. Because our disillusion began in May, 1917, after Nivelle's defeat. And that is what has left its mark on professional soldiers like myself—a deathly scar on our very souls, Monsieur. . . . Because, on that accursed day a French division refused to march to the front. Did you know that?"

"No," said Wyndward.

"It became far worse than that. In sixteen French *corps d'armée*, mutiny broke out! Did you know *that*?"

"Good God, d'Oran, what are you telling me?"

"Facts! . . . They were the finest troops in France, too. My own regiment, I thank God, was not among them. Wyndward, do you understand the reason for a professional soldier's disillusion?"

"Yes. I had no idea—"

"We concealed it. We denied rumors. But now we ought not to hide it any longer. Frankness should do good. Concealment is moral degradation. A lie never is worth the effort. It is all very well to sneer at the Portuguese and

jeer at Caporetto. But when I tell you that division after division in our French army went 'red' in the spring of 1917, and elected 'soldiers' councils'; that entire French regiments deserted their posts and started for Paris; that a Russian division on our front revolted and began to murder its officers; and that we had to turn our cannon on them to subdue them—then you can understand a professional soldier's disillusionment. And, I think, you will agree with me that these facts are not shameful national details to conceal, but grave, momentous symptoms of a world disease which ought to be exposed to-day and a remedy sought with which to immunize the armies of the civilized world."

His eyes were burning in their sockets, and he seemed weary and weak with the emotional effort. Chiyu touched Wyndward, and he rose to take his leave. But d'Oran said: "Let him stay a little, my dear; it does me good to talk to an American soldier. And I have another thing to say. . . . Which could be said, perhaps, only to such an American as John Wyndward, a good Anglo-Saxon."

Chiyu looked silent at her husband; Wyndward bent nearer to the bed.

D'Oran said: "It is my due, I think, that gentlemen the world over should understand the reason why my cousin de la Roquettaire has incessantly quarreled with me.

"For years I shared with him the scanty income I had. He was a leech. He begged, borrowed, stole from me. He was perpetually at me.

"Then came the war. And in 1917, when his regiment deserted its post and went red, my cousin was aware of the conspiracy. He was both an opportunist and a defeatist; he played both ends and waited!

"Before the military court—God knows how!—he was mistakenly exonerated. But he was as damnably guilty as any fantassin; and I know it and possess the proof. And when I—inherited—money—willed to me by one I deeply cared for—then he came back whining, demanding, threatening blackmail, begging, blustering.

"And finally, on the day of my marriage, I told him why I never again would loan or give another sou to a bad soldier and a disloyal Frenchman! . . . And that is my story, Wyndward—for any honest gentleman who might care to inquire the facts of you in America—" His voice fluttered, dwindled: "I am very tired, my dear," he murmured.

Chiyu bent gently over him and touched his wasted hand. Then she looked at Wyndward.

“Good-by, old chap,” he said; “it’s been jolly well worth while to listen to you. Do ask me for another little visit when you’re up to it.”

As he left, the day nurse and the family doctor entered, both standing silently aside as the other guests took their leave, flocking out with lively, cheerful adieux for the sick man, who already was half asleep.

Wyndward, lingering on the grand staircase and looking down at the gaily scattering guests below, felt a light touch on his shoulder and turned to meet the gray-gold eyes of Chiyu.

“Are you shooting this morning?” she inquired smilingly.

“As you like, Chiyu.”

“It’s only a little way. I’ll load for you if you like. We lunch at Saint Graal brook.”

They descended the stairs together. The other guests were already stringing along across the lawns toward the edge of the northern woods.

Chiyu spoke to a *garde de chasse* who touched his *képi* and presently fetched Wyndward’s guns. Then they strolled forward toward the other men who, with their gaily chosen demoiselles, were being ushered into position by old Cliquart and the head gamekeeper, Valentine, facing the long fringe of woodland in all the glory of its autumn foliage.

Cap in hand Cliquart came bustling up to show his mistress and Wyndward their station.

“There are plenty of pheasant, Madame la Comtesse,” he said in his big, jolly voice—“if only the young gentlemen will honor us by shooting them —”

He took the twenty-gage gun from the gamekeeper, inspected it whimsically, loaded it, and handed it with a gay bow to Chiyu who laughingly offered it to Wyndward.

“That is the age-old etiquette at Oran,” she explained a little shyly. A gamekeeper drove the steel points of two folding camp-stools into the turf. Cliquart loaded the other gun and handed it to Chiyu with another profound bow; then he bolted off to superintend general arrangements and to look over the retrievers, leashed in couples, and extremely interested in these familiar preparations.

“I can hear the beaters in the woods,” said Chiyu.

"So can I," began Wyndward, but checked his speech as a high cock showed above the woods, coming like an arrow. Up slanted his gun, poised for a second; then came the light, dry crack of the shot, and, up there, in the dazzling sky the cock pheasant folded up and slanted down at a long swift angle, bouncing as it hit the grass.

"One shot, one bird," he said mischievously; "how about my limit, Chiyu?"

She handed him the other gun, took his and loaded the empty barrel:

"Oh, I know you can do anything," she said. "And you may do it as long as you care to."

"Well, then, watch me miss this rocketer—"

Bang went his gun; and once more, bang!—and the towering cock collapsed in mid-heaven, as though struck by lightning, and came hurtling earthward like some pigmy Icarus, landing with one half-spread pitiful wing, clean killed by the left barrel.

"I thought I'd miss him," admitted Wyndward, taking the other gun from Chiyu. "Don't you want to shoot?"

She shook her head in the sunshine, which turned the coppery red of her hair to molten fire, and sat watching Wyndward; loading for him as he emptied, listening to the incessant bang, bang, bang of the other guns all down the line where the Buccaneers and Kilcarrick were spraying forest and sky, and sometimes a pheasant, with storms of leaden pellets.

Ground game being taboo, no beaters were touched up, fortunately.

The beat ended in a wild eruption of pheasant from the wood's edge; then the beautiful game birds were gathered up and laid out in long rows on the vivid green turf for inspection; the lunch wagon rolled up to the edge of a little forest stream, where a folding table and camp-chairs were erected, cloth laid, and marvelous eatables spread before guests theoretically exhausted by *la chasse à la française* and supposedly famishing in a howling wilderness.

It was all a kind of glorified skeet—purely a matter of experience and skill.

Of course George Bullup pretended to complete collapse and staggered pathetically toward the nearest champagne; but his clowning was now expected and approved by the fair who were satisfied that they had at least observed one genuine case of crazy American.

Saint Graal brook gurgled and splashed and poured an emerald waterfall into a cuplike basin fringed with ferns.

Chiyu explained that this brilliant green chalice gave the rivulet its name in the days of Henri Quatre who greatly esteemed the troutlings inhabiting its jade and opaline depths.

George Bullup, of course, had to leave the table and try to catch a trout in his hands. And finally Chiyu rose and knelt down among the ferns and showed her guests how the *braconniers* poach trout by "tickling"; and presently lifted a big red-spotted fellow from the water. It lay gleaming and quivering across the palms of her hands for an instant, then flopped back into the pool.

Everybody wanted to try it immediately, and the brook was full of scared trout rushing up and down, dodging futile fingers.

After the lunch, lazy cigarettes were in order; laughter and gossip among the ladies; emphatic and pictorial explanations among the gentlemen concerning missed shots.

When a pause in the jolly tumult afforded opportunity, Chiyu explained the remainder of the day's program: a walk-up of gray and red-leg partridges, with retrievers at heel. This, across the rolling cultivated territory of the farm.

Or, if any individual so elected, a shot or two at woodcock among alders and willows. But Cliquart guaranteed no sport there, because the wily long-bills might be lying up in the bracken or among birch and pine-bush scrub. However there was a brace of pointers awaiting any optimist.

The Buccaneers and Kilcarrick seemed to prefer deploying into line of battle, with extra promise of ground game; and a roe or *coq-de-bruyère* not unlikely.

"And you, Monsieur?" inquired Chiyu, looking at Wyndward.

"These big European woodcock are always a temptation to me," he admitted.

"Very well, we'll go," she said; and sent a footman to find a gamekeeper and the pointers.

Unwillingly George Bullup separated himself from a decanter full of Scotch dewdrops, and accepted a gun with a groan.

Chiyu and Wyndward observed with infinite amusement the departure of the Buccaneers and Kilcarrick for the field of honor, escorted by merry and lively ladies and followed by a battalion of *gardes de chasse* and two brace of heavy, black retrievers.

"Like Napoleon's Grand Army invading Egypt," said Chiyu, smiling.

"All they need is a band of music," remarked Wyndward. "Gentlemen," he called to them, "please remember that thirty centuries look down upon you—and will look downer if you bag a dog or a gamekeeper!"

"Will you accept a bet?" shouted Bullup. "Two to one I show you five brace of partridge to every woodcock you knock over!"

"Done," laughed Wyndward.

"Oh dear," exclaimed Chiyu, "now we must find birds! Jean-Paul," she added anxiously to their rosy faced little gamekeeper in sabots, blouse, and *képi*, "do you believe you can discover where the *bécasse* hide to-day?"

"*Soyez tranquille, Madame la Comtesse*," replied the grinning lad touching his cap. "Monsieur shall have no cause to be discontented."

So they strolled along by Saint Graal brook, the two liver-and-white pointers ranging and quartering ahead, and cutting up the ground like demons.

To the left a thread of a spring brook, bordered by bushes, meandered to meet Saint Graal; and, in a warm hollow, near a clump of willows, one dog whirled and froze to a point; the other, far to the right, crawling forward to "honor" him.

"*Bécasse*, Monsieur!" cried the little gamekeeper joyously.

Wyndward hastened forward; both dogs stood like bronze and silver statues, motionless except for the nervous movement of their slavering jaws.

As Wyndward stepped in front of them, up blundered the bird, its short, broad wings beating the air in mothlike flight; but at the crack of the gun it stopped in mid-air and dropped through the yellowing willow tops to the moist ground below.

"There's another, sir!" warned the little *garde de chasse*; and in the same instant up shot a huge woodcock and whirred away to the left; and Wyndward's shot left a dead bird driving earthward amid a floating cloud of feathers.

And then, as the dogs still stood, he walked on ahead; and up darted a snipe squawk-squawking in a very delirium of eccentric flight.

When at last he had "straightened out," it seemed an impossible shot; but luck held, and the *bécassine* fell whirling to the bang-bang of Wyndward's gun.

"Oh, Monsieur," protested Jean-Paul, "the first barrel did his business for him!"

"Quite right, Jean-Paul," admitted the young man regretfully. "Mark that shell against me."

The dogs, Tric and Trac, fetched in the dead birds and politely offered them to Jean-Paul. Wyndward, marveling always over the plumage of the big woodcock, showed the mottled breasts to Chiyu, explaining the difference between these and the American variety. And, when Jean-Paul pouched the game and cast out Tric and Trac, they moved on, over the rolling country, picking up a brace of *bécasse* or *bécassine* here, or a single bird there, or missing yonder in some pine plantation where, deep in bracken, the wily birds dodged behind some pine-bush before Wyndward could drop a gun on them.

There were an amazing lot of birds first and last; he made very few misses—no mortifying ones—and when the westering sun flung long rosy bars across the meadows, and the air was alive with evening midges dancing and glittering above the grass, Jean-Paul proudly laid out and counted eight brace of cock, and six and a half of snipe, and two hare.

Standing on a little eminence deep in fern and golden sphaghnum, they could see, far away, the Buccaneers still advancing across the interminable cabbage and carrot patches and plains gleaming with stubble; and hear the far report of guns, along the skirmish line.

At a word from Chiyu, Jean-Paul took the spare gun and the game and trotted away toward the distant motor-wagon which was dogging the Buccaneers.

Wyndward slung the remaining gun; and, shoulder to shoulder, he and Chiyu wandered slowly toward the distant house where every western window blazed fire in the glare of the sinking sun.

They made no conscious effort; they spoke or remained silent as it suited them, tranquil, unaware of this new intimacy that so subtly was invading and possessing them.

She spoke, absently, of this unfamiliar world and life; of its duties, burdens, responsibilities still not entirely familiar to her.

There was much kindness toward her, it seemed—from her husband, relatives, neighbors, servants, and the personnel of the estate.

"Because you are you, Chiyu," he said.

She looked up at him.

"Because," he repeated, "you are friendly and gentle and without pretense. There is no mistaking that kind of dignity."

She laughed. "Is that dignity?"

"The only real kind. The other is sneered at."

She laughed again. "You mean the 'high-hat'?"

"I do."

"Well, you know," said she, "considering my antecedents, that would be quite funny."

"Considering anybody's antecedents it remains funny. There is a sneaking 'dignity' of the spirit, too, which is still funnier—or sadder. . . . Pooh-Bah had it."

"Who was Pooh-Bah?"

"I forgot you were born too late to meet him. He was one of the immortals in *The Mikado*. . . . Well then, you *are* happy, Chiyu?"

She did not reply to that; and they sauntered on in silence, and their long shadows strode beside them.

Away over toward the west the shooting-wagon loaded with ladies and Buccaneers, was wending its way homeward; and their gay singing came faintly across the meadows.

"It was very kind of them to come to see my husband," said Chiyu, so simply that Wyndward laughed.

"Don't you suppose you were included in their eager assiduity?"

"They are friendly."

"I should say so! You've turned every one of their heads. You turn everybody's head, you know. . . . Or don't you know?"

"You should know," she replied demurely; "heads are your monomania, I believe."

His laugh was genuine but surprised. It was the first time in his life that this girl ever had ventured to chaff him. Her temerity left a tinge of color in her face.

"So you remember that?" he said. "Well, I'm just as fixed in my opinion as ever that eyes conceal, mouths reveal, and the shape of the head tells the whole story."

"I'm glad you approve mine," she said.

"It is perfect! So are—but that's not very subtle. Anyway you know what I could say about your head and the rest of you."

"I know what you *could* say, and I hope I know what you *would* say."

"By God," he said bluntly, "there never has been anything to say that does not do you honor!"

What he had blurted out extinguished conversation for a while. That the girl was sensitive to his flash of emotion appeared in her flushed features; and they walked on together past the glass-houses and kitchen gardens and orchards, turned the angle of the kennels and came out upon the northeastern terrace which overlooked a wooded ravine through which the brook Saint Graal dashed, foaming far below.

There were the usual French benches there. Chiyu stopped a moment, then seated herself and leaned on the balustrade, looking down into the dusky glen.

He, also, unslung his gun and sat down beside her.

"I am convinced," he said, "that human heads shape the destinies of those who wear them. You just can't help the shape of your head or your mystifying eyes. But your mouth tells your secrets every time."

"Does mine?"

"Exquisitely, Chiyu."

"What does it tell you—no! Don't!" she checked herself with a swift blush.

"All right; we'll take George Bullup's head, then. That square front with no back—the tawny *toison d'or hérissée*—"

She was laughing.

"Did you ever see a young herd bull?" he asked. But she laid a swift hand on his lips, still convulsed with laughter.

"Don't," she begged. "You are too cruel. . . . Too clever and unkind—"

"Not at all, Chiyu; he'd be flattered! . . . Well then, take Reckness, and his sleek receding head and sleepy eye of a satiated leopard. And the long, slightly upcurled mouth that confirms it all.

"Or take Phil Bailey, with his mottled head of a Dutch burgher with opaque, Delft-blue eyes. And a mouth fashioned for feeding. And *he* made it, not God!

"Or take Scott Dundas with his *tête de militaire*—all clean-cut temple and crisp hair and cheek-bone and jaw; and an eye of fighting blue. And that thin, grim streak of mouth to endorse the analysis. . . .

"Or Kilcarrick—all coursing-greyhound, even to his color—even to the delicate, eager mouth and slender jaw of him that will lap up life at speed and whether it taste of blood or tears. . . .

"Oh, Chiyu, take *me*. Shall we?"

She said faintly: "If you fashioned your mouth, I think God helped you."

Pulsating silence; increasing awareness of each other's nearness, stirring pulse to disorder; meddling with breath; confusing vision and misting mind.

The tension tired her and she rested one hand beside her on the edge of the bench; and presently his own covered it. Through throbbing silence, high in the sunset sky, lapwings, passing seaward, uttered their lonely notes.

"This is a strange scheme of things," she said at last—"the beginning, the long interim, the end. Ignorance, sophistication, helpless wisdom; then, death. . . . There is nothing to do about it—is there?" She turned to look at him. Her eyes were a deep golden gray, and dusky with the desperate grief and passion that her full, delicate lips were tremulously denying.

"I am no more secure than I was before I married," she said. . . . "I never expected to be thrown out on life's dump-heap before I was dead—"

She withdrew her fingers from his, set both elbows on her knees, and took her head between clenched white fists.

"It's bad enough to do it and die without a baby," she whispered fiercely. "But it's worse to remember—" She choked, turned away and sat with averted head, staring at the molten edge of the sinking sun.

"I was afraid of insanity," she said; "afraid a separation would do that to me. I should have remembered that I could always kill myself. . . . I never thought of it."

After a bitter silence: "They say that almost every French woman takes a lover. Maybe I would too if he were not so ill. . . . Or less kind. . . . I wish I had died the last time I saw you."

"I wish I had asked you to marry me," he said.

It was almost dusk before she finally turned around and looked at him. He took both her hands, then, and kissed her mouth; and she kissed his, trembling.

"John Wyndward," she said, "there is no way out of it, now; there never was any happy way out of it for me except to do whatever you wanted me to do. . . . I don't mean marrying you. You speak of it now in desperation; but it would have made you deathly unhappy if we had done it. . . .

"Maybe it might not make you unhappy now . . . as I am now. . . . Because other men have married me. . . . Not such men as you are—"

"But a damned sight decenter," he said savagely.

"Oh no; it isn't a question of decency. It's just getting out of life what one is entitled to. I knew it all the time; but I knew, also, the time would come when you would have to tell me it was ended. . . . I was afraid of that. Of what might happen to my mind. . . . I'm sorry I was afraid."

The early October twilight made her face and figure so dim that he leaned nearer; then took her in his arms.

"I can't play the game if you do that," she said. "Won't you see me through?"

He kissed her, conscious of the awakening passion in her breath and lips and slender fingers tightening on his shoulders.

"All right," he breathed, "I'll try to see you through, Chiyu. See me through, too."

They rose confusedly in the dusk; and instantly Wyndward was aware of a shadowy figure observing them—which disappeared in the darkness among the rhododendrons.

He said nothing about it. No use scaring Chiyu.

They went slowly toward the house together, he carrying his gun, she naïvely touching her eyes with tightly twisted handkerchief.

"I forgot to tell you," she said, "that Cliquart's foresters have located a very large boar. A gray one I believe he said. Will you take me with you, John?"

He had called her Chiyu all her life. It never had occurred to him that she had an equal right in familiarity. He never asked her to exercise it. Now the girl took it, after all these years; and the man felt strangely surprised and grateful and thrilled at her lovely condescension.

CHAPTER XVII
THE WORD

The victrola was going, and everybody was dancing in the great hall of the House of Oran when a footman, approaching Chiyu, asked her if she could see the *Grand Veneur* a moment.

Wyndward, with whom she had been dancing, stepped back, but the girl retained his arm, and they walked together to the armory, or gunroom, where Cliquart was waiting.

He was blunt and French about it; where the big, gray boar had bedded only the bed of juniper and the stink remained.

He said: "I don't know, Madame, what started that old devil, but he's changed his bed, and we'll have to find him or another before the gentlemen can shoot."

Chiyu smiled at the mortified huntsman, saying: "You shouldn't take it to heart, Cliquart."

"Pardon, Madame la Comtesse, but I do. I am ashamed. But, Madame, it was not our fault, I think. Some cursed, prowling *braconnier* must have startled that old rascal and, like a fox, he won't come back to where he was surprised asleep. I wish he'd ripped that poacher to slivers!"

"Oh, Cliquart! You mustn't make Monsieur Wyndward believe you are as cruel as that!"

"Monsieur knows as well as I do that a poacher is worth nothing," muttered the *Grand Veneur*. "And there is somebody else, also, hanging about the shrubbery and gardens, Madame. The servants have seen him twice, but they couldn't catch him."

Chiyu laughed. "My dear Cliquart," she said, "with a house full of gallant gentlemen do you think the ladies of the Hotel d'Oran are in any danger?"

"As a matter of fact," remarked Wyndward carelessly, "I myself caught a glimpse of a fellow this evening dodging about the shrubbery."

"If I see him I'll shoot his pants full of rock salt," snarled Cliquart.

"You are not to shoot at anybody," said Chiyu quietly.

Cliquart bowed, but rumbled in his beard rebelliously.

Returning to the great hall Chiyu said that a neighbor, the Vicomte de Numésnil, had a pack of fox hounds, and that they all were invited for the morrow if they cared to go.

When it was suggested to the dancers, everybody was delighted. So Chiyu telephoned to Numésnil and then called up the Oran stables.

Wyndward, waiting for her, slipped his arm under hers: "You're an efficient youngster," he said, "an irreproachable hostess, a perfect companion—everything, in brief, that every girl should aspire to be. I say it very clumsily, Chiyu, but the wonder of it still confuses me—"

"You always say the most heavenly things, John Wyndward—"

"Oh, Chiyu, Chiyu," he murmured sadly, shaking his head. Then he lifted her left hand and kissed it; and she slipped it gently within his arm.

The long windows were open; the night was as soft and still and starry as a midsummer night; and they stepped out to the south terrace where lemon and orange trees were in bloom.

"Once," she said, "years and years ago, you took me to a pretty French restaurant called Le Vieux Carré. First we had two delicious cocktails. Then caviar, a filet of imported sole, new little peas, new asparagus, and a salad Doucette, and an ice. And Chablis."

"Good Lord, do you remember all those details!"

"Yes. I said to you, 'I hope I shall have enough money some day to invite *you* to dinner in a pretty place.' Do you remember?"

"Yes, I do."

"I've done it, haven't I?"

"You have indeed, Chiyu. . . . But I wish the years could fall away, and we were back there in the Vieux Carré—"

"I go there very often," she said. "And to your studio. . . . It is dangerous ground, my friend."

"You always wished to live dangerously."

"I have lived dangerously ever since I was sixteen. You were the danger."

"I never dreamed—"

"*I* dreamed."

"Not at sixteen, Chiyu—"

"Every instant, day and night. I was living dangerously; and I knew it. . . . Even as a child, not seeing you almost broke my heart. . . . And when I was sixteen, and went to see you, I knew that I must live dangerously all the rest of my life."

He leaned heavily on the gray stone balustrade. Heavy scent of orange bloom in darkness almost sickened him. Bitterness, wonder, darkness. Steady pulsations of a brain too dull, too narrow to have understood the things she had understood at sixteen.

She said in a rather breathless way: "It's rather frightening—to think about. . . . Once you told me that life was dangerous enough without seeking further perils. Do you remember?"

"This is becoming unendurable," he said. "I could take my punishment for my damned stupidity, but it's hard to see you being punished for nothing."

After a little while she laughed almost cheerfully:

"At the Carthusian Sisters in Baltimore," she said, "I was a boarder, and I behaved quite well. But I was a day scholar when I was a child and went to the Carthusian Convent near New York. Sister Euxènie didn't like day scholars, and she used to punish me for things I never did. . . . That is where I got my name."

"Your name?"

"Chiyu."

"Isn't it your name?"

"No. My real name isn't Chiyu; it's Kathleen Veronica. Can you see a good Irish Catholic like my father naming me Chiyu? Or, perhaps you suppose there was some such Saint." She laughed again. "No; the name stuck to me. Even my parents called me Chiyu. So did Father Sullivan. And I was married twice under that name—with the other two trailing along after."

"What *is* Chiyu?" he inquired. "Chinese?"

They both laughed at that.

"This is how it happened. The cloisters of the Carthusian Sisters had been a *chai*. You know what that is?"

"Yes, a wine vault."

"Yes. And I used to like to put on my roller skates and skate there and make '*tapage*,' which disturbed the good nuns. And always Sister Euxènie would come running and crying out: '*Ne fais pas du chahut dans le chai comme ça!*' That was the eternal cry; '*chai*' and '*chahut*.' And you know uneducated people pronounce *chahut* like Chiyu. So, from the time I was a little kiddie everybody called me Chiyu."

He said: "The last breath I draw will breathe out that name."

The girl turned her lovely head to him, serious and startled.

"I did not know you felt that way," she said.

"That is how I feel, Chiyu."

"To—to—at the end of everything to think of *me*?"

"And until everything is ended, Chiyu."

"Then—" but her lips refused the question and the word.

He never had used the word "love" to this girl. He never even had admitted it to himself. It always had meant to him more than he understood. More than he cared to understand.

He used it now, for the first time in his life to any woman.

"I have read," he said, "that it sometimes means renunciation and resignation. These are not in me, Chiyu. But the whole thing is too new to me to know what I'm about. I know I've made a wreck of everything so far."

"It's r-rather awful, isn't it?" she said tremulously.

"Ghastly. I can't get on this way. And I'm not going to let you go on without love, Chiyu—"

"Oh my dear," she said impetuously, "you don't know the heavenly thing you've done to me already! Oh I wanted it—you don't know— How many, many times have I prayed for the miracle of your saying it to me!"

So tense was his whole body—the muscles in his cheeks and throat—that he could scarcely articulate—there where he leaned on folded arms beside her.

"I love you, Chiyu. If God really fashioned my skull, he made a narrow brain for it; and gave it a lagging heart and slow pulses to control. . . . I'm telling you all I know about me—I mean as I was. . . . As I always had been

until I became aware of you that time—conscious of touching you—troubled by your nearness. . . .

"I took it, merely, that it was coming to me—that it was high time it came. . . . Until then I never had been deeply stirred.

"And then it happened that you were in my arms, and I was passionately aware of you—of your mouth and throat and body. . . .

"Even then that God damned narrow mind of mine learned nothing. . . . It learned very, very slowly, Chiyu.

"And now it has taught me all there is to know.

"I love you."

Side by side, unstirring, they leaned on the gray stone coping, staring across darkness where far stars glimmered behind the veil of fog.

In the distant stables some paddock lad was practising the "hallali."

"*Le cerf est aux bois*," he murmured; "*le cerf, c'est moi*."

The girl's hand slid along the stone and closed convulsively over his.

"I don't know how I am going to go on this way," she said. "If he were not so ill. . . . I don't seem to know what to do any more—"

From spectral woods the far hooting of an owl floated across the darkness.

"*L'hibou*," she murmured; "*mal chance pour moi, je pense—*"

The owl called again.

She straightened up with an impatient movement of her supple shoulders: "*Chouette!*" she exclaimed with adorable effrontery—"and that is a gutter-snipe's jest and slang. Are you disgusted—darling?"

The unlocked for caress of the word—her first voluntary caress of any kind—thrilled him with its delicious suddenness; and he had caught both her hands before she could snatch them away.

"Please dear—those lighted windows behind us," she whispered—and twisted herself free of him and turned and ran.

But, as he did not follow, she came back hastily, and took his lips with heavenly leisure, her young arms around his neck.

Then: "John—darling—please help me to go back to them and look as though I were not in love—"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GATE

The hounds of Numésnil were good hounds. Victor de Numésnil was no "sportsman" but a correct Gallic copy of dozens of young Englishmen who did that sort of thing acceptably and *con amore*.

So master and pack, and the nags of the Numésnil Hunt were well turned out; and it was a pleasant sight to see the Buccaneers and Kilcarrick in pink, and the ladies from the Château d'Oran as beautifully groomed and turned out *à l'anglaise* as were their mounts from Oran stables *à la française*.

Wyndward having no pinks with him, rode out in gray cords and bowler. And Chiyu, riding cross-saddle with perfectly fitting bowler, stock, black hunting coat and boots, and still under Cliquart's schooling, was adorably diffident about a cross-country gallop over unknown terrain, having, so far, confined her equitational exploits to the gentle, rolling country of Oran where streams were narrow and turf soft.

The Vicomte appeared to be delighted to greet her and her guests. He was a young, blond fellow, a picture of wiry vigor and sunburnt health, and he did not seem to worry over any British criticism of the Numésnil pack.

A fenced lane leading down across Saint Graal stream—now a rapid little river where, at Oran, it was a brook—was filled with the hounds, riders in red coats, and lovely, slender ladies in that severe but bewitching *tenue* which makes the style of saddle a matter of indifference.

Master of Hounds, whip, and *piqueur* paraded with a perfectly controlled pack which, to Wyndward, seemed to lack nothing of bone, contour, coat, and color. Behind, riding as they found it convenient down the wide lane to the rippling river, the others followed, lady and cavalier, on an extremely good-looking lot of horses—many of Irish type; a few of French.

George Bullup in flaming pink was glorious, busy as a bird dog, bestowing himself upon lady after lady with killing condescension. Kilcarrick sat his flat saddle like his long-legged forefathers, and had few words to spare, intent on every detail of this French business which the artists of *Punch* always made so ridiculous.

Phil Bailey had grown too fat for his red riding-coat, and the twins, Clairette and Claudine, were suffocating with repressed hope to see the buttons fly. Reckness and Dundas rode like the Virginia veterans they were;

and Chiyu and Wyndward walked their hunters in the rear, more intent upon each other than upon this jolly, colorful, gossipy scene around them.

The early morning sun was rising in a cloudless sky as the hunt crossed the river; dew spangled the meadows like liquid frost where were spread countless thousands of little gossamer cartwheel spider webs, all heavily laden with glittering dew.

Cock pheasants were crowing in the bracken; bronze-green plover flapped leisurely toward the distant sea, plaintively complaining; a kestrel circled overhead in the blinding blue.

Deep in a spinny the hounds were being cast out, Wyndward and his ladylove sat their horses apart from the others, watching the eager, inquisitive heads and waving tails of the busy hounds shoulder deep in fern amid thorn and sapling.

Both had been thinking of the same thing—had been thinking of nothing else since leaving the weary Lord of Oran on his gilded bed that morning where the rising sun had flung a first golden arrow into the somber chamber of pain.

Finally Chiyu, always the child of candor, voiced their meditations: "That was an odd leave-taking. . . . I mean the strange verse he quoted. Do you remember?"

"Partly—"

She repeated under her breath:

> "There is a death no man should die, and live!
> There is a life no man should live, and die!
> One God, one life, one death we may defy,
> But Christ upon the Cross could not forgive
> A God whose gift of death became a lie!
> Who made that law, infernal or divine,
> Forcing me twice to drain Death's coal-black wine!"

Wyndward stared at the busy hounds and the huntsmen riding slowly around the spinny.

"They'll draw it blank, I expect," he murmured. . . . "That's rather a ghastly verse I think, even if one doesn't entirely get it."

"I do," she said.

He remained silent.

"Do you remember what else he said to you?" she continued in a low voice.

"Yes. He asked me to look out for you—not *in loco parentis* but *in memoriam*! That was an odd thing to say. What did he mean?"

"You don't understand?"

"No, I don't. Do you?"

"I think so."

At that moment a hound gave tongue, far hidden in the depths of the spinny where it thinned to a coppiced neck. Again the lone hound's cry broke out amid a wild scramble of waving tails and flapping ears, and a sudden stirring of horses. Westward, through wet weeds, trotted the Master of Hounds.

And now hound after hound took up the scent hysterically; shining horses and red-coated riders were cantering forward; there came a lively flourish from a hunting horn; a far cry in the coppice; and suddenly, on the bare hillside, appeared a confusion of headlong, scrambling hounds in dappled contrast to the turf; and Master and Whip in galloping escort.

The country was not stiff. Orderly hedges and shallow ditches characterized it, with a plowed field or two and wide open gates, for any who preferred them, and a grinning *garde de chasse* or shepherd to close them safely.

The field was not numerous but it was choice. Scarcely half a dozen farmers attended, and they seemed a sturdy lot and galloped stoutly at ditch and hedge.

But after the first two miles the character of the landscape changed; and there were rocky pastures and stretches of heath and gorse and broom, and patches of chestnut woods cut by deep gullies.

This French fox, evidently, proposed to make a Roman holiday of it for the Numésnil Hunt; and began to do it by entering a rather devilish region peppered by shallow little ponds where widgeon spattered into flight and a great heron flapped solemnly over shaggy tree-tops.

It was the celebrated Col de Nio—fanciful seventeenth century companion to the Cyclades—where dozens of tiny islets, separated by threads of water, permitted a pursued animal to jump from one to another. And this Numésnil fox did exactly that.

There ensued a vast splashing of hounds and horses; and check after check, while the sagacious of the pack scented out the clue to the maze and led on out of this watery wilderness.

But the pack, now running in silence, was far away on a hill before the last laggard detached himself and his horse from a bewildering mess of fern and willow, and pounded hopefully onward toward the horizon.

Also this was no place for neophytes; and Wyndward kept holding in his hunter and lingering to see that Chiyu kept her saddle and avoided a bath.

So when, at last, they emerged from the fabled islets and took a survey of the landscape, the hunt was far away and the hounds out of sight.

"Go on, please!" she insisted, breathless from her scramble. "I don't wish to be a burden to anybody—"

"Do you know this country?"

"Vaguely. I've never before hunted here."

He sat his saddle, listening intently. Very, very far away to the westward he caught the faint notes of a horn.

"I think," he said, "they're swinging around to our right beyond those woods. Suppose we ride that way?"

"I don't want you to make allowances for my poor sportsmanship—"

"You've always made allowances for mine, Chiyu."

The girl blushed brightly but set her horse in motion beside his; and they moved forward together in silence.

Near a stile they saw Phil Bailey sitting and holding the bridle of his horse.

"Anything wrong?" inquired Wyndward.

"Every button's gone, and I'm split up the back," replied Bailey.

At that moment the twins, Claudine and Clairette, cantered up, their hopes realized. But they were not cruel about it; they said they had had enough and offered to show Mr. Bailey the way home.

So he climbed gingerly onto the stile and remounted with misgivings; and the two pretty Samaritans rode off on either side of him exhibiting solicitude and marvelous facial control.

Others were passed who had fallen by the wayside as Chiyu and Wyndward continued their way; and they saw Scott Dundas, all over mud, chasing his own horse in a swampy pasture—which Wyndward caught for him—and the lively Sesia de Serret and a very young French cavalry officer were observed, sitting their horses among the ferns and lighting cigarettes for each other.

They rode into the chestnut woods, drawing bridle now and then to listen, but wherever the hounds had gone they were not in this part of the world.

"You look tired," he said bluntly.

"It's not the gallop. I slept rather poorly."

"Why?"

She said with characteristic candor: "I was excited by your kissing me."

He touched her gloved hand, and she stripped off the glove and abandoned it to him.

"This is like an enchantment," she said. "I try to believe it. It doesn't seem to be me—with *you*. . . . When I'm so excited that I shiver all over I look up into the sky and try to think and realize—I do love you so; I do—"

Yellowing chestnut leaves were sifting down through brown and yellow tree-tops, each leaf striking intervening twigs and stems with a tiny elfin clatter so that the wood was full of the dry murmur.

Red squirrels with pointed, furry ears, raced about among filbert bushes, disputing with rosy-breasted jays; and, if one sat very still, one caught the cautious, hidden tread of fallow deer moving stealthily through some ferny glade invisible.

"It is like the magic forest of Armida," she murmured. "Even the cascade. Can you hear it down there below us?"

It was a faint, sighing sound like wind in pines.

"We could ride back to Oran this way," she said as they emerged into a broad, grassy ride where another ride, intersecting, formed a ferny *carrefour*, in the center of which was a marble pedestal and figure of Artemis, weather worn and patched with moss and lichen.

The goddess, with one hand, was trying to restrain two leashed and struggling hounds from plunging ahead. In the other hand she clutched an

unstrung bow. Her keen, beautifully dangerous head, was bent forward, her gaze riveted on something invisible to mortal man perhaps.

"She sees Endymion," murmured Chiyu. "Or was it Sélène and not Artémise who had designs on that poor young man? Or does that statue merely represent Woman, the eternal huntress, always stalking but always checking in and controlling the dogs of desire?"

He laughed: "Who's the author of that Gallicism? Not you!"

"No; Victor de Numésnil. We were riding this way."

"Very French," he said dryly.

She glanced up, extended her bare hand toward his and rested it there as they walked their horses slowly along the ride.

"I suppose," he said, "your unspoiled youth and beauty are sufficient to start every Gaul bedeviling you with Gallic mischief."

She laughed. "You know," she remarked, "that it has required rather more than a mischievous Gaul to bedevil me. Meaning you, John."

"Do I bedevil you?"

"You meddle angelically with my peace of mind."

"Do I really cause you unhappiness, Chiyu?"

"Oh, darling, you are making me wildly happy, now. Can't you understand? I am twenty-two years old. And I have been in love with you since I was ten."

"Not as a child—"

"Yes, as a child. Always! You seem to think children can't love and be lovesick? You seem to think they can't thrill and suffer? They do. Their world is a romantic and exquisite realm of enchantment; and in that celestial region of unreality they detach their minds and souls from the sordid and familiar, and mingle with the radiant beings in their fancy fashions. And love wildly, tempestuously, and hate as passionately as they love."

"I never knew that your childish imagination had created a lover out of me," he said, smilingly.

"It also created a magic world for you to live in. You were always the only thing in the world as far as I was concerned. And, by day and night, I was always venturing into the world I made for you, to be with you and love you and be loved by you."

"What did we do together?"

"We traveled the world over, and always hand in hand."

"Did we kiss?"

"Frantically."

He laughed, but she remained serious:

"It was when I returned to the poverty and misery of reality," she said, "that I became lovesick and hopeless and frightened to be awake and alone. . . . Do you remember when my daddy was killed and you looked for me and brought me home? I began to love you then. . . . When I was kneeling between the candles by the bed I tried to think of God, but I could only see you. . . . I have looked at many, many men in all these years, and never have seen a single one of them excepting you."

"And then—you ran away from me."

"You know why."

He looked in silence at this young, healthy, lovely creature who had feared insanity if they two had loved and parted. . . . And if they loved, now, they must part. . . . And if they loved and parted—what?

What did it avail him now—this surge of wintry bitterness at his own narrow-brained complacency—fat-brained prejudices, mental blindness and inertia in the days that were no more? . . . In the golden days when he had made his monument; when the fire of creative desire was in him and his veins sang the song of unfettered aspiration and the reckless hymn to beauty?

Where, in those days, were his eyes and heart and mind and the inspiration of vision?

All that this girl was to-day he should have seen, divined, recognized in the child, in the shy, wistful adolescent, in the lovely, unhappy girl upon whose marriage bed her husband sprawled in drunken delirium.

And he had seen and divined nothing, preoccupied with his self-complacency, his petty routine, his pettier prejudices, and his own precious and personal well-being.

So an alert world stole from him what lay trembling between his hands. A smart, lively, enterprising world endowed with shrewd foresight and a talent for appraising.

Of that lively world Trenholme had seen and acted; then Jauncy, then Kilcarrick, then, tumbling over one another toward a recognized goal, every man who laid eyes on her. Even de la Roquettaire, willing to live off her modest dot for the sake of this young thing's sheer beauty of mind and body. . . . And had destroyed her new husband because of it. He knew, now, that it had been because of her, not because of ancient bickering over money that this dingy, disappointed, desperate lover had so savagely mutilated his infuriated cousin in Oran woods that sunny afternoon.

They rode through the Oran gates together about two o'clock in the afternoon; and Chiyu went up to see her husband, and then to bathe and change and lunch lightly either beside her husband's bed or in her own apartments if he were inclined to sleep.

Wyndward continued on to his own quarters where he removed the saddle-reek with a bath, changed to flannels and ate his bacon, eggs and coffee in sunny seclusion.

The others straggled in by twos and threes late in the afternoon, having returned to the Hôtel Numésnil for a breakfast.

Only one fox had been started and that one had, finally, gone to earth, where they decided to let him remain in vulpine peace. So there were neither brush, nor mask, nor pads—only a glorious and rather stiff gallop to record as the day's doings with the Numésnil pack.

About five o'clock Phil Bailey, resenting loss of "face" and buttons, took a rifle from the armory and Jean-Paul from the gamekeeper's lodge and walked out into the woods.

And there he saw a roebuck walking up a gully; and knocked him over, and proudly displayed him to the twins, Claudine and Clairette, who marveled with clasped hands and dared not nudge each other.

Chiyu, charming in white tricot sport clothes accented with topaz gun-pads and military cuffs, applauded the prowess of Mr. Bailey and ordered the pitiful little head, with its pathetic antlers, to be neatly mounted and sent to Mr. Bailey's New York address.

Other guests clustered around to view the defunct roebuck which lay on the terrace with its four slim legs tied together and its delicate little hoofs sticking out.

"Cooked *à la chasseur*," suggested Jean-Paul politely, "the flesh is delicious, Monsieur."

"Let it be *à la chasseur*," said Bailey with an anticipatory quiver of his fat mouth.

Chiyu had something to say to one of the shepherds concerning some new sheep-dog puppies, and she went on alone toward the *basse-cour* and fold.

As she was returning through the west orchard—close where a path continues on toward one of the Oran service gates a mile away, a man stepped from among the apple trees in front of her, taking off his soft felt hat with a flourish.

"Amadeo!" she said, astounded.

"Madame, I could no longer keep away!" exclaimed de la Roquettaire passionately. "I beg you will not drive me from you— Oh, Chiyu, I beg you to listen—"

"This is an unpardonable effrontery, Monsieur—"

"Not unpardonable, Chiyu, if you will hear me for a moment—for one moment—"

"What can you have to say to me then—with your cousin's blood unwashed from your wicked sword?" she said breathlessly. "This makes four times you have found your way inside Oran gates—four times within the month! And four times you have attempted to detain me in conversation. And I am obliged, once more, to say to you, Monsieur, that I do not wish to speak to you—"

"In God's name, Chiyu, show some pity!" he begged; and there was a passion in his voice that was almost a squeal. "I merely ask you to hear me a moment. I am miserable, distracted, in an agony of self-reproach. But I fought Charles loyally; the officers' court of appeal have said the thrust was not to be laid to any disloyal thrust of mine! I should not have provoked the duel, but I was beside myself with grief and love—"

"I gave you no reason—no liberty to believe—"

But the torrent of stumbling words were overwhelming her and beating at her senses and benumbing speech and movement.

"From the beginning I loved you!" he burst out. "I flung myself at your feet; I agonized prostrate before you! What did I care that you had no money

—or little! I loved! I adored! It was enough. All I asked of God's holy Mother was to touch your heart, Chiyu! And I believe you would, at last, have listened—had not that wicked American woman warned you away from me, and had not my cousin paid her—yes, paid her money!—to bring him formally to your notice! Would not such treachery—such cynical and vile impudence enrage and madden any man? Could any man of heart and courage endure it?"

"What do you want?" she said.

"I want your forgiveness, Chiyu. I want you to show some trace of human feeling toward an unhappy man whose only crime is that he loved you—and loves you still! I want you to show me a little mercy—give me leave to see you, now and then—"

"Monsieur, I don't engage in vulgar intrigue."

His small, muddy eyes blazed like a rat's at that, and he almost screamed at her: "I saw you on the terrace with a lover Tuesday night! And on Wednesday, also. And you were in his arms and he kissed you!"

His words seemed to deafen her for a moment, and she went white and then scarlet as though lashed across the face.

"You care nothing for your husband! You never did! And you did not understand my passion, nor that I am a man to be reckoned with and not to be endured and then ignored! Oh my God, Chiyu, could you not understand me after I had fought to the death for love of you—to avenge myself—to revenge that man's betrayal of me—to try to win your respect—your regard—perhaps even a little tenderness in time—win even a little love—"

"By murder?" Her voice choked, and she stood staring at him, her small white hands tightly clenched.

"Murder? You believe then, that I fought foully? Is that why you refuse to listen, Chiyu? I swear before God Almighty, on my mother's cross—"

The horror in her face checked and silenced him. Then the muddy red of pure rage empurpled his sallow skin to the roots of his thick, bristly hair.

"What is the matter with you?" he demanded, his loose mouth quivering like a dog's before a cornered doe. "You are not too fastidious to take a lover, it seems, although you pretend to shock when I tell you that I have loved you better than life, and have proved it!"

She said: "Even if my husband were not bedridden I should not ask him to take up this affair with you—"

"Maybe you will ask your lover," he sneered.

"No. But I'll instruct the servants what to do with you if you ever again come inside Oran gates."

Fury blanched him.

"As it pleases you, Madame. And now let me tell you what I am going to do. I am going to see that my cousin d'Oran is fully informed about your lover. You think perhaps I can not get the pleasant news to him? You are mistaken. I know how to do it, and you can not prevent me."

His jaws were working again; he kept clinching and relaxing his blunt fingers and staring at her out of his little, bloodshot, inflamed eyes.

"The trouble with you," he said, "is that you are stupid. Like all Yankees you are almost without brain, which makes your beauty of face and body a matter of merely temporary amusement—"

"Monsieur, move aside if you please—"

"One moment, Madame," he said with a leer. "I think perhaps you are going to be quite willing to see me again. Not, Madame, that I have any tender regard left for you. Stupidity never attracted me. And, as you are so insultingly averse toward regarding me as a lover, maybe you will consent to be useful to me—financially."

For a moment she lost all color again, and he leered at her.

"If," he said, "my cousin d'Oran is informed that you are turning his Château into a bordel, he will have you thrown out of those beautiful old gilded gates. A word from me, and it happens, Madame.

"But—well, your personal allowance, I am told, is three hundred thousand francs. That, in your Yankee money, considering the present value of the franc, is not much. However, I will accept it. So, with your gracious coöperation, maybe I shall in time acquire a portion of the family fortune in which both decency and justice should permit a Prince de la Roquettaire to share."

She was unable even to move her lips, and he showed his discolored teeth at her.

"Say a week from to-day? Yes? Here? . . . In notes of a thousand, Madame—for your convenience. . . . I really regret the trouble I cause you. I should have preferred to leave here as your accepted lover. You would not have it so. *Que voulez-vous, Madame la Comtesse*; man proposes; the lady

disposes. *Ah oui, hélas! Donc*—at five o'clock then, a week from to-day. *Here*. Or—what is it you say in America? Ah yes—you get the gate!"

CHAPTER XIX
LA LIBERTÉ

The young Countess of Oran had not the slightest idea of what to do about this situation.

She was not panic-stricken; she was slightly frightened.

It never had been her habit to go to anybody for advice or aid in perplexity; never to her mother; never to the Carthusian Mother Superior nor even to Father Sullivan.

Not secretive but always reticent with everybody she ever had known except John Wyndward, she had, now, no intention of carrying this unexpected and highly disagreeable affair to him.

Had her husband not been so desperately ill she would have told him, admitted her passion for Wyndward, and offered him his freedom—divorce not being admissible in his religion or in hers. Although, so far, there could be no doubt that Rome was competent to nullify this marriage which, she had been given to understand, never could be consummated.

One thing, however, was certain; she could not bring her trouble to a husband who was unable to take the matter into his own hands. And, to ask him for advice would have been brutal. It was the cruelty of Amadeo's threat to trouble the sick man with such things that frightened the girl.

If she told Wyndward he'd take Amadeo by his sallow neck; and there would be another scandal at the Hôtel d'Oran bespattering everybody.

There seemed to be nothing she could do about it except to have the servants eject him if he returned. Or to pay blackmail.

She knew what blackmail was. Youthful education in the front row had instructed her that Broadway and blackmail were synonymous. Here, chuckle-headed youth and tired business men, alike, usually took what was generally known as a "trimming" when they strayed too far backstage.

So she knew that this was blackmail. But she did not know what to do about it.

Dressing for dinner that evening she pondered the problem—not nervously nor angrily—for Chiyu was so slow to anger that she could not remember any outbursts of wrath excepting once when a boy took indelicate

liberties with her, and she had hit him with her small fist and knocked out a tooth or two.

Her chief and only emotion seemed to be a dread that the sick man on his gilded bed might be made unhappy.

Chiyu was accustomed to dress early because her husband liked to see her in an evening gown and always wished to hear about the table decorations and what sort of dinner the chef had designed for the evening.

While her personal maid, Josephine, was fastening her garters she stood thinking and looking down from her window toward the orchard close; and saw Wyndward, already dressed for dinner, wandering out there all alone.

Always her heart quickened at sight—even at the mere thought of him; and it did so now.

Never in all her life had a thought disloyal to him entered her mind, nor any censorious reflection regarding him or anything he ever had done.

That this young man had not discovered that she had been worth loving legally seemed now to her a sorrowful thing, and as tragic for him as for her. But never did she attach the slightest blame to him for the unhappy situation in which they found themselves, because her mind simply could not conceive any fault in him.

It was sad; it was a great pity; and that was all. And only this miracle of yesterday—the revelation to them both that at last he understood she was worth loving—was compensating her enough to make her fate endurable. . . .

She had half an hour, nearly, before dinner could be announced, in which to amuse the sick man.

She expected to do it. But it was he, not she, who maintained the conversation. The strangest she ever had listened to. And when at last she left the shadowy chamber her throat was straining to choke back the tears.

Wyndward with his cigarette, his hands in his pockets, and wandering at hazard among the apple trees where wine-fragrant fruit dangled heavily from every bough, noticed a man standing near the wall-wicket, his head bent as though in deepest thought.

He was a sallow, wiry Frenchman who looked dingy and unventilated in his snuff-colored knickers and stockings and fancy sweater; and his ears

were crowded outward by a too-large golfing cap.

As Wyndward started to retrace his steps the man heard him and looked around; and Wyndward, also, turned at the same moment.

"'Allo, Wyndward," said the man, showing a row of yellowish teeth under his grin, "'ow do you like the country life at Oran?"

He advanced, offering his hand; and Wyndward recognized the bilious skin and waxed mustaches of Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire.

Wyndward did not particularly care to shake the offered hand but could not politely decline it.

"I thought," he said, bluntly, "that you were on the outs with the household at the Hôtel d'Oran."

Amadeo shrugged. "Oh well, so far as I am concern Charles is a good fellow. Men were born to differ; we had a difference. *Voilà tout!*"

"So you are reconciled?"

Another expressive shrug. "For me, I am reconcile. I bear no malice. I have written to say so, frankly. What more can I do?"

"Then Monsieur d'Oran knows that you are here?"

"Ah, that I do not know, Monsieur. My cousin has not reply. *C'est dommage!* I have made the *amende honorable*. I do my possible. Kinsmen should not cherish malice. If there has been bad blood between Charles and me, *mon dieu*, have we not spilled it out?"

As such matters were no concern of Wyndward he remained silent; but it seemed to him a colossal impertinence that this fellow who had destroyed the head of the House of Oran, should feel free to saunter about the estate uninvited.

"To-morrow," said Amadeo cheerfully, "you hunt the boar. Yes?"

"I haven't heard so."

"But yes, Monsieur; it is talk about a drive in the West Forest for to-morrow."

"I don't know anything about it," repeated Wyndward.

"Believe me," insisted the other with animation, "it is true. They could not find and hold any good boar, and so they drive. Me, I could find a bedded boar worth spear or bullet, and hold him, too. But this Cliquart—and

his *piqueurs* and *gardes de chasse*; it is not in their blood; it is, with them, a business like any other.

"But, for eight hundred years it has been in the blood of my race to follow and find and fight the wild boar! And I thank God I have inherit the instinc' and desire."

"I see. Then, no doubt, you will join in any hunting that may materialize in the forest of Oran."

He shrugged. "I do not see why not. True, I have not yet been invite. And yet I am friendly and have offer my amends *loyalement et de bon cœur*.

"And, Monsieur, it would be very difficult for any man of my race to remain unconcerned when the hunting horns sound in Oran Forest."

To that Wyndward had nothing to say. So he dropped his burning cigarette, set his heel on it, took polite leave of Prince Amadeo, and walked away toward the Château where, already, guests were gathering for cocktails in the glass orangerie.

He said to Chiyu when he found an opportunity: "I ran into Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire in the orchard before dinner. What is he doing around here?"

There was a perceptible pause before she replied: "What did Amadeo say he was doing?"

"Nothing in particular," replied Wyndward dryly, "except that he wished to patch up matters with your husband and go boar hunting. . . . Is there to be a hunt to-morrow?"

"Yes; a drive. Cliquart sent up word while I was dressing that they hadn't succeeded in finding and holding anything very good, but that he could drive some big ones if permitted. So I sent word that we'd hunt to-morrow." . . . She added in a low voice: "Please take out Sesia de Serret; I ought to give my arm to Mr. Reckness for once. But you'll find your card on my left, darling. . . ."

"You're so sweet to me, Chiyu—"

"You're so kind to think so—" her hand at her side touched his; there was a momentary linking of fingers, then he took her cocktail glass and she smiled her thanks and gave her arm to Revell Reckness.

The news of the morrow's hunt had just been broken to the guests at Oran House, and the table chatter was lively during dinner.

And, after coffee had been served, George Bullup and the twins went into the armory, and there he practiced on a curly hunting horn until they fled, and Phil Bailey came in to protest in the name of all bridge players on earth.

"Damnation," he said, "do it to the boar to-morrow and you'll need no rifle. Where the hell do you think you are—in a Harlem free-for-all?"

"Oh go and split your buttons," retorted Bullup; but he laid aside his horn and fell to examining the rifles in their racks; and Chiyu came in to show him the weapons used in Oran woods.

"Because," she explained, "Cliquart says that any long-range gun is dangerous to the other hunters in a drive, and anyway a Männlicher wouldn't stop a charging boar. So my husband used only the 45-70, which, he says, will stop a boar and is not likely to hit a guest a mile away."

Bullup, who never had shot a boar, or even seen a wild one loose, contemplated with respect several huge, shaggy, tusky heads mounted on the armory walls.

"I think I'll make my will," he said, "and leave all to the S.P.C.A.—except a broken heart; and that goes to you, Chiyu."

"To be divided pro rata," she laughed. "Line of grass widows will form on the left, chorus girls on the right—"

"You're very mean to me," he said. "If ever the time comes—"

"It never will, George. You have enough scalps without my red one."

"You know I've been mad about you—"

"*At* me, not about me!"

"Determined to marry you—"

"Determined *not* to, George, except when it became the fashion," she said, laughingly. "So make your will and leave me a small, thin slice of your used-up heart, and I'll distribute what's left from Park Avenue to Greenwich Village."

His features expressed pained resignation as they returned to the bridge players where, noticing Sesia disengaged, he cheered up, pounced, and lugged her off somewhere—anywhere out of sight would do. . . .

Everybody being busy—the twins deep in Tric-trac—Chiyu picked up a fur coat and went out to the terrace where there was a tang of northern cold

in the starlit night.

Wyndward, sitting on the balustrade, passed his arm around her as she came up, but she freed herself.

"Don't, darling," she murmured, "the night has eyes."

"I don't see any."

"I don't either." She shivered a little. "I wish I could tell Charles."

"Tell him what?"

"That I am in love with you." She shivered again. "I hate deception."

"I don't care for it either."

"I know it. But it would be a brutal thing to say to a sick man that I wished to go . . . that I was weary of him. Frightful! . . . There's absolutely nothing left for him if I go. . . . I have no vanity or conceit, darling; it just happens to be a fact. . . . And even if it were merely a *mariage de convenance*, I couldn't leave him in such a state. . . . I couldn't abandon a sick kitten. Or anything dependent. . . . I wish somebody could tell me—show me how—" She choked, turned her lovely head aside and pulled the fur closer around her pallid face.

Wyndward pulled out a pipe, loaded it slowly and attentively, examined several matches before he struck one. It burned out in his fingers and his pipe sagged, unlighted.

"See here," he said, "there's damned little that I can do for you, Chiyu. But I can go."

"Oh no," she breathed, her fingers closing on his sleeve.

"Think it out. Wouldn't it be easier for you?"

"No."

She stood twisting and fingering the edge of his sleeve, her eyes fixed on the stars sparkling coldly over Oran Wood.

"I think he knows, anyway," she said.

Wyndward turned to her incredulously.

"It was just before dinner," she said, "and I went in to say good night. . . . He likes to see me in evening dress. . . . So the nurse went out and I sat down by the bed where he could see me. . . . I told him that Cliquart

wished to drive boar. Usually that would have interested him, but he merely kept his eyes on me without noticing what I was saying. I could see that.

"When I had nothing further to say about Cliquart and the drive, he spoke about you. Very, very kindly—" Her voice caught again and again she turned her head and remained so for a little while, worrying his sleeve with slender white fingers.

Finally, with a little movement of her shoulders, she lifted her head and turned once more to her lover.

"He said that it was generous of you to come to Oran because, although his acquaintance with you in New York was slight, he was conscious that you had not liked him.

"He thought that you liked him better, now. He always had admired and liked you, he told me.

"Then he told me that he had only one fear in the world; and that was the fear that I might tire of Oran, and of him, and seek what—as he said—was due me—an annulment of our marriage.

"He said that he would make no plea for my love because he was aware that he never had possessed it.

"He would not, he said, beg for my friendship because even friendship was not had for the asking. But he thought that he already possessed that in some degree.

"Then he said that the physicians agreed that he might live for a long while, yet grow no better. Which meant a sentence of life imprisonment for me if it were true.

"He said that no strong, healthy and young woman could tolerate such a sentence and remain happy and normal.

"So he said he gave me limitless liberty of mind and spirit and body. That he asked only that I remain where, sometimes, he could see and talk to me, and be conscious of my presence in this ancient home of his family.

"And, while he was speaking, I sat all the while just looking at him, frightfully sorry for him, close to tears.

"So, at last, when he said no more, I told him that I would remain; that I entertained for him a real friendship; that I cared for Oran and its traditions, and that I was sorry that I could not give him a son in return for his kindness

to me. . . . I don't see how I could have endured it, but I would have had to, somehow, I suppose, if it had been possible. . . . But it isn't."

She drew nearer to Wyndward, rested against his shoulder. "I don't know how he knows. I suppose he has only to look at me when you are in the room."

Wyndward did not look at her, did not speak.

"I am wondering what will happen to me," she said. "I mean when you go."

"I can't remain much longer, Chiyu."

"No. . . . Oh darling—"

He had one of her hands now; crushed it between his.

"We'll talk it all over b-before I go," he said unsteadily.

"We'll have to. . . . And, darling, I'm quite sure somebody has seen you kiss me."

"You believe so?"

"I'm quite sure of it."

"As a matter of fact," he said, "there was a shadowy somebody dodging around those rhododendrons the other evening. . . . I didn't wish to worry you—"

"Such things don't worry me, darling. It's only because he's so helpless —and so kind—"

"Those damned bridge players are coming out. We must talk it over somewhere—where we'll not be interrupted—"

"Shall I come to your room?"

He did not reply; and the next instant people came flocking out into the starlit freshness in animated discussion of their several bridge games; and George Bullup, always the clown, began to turn cartwheels across the terrace to the delight of the giggling twins.

"Come on, Buttons," he challenged Bailey. "I'll turn 'em with you for a hundred francs a flip-flop and allow you a handicap of six!"

But Phil Bailey had no stomach for such activities; and somebody turned on a victrola, and the dance was on in the great hall.

CHAPTER XX
THE CLOCK

Gay voices died out along corridor and stairway; doors opened, closed distantly; a last echo of a young girl's laughter; then stillness settled through the darkened halls of the House of the Counts of Oran.

The windows were open in Wyndward's bedroom and he closed all except one. Through it came softened sounds of the October night—soughing of tall trees in some fitful breeze, drip of dew along the leads and gargoyled water-spouts, a far, melancholy complaint from some restless hound. And, always the owl's ghostly note from the foggy forest like a goblin's faint halooing in the starry mist.

He found, on his dresser, an American mail awaiting his pleasure—letters from Quinton and from Narcissa Belinda Grey, and a bundle of New York newspapers.

Quinton wrote briefly concerning the financial gloom enshrouding the country:

> But why do we curse out our miserable morons in Congress? They are morons; but morons chose, elected, and put them there. They truly represent the stupid, bewildered average of a partly educated and uncouth public with all that public's credulity, vulgarity, and greed.
>
> As for the bigots; Chadband, Stiggins, and Uriah Heep, as always, lead their Baptist—Methodist—Presbyterian mobs in a swine's scramble to hog the last scrap of personal liberty left in our mire-trampled Republic; and a pie-faced executive smirks approval. Tyranny, intolerance, vulgarity, poverty stamp this blackest year with a branding iron that will leave its nasty scar on us forever.
>
> Stupidity is drifting us toward conflict with Asia—the same national stupidity that alienated South America and is alienating all Europe. Only the rectitude of England looms like a majestic rock out of this reeking sea of scum.
>
> Why do you talk of coming back? There is no work for you. I once thought that the most terrible thing in the world was bigotry. No. The most terrible thing in the world is to ask for work and be

denied because there is no work to do. No threat of hell embodies such a horror.

You will please offer all my devotion to my little Chiyu. My friendship and respect to the Count d'Oran. My good-humored contempt for the remainder of the house-party excepting my cousin Kilcarrick. Just tell him he's an ass.

Yours without enthusiasm,
T. QUINTON, M.D.

He carefully destroyed this letter. It was no business of French servants, this moral collapse of America.

Narcissa Belinda's letter was lazy, humorous, impertinent, delightful. He read it once, laid it aside for re-reading.

The bundle of American newspapers depressed him. He unfolded one as a sample. Sordid politics redolent of Louisiana Kingfish, murders, kidnapping enterprises, a moribund Congress kicked to death by public opinion and expiring in disgusting struggles while an impossible President sent them unasked advice—and he might as well have spat into their twitching, dying, and swinish ears.

Then there was uglier news; veiled hints that a proud, sensitive, chivalrous, warlike nation—which was doing what the United States had done for a hundred years—had finally taken offense at our Caucasian hypocrisy.

Wyndward shed his coat of ceremony, pulled on a silk dressing gown over his white waistcoat, lighted a cigarette, and turned to the pages devoted to literature and the drama. Here the same old book-reviewing pander and the same thwarted literary young thing in skirt or pants, and the same column-clown and comic-strip merry-andrew cavorted daily, as usual.

And so from thence to the screen advertisements, all a-sprawl with scare-heads and the names of Broadway kikes and Hollywood whores. Full of cuts of young men and women kissing; or, nose to nose, inspecting each other with tom-cat intensity; or hugging each other about half naked. . . .

Wyndward had had enough.

Out onto his iron balcony he stepped, knotting his chamber-robe around his lean waist, and looked out over acres of filmy ground mist to the spectral forest. From it the goblin yelping of owls came fitfully. A large, liquid star

trembled low above it, washed out at intervals by waves of mist. And in his weary brain echoed the old admonition of a departed and priggish age:

Where every prospect pleases
And only man is vile.

"Man might remain stupid but he needn't be vile," he thought, "if he minded his own goddam business." The distant owls laughed in the forest mist. Then the clock in the old château chapel of Sainte Anne d'Oran struck twice very softly.

A sudden overwhelming sense of loneliness and futility, surged in his heart—as though the low, still notes of the bell had evoked emotions dormant and forgotten. . . .

Never before had he known such loneliness. . . . If only there were anything to believe— If Sainte Anne d'Oran ever really had lived. . . . After all, she might have. . . . After all, Christ had existed—whatever you thought about him. Or chose to think— No, it was no matter of choice; he was a God. Or he behaved like one. Or, he was no God but behaved like one. . . . And whatever conclusion you came to regarding his birth, he certainly had been born of a mother. . . . Then came the stumble: again no matter of choice: there was individual survival after physical death, or some sort of survival; or there was not. Christ believed there was. Believe it too, if you can. Or let it remain that you do not know. No choice here; you think you know; you know; or you don't know. The latter utter loneliness and intolerable except that you are one in an eternal plight, entangled with everybody in the universal net. . . .

God, what loneliness! And yet this young man's immature philosophy and all his youthful hurt was stirring him to mental pain and spiritual passion merely because of a young girl in whom he had discovered both of these, along with their exquisite, physical concomitant.

So it was not the bell in the Sainte's Chapel, or thought of the lovely Sainte herself, but love, which sent his restless soul aloft in lonely inquiry.

It was still floating about inter-stellar realms when he heard a sound in the room behind him like a cautious knocking at his door.

It was she, of course, and in a delicate Chinese robe of woven gold and April blue, and her copper-tinted hair in two loose braids, framing a flower-white face.

"Were you on your balcony?" she asked in a guarded voice. "I thought I saw you."

He nodded and closed the long window, letting the gilded latch fall.

She sat down on the bed's edge and looked about her, curiously, as though she had never seen the room before.

She said: "I had to wait. George and Revell Reckness were shooting craps, across the corridor, and they left their door ajar."

He was pacing the room, slowly; and continued while she was speaking.

"I had a letter to-night from Dr. Quinton," she said. "A charming and gay letter. Would you like to read it?"

"Gay?" he repeated.

"Very. He always cheers and stimulates me—" Her eyes fell on Quinton's letter to John Wyndward— "Oh, so you have one, too? Is it as cheerful as mine, I wonder?"

"It's about conditions over there."

"*Not* cheerful?"

"Not very."

"He has no business to write that way to you. I shall tell him so—"

"Don't. And I have one or two things to say to you, Chiyu. I'm in the breakers, financially."

"Breakers?"

He nodded. "And the rocks are not so far away. I've had to give up the penthouse, servants, car—in fact I've dumped the whole outfit."

She said nothing. Perhaps Quinton had told her.

"I've got the studio, yet. I think I can keep it on what income is left if I get a job or two in addition."

"Have you any jobs?"

"I have only that one which came through Sidney Rosenquest the art dealer. . . . And I've got to get back to it."

For a long time she sat there linking, unlinking her fingers in her lap. Finally she looked up at him gravely:

"I have," she said, "quite a good deal of money. I don't mean my allowance, or anything from Charles. I mean what Warren left me, and what

I had saved from my salary with Number Two Company. . . . Would you let me lend it to you, darling?"

He smiled; came over and sat down on the bed's edge beside her and took her slender white hands in his:

"Don't you know, you sweet thing, that I can always take perfectly good care of myself?"

"Yes, I know."

"Besides, you are going to have plenty of financial perplexities of your own, Chiyu."

"We have some."

"You are going to have more before this nightmare of depression lifts from the world. You can't avoid it. Nobody can. Taxes in France are heavy enough; they will become crushing; perhaps confiscatory.

"Nobody can see the end of this mess; nobody can foresee the future of man and his money—of civilization itself. . . . And the only thing that sickens me, and that I can't go on enduring, is that you and I may not face what's coming together—Chiyu—"

His voice faltered; she put both bare arms around him, held him, strained him to her with all her strength and passion.

"If there's trouble in the world," she said, "I'll die of it if we are separated."

"If trouble comes," he said, "I shall come to you, Chiyu, wherever you are."

Her warm, fragrant little head drooped against his shoulder; and for a long while they sat so, silent, envisaging the future, a future that they never would have feared had he not prematurely wrecked it with complacent egotism and monstrous stupidity. And now, for these, they both were paying. And therein was a bitterness he could scarcely bear.

"So," he said—and she felt the muscles stiffen in his straightening chest and shoulders— "I had better go back and take up the job I have and look for others. . . . Always and only with you in mind, Chiyu. There is no other meaning in anything any more, for me.

"Plug along, *do* something. Something, maybe, that I have not done since you and I united in parentage of the only worthy thing I ever yet have done in all my life."

"Oh, darling—"

"There's *that* ahead of us, anyway!"

"Oh I've always known it, darling—"

"Then you are clairvoyant; for I had given up the last, damned hope. Or thought I had. But now, in this moment here with you—"

"Oh God," she sobbed, "you have made me happy. . . . I c-can stand anything except your failure—"

She slipped lower in his arms and rested her tear-wet cheek across his knees; and he bent closer over her and saw the tears still running, and breathed the fevered fragrance of her parted lips.

"Sorry, darling," she sobbed, "but when such a weight is lifted from a girl's heart, she's l-likely to s-snivel some—"

"You blessed little thing!"

"I am, now. I can go on, now. . . . Because you're all right again; aren't you? . . . After all these blind years—"

"God knows how blind! . . . All right; I'll keep in touch with you and go on. . . . All right, Chiyu—"

She was fishing around for her handkerchief and finally staunched her tears with the hem of his silken dressing gown, looking up at him naïvely lying across his knees, her head cradled on her disordered hair.

"This is the dickens of a spectacle," she sniffed. "Get me a real handkerchief, darling—"

So he lifted her; they clung in a long, desperate, happy kiss; then he got up and found her a handkerchief; and she repaired face and hair before his mirror. Ting-ting-ting! went the tiny enameled clock on his dresser.

"Oh heavens," she whispered, "it's three o'clock and we hunt in the morning!" And, as he drew her into his arms: "Oh let me go, darling. . . . Oh I don't want to go—" Her mouth melted against his; her body, too, with a faint sigh.

Clear, low, came the mellow bell of Sainte Anne d'Oran, numbering the hours of night.

CHAPTER XXI

SANGLIER!

Because the wild boar feeds till sunrise—and sometimes long after—gruffling and grunting amid forest mast and mushroom; and ever tunneling toward unseen truffles—he beds rather late in the morning.

Which is why there is no hurry about a drive. In fact there never is any particular hurry about boar hunting except in a still-hunt, to lie out before sunset.

For if you ride, you, or the hounds, may pick him up anywhere and at any time; and if you use a rifle and take station, beaters and hounds can be counted on to bounce him out of some ferny gully or bed of brake or juniper.

All this, of course, concerns the old and solitary fellow who, furred in black or silver-gray, heavily tusked, red-eyed, evil, hunts shadowy depths in sullen self-sufficiency, unafraid.

But with the lesser beasts, and huge old sows, and the striped and squealing sounders roving at hazard, no hunter has anything to do. They are the business of forester and gamekeeper. And of the timid roebuck and fallow deer that never venture too near lest some shaggy horror leap and seize them and tear them and crunch and gulp them, strewing the bloody scene of murder with fragments of hide and bone and bleeding flesh.

Hunters and huntsmen invaded the Wood of Oran very gaily and at their leisure. Except for the green and silver of Cliquart, and the rough green and gray of his *piqueurs*, huntsmen, and *gardes de chasse*, the affair was entirely modern. There were no horses; station cars took them all, hunters, the three or four ladies who elected to bless the hunt by their presence and approval, boar-hounds handled by their kennel-master; grooms with luncheon and wraps.

Wyndward, seated in the hunting-car beside Chiyu, was reading a second letter from Quinton which seemed unpleasantly prophetic. Because that morning at breakfast Kilcarrick had called his attention to items in the French newspaper reporting that the United States battle fleet was irritating Japan by its unusual maneuvering in the Pacific; and that the Japanese fleet would also engage in practise near to her mandated islands. And this is what Quinton wrote; and Wyndward and Chiyu read the letter together, because they shared all things now instinctively:

DEAR JOHN:

This steady drift toward war with Asia sickens me.

Once we had a gentleman's agreement with a sensitive, high-spirited people whose religion is honor.

And because the nationals of that nation were better farmers, more industrious, more intelligent, more frugal than the louts among whom they lived, a great Pacific State denounced the gentleman's agreement and forced an insulting substitute on our ignorant, callous, uncouth Congress.

For this stupid affront to Japan we never have been forgiven.

California did the same to the Chinese; and have regretted it ever since. This faux pas also will be bitterly regretted.

South America, Asia, Europe hate us. Not for the debts they owe us but for our arrogance, stupidity, bad manners.

Did you think France did not understand our sneers, or Italy our contempt, or Portugal our laughter, or Argentine our bad manners, or Chile our bullying; or Mexico understand our spiteful hypocrisy?

For God's sake let's give things their right names!

What's in a name? The whole story. All right, let's name some few misnamed things!

The Italian gives us Columbus and Raphael; the *wop* hands us Capone. The Negro gives us Toussaint l'Ouverture; the *nigger* offers us the blue-gum. The Jew gives us Moses and Jesus; and numberless geniuses in music, painting, sculpture, literature, science, statesmanship, philanthropy; the *kike* creates for us Broadway and Hollywood; and peoples these with dope peddlers, prostitutes, pimps, and gunmen. And are incredibly stupid enough to bunch all these in a lump!

What the hell difference does religion or creed or color or nationality make if you call each by its right name?

The world's woe comes from meddling. If each one of us, and the world, minds his goddam business, there'll be less woe and no wars.

Let the bigot stew in his own bigotry, but let him keep his pious fingers off his neighbor's dinner table. To hell with all missionaries who do other than clothe and feed and nurse!

The world grows lousy and crawls alive; its millions of proselytizing vermin infest the only freedom left humanity—the freedom of the mind.

May God damn and exterminate them every one, and let a deloused world put on clean clothes!

All right then; if war comes, I'm shriven. And that's something, John, because I know I shall be ass enough to shoulder a gun again. And so will you, you jackass—so will you!

Affectionately,
TERRY.

She said in a low voice: "Do you think there'll be war?"

"I don't. But if it comes it will begin by a closing of Chinese ports to us. And then our fleet will have to reopen them. . . . Another war will put an end to world civilization," he added aloud for the benefit of the others in the hunting-lorry.

"War?" repeated George Bullup nervously. "We've got war enough on our hands to-day, haven't we?" And, to Phil Bailey who had managed to get into his shooting breeches by the exertions of two sweating valets: "Are you going to war, Phil? Not in those breeches, I hope."

"All I ask," said Bailey, "is to be able to climb a tree in them. Wild boars can't climb trees, can they?" he asked the lively Baroness Sesia.

"Yes, they can, George; they nest in trees," she replied gravely. "Never take to a tree when an angry boar chases you; he may live there." This convulsed Clairette and Claudine who continued to pinch each other and hopefully watch the straining staghorn buttons on Mr. Bailey's cartridge-looped coat and waistcoat, which tailoresque fancy made him resemble an obese Cossack.

They were a very merry company huddled side by side on the two long leather-cushioned seats of the station car which faced each other. They sang hunting songs and old *cor de chasse* sequences which were made before Henri Quatre dallied with his Margot—before Louis XI prowled about Oran Wood and peered up at the gruesome fruit dangling from the oak trees,

pointed to with pride by Petit André and Trois-Eschelles; and jested about Olivier le Dain.

Sesia sang joyously:

"I chased the boar,
The boar chased me!
Miron-ton-ton-ton!
I slew the boar,
The boar slew me!
Bon!
Miron-ton-ton-ton!

I've lived, loved, died,
My bed's a sod,
And here I bide
While my soul's with God,
Bon!
Miraton-ton-ton!"

"Sixteenth-century stuff," remarked Reckness. "It would be a flop on Broadway. Give them the works, George."

So George Bullup lifted his voice in a Harlem whine:

"I'll paint mah pan
An' I'll git me a man
In de ole black-an'-tan,
Black-an'-tan!
Black-an'-tan!
Gimme yaller, gimme black,
Gimme Rufus, gimme Jack,
White or black, das a fac',
All I wants, yuh unnerstan',
Is a man, man, man!—"

"*Quelle horreur!*" protested Mademoiselle d'Azyr, stifling him with determined glove; but everybody, now, was beating time and "patting juba" with hand and foot, and singing the black-belt ditty to the old buck-and-wing sand-dance walk-around air dating from before the reign of Tony Pastor:

"—Is yuh did yuh kinks,
Nigger Nan?
Nigger Nan?
Is yuh did yuh blinks
Nigger Nan?

Yaas ah done did mah kinks
An' mah blinks is full o' winks
An' ah'll git me a man
In de ole black-an'-tan—"

The hunting-car rolled through a fine old gateway flanked by high stucco-faced walls all pink and green with moss and lichen, and from the top of which sparkled the time-honored and imbedded fragments of splintered glass, lovely and murderous as razor-edged gems in the slanting sunshine.

Here stood a charming pavilion where servants were busy with bridge tables and preparations for a two o'clock lunch.

Here Cliquart and his *piqueurs* and *gardes de chasse* took charge of the boar-hunters, who descended from their seats and trailed off along various rides and *sentiers* toward unseen stations to be assigned them.

"Anything that comes," were the orders, now, because, for some unknown reason, the capricious wild swine seemed to have shifted toward the wooded hill region in the north and west; and Cliquart was dubious about starting a really good tusker from a region where, a week earlier, there had been several fine heads feeding every night.

"You never can be sure about them," Chiyu confided to Wyndward. "So Cliquart thinks we should make it a mixed bag. Which means stag and roebuck; and a big boar if he comes; but no fallow deer of course."

The majority of the ladies elected to remain outside the *chasse* and play bridge until the gentlemen had done with their sport and had rejoined them, in the pretty little hunting pavilion, for a late two o'clock lunch.

The Baroness Serret, however, went off with Revell Reckness and a *piqueur*; and Lucie d'Azyr trusted her fragile limbs and body to the valor of Kilcarrick. Which left four for cards at the pavilion.

Phil Bailey, nervously admitting that he had all he could do to look after his own safety, politely discouraged the pretended desire of the twins to accompany him; and he went away in his too tight clothes almost hoping that no boar would trouble his vicinity.

The ride that Wyndward and Chiyu followed led for half a mile to the southward, where a fern-grown *sentier* branched to the west and led them into a beechwood—an enchanting place where sunshine gilded the brown and yellow foliage, and a tiny rivulet tinkled among mossy rocks.

It was a kind of pass, flanked by hard ridges set with trees and rocks; and Cliquart cautioned them about vipers which were not very scarce there.

Wyndward told him bluntly that he had no desire to shoot stag or roebuck; and if any came, he'd let them through. And the old fellow told him very earnestly that he was going to mount and ride to the beaters and would do his best to drive a good boar at him.

And, to Chiyu, cap in hand: "I send Jean-Paul to Madame la Comtesse, then?"

"Don't send anybody, Cliquart; I feel perfectly safe with Monsieur Wyndward."

But Wyndward said quietly: "Guns jam, sometimes. With Madame's permission I prefer to have Jean-Paul not too far away."

Chiyu laughed, but Cliquart nodded his relief as he saluted and hurried away; and in a little while the rosy, grinning countenance of Jean-Paul glimmered in the dappled sunshine, pushing through the filbert fringe in front of them.

His rifle was slung across his blouse; his sack and his boar-knife flapped on his left hip—the long blade in its worn leather sheath. He took off his *képi* with a flourish; saluted them with a profound bow; and trotted cheerily away to squat down behind the rocks on their left, and, like a good little Frenchman, patiently await whatever the good God might be pleased to send them.

"Even death," suggested Wyndward, smilingly, "would probably be greeted with perfect politeness by that good little man. That sort are the real people in this not always 'pleasant land of France.'"

"I know," she admitted, "that France can be greedy and bad-mannered. They are treating the Americans in France quite horridly this year."

"No worse than we treated them in the army. I suppose, however, it's the debts they owe us."

"Yes. They simply can't understand why we clamor for our pound of flesh."

He said: “When France contracted those debts she was able, and meant to. She is no longer able to pay. Neither are the other nations. Only common sense can solve this unhappy tangle, and neither President nor Congress have any.”

“You’ll be electing another President and another Congress next month, darling,” she reminded him gaily.

“It’s our only hope,” he said. “There’s nothing but hell in the world just now.”

“You’ve made it a heavenly world for me,” she ventured; and he lifted her small gloved hand and kissed it.

They were seated side by side on the smooth, lichened, bluish-gray trunk of a fallen beech tree from which ambush, amid the filbert bushes, they had a clear view ahead for nearly two hundred yards.

She drew off her chamois glove and rested her soft hand on his.

“Who would have thought it?” she murmured blissfully.

“That you and I would ever sit here together in Oran Wood—dear Countess?”

“Countess,” she repeated, smiling; “that’s what Broadway calls a girl when it wishes to be facetiously familiar. . . . It’s funny, darling. . . .”

For a while they sat quietly on their beech log without speaking. It was very still in the forest. Yellowing beech leaves dappled them with shade; frost-tipped brake and fern cast lacy shadows across them; a big black lizard marked with brilliant orange lifted a heavy head to look up at them, then pursued his lumbering, humble way toward a mass of vermilion coral mushrooms fringing a rotting stump.

“He’s harmless, darling,” said Chiyu to Wyndward who was looking at him dubiously; “it’s a *sourd*.”

“He looks like those carved stone ones on the walls of Blois.”

Wyndward watched the creature’s slow progress for a while, then looked around at Jean-Paul who squatted motionless in his ferny form with eyes and ears alert.

“Do you hear anything?” he inquired.

“Nothing, Monsieur.”

“What are we to listen for, dogs?”

"Oh no," said Chiyu, "we'll hear and see wild things before we hear the hounds. They'll hold them in leash, anyway, you know and they are not likely to give tongue."

"Why do they bring them, Chiyu?"

"A boar might charge the beaters. Besides, it's better to have our hounds in case of trouble with a wounded beast when one makes it a point of honor to go into the juniper and yew after him. . . . Or to track and pull down a wounded stag. One or two couples of stag hounds are with the beaters—"

His hand closed on hers enjoining silence; there came a distant galloping noise from the rocky glen in front of them; a small herd of red deer was coming on at full speed down wind, their gangling calves at their heels. They were hinds, or *biches*; and they made uncouth snorting noises and a vast clatter over the mossy rocks.

On they came over a loose gravel bank, dislodging an avalanche of stones which made a sliding roar in the glen, and passed to the left of Jean-Paul who regarded them, round-eyed.

"Fussy old things," said Chiyu, with that quick, engaging laugh of hers which was something new in her—new to Wyndward, too, and to everybody else.

"Madame!" called Jean-Paul cautiously from his form in the bracken, "two stag are coming!"

Her fingers closed on Wyndward's arm. "There they come," she whispered. "Count the prongs!"

They came at a slow lope—scarcely more than a fast walk—stopping occasionally to look back and sniff the air to windward. One carried rather a poor head with one antler damaged or deformed; the other was a superb stag, haughty, annoyed, reluctant to be hustled by a mere smell. Twice he stopped, turned, sniffed, stamped his petulance, and even lowered his kingly head and did a little rubbing and clattering with his great antlers against the beech-boles and sagging limbs. But sullenness, temper, and the stamp of defiance were not proof against what he scented in the scarcely stirring air, out there somewhere to the northward, and very soon he turned and continued the retreat in the direction taken by the other stag and the hinds and calves.

"Ten points," she whispered; "two more and he would have counted 'royal.'"

"He's handsomer than our elk but not so big," said Wyndward under his breath. "Oh, Chiyu, do look who's here!"

She also had seen the light, graceful roebuck standing and staring in their direction. Where he stood there had been nothing but fern a second before. Noiselessly as a specter, the slender creature had materialized out of sunlight and shadow, an exquisite evanescent spirit of the woodland, daintily wild.

The buck might have stood there immobile, indefinitely, had not he caught a disturbing taint in the air. Suddenly he made a bound, and another, and was gone.

Then for several minutes nothing else stirred in the woods except fallow deer, trooping unhurriedly in small groups southward, not much afraid when Chiyu stood up to count the tines on a fat, reluctant buck who seemed inclined to linger and sniff and nose over the beech-mast.

Wyndward could hear Jean-Paul smack his lips and murmur, partly to himself: "A juicy haunch, yonder; and fit for the Grand Mogul himself."

The white spotted deer were still visible among the beeches—a glimmering glimpse of flank and shoulder lingering here and there in hazel depths—when there came a sudden noise of galloping down the gully, and a headlong sounder of wild swine rushed through the beech woods—mostly yearlings with a sow or two and a scampering shoal of striped piglets.

Wherever they were going they were losing no time about it. Swift, agile, quick as nervous cats, they appeared and were gone in the same instant; and the ominous noise of them galvanized the fallow deer into terrified flight before them. For it is not well that any deer should allow any boar too near her heels.

Roebuck appeared in increasing numbers on both sides, now, bounding elegantly over gullies and fallen trees in general flight toward the south.

Single young boar and youthful sows rushed through juniper and yew along the shoulders of the two escarpments, their flying hoofs and shanks visible against a streak of sky as they fled.

Then nothing more came. After half an hour Wyndward got up, stretched, looked up the gully in a bored, good-humored way; looked back at the sunny bed of brake where they had sat hidden, and where Chiyu, now, reclined, her sport hat in her lap, her bronze-red head resting on the mossy log behind her, fast asleep.

Wyndward felt sleepy, too; which was natural, as they both had heard Sainte Anne d'Oran's bell strike four that morning.

He walked over to consult with Jean-Paul who seemed to believe there was still a chance for a bigger boar and assured Wyndward that the beaters had not yet reached any known lairs.

But Wyndward was convinced that if he sat down again in that sunny hollow he'd fall asleep, so he lighted his pipe and began to saunter along the *sentier* toward the tiny rivulet that spattered moss and fern where it fell into a miniature pool.

Out of this pool he took a drink of icy water, achieving it on all fours. And, when he got up, drying his palms on his knickers, he found himself looking at a man. And the man was Amadeo.

"Well," said the latter coolly, "did you have a good drink, my friend?"

"Excellent. Where the deuce did you come from?"

Amadeo clicked his tongue and made an expressive gesture. "Would anybody believe it that not one decent boar came this way?"

"How many did you expect?" inquired Wyndward.

"There are plenty"—he jerked his sallow head toward the north—"over that way. They drive like old women herding cows on a common."

He helped himself to a cigarette, lighted, trod out the match.

"Your station is here, Monsieur Wyndward?"

"Over there in the beeches. And yours?"

"Me? Oh I stroll about at hazard."

"You have a *piqueur* I suppose?"

"What would I do with a *piqueur*? No; I have no *piqueur*."

It was evident that Prince Amadeo was in Oran Wood without invitation. He wanted to come. He had said so. And, as no invitation arrived, he simply crashed the party.

This colossal impudence was none of Wyndward's business. He knew enough to ignore and steer clear of family quarrels. But this was atrocious effrontery, and he wondered what the *Grand Veneur* might have to say about it later.

"And my cousin Chiyu," said Amadeo coolly, "is she perhaps of the *partie de chasse*, Monsieur Wyndward?"

Wyndward said: "The Countess d'Oran and I share the same station, Monsieur."

Amadeo shot at him a gleaming, yellow smile. He did not utter a word, but the leer was unmistakable.

Wyndward looked him over, coldly, insultingly, from his shiny, laced breeches of horsehide and his high-laced porpoise-hide boots, to his waxed mustache and velvet *casquette de chasse*.

A vast dislike and contempt of this sallow, poorly ventilated Frenchman began to possess him.

He was about to turn on his heel in silence—which would have been a rudeness provocative of trouble—when a slight sound behind them caused both of them to look around. And, as they turned, two big wild boar, trotting noiselessly out of the western forest, halted abruptly, facing them, and not twenty yards away.

The beast in front of Wyndward was a gray boar. His furry ears were erect and spread forward; his eyes already glowed like little red coals; and his pointed mouth bristled with tusks that curved up like ivory scimitars, arching the doubly indented nose and hairy jowls.

Amadeo had unslung his rifle in a flash; the dim glade echoed with the clattering, castanet-like chatter of slime drenched tusks, always precursor of headlong fury.

"My friend," said Prince Amadeo, coolly sardonic, "these boar are going to charge; and if you don't wish to have your guts ripped out you had better shoot very damn quick!"— And bang! went his rifle; and bang, bang! went Wyndward's 45-70. Then, close to him he saw a huge, hairy, horrific thing almost on him; and bang! went the 45-70 again.

The falling monster lurched toward him, so close that Wyndward leaped backward; but the great gray boar was done for; and he lay lifeless in the trampled ferns by the edge of the tiny brook.

Amadeo's boar—an even bigger one, of a grizzled black color—was down, also, in low thick juniper. The Prince watched him, threw another cartridge into the breech, and said calmly to Wyndward: "A dead boar is never dead till your boar-knife tells you so! You'd better give yours a prick or two before you shake hands with him."

"He's dead," replied Wyndward curtly; "and you'd better look after your own friend in the juniper yonder."

"You mean I should shoot him over?" inquired Amadeo with a slight sneer in his voice.

"I don't care a damn what you do to him; but he's not dead."

"Ah then, you have experience, Monsieur Wyndward. Nevertheless I shall not shoot him over."

Mentally Wyndward invited the ironic Prince to go to hell; but he stood ready, nevertheless, to help in an emergency.

The black boar was down in the juniper, but invisible.

They waited for a few minutes. Over his shoulder Wyndward saw Chiyu standing about ten feet behind him, and he motioned her back impatiently, and made a gesture for Jean-Paul to step up between her and himself.

If Amadeo saw them at all he made no sign. His sallow face was suffused with an unhealthy red; his little eyes fairly blazed as he advanced, catlike, toward the juniper.

But the moment Wyndward started to support him, he snarled at him.

"What you do is not done in this forest, Mr. Wyndward, unless by request!" he said harshly. "I beg leave to represent to you that a man of my race is quite capable of caring for his own quarry!"

Even at that nasty impertinence the sportsman in Wyndward would not allow him to abandon this ugly-tempered Gaul and leave the fellow to chances of mutilation or death.

He said nothing, but he kept his rifle ready. God only could guess what a wounded boar might do.

He turned around again and said to Jean-Paul: "I beg Madame la Comtesse to keep safely away from this."

Chiyu, standing on a rotting stump to see, called softly across to him: "They are treacherous and quick as leopards! Don't look behind you again!"

At that moment, far ahead, a hunting horn blew in the depths of the woods, sounding, "Game afoot!" The distant flourish seemed to exasperate Prince Amadeo, and he called out to Jean-Paul: "You tell Cliquart to keep his God-damned hounds away and not interfere with me!"

He had loosened his hunting knife in its sheath. Now, moving coolly and very quietly, he advanced with cocked rifle at a ready. Nothing moved in front of him; sunshine gilded the still junipers; yellow beech leaves dropped; the curled tips of the ferns glistened.

Amadeo had already reached the edges of the junipers and, craning his sallow neck, was looking into them. Then he advanced a step or two inside, knee deep, scanning the shadowy growth.

"There is nothing here," he called out. "But the beast was hard hit and must be near—"

"*Malheur!*" shrieked Jean-Paul. "*Le sanglier*, Monsieur! *Garde à vous!* —"

Up floundered the boar almost under foot; the Frenchman fired from the hip; the beast fell, reared up again screaming; turned his gaping jaws to the right; knocked the rifle out of Amadeo's clutch and bit him; then, swinging his huge head like lightning, drove the tusked snout between the Prince's thighs and flung him ten feet into the junipers.

Two things saved the man from death; the terrible sabre-tusks slipped along the heavy, greasy horsehide breeches, not penetrating and disemboweling; and the great beast could not spring because Amadeo's last shot had paralyzed his hind legs.

Now, screaming and rousing and dragging his useless legs, the crippled creature made painfully toward the fallen man to finish him; and Wyndward already had leveled his rifle when the Frenchman sprang savagely to his feet and, knife in hand, fairly flung himself on the boar.

What happened, then, among the trampled junipers became horrible; the boar, soaked with saliva, slime and blood, bit and slashed right and left; and the disheveled man, panther-quick, drove at him with the long, heavy knife, mangling, missing, and mangling, unable to reach the vital spot.

The man's face, fists, body were drenched with blood; his jaws clamped in a rigid snarl; there was no hesitation, no slightest trace of fear in him, only ferocity and murder in his little blazing eyes as he flew at the gaping beast, lunging, dodging, stabbing, until animal and man became a confused, interlocked, panting mass of fur and tusks and blade and blood.

Then, up out of the junipers rose Amadeo with dripping fist and knife; but the boar lay quivering and jerking; then suddenly quiet, until the air in his collapsing lungs exhaled with a deep sigh.

The Prince de la Roquettaire looked down at death, then looked up and around at the living; and stood so, his breath laboring, his little, malignant eyes roaming from Chiyu to Wyndward, upon whom they remained fixed.

And now he was coming out of the juniper, still panting, speechless, a wiry, sinewy, grinning thing scarlet-wet, dripping like a butcher in an abattoir.

"*Eh bien*," he said hoarsely, coming up close to John Wyndward, "you have seen how men of my race manage their own business? Yes? *C'est bien alors*; manage your own Yankee affairs as well as I do mine, and mind your own goddam business!"

Under the monstrous insult Wyndward paled slightly. Neither man stirred for a full minute. Then Wyndward said in a low voice: "Because you know that Americans don't resort to duels, you are safe."

"Maybe they can be kicked into defending what they suppose is their honor, Monsieur."

"Perhaps; but you had better not try it."

Suddenly de la Roquettaire laid his blood-wet hand flat on Wyndward's chest, leaving the filthy imprint on his shooting coat.

"Maybe your tailor can scour that clean for you—if you don't know how to do it yourself," he said, staring.

Before Wyndward could take him by the neck, Chiyu stepped suddenly between them, turned and slapped the Frenchman smartly across his face with her gloved hand.

Under the filthy mask Amadeo's sallow skin turned deathly white and his clenched jaws parted.

Wyndward, as white as he, pushed Chiyu aside, but the girl clung to him, blocking his way.

"Let him alone!" she said. "You can't fight a dishonored man! I know you could kill him that way—or you could kill him here—now—with your bare hands. And I ask you not to!"

"Let me go, Chiyu—for one minute—"

"I beg you, John!—"

"*Ah ça!*—" burst out Amadeo, beside himself, "I shall send to you my seconds, Monsieur; and, if you don't know what to say to them, I take my

dog lash and look for you! *C'est entendu, hein!*"

Suddenly Wyndward caught Chiyu in both arms, lifted her and set her aside; and almost in the same movement he had Amadeo in a terrific grip, raging, cursing, struggling to free one arm and use his blood-stained knife.

And John Wyndward lifted him, squirming, biting, kicking, and strode straight into the juniper and, raising him above his head, hurled him downward onto the dead boar.

"As one swine to another," he said. "Talk it over between you."

PART III

THE MOUTH REVEALS

CHAPTER XXII
KITH AND KIN

It was utterly impossible to keep the affair quiet. Jean-Paul had witnessed it. And a *garde de chasse*, two beaters, and a *piqueur*, coming up through the thickets with two couple of leashed boar-hounds, had seen the end of the incident.

Brave old Cliquart himself, arriving a few moments later, had, to his angry astonishment, encountered the Prince de la Roquettaire in Oran Wood, uninvited, truculent, filthy with recent slaughter. And Cliquart had rebuked him for his cynical disregard of good manners and convention.

"You old dotard," retorted Amadeo contemptuously, "are you venturing to instruct me in manners? Get out of my way."

"Monsieur," said Cliquart, reddening under the insult, "my master, the Count of Oran, lies paralyzed in this hour by the savagery of your sword; and I am in authority to represent him here; and have full jurisdiction in this forest of Oran. And if ever again you enter this estate uninvited or unauthorized, I shall go to the *Commissaire de Police* with representations and ask for a mandate of arrest!"

But Amadeo had yawned, then smiled at him; and had walked coolly away carrying his gun and smoking a cigarette, his disheveled, dangerous head lowered as though in leisurely abstraction. He limped a little as he walked; but whether from the enthusiastic attentions of the boar or from vividly illustrated remarks of John Wyndward, those who observed his careless departure were unable to guess.

Chiyu then spoke to Cliquart aside and briefly. And Cliquart, cap in hand, had replied: "At the orders of Madame la Comtesse," and, addressing his people, had continued in a voice still tremulous with shock:

"*Eh bien, mes enfants*, this is one of those unfortunate family affairs which your loyalty to Monsieur and Madame d'Oran, and your own good sense, will not allow you to discuss with strangers."

A futile request in a region and among humble folk where gossip is the breath of life itself. And so the entire countryside knew in an incredibly brief space of time. And, within a few days Paris newspapers printed accounts disguising locality and names so cleverly and so mischievously that nobody was in any doubt about the entire affair.

At the bridge tables there was a vast whispering.

"*Mince de Prince*," said Sesia de Serret slangily to her bosom friend, Lucie d'Azyr, "I am glad—as George Bullup says so elegantly—that Monsieur Wyndward 'slammed him one on the bean.' *C'est-à-dire, 'sur l'haricot' tu sais—*"

"*Compris, 'tite poule—haricot vert—vert galant—*" said Bullup breezily, enchanted by his own wit—the feeble flicker of which sent the twins into agonies of suppressed laughter.

However, the next morning, Chiyu mounted her horse and rode two miles through the forest to the gates of Oran, where, half an hour later, and as she had shrewdly expected, two young gentlemen, handsomely mounted, pulled the lodge bell for admittance.

One was an unknown captain of cavalry in blue uniform; the other was a friend, the Vicomte de Numésnil.

Admitted by the lodge keeper they viewed her with disconcerted surprise, but both youngsters hastened to salute her hand, the Vicomte begging leave to present Captain Yves de Faöuet—another species of "cousin," it appeared.

"Ah, messieurs," said the girl, lifting a single admonishing finger, "I have been expecting you since yesterday. And if your visit had promised a charming and ceremonious attention to me, I had been flattered and enchanted by your gallantry."

The young men regarded her rather blankly for a moment, then blushed.

"Victor," she said smilingly, "your errand here in company with Monsieur de Faöuet is very easily guessed. You come from Monsieur de la Roquettaire, I think."

They sat their horses in solemn silence, redder than ever.

"Ride with me if you please," she said politely. "I have for your respectable and sensitive ears a family history which I am sure, because you are kinsmen, you will find interesting."

They ranged their horses abreast of hers as she led the way along a branching and secluded bridle path into the eastern chestnut woods. And, as she rode with them through the yellow and orange tinted forest dusk, she told them very quietly and simply as much of the story of Amadeo de la Roquettaire as she knew. Not blaming or complaining; not by voice or gesture characterizing this man's conduct; but merely reciting facts—his

impudent invasion of the Oran estate, his persistent dogging her and forcing upon her his attentions when opportunity offered; his anger; his insolence when repulsed; his attempt to blackmail her. She mentioned the sum he had demanded and his threat to accuse her of infidelity to her helpless husband; but she did not name the man whom Amadeo accused.

However, his identity became apparent when she told them about the boar drive, and de la Roquettaire's persistent and insolent attempts to force a quarrel on John Wyndward.

"Now, gentlemen," she said pleasantly, "I do not mention the sword thrust that has left my husband an invalid for life. An officers' court has, I am told, pronounced upon that.

"You know your French code and its obligations of honor. . . . It is needless for me to remind you that the code duello does not exist for Americans. Nevertheless I am very certain that Monsieur Wyndward will not leave unnoticed another affront from Monsieur de la Roquettaire. He may horsewhip him; but I believe he is in a temper to kill him under the ægis of his own code duello.

"And what I came to ask you, messieurs, is simply this: is it possible for Monsieur de la Roquettaire to find any honorable gentlemen to do his offices for him in an affair of honor?"

Captain de Faöuet was choking with shame and anger, and far too furious to trust himself to answer her.

The Vicomte said, gravely: "Our errand here is already finished, Chiyu. Thank you for meeting us."

"I understand, Victor. But could you perhaps advise me?"

"In case he returns to make further trouble?" asked the Captain in a suffocated voice. "Well, Madame, in that case, I have the honor to suggest that you ring for your servants."

"Or telephone to the police," added the Vicomte, his arched nostrils a-quiver.

Then, as their anger mounted that they should have been employed on such a mission, their shame and embarrassment also grew, and they were at a loss to express their contrition to this young girl whom a kinsman of theirs had so brutalized.

"Graciously leave it to us, Madame, in loyalty and confidence," murmured de Faöuet, "and we will do our possible to prevent this last

infamy from becoming public gossip outside the family."

They kissed her hand. She rode on toward Oran; they wheeled and spurred back to the gates—back to the Hôtel de Numésnil—and beyond it where, facing a dry common of furze, a squat, stone house stood which once had been a fortified farm called Mon Plaisir.

A few scrawny poplar trees surrounded it; its noble owner, the Prince de la Roquettaire, came out of it and laid one hand on Captain de Faöuet's horse. And the Captain slashed him across the face with his riding crop and swore at him as he staggered back half blinded.

The Vicomte, pale with passion, leveled a trembling finger at him: "I forbid you ever again to address me or even look at me!" he said. "Vulgar *chanteur*; disgrace to your blood name and kith and kin! One word from you, and I present our case to the officers' court of the entire division! A single word out of you will do it!"

A terrible silence; then the horsemen slowly turned their horses again toward the Château de Numésnil.

CHAPTER XXIII
MON PLAISIR

Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire sat in the only habitable room of Mon Plaisir and bathed his swollen face with cold water.

A wounded wild thing seeks solitude to lick its wounds and meditate. Amadeo's hurts were various and deep and required industrious licking and concentrated meditation.

The boar had bitten and bruised him viciously and, in spite of iodine, one of the places was festering. But he had had such wounds before; besides he never suffered physically very much, resembling somewhat, in that respect, the callous stoics of mongoloid characteristics who endure pain easily.

The whip lash had bruised, discolored, puffed, and slightly cut the muddy, yellow skin of his face, but he experienced a minimum of pain. The subject on which his mind was concentrating was this: he had to get out of France.

That was certain and there remained no other alternative. No physical courage could avail him now because nobody in France, now, would give him a physical opportunity to vindicate himself. An honorable appeal to arms was no longer open to him. He was blacklisted.

This was bad enough. But much worse could happen to him if a court of honor chose to review that affair with his cousin, d'Oran. If le Faöuet, or du Faöuet or whatever his damned Moribihan name was, should demand a rehearing of the matter upon the ground of new evidence concerning his moral character! If de Numésnil should post him at the club! And in his mind there was no doubt at all that they would do these things immediately. Therefore it was certain that he would have to get out of France. . . . How?

Out of badly swollen eyes he looked at the shabby salon where he was sitting. The only valuable antiquities that ever had been in it—or anywhere in the rickety old house—had long since been sold—armor, pictures, furniture; even the boiserie and mantels had gone to the auction room. There was nothing except second-hand modern stuff left in the house, and not much of that. And the house itself and its stony pastures and swampy meadows and mangy remains of woodland were mortgaged to the chimney pots and to the last sickly sapling.

So Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire did not have very much to pack up.

Divonne was about it now—the old witch!—last of the retainers at Mon Plaisir—coughing and wheezing and dragging a cowhide trunk and a battered military chest down from the attic. . . .

He got up, limping, and went out to the hall to see what the old woman was packing.

She had put into his military chest his officer's sword, uniform, cloak, boots, and case of dueling pistols. To these she was adding a *fusil de chasse*, and his dueling rapiers—the latter carefully wrapped in a rather dirty and ragged shirt.

"My boar-knife, too," he growled.

"I know, I know," she croaked testily, "who but I should know what to pack when you are running away from somebody or something *louche*?"

"For two sous," he said, "I'd finish breaking your crooked back."

It was crooked because—after he had kicked her many years ago—it never had straightened out. He recollected the doctor's bill, savagely.

"Put in those new packs of cards," he said—"but save two packs for my handbag. Perhaps I may make acquaintances on the train."

"You will," she said hoarsely.

He looked on in sullen silence while she laid two moth-eaten blankets over the contents of the chest.

"And the sheets, *morbleu*!" he growled.

She added two soiled sheets and an emaciated down pillow, and, closing the chest, sat down on the lid and locked it.

"It's all in but the cat," she panted—her labored breath making a cackling noise.

"*C'est bien*. My linen, now."

The old woman began to cough again, and he swore at her; and she got up wearily and shambled off to collect his underwear and clothing from the cheap pine armoire.

There she arranged in the cowhide trunk—a few comparatively intact suits of American origin, and the remainder very French and very much mended.

"'*Cré nom de Jésus!*" he snarled, "do you wash them in *eau de javelle* then?"

At that she screeched with laughter and displayed a shirt that was riddled like a sieve.

"You did it yourself," she cackled. "You shot at my cat when the wash was on the line!"

"That I did not blow her to bits is one of the regrets I leave behind me," he said. "That accursed animal with its whiskers in the milk I drink!"

"You drank it all the same. One gets quinsy from cats." And she screeched again until coughing choked her laughter.

"Hold your dried up tongue!" he said. "Did you tell Meunier to bring his car?"

"It's out there now by the wall. He'd better come in and help me carry out all this stuff—"

"You can drag it out. Look here—yes, look me in the eye, you old witch, and repeat to me that you haven't any money tied up in a rag somewhere!"

"Not a Swiss sou!"

"You're lying, you old miser. Go and get it. I'll pay you. I'll send it to you as soon as I go to the bank—"

"What bank?" She screamed with laughter and tossed her skinny arms convulsively.

"*My* bank. In Paris. There isn't time to write. I've got to go there, haven't I? Be reasonable, Divonne. By God, if you don't get that money, I'll not come back at all. And you'll starve!"

"Yes," she said, "you'll come back."

"You think so?"

"The cards say you'll come back. I made them last night. You'll come back to Mon Plaisir, Monsieur Amadeo. Maybe in a box."

He had been putting on his overcoat with the stained velvet collar. Now he turned around to look at her.

"If I had time," he said, grinning at her, "I'd put *you* in a box. And your squalling cat with you. Very well, then, keep the money you've been robbing me of—what you pretend are your savings. I can live on a crust a day as well as the next beggar."

He turned his back on her and began to button up his overcoat and arrange the dingy foulard around his neck.

The woman's face altered. She looked at him while he stood fumbling with his neck-cloth, and her chin quivered slightly.

"How much money have you?" she asked tremulously.

He did not even turn his head but crammed a felt hat on it to the level of his ears.

"Will you answer me, Amadeo?" she quavered.

"I have the price of a ticket to Paris, third-class; and no more," he said calmly.

"Do you swear it?"

"On the cross of my mother," he replied carelessly. "Well then"—he turned around—"good-by, Divonne—"

"Wait!"

"What do you want?" he asked trying to smile; but his swollen features made it a grotesque contortion.

"Wait," she repeated, trembling. And, after they had faced each other in silence for a long while, she turned her misshapen body and crept painfully up the stairs. And was gone for some time—long enough for him to smoke a cigarette very comfortably and take a surreptitious glance at his bill-fold where lay some fifteen-hundred francs in clean, new notes.

But she was coming, now, clumping painfully down the uncarpeted stairs, and he thrust the bill-fold into his breast pocket and settled his soft hat firmly over his thin, muddy-colored ears.

She held in her shaking hand two hundred francs in Louis d'or, and two dirty bills of a hundred francs each.

"God sees you, Amadeo, if you have it in your heart to cheat me. I have no other money in the world than this I give you—"

Tears streaked her withered cheeks into which something of their ancient peasant bloom had come to mock the ruin there.

He took the bills and gold pieces and shoved them carelessly into his trousers pocket.

"Probably," he said with another facial contortion, "you've as much more somewhere upstairs. All right, then; if I return, I return. And if the *huissiers* arrive, let your damned cat bite them!"

He was moving toward the door, now.

"*Allons! Vite!*" he growled. "Fetch out the baggage, you old slut!"

They were too heavy for her. So Meunier came in to help her; and at last the trunk, military chest, and handbag were loaded onto the battered car; Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire lighted another cigarette; Meunier kicked in the clutch, and the car wheeled out across the barren common into the highroad.

And Divonne, through a blur of tears, watched the departure of Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire who had seduced her when she was a little, fresh-faced kitchen maid at Mon Plaisir in those happy years of frugal plenty—so long, so long ago. . . . And who, reeling home one drunken, raging night, had kicked her into crippled servitude for life.

He was in a rage, now, seated alone in his first-class compartment and squinting from the window of the flying train. A still fury which left him rigid, motionless, save for his blunt, soiled fingers picking at the roots of his stubby nails; pulling the raw skin till they bled.

Well, then it was finished, in France, for him. Completely finished. Any of those inclined to make trouble for him could make it. Plenty of trouble. And one thing always stirred up another.

He was sullenly aware that he was in no position to face inquiry or accusation of any kind. Such as further investigation of his affair with his cousin d'Oran. Or his attempt at extortion with Chiyu d'Oran. Or his trespassing upon the *chasse*, and killing a boar there without permission. Or sending his seconds to that accursed American. . . . And there were other matters which none of these people knew about, but which might be stirred up by publicity. To be expelled from a club, cashiered as a reservist officer, outlawed from any family connections was bad enough. But there were things he had done which menaced him with prison. Not at cards, only; nor that racing scandal out of which he had slithered; but something far graver. Something which had to do with military information and a foreign government.

No; France had become impossible overnight. To get out of it while he could was imperative.

But—how was he to live, wherever he was going? By his five wits, as usual.

For a long while he reviewed in his mind the places of refuge which promised most—Brazil, Mexico, the United States. . . .

He still had his title, he reflected. Americans were idiots. Even under this black financial sky there was money left in America. Those vulgar fools over there still went to Palm Beach and threw money out of the window. He had read about it in the newspapers. . . .

How about that woman—what was her name? Yes, Sedley, Mrs. Sedley-Biltong. That fat female hellion who, bribed by his cousin d'Oran, had spoiled his chance for Chiyu. . . . After all he could scarcely blame her. Business is business. D'Oran could pay cash; he himself could only promise a contingent fee. . . .

The thing to do, he thought, is to call upon Mrs. Sedley-Biltong in her hotel in Paris and very frankly lay all his cards out for her shrewd inspection.

His cards consisted, solely, of his title. But that was currency in America. Always.

So perhaps he could do business with Mrs. Sedley-Biltong. On a contingency. He had his title. It was the only genuine and sound asset he possessed. What he wanted for it was a wife with enough income to make him comfortable. And, out of that income he would engage to pay to Mrs. Sedley-Biltong the fee which she demanded.

"Palm Beach," he thought to himself, "is not the Riviera but it is preferable to a French prison."

He was thinking with a slight shiver of some documents missing from General Staff headquarters. And, thinking of them, he was very glad he was about to leave the pleasant but dangerous land of his nativity.

Musing pleasantly he leaned back, lighted a cheap cigarette. A battered smile distorted his features.

He was hoping that he had trimmed his frayed cuffs with scissors for the last time.

CHAPTER XXIV
EN FAMILLE

At the Hôtel d'Oran Kilcarrick was the first of the house-party to take his leave.

Concerning Chiyu he still remained sentimental; but the boy was young and touchingly primitive and easily confused by beauty when it was massed in numbers.

Like a long-legged gnat dancing its love-dance entangled by its beloved, he gyrated in eccentric circles when assorted pulchritude "cut in" on him; and danced madly with the first newcomer.

So between Clairette and Claudine and Sesia de Serret and Lucie d'Azyr, he had a dizzy experience and was always quite bowled over by the one who happened to be playing with him at the psychological moment.

Moreover, concerning each one of these engaging intruders, at one time or another, he had sought Wyndward's advice with a view to impulsive matrimony. And in every case Wyndward had gravely sympathized but had suggested that the boy go back to his regiment and think it over between parades.

So Kilcarrick was going to try it, now; but he departed from the Hôtel d'Oran torn by indecision and convinced he was frightfully fond of somebody or other; although this definite somebody still remained elusive and indistinguishable amid the dizzy love-dance of the gnats.

Chiyu drove him to the station in her sport car, which kindness temporarily wiped out all infatuation for anybody else.

"Good-by," he said dramatically, "good-by, dear Chiyu. And if my sentiments toward you seem culpable and uncontrollable—"

"Nonsense, Linley," said the girl, laughing; and kissed him on both cheeks with mischievous satisfaction.

But when she drove back to Oran her gray-gold eyes grew remote and melancholy. For the going away of all these lively young people, which she dreaded, had finally begun. Link after link of the happy chain that bound her to the outer world and to youth was giving way, now, and leaving her to face the solitude of a coming winter beside a shadowy, gilded bed.

She dared not even consider Wyndward's going; and when chance thought of it chilled her, she forced it from her mind.

The twins of Ept departed for Cannes amid universal protest and violent cerebral excitement of George Bullup, who hovered distractedly about them, incapable of choice. They departed, pink with stifled laughter, and entirely aware that one or both of them had narrowly escaped a declaration preliminary to another one in form.

"Not," said George, afterward, to Scott Dundas, "that I have any use for marrying anybody just yet, but how else is one to monopolize two such mind-wrecking specimens of their sex?"

"Am I to understand that you want 'em both?" inquired Dundas.

"Well, if I were an Oriental polygamist—"

"You're an Occidental one," said Dundas, "and if you married nine hundred and ninety-nine of 'em, you'd still be scuttling around to make it a thousand—the *first* thousand—"

"Womanhood en masse appeals to me," admitted George. "The old Greek gods would have understood me."

"But the police wouldn't, George. Come on if you're going to shoot partridges with me—"

The Vicomtesse de Vicq and Madame Brindes departed the following day to hunt in the Forest of Kerselec where one hunts big boar with horse and hound and horn from the lovely little lost Gothic chapel to the stone bridge over the Laïette.

And it was all arranged that the old Château of Vicq, near Vicq-en-Laïette, should be a joyous rendezvous for next summer, and everybody at Oran should come to assist at the Pardon of the Birds. The vivacious Vicomtesse looked at George Bullup when she accented the word "pardon."

Afterward: "There's one bird I know," remarked Phil Bailey, "whom she won't pardon."

"Meaning me?" asked Bullup, smirking.

"Well, I saw you kiss Sonia de Vicq on the bridge—"

"Two errors, dear friend; it was the tip, not the bridge of her adorable nose; and she *did* pardon my bad aim when I corrected it."

"Is there a girl here you haven't kissed, George?" asked Dundas, curiously.

"Sure; one of the parlor maids. But there's time. And—well no, I haven't even tried to kiss Chiyu."

"So there really is *something* sacred to a *pompier*?"

"You know damn well that Chiyu isn't to be monkeyed with."

"What scares you about her, George?" inquired Reckness, ironically.

"The same thing that scares you and Scott Dundas," retorted Bullup, "and scares every other fresh guy too. Maybe you'll tell me what it is."

Dundas said: "Do you remember what the Paris papers printed about Chiyu when they interviewed her at the Sedley-Biltongs? 'Madame Trenholme is not only beautiful, but every movement, gesture, and word betrays the born patrician.'"

The smile of Revell Reckness became a sardonic grin: "Paddy Clyde's kid, the born patrician of 105th Street and Ziegfeld's front row."

"But that didn't get you anywhere with her, did it?" sneered Dundas. "And she sure looks the Vere de Vere, anyway."

"I'll add," said George, "that she acts it, too. What the hell," he added, "you make 'em, or you don't make 'em. And that's the complete answer. And you can call her 'patrician' or whatever you damn well please, but there's a kind of girl you don't try to monkey with; and Chiyu's that kind."

Reckness said: "Patrician, my eye! I've known plenty of titles that fall for you, happily—sometimes gratefully."

"Plus or minus her title," said Dundas, "Chiyu is Chiyu. Try to make her! Like a pig's wrist you will. And whatever a Countess of Oran might do, Chiyu falls for nobody."

"If you ask me," remarked Reckness, "I think Chiyu is in love with John Wyndward."

"I've thought so too, at times," remarked Dundas.

"If that's true," protested Bullup, "of course I can't understand their not mixing it. After all, we have only one life to live—"

"You've got nine, you damned tom-cat," sneered Reckness; "and you've already lived ninety-nine hundred of them. If Phil Bailey is coming out to

try to shoot a roebuck with me, please let him signify it with an epicurean grunt."

Revell Reckness departed for Nice the following day where his yacht, the *Niobrara*, was now at anchor awaiting that wealthy young man's pleasure.

Very politely he had invited d'Oran and Chiyu to cruise with him, but that, of course, was hopeless. A little more hopeless than ever; because Charles d'Oran had not been quite as well, recently, tiring very quickly of movement and noise when, as usual, his guests gathered in the great, dimly lighted bedchamber to chat with him or play backgammon or bridge for his amusement.

He had liked the harp and piano, and the school-girl singing of the twins; but Lucie d'Azyr's voice was more mature, robust, and ambitious, and she played her accompaniments too vigorously for his weary, disillusioned ears.

Phil Bailey went off to Nice with Revell Reckness. He hated to go. He adored the game dinners at Oran, particularly roasted woodcock stuffed with chestnuts, and roebuck cutlets *à la chasseur*, drenched in rich gravy.

However, he was unable to button vital gaps in some of his clothing, now, and a visit to a Riviera tailor was becoming imperative to avoid arrest.

As the Baroness de Serret and Mademoiselle d'Azyr were going to Nice, also, they made of it a *partie carrée*; and off they rolled in a beautiful Diana car which Reckness kept at Nice and which had arrived the night before.

Which left, of the Oran house-party, only George Bullup, Scott Dundas, and John Wyndward; and these three gathered on the terrace where October sunshine fell warmly and where men already were taking away the last of the orange and lemon trees to their glass refuges for the winter.

Speaking of Reckness, George Bullup said gloomily: "Yachts and Diana cars and wads of money are grand things, Chiyu. But I'm wondering whether I'll have the price of a cheap taxi if things get any worse in New York."

"Are things getting any worse?" she asked.

"They're so terrible that I'm afraid to read the morning paper any more." He mentioned two standard stocks with a wry face. "You're loaded up with

them, too, I believe," he said to Wyndward with one of his blond grins.

"You ought to know, George," returned Wyndward good-humoredly; "your firm bought them for me. I might add that they recommended them, but I don't cherish malice."

Dundas laughed but there was gentle concern in Chiyu's face.

"Sometimes," she said, "it might almost seem that the custom and practice of bankers and brokers leave something to be desired. But perhaps I don't quite understand—"

George looked at her in astonishment. "What do you know about the practice and customs of brokers, Chiyu?" he demanded with a brusk laugh.

She said: "Before I was first married I had saved a little money to invest."

"Well, I hope there was somebody to advise you how to invest it safely, Chiyu."

"Everybody advised me," she said smilingly, "including my brokers. But I'd been trying to study the stock market for quite a long time. So I made up my own mind," she added naïvely.

"And lost it all and blamed your brokers," concluded George, virtuously.

She laughed at him in a friendly way.

"Didn't you curse them out?" he insisted. "You know you did, Chiyu!"

"No," she said, "because I made quite a good deal of money. I mean quite a good deal, for me, George."

"And when did you eventually lose it, Chiyu?" he persisted, grinning his "Cheshire grin" at her.

"I didn't lose it. But I would have if I had followed my broker's advice."

Amid general laughter Bullup asked her what kind of bucket-shop she had operated in.

"The firm," she replied demurely, "was Bullup and Dundas."

Wyndward's laughter rang out uncontrolled. George, very red, violently denied any such account; but when she explained that they had carried her account under the name of Kathleen Veronica Clyde, George gave Dundas a dirty look of inquiry, and Dundas admitted the impeachment.

"Take me out and sick a boar on me if I ever dreamed it was you, Chiyu," he asserted. "And I guess my advice did leave—as you so kindly put it—something to be desired. But I'm devilish glad you made some money."

"The banks," added George, still uncomfortably red, "are worse than we are. That South American bond issue was something scandalous."

"Well," remarked Wyndward, "we'll all be in the same leaky boat very soon—banker, broker, and the poor peddler of plaster busts. I can stand it; but you fellows can't, with your fastidious tastes. Luxury means life to you. Better order a good-looking mausoleum, George, while prices are cheap."

Thus Chiyu, Wyndward, and the Buccaneers in pleasantries a trifle macabre, perhaps; but they all were feeling the reaction from the disintegration of a house-party which had been delightful and too brief.

Before Bullup and Dundas left for Paris they all hunted once more with the Numésnil pack. The vigorous young Vicomte had one or two family matters to talk over with Chiyu after the hunt breakfast, and took some time about doing so.

It was he who would head the family in the event of the Count d'Oran dying without issue, which impending misfortune had become a certainty.

But what he had to say to Chiyu chiefly concerned Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire.

He told her that Amadeo would not be likely to trouble her again; that he was a ruined man financially; and, in reputation, a bankrupt.

"You understand, Chiyu, that I can not burden my cousin d'Oran with this disturbing family business. And it is not necessary that Charles be distressed, because I know—and all our family know now—that in your charming and competent self, the dignity and traditions of the family are safe."

"You honor me, cousin," she murmured.

"*You* honor *us*, Chiyu. The women of my race are not serious—not too severely moral, perhaps—but they are difficult to please when another of their sex is introduced into the family. And they are unanimous concerning you!"

The girl flushed rosily with diffidence and pleasure.

"In you," he said, "we discover just sufficient of the Puritan to balance our *gaîté gauloise*; a charming honesty and delicate austerity which lends to you authority. Of which," he added, smilingly, "you have the wisdom to be unconscious."

He lifted her hand and kissed it with grave respect.

"I'll tell you," he said, "what I am afraid of. First, of publicity. Because the affairs of Amadeo would not bear publicity. Second, that he may yet do something to disgrace us.

"I don't know what. He has gambling debts. There are rumors regarding the race track.

"It is true that he was exonerated concerning his affair with Charles. And God knows I would not stir up that matter. Nor would I insist on an explanation as to his vicious conduct toward you or the insult offered de Faöuet and myself in daring to send us on such a mission to Monsieur Wyndward.

"No, he is too dangerous. One dares not handle too roughly a rotten egg in a nest full of sound ones. And so I am afraid to punish this man."

De Numésnil still retained Chiyu's hand, and now he pressed it earnestly between both of his strong, brown ones:

"Chiyu," he said, "it is better that I share with you another and deeply disturbing matter which lately has come to my knowledge. I share it with you in sacred confidence, knowing that even a secret concerning the welfare of France is as safe in your breast as it is in my own. And that, because you now represent Charles in our family councils, you ought to know everything that he should know were he in any condition to be told."

"I am wondering," she ventured, "whether I have enough wisdom and experience to be taken so vitally into your confidence, cousin—"

"Let me be the judge of that, Chiyu. Listen attentively to what I now tell you:

"On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war and began to send us help. It was partly because of this that Nivelle made his premature attack. After Nivelle's defeat in May, 1917, many French regiments went bolshevik, drove out their officers, and elected soldiers' councils. I blush to tell you this.

"Whole brigades and divisions revolted and went red. Among these the regiment of Amadeo.

"Then Pétain was appointed Commander in Chief; and he restored order. But in the chaos which reigned for a time on our western front, there were many opportunities for treachery. And many contacts with the enemy made which, in some cases, have lasted until to-day. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

His grip almost crushed her hands, but in her intense absorption in what he was saying she scarcely noticed the pain.

"Sometime last April," he said. "About the time that Amadeo was paying his court to you, but before Madame Sedley-Biltong introduced to you Charles, and sent Amadeo about his business, a certain document was taken from the Headquarters of our General Staff.

"It was the third theft within the year of documents containing secret military information. . . . And, in that month, Amadeo de la Roquettaire lost four hundred thousand francs at racing and at cards. . . . And yet he was dead broke the month before. . . ."

The girl turned very pale. De Numésnil released her benumbed hands and began to walk up and down the gunroom, slapping his spurred boots with his riding crop, the muscles in his tense jaws working like a hound's.

After a while he halted, facing Chiyu:

"It is impossible that God could permit such disgrace to fall upon us," he said hoarsely. "There never has been disloyalty among us. Not in all our history, Chiyu—"

His voice choked; he looked at her with the glitter of tears in his clear eyes.

"There is no proof," he said with an effort. "I don't know what to do. I went to his house, yesterday. It was as empty as a deserted barn. The only servant there—a poor, misshapen woman—did not know where he had gone but believed he was in Paris.

"Chiyu, I think I had better go to Paris."

She nodded.

"I can't rest under the shadow of this frightful menace," he said, "this awful threat of disgrace to our name. I can't sleep. . . . To-day, for a moment, I lost my nerve and hoped my horse would kill me—"

Chiyu came and took his strong, sun-tanned hands into her soft, white ones:

"No," she said, "we must carry on. All of us. You know it, cousin."

"Yes, I know. It was only for a moment. . . . The thought crazed me—"

"I know. I know what happens when one fears for one's mind. A blow to the mind! Death is the only doctor for that. . . . I also have passed through that. But it is ended with you, too; isn't it?"

"Yes. . . . I feel so sure that he is guilty that I thought of killing myself last night. . . . It's over, as you say, Chiyu. I'll keep my sanity. We'll see it through—if it comes."

She said: "If you could find him and face him with it, and drive him out of France forever—"

"Yes, that is best. . . . Drive him away where he could do France no more mischief. . . . Before they suspect him and arrest him and try him. . . . Before they mutilate his uniform and do to him what they did to Bolo on Sartory plain—"

He closed his eyes and clenched his lean fists inside her clasping hands.

"God," he whispered, "one of our family! Charles could not survive it an hour!"

"Do you believe," she said, "that he is already suspected?"

"I don't know."

"Are you going to Paris?"

"Yes, to-night."

There was no more said. After a little while they regained command of themselves; he offered her his arm, and they came sauntering out of the gunroom to join the jolly red-coated company gathered around the great fireplace in the hall.

There was much drinking from a huge silver loving-cup; gay singing of old hunting choruses and sounding of hunting horns in the handsome hall.

The brush had gone to Captain de Faöuet; the mask and pads by acclamation to Chiyu—a picture of lovely, protesting confusion.

But she bravely set her lips to the loving-cup, lifting it with both hands as she gave them:

"A fox and a hound
While the clock goes 'round,
And a horse and a horn
Till the Judgment morn!
If old Saint Peter makes me wait
My horse will jump the Pearly Gate,
And I know that God will laugh and say,
'Way for the horse and hound! Make way!'"

CHAPTER XXV
DEVELOPMENT

The morning mist had turned to a chilly drizzle by noon and, by evening, had become a driving rain.

Wyndward, the last remaining guest at Oran, had been out all alone, wandering about after snipe and woodcock. He came back toward dusk, soaked, and in a somber mood; and found an American mail on his dresser, including the usual bundle of New York newspapers.

Waiting for his bath to fill he glanced through the latter, reading about the steady approach of the United States, day by day, toward financial disaster; about the White House Bourbon who learned nothing and forgot nothing; about bankruptcies, blackmail, bigotry, political rascality, congressional stupidity, the breakdown of foreign policy, the increasing dislike and distrust of the United States among many nations; the disrespect of all.

He had read enough to sicken him before his bath filled. Stiggins, Chadband, Pecksniff and Uriah Heep were still in the saddle and spurring that old skate, Prohibition, to a Rosinante gallop. Bishop and canon and fat, bespectacled females led the W.C.T.U. and sectarian-minded and windless millions to the triple crucifixion where Liberty hung inert upon the tree, flanked by dying decency and intelligence in mortal anguish.

After he had bathed and dressed he read his mail. There was the usual bantering letter from Narcissa Belinda Grey, reminding him of Browning's "The Bishop Orders His Tomb"; and hoping that any old bishop would order one from Wyndward for immediate occupancy.

The only other letter that interested him was from Dr. Quinton:

> Here's betting your own odds that we go off the gold standard! Any takers? Our national treasure galleon is driving fast toward the rocks. Her battered consort, the poor old patched up Ship of State, is already breaking her back on the bar—or for lack of one; and the bewildered, bone-headed Skipper still tries to steer with a busted rudder and a crooked crew from Congress.
>
> Do you know that there is scarcely a representative in Congress who isn't crooked? And why not? A potentially crooked

population put them there; and they developed what was latent in them. Don't blame them; blame the base morals of the nation.

John, you'd better come home and look for work. There isn't any, but you'd better practice looking for it. There is likely to be some after Election. There's got to be. Or we will start hanging politicians, prohibitionists, bigots and bankers.

All this grotesque crew in Washington is going to be swept out by a patient people's righteous indignation. Because we become righteous when our pockets are emptied and they steal our pants.

Then we'll strike bottom with an awful bump. Pantless. Then hell will break loose. Or it won't. Personally, I don't think it will. I think we'll sit up and rub our posterior and breathe hard and painfully and get up. And try to revive the good old crooked days that are no more.

So come back, take your bump like a good American, and get up with the rest of us.

My love to Chiyu. My kindest wishes to her husband. And to you a final admonition: Come on home and get into the swinish scramble. The trough is empty. But the Eternal Saki will pour it full of hogwash many, many times before the world cracks open disclosing the pit of misfit and agitated bones tumbling about the business of resurrection.

Yours,

TERRY.

P.S. A man from one Sidney Rosenquest, alleged art dealer, hunted me up and desired to know when you'd return to your studio and begin work on a commission given you, through their firm, for a foreign client.

Well, here it was, then. His time was up. This ended things in France.

So Wyndward rang for a valet and told him to pack and to telephone the station for a reservation to Paris on the early morning train.

Then he went out and descended the grand staircase in solitary and gloomy state and entered the music room where a blazing log fire tempered

the chilly dampness, and a cocktail shaker and two glasses awaited his hostess and himself.

He had not seen either his host or his hostess since morning when he had conversed briefly with the former in his gilded bed.

Chiyu had accompanied him to the hunting-car where were stowed his gun, his lunch, and two dogs. But, by special request, he took no *garde de chasse* with him and drove the car himself.

And now he was back in the Château of Oran, loitering beside the fire, awaiting Chiyu, and thinking over the news he had to tell her. And he was aware that she would not like it.

But the time had come for him to depart. He had little more than sufficient money with which to get home. And there was a commission waiting for him.

As for Chiyu, and himself—and love—the tragedy of it already had begun. But there would be no climax. Because Chiyu herself was developing out of the tragedy of their love; and, with its avowal, already had grown to a stature unassailable. And was still developing.

Not spiritually, perhaps, but with a sort of spiritual dignity which forbade interference with the stately progress of a drama in which an entire and ancient family were involved.

And Wyndward realized, now, that to their traditions this girl always would remain loyal.

It was curious, but it was true that Chiyu as perfectly understood *noblesse oblige* as did any daughter or son of this ancient and noble race whose forefathers wore gold spurs when her forefathers, in peasant rags, roved the whins and bogs or fought the Sassenach from Inishtrahull to Fastnet Rock.

Hers were no puritanical prejudices; no fear of bell, book, and candle; no inherited or instinctive inhibitions; no dogmatic obligations to a husband who already had resigned to her her freedom, asking only that she continue with him—or what was left of him.

But here—and Wyndward understood it, now—was a selfless obligation to perform her part in a complicated family machine which had been functioning for centuries without reproach, and in which all parts were interdependent.

One cog of base metal had become damaged; and was to be quietly discarded. A new cog, herself, must replace it.

Sans peur—Chiyu already was that. *Sans reproche*—she still remained so. And now, he realized, she always would remain so. Always, despite herself, himself, and love; and lesser things, like death. . . .

He looked around from his abstraction and saw Chiyu coming toward him, fresh as a dew-washed wild rose in her filmy dinner gown.

"Darling," she said breathlessly, "I'm late! I'm sorry. Your valet came to me just now with some confused, preposterous story—"

"I asked him to pack for me. I have to leave to-morrow morning."

She looked at him in unfeigned terror: "You're n-not going?" she faltered.

"I've got to."

"Oh, darling—"

A servant came to shake up the cocktails. Until he departed she dared not touch her glass; she trembled so.

When dinner finally was announced, her arm in Wyndward's was still trembling. It proved a trying ceremony—the presence of servants requiring conversation and gaiety made to order; and they both were glad when the strain of it ended and they had returned to the fire in the music room. But they were very silent until coffee and liqueurs had been removed.

"I've had a letter from Terry Quinton," he began. "My funds are running low, and there is a job waiting for me. If I do it well, maybe they'll give me another. Rosenquest hinted as much."

"What is it?" she asked faintly.

"It's a nymph and faun, for some foreign client of Sidney Rosenquest's. I don't know who ordered it."

"Have you decided on the composition, darling?"

"Yes, I made a wax sketch for it before I left New York. I have them seated on a low limb of a tree with their feet swinging; and he's telling her a jesting story, and she is laughing—yet still a trifle afraid of him—and you can see just a trace of malice in his clever, dangerous face."

"In m-marble?" she swallowed hard and touched her tremulous mouth with her handkerchief.

"Yes, in a very delicate, ivory-hued marble. There'll be a ferny place at their feet, and a pool into which water will splash. It's all quite pure and sylvan and naïve."

Chiyu nodded and touched her eyes with her handkerchief.

"See here," he blurted out harshly, "it's hell enough for me as it is, and I can't stand seeing you unhappy."

"Oh," she breathed, "you must not be unhappy about it, d-darling—"

"We can't help being, but we can help what we do about it!"

She got up abruptly, walked to the window and parted the crimson curtains.

"What a ghastly rain," she said. "You must have been drenched out shooting."

"I don't mind a wetting."

"D-did you shoot m-many w-w-woodcock—"

But she gave up the effort and stood silent with bowed head, holding tightly to the brocade curtains.

He came behind her and encircled her body; and her tears fell on his clasped hands above her trembling breasts.

"I don't know why I ever wished to live dangerously," she sobbed. "I didn't know about it—I didn't know—"

"It is almost unendurable for me, Chiyu, to go away and leave you here in France. At moments it seems as though I couldn't go—"

"Oh dear," she wept, "oh dear, oh dear—"

Her handkerchief was a tiny wet wad, now; he gave her his own, and she wept on in feverish silence.

Finally she turned around and took hold of his arm; and they began to walk the room together like two unhappy caged creatures, haunted by dreams of free wild woods and skies.

"You understand, darling," she faltered, "that the very liberty Charles gives me loads me down with chains. Everything conspires to fetter me to him and to his race. My individuality is gone. I can't betray these people who trust me, and of whom I have become one.

"It's a chain, I tell you, and there isn't a link in it I can break without treachery to everybody concerned. And there's no treachery in me, darling —"

"This is all rather frightful," he said, "to know you are unhappy through me—"

"Oh no, not through you—"

"Through my damnable stupidity and blindness—"

"Oh no, please! Oh no, darling. From the very beginning you've been such a guiding light to me—such an inspiration—"

"My God, Chiyu, you can say such a thing in this hour!"

"Yes, I do. Where do you suppose I'd have been to-day except for you? Unless I had been in love with you? Look back and see what I've come through—all these years—and finally to find myself here, in this room, now, with you. . . . Darling! Do you imagine I haven't been tempted to take an easier way—a spirited and adventurous way?

"I am intelligent. I am curious. I am not afraid. And I am not made of ice. . . . I think there are times when any girl finds it difficult not to live completely. In all of us there seems to be some trace of latent joyousness, of healthy recklessness. And of tenderness, too, darling. Loneliness is an enemy that kindles false little flames in us. Sometimes they seem to burn like real ones. It has not always been too easy to remember that I am in love. . . . But—I have remembered."

She did not mean to punish him, but merely to make him understand. But it was coming to him. He had to take it. Lie down to it or take it on the chin.

His face actually wore a battered look, and there were dark, bruised streaks under his eyes. And there was nothing to say or do except to stand up and take it amid the wreckage he had made of everything.

He said: "You are kind to me, Chiyu, who have done us both this mischief and can not undo it.

"But there is this, out of the ruin: I leave you here secure, respected, honored, even loved, among an alien people naturally inclined to cynicism and mockery, and easily moved to contempt and hatred of all aliens.

"What your eyes so long concealed has been revealed out of the mouth God gave you to make or mar. . . . And it is a child's mouth still, Chiyu. . . ."

She smiled through sudden tears: “So is yours, darling—the mouth of a school-boy; all humor and sulks, sweetness and stubbornness, and always mobile enough—even in grimness—to camouflage a grin—”

“God,” he said bitterly, “did I ever grin!”

“You will again, too, John Wyndward.”

But the great mistake of his life and career was staring him too closely in the face with a Medusa stare for him to believe in such a miracle.

Here was his finish. Here was the end of love. Beyond he could see nothing except gray years of work.

Yet even then, in that dark, unhappy moment, he felt a faint and hidden shiver of clairvoyance and inspiration—occult instinct prophesying what his work might be because of Chiyu, and of love.

CHAPTER XXVI

ADIEU

The first misty sunbeams filtered through the curtains and a single bar of pale gold lay across the gilded bed. The hour was early, but the Count of Oran had insisted on bidding his guest farewell.

"It was thoughtless of me," said Wyndward, bending over him, "to choose so early an hour for departure, and I told Chiyu, just now, that I would take a later train. But she said you were already awake and expecting me."

The sick man, flat on his bed, looked at him out of eyes deep burning within the skin-stretched orbits of a skull.

"Will you come again, Wyndward?" he asked in a windy, whistling voice that had no resonance.

"I want to come."

"I want you to."

"You are extremely kind, d'Oran."

"You are, also. Come when you can, then. Chiyu will welcome you. . . . And all who are kinsmen of ours will be glad to see you. . . . I also, Wyndward—if I am here."

Wyndward gave him a slightly startled look, then reddened. "Of course you'll be here, d'Oran. You're gaining steadily, if slowly, I understand." He bent lower and took the sick man's bony hand: "I want you to show me a boar, even if, at first, you have to take it easy. I want your companionship in your beautiful and noble forest of Oran. Only the master of such a place can understand and explain it as it should be interpreted."

"Yes, I love it."

"Well then, there must come a day when we two shall go into it together, and I shall really begin to understand it."

The sick man smiled.

"They tell me," said Wyndward, "that the Eleventh Louis and the Fourth Henry hunted here. And other diademed ones."

"Yes. Our *Grand Veneur* is permitted a strip of *gallon d'or* because of them. And the Fourteenth Louis left his lace jabot for us to wear a-hunting

because a youngster of Oran rode well at Steenkerke."

Wyndward laughed: "An ancestor of my own ran from that battle. It was a bilious time for our Third William, I understand."

A ghost of a laugh fluttered the sick man's shrunken lips. Then the mask relaxed and the sunken eyes burned.

"Wyndward," he said, "if, when you come again, I should be—unavoidably—absent—"

He lay silent in labored breathing for a moment; then: "There is, among our heirlooms here, a pair of golden spurs. . . . Ask Chiyu to—find them—and buckle them on for you—to replace your own."

They looked each other steadily in the eyes. Finally:

"Do you wish it, Monsieur d'Oran?"

"I wish it."

"I promise, then."

"*C'est bien*."

When Wyndward came out and descended the grand staircase he was inarticulate; and he moved very slowly in order to recover poise and speech for the other leave-taking now awaiting him below.

She had decided not to drive to the station with him. Emotion had paled the color in her face, and in his own.

The car, with his luggage aboard, waited under the terrace in the frosty sunshine.

They stepped aside into the seclusion of the music room; and then she ventured to look up at him. And saw something in his face that had not been there before—a pallid stillness that aged and refined it, leaving his features almost tranquil.

They had already said what there was to say. Her face grew deathly pale when he lifted her hands and kissed them, then released them; and turned away and went out alone into the frosty sunshine.

She had stood alone in the shadowy music room unstirring, listening to the sound of his departing motor.

When she could no longer hear it she turned wearily away to go to her husband and sit beside the gilded bed until he slept once more.

CHAPTER XXVII
LILY

At the Hôtel d'Athos, rue des Cimbres No. 7, where Mr. and Mrs. Sedley-Biltong made their overseas lair, Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire also had made his since his arrival in the City of Light.

With the Sedley-Biltongs was, as usual, a young American girl—a Miss Lily Dilling—from War Bow, Arizona.

With her mother's milk scarce dry on her pouting lips and the wonder of the world still bluish in her widening eyes, and the soft hair and soft warmth of her still redolent of the nursery, she seemed scarcely adolescent. Yet the records at War Bow credited her with twenty-one years of perpetual childhood.

There was practically nothing in her brain. But, although her mind was empty and without industry, her eyes, kitten-like, were unwinkingly busy with this bright new world, and its varied and astonishing phenomena. And she laughed very easily.

Wilbur P. Dilling was her father. He had nothing to say about anything except his oil interests.

Mrs. Wilbur P. Dilling was her mother. *Some* mother, it was rumored.

A large check signed Wilbur P. Dilling had been banked in August by Mrs. Sedley-Biltong. It was a good beginning. It would be doubled when Miss Lily Dilling became Lady A or Lady B or Lady C; or, failing contact with the British aristocracy, the check would be doubled when Lily Dilling became the Countess of X or the Baroness of Y or even the Vicomtesse of Z. And the dot was a solid million in United States bonds.

From the million, also, Mrs. Sedley-Biltong expected further financial nourishment for self and spouse. Because, thought that thrifty lady, it would be an incompetent business woman who wouldn't be able to detach a few attractive coupons on a contingency from a prospective bridegroom burning to possess the dot, even if less inflammable regarding the bride-to-be.

It is true that, when exploiting Chiyu, Mrs. Sedley-Biltong had encouraged Prince Amadeo, and then had replaced him with Charles d'Oran.

But now in France the situation had changed; Americans were, nationally, disliked; taxes grew heavier; financial confusion reigned; Mussolini was cutting up; Germany, a prey to political factions, winked a

friendly wink at Herr Hitler; the Republic and its citizens turned sullen, unfriendly, and defiant, one Gallic eye glaring at the United States, the other squinting at a suspected Europe.

So Paris, at the moment, was not a propitious place in which to promote international marriages, principally because of suspicious financial conditions in the land of Yankee heiresses.

Which is why Mrs. Sedley-Biltong was polite to Prince Amadeo when they encountered each other in the corridor of the Hôtel d'Athos, and permitted him to salute her fair, fat fingers and anoint her with compliments.

Probably he was on his uppers as usual; but he was a genuine Prince. And a Princess of the House of Dilling would petrify War Bow and points west and south.

So Mrs. Sedley-Biltong dispensed tea in her small drawing-room, and Prince Amadeo partook of it—"bountifully," as the *War Bow Tribune* might have described the function; and very quickly they came down to business.

It took some time for even a tentative understanding and they fought rapaciously over every detail, perfectly distrustful of each other and indifferent about showing it.

Prince Amadeo lied, and Mrs. Sedley-Biltong knew it; Mrs. Sedley-Biltong lied, and Prince Amadeo knew it. And both knew that the other knew they were lying.

He was not particularly curious to see the girl in question. He glanced without interest at the photographs shown him. What interested him was the interest on the bonds. He said so, without delicacy.

It was nearly seven o'clock when Mr. Sedley-Biltong returned from a drive to St. Cloud with Miss Lily Dilling. She giggled when the Prince kissed her hand. It was her first personal experience with a Prince, although early picture books and recent novels had made her delightfully aware of them.

Amadeo could be entertaining. He was, now; and continued to be until it was time for him to dress for dinner and return to dine with the Sedley-Biltongs and with Miss Lily Dilling.

So the campaign opened the very afternoon of Prince Amadeo's arrival in Paris; and at the end of the week important gains had been made and consolidated, and the zero hour for final attack upon a million in United States bonds, and Miss Lily Dilling, was agreed upon.

So far her only reaction to attack had been a giggle.

There were two other aspirants in the field, sagaciously introduced by Mrs. Sedley-Biltong. One was a middle-aged, farming Baron, who needed a moratorium but did not need Lily and was in two minds about her, but in only one concerning her dot. The other, a weary young Vicomte, half dead from excesses, and not entirely competent mentally, couldn't quite seem to understand whether Mrs. Sedley-Biltong was providing him with an odalisque or a wife, and, in consequence, was not permitted any tête-à-têtes with Miss Lily.

It was the eve of the zero hour; everything was set for the assault in the Sedley-Biltong apartment; Lily was being attired for attack by Mrs. Sedley-Biltong's brand-new maid; Mrs. Sedley-Biltong in the dining-room directed the arrangement of strategic flowers; Sedley-Biltong, slightly benumbed by too many *fines*, suffered his valet to dress him and tried to straighten his eyes in the glass and see himself singly and not en masse.

The maid who was dressing Miss Dilling spoke English. She was deft and gentle and clever and ventured sympathetic conversation, eagerly and gratefully responded to by Lily who was, by temperament and inclination, everybody's youngest sister.

"Prince Amadeo," said the maid whose name was Ellen, "appears to be a most gallant and delightful gentleman. Mademoiselle, no doubt, has many acquaintances among the ancient aristocracy of France."

"No, I haven't," said Lily. "I've met only that red-faced old farmer and that sleepy Vicomte de Shabraque. I don't think farmers are interesting. There are plenty of them in Arizona, Nebraska and Iowa. Awful ones." She giggled and wriggled in her dinner gown, trying to see the back of it in the mirror. But it had none.

"But Monsieur de Shabraque, Mademoiselle! Ah, what an ancient aristocracy! What *vraie noblesse*!"

"He pinched my leg," said Lily, squirming. "I'm afraid of him."

If she had seen her maid's face she would have noticed in it a violent inclination to laugh. But Ellen said in a shocked voice: "But surely, Mademoiselle must have been mistaken—"

"No, I wasn't. Every time the others turn their backs he reaches for some part of me, and I have to be on the hop with him every minute—"

A stifled sound from the maid checked her, but Ellen merely seemed to have a cold, and Lily recommended a bottle of Tix on the bathroom shelf.

"Gargle it, Ellen," she said, "and it's good for oversmoking, too. But about the Vicomte, he reminds me of my necking days back in God's country. I got terribly tired. A girl can't struggle every minute, you know."

Ellen, kneeling beside her filmy skirt and fussing with it, looked up at the girl and eyed her for a moment.

"Mademoiselle has had sophisticated experience with American young gentlemen?" she inquired impudently.

But the impudence was not understood, and the question made Lily giggle:

"Well, you know what it is to be a coed. Or maybe you don't. Neck-neck-neck! that's half the curriculum. Then mother got to acting up and yanked me out. And here I am to sober down and marry something noble! . . . Does that V meet exactly on the end of my spine, Ellen?"

It was being arranged to do just that. Wriggle-proof.

"No," said Lily, "I can't see Cleon de Shabraque or the noble farming hick. What do you think of the Prince, Ellen?"

The maid replied in a low voice: "Mademoiselle should behave with extreme caution."

Lily twisted around to look at her; and Ellen coolly sustained the scrutiny.

Lily said: "He isn't handsome. He's got a kind of ratty look. But he's the real article . . . isn't he?"

"How should I know?" murmured Ellen, draping the fluffy skirt with clever hands.

Lily said: "Mr. and Mrs. Sedley-Biltong say he's okay." She added with a giggle: "There'll be hell in Arizona if he isn't."

Ellen, very busy, said in her level, distinct voice: "If Mademoiselle desires, I can very quickly obtain reliable information concerning Monsieur the Prince de la Roquettaire."

"Have you heard things?"

"Perhaps."

"What things?"

The maid's shoulders merely rose a trifle.

"Well, see here, Ellen," said Miss Dilling with a giggle, "I'm not half as dumb as I look. I'd like to be a Princess. I can have plenty of fun too. But if he's a jailbird, or anything like that, I'll make it right with you if you'll tip me."

"Will Mademoiselle help me?"

"Sure, I will. And how!" She giggled again.

"The letters—little notes—that Monsieur le Prince—"

"I get you. Thumb prints and chirography? Okay, my dear. They're in the top drawer. Here's the key; help yourself. And make a snappy job of it, Ellen, because Mr. Button-eyes means to come to a clinch, and I'll have to quit stalling and baby-staring and sink the pill at the eighteenth. You know?"

Ellen had unlocked the drawer and was transferring the notes and messages to a cellophane envelope which she tucked into her bosom.

Lily picked up a hundred-franc note from the dresser top and held it out; but the entire demeanor of the maid had altered, and she put the girl's hand aside with a brusk gesture.

"Mademoiselle," she said coolly, "it is perfectly plain to me that you know how to take most excellent care of yourself. And of your dot. Permit me to recommend further prudence regarding the Prince de la Roquettaire, and loyal silence concerning myself and what I am undertaking in your behalf."

"This," giggled Lily, "is becoming exciting. And I've already told you I'm not the dumb-bell I look. There is considerable of papa in me and less of mama, Ellen."

"Mademoiselle has no intention of accepting Monsieur de la Roquettaire?"

"Oh, I don't know. A Princess is a Princess, particularly in America. . . . And there's always Reno, you know."

"Mademoiselle will wisely await the result of my inquiries and investigations?"

"Sure, I will, Ellen. Go to it, my dear. Give me the lowdown. Come back and spill it." She giggled and picked up her nail file.

"You can bean Button-eyes if you like," she remarked. "It's all right by me. Only—one thing—" She touched the file to one brilliantly stained nail, very delicately, and smiled at the maid.

"One thing?" repeated Ellen.

"Yes, one thing. Who are you?"

The sudden question brought a hint of color into the maid's face. "Mademoiselle is good enough to interest herself?"

"I am. Who the deuce are you?"

They remained looking at each other, level-eyed, for a few seconds' silence.

"Very well, then," said Ellen quietly, "I am an employee of the French Government."

The girl giggled. "This is good," she said, "and it's getting better. I thought there must be something the matter with Prince Button-eyes."

"There is."

Lily Dilling held out her baby hand to her maid with a soft giggle. "Nail him, my dear," she said. "He means nothing in my young life."

"He is likely to mean something in mine," said Ellen.

"Grand! I'm all for you, my dear. Make him, and then I'll shake these Sedley-Biltongs, and you and I will get acquainted and go places."

About that time Monsieur the Prince left his room and went out into the corridor toward the lift, which was some distance away.

The corridor formed an L just beyond de la Roquettaire's apartment; and in this L, which was dusky, he encountered a woman so suddenly that he scarcely avoided a collision.

But that was merely the beginning of the episode, for, in the middle of courtly and profuse apologies he recognized her.

She was a handsome woman of perhaps thirty-five, tall, svelte, beautifully gowned, gloved, and hatted, and bore herself with the well-bred composure of a pretty woman of the world.

"Sari!" he faltered.

"I have the apartment adjoining yours," she said. "Step into it a moment."

He didn't desire to. That was evident. But he turned and shambled along beside her, glancing furtively about and behind him and seemed relieved when he was in the room.

"When did you arrive?" he asked, cautiously locking the door.

"To-day."

"From Basle?"

"Yes. What are you doing in Paris, Amadeo?"

"Amusing myself," he replied with a forced smile.

"Are you amused?"

"*Comme ça*," he shrugged.

She had cast off her furs and gloves and hat. Her plump white fingers glittered with diamonds and emeralds as she lighted a cigarette.

"Sit down, Amadeo," she said.

"Sorry, Sari—an engagement—"

"Sit down." She added "please," as an afterthought.

He seated himself and shot an unquiet look at her.

"You've been getting into mischief," she remarked.

"I—"

"Yes, you have, Amadeo. Making trouble at Oran. Taking a slap in the face from a young man—"

He went scarlet at that and sat glaring at her, his lips twitching.

"What a fool you are," she went on calmly, "to stir up trouble! When you know it behooves you to remain peaceful and inconspicuous. And that Jockey Club affair ready to start simmering. Not to mention your duel with Monsieur your cousin. What devilish itch possesses you to make these noises when self-effacement is your safety? And, incidentally, mine."

"I'm not afraid to make a noise when I'm insulted," he snarled.

"You're not afraid of anything, Amadeo. Nobody ever accused you of timidity."

He swaggered a little at that, curling his waxed mustache. Yet it was quite true; he was no physical coward.

"*Merci*," he said. "And I am going to kiss your hand and accept from you my *congé*—"

"Not yet."

"But I—"

"*Compris*. You dine with your Sedley-Biltong and your intended—shall I say, victim?"

"Say what you like! . . . Where the devil do you gather such news? But"—he shrugged—"it is your business to gather news of course—"

"Except when you gather it for me, Amadeo."

"No," he said in a low voice, "I've had enough!"

"*I* haven't."

"*I* have—"

"My poor friend, when one embarks in this peculiar life devoted to the gathering of information, one never finishes."

"I have finished, Madame!"

"No, you are mistaken. You have scarcely begun."

After a silence: "Have I the honor to be threatened, Madame?"

"My Government never threatens, Monsieur."

"Oh, it acts. Is that it? Because, after all, that is merely an added threat."

She smiled at him. "Be sensible, Amadeo. You have been useful and have been well paid. One does not quit one's employer like that. In sheer caprice."

"You may have my cards to scan," he said with a shrug. "I am marrying."

"A fortune. Yes, I know."

"Well then, if you already know, do you think me a fool to take risks for money I shall not need?"

She tossed away her cigarette and lighted another, and sat puffing it, her black, brilliant eyes remote. Finally she turned and looked at him pleasantly.

"Well," she said, "you may marry your dollar-princess and go to America if you like; and nobody will interfere. Only, before you do it, you must fulfil your agreement with my Government."

After a long pause: "And if I refuse?" he said.

"Don't refuse."

"Suppose I do. What?"

She shrugged her pretty shoulders: "I fear matters will turn badly for you, Amadeo."

"Your Government will behave disloyally toward me? Is that what you mean?"

"My Government knows how to protect itself. And how to punish."

"You know," he said, grinning at her, "I could denounce you."

"Not with the two documents I have had of you and which now are in possession of my Government."

His small, brightly opaque eyes kept traveling over her from head to foot, lingering particularly on the white column of her neck; and once or twice his blunt fingers quivered and crisped under his ill-fitting cuffs. Those celebrated cuffs which it was said he was accustomed to trim with scissors.

"*Bien*," he said at last. "What do you want, Sari?"

"The third document of the series—"

"The *bordereau*?"

"Yes."

"I can't get it. I could give you its substance—"

"No."

Another silence. "I tell you I can't get it for you."

"You'll have to, Amadeo."

For a little while he appeared to be absorbed in this problem. Once or twice his small, hard eyes peeped up at her neck.

"Very well," he said under his breath.

"When?"

"To-morrow. Is the—"

"Yes, the same price. You promise it for to-morrow? I ask, because I wish to arrange for reservations—"

"I tell you I'll do what I can. . . . I've got to go, now. Take a look out into the corridor for me."

She opened the door and looked out.

"*Personne*," she nodded.

His blunt, powerful fingers itched as he slunk out past her:

"*A bientôt alors*," he snarled, showing his yellow teeth.

CHAPTER XXVIII
VIATICUM

When John Wyndward arrived in Paris he learned that his telegraphed reservation aboard the French liner *Sfax* had been transferred to another ship.

The reason was that incendiary fires had been started aboard the *Sfax*—as had been the case with several other French liners in port—and another ship, either the *Agadir* or the *Biskra*, would be ready to replace her and sail in a few days.

The delay annoyed him for financial reasons, but there was nothing he could do about it, so he took a cheap room at the Hôtel d'Athos where even the cheapest accommodations were equipped with bathrooms. And this was remarkable in a land where national aversion to water was proverbial.

Never before had time hung heavy on this young man's hands. It did now because of a lady he had loved and lost.

The first thing he did was to write her. He wrote three letters to her that day, and went to bed thinking about a fourth.

The morning dawned warm and sunny, and full of heartache for him when he thought of sunlight in the Wood of Oran, and of Chiyu beside him, sauntering gaily along, knee deep in ferns.

He confirmed the assignment of a stateroom to him aboard the *Biskra*, paid for it and awaited notification of a date for sailing.

He went to the Rodin museum; to the Luxembourg and Louvre. That helped kill time, but amid the confused beauty of bronze and marble his melancholy mind was haunted by Chiyu's beauty, and the loveliness of her mind and spirit.

That evening he went to a show. It was not nearly as nasty as a Broadway show. Also there was artistry in it. But his mind remained preoccupied by thoughts of Chiyu, and he would not sully them with such a spectacle; so he left after the first act and wandered along the boulevard. And always, at his elbow, glided the enchanting ghost of this girl he loved.

Nothing, he thought, that she was not already, could be desired for her. She was quite perfect. Always had been perfect, even in immaturity.

It was an odd passion that was taking possession of this young man who already began to see Chiyu in three incarnations—as his own little child to be adored, as a shy adolescent to be tenderly protected; as this enchanting girl to be passionately loved and desired until the implacable years left no more emotion in what remained of him.

There were poignant moments when it seemed impossible for him to endure separation or even to acquiesce in this damnable frustration of her life and his. . . .

He walked all the way back to his hotel and, because he dreaded the loneliness of his room, wandered into the bar. It was that kind of chic bar where the noise of the hotel orchestra is audible and where American girls of sorts, and foreign girls, also of sorts, stroll in chaperoned or otherwise to dawdle and flirt and absorb things that look prettier than they taste.

And in here he collided with Amos Sedley-Biltong, slightly jingled, hazy, red-faced, paternal.

"My dear boy!" he exclaimed thickly, "thizz unlook' for pleasure, 'sure you! Want you to meet charming girl. Perf'cly charming, 'sure you—"

He looked around benignantly out of puffy, protruding eyes, detaining Wyndward by his elbow; and the latter was aware of a very young, baby-faced thing, sitting on a high stool by the bar and looking brightly at him as she dragged lemonade through a waxed straw.

And that's how John Wyndward met Lily Dilling.

She wanted to dance; and he couldn't very well get out of it. She danced like a professional, with effortless insouciance and with a perfection too complete to be called finished. And maintained a perpetual stream of gurgling conversation punctuated by giggles.

"Where have you been all my life, Mr. Wyndward? Oh how mean of you to live in New York, and poor little me out there in War Bow! . . . Yes, Arizona. . . . I like this music. . . . You know, it's from 'Fuzzy-Wuzzy.' Didn'tcha see 'Fuzzy-Wuzzy'? Yeah, 'ss a riot! . . . You all dated, Mr. Wyndward? Gee, I'm in the same jam. Listen, you can spare me a time if I'm not all wore out with him. One of these hopping-johnnies, hop, hop, hop to hell on your heels. . . . Friend of the Sedley-Biltongs. . . . I admit he looks rather nifty in his uniform. . . . Yeah, a reserve officer. All dolled up for maneuvers. . . . Do you know many Counts and Princes and Viscounts, Mr. Wyndward? Not so hot, are they? . . . Well, if I've got to have one I'll want a Yankee on the side. . . . You are not looking for a job, are you, Mr.

Wyndward? . . . Second fiddle? Not at all. First violin. That's a gay orchestra. And the Count plays the triangle."

"Do you believe you can keep them all in tune, Miss Dilling?"

"I wouldn't know that. But—I guess so. . . . I kept a whole freshman class singing close harmony, once. . . . Oh, out at a jerkwater State college; you've never heard of it. . . . Your dancing suits me, Mr. Wyndward. . . . Let's date. . . . What? You're sailing! For God's sake, when? . . . Wouldn't you *know* it? Well, that's only another wet smack. Life's like that. . . . And like *that* over *there*! That's my hopping-johnny in the soldier clothes. I can see him ratting about over there—"

Wyndward turned his head in the direction of her frowning baby stare and saw Amadeo in the uniform of a staff major, peeping about among the dancers.

"Is that your boy friend?" inquired Wyndward dryly.

"My guy, kind sir. I'll plant him pretty if you say so."

But Wyndward thanked her more dryly still and took the unwilling Lily back to Biltong and his fat wife, and there left the trio to be discovered by Amadeo.

As he was going, Mrs. Sedley-Biltong detained him aside with fat, jeweled fingers.

"But you know Prince Amadeo," she said, "don't you?"

"I've met him."

She looked at him out of bright, shrewd little hazel eyes half buried in depths of fat:

"You don't like him, Mr. Wyndward?"

"I do not, Madame."

She drew him a little farther away, tapped him vivaciously with her forefinger:

"Lily Dilling is a real catch," she whispered.

"I have no doubt of it—"

"She really is. Crude, if you please, slang, impertinent, immature—"

"But rather sophisticated," said Wyndward, smiling.

"Oh *that*! Do you take it for sophistication? She doesn't know anything worth knowing. How could she in that common college! But I'll say this for the child: she's honest, warm-hearted, rather shrewd, and very sensitive under all that cheap middle-class swagger. . . . *You* could make a lady of her —"

"Do you believe even God could do that, Mrs. Sedley-Biltong?"

She laughed. "Yes. So could a demigod. And I think you already are that to the child. And she has a sound million, now, and will inherit many."

"Sorry," he said, wearily polite. "And I hope little Miss Dilling may not become the sort of Princess that she appears to be in danger of becoming."

Amadeo, having caught sight of Lily, and pressing his way through the gay throng in the bar, passed close to Wyndward in his progress and heard what he said.

He turned ghastly white and stood stock-still; but Wyndward did not see him and continued his way toward the lobby.

Here he inquired for mail; but none had arrived for him; and he turned from the desk to the lift and was hoisted upward on his way to his own quarters and bed.

Amadeo who had followed him in a white rage, halted at the head of the stairs, furious yet irresolute, realizing that a blow in the face was all the satisfaction that this Yankee ever would condescend to accord to him. That his anger at the insult must remain impotent was becoming clear in his infuriated brain—unless he meant murder.

His inclination was perfectly murderous at the moment. This American, once more, was interfering between him and what he wanted. Meddling again. Ruining his chances with this Yankee heiress. Insolently taking the very bread out of his mouth!

And there went the cursed Yankee up in the lift, and here he stood, sweating his fury, unable to demand revenge. . . .

Two or three people stared at him in passing; he pulled out a soiled handkerchief, wiped his face, turned on his heel and went away toward the bar. He'd find out damned quick how the Sedley-Biltongs thought about the matter, and what Lily Dilling meant to do about it.

Here was an outrageous situation; an insulted man unable to demand satisfaction of his insulter!

An injured French gentleman—an officer and an aristocrat—mentioned with contempt to the Sedley-Biltongs who were on the eve of providing him with a fortune! Not to mention a wife.

And, to make the matter worse, he had come to ask their indulgence for breaking his engagement of the evening, and to plead an unexpected summons to military duty as the cause of this ungallant dereliction.

Far worse, even, than that, was his own precarious situation at that very instant.

Because, inside his military tunic was folded a document which he had taken from the War Office only an hour ago.

And he had thought, once or twice, that somebody was following him—following even in the taxicab which, in his nervousness, he had picked up on the street.

Not that he had actually identified anybody who might possibly be following him among thousands crowding the brilliantly lit sidewalks of Paris. Yet the strange instinct of a pursued creature had made him suddenly uneasy. All his life he had pursued wild creatures; and was hunter enough to recognize the premonitory instinct of the pursued, in himself, and to try to understand and heed it.

He recollected one man in the crowd whom he seemed to have noticed before. And, in a taxicab that seemed always to be rather close behind his taxi, he thought there was a woman whom he had noticed in another taxi driving the other way.

Amadeo was no coward. But he was nervous, now. Everything had combined to make him nervous and wary: his attempt on Chiyu, and the miscarriage of blackmail; his quarrel with Wyndward and the resulting humiliation; his aborted duel revenge; his terrible shame at the hands of de Faöuet and the Vicomte de Numésnil; this devilish Yankee girl with her million and her misleading baby face; the avaricious and voracious Sedley-Biltongs; the encounter with Sari von Valepp and her blackmail of him which had not miscarried. . . .

And now this dangerous business at the War Office. And the abstracted document with its *bordereau* in the breast pocket of his tunic. . . .

When he entered the American bar at the Hôtel d'Athos he did not see the Sedley-Biltongs or Miss Lily Dilling. But he did notice a man in evening dress whom he was almost certain he had passed on the boulevard on his way from the War Office.

For some time he kept glancing askance at this man who looked quite harmless, even stupid, and who never once seemed to notice him.

After all, suppose he had seen him on the boulevard, what of it? There were plenty of people who come from the boulevards to the bar in the Hôtel d'Athos.

Anyway, he was becoming extremely nervous. Ridiculously. Because there was a young woman over yonder, dancing, who, somehow, made him think of that woman in the taxicab. And that was silly.

Besides there were several other matters on his mind. He always was coolly aware of his own personal peril, and that did not particularly preoccupy him. But his present poverty did. His immediate indigence vastly annoyed him. Already he had lost in petty gambling almost every sou he had brought away with him from Mon Plaisir.

However, there was the million dot in prospective and perspective. Not quite close enough for present emergency, however. And the Sedley-Biltongs had coolly refused to advance him a dollar, even at usurious rates; or even to honor him with a small loan.

There remained another source: Sari von Valepp. At ten P.M. he should have several thousand francs from her. He *should* have. That was not having them. She and her miserly Government might not pay him for several weeks; might even, conceivably, not pay him at all, having discovered, somehow, that he would be of no further use to them.

At the mere idea of such a dirty swindle his blunt fingers crisped, and he thought of Sari's plump neck.

Well, she'd have to pay him then; that was all. Maybe if he gave her throat a good pinch. . . .

There remained to him a third source of immediate revenue. A miserably small sum, but, nevertheless, money.

He had made the appointment for a quarter past nine o'clock, and had prepared the data some time since—in fact he had written it all out, names, dates, and details on the train when he journeyed from Mon Plaisir to Paris.

What he had to sell was a poisonous budget of newspaper gossip describing in thinly veiled language alleged meretricious relations between John Wyndward and the Countess of Oran, with a full history of the Countess—imaginary but vicious—whom he had somehow heard had once been on the American stage.

This was to be sold to a person who ran a wickedly witty column in a popular French newspaper, and who signed the column with the name "Sidi."

To this Sidi, Amadeo had often sold scandalous paragraphs, some of which had made serious mischief in vulnerable households. And, sometimes, Sidi's cruel ridicule had ruined a man and driven a frightened woman to self-destruction. Amadeo knew of three such cases; and he hoped that a fourth case might involve his cousin d'Oran and Chiyu, though he saw little chance of harming Wyndward.

So now, it being nearly nine-thirty, he left the bar in the rue des Cimbres, and walked the short distance to the rue Casse-Museau where the playful individual known as Sidi lived and prepared his poisons.

But Sidi, the concierge reported, had gone out for the evening; and Prince Amadeo, grinding his yellow teeth, hurled the memoranda on the *grille d'égout* and strode furiously back to the Hôtel d'Athos bar. He encountered there several persons whom he knew and attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain a small loan from every one of them.

Finally he went to the telephone and called up one or two disreputable women with whom he was on terms; but they, also, refused the usual small loan.

Somehow or other he had to have some money within twenty-four hours.

He regretted having destroyed what he had written about his cousin and Chiyu and Wyndward. He went into the hotel writing-room and wrote it all out again, more plainly and scandalously than ever and put it in an envelope directed to Sidi, requesting payment by to-morrow evening at latest.

He had a few stamps in his room and decided to wait until he went there and then stamp and mail the letter.

He was due in his room at ten o'clock. It was nearly that, now. If Sari had his money for him, he knew how to spend an agreeable evening. If not, then he'd read a rather filthy novel he had found in his waste basket and go to bed when sleepy.

So Amadeo sauntered over to the bar and asked in English for some Bourbon whisky.

He got it and bolted it raw. Bolted two or three more; not feeling them. So he tried brandy; and this superinduced an agreeable glow. He seated himself.

Several things were certain; he could not go to any of his clubs—even to the disreputable ones—because he had been suspended for debt in the majority of them, and expelled permanently from two.

Well, they all could go to the devil as soon as he could "touch" his American million. . . . Where the deuce were the Sedley-Biltongs? And that little baby-faced slut?

He summoned a waiter, swallowed several more small glasses of brandy, got up, wandered about. Twice he noticed the man he had seen in the bar; and it slightly disturbed him.

"Cursed *mouchard*," he thought, "I'm not afraid of you even if you are one."

This bravado was instinctive; but presently Amadeo began to consider the matter and wonder what he would do about it if a real *espion de police* should haunt him.

"Knock his damned head off," he thought. But one doesn't knock the head off a police spy. Not with safety, anyway.

He had rambled as far as the lobby again. Now he cast a ratty glance at the large, ornate clock behind the desk.

It was nearly time for him to rid himself of this dangerous document.

He would have liked to rid himself of Sari von Valepp, also. That round, white neck of hers. . . .

Even he must have felt the malignancy of his own face for he wiped it with the dirty handkerchief, composed his features and tried to steady his burning thoughts.

Yes, the main objective was the million. That was what he must concentrate upon. It was almost his. Practically his. He had already spent a good deal of it, in his mind. It gave him pleasure to spend it. Women, horses—and he even gave some of it away, in lordly largesse. And some of it he speculated with; and made millions more, in his mind. And sometimes he reveled in a mental orgy and threw money about like a lunatic. . . .

Again, with some of the millions he gained in speculations, he moved sinister financial powers in a vast conspiracy to ruin his cousin of Oran. . . . And buy in the property. . . . And take a dog lash to Chiyu, beating her to her knees and listening to her pleading for his mercy and "protection". . . .

He'd give her mercy! Use her and kick her out. Twist her damned neck. . . .

Which brought his thoughts back to Sari again, and his ratty eyes to the clock.

Well, it was time, now, to rid himself of the document he carried. And to take his pay for it—not so very much, either, considering the deathly danger—and to control himself sufficiently to keep his square, powerful fingers off Sari's plump neck. . . .

By God, he would be through with her. He'd go to America with his million—and his silly wife—and he'd laugh at Sari and her Government. And at his own Government, if it bothered him. . . . Still he hoped it wouldn't. It was not pleasant to have to fight shy of France. He sincerely hoped that France never would suspect him of having sold secrets concerning the salvation of his native land.

As he stepped into the lift he turned suddenly around. But his small, cunning eyes saw nobody following him.

He got out when the lift stopped and went to his room.

After he had searched it and looked under the bed and behind the curtains, he opened a bureau drawer, fished out a soiled but uncanceled stamp and affixed it to the envelope directed to Sidi. And he hoped the contents of the letter would avenge him, in a measure, on his cousin, on Chiyu, and on that accursed American.

He laid it on his dresser, meaning to mail it later.

Then he leaned over and rapped lightly on the left hand wall; listened; walked slowly to the door, opened it, and left it barely ajar.

Almost immediately after he had seated himself in the only arm-chair, Sari came in. She was smartly gowned for traveling, and she looked very handsome and amazingly youthful and seemed to be in the highest spirits, laughing noiselessly at him as she twisted her supple body around and locked the door with a flourish of one perfectly shod foot in a saucy backward kick, toward him. Then, advancing lightly toward him:

"Did you bring it?" she inquired in a bantering whisper.

He unhooked his tunic, pulled out the document, and tossed it on the bed.

"Thank you for your politeness," she said cheerfully; "you seem to be exceedingly bad-tempered this evening."

"Shut your mouth and read it," he growled. "And *fichez-moi le camp*!"—only he used a more vicious term in the adjuration.

But Sari merely laughed good-naturedly, picked up the envelope on the bed and examined the document it contained with a careless, detached air as though it did not concern the fate of a nation—maybe of many nations—perhaps of civilization itself. She then inspected the *bordereau*, still smiling to herself and humming a little song.

When she had finished her examination, "*C'est très bien, mon ami*," she said lightly. "There is no trick here; and you know, Amadeo, you really are tricky. . . . So now," she added, "comes the sugar for my *toutou*! *Tiens! Attrape!*"

And she tossed on his lap a flat packet.

"*Petit plat sucré*," she repeated, "*vois donc comme je te dorlote*!"

For nearly five minutes he remained busy counting and recounting the bank-notes; and finally turned on her and gave her a venomous look:

"You and your filthy, stingy Government," he snarled. "Do you expect me to let them shoot me on Satory Plain—*pour dix sous*?"

"*Pour dix centimes, je faisais voir la lune—*" she sang laughingly.

"Answer me!" he growled.

"You have what you bargained for, *mon ami*."

"Maybe. But there's no generosity in your accursed Government or they would have added handsomely to the honorarium—"

"A *pourboire* for a gentleman, Amadeo?" she protested, shocked; and his rat eyes reddened at her and he looked at her neck, almost grinning.

"That *bordereau* alone," he said, showing his teeth at her, "is worth ten times what your beggarly Government pays me for it. And I have it in me to take it from you and stick it in its pigeonhole rather than let it go for a mere nothing!"

"That would not be healthy for you, Amadeo."

"As to health"—he could not refrain from threatening—"you yourself might suddenly succumb to—throat trouble."

"Oh no," she laughed, "you have your Yankee heiress to swindle yet. Don't forget your baby-faced dollar-princess, my irritable friend."

"That," said he, "is why I don't twist your sensual neck for you, Sari. But it isn't worth a million for the pleasure of giving your neck a little love-pinch—"

He was half out of his chair, now; but the woman's laugh defied him; and he sat down with hell in his eyes and his blunt fingers working.

"I'm going now," she said. "And you'd better *look* out; and *get* out—you and your dollar-princess and her Yankee million. Because, Amadeo, when I'm safe in my own country, you won't be safe in yours. No. Sooner or later the *mouchards* will smell you out; and then the brutal *sbires* will come and cut off those gilded buttons on your tunic and break your tasseled saber, and march you out to Satory Plain on a gray and misty morning. . . . I'll probably see a photograph of you, sagging from the post with your wicked mouth open and all those yellow teeth of a dead rat showing—"

She waved her daintily gloved hand and twiddled derisive fingers at him.

"*A bientôt—la mort!*" she whispered softly. "Descend to hell, son of Saint Roué"—in mocking parody of a dying king's viaticum. And this man, who was physically afraid of nothing, paled at the mockery of the sacrament of the Eucharist, and shivered as she closed the door behind her.

For a long while he sat staring at the closed door. Then he placed the money in the breast pocket of his tunic and got up to mail his letter.

Almost at the same moment he heard an odd noise from the adjoining room—a voice as though suddenly stifled—heavy sounds as if baggage were being shifted and dragged about the floor.

"The damned slut is going," he muttered.

He put on his military cap, hooked up his saber—prescribed *tenue* for the street. Besides, Lily Dilling liked to play with his sword; and he hoped to find her and the Sedley-Biltongs *chez eux* before he returned to read his dirty novel and go to bed.

As he took his service revolver from the dresser drawer to place it in its holster, a slight sound at his door made him glance around.

Over his shoulder he saw a strange woman open his door; look at him; then softly close the door and disappear.

He had seen that same woman's face in a taxicab, and, later, on the dance floor adjoining the hotel bar below.

But the silently opening and closing door had revealed to Amadeo de la Roquettaire a glimpse of more than a woman's disturbing face; it had showed him shadowy shapes clustered in the corridor outside; and a vague glimmer as though of metal buttons.

So—it was here, then. Waiting, just outside his bedroom door.

He stood motionless, his small eyes fixed on the closed door; but he did not see it. His little croppy ears listened, but drumming pulses deafened him.

He never had been physically afraid. He was not afraid now. . . . Now that it all had come so unexpectedly and so suddenly . . . with such deathly speed that the American girl and her million didn't matter any longer . . . that the money in his breast pocket no longer meant anything. Nothing mattered any more; neither his hatreds nor his loves nor his lusts. Nor life itself.

He stealthily unhooked his saber, laid it on the bed; flung the unposted letter to Sidi after it; seated himself facing the door. Then he calmly cocked the heavy service pistol in his hands, and waited.

Suddenly the door flew wide open, and the doorway was a confusion of crowding police. Two of them had Sari by both her straining arms, and they pushed her along into the room with them.

Then Amadeo fired at her. His bullet tore horribly through her pretty face.

Men were shouting, now, and running toward him; and Prince Amadeo de la Roquettaire shoved the muzzle of his pistol between his yellow teeth and fired. . . .

Later, when the police examined the letter found on the bed they included it in the dead man's dossier. But when the wise old Chef de Sûreté came to read it, he shrugged his lean shoulders and tossed the letter to Sidi into the fire, murmuring: "What silly filth is this, then? Is there not already sufficient serious disgrace here?"

Not the slightest hint of the double tragedy was permitted to escape to the press. Military necessity smothered it, sealed the blood-spattered room, buried Amadeo and his Sari, and clamped on the iron lid of silence.

And left the world of Amadeo de la Roquettaire—which was mostly the half-world—to speculate a little, and then forget.

They do those things very well in France, sometimes.

CHAPTER XXIX
EN VOYAGE

The huge French liner *Biskra*, with her nose pointed toward North America, was not very far off Sandy Hook Light when the results of the Presidential election in the United States began to come aboard by radio.

It was cheerful news to the disappointed, bamboozled, and harassed, long victims of incompetence, ignorance, and stupidity, bruised and buffeted by arrogant bigotry and brutal laws, outraged in mind and pocket.

Prospective repeal of the fanatic Eighteenth Amendment was something out of thick darkness; there remained the equally infamous income tax law for a wiser and more civilized generation to get rid of.

But, as the election returns continued to come aboard the *Biskra*, it became plainer that the plain people were resolved to free themselves of "the dirty politicians with their dirtier ambitions"—and find out for themselves why their various governments took from them almost everything they earned—even took away their jobs!

And why a cast-iron religious bigotry, more brutal than the Inquisition, prescribed for them and threatened them and even poisoned them.

And why some city officials supported dozens of relatives on small salaries; and why mayors ran away; and why bosses couldn't recollect where their bank accounts came from; and why congressmen were afraid of clergymen and ministers and sects and churches and W.C.T.U.'s, and Boards of Temperance and Public Morals.

John Wyndward, pacing the breezy deck, looked up into the bluest of American skies, and across miles of blue and sunlit waters; and drew the aromatic wind deep into his lungs.

For the first time in all his life he felt more American than British. And it was the British in him that made him feel so—that sane, clean, dauntless instinct toward decency and right which, please God, we never shall entirely forget that we inherited.

However, there remained sufficient British in him to make him typically reserved and shy of new acquaintance, and well satisfied to flock by himself.

He had no acquaintances aboard the *Biskra* as far as he knew; and he saw no reason to make any.

His seclusion was inoffensive—far less offensive than the kind of American familiarity typified in picture advertisements which point an impertinent finger directly at you, or which begin with such gruesome vulgarities as: "Going hunting? Okay. We've got your boot and shoe number. Come and get 'em at Lastingsole's 450th Street Emporium!"

Anyway John Wyndward, always polite when cornered, had quietly avoided the gregariousness of table and smoking-room, content with the companionship of his own thoughts—mostly of Chiyu, and of golden days that were no more.

He had, therefore, been a trifle surprised, if not amused, to feel himself patted lightly on the arm one day when leaning on the starboard rail and contemplating the Atlantic Ocean.

"Hello," chirped Miss Lily Dilling, "I hope you're not being too good to the fishes, Mr. Wyndward."

"Oh," he said, "how d'you do. Thought you were settled in France for the winter."

"Not me, kind sir. I flew the coop."

"Oh."

"Bet your life it's 'oh.' France? None in mine, please. I'm not having any."

"I suppose Mr. and Mrs. Sedley—"

"You'd be surprised. Gee, I couldn't swallow that pair. I gulped and gulped but they wouldn't go down. So I just quit chewing on them, Mr. Wyndward, and I packed up and beat it for God's country."

He smiled. "Well," he said in a friendly voice, "I think you are rather wise to avoid some of your foreign acquaintances."

"You mean Amadeo. Well, I gotta be honest. *He* dumped *me*! Percolate that for yourself!"

Wyndward laughed: "I hope you've consoled yourself."

"What do you mean, consoled? I know every boy aboard—even you. That never was my trouble. What sinks me is this Prince stuff. He was

terrible, I admit it. But Lily looked good to me with 'Princess' in front of it. No, I'll hand it to him. He left me flat. Gee, what a jar!"

Wyndward, puzzled, remained silent.

"Walked out on me," said Lily, gazing upon the ocean out of baby eyes.

"Oh."

"Oh, it is! Make it so—as they say on the bridge. I know; I've been up there devastating the chart room. But what I'm telling you about the Prince is correct. He didn't show up for lunch, and Mrs. Sedley-Biltong called the desk. No Prince. Checked out, bag and baggage. Destination unknown. Can you marcel that?"

"I don't have to," laughed Wyndward, "as long as he put a permanent crimp in Mrs. Sedley-Biltong."

Lily laughed too: "Was she wild? And then she tried to hitch-hike that Viscount on me. But I was fed up on him and that noble farmer—the way they were slouching around and thumbing traffic— So I said to the Sedley-Biltongs: 'Here's where I drop my trailer, and you're both in it. For God's sake, let me alone and give me a clear road and a green light; and don't pull a Mussolini on me either, for I'm going through.'

"So then they cabled papa. But *I* cabled mama: 'I'm all gummed up! Stop. Meet me at the Waldorf! Stop. Your loving daughter, Lily. Stop—'"

Wyndward's laughter was beyond control; and the girl took visible pleasure in it.

"You know," she said, "I like you; and if you'd take the trouble to check up on me, you'd discover that I'm quite nice."

"I'm sure you are," he said, "and I'm glad your mother is meeting you in New York."

"Some mama," she murmured. "She won't like my missing out on a Prince; but a girl can always marry one of those Russian dukes, you know. Or can she? I wouldn't know that. They don't have a lot of them in Arizona; and those I've seen are not so many and not so hot. . . . Shall we have tea together?"

Thus, in friendly wise, if not too radically in accord, John Wyndward and Miss Lily Dilling whiled away the sunny or starry hours aboard the *Biskra*. . . . An odd, eager, healthy young thing masking sensitiveness under effrontery, tender-hearted, grateful for kindness, and, though accustomed to

mauling, deeply appreciative of delicacy and restraint. And, alas, very near to falling in love with this man who never even touched the girl with a finger tip if it could be avoided.

She was inclined to be hotly sentimental—even tearful when the hour of parting approached and, through a magic mist, the tall towers of Manhattan loomed, piled skyward, studded with foggy jewels.

"Good-by, Lily," he said, humorously gentle with her. "Tell Madam your mother that I say you've been a good child and *are* one, instinctively and thoroughly. And that if somebody would sell America to you I think you'd like it better than if somebody sold you Europe."

The child was weeping when she lifted her face to be kissed.

He did it with reasonable pleasure.

CHAPTER XXX
THE NEW FREEDOM

But, although the new presidential election had sent a slender, momentary gleam athwart the murk, the nightmare in Washington thickened; far lightning from the Asiatic war glimmered through it at intervals; the world's business slowed, faltered; there was no work; bread lines lengthened; clerical ghost-dancers babbled of faith; grafting demagogues ranted; local politicians filched; incomes approached the vanishing point; the word "revolution" began to be printed in newspapers; the President and the dying Congress squabbled, bickered, sulked. There was no courage, no leadership. Europe sneered and watched its opportunity to bilk us. It wanted to, but it didn't quite dare. Buzzards brooding about a dying thing—not yet quite dead.

New York City was ominously still in those dark days. Few people on Park and Fifth Avenues; too many on Sixth and Broadway. A strangely silent city. The loudest sound was the puffing and panting of the poor old *Herald Tribune* administering the viaticum to an unpopular and passing President.

As for John Wyndward, he had, now, scarcely enough money to work with and live on. To employ models was expensive, but he had to do it or stop work—the only work he had at all, which was the foreign commission that had come through Sidney Rosenquest of the Rosenquest Art Rooms.

It always costs money to make money. He had to keep up his studio, heat and light it.

He had resigned from his clubs; from the Racquettiers first, then the Patroons, then the Buccaneers; but hung on to the Nine Muses which cost little, and where he could eat at a minimum of expense and also get his hair cut. None of these reverses particularly bothered him; he had known luxury always; and the lack of it was an interesting novelty.

Besides, he had his work and was completely engrossed in it. He did all the dirty part of it himself for want of assistants, hammering away like a woodpecker with mallet and nail-punch, filing metal, clipping wire, heating and bending bars, lugging clay and buckets of water and heavy folds of wet cloth.

He also tended furnace and stove with kindlings and coal scuttles and dumped the cinders. And still had all the time in the world to make or alter

his plastaline studies from his posed models, point up, and start his full-sized clay group for the exquisite sylvan fountain.

One day, God willing, it would gurgle and plash under the lovely dangling feet of a shy young marble dryad listening to the wicked and witty wisdom whispered to her by a faun with long, clever face and narrow, dangerous head.

Perhaps, when finally it became marble, oak leaves and beech leaves would wave netted shadows over it; April rains tint it with faint green bloom; or winter's snows shroud it, which a pale sun would gild and model with faintly purplish shadows. . . .

Always these hues and lights and woodland forms drifted through a mind surcharged and intent. And happy except that, for a long while, now, he had not heard from Chiyu.

He continued to write. They had written no love letters; but they had told each other about everything excepting love.

Now it was already March; and he had had no letter from her since the middle of January. Nearly six weeks, now.

Quinton, who had been to South America on research business for a great foundation, had just returned; but Wyndward had been unable to get him on the telephone—their goings out and comings in not coinciding, so far.

That afternoon his dryad model, Marie Desaix, had developed a cold; and he let her go home and nurse it; and was fussing around the stove with a bucket of coal when the door of the empty office opened and Dr. Quinton came in.

When he saw what Wyndward was doing he gave way to the kind of laughter that newspaper writers call "Homeric"—the same sort of writers whose characters "select" cigarettes when their author doesn't know what else to do with their hands, feet, and mouths. The species of writers whose creations react incessantly by "grinning" and "chortling"; and who discovered the word "meticulous" about the same time that the Broadway kike discovered dinner coats and manicures.

"Where the hell have you been?" demanded Wyndward, emptying the coal scuttle and then washing his fingers at the sink before shaking hands.

"I wuz to Brazil," said Quinton. "You know—the big snake farm. Now I have met the kinds of snakes that are socially impossible. John"—he looked

about him humorously—"what's all this poverty about, anyway? Can't you afford Rocco or Angelo to shovel coal?"

"What do you mean, poverty? I don't notice any."

"Oh, all right—if you don't notice it—" He caught sight of the plastaline composition for "Conte Drolatique"—the Faun and Dryad group.

"Hey," he said, "what's this, John—"

"It's the Rosenquest commission."

"Sure. I remember. Lord, this is fine work, John. This is going to be *it*! Oh that little dryad! Well you know, John, there's nothing any better. . . . Not anywhere that I know of. Greece hybridized with Clodeon and Rodin—"

"Shut up."

"I mean it. Oh my God, what delicacy and delicious youth! You know it makes me think of Chiyu. . . . Up there on the marble horse—"

Wyndward flushed brightly.

"I know you mean it," he said, "or you'd say nothing. I believe I'll get *something* out of it, Terry. . . . I feel quite young about it."

"It's all *right*!" said Quinton. "I think you're coming back. Unless this is second childhood—"

"God knows. . . . I'm rather happy with it, though. . . . Sit down, Terry, and tell me news of you."

"I told you. I shook hands with some snakes in Brazil. They packed enough poison to rub out all the armies of Europe."

"Research. Anti-venom," nodded Wyndward.

"Your nomenclature is off but you get it, John. We want to know, also, what it might do to human lungs and glands and other mortal gadgets. . . . I say, you're looking thin, aren't you?"

"You probably think I'm on the bread line."

"We'll all be if this Congress doesn't get out and let in a batch of human beings. . . . Tell me about France and Chiyu, now."

"I wrote you."

"You did. And I wrote you. But I'd like to hear more."

Wyndward said quietly: "I haven't had a letter from Chiyu since January. The seventeenth, I believe it was."

Quinton leaned forward in his chair, his clasped hands between his knees. After a few moments he glanced up at Wyndward.

"Her husband died on January twenty-first." He looked at Wyndward again, looked away, but went on talking: "On the twenty-first, about sunset. . . . One of those lovely, wintry sunsets, Chiyu wrote me, which are all rose-gold and palest green. . . . Snow everywhere. A winter robin singing gaily in the holly outside the window. . . . You know those little European robins, about sparrow size, with vivid red breasts? Well, one of those, under her husband's window, singing like hell—"

Quinton slowly untwisted his fingers, inspected them all in turn:

"Yeah. Sunset. . . . It seems they operated on the seventeenth—date of her letter to you, wasn't it? Didn't she mention it?"

"No."

"She wouldn't. . . . Well, there was just that one chance. He wanted to take it. He was dying anyway. . . ."

Quinton sat up straight, fished out a rusty pipe and sat turning it between his fingers:

"No, she wouldn't write to you for a while. . . . Not for quite a while. . . . And, of course, there were things to do. . . . You know what a powwow a French family holds when a tenth cousin twenty-five times removed hits the heavenly highroad? Sure. . . . You get your 'letters to make part,' and your *pompe funèbre* with *croque-mitaines*—I mean *croque-morts*, and everything else including the kitchen stove. . . . And all the visits of condolence, and the goings and comings, and legal red tape and fussing and mussing. . . . And they reproach us Irish for our wakes! . . . By the way how's Linley Quinton, tenth Earl of Kilcarrick?"

"Go on about Chiyu, Terry."

"I've told you, haven't I?"

Wyndward was silent.

"Victor de Numésnil heads the family, now," said Quinton. "Ah, well, they'll never see a sweeter Countess of Oran than our little Chiyu, I'm thinking, though Numésnil marries the Grand Mogul's daughter.

"D'you mind the time she danced at Skipton Jauncy's ball? The only right lass there? Clean as a hound's tooth, John, then and now. Heart of gold dancing among the diggers of it. . . . And many a man there ready to dig hers out of her for the fun o' digging. . . . You got any booze, John?"

"No."

"All right, all *right*! Don't be pullin' a face at me; I've lashins of Irish for the two of us. . . . I don't want it, either. Not now. But I'll be sendin' ye a jug o' potheen f'r to gay ye. F'r to hearten ye in the long and melancholy nights alone—"

He rose, held out his hand: "Well then, I'll be seein' ye asthore—"

"You have heard from Chiyu recently?" asked Wyndward wistfully.

"Yes, I have," replied Quinton, dropping his brogue.

"Is she well?"

"Busy and well, John. . . . If you'll think it over, you'll understand that she wouldn't write to you for a while. For quite a while."

So Quinton pocketed his pipe and went away; and Wyndward sat down at the foot of his Conte Drolatique and took his tired head between his weary hands.

Late one afternoon he dismissed his models, washed his hands at the tap, exchanged his dirty blouse for a coat and sat down with a cigarette to study the clay group before he covered it for the night.

It was raining. A fog shrouded the streets; but the financial gloom in the city was thicker. Newsboys with foghorn voices were bawling an extra; and the hoarse alarm seemed to deepen the wintry gloom outside.

Wyndward listened dully; he had little more to lose. No good running in circles.

The evening before he had run into George Bullup who upbraided him for resigning from the Buccaneers. That had depressed him. But he took George to dinner at Nine Muses—not for his *beaux yeux* but in hopes he'd talk about Chiyu who, it appeared, had written him briefly about her husband's death.

But the dinner proved a washout. George didn't like the food at the Nine Muses where plain cooking and high thinking ruled the roast.

He didn't care for the artistic company either; and, when one sentimental member quoted Shakespeare's:

I know a bank
Where the wild thyme grows—

George remarked that every bank was having a wild time these days.

And, in the art gallery whither he was persuaded to see a portrait of a celebrated but intemperate actor as Coriolanus in the scene beginning:

What, drunk with choler?—

George murmured: "No; he's drunk without a collar. Ask me another."

So the foregathering with former boon companions disheartened Wyndward; and the general depression influenced his spirits to such a melancholy degree that now, looking up at his exquisite clay group, he saw only its faults and was miserably wretched.

Presently, upon the young man's unhappy musings, a sound of knocking broke, arousing him from abstraction.

"All right," he said, "come in!"

She came in. He didn't recognize her at first and turned on the electric light to see better.

Then he recognized her and gave her outstretched hand a friendly shake.

"Well, Mr. Wyndward," she exclaimed, looking around her, "is *this* your studio! Why I had it all figured out that it would be lousy with bohemian boys and girls carousing, singing, and drinking bubble!"

"No bubbles, Lily, and no bohemians."

"Is the breed extinct?"

"There never were any."

"What about that opera called *La Vie de Bohême*?"

"It came out of a book and the book came out of the brain of Monsieur Murger."

"What about the Village?"

"Just full of dirty incompetents."

"Where are your nude models?" she demanded, opening her baby eyes.

"Sorry," he said, "but they had to put on their clothes to go home. You know how fussy the police are," he added, "about nudism in the city streets."

"Oh Lord," said the girl, "and I expected to see an Earl Carroll riot here!"

She went over and looked at the clay group.

"*She's* naked anyway," she remarked with satisfaction. "Who is she?"

"Rather a diffident and shy young girl who supports a mother and three little sisters."

"Oh yeah?"

"And is highly religious and respectable."

"So what?"

He laughed: "So she helps poor painters and sculptors to paint and sculp and keeps her family alive and reasonably happy."

Lily looked hard at the group:

"Is he telling her a dirty story?" she inquired.

"Not very dirty."

"She's got that kind of 'please don't' look."

"She's a trifle timid."

"I bet she's your sweetheart!"

"I bet she isn't," he retorted good-humoredly. "You've been reading things, Lily."

"Sure I have; D.H. and McGoffin's Magazines. . . . Well this is a terrible disappointment, if you ask me—"

She looked at the Dryad again, searchingly:

"Do you think I'd make a good model, Mr. Wyndward?"

"Probably," he replied, smiling.

"Gee, I'd like to be made out of marble. Maybe this depression will ditch me so I'll have to pose for a living. I'll give you a ring if it does."

She began to promenade the place, craning her neck to see all over it.

"It's damp and ugly," she remarked. "I thought studios were full of antiques and couches and tiger skins."

"And passionate, masterful young men who paint in velvet jackets?"

"Yeah," she nodded dreamily. "Where's yours?"

He pointed to his clay-stained blouse, hanging on a peg. They laughed.

"I suppose you met your mother as you expected," he inquired.

"Oh yes; little mama was on the job. But Lily is through with titles—even Russian ones. You remember the dear old nursery song?"

And she voiced it, her pretty feet treading the measure in a slow dance:

"She wanted something to play with,
Something to call her own;
Something to sleep with her nightly—
She was tired of sleeping alone—

"My idea of a hubby," she added, slowly waltzing by him, her graceful arms extended.

"Yes," said he, "that's one kind of hubby. By the way, have you any news of your fugitive Prince?"

"Amadeo? Not a peep." She came in front of him, hopping from one slender, restless foot to the other:

"I guess," she said, "he's a selling-plater. You remember Mrs. Sedley-Biltong's maid? Ellen?"

"Slightly."

"She was keeping tabs on Amadeo; checking up on him. She was an agent of the French Government."

"How do you know?"

"She told me so. Probably that's why he beat it. I guess so. Anyway he's out. And here I am," she continued, hopping up and down in front of him, "waiting for you to take me out to dinner."

"My poor child," he said, smiling, "I'm in no financial condition to take you out."

Her baby stare became genuine, her pink mouth opened in awed surprise.

"My goodness," she breathed, "is that right?"

"Right as rain, Lily."

"Well—well then—if you—if I—well, what the hell," she burst out naïvely, "I've got the price—if you're not too silly to—"

"I'll ask you some time," he said, laughing at her. "It's not pride, Lily, but I'm just tired and out of sorts—"

"But you've got to eat!"

"I haven't *got* to, you know. But if I happen to want anything, I've a kitchenette over there—" He nodded toward his study.

"Oh *please*!" she exclaimed, clasping her daintily gloved hands in eager appeal.

"Please what?"

"Let me!"

"Let you do what?" he repeated.

"Help fry whatever we are going to have for dinner! I suppose you'll fry it."

He didn't want her; but she was very eager and young and winning and had hold of his hand now, trying to drag him across the studio to his study.

So the upshot of it was that her furs and coat and gloves and hat lay on his bed, and he was setting the table while she broiled chops in the kitchenette, singing away like a canary in a birdshop.

There was nothing left with which to shake up cocktails, but he managed to find a bottle of good claret.

The girl was in the seventh heaven, all over the place, happy, efficient, busy as a caged squirrel.

"I love you,
I love you,"

she sang:

"You're all that I have got!
The bunk that others shove you
Is not
So hot!

"I swear to God above you
You've put me on the spot!
I love you,
I love you,
You're all that I have got!—"

The dinner was sketchy but extremely good. Lily made a face over the claret but ended by liking it.

"This," she said, "is the grand event of my career. Mama's hair would fall out if she could see us. But you've been just lovely to me."

They smoked a cigarette or two over their coffee, she lazily prone on the sofa, her feet crossed, one arm under her neck, and her baby blue eyes watching the rings of smoke floating upward.

"So what?" she murmured after a long silence.

"I think," he said, "the answer to that is 'Home, James.'"

"Oh no. No. No!"

And, after another pause: "I don't suppose you need a best girl, do you, Mr. Wyndward?"—always watching the floating smoke above her.

He laughed. "You're too clever to be one," he said.

"I'm a dumb-bell. Don't I look it?"

"I hadn't noticed it."

"Well, something's wrong with me. Or you'd like me."

"I do."

"Oh yeah? Giving me orders to beat it?"

Then she sat up, looked at him, got onto her feet and tossed her cigarette into the fireplace.

"Okay," she said with adorable resignation.

While she was powdering and painting in the bathroom he sat thinking of Chiyu.

Lily came in languidly, silent, subdued; he held her coat for her, and her furs.

"Date?" she murmured.

"Let's leave it to some happy chance—"

"A fat chance, then." Her lips quivered a little. "Oh gee," she said, "you've got those dukes skinned a mile, but there's nothing to d-do about it —"

"My dear—"

"Sure. You're no fool. You can see what's the matter with me. Well then —"

He walked to the door with her in silence. A passing taxi drew in to the curb.

"Good night," she whispered; "you have been perfectly lovely to me."

CHAPTER XXXI

DARK

On that day all the banks in the United States closed their doors and the country crashed.

Quinton came into the studio that day, not at all cast down. Wyndward in a clean blouse was nailing up some scaffolding to make a platform around his clay group.

"Hello John," said Quinton cheerily. "Everything's gone to hell, hasn't it?"

"I'm rather relieved to know that we're ditched at last," murmured Wyndward.

"So am I," returned Quinton. "So's everybody, I fancy. Have you any cash, John?"

"A dollar and something."

"Want a little more?"

"No, thanks."

Quinton looked up at the clay group on its lofty scaffolding.

"That's magnificent," he blurted out.

Wyndward reddened with pleasure: "I'm quite happy doing it," he said, "but I've been too near it too long to know just what I've got."

"Don't you really know?"

"Sometimes I hope I know; most of the time I just hope," said Wyndward, smiling.

Quinton grunted. Then: "No models to-day?"

"No. No cash to pay them. Besides I've all I can do to fix up this scaffolding. Won't you sit down, Terry?"

"No. I've just come from downtown. That goddam bank of mine treats me like a stepchild. . . . There'll be no riot in New York, but, if there were, I know several bankers who'd look all right on a lamp-post. However, a mob would probably be so busy with local politicians and religious fanatics that the bankers I've selected might escape to Yonkers where there's no extradition."

"Do things really look so bad downtown?"

"They do. My God, what a patient people we really are! That's the Abe Lincoln in us. There's a tiny bit of him in us all, John, since he came to earth and left it. . . . Left it, crucified between North and South."

He began to walk to and fro, his hands clasped behind him:

"All this was coming to us. All tyranny has its comeback. Once we supposed that Church and State were separated in this Republic. Look at us now, threatened, blackmailed, bludgeoned, governed by sectarian bigotry! And the most infamous tax that ever penalized industry and thrift, imposed by rapacious politicians upon a plundered people! We're a bunch of Jobs!"

Wyndward smiled: "Your remedy is the lamp-post, Terry?"

Quinton wagged his finger at him: "The remedy," he said, "if there is any, is this new man in the White House. Look at the shape of his head! Look at his eyes! Then wait till he opens that grim, thin mouth and reveals himself!"

Wyndward went on hammering. There were only two things in his mind: his clay group, and Chiyu. Nothing else in his mind, or in the whole world interested him.

"Have you heard from Chiyu yet?" asked Quinton.

"No."

"I believe you will. To-day."

Wyndward looked around at him: "Why, to-day?"

"I think you will," repeated Quinton. "Sometimes I have hunches."

Wyndward turned to his hammer and nails again.

After a pause: "Do you want to take a walk in the park with me?" suggested Quinton. "It's a beautiful day."

"I'm too busy, thanks—"

"So I notice. And you're too white and too thin, also. But who ever paid any attention to the warnings of a mere Doc?"

He buttoned his overcoat, settled his hat. "Anywhere," he remarked, "that you find a hundred and twenty million people you'll find a hundred and twenty million morons. . . . And after I go out of this studio you can count the moron population inside it." He held up one finger, then turned on his heel and marched out.

Wyndward had no desire for any luncheon. Particularly for any luncheon of his own cooking. Besides he wished to finish his carpentry before evening so that he could have a clear day ahead for work on the morrow.

So he sawed and braced and hammered and fitted cleats and twisted wires with pliers, until the fading light of afternoon found him tired, and lying back in a wicker arm-chair, his weary eyes fixed on his clay creation.

Banks might close their brazen doors, trade cease, the foundations of the town totter and spill Radio City into the *Ewigkeit*. Contemplating his work he would have remained unaware of it.

He was unaware, too, that a handsome gentleman with a large, firm chin and rather close-set eyes, and with a head that inspired confidence, and a mouth reassuring to mankind, had this national cataclysm in the hollow of his capable right hand.

Amid the economic débâcle of the great Republic there remained only a single disquieting feature: not for nothing was the jackass made the symbol of a great political party. And that party could always be counted upon to behave *sui generis*.

A ruddy ray from the westering sun slanted across the lovely clay Dryad and made a golden pool at her feet. So perfect was the suggestion for a future fountain-spot that Wyndward sprang up, and with a splinter, traced in the moist clay the outline of the oval sun-spot.

He heard a latch click somewhere behind him, but finished his tracing before he looked around.

The door from the empty office was open and he saw a figure standing there, indistinct to his sun-dazzled eyes. As his confused vision cleared, a slender girl in dark furs came slowly forward into the studio.

"Chiyu!" he said.

They met half-way; and she was still stripping off her black gloves when he took her hands in his and held them prisoner, and looked into her gray-gold eyes that were all glimmering with tiny green sparkles.

Then he took her entirely into his arms, and her own arms tightened around his neck in a long, convulsive kiss.

Her first coherent word was a breathless request to be shown the clay group he had been working on. And when she stood by the temporary wooden pedestal on wheels and looked up at the sunlit Dryad, he felt her whole body quiver.

“Another miracle,” she whispered. . . . “Like our lovely child on her marble horse. . . .”

For a long while they stood looking up at his work, lingering until the light grew dim under the glass roof and Dryad and Faun became shadow-shapes against the stars.

As they turned away at last, slow moving, enlaced, she spoke again of the Riverside Memorial.

“I want to go with you to see our little marble kiddie,” she said. “Will you, darling?”

“To-morrow,” he nodded.

“Have the years harmed her—the winds and rains and snows?”

“No more than they have harmed you, Chiyu.”

She laughed: “What a gutter-snipe I was, and what a heavenly thing of marble you made of me, darling.”

“Maybe you’ve made something out of me, too,” he said.

“Oh, darling, the gods did that, long ago—”

He opened the study door for her, turned on the light. She flung coat and furs and gloves and hat across a chair and turned to lose herself in a desperate embrace.

“Oh, darling,” she whimpered, “oh, darling, darling—”

It was growing rather late for dinner, and they were still talking of matters far and near and of yesterdays and to-morrows.

They scarcely mentioned the nation’s financial crash except when he asked her what she was going to do with the lovely domains of Oran, and she had replied that she didn’t know. And then she had to admit, very shyly, that it was she who had ordered his Dryad and Faun through Rosenquest.

“I was afraid,” she said, “that you might not understand me, so I ordered it through Rosenquest. . . . You know—it was for the *carrefour* where we took the *sentier* to the beechwoods—the morning of the boar hunt? And I meant to have you design and execute a marble group for every *carrefour* in Oran Forest,” she added defiantly.

He was completely surprised. But she was vastly relieved when he laughed about it.

"Rosenquest advanced me ten thousand francs on it," he said. "I'd have been sunk without you, Chiyu."

"Oh, but we're not going to sink now, darling! Even after we take out death duties and taxes and the general smash-up of securities, we shall have enough to live on—"

It was just sheer, whole-hearted and youthful laughter that interrupted her; and no rancor or bitterness in it:

"The high gods are laughing with me," he said, "to see, as I see, what they are doing to me! . . . To see me lying at your feet and my banner in the dust."

"Darling—"

"It's all right, Chiyu. I love to feel your tender little foot on my neck. . . . And, some day you shall order more Fauns and Dryads and demigods and gods. But, for a while, I imagine we shall have to live on mausoleums and portrait busts."

"But nobody wants any more just now—"

"Yes, they do. I had two orders last week from a couple of gold-hoarders. There's plenty of money somewhere; and our old friend Death declares no moratorium."

"But what shall we do with my income?" she inquired pitifully, holding out to him her lovely empty hands.

"If your income still exists to-morrow," he said, "we'll save it. Life is a skittish jade, Chiyu, and a fellow never knows when her footpadding friend, Chance, will black-jack him and bump him off—"

"We'll both bump, then," she said. "Have you any money at all, John Wyndward?"

"Not much," he replied tranquilly. "The banks have closed, and I was caught with a dollar and fifteen cents."

They laughed.

"So we'll have to cook what there is in the icebox," he added.

"Oh, John!" she pleaded—"not that I'd mind it on any other evening—but I've set my heart on our dining together in that pretty little French place—"

She picked up her wrist bag, opened it and showed him a crumpled mess of bills.

"Please, darling," she begged. "I changed all my money on the steamer last night—"

"All right," he said smilingly, "after all you ought to feed the thing you've made in the likeness of a man—"

She was in his arms instantly, closing his laughing mouth with fragrant palm and fingers. Then her lips melted to his. . . .

It was very late when at last they were ready to go out to dinner; about the same hour that once, so long ago, he had taken a shy, sensitive, silent child of sixteen to this same little restaurant.

He had admired the shape of her head, then, and her enchanting eyes.

But he never could have imagined the amazing wisdom that her childish mouth, one day, was destined to reveal. . . .

As they stood together in the lamp-lit darkness of the street, her arm in his, and looked about for a taxi, newsboys were calling another extra, alarming the gloom with their ghoulish howling.

"What is it, darling?" whispered Chiyu.

"Probably," said John Wyndward, "the whole world has tumbled down. Do you care?"

He smiled at his ladylove, and his ladylove smiled upon him as their taxi drew up by the sidewalk.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *The Young Man's Girl* by Robert W. Chambers]