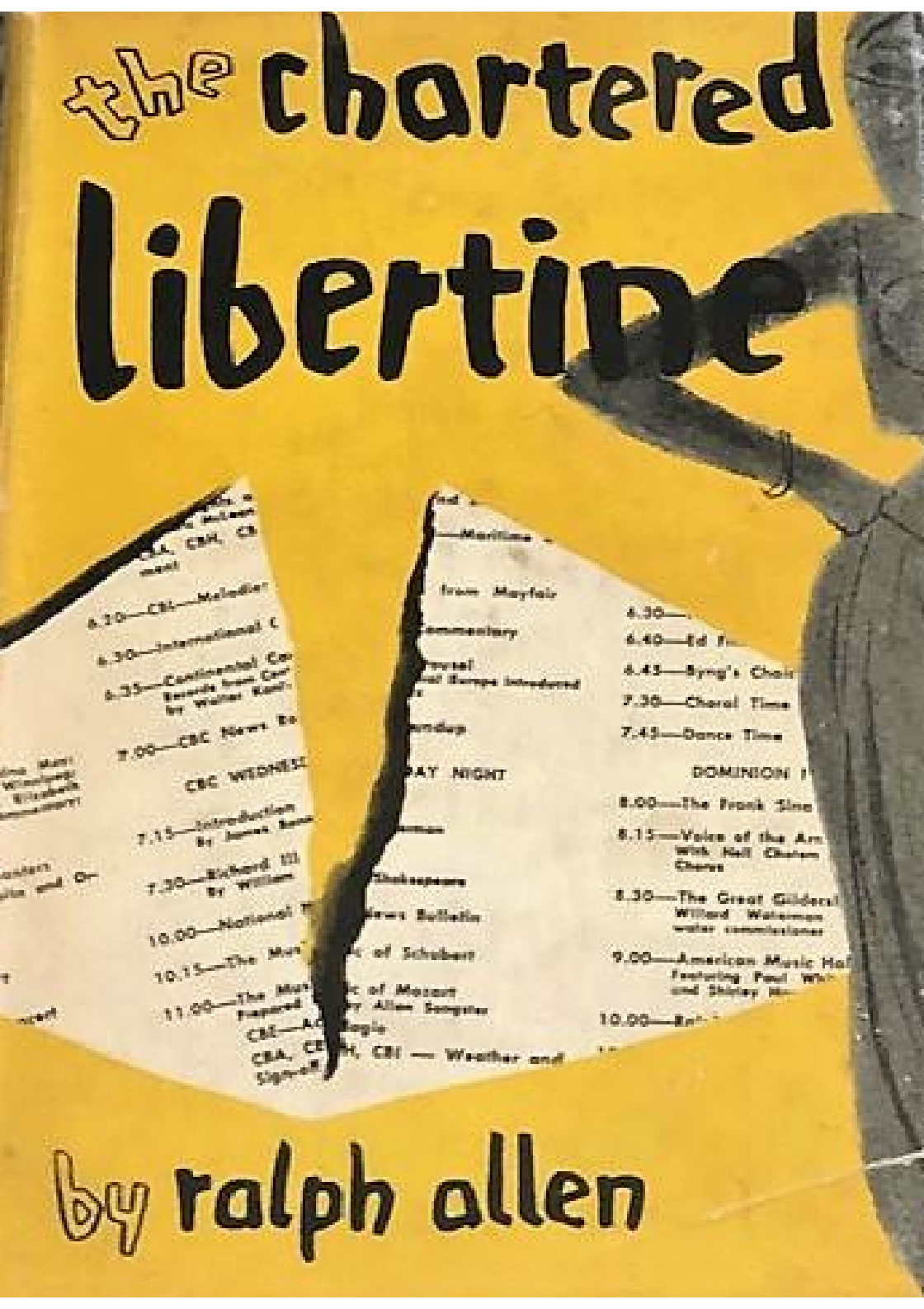
the chartered libertine



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THE CHARTERED LIBERTINE

By RALPH ALLEN

"The air, a chartered libertine, is still,
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears."

HENRY V, Act 1, Scene 1

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The Chartered Libertine

1

Garfield Smith, sole owner and president of radio station CNOTE, part owner and business manager of the Toronto *Daily Guardian*, chief debentures holder and Editor Emeritus of *True Blue Revelations Magazine*, and non-stockholding past chairman of the board of the rather disappointing Drive-in Dentistry Inc., was in the process of adding to his holdings.

"Just the bare essentials for now, Hubert," he asked the young man at the far side of his desk.

"Twenty-one thousand dollars in cash for the franchise. That includes a six-year lease on the park and thirteen players' contracts."

"What's the nut and what's the take?"

"Ninety-six and eighty-two." The young man hesitated. "Frankly, Mr. Smith, the whole thing looks pretty dubious."

His employer peered up genially. "That's what they always say," he sighed. "What was CNOTE grossing when I took it over? What about *True Blue*? What about the *Guardian*?"

The young man had been through the drill before. He answered briskly, smothering the tragic memory of Drive-in Dentistry Inc. "CNOTE was doing three hundred and twenty thous . . ."

"Never mind," Mr. Smith said. "Never mind." He rose from his chair, a small deceptively boyish figure with the air and appearance of an apprentice jockey who isn't getting quite enough to eat, and strode with jaunty weariness across his office. He stood in silence before the big bay window with his arms folded across his tiny chest.

The expanse of splendid wood and splendid cloth behind him was like a caress from unseen hands. He moved one foot a fraction of an inch and felt the voluptuous pile of the Jubbulpore carpet where it met the darkly luminous, glacial border of the teakwood floor. He ran one finger down the tapestried bosom of the wall, as sleek and cool and firm as the tiny scales of a still-living rainbow trout, and although he did not turn to look at the Poor

Man's Louvre—his own phrase—behind his desk, the colours of the Rouault, the Gauguin and the Dufy made soft trumpet sounds just within his hearing.

Yet he was not proud. On the contrary, mounted in a niche between the two most priceless of the paintings—priceless, more priceless, most priceless; yes, he too could smile at a solecism—mounted there in a little niche covered with a small curtain of gold damask and illuminated by the most minute of neon lights, kept perpetually burning, was the very most priceless possession of all. It was a baseball and it was inscribed in ink: To Garfield Smith from his friend Ty Cobb.

"Turn on the box, please," he requested over his shoulder. His assistant flew to the controls of a tape-recording machine which stood beside the desk and rushed back across the room bearing a silver microphone. He placed the microphone on the window ledge in front of Mr. Smith.

"Garfield Smith on ladies' softball," Mr. Smith notified posterity. "September eight, nineteen fifty-seven." He inspected his wrist watch. "Eleven-seventeen a.m. Impromptu remarks to Hubert Rodney, executive secretary. For release only to authorized biographers."

He did not often pull the damask curtain aside. But sometimes a very big man, growing jealous, or a very small man, growing suspicious or afraid, would pause beneath the little neon light and Garfield would say earnestly: "Promise not to laugh?" If they promised, he would show them the Ty Cobb baseball and if they kept the promise he would tell them how he acquired it.

It was a partly true and a very touching story and he still had found no way of reliving it without reliving all the pangs and glories of his childhood. His father had worked in the railway-yards in Winnipeg and before that he had worked in the railway-yards in Detroit. Twice a week during the years in Detroit he'd gone to see the Tigers play and when he'd moved west a chaste and lonely deity had been locked inside his heart and the deity's name was Tyrus Raymond Cobb.

In Winnipeg Smith Senior married a kind and virtuous but tragically unperceptive Ukrainian girl named Sonja Zabowski. He spent four years trying to tell her about Ty Cobb, but she simply couldn't get it. He clung to the vision and the mission long after their son was born. The son never fully comprehended the meaning of Ty Cobb to his father, the last, lost symbol of a disappointed man's sole intimacy with greatness. But he did come by degrees to comprehend the dreadful intensity that lay behind it. Garfield was barely five when he first heard his father's angry appeal, delivered with the

passion of a plea for life itself: “That bastard Ruth! That bastard Wagner! The two of them couldn’t carry old Ty’s bat!”

The debate grew beyond all reason in their four-room frame house in North Kildonan. None of the other yard-men could grasp its consequence and although Sonja Zabowski tried, as a dutiful wife should always do, to interest herself in the concerns of her man, she found it impossible to work up an intelligent argument about Cobb’s base-stealing record. In his frustration over this and doubtless other things Smith Père took to drink. “Ninety-six stolen bases in one season!” he would shout, making the little kitchen ring with his wrath. “Who ever came close to that, you Hunky bitch!”

“Poof!” Sonja fell to sniffing in self-defence, “who cares?”

And so, one summer, in a splendid burst of yearning and revenge, Garfield’s father removed his lifetime savings of forty-eight dollars from the bank, asked the rail-road for two round-trip passes to Detroit, and announced that though the boy might well die on the gallows, his, Garfield Smith’s son, Garfield Smith, Junior, was, by God, going to see Ty Cobb play baseball; and that, by God, was more salvation than all the popes, muezzins, lamas and pagan witch-doctors in the entire history of the human race could muster for him if they pooled their talismans and prayed for ever. He shouted down Sonja’s frightened protests with a logic that brooked no answer: “God damn it, old Ty is getting old! Leave it another year and it may be too late!”

Young Garfield was frightened too, for he had already acquired the seeds of commercial prudence selling the morning *Free Press* at the corner of Higgins Avenue and Main; and, besides, a worldly young schoolmate whom he had not dared to quote at home had told him that Ty Cobb was already all washed up.

“Don’t *you* start giving me that crap about what we can afford!” his father shouted, when Garfield sought to discourage the adventure. “Do you want to see Ty Cobb play ball or don’t you?”

Garfield Junior did not care to risk another cuff on the ear and therefore there was only one possible answer. At the end of a long and dismal hegira by day coach, high-lighted on Garfield Junior’s part by ham sandwiches and oranges and on Garfield Senior’s part by tugs at a two-quart bottle of potato whisky, they sat together on the third-base line in Detroit and watched Ty Cobb play ball. Cobb was, indeed, growing old and even a little fat, but in response to the senior Smith’s litanies of hope and praise, he hit a single and

a double and, to the obvious amazement of everyone but Mr. Smith, stole a base. Filled with rapture and the last of the potato whisky, his father yanked the apprehensive young Garfield to his feet the instant the game was over. "Come on!" he bawled. He lifted the boy over the railing separating the stands from the field, pushed a park policeman aside, and hauled Garfield Junior at a dead run across the diamond. They caught up with Ty Cobb at the entrance to the dug-out. "Mr. Cobb," the father shouted, "I'd like you to shake hands with my son." The baseball player threw a word of apology over his shoulder and quickened his pace. Mr. Smith grabbed him savagely by the arm: "God damn it, Cobb!" he cried in sudden, blind despair, "if you don't shake this boy's hand I'll kill you!" The baseball player turned, half angry, half quizzical, and saw the tears of hurt and passion in the other's eyes. "Why, I'd be glad to meet the boy, Mister," he said gently. "What's your name, son?"

He remained with them for nearly ten minutes, listening to Mr. Smith's memories of other exploits as attentively as though they were the first words of appreciation he had ever heard. At last he said: "Wait a minute, please." He disappeared through the runway from the dug-out to the dressing-room and then came back with a baseball and right there in their presence he wrote the words on it and signed his name.

"Thanks, Mr. Cobb," Mr. Smith muttered, "he'll treasure this all his life. He's been proud of you ever since he was in his cradle."

"That's nice." The baseball player looked from father to son with grave discernment of the need between them. "You be proud of your father too, Garfield."

By the time they had reached Winnipeg again Sonja, whose grievances had come into focus during their absence, had taken to potato whisky too; she was not to lose her taste for it until her death.

Standing before the baseball, between the Gauguin and the Rouault, and describing the significance of the former to a nervous creditor or a recalcitrant or importunate employee, Garfield's filial respect did not, of course, permit him to dwell on all the details. "The one on the left cost forty thousand dollars," he'd say boyishly, "the one on the right cost thirty. The one in the middle cost nothing, but it means more to me than everything else I've ever owned or done."

Depending on the circumstances and the sensitivity and importance of his visitor, he would sometimes spell it right out. "Dad was a strait-laced, thrifty man; he knew it was foolish to spend all that money on a trip to a ball

game, but in later years I've realized what he was trying to show me: one good dream is worth all the material things in the world. Mother pretended to disapprove; she was always all wrapped up in her church work and things like that and didn't know a Texas leaguer from third base, but I do think that in her own quiet way she realized that Dad was right." Garfield now believed the words implicitly—or believed their essence, which was the same—and took a genuine, modest pleasure from the occasions which called for their repetition. He was by no means so naïve as to be unaware that they were sometimes received with cynicism. He was perfectly conscious of the standing gag which circulated among the less loyal of his employees: "Well, did you get the raise or did he show you Ty Cobb's autograph?" But he had learned to accept envy and malice with composure and good temper; any man who did constructive things had to resign himself to the penalties.

He turned sadly around and confronted his assistant with a visage full of gentle suffering. "God damn it, Hubert," he muttered pathetically, "why do I always, eternally and forever, have to think of these things for myself?"

"I don't know, Mr. Smith," Rodney said humbly.

"It's not your fault, Hubert; you've been with me such a short time. But those others! They thought I was a fool when I bought CNOTE. They didn't think *True Blue Revelations* was going anywhere. They had no faith in the *Guardian*. They keep making cheap jokes about Drive-in Dentistry. No wonder the public isn't ready for it yet. What's the name of this team again?"

"Swansea Lady Sluggerettes."

"Swansea Lady Sluggerettes." He dwelt over each syllable, revelling in the fat absurdity of their sum.

"No wonder they're on the rocks, Hubert. The first thing we need is a name. Something in good taste but with a little dash and romance to it, perhaps just a hint of . . ."

"Sex?"

"Try not to think in clichés, Hubert. Here's what we'll do. We'll have that fellow who does the readership surveys on the magazine test half a dozen names. Take notes, Hubert. I don't want the tape to hold us up on this."

Rodney extracted a leather notebook from an inside pocket.

Garfield closed his eyes.

“Divanettes. Chaises Longues. Like them?”

“Wonderful, Mr. Smith.”

“Lionesses. She-Cats.”

“How about Minks?” Rodney suggested timidly.

“No,” Garfield said thoughtfully. “No, I guess not. A good effort though, Hubert,” he added affably. “Courtesans. Courtesans might do. Look up courtesans, Hubert.”

Rodney moved across the room to the Webster dictionary. “Prostitute,” he announced.

“I knew *that*,” Garfield said indignantly. “What else does it give?”

“Royal mistress. Loose woman.”

“Hmmmm. Oh, well, knock it out. No . . . leave Courtesans in for the time being. If it does well on the poll we can get an opinion on the church reaction from that fellow who does the theology page on the *Guardian*. Inamoratas. Put down Inamoratas.”

“Inamoratas.”

“Coquettes. And Queens—queens of something—queens of—give me a little help, won’t you, Hubert?” Garfield appealed fretfully.

“Queens of Diamonds,” Rodney put in hopefully.

Mr. Smith sat down heavily in a leather armchair and placed his palms against his forehead. “Hubert! Hubert!” he winced.

“Queens of Swat?” Rodney murmured piteously.

“No, no, Hubert.”

“I’m sorry, Mr. Smith.”

Garfield smiled instantly, forgivingly. “Queens—Queens . . .” He rose and snapped his fingers. “Queens d’Amour! By God, there it is in spite of everything! Queens d’Amour!”

“Queens d’Amour!” Rodney whispered.

“We’ll go ahead and do the poll, just as a final check,” Garfield Smith cried, feeling his enthusiasm soaring to a boil, “but there’s our team, Hubert: Garfield Smith’s Queens d’Amour!”

He began pacing the pampas of the rug, with one eye on his assistant and the other on the silver microphone. His voice rose and fell according to the distance between him and the microphone.

"I'm going to give you a chance on some of the detail work, Hubert. But here are the broad outlines: a new departure in uniforms, an entirely new departure. Only a moron would have thought of dressing nine beautiful girls like the New York Giants of 1912 just because that's the way baseball players are supposed to dress. I want a uniform designed especially for the Queens d'Amour. Something lacy and silky, like black lingerie. The fashions woman on *True Blue Revelations* will design it for you; get her to run a story saying the God-damn ridiculous uniforms girl athletes wear now are unnatural and unhealthy. Probably a lot of truth in it too. I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of those girls have been developing cancer from wearing those stiff flannel shirts and God knows what torture devices underneath them; have the medical reporter of the *Guardian* look into the figures, might be an editorial in it for them. Tie it in with National Health Week."

Rodney's pencil flew across the pages of the notebook.

Garfield's incandescent mind raced on, as his short legs raced back and forth across the multi-coloured pampas of his carpet. "We want drama. We want names. This is a big thing for Canadian sport. It's a big thing for Canadian womanhood. I'm going to do for the Queens d'Amour what Smythe did for the Maple Leafs. I'll do twice what Cooke did for the Toronto Ball Club. I'm going to make them a national institution, a national habit. Get Foster Hewitt. Get the CBC. Every Sunday night I want the Queens d'Amour on a coast-to-coast hook-up and I want everybody in the whole country listening the way they listen to the Leaf hockey broadcasts. Get them on TV too."

Garfield inadvertently brushed against a tall wrought iron ash-tray and a charge of static electricity enveloped one hand in a crackle of blue flame, like a stage effect from Faust. He jumped but was still talking when he came down.

"An institution. What's that gimmick they use up at Maple Leaf Gardens: Young Canada's Team? The germ of an idea, but those people up there never follow through. Good third-rate brains . . . An institution. A shrine. That's it, Hubert: The Shrine of Canadian Girlhood. The Toronto Queens d'Amour, the Shrine of Canadian Girlhood."

Rodney looked up briefly and made a movement with his head denoting dazzlement without hinting at anything so presumptuous as approval.

"We'll need some big names until we get rolling. Who, Hubert? Who?"

"Jessamine Slade is under contract already," Rodney said in a hopeful, crisp manner. "She pitched three no-hitters last year. Your shortstop, Mavis Rebchuck, hit four-eighty. They're the league's top drawing cards."

"They are, are they?" Garfield demanded bitterly. "So they draw a lousy eighty-two thousand dollars all year. Why, Hubert, why?"

"Well, Mr. Smith . . ."

"I'll tell you why. Because I never heard of Jessamine Slade in my life and what's more I never heard of Mavis Rebchuck. The chances are they never even heard of each other. You haven't been with me long, Hubert," Garfield reminded his assistant ominously, "but I hope it won't be long before you realize that when I talk about big names I am not, Hubert, positively not, talking about anybody called Mavis Rebchuck."

Rodney's mouth hung open helplessly.

"The first thing is to learn to use your imagination," Garfield resumed patiently. "Forget I ever mentioned softball. Oh, we'll keep Jessamine and Mavis, of course, along with anybody else that can play ball and doesn't look like Yogi Berra. But forget I mentioned softball at all, Hubert. Don't try to think at all. Now answer me one simple question. Who's the most famous woman in Canada?"

Rodney shuddered and closed his eyes. When he opened them they were wild with terror.

"Kate Aitken!" he croaked fearfully.

Garfield seized the silver microphone and jerked his hand back as though to hurl it across the room but ended up by merely tossing it up and down in the palm of his hand. The action had some essential soothing effect, for when he spoke again it was merely in a tone of unrequited kindliness.

"Kate Aitken is a fine broadcaster, Hubert. She has a fine audience. But she is a grandmother, Hubert. She would not fit into the Queens d'Amour picture in any way. You do understand that, don't you?" he finished earnestly.

"Yes, sir," Rodney murmured gratefully.

"You've helped me to clarify my thinking, though, Hubert," Garfield mused. "I can see we'll have to go right outside Canada. Put these names down. Betty Grable. Lena Horne. Ethel Merman. Get reports on them all

from New York and Hollywood. If any of them is over the hill, or in trouble with the studios, we might be able to make a deal of some kind. See Barbara Ann Scott's agent. Who's that Chinese woman I met at Henry Luce's? Her husband was in the army. By the way, remind me to look old Henry up the next time I'm in New York."

"Madame Chiang Kai-shek?"

"That's it. A very attractive woman."

"But is she very . . . athletic, Mr. Smith?" Rodney asked hesitantly.

"Surely to God she could go in now and then as a pinch-hitter, couldn't she?" Garfield almost shouted this, like a man beset at every turn by unreasonable, trivial difficulties.

Rodney subsided once more into the notebook.

Garfield sat down and stared out of the window in complete silence. For one . . . two . . . five minutes time itself was suspended. Then he drew himself erect again.

"Here it is, Hubert!" he cried. "Here's the whole thing! What price Mavis Rebchuck now? That fellow in Denmark! The fellow in Denmark!"

"The fellow in Denmark, sir?"

"Yes, yes," Garfield cried excitedly, the thrill of invention in every syllable. "The sergeant fellow! Get him, Hubert. Get him right away and get him at any price!"

"Oh, dear," Hubert said dolefully.

"What's wrong?" Garfield peered at his aide with suspicion and impatience.

"You tried to get—er—her several years ago. Don't you remember, sir? You offered—uh—her fifty thousand dollars a year to take over the Brides and Beauty section of *True Blue Revelations*. She just . . ."

"Oh, hell!" Garfield said disgustedly. "That's right. She wouldn't listen. That other fellow I used to have talked to her. She hung up on him. Well, that's out."

"It's a brilliant idea, though, sir," Rodney consoled him.

"Perhaps," Garfield said wearily. "Perhaps, Hubert. Thank you for saying so." He passed a hand across his eyes and sat down again, this time quite inertly. He remained in silent rumination for a long while. Then he

murmured gently: “Hubert, would you mind getting me a glass of water?” He was feeling spent and weary, but already the germ of a fresh idea had begun to stir. Perhaps—the yeast of invention was swelling now with the blowsy magnificence of a fingered bosom—perhaps an even better idea than the first one.

“Of course, sir.” Rodney hurried to the silver thermos decanter on the mahogany desk.

“Thank you very much, Hubert.” Garfield paused and closed his eyes again. It was a very tricky moment. One wrong word, one wrong inflection, could still spoil it all. He had dealt with many men and many projects and there always came a moment like this, when the crucial business of nailing down had to depend on instinct. “I sometimes wonder why you put up with me. You’re the only person I’ve ever had in this organization who . . .” He sighed and asked warmly: “How old are you, Hubert?”

“Twenty-three, sir.”

“Twenty-three! God, Hubert, how I wish I were twenty-three again with this great age of science opening up before me. The adventures, the challenges, the things to be done for humanity. Are you married, Hubert?” As he uttered the words Garfield knew he had not failed himself. There was a good and reassuring ring to them. Hubert might hold him in suspense for a minute more; perhaps, indeed, an hour more, or a week. His intuition sang up clearly, almost but not quite drowning out a distant echo of disappointment. Hubert would do what was required of him, thank God! Yes, thank God, Hubert would do it, the feeble, unfortunate little cipher.

“No, sir.” For the first time during the long morning Rodney ventured to look directly into his employer’s eyes. “Oh, no, Mr. Smith!” he gasped. “No. I don’t think I’d want to do that. I don’t want to seem disloyal, but . . .”

“I pay all expenses, of course,” Garfield said, keeping his voice matter of fact, carefully holding his excitement in check. “And you stay on full salary, even if it takes two years. After that, fifteen thousand a year to start with.”

“Honestly, Mr. Smith, I don’t think . . .”

“No need to make your decision right now, Hubert,” Garfield said easily. “No need at all.” It had turned out to be a good morning after all. Thomas J. Watson might be corny, but, by God, he also happened to be right. The biggest word in the dictionary was: Think.

“Oh, by the way, Hubert,” he said, “get me reservations to Ottawa for next week. I think I’ll run up and see Bert Harvard about the radio and TV

end myself.”

2

The makers of Canada formed two circles above the hushed and carpeted plain of the parliamentary committee room. The parchment faces of the outer circle, immobilized forever in their heavy walnut frames, gleamed down like silent watchers on the rim of a *coulée*. The faces of the inner ring, while livelier, looked scarcely less forbidding. Although nominally included in the inner ring, the new chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation sensed his isolation from it. He felt for the moment like a solitary paleface caught between two Indian skirmish parties.

Papers rustled on the mahogany table like moccasins in dry grass and the chairman of the Commons Committee on Radio nodded to the chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. "Ready, Mr. Harvard?"

"Quite ready, sir."

"The committee will please come to order. Since this is the new CBC chairman's first appearance before this committee . . ."—fourteen pairs of eyes inspected Bertram Harvard with grave curiosity; they saw a pale man in his early forties, with not much hair, a round high forehead, humble but not quite timid blue eyes, and nothing else whatever to distinguish his physical appearance except the billowing maroon four-in-hand silk tie which he had retained as a stubborn memento of his carefree days as a producer of one-act sustainers in Winnipeg; having seen, they signalled their recognition with a series of quiet parliamentary "Ughs" and the chairman of the committee went on—"Since this is Mr. Harvard's first appearance here, I should first of all like to make him welcome and to reassure him of the purpose—I might say the only purpose—for which we are here."

Bertram Harvard looked covertly across the table. He observed with a faint touch of relief that the chairman was reading from notes and that, though his eyes were shrewd and disillusioned behind his pince-nez, he had to hold the paper close to them in order to read at all. Always remember, Kevin had counselled him, the members are human, too human sometimes, but human.

". . . Merely to ensure that one of our greatest national possessions shall give expression to the will of the people and serve their best interests. In the last year or so, as you are no doubt aware, some very highly placed people

have momentarily lost sight of this—I was going to say including certain employees of the CBC, but since they are not here to defend themselves . . .”

Skol! Kevin, Bertram Harvard thought affectionately. *Saluda! Andy*, he thought.

“Come! Come!” A gigantic florid man on Bertram’s left banged a glass ash-tray irately on the table.

“Now look here!” a motherly woman in a flowered hat shrilled.

They won’t be downright rough on you, each of his two immediate predecessors had assured him. Keep your head and most of the squabbling will be between themselves. They’ll keep assuring you and each other that the CBC is and must be kept free of politics; but of course this is nonsense. A State-owned corporation can’t be free of politics, especially a State-owned corporation that’s responsible directly or indirectly for every word and every note of music and every grimace on every radio or television set in the country. Never forget that these people have a constitutional right to criticize the way you run the show . . . The party in power will be friendly, because an attack on the CBC is an attack on the government. The Opposition—well, it’s a pretty tempting target.

Andy Bergenson’s wounds were the fresher. His resignation had just been accepted after a series of broadcasts based on some of the more repulsive theories of H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell and a number of other scientists and philosophers had aroused what the Opposition press and a slight majority of the clergy agreed was a wave of protest among those who cherished the proved and timeless values of the spirit. The Liberal-Conservative Party, temporarily becalmed in opposition, had ridden the wave to victory in a sudden election and of course Andy Bergenson, to use his own wry phrase, had lost his deposit.

Kevin Dobbs too had disappeared—a year earlier—in the immediate wake of an election. In this one the result had been different—a victory for the Conservative-Liberals—and the issue had been slightly different too. It had found its focus in a rather bad radio play in which a young unmarried woman named Hilda Morganson had become involved in one of the classic difficulties of young unmarried women. Each time a Mothers’ Club, a Home and School Association, a church auxiliary or a vigilant divine found cause to resent the moral climate of the air lanes it or he or she also found cause to resurrect the uneasy bones of Hilda. The Conservative-Liberals, who had not been in power for more than twenty years, kept running up Hilda’s ghost like a sunrise flag at the beginning of every parliamentary session. When at

last they did win an election, no one was quite certain what part Hilda had played in their success, but Hilda got at least some of the credit. As Dobbs acknowledged himself, when he came in to clear out his desk the day after the election, Hilda's long confinement had been one of the wonders of medical science, but her fruitfulness could not be questioned.

Dobbs had held the chairmanship for a dozen years, had been examined by half-a-dozen parliamentary committees without once losing his composure or his stubborn belief that, for all their defects, Canadian radio and television were providing freer and more mature and varied programmes under public control than they could or would have done under private control. "The secret of keeping your head," he had written Bertram, "is to keep it clear of the Civil Service attitudes toward the damned politicians. Don't forget the damned politicians are under a bigger gun than you are under. A lot of people—some for selfish reasons, some for the perfectly good reason that they believe the programmes would be improved—a lot of people want the government to get right out of radio and give the whole thing back to business. A lot of others believe—quite earnestly—that any talk or play that challenges religious or moral orthodoxy must not merely be challenged in turn but must be suppressed. Your vast unseen audience includes millions of people who would be appalled at the idea of burning a book but who think it's right and natural that the intellectual and philosophical content of the air should be censored as rigidly as their children's Sunday School papers. You know all this already, Bert, and will have to go along with it. The damned politicians are in exactly the same position, but they are under the additional pressure of having to get elected. Don't forget you'll be hearing a lot of election speeches in that committee room."

It occurred to him that he might be hearing one now.

". . . As for the Liberal-Conservative Party," the chairman of the committee was saying, "I can only offer you the assurance that we shall continue to support those policies which we believe to be in the public interest and to oppose those policies which . . ."

"Which cost you the 1957 election," the florid man on Bertram's left boomed forth.

"Order!" the chairman shouted.

"Then stop gibbering for *Hansard*!" the florid man demanded.

“Very well,” the chairman said with a manful effort at dignity. “If I might put the first question myself—no, no, Mr. Harvard, please keep your seat—would you be good enough to tell the committee, since it has already been mentioned this morning, what decision, if any, has been reached with respect to the H. G. Wells broadcasts?”

“Well, sir, they were discontinued on September third, three days after the elec . . .”—Bertram sensed a shudder of distaste toward the far end of the table—“on September third.”

“And are you—ah—personally satisfied that this was a wise decision?”

“Well, sir,” Bertram said, “I feel it has been demonstrated that the majority of the listening public wished them discontinued.”

“Thank you, Mr. Harvard.” The chairman cast a look of lazy benediction toward the ceiling.

“And has this and—ah—other recent developments had any effect on the internal organization of the CBC?”

“Well, sir,” Bertram said, “my predecessor as chairman, Mr. Andrew Bergenson, has recently been appointed Assistant Commercial Attaché to the Canadian Legation in Peru.”

“Ah, yes,” the chairman said. “A well-deserved promotion. I was wondering rather about other shifts or changes of personnel.”

“The original producer of the Wells broadcasts has been transferred to another department, for purely administrative reasons.” Bertram allowed the phrase “for purely administrative reasons” to roll across his mind a second time, like a fat, shining globule of mercury; Kevin and Andy both told me I’d catch on to the language in no time, he reflected, not unhappily.

“Look here, Mr. Chairman!” The florid member on Bertram’s left had manufactured a splendid rage. “If we’re going to go over things that have happened in the past, let’s do it right. What about that scientist from Cambridge? And what about Hilda Masters?”

“Hilda Morganson!” A voice at the end of the table corrected exultantly. “Yes, Mr. Chairman, what about Hilda Morganson?” Immediately the room was filled with a variety of brief, urgent, indecipherable utterances, like a cave of birds startled by the premonition of an unknown danger.

“Order! Order!” The Chairman refused to look up from his gavel until its stubborn glock-glock-glock had stunned the room to silence. “Hilda Morganson has been discussed in this committee many times in the past as

well as in the House and the Senate. By no stretch of the imagination is there any reason to discuss the matter again at this time."

The florid member's anger had subsided. "All right," he said suavely. "But perhaps Mr. Harvard will be good enough to tell us what policies the CBC proposes with respect to similar dramatic offerings in the future?"

"Well, sir, when the—uh," Bertram fingered his maroon cravat, "dramatic offering under discussion was before parliament the chairman of the CBC was Mr. Kevin Dobbs and therefore . . ."

"One interruption, please," the florid man said courteously. "Is Mr. Dobbs still with the CBC?"

"He was appointed Minister to Norway some time ago."

"Thank you," the florid man said gravely. "The appointment, I might remind the committee, was clearly in the public interest and was, of course, made by the Conservative-Liberal Party at the beginning of its recent term in office."

The chairman smiled furiously. "If Mr. Bollinger would please be good enough to put his original question in more specific terms . . ."

"Well, what about unmarried mothers on the CBC?" the now less florid Mr. Bollinger asked.

"I—er—don't believe Hilda Mor—the dramatic character under discussion actually became a mother," Bertram said diffidently. "It is my recollection that she committed suicide."

"You know what I mean," Mr. Bollinger persisted.

A twinkling van-dyked member in an old-fashioned frock-coat addressed Bertram from across the table. "I don't think Mr. Harvard need be diffident about using the word pregnant. It's quite parliamentary even though it doesn't appear to have proved very airworthy."

"Well, then, sir," Bertram spoke over the sound of good-natured chuckles, "as I understand the Minister's wishes, no further reference to pregnancy among unwed women is to be permitted over the CBC or any of its radio or television outlets."

"I don't think there'll be any discussion of that?" The chairman looked warningly toward the members of his own party and invitingly toward the members of the Opposition. "Did you have some objection to enter, Mrs. Sanderson?" He turned his gaze hopefully on the lady in the flowered hat.

"No," the lady member snapped. "The Conservative-Liberal Party's attitude toward public morality is quite well known, I think."

A round, pleasant-faced man in an elegant white waistcoat signalled for attention. "*S'il vous plaît, Mr. Harvard.*" When he switched into English his voice bore only the least, liquid trace of accent. "But, of course, with the married ladies it must be very different, *non*?"

"Somewhat different," Bertram admitted cautiously. "But," he added quickly, "we have no intention of allowing the subject to be mentioned except in the most exceptional cases, all of which will be most carefully reviewed in advance at the very highest level."

"What! What's this!"

"Please address the chair, Monsieur Chartrand," the chairman said to the round man in the white waistcoat, whose pleasant face was showing signs of agitation.

"Very well! Very well! Perhaps Mr. 'Arvard . . ." Monsieur Chartrand's accent had thickened slightly and his voice had grown quite loud ". . . will please tell the chair w'ich 'e thinks is the greates' enemy of society: the unmarried woman who bears children or the married woman who does not bear children?"

"I do not believe the question has ever come up in just that form," Bertram said uneasily.

"Well then, I say it is 'igh time it did! I do not like this talk about our wives 'aving children only in the most exceptional cases all of which will be carefully reviewed in advance at the 'ighest level. No doubt this sort of thing is liked in some parts of Canada, but in my province it will not be liked at all. In my province we believe that when a married lady does *not* have children—yes, many children—*that*, Mr. Chairman, is the exceptional case to be reviewed carefully at the 'ighest level."

"I am sure that all of us, even those who come from other parts of Canada, sympathize with your point of view, Monsieur Chartrand, and with the view held generally in your great province, and that many of us share it. But of course we are not talking about everyday affairs here. We are talking about plays on the CBC." The chairman ended with a winning, disastrous chuckle.

"And that is what I am talking about, and it is no laughing matter!" M. Chartrand thundered. "The rest of you demand that no CBC play shall 'ave a pregnant woman who is not married. Very well! If we are making rules, I

demand that no CBC play shall 'ave a married woman who is *not pregnant*!" M. Chartrand folded his arms and glared defiantly around the room.

The chairman's face was the colour of the faintly smudged stack of notepaper on the table before him. "I am certain," he said unhappily, "that as fellow members of the Liberal-Conservative Party, Monsieur Chartrand and I are in absolutely no disagreement. Perhaps, through haste and the informal nature of these proceedings, Mr. Harvard failed to indicate that, while always remaining within the bounds of good taste, the CBC has no intention of concealing the fact that, but for its glorious mothers and the—ah—glorious state of motherhood itself . . ."

"You cannot 'ave one without the other!" M. Chartrand pounded the table furiously.

"Perhaps Mr. Harvard has some obs . . ." The chairman's voice died helplessly.

"Well, Mr. Chairman, Monsieur Chartrand . . ." Bertram crouched for a long, lonely instant under the rim of the *coulée* and suddenly found a gap of daylight. "I might remind the committee, sir, that at the parliamentary session of 1953," he went on more confidently, "there was a good deal of discussion about a documentary broadcast concerning the birth of a child. At that time criticism was voiced by both the government and the Opposition and the broadcast was cancelled."

"Yes, yes, of course," the chairman interjected swiftly if a trifle vaguely. "It's just a matter of following common-sense practices and implementing the will of the people." M. Chartrand was on his feet. "Order, please, Monsieur Chartrand," the chairman mewed, turning on M. Chartrand a look of pleading almost sufficient to bring tears from the portrait of John A. Macdonald glowering sternly over the former's shoulder. "As the committee is aware, its recommendations will not be brought down for some time. I promise, absolutely promise, all members that if they will only do their best to be patient at this very preliminary stage, their views will be given the very highest consideration before any action detrimental to them will even be discussed."

M. Chartrand eyed the chairman appraisingly and then shrugged and resumed his seat.

The twinkling van-dyked member spoke now. "I was delighted to hear the chairman make that undertaking," he said in a mellow voice only very lightly touched with an old man's mischief. "I am privileged to serve a

district made up largely of younger people whose outlook is—well, the phrase I like to use is 'fairly modern'. A number of them have asked me why our national radio doesn't give them an occasional informative talk on birth control."

M. Chartrand was struggling for his feet and his breath while the chairman fluttered his hands as though against an invasion of moths.

"Never!" M. Chartrand cried. "Better pregnancy for all, married and unmarried alike!"

The woman in the flowered hat sprang erect and blazed emotionally. "Speaking for the Canadian Mother . . ."

"Speaking for the Conservative-Liberals . . ." Mr. Bollinger boomed, his earlier floridity now restored and embellished.

"Speaking for the CCF . . ."

"Our sons and daughters . . ."

"Speaking for Social Credit . . ."

"The home . . ."

"Order!" Glock-glock-glock.

"God . . ."

"Speaking for the Liberal-Conservatives . . ."

"Adjourned!" Glock-glock-glock-glock-glock.

Bertram walked slowly down the barely visible slope of Parliament Hill and found his way across the groping mid-afternoon traffic of Wellington Street to the refuge of his office. He walked quickly through the anteroom, past the ubiquitous picket of callers and petitioners, hoping vaguely to be mistaken for a repair man answering an emergency call, said feebly but audibly to his secretary: "All right to go in?" and thus reached his private sanctum.

He sat down at his desk, reached nervously for the desk pad and noted with profound relief that there were no appointments.

He picked up his desk telephone and pressed as lightly as possible on the buzzer to his secretary.

“Please get rid of those people, Mrs. O’Brien,” he said with unnecessary furtiveness. “Unless any of them happened to recognize me, you might just say I’m not expected back until tomorrow.”

“Perhaps I’d better come in a moment.”

He did not protest. Nor, he knew, would he protest when, as she did now, Mrs. O’Brien entered, closed the door carefully behind her and said with firmness and sympathy: “I’m afraid there’s one of them you’ll simply have to see.” As she spoke, her trim, square shoulders were framed by the portraits of his old friends and superiors, Kevin Dobbs and Andrew Bergenson, beaming upon him from the far wall with the stunned amiability of mounted salmon. Bertram had not been in possession of the office long enough to have decided whether it was a mere coincidence that Mrs. O’Brien had always seemed to render her mandates from that particular point of vantage. Nor had he quite brought himself to guess what significance, if any, he was invited to attach to the coincidence that on the stretch of wall between the pictures of his predecessors there was ample room for a third picture, identical in size and, perhaps by implication, identical in expression. These were matters for later study. Mrs. O’Brien had been around a long time. Both Kev and Andy had urged him to avail himself of her care. She knew the ropes.

Nevertheless he did not care to surrender without at least a token show of his authority. “I’ve had a hard day,” he informed her sternly.

“The first day up there is always the hardest,” she said sympathetically. “What was it today—Controls or Morals?”

“H. G. Wells and Hilda Morganson.”

“Morals,” she announced, as though consulting a catalogue. “Well, get ready for a round on Controls. Garfield Smith is waiting to see you.”

“Oh, God!” Bertram gasped. “Not today!”

“Shall I send him in?”

“Yes, of course.” As Mrs. O’Brien disappeared into the anteroom, Bertram rose to his feet, arranging his face in a dignified but friendly smile.

3

Dr. Hilary Bonnisteel made one last attempt to bring both eyes into focus on the examination paper at the top of the pile, and perceived that the effort was useless. One of the conditions on which she had accepted the position of associate professor of English at Ontario University had been that she be excused from marking papers, but once again her curiosity had been too much for her. It was all very well to say that if the arrow left the bow true and straight it was thereafter beyond the marksman's control and jurisdiction. But the marksman still ran breathlessly toward the target, peering anxiously across the intervening ground-haze.

The round prim letters ran together now and when she squinted at them they separated and loped right off the page. Hilary Bonnisteel shoved the stack of papers aside, walked across her small office and seated herself at the small dressing-table, functional to the verge of seediness, which stood beside the only window. She paused for a long inspection of the green and Gothic grounds outside; the sight always held sanctuary and healing for her and it did not altogether fail her now. Looking out this way from her office, she felt deserted but secure, like an unfrightened garrison under siege. She liked particularly to be there alone at evening, when the sun fell down below the college towers like the dropping of a portcullis, isolating her from the blessings, the hazards, the failings and the sure, known virtues of the three billion human beings encamped outside. At dusk the camp-fires of the surrounding hordes already began drawing close; on the highway curving through Queen's Park to the nearest settlement they glowed and gathered and from just beyond their perimeter wheels rustled against asphalt like the whispering of patrols. On the parking lot outside a car door sometimes crumped shut like a mortar blast and a hostage cried for quarter: "God damn it, Swanson, you know I hate faculty dinners!" By day the feeling was only a little less marvellous in its faint melancholy and self-containment. But she, the lonely one, was secure by reason of her very loneliness.

She put her face close to the mirror and studied her still throbbing eyes at the level of aesthetics. She permitted herself a brief smile. The good eye, the left one, gazed back at her confidently and with a trace of shrewdness, blue and steady but not without sympathy. The bad eye, the right one, was the tiniest shade less blue and had a tiny, coquettish disposition to vagueness. She was definitely not cock-eyed, she assured herself as she had

done so often in the ten years that had elapsed since the bad eye had been nicked by the skate of a fellow lady hockey-player. Still there was a hint of dichotomy, on the left the professor, the woman of letters, the winner of three separate Governor-General's Awards (true, all of them for poetry), the youngest member, male or female, of Her Majesty's Advisory Council on Canadian Culture; on the right the campus cut-up, a little agitated, a little vacant and—alas! there was no other word for it—definitely a little cute.

She sighed without real displeasure, made an unnecessary rearrangement of her blonde, short-cropped hair and reached into a drawer of the dressing-table and extracted a black silk eye-patch. She fitted it carefully around her neat blonde head and returned to the desk. As she marched back across the room, her white linen skirt and the red-and-white-candy-striped blouse above it cleaved cleanly through a slanting box of sunlight and her whole aspect bore the bright unbearable newness of a minor pirate in a high-school production of *Peter Pan*. It would never have done to appear in such a costume before a classroom.

She returned to the paper at the top of the pile. She read clearly enough, now that the bad eye had been relieved of duty. "Shakspeare," she read, "marches through the pages of history sometimes with the soft footsteps of peace sometimes with a loud marital tread."

"Dear, dear," she whispered helplessly. She put the top paper impatiently aside and began skimming with mounting recklessness and horror through the papers underneath. "Oh, no!" she cried aloud, and then read back to herself: "The alliance of the French realists and the Italian romantics uneasy though it was and lacking as it did the solid foundation of a genuine *esprit de corps* naturally and inevitably—though with certain reservations with which the English sentimentalists were not slow to recognize."

"Oh, no!" she repeated piteously. "My beautiful, beautiful lecture!"

She pawed on with growing haste through the tidy pile of paper, suddenly grown obscene and wicked. Ameliorate. Ambivalent. The Tower of Babble. The language of Milton infested his stately thoughts with an added stateliness and dignity. Self-abnegation.

She surrendered to blind anger, but it passed in a moment and was replaced by a mixture of pity and guilt. The poor, poor kids! They not only can't write; they can't read properly; they can't spell. I must not—I shall not—let myself be arrogant.

She tried to put herself in their place. The effort only added to her discontent. Her own years as a student were arrayed before her like folds of sterile gauze, white, austere and perfect. The scholarships and medals, the year at Columbia, the year at Cambridge, the year at the Sorbonne, the whole lonely panic-stricken quest for knowledge, hounded and harassed by the desperate certainty that only a very little could be learned and that little only dimly understood. So much lost and left behind forever: *Mais non. Mais non. Restez avec moi. Restez avec. Restez! Restez!* A pale boy standing in the gardens of the Luxembourg on a spring night. *Restez. Restez.* And long before that a smaller boy standing beside an unpainted farm-house in Saskatchewan while the red grain truck awaited the loading of the battered fibre trunk . . . and this boy crying too: "Don't go, Hilly! Don't go! We'll both be lonesome, Hilly!"

And they thought it had been easy. "Confronted with such effortless and unflawed artistry on the part of a young woman barely out of her twenties, the reviewer can only conclude that the greatest part of artistry is not anything less than a gift bestowed at birth."—*New York Times.* "A superb natural talent."—Toronto *Globe and Mail*.

Her anger returned. A procession of soft bird-like girls and hard, doll-like boys, scampered, barefooted, down the desolate avenue of her mind. *Restez avec! Don't go, Hilly!* they cried, and in the distance a crooner seized the echo and threw it back in a sobbing threnody. One by one the bird-like girls and the doll-like boys threw away their books, paired off, exchanged gifts of chewing gum, and danced away into the moonlight. I could have danced into the moonlight once. Once Jockoboy and I were going to steal the big red rooster and three brood hens and raise chickens on a desert island. Once the boy in the Luxembourg said: "*But you are in love with me.*"

Lazy, irresponsible, undisciplined louts! She searched savagely for the essay about the French realists and the Italian romantics, and when she had found it she took a red pencil and scrawled across its surface: *I refuse to grade this idiotic farrago.*

She sat glaring at the result for a moment, but then the pity got the upper hand again. She searched in her desk for a piece of gum rubber and attempted, without success, to erase the crayon marks.

"It won't work, my dear."

"Oh, hello, Dr. Darty," she said immediately and put the rubber away and turned around. Dr. Gregory Darty had repeatedly urged her, when he made these unannounced visits, not to allow herself to be interrupted by

them. But Dr. Darty was the President of the University. Any president of any university was entitled to certain automatic honours, like the flag or the throne.

She stood up and held out her hand. “So nice of you to drop in,” she said. Dr. Darty swept his round chin gallantly in the direction of his portly chest.

“You find me,” Hilary said, giving herself gratefully up to dolefulness now that there was someone in whom to confide, “in a state of self-abnegation. I am feeling definitely ambivalent.”

Dr. Darty laughed. “Ah, yes, papers. You mustn’t take them too much to heart, my dear.”

He seated himself on the edge of the desk. His short legs did not quite meet the floor and for a moment Hilary was obsessed with the notion that he was in danger of rolling off. She concluded with relief, after a second glance at his round, low-slung centre of gravity, that he would inevitably land erect.

She pushed the most nauseous of the papers across to him. “Look,” she said, “no verbs.”

“Everything takes time, my dear,” Dr. Darty consoled her absently.

“I suppose so,” Hilary conceded without conviction. She paused. “Dr. Darty, how does a neurotic school-ma’am discover that she *is* a neurotic school-ma’am?”

The president laughed again. “The last thing in the world that need concern you, Hilary.”

Hilary regarded him steadily with her good eye. “Does she begin to grow jealous of the empty-headed little bits of fluff whose empty-headed little papers she has to read? Is that when? Or is it when she begins to think the whole race, herself included, is mired in ignorance and sloth and all this talk about universal education and higher education is only a fumigating agent to cover up the smell of primal mud?”

“Precisely the opposite.” Now it was Dr. Darty’s turn to be melancholy. “It was—oh, almost thirty years ago—that I stopped being jealous of the empty-headed little bits of fluff, male and female, whose empty-headed papers I had to read. It was—oh, say, twenty years ago—that I found myself worrying less persistently about ignorance and sloth. It was I who thereupon began to be the neurotic school-ma’am, really.”

"You're so tactful," Hilary murmured. "But I don't know whether I feel better or not."

"We must carry on another time." The president glanced at his wrist watch. "This, at any rate, has brought us to the point of my call. Hilary, my dear, I have a very great and very important favour to ask you."

"Please do."

"The Senior Chamber of Trade would like you to address its regular monthly meeting the Tuesday after next."

"For Heaven's sake! How absolutely absurd!"

"How absolutely wonderful! You must accept, Hilary. You absolutely must!"

"Why, Dr. Darty?"

"I'll be frank, Hilary. It's like pulling teeth at any time to get the Senior Chamber to listen to anyone from the University. Can't blame them much. I've been there half a dozen times myself and no matter how hard I try to make it a little different they know and I know that it boils down to an impecunious bore begging for money. A couple of times I've managed to fob off senior members of the faculty on them. The year before last Jukes in Commerce gave them a delightful talk on the virtues of public ownership. Three years ago Byers in Classics held them enthralled with a seventy-minute discourse on Homer's Meaning to Modern World Trade, much of it in the original Greek."

"So you want to fob me off on them instead?" Hilary interpreted sadly.

"No. No, my dear. It was their idea. I swear it to you. They begged to have you, my dear. Indeed, they made it abundantly clear that it's you or no one."

"But why?"

"In spite of your becoming modesty," Dr. Darty smiled, "you are a most celebrated and envied and attractive young woman. You are famous, Hilary."

"But I never make speeches. It's a rule I've always followed."

"That," the President said candidly, "is a bonus factor."

Hilary shuddered and looked out of the window again, debating for an instant whether she ought to take offence. But no, she admitted miserably,

that would not be fair; her life was dedicated to the bonus factor. That was how she had allowed it to be ordered. No more Jockoboy; bonus factor: four volumes of verse and a very-nearly-excellent critical biography of Chaucer. No more boy in the Luxembourg; bonus factor: honorary life membership, Canadian Authors Association. No more choke-cherry jelly and Saskatoon pie, no more wondering whether her first baby would look like her first doll or like her second doll; bonus factor: speech to the Senior Chamber of Trade. Nobody pushes Hilly around; bonus factor: nobody pushes Hilly ar . . .

She had never thought of such things until the twenty-fourth of May of their eleventh year. The year and the day belonged to them equally, for they were twins; belonged to them especially, for they were farm kids and on most Twenty-Fourths farm kids trapped gophers or floated a raft on a slough or rode tandem on one of the percherons—did not, in any event, invade the precincts and occupations of town kids; but on this Twenty-Fourth they had been driven to town and for a while it was working out wonderfully.

Being driven to town had been their own idea. No, more; it had been their plot, their scheme, their vision. They had no essential reverence for the town, nor close acquaintance with it. Not, at any rate, Hilary. The consolidated school had not yet come into fashion, and their farm was twelve miles out, so that their only real friends were the eight other children who attended the one-roomer two concessions over. The town was strange, therefore. But it was not an object of awe, not at any rate to Hilary. The only thing that had drawn them to the town on the Twenty-Fourth of May was its proximity to the river. The river, like the day, belonged to them as much as it belonged to anyone else. Explaining this to their parents had been difficult, but the explanation had at last been understood.

Standing at the brow of the long hill leading from the town to the river, Hilary had staked their claim.

> “Twenty-Fourth uh May,
> The Queen’s birthday—
> Hip-hip-hooray.”

Jockoboy’s voice beside her was as full of hope and delight and craziness as her own, and she threw her head straight back and shouted the words again, hurling them straight up into a white cloud and imagining that if she could only reach it the cloud would send back an echo.

Jockoboy started giggling and so did she. They sat down on a big grey boulder, letting their shoulders fall together and shake each other into a state

of restful surfeit. When they stood up, Hilary tucked their towel-wrapped lunch under one arm and took Jockoboy's hand in hers. They marched off at a long goose-step, swinging their joined hands sky-high. The valley lay below them like a painted furrow; not sissified, citified painting, though, but a confident careless arrangement of browns and blacks, winter-killed prairie grass on the slopes, ebony tree trunks beside the river and no more than a hint of beginning in the springtime greens.

"See, Jockoboy," Hilary cried anxiously and gratefully. "See?"

For Jockoboy had not seen in the beginning. He had not wanted to come at all. Once she had converted him to the plot, the scheme and the vision, he had entered into it whole-heartedly and added his entreaties to her own. But Jockoboy had not really wanted to come to this enchanted, distant place; he did not really share her taste for foreign parts and doings; the going out and claiming of things held in doubtful ownership had always been, to him, a chancy business, filled with the danger of uncalled-for insult and rebuff.

"See, Jockoboy?" Hilary cried now. They caught a glimpse of the river, a ripple of muddied gold through the black trees. "See?"

"Yea-bo!" Jockoboy shouted. "Yea-bo!" She was certain that he really saw now. Saw the whole pattern, saw the true urgency of taking the red rooster to a desert island, a project to which he had paid mere lip service heretofore. Saw the desirability of riding through Trafalgar Square behind white horses, of fighting a duel by midnight in the courtyard of Edinburgh Castle, saw the clear necessity of sailing around the Horn, two people on a raft of poplar trunks, saw the plain good sense of starting up a new gambling-saloon and dance hall in Dawson City, a brave and handsome man to run the faro game, a pure and beauteous woman to comfort and inflame the rough colleagues of Dan McGrew.

She hurried to forward the present adventure. "I know!" she shouted. "Let's race!"

"Who wants to race a girl?" Jockoboy's tone had a good-natured bantering quality, exactly right.

"If you're so smart, you could give me a head start."

"I could do that all right."

"All right then."

"All right."

Jockoboy locked his bony knees and punched at the slope of the hill with his heels, swinging his legs from the thighs like stilts. “Heel-toe, away we go,” he sang in a fractured soprano. “Heel-toe, the polkeeyo.” His body swayed to the rhythm as he gathered speed and he dug his forearms tight against his belly, as though to discourage the whole upper part of him from toppling off his thighs like an unsure rider thrown by a runaway horse.

Hilary ran more fiercely, flailing her slightly shorter legs at the slope until they got ahead of the rest of her, and then pumping herself back on balance with wild rotations of her free arm. At first Jockoboy’s wooden caricature of a run was no match for these bursting endeavours and soon Hilary was flying toward the valley floor by herself, with the boulders and grassy humps of the hillside seeming to jump out of her way, aghast at her ruthless speed, the fresher valley air rushing up the hot slope to meet her and drench her eyes with reckless, uncaring tears, and no sound near but the wild thud of her footsteps striking at the soft earth through its thin cushion of grass. All around her the world seemed lopsided and disintegrating, like a vision caught and abruptly lost in a trick mirror. She ran harder, exultantly and a little vindictively. Now she was conscious of doing violence to the whole chained and lurching universe, humbling and desecrating it before her golden gift of flight.

Above the sound of her thudding feet she listened in terrible suspense for the footsteps of Jockoboy. She slowed a little but did not stop—slowed but ran on, filled with a hollow fear that Jockoboy had given up, but unwilling to give open acknowledgment to so cruel a danger. Suddenly the wind on her face grew stagnant and lifeless.

“Come on, Tony! Come on, boy! Got to head them off before they hit the canyon.”

Jockoboy was racing by her side, bent slightly forward, with his head tucked in and his right hand flailing urgently at his right buttock.

“Come on, Tony!” Jockoboy yelled again.

“Yah!” Hilary sang back at him. “Yahyahyah! Yah!” The sound flew forth like a steeple bell caught in a giant gale. Jockoboy pounded past to widen the gap between them. He threw up his heels in a final, bragging spurt and then braked himself at the edge of a clump of choke-cherry bushes near the bank of the river. “I was beating till I stubbed my toe,” Hilary panted happily.

“Hi, girl,” Jockoboy answered with jovial disdain. “You better let me lead the way, girl.” He raised one arm before his face like a crook and pushed his way through a tangle of choke-cherry bushes. He held the springy branches back for Hilary, but the growth was very thick and when he moved on another step one of the branches he was holding flicked back and stung her cheek.

“Ouch!” Hilary muttered. Jockoboy turned around and regarded her protectively. “Put your arms around me,” he commanded. “Around my chest.” Hilary advanced meekly and placed one hand under each of his armpits. “Closer!” he ordered. She moved forward until her chest was against his back and her two hands met in a bear-hug on the ridge of his collar bone. “Forward march!” Jockoboy commanded. They proceeded through the bushes in tandem, one step at a time, with Jockoboy calling the steps and pausing between to clear away the branches with his arms.

The river was right below them, brown and placid in the noontime sun. They passed a small wooden bridge and soon came to a small gravel beach where a float was anchored in the quiet water and a dozen children played around it, half-running and half-swimming through the puny current. Heard above the tiny rustling of the water, their shouts sounded remote but provocative, like the cries of pygmies imprisoned in a well.

“Oh boy!” Hilary cried. “Oh boy, Jockoboy!”

Jockoboy stared at her accusingly, then stared away. “We don’t want to go in here,” he muttered over his shoulder. “Who wants to go in here?”

Hilary hesitated. “I—” she hesitated again “—I don’t want to. Do you?”

“No,” he said firmly. “Sissy town kids.”

They walked downstream, through the tall trees, until they came to a hairpin bend in the river. Hilary’s tiny nagging hint of deprivation had passed. This was a better part of the river and all of it belonged to them.

Here the river had a big, muscular and dangerous aspect. On the near side the water flowed easily but purposefully around the curve of a narrow gravel beach, and on the far side a channel of faster and deeper water threw itself head-on against a little cliff of washed-out clay and doubled back into an unmistakable whirlpool before it regained its direction and banked out of sight.

They stood and looked from the edge of the beach. “In a whirlpool,” Jockoboy said with awful solemnity, “they never come up.” But Hilary knew he was not in the least afraid. Jockoboy feared no physical thing: not any

bull, not any frustrated stud-horse, not any trapped badger, not any dark of night, not any forty below, not any ocean, not any river.

"In a whirlpool," he repeated happily, "they never come up." He sat down in the gravel and began pulling off his shoes.

"Gee!" Hilary said.

"Other places they go down three times," Jockoboy said in deep and awful contentment. "In a whirlpool they go down once and that's all."

"I guess you have to be mighty careful not to go near it," Hilary said respectfully.

Jockoboy picked up a small stone and threw it across the stream into the heart of the whirlpool. It disappeared without a splash. He laughed with a splendid sound of menace; the laugh spoke of perils best not mentioned in the presence of womenfolk. He pulled his jersey over his head.

Hilary retired behind a nearby clump of willows and slithered out of her clothes and into her blue cotton bathing-suit. "Last one in stinks!" Jockoboy shouted. They hit the shallow water together in a tornado of whoops and splashes and floundered back to shore shrieking imprecations against its breath-strangling iciness.

"It's twice as cold here as it is up at the bridge," Jockoboy shouted as he waded back in.

"Sure!" Hilary yelled between her chattering teeth. "*This* is the place." The frigid water was wild and pure against her skin. In a swift impulse of devotion and surrender she squirmed out of her bathing-suit and threw it on the beach. "Take off your clammy old suit, Jockoboy!" she shouted. "It's away better this way."

"Hey!" Jockoboy shouted nervously. "Somebody might come!"

"Aw, nobody would come down here," she assured him. "They're all too scared!"

Jockoboy threw off his suit too, and the racing water touched their naked gleaming bodies in ribald benediction.

"Twenty-fourth uh May!" Hilary sang.

"Queen's birth-day!" Jockoboy sang back.

Abruptly Jockoboy's voice choked off—right in the middle of a syllable. Hilary followed his gaping, paralyzed stare across the rippled surface of the

water to the bank. For a moment she saw nothing at all, and she thought it might be a trick Jockoboy was trying to play. Then two boys swaggered down to the beach from behind the clump of willows on which she had hung her dress and drawers and her long black cotton stockings. She shrank involuntarily to her haunches, covering her nakedness with the cold cloak of the water.

"You go away!" she demanded indignantly. "You go away! Both of you go away and mind your own business."

"Nyah! Nyah!" the smaller of the boys sang, dancing up and down in excitement. "Dirty ole farmers. Nyah! Nyah!"

The larger of the boys took Hilary's dress from a willow clump and began tying a knot in one of the sleeves.

"You cut that out, see!" Hilary yelled indignantly.

"Nyah! Nyah!" the smaller boy chanted.

"If you're not careful," Hilary cried menacingly, "my brother will come up there and give you what's coming to you."

"Oh, sure!"

"Gee, fellas," Jockoboy murmured miserably. "Go on away, ay? Go on away, ay, fellas?"

"Nyah! Nyah! Dirty ole farmers!"

"I guess if *you* were swimming in here you wouldn't be so anxious to wear a bathing-suit either," Hilary said on a note of virtuous inspiration. "It's mighty dangerous in here, if you want to know. You get around that whirlpool and you don't want a lot of clothes and stuff dragging you under."

"Some whirlpool!" the smaller boy sneered. "It's all of three feet deep."

"That shows what *you* know!" Hilary shouted triumphantly. "That shows what *they* know—*ay* Jockoboy?"

"Aw, quit arguing with them," Jockoboy muttered treacherously. "Go on away, fellas," he pleaded again.

"Nyah! Nyah!"

Hilary lost her temper. She bent further down into the water and felt along the river bottom until she found a good-sized pebble. She stood up and threw the pebble as hard as she could. It hit the smaller boy on the shin. The boy yelped.

Hilary threw another pebble, which missed. “You get away from here right now,” she yelled furiously. “Go on, get away right now!”

The smaller boy struck an attitude of uncertain belligerency. “I’ll smack that brother of yours right in the nose,” he threatened. “I’ll smack him good!” Hilary answered with another pebble, and then another.

The larger boy laughed with uneasy scorn. “Come on, Bob,” he said loudly. “You can’t fight with girls.” The two boys linked arms and retreated in only mildly nonplussed dignity. “Nyah! Nyah! Nyah!” Their voices trailed off through the woods.

“Ha!” Hilary snorted. “They better not try picking on *us*!”

“They better not,” Jockoboy said miserably.

It had been arranged that they were to meet their parents at the post office, at the top of the main street. Jockoboy had been glum and silent during the long walk up the long hill, and when they reached the brow of the hill and could see down the street, his quietness took on a quality of stealth. He moved uneasily, almost on tip-toe, across the railway tracks and up the first block to the corner by the hotel. He kept glancing up the street to the next corner, by the Chinaman’s. A group of boys were lounging there in the unnatural quiet of the holiday afternoon. It was impossible to tell from that distance whether the two boys at the river were among them; but Hilary saw at once—and to her consternation partly shared—his certainty that this was only a minor detail, his sense that they had become set apart and vulnerable by what had happened at the river.

Hilary did not say anything. She moved across the sidewalk until their shoulders touched. She held her own shoulder tight and straight, and thrust her eyes straight ahead and quickened her step. For a moment Jockoboy’s step quickened too as they marched up the street together. Her heart was filled with awful but exhilarating portents; in the moment there was a hint of the beckoning disaster and the grandeur of sailing around the Horn.

And then Jockoboy’s step slowed and faltered. “Hey, Hilly!” he muttered in stealthy misery, “I just thought of a new game. You walk on one side and I’ll walk on the other. We’ll see who gets there first.”

The words stunned and emptied her. There was no answer to them. As though fearing that she might protest Jockoboy was already halfway across the street. No one said a word to either of them as they passed the corner by the Chinaman’s, he on one side and she on the other. They exchanged no word on the subject between themselves—then or ever. But the schemes, the

visions and the plots were all gone, gone by default, gone forever, and in spite of all later temptations toward backsliding Hilary had never forgotten the bitter logic of Jockoboy's suggestion, the safe, predictable fruits of walking fast and walking on one side.

What had Dr. Darty's name for it been? The bonus factor? An unfair argument. Non-involvement was her creed. But for her non-involvement in the affairs of the race she would have been, at most, an anonymous housewife; and now, because her non-involvement had brought her a tiny measure of fame, they were growing curious and insisted on involving her.

"It's a real challenge, Hilary," Dr. Darty was urging her. "A unique challenge."

"How?" she said inquisitively.

Dr. Darty was half playful and half in earnest . . . "The prettiest and most brilliant young woman in Toronto lecturing to the oldest and stuffiest men."

Hilary laughed aloud, with the first full enjoyment the morning had brought her. "You don't enjoy conflict, do you, Hilary?" he said with shrewd sympathy.

She shook her head, partly in assent, the rest in protest. The turn of the conversation seemed to be bordering on outright foolishness.

"I can't imagine you fighting about a single idea," he said persuasively, "but I can see you fighting tooth and nail about ideas in general. I can't see you fighting *over* them; but you'd fight *for* them."

"But what . . ."

"In a way everything." He reflected and went on more mildly. "We teachers—you writers and artists—oh, let's use the exact, pretentious word and say we intellectuals." He paused again. "We intellectuals have been making the same error the scientists have been making. We think the four-letter word 'pure' grants us absolution from the ultimate duty of our trade. The scientist fools around with neutrons or a new bacteriological killer and says: 'I am concerned with pure research only. What the foolish or the wicked do with the product of my research is not my responsibility.' "

"It's a bad analogy," Hilary said respectfully.

"No. We pure intellectuals nourish the old ideas and occasionally invent a new one. We pass them on as best we can, hoping that they may be accepted or better still, intelligently disputed. Then we go over the examination papers and find, all too often, that the ideas are neither accepted

nor disputed; perhaps we find that they have not been understood and that they have not been heard. What do we do?"

"What *can* we do," Hilary said, "but burst out crying?"

"But no. We can at least go and make a speech. We can at least begin training our skirmish parties."

"Our skirmish parties?"

"I don't want to be an alarmist," Dr. Darty said soberly, "but I quite seriously believe that in your time, if not in mine, the healthy age-old fight over the validity of particular ideas is going to mush out into a fight over the respectability of ideas in general."

Hilary understood him fully now and realized that she was in full agreement. But she was not yet ready to be trapped.

"Please, Dr. Darty. We *were* talking about a speech to the Senior Chamber of Trade, weren't we?"

"Who are not the enemy," Dr. Darty conceded. "At the moment the enemy is indifference. So far as we're concerned, a slight indifference to the machinery of higher education. The next enemy—and its skirmish parties are out already—outright hostility to the very stuff of all education."

He's accusing me, really, of a lack of courage, a lack of conviction, Hilary thought. I wonder what he'd say if I told him about the time I stood bare-naked in a river and threw stones at the enemies on the bank? I wonder if I *have* degenerated into a pure intellectual? I must have done; why else would I be mooning about neurotic school-ma'ams?

"But you must realize from the way I've been talking," she said uncertainly, "that I am in no mood to extol the virtues of our educational system before any public gathering."

"So much the better, my dear," Dr. Darty rumbled happily. "Shock 'em. Wake 'em up. You'll never have a more receptive audience. As it is, half of them claim their secretaries can't spell. Blame it on the schools and they'll love you. Blame it even," the President paused and plunged on recklessly, "on the universities. If you could suggest—subtly, of course—that the universities might do a better job if they had more money . . ."

"Oh, dear!"

"Then you accept?"

"I suppose I must."

“Fine! Fine!” Dr. Darty boomed. He was already halfway out of the door. “A great service.”

“I hope so,” Hilary called after him woefully. Her fine anger over the examination papers had already fled and the intimations of heroic struggle were beginning to lose their shape. “And after all the bragging I’ve been doing,” she called tremulously after the President’s retreating back, “I probably won’t say a single thing except that education is the nicest, loveliest thing in the world.”

She plunged weakly into her chair and fingered unhappily at the black eye-patch, a buccaneer thoroughly becalmed.

4

Bertram Harvard checked himself in the act of rising. He plucked a sheaf of letters from his in-basket, placed them on the desk and began reading them with determined preoccupation. But he kept the corner of one eye on the door. This was no occasion for a red carpet; there was, on the other hand, such a thing as ordinary courtesy.

A minute passed and his absorbed expression took on an edge of anxiety. Could it have been possible that Mrs. O'Brien had misunderstood him? Could she, as a punishment for his brusque intrusion into the making of his appointments, have *pretended* to misunderstand him and sent Garfield Smith away like some disgruntled saxophone player? Could Smitty have grown impatient over even this brief delay and gone away of his own accord?

He made a nervous movement in the direction of the buzzer to Mrs. O'Brien's telephone and then stoically checked himself again and went back to the pile of letters. Let him wait, he counselled, and repeated the counsel, and thus was able to forget that it was he himself who was waiting.

He'd rise casually and say, "How are you, Smitty?" Smitty would be taken a little aback at first, perhaps. But they were antagonists now and there was no point in pretending otherwise. Somebody had to begin on the defensive.

He was sorry now that he hadn't had a look at Smitty on the way through the anteroom. It was quite incredible that they'd never met since the evening they had wound up in the Georgie and Uncle Wilbur series in the broom closet back at CKY and Smitty had stretched out his tiny, bony hand and said: "So long, Bert."

"Then you're going, after all? After what Mr. Jessup said?"

"Yes, Uncle Wilbur," Smitty had said, using his Georgie voice and then switching to the bluffly querulous tone of the station manager. " 'If everything goes well, I can put you on the 6.30 spot in the fall and raise you both to twenty-five a week.' "

"We could make something of it, Smitty," Bertram had said wistfully. "We're still young."

"Look!" Smitty made a gentle, flicking slap at the back of Bertram's hand, quick and indifferent, like a bantam-weight boxing champion touching

gloves with a second-rate sparring partner. “Look. I’m going to own my own station some day.”

“Sure.” Bertram had not been able to muster any genuine show of disbelief. But he was two years older than Smitty; more than two years, really, a whole generation older in the things that counted, for he was now old enough to vote and Smitty was not. He had to say something.

“Some day,” he had said, “I’ll be running the whole CBC.”

“Peanuts!” Smitty sniffed, flicking his hand against Bertram’s lapel.

They were walking down the corridor, Smitty in this corridor for the last time. “Just a minute.” With no regard for the red warning light-bulb, Smitty opened the door to another broom closet. A very pretty, very dark and very young girl was facing a stand-up microphone. An elderly man sat nearby prodding the keyboard of a small piano with an air of controlled venom. The girl was singing in a not-very-good, not-quite-amateur contralto.

“Just picture me upon your knee
And tea for two and two for tea . . .”

and when she saw Smitty through the opened door she made alarmed and scolding gestures at him with her face and with her hands.

Smitty took two quiet strides across the tiny studio and kissed her silently on the cheek. The girl leaned against him and closed her eyes, but went on singing. Smitty patted her arm, took two steps backward, waved to her, and left as abruptly as he had come. As the door closed the girl made an involuntary movement with her hand, as though to touch her cheek on the place that Smitty had kissed. Instead she waved back and smiled and continued her song.

Two for tea and tea for two alone . . .

“She’s O.K.,” Smitty said in the quiet of the corridor. He said it with an air of warmth and dismissal, like a man on a diet refusing a particularly appetizing dessert. Again Bertram was faced with the need of saying something. “When do you leave?” he asked.

“I’ve already left,” Smitty said. “Look me up if you ever get to Toronto.”

It had taken Bertram almost fifteen years to get to Toronto. By then Smitty had his station and by then Bertram, although no longer so young and reckless as to believe that he would ever be its head, had committed his radio career to the CBC.

From afar he had watched Garfield Smith's rise with uneasiness and pride. Smitty was only one of more than a hundred owners of private radio stations who were compelled to abide by the CBC's regulations, but none of the others was so militant and so bright. It was Garfield Smith, or, as some said, one of his ghost writers, who in a phrase more widely quoted than anything in the Massey Report itself had described the CBC as "the costly conspiracy of crypto-socialists, long-hairs, agnostics and professional Canadians which masquerades in the name of our national radio system".

It was Garfield Smith who, at the height of the debate on commercialism versus culture, had introduced a new and brilliantly pertinent signature for his own station and ordered it read every hour on the hour, twenty-four hours a day: "This is CNOTE, a station that is listened to and makes money." Poor old Andy Bergenson, on the edge of panic, had allowed a distressed member of the CBC Board of Governors to persuade him that this constituted a direct attack on the government's radio policy and therefore was a form of political broadcasting which CNOTE ought to be compelled to identify as such. Garfield Smith's lawyers objected before the parliamentary radio committee. Bergenson's fellow-governors induced him then to reclassify the signature as a commercial, chargeable against the maximum commercial time permitted to any station under the CBC's regulations. Smitty retaliated by enlarging the signature: "This is CNOTE, a station that is listened to and makes money. In your interests as a taxpayer, you are reminded that the nationally-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation maintains two radio stations in the area served by CNOTE, that neither is listened to and that both lose money." Having done this he had his lawyers argue before the parliamentary committee that the signature, since it brought the listener essential facts concerning a national issue, was entitled to be classified officially as a public service broadcast. Now thoroughly alarmed by mounting charges of interference by a government agency with freedom of speech, the parliamentary committee recommended to the government that CNOTE be sustained again and the government passed the recommendation on to the CBC.

It was not this issue that had cost Andy Bergenson his job. But his composure and self-confidence had been badly shaken by it. And when, later in the year, three of the nation's largest church groups had attacked the Wells broadcasts, Bergenson—either through fatalism or through plain weariness—had tried to answer questions far better turned aside or, if they must be answered, left to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, anticipating just such an unprofitable task, had forestalled it by ordering a

special public hearing at which the chairman of the CBC would answer questions on its general policies put by representative public bodies.

On the Tuesday, the editor of a United Church weekly had asked him: "Do you, personally, believe in the immortality of the soul?" "I'm not sure," Bergenson had said quietly.

On the Wednesday, a Baptist fundamentalist had asked him: "Do you, personally, reject the doctrine of Jonah and the Whale?" "I reject few ideas absolutely," Andy had said, while the newspaper reporters scribbled furiously, "but on the limited evidence with which I am acquainted I have not, as yet, accepted the doctrine of Jonah and the Whale."

On the Thursday, M. Chartrand, the member from Quebec, had asked him: "Do you believe it is the function of the CBC to allot time to speakers for the purpose of challenging the doctrine of the virgin birth?" Andy had replied carefully but not carefully enough: "We allot a great deal of time in our religious broadcasts to speakers who hold to particular doctrines. Therefore we do not consider ourselves obliged to deny a hearing, in our non-religious broadcasts, to scientists and philosophers who do not happen to agree and who, in explaining their scientific and philosophical beliefs, may wish to state their disagreement."

But none of this was in Garfield Smith's domain. Smitty could have no real sympathy for the morals lobby, which after all was indirectly responsible for the relative unpopularity of Sunday commercials, the CBC's negative attitude toward the advertising of contraceptives, and the nation's lingering prejudice against soft-spoken murderers, lusting lady crooners, sexually repressed ventriloquists' dummies and other staples of an art form with which Smitty was in fundamental harmony.

No, Smitty himself was strictly a controls man, a simpler kind of cloud formation. Bertram almost hoped that it was controls he had come to talk about now, for in this—a reasonable disagreement already fought and settled a thousand times by men more eloquent and convinced than either of them—there could be no surprises, no gambits for which there was not already a standard defence. Their conversation would be wearying and repetitious but it would be as safe and well-rehearsed as an episode of Georgie and Uncle Wilbur.

"Tell me, Uncle Wilbur," Smitty might almost say, "why does the government run radio in Canada? Isn't it true, Uncle Wilbur," Smitty-Georgie might go on, "that in other things we have placed our faith in that

business called—uh—private enterprise and that it's done *wonders* for our country? Why not in radio, and now television, Uncle Wilbur?"

"Well now, Georgie, radio is a little different." Garfield Smith was no more than a name; it was ridiculous that Kev and Andy had once thought him so formidable and troublesome. "In a big country like this, Georgie, there's always room for one more farm or one more store or one more factory. But there's not always room for one more radio or television station, Georgie. A radio or television station needs room on the air—a thing called a channel—before it can be heard or seen. So a long, long while ago—oh, not much after you were born—our government decided that all the channels belonged to all the people. It kept some of the channels and built government stations to use those channels. And then it turned over most of the remaining channels to folks outside the government and let them build and operate what are called private stations."

"Oh, I see, Uncle Wilbur. And of course the folks who build and operate these private stations are free to give their listeners the kind of healthy, stimulating entertainment that their listeners want?"

"By and large, yes, Georgie. But we placed some restrictions on them. Many of the private stations served areas not served by the government stations. In return for the right to use a part of a national possession to make profits, they are sometimes compelled to carry network programmes which originate in the studios of the government stations. And they are not allowed to set up networks of their own to compete against the government networks."

"I see, Uncle Wilbur." At this point Smitty-Georgie might step slightly out of character and his simple thirst for knowledge might be underlined by a note of asperity. "And of course these programmes that originate in the studios of the government stations are so wonderful that everybody listens to them?"

"Well, no, Georgie. We come to a rather complicated business here about something which is often described as mass entertainment. We Canadians live right next door to a very great and very wealthy and very talented nation that has a very great genius for producing this thing called mass entertainment. Most of our books and comic books and magazines and movies and a great deal of what we read in our newspapers already comes to us from the United States. So does a very high percentage of our radio and television entertainment. Some of it is brought in by the government stations. A great deal of it is brought in by the private stations. A great deal

more comes in direct from the scores of American stations that are close enough to the border to be heard and seen without being relayed through Canadian stations."

"I see," Smitty-Georgie would now say with carefully counterfeited innocence. "But I imagine these American radio and television programmes cost the person who listens to or sees them in Canada a lot of money. I guess that's why the CBC goes to the expense of putting on its own shows?"

"Well no, Georgie," Bertram-Uncle Wilbur would reply reasonably. "Nearly all of these American programmes are sponsored by advertisers who use the programmes as a medium for selling their products. The programmes cost the listener nothing."

"Oh, now I get it, Uncle Wilbur! The Canadian listeners don't *like* these American programmes. That's why the government goes to the expense of making up programmes of its own."

"No, that's only partly true, Georgie. The fact is that the American programmes, on the average, attract much larger audiences in Canada than the Canadian programmes do."

"But, Uncle Wilbur . . ."

"We come back to that expression I used before—mass entertainment. Because they are nearly all sponsored by advertisers and are very expensive to produce, nearly all the American programmes must attract very large audiences if they are to sell enough goods to pay their way. Experience shows that four or five kinds of programme attract the largest audiences. And so nearly all the programmes fall into these four or five patterns."

"What patterns, Uncle Wilbur?"

"Oh, movies about cowboys, plays about private detectives, programmes of recorded love songs, funny sayings by comedians, and serials about unhappy ladies. A few others, but these are the main ones."

"And is that bad, Uncle Wilbur?"

"Not necessarily, Georgie. The only bad thing is that there are so many programmes like those ones that they crowd out almost everything else."

"I don't quite understand, Uncle Wilbur. Didn't you say the people *liked* them?"

"Most of the people, Georgie. But many people like other things: a piece of music that isn't a love song, some of it very old music that hasn't any

words and takes nearly a hundred instruments to play; talks and lectures about science and books and about our own history; plays in which, sometimes, nobody gets murdered or even falls in love."

Bertram smiled and erased a non-existent fold from his maroon cravat. He nodded benignly, as though closing a not unpleasant interview. And suddenly in the pleasant semi-vacuum of its imagination the absent figure of Garfield Smith replaced the absent figure of Smitty-Georgie. He looked at his watch with returning awareness and without further reflection pressed the buzzer connecting him with Mrs. O'Brien.

"I'll see Mr. Smith now," he said sternly, just short of panic.

He heard Mrs. O'Brien call plaintively across the anteroom, before she even returned her receiver to the cradle: "Would you *mind* going in now, Mr. Smith? Mr. Harvard has been waiting nearly fifteen minutes."

He saw at once how childish and unworthy it would have been to greet him as Smitty. Garfield Smith's short, dynamic legs carried him across the room like a man running up on a down escalator; he seemed to be moving very fast and proceeding very slowly and the effect, while slightly eerie, did command respect.

Bertram found himself rushing to meet him. "Hello," he said—groping for a more suitable form of address than he had planned—"there."

"So good to see you, Bert," Garfield said, bestowing his well-tailored and well-compressed five-feet-three-inches on a large leather armchair and contriving, by some evil magic, to make it seem that the chair was not quite large enough to hold an honest-to-God man. "So good, Bert. Sorry if I held you up. You look fine."

"Oh . . ."

"Fine. Fine. Got talking to a very interesting old codger out there. Member of the Convention of Faith Healers. Says he's got ten thousand names on a petition demanding the CBC stop shaking the taxpayers' religious beliefs by giving publicity to germs . . . I meant to drop you a note. You've had this thing coming to you, Bert. You deserve it. About the time they were deciding to let Dobbs out I happened to run into the P.M. I told him at the time that everybody in the business thought you'd be the automatic choice. Automatic. I never could see *either* Dobbs or Bergenson."

"Well . . ."

“Custodian of our culture. Guardian of the nation’s soul.” Garfield Smith smiled his famous boyish smile. “No, Bert, don’t get mad. You know where I stand. I don’t think our culture needs a custodian. I don’t think the nation’s soul needs a guardian. In the first place it’s a lousy undemocratic idea and in the second place it doesn’t work. But as long as we’ve got to have it, I’m glad it’s you. You look real fine, Bert.”

“I feel fine,” Bertram said.

“I see the committee started up again today. I’m not asking for a hearing this year.” Garfield held his head absolutely still for an instant, as though listening for some tiny sonic vibration somewhere inside Bertram.

“No?”

“Neither is the Association of Broadcasters. It took us a long time to wise up. The public doesn’t understand us. Never will. They think our angle is the money. For twenty years we’ve been beating our heads up against a stone wall, supplying you people with an imaginary ogre to ride against waving your cardboard spear. No more. The hell with that! God, you look good, Bert!”

“You look good, too.”

Smith sprang abruptly from his chair. “I haven’t got too much time,” he said in a tone halfway between apology and forgiving rebuke. “I’ve got a business proposition for you, Bert. A firm business proposition. I want the Trans-Canada network two hours a week, thirteen weeks, beginning the first week in June. Three sponsors, all good sponsors. If you don’t like them I’ll get others. What’s the price?”

“What time?” Bertram found himself speaking with unwonted crispness and wished, too late, he could have made the question longer and more leisurely.

“Eight to ten any night but Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Too many people away on week-ends.”

“That may be tough. It may,” he amended, speaking as slowly as he could, “be extremely difficult.”

“I know it’s tough. But this is a big account. A big show too, Bert.”

“Can you give me an idea . . .”

“I’ll give you the whole thing, Bert. It’s on the q.t. for now, but I’ve bought a girl’s softball team. Well, laugh and get it over with.”

"I . . ."

"I didn't think you would. You've got imagination, Bert. Now get the name: The Queens d'Amour. All right so far? Wait. I bring in teams from all over the States—Los Angeles, Dallas, Chicago, Cleveland. Maple Leaf hockey night: a big thing for radio and TV, a big thing for the CBC, all over the country. Same thing here, only bigger: Queens d'Amour softball night, a tremendous thing for radio, a tremendous thing for the CBC. I've got an option on the Exhibition grandstand already. Twenty-two thousand capacity, forty with special bleachers. Wait. I know what you're going to say . . ."

"I . . ."

"Wait. A band all dressed up in gold and black: the Minstrels d'Amour. Wait, Bert, wait! Every usherette a trained chorus girl, trained like the Rockettes, Bert: the Pages d'Amour. They do two, maybe three, big production numbers, let's say, after the third, fourth and fifth innings. Wait! Every week I get the biggest name singer in town, there's always a big name at the Casino or one of the night spots. Jack Cooke gets them for nothing at the ball park, but before I'm through they'll be offering to pay *me* for the publicity. Wait! At the end of the seventh inning, the sports writers pick the Empress d'Amour. The girl who's got the most hits or done the best pitching, or made the nicest fielding play. Wait! The game stops. The Empress d'Amour is wheeled out to the middle of the diamond on a big dais loaded with silk cushions and roses: the Bower d'Amour. Wait! Now the big-name singer comes out in a silk hat and tails: the Prince d'Amour. Everything is dark. The spotlight picks him up and follows him out to the Bower d'Amour. He kneels on one knee and sings Girl of my Dreams. Wait! When it's over he rises slowly and kisses the hem of her dress. Just the hem, Bert. The whole thing in a low key, so restrained it breaks your heart."

"Yes," Bertram acknowledged, making a feeble play for time.

"That's just the bare outline, Bert. I'm working on one added feature that's so terrific I can't even tell *you* about it. Well, break the bad news, Bert. What's it cost me?"

"I'm really not certain . . ."

"Now hold on." Smith's expression grew hurt and hard. "You're not going to give me the policy crap, are you, Bert? I'm offering you a top entertainment show for your top network. And I'm offering you money—say, for the sake of argument, a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. You *do* accept commercial shows. Is this show of mine against policy? Is this the

kind of deal you're here to protect the CBC from? Is this the kind of deal you're supposed to protect the taxpayer from?"

"No," Bertram reminded him quickly. "I didn't say anything about policy. But we do have a certain balance to maintain. From the straight programming point of view, the straight scheduling point . . ."

"Sure, Bert. Two hours is a long time. That's why I'm prepared to let you name the night."

Bertram opened the middle drawer of his desk and reached for a folder as though for an anchor. "Hmmmm." He studied it intently. "It's just possible nine to ten on Thursdays will open up next June; Coronation may drop their option. But no, eight to nine is solid. Tuesday, let's see, we could move Bird Talks ahead and put the D'Artois Trio back just behind the news; they're both our own. But no, there's still the Steel Corporation Choristers. Monday. Hmmm . . . We could can I Now Inquire . . . And maybe Amalgamated would move from eight-thirty to seven-thirty; I know they wanted to at one time. Oh, damn! Nine to ten is solid, the Universal Electric Playhouse on the NBC relay."

"What about Wednesday, Bert?" Garfield Smith's voice was much softer than it had been before and the stillness of his head once more conveyed the impression that he was listening for a radar ping.

"Oh, come now . . ." Bertram started to laugh, but it did not come off.

"What about Wednesday?"

"You know about Wednesday." Bertram fingered his cravat.

"Yes," Garfield Smith said slowly. "I know about Wednesday. It's wide open. It's been wide open for what—ten years? Twelve years?"

"Open?"

"Wide open. Five solid hours of sustainers. Bach. Brahms. Einstein. Kant. Sartre. Ibsen. You didn't think I knew all those names, did you, Bert? Come out and see my library some time; I've got the third biggest private library in Canada. The influence of the Pre-Raphaelites on Corot. Come out to the house some time and see my Corot."

Bertram fought back the cheap, oddly debilitating urge to ask Garfield if he'd ever really seen the Corot himself. "God knows it hasn't been perfect," he admitted wearily. "But I won't be the man to take it off the air. It's at the root of the whole thing. If the main idea was ever any good, the idea of Wednesday night is good. If the idea of doing things that no commercial

sponsor could do was ever any good, then it's impossible to give up on Wednesday night." To his surprise Bertram found that he was on his feet. "Let's save the argument about forcing it down people's throats for another time. We don't; we put it there so that anyone who wants it can have it. If he'd rather have a disc jockey or a private eye, he can have that too, just by turning the dial. But if he happens to want Sartre or Corot or Bach, he can have that. He can't get it any other place, except by luck or accident. You may as well understand," Bertram finished carefully, "that a man who gets a job by accident or by default might just happen to believe in the job. I believe in this job."

Garfield held up his small right hand. "All right, Bert," he said equably. "I won't bother giving you the rest of the pitch. I won't bother asking you for the rating on Wednesday night. I know. Five point one. You know what my lousy little station gets on Wednesday night, with a commercial every five minutes and the lousiest disc jockey in the business? Twenty-three, Bert. You know what my ball team would get on a national hook-up? Thirty, Bert. I'd put that in the contract. If it didn't hit thirty in six weeks you could cancel."

"Why not put the ball team on your own station, on CNOTE?" For an instant Bertram felt he had made an inspired suggestion.

"I need a network. I need a full park. To get that I need a peak audience outside the park. I'm going to get a network, Bert. Two networks, Bert. One radio, one television. To start, I might settle for radio alone."

"I don't make the regulations," Bertram said with a sadness he did not feel. "The only network you can have is a CBC network and I can't give you one."

"All right, Bert." Garfield Smith paused on the way to the door. "You won't mind if I keep trying?"

"No. I should tell you it's your right to appeal my decision to the Board of Governors. And of course you can ask for a hearing before the parliamentary committee."

"Bert!" Garfield Smith smiled reproachfully. "I've already told you I'm through supplying the CBC with an imaginary ogre. You won't object if I keep trying in my own way?"

"No. I won't object."

"Well, so long, Bert."

“So long . . .”—Bertram allowed the old, familiar diminutive to hover briefly on his lips, but it would have been a mean unadult thing to do to Smitty in this moment of his own quiet, dignified triumph—“then.”

5

It was an overflowing meeting. The six hundred members who occupied the main part of the banquet hall crouched and fluttered over their apple pie and darted glances of faint torment and supplication toward the head table. The head table continued, with insolent unconcern, to dabble at the veal chop. The rattle of dishes mingled with unreasonable, unreckonable noises from the service entrance while the members of the Senior Chamber of Trade made shrill but half-heard conversation, like sea-gulls in a gale.

Garfield Smith leaned across his chop and counted the bodies between him and the speaker. There were four. The bishop he could understand; the bank president and the oil magnate he was willing to concede. But this other, this high-school superintendent . . .

From one of the round tables below the head table, a fat, pink man was eyeing him with distress and fury. The man signalled fruitlessly for a waiter to fill his empty coffee cup and looked up again. *Get on with your veal chop, you dirty head-table son-of-a-bitch*, the man's glance said. Garfield laid down his knife and fork, lifted the serviette from his lap and patted his lips. He inclined his head toward the high-school superintendent. "What did you say your name was?" he inquired.

"Hodgins. Edg—"

"Oh yes." He moved away and picked up his knife and fork again.

Of course it was his own fault. He had to be a member, but he didn't have to come to the damned meetings. They'd recognized his acceptance as a weakness. "He surely won't mind about the superintendent," they'd probably said. "After all, it *is* education week."

The Bonnisteel woman had been the trap. He'd allowed his thoughts to become too preoccupied with famous, good-looking women since the interview with Bert Harvard. Given his rights, given the rights to which any man was entitled under a free economy, there'd have been no need to give the Bonnisteel woman a second thought. Given the network, and Mavis Rebchuck and that other girl, the pitcher, and later Hubert, he'd have had all the nucleus he needed.

But Hubert mightn't be ready for nearly a year, even if it was medically feasible at all; without the network he simply had to have at least one really

famous, good-looking woman. He'd have the network in time, of course, but so long as common sense and the public good were suspended from consideration, he might have to create the interest first.

He relented and forgave himself for coming. His instinct on the Bonnisteel woman had been sound enough; she was even prettier than was strictly necessary and although she'd been getting most of her ink on the book pages there'd been more of it than any Canadian writer had had since Stephen Leacock. A good intimate profile in *True Blue Revelations* and perhaps an attack on her work in the *Guardian* could easily make her a genuine national figure.

Now his instinct reminded him that it was all a waste of time anyway. The woman was obviously a highbrow. She wouldn't consider the Queens d'Amour, whatever the money, whatever the concessions. You'd have thought she'd be willing to manage the club, at least; all he'd have asked was that she stand in the third base coaching box—he'd even allow her to wear a special uniform, put her in a God-damn hoop skirt and bustle if she was *that* finicky—but no! she'd take the mere proposal as an insult.

He gazed bitterly around the room again. There were lessons in everything, and the biggest lesson was that you paid for your mistakes. The good try earned no exemptions. There were a dozen things he could have been doing, he needed to be doing: the proofs for the magazine, the shaky advertising appropriation from Chlorobreath, another drunken lout of an announcer to be spoken to, a promising cowboy singer to be talked out of his intention of returning to his mistress in Biarritz, the last tapes to be edited for a new give-away show, God knows what! And here he was, pinned down by a whither address about to be delivered by an uppity and nervous female.

He signalled a waiter to take his food away. He took a pencil from his pocket and jotted a name on the menu in front of him: Hubert Rodney. He crossed out the Hubert and substituted Helen. He crossed that out and wrote Hazel, frowned glumly and crossed that out and wrote Honeybear. He studied this last speculatively and with a trace of satisfaction. Honeybear Rodney, not bad.

He turned to his neighbour. "What does Honeybear say to you?" he asked crisply.

His neighbour opened his mouth and closed it. "I beg your pardon?" Garfield recognized the high-school superintendent and turned away in distaste.

"Never mind," he said.

At last the room fell into a sullen hush. Five places up the head table a man arose, spoke a few words and sat down. Two places farther on another man arose, spoke a few words and sat down. Each man spoke in an idiom and inflection with which Garfield had become altogether too familiar in his days of intermediate struggle. Each proclaimed that what he was about to say was unnecessary, obvious and redundant; each was at pains to emphasize that he would say even this very badly; and in these matters each expressed a deep, mysterious pride. Each man's voice rang forth high and pure, filled with the excitement of revelation, like a Viking sailor reporting back from a voyage of discovery in the rush-lit banquet hall of his king. Then a female voice was raised, far, liquid and distressed like the night call of a whip-poor-will.

Garfield listened to none of them; these particular varieties of Mr. Chairman, Introducer-of-our-Speaker and Honoured Guest could be catalogued through the pores. He remained intent on his private concerns. For ten minutes, fifteen minutes, nothing developed but a series of designs furrowed into the stiff tablecloth with the edge of his unused butter-knife.

Suddenly Garfield smiled. He picked up the silver pencil again and it tingled under his fingers like a piece of wire lightly charged with electricity. "Get Mohammedan girl for infield," he scribbled on his notebook. "Veil. Never removes veil. Fans demand removal of veil. Refuses. Fans repeat demand. Finally consents remove veil if struck out twice in any one game. Ad Copy: Tonight may be the night to see the face of Fatima. Move on this at once."

He leaned back, completely absorbed in the pride of innovation. Let Bert Harvard try to keep *that* from the people. Even sheep will stand only so much pushing around. And then when Hubert—Fatima *and* Honeybear! Just who did Harvard and the Massey crowd think they were playing with—children?

He had earned a moment free of the burdens of thought and he attended briefly to the far, liquid, distressed voice of the speaker . . . "I say to you as a teacher, the thing they need most is discipline. They will not learn; they recognize no duty to learn, no duty even to try to learn. They have been told too long that learning belongs among the easy Elysian pleasures . . ."

He could conduct a contest, spread it over the season. Hand out an entry form with every admission to the park: *What do you see behind the veil of*

Fatima, mystery maiden of the Queens d'Amour? Sketch her likeness and hand it to one of the Pages d'Amour on the way out of the park . . .

". . . perhaps too impatient of our students. If they are lazy and indifferent, they dwell in a lazy and indifferent society. On the one hand, you, the employer, working your banker's hours with your three-hour lunch and your four-day week-end and your two-month vacation in Florida and your incessant whimpering about labour's demands for a shorter week and a fatter envelope. And on the other hand, the union man, distorting what began as an honest whimper of rebuttal until he, like you, is pleading against the inescapable verities of life itself. What are those verities? In this context we need concern ourselves with only one of them: the simple willingness to do some necessary minimum of work and to do one's level best while doing it. Why, given so shockingly bad an example by his elders, should it be expected that the student of today . . ."

When Fatima is unveiled all sketches entered will be submitted to an impartial board of judges. The person who has most nearly guessed the Face of Fatima will receive a brand-new Cadillac convertible.

". . . am sure we all agree that the State has responsibilities to the individual. But that responsibility must end somewhere, if individual energy and ambition are not to become a fatuous and Quixotic anachronism . . ."

Artistic skill will not count. No matter how inexpert your sketch may be by professional standards, it has as good a chance as anyone's. If, in the opinion of the judges, you have visualized the face of Fatima in accurate general terms, you will win the prize. In the event of ties or of any disagreement among the judges, the prize will go to the person who has submitted the most sketches during the season.

". . . family allowances, health insurance, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, even a form of national insurance on that nebulous possession we call, usually with blushes, our culture."

Garfield sat forward. He dismissed the Queens d'Amour, not without reluctance, and gave the speaker his undivided attention.

"It was not my intention to discuss the Massey Report or the CBC. On the broad principles raised by their existence I have my own ideas, which are largely irrelevant to the topic under consideration here. But I do think it both pertinent and fair to say, since we are speaking of education, that our national radio system has short-changed us. I think it pertinent and fair to say that Mr. Massey, since he has consented to become its best-known and

most influential champion, should be invited to descend from the eyrie into which he disappeared as Governor-General, and lock himself in a room with a radio set and a television receiver and not be allowed to come out until he has heard, in its entirety, a full week's output from our State-owned defenders of culture. The output was questionable enough at the time of Mr. Massey's observations. Since then we have added national television to national radio, and although the good things we receive from the two are still good, the bad things are worse and more abundant."

Garfield pounded on the table. He was delighted to observe that the small round tables in the body of the hall were receiving similar attention. "Hear! Hear!" he murmured.

". . . But I *am* digressing. I apologize for the digression, although perhaps it has served a purpose. If it has served only to remind us all how inevitably, in a society like ours, one thing always leads to another—the state of education leads us, for instance, to the state of radio and television, and the state of radio and television leads us back to the state of education—if we leave here agreed on nothing more than that, then I shall hope for your forgiveness. Thank you."

The woman was brilliant. Not only that—sound as a bell. He wished he'd begun listening sooner; no, not really, for the warm memory of Fatima and Honeybear still caressed his mind like a scented garland. He'd heard enough, all he'd needed to hear. Already the new idea was in motion, a bigger idea by far, still in outline only, as large and pliable and virginal as a mountain of potter's clay.

He strode quickly down the narrow passageway between the head table and the wall, picking his way between murmuring banqueters on the way to the exits. He paused as he passed Dr. Bonnisteel, made a hesitant motion as though to speak to her, but then went on quickly without saying anything.

6

By the time he reached his office, he knew that his impulsiveness had again threatened to destroy the benefits of his vision. All his mistakes had been the mistakes of impatience. The greatest mistake of all . . . the wearing, wasteful attempt to present the central issue in its manifest blacks and whites and trust that logic would automatically prevail . . . had cost him nearly fifteen years. Just now, he reminded himself wearily, he had almost gone up and spoken directly to the Bonnisteel woman and committed himself to renewing the mistake for another fifteen years. Ah, but I'm too clever for you, Smith; you won't get me on *that* one again.

No, he and the Bonnisteel woman might meet again some time. But the meeting would not be of his devising. And they would talk of other things.

As for the idea, that, he comforted himself, had only profited. His first instinctive lurch toward the fatal error had at least revealed the shape of error. The summits of wisdom always stood out most sharply against the brink of stupidity.

"Ask the religious editor of the *Guardian* to come over right away, please. By the way, what's his name?"

"Potts. Eustace Potts, sir."

While he waited he turned a set of silver controls custom-built into his custom-built desk. Twin speakers, hidden behind the tapestried walls brought him the voice of his most profitable and favourite property . . . "This is CNOTE, a station that is listened to and makes money . . ."

A languorous young lady, her voice as soft and round as the bolster of a bordello bed, sang a three-line jingle to the opening melody of Beethoven's Fifth. Each line was the same.

"Chlor-chlor-o-*breath*!
Chlor-chlor-o-*breath*!
Chlor-chlor-o-*breath*!"

The more elaborate commercial which followed in a desperate baritone did not lack for conviction, but it still conveyed a hint of anti-climax. The Chlorobreath people themselves were unhappy about it, in a vague, unspecified way, and Garfield had to admit that coming on the heels of the hypnotic jingle it did seem flaccid and ordinary. The Chlorobreath people

did not question the impressive listening figures Garfield had been able to present to them, but at their last meeting they had made the ominous point that Garfield was in no position to question the sales figures presented by them to him; in short, they might find it necessary to move the account elsewhere.

"But it's your copy, George," he had reasoned helplessly, as he went over the tapes with the account executive. "And you can't say the announcer isn't giving. Why, on that last line—'For the sake of your future, buy Chlorobreath *today*!' he's almost crying."

Now he remembered the last part of his own remark and it created a new vibration. *Almost* crying! Why not crying? The first crying announcer! Oh, they'd sneer—everybody had sneered at Johnny Ray—but they'd listen and they'd talk and they'd remember. He made a triumphant note on his desk pad, only half listening to the ranking coloratura of the week as she rendered the ranking song hit of the week:

> "Black pillow, black lin-ger-ie;
> Green willow, better my white flesh to flay;
> Night's billow, better the moonlight than day,
> For the thoughts that I think while I lie here and drink
> The cup of despair that there's nobody there
> But me and my black black pillow."

Garfield listened more carefully to the second chorus; he had heard it many times before, of course, and he was acquainted with the fact that his senior disc jockey considered its melody—which consisted entirely of the single note F sharp—to be even more original and persuasive than the lyrics. He was not disposed to quibble; anyone with the slightest understanding of entertainment could tell this was far more than an ordinary Hit Parade tune.

He spoke into the desk microphone: "Memo, programme department CNOTE. Until further notice play Black Pillow every hour on the hour, twenty-four hours a day. Try playing it for half-an-hour straight on the Midnight Musings programme with no interruptions except for commercials. Let me have the Elliot-Haynes on both these experiments as soon as possible. The programme department should have thought of this itself. It is still CNOTE's policy to give the listening public the very best in entertainment."

A secretary ushered in Eustace Potts, theological editor of the *Daily Guardian*. Potts, a thin, elderly man with the air of weary, desperate eagerness often found among newspapermen whose best days are behind

them, greeted his superior apprehensively and accepted the invitation to sit down.

"What do you hear about this Bonnisteel woman?" Garfield asked abruptly.

"Oh, I think . . ."

"No, no, Potts. What do the church people think?"

"I don't believe they are in particularly close contact with her."

"That's not what I mean, Potts. She's a famous writer. She's a famous educator. Do the churches recognize her as that or not?"

"Oh, I'm certain they do."

"Certain, Potts?" Garfield asked sharply. "Certain is a very big word. What makes you so certain? What church does she go to?"

"I don't believe she attends any church. But through all her work there runs a deep vein of respect for the broad spiritual values. And then, of course,—"

"Just a minute," Garfield interrupted shrewdly. "Have you ever *read* any of her stuff?"

Potts was embarrassed. "It's mostly verse, you see," he murmured. "I think there was a long book about Milton too. One doesn't always have as much time . . ."

"Never mind," Garfield said tolerantly. "I don't suppose anybody reads her. What else were you going to say?"

"She made a most profound impression during the recent Wells controversy. Her comment was quoted from several pulpits. I was watching fairly carefully, because—" Potts smiled shyly "—it was on my—our—page in the *Guardian* that the comment originally appeared."

"Yes?"

"If you'll remember, we polled a number of lay as well as theological people. The question was: Should a Christian society allow its State communications system to be used to forward unorthodox or unpopular views?"

"And Dr. Bonnisteel said?"

" 'On a matter so close to my own fundamental beliefs and principles, I find it difficult to admit that there is room for argument. I am certain that all true Christians feel the same way.' "

"Hmmmm." Garfield sat in silence. "I guess I've never told you how much I look forward to your page, Potts, how much real satisfaction it gives me to know that the *Guardian* is taking an intelligent helpful interest in the real roots of our way of life."

"We do our best, sir," Potts said gratefully.

"Let's the two of us do a little more thinking out loud, Eustace," Garfield said warmly. "A young gospel preacher named Michael Quil . . . Quil . . ."

"Quildinning."

"That's it. Quildinning was in to see me three or four weeks ago. Wanted a donation for some Bible class or something he's running."

"The Apprentices of Nazareth."

"Wait. He says his class is completely undenominational. Is that right?"

"As close as anything like that can be. I . . ."

"Wait. He says he gets along well with the RCs, the United Church, the Anglicans and even the Jews and Baptists."

"Yes, Mr. Smith, I'd say that's substantially true."

"I don't believe it." The note of challenge returned abruptly to Garfield's voice. "I told Quildinning I didn't believe it, and I tell you I don't believe it."

"Your scepticism does you credit, sir," Potts applauded nervously. "If Quildinning taught the usual type of thing, say, Youth for Christ or even Moral Rearmament . . ."

"Wait. What does he teach?"

"The Power and Prevalence of Goodness."

"What's new about that?"

"In the theological sense, nothing. That, really, is the source of Quildinning's good relations with the other churches. He has no dogma."

"But I hear he's drawing overflow audiences. He must be taking people away from the other churches. Surely they're not too happy about that."

“Ninety per cent of his young people have already stopped going to church,” Potts explained. “The other churches know this. They also know that Quildinning makes it a point to urge his young people’s ultimate return to the various faiths of their fathers. Most of them, you see, are very young, seventeen, eighteen, twenty-one at the most. They can’t stay too long with the Apprentices of Nazareth or they begin to feel out of place. And perhaps, after a year or two, the novelty wears off. A surprising number, a quite surprising number, do exactly what Quildinning counsels. They return to the faith of their fathers. Perhaps they don’t enjoy the services quite as much as they enjoy Quildinning’s services, but they have learned to think of Church as something pleasant and stimulating, not so much a duty as an experience.”

“Are there any figures?”

“No exact figures. But Blodgett over at Macdonald United once told me that in the three years since Quildinning opened his mission his own congregation increased by ten per cent. Father Dolan in the Ward says one of his biggest families started coming back to Mass after one of the boys drifted into the Apprentices of Nazareth. I’ve heard of similar cases from nearly all the churches.”

“Then Quildinning was telling me the truth?”

“Of course they can’t and don’t endorse him openly. But they are more than glad to be resigned to him. As Father Dolan says, he offers all the churches a last line of defence against apostasy. If a Catholic boy turns Protestant or a Protestant boy turns Catholic, his church is guilty of a total failure. If he drifts into the Apprentices of Nazareth he is not lost forever. He does nothing and hears nothing which flatly cuts him off from the flock. He’s only, at the worst, in purgatory for a while.”

“Thank you, Potts. This is extremely helpful. By the way, this church union talk I hear. Will it ever come to anything?”

“A few minor doctrinal concessions here and there, perhaps, between the Anglicans and the United Church. No more than that. As you know, it would be a theological absurdity for the Roman Catholics to unite with anyone except on their own terms.”

“And it’s still impossible for the churches to get together on non-doctrinal matters?”

“Largely, I should think. One forgets that the rivalries of religion are older and more earnest and often more difficult than the rivalries of

politics."

"But there must be some things on which all the churches are agreed already, on which there is no difference of dogma. Fundamental social issues. They'd be so much stronger, so much more effective if they could speak, on these things only, with a single voice. Nothing could stop them. Could it, Potts?"

"Nothing," Potts said. "Nothing."

"Wait." Garfield began pacing the carpet. "Let's say it was some simple, fundamental thing like strip teasers. Or, let's say, closing all the bars at nine o'clock. If they put up a solid front, and made it official, they could settle a question like that right away."

"Undoubtedly."

"Wait. Let's take a different example. Let's say the government—let's say the government of some province—tells its Minister of Education to hire teachers who think God is a myth. Let's say these teachers start telling that to the kids. Why couldn't the churches act together on a thing like that?"

"They probably wouldn't have to, Mr. Smith. They'd act independently. They'd be able to put a stop to it in the normal way."

"Well, then,"—Garfield paused to smooth the corrugations of impatience from his voice—"let's say it's some kind of a *similar* issue. But not that simple. Not that easy to bring home to the public. A *similar* issue, mind you, but one mixed up with a lot of cross-issues. The main issue keeps disappearing into the cross-issues. The churches are all protesting, in their own ways, but these cross-issues get everybody so confused that the churches end up protesting against each other."

"Oh," Potts said brightly, "you mean something like the recent fuss over the CBC and Hilda Morganson and Wells and that sort of thing?"

"I don't mean anything in particular, Potts," Garfield said severely. "I want your general opinion on a general question. In a situation such as I have outlined, would it or would it not be to the advantage of the churches if they could present a common point of view through one common voice?"

"Yes, sir," Potts said meekly. "Provided always that they could agree on a point of view."

"And if—think carefully, Potts—if they were forming a committee or something of that nature to draft resolutions for all the churches on questions of this nature, who'd be the best man to head the committee?"

“It’s so difficult,” Potts said apologetically. “He’d have to be a clergyman. And right there you’d be up against the usual sectarian jealousies and obstacles. If you’re thinking about Quildinning, Mr. Smith . . .”

“Perhaps I *am* thinking about Quildinning. Potts?”

“Yes, sir?”

“Suppose the better elements inside the churches wanted to get together with the better elements outside the churches to act on certain common causes on which there’s no dogmatic angle. Would you say that some fresh young voice like Quildinning’s might act as a leavening agent for the churches? Is it possible that some fresh young voice like Dr. Bonnisteel’s might act as the same kind of rallying point outside the churches?”

“Quite possible,” Potts said thoughtfully.

Garfield leaned forward. “I’m not sure, Potts, but I think I’ve got the germ of an idea. It may be something pretty big—something this country has needed for a long time. But first I want to have another look at Michael Quildinning. How would you like to come to his church with me on Sunday night? There may be some things about the service I’ll want to have explained.”

7

"Stick of gum, Dad?" Garfield winced, lowered his head, and began studying his shoes. Under cover of the pew in front he extended the examination to the shoes of his neighbours. Once a wealthy philosopher had told him that he never hired a man or fired a man without looking at his feet; the whole foundation was inscribed there, the degree of a man's fastidiousness and the state of his finances, the range of his dreams and the silhouettes of his despair. The youth at his right, the youth who had just spoken to him and whom Garfield was trying to ignore, wore blue sneakers with thick gum-rubber soles. A cheap white plastic pump, surmounted by a small, bare and not altogether immaculate feminine ankle, rested against one of the sneakers in a careless, lounging embrace. Further down the row, more pumps and sneakers stirred and poked at the adjacent brogans and saddle-shoes. Ox-blood caressed jade-green. Turquoise fled from gun-metal suede. Coral fenced prettily with ebony. Garfield turned his head the other way, toward a world in which he was more at home, the world of Eustace Potts. Potts, he observed, with a sensation halfway between respect and distaste, was wearing Dack's; the thirty-dollar Executive model at that. To Garfield's generation, a generation slightly younger, Dack's had been a symbol both of challenge and of fruition. Between his own nineteenth and thirtieth birthdays Garfield had never worn anything but Dack's. He had bought his first pair on a salary of twenty-one dollars a week, and he still remembered the helplessness, almost the terror, with which his old friend Bert Harvard had received their first appearance. "You're out of your mind, Smitty!" Bert had protested. "There are two kinds of people in the world," Garfield had replied grandly, paraphrasing the wealthy philosopher. "Those who wear cheap shoes and those who don't." Bert Harvard's eyes had sunk to the floor in inarticulate confusion.

He wondered with a mixture of tenderness and reproach how Potts had become a wearer of Dack's. It was true that no one who really knew about such things still regarded Dack's as either the most desirable or most expensive shoes to be had; Garfield himself had given his last pair to the Salvation Army more than ten years ago. But Potts was still out of character in them. What had been his history in relation to them and their history in relation to him? Had Potts once been the sort of man who, at the age of nineteen and on a salary of twenty-one dollars a week, went bravely to the best shoe store in town and bought the best shoes in the house? If so, what

had Potts' friends said to him and what had he said to them? How had Potts felt, making this gallant, foolish gesture? What had he thought about it since? At what stage had the gallantry gone out of it for him, leaving him nothing but the bitter distillation of its foolishness? He must have reached and passed this stage many years ago. Why, having passed it, had he still persisted in wearing Dack's?

Or was it possible that this very pair of Dack's was the first pair Potts had owned? Was it not more likely that Potts had recognized from the first that he was one of the men for whom gallantry and foolishness must always be synonymous? Was it not altogether more likely that Potts had gone through life buying his shoes in Eaton's basement—resigned to buying them there—and then one day had passed the window on King Street when a clearance sale was in progress? For just this one day, was it not likely Potts had realized the world he had pursued in vain had come back to wait for him? Yes, that would be it.

Garfield studied Potts' shoes more closely, in the light of the new theory. Across the break above the left toe the leather was cracked and a dry ridge of blacking stood up above the crack in a futile attempt at camouflage. He made a mental note to inquire into Potts' salary. Almost certainly Potts was being paid too much and almost certainly Potts thought he was being paid too little. Suddenly, Garfield was very tired of scuffed, resentful little men, concealing their scuffs and their resentment behind their good cheer or their good intentions. Potts, Hubert Rodney, Garfield's father, Bert Harvard, that Bonnisteel woman, probably this young Quildinning—their kind of people were always at war, in one way or another, with his kind of people. His kind of people were always being accused, in one way or another, of using their kind of people. But the accusation was not fair and it was not accurate. Who used Potts but Potts himself, making the very remembrance of ambition a proclamation of defeat? Who used Hubert Rodney but Rodney himself, a man seeking dignity and stature through the very surrender of dignity and stature? Who had used Garfield's father? Not the son, who told touching, almost true, stories about the Ty Cobb baseball; no, the father who tried to conjure meaning out of memories and a bottle. Who, if his plans should come to success, would be using Bert Harvard, the Bonnisteel woman and young Quildinning? Why, they themselves, in the varying degrees of and outlets for their varying woolliness and pretentiousness.

"Come on, come on; we're all friends here." The youth at Garfield's side reached inside his chartreuse Grenfell-cloth windbreaker and extracted a rectangle of Doublemint. With elaborate courtesy he peeled back the

wrapper, clutched the folded sheath of paper between a thumb and forefinger and thrust the naked gum under Garfield's nose.

"Thanks," Garfield mumbled. He moved his jaws in a series of crab-like motions, working the gum back to his molars by stealth and eyeing Potts, seated on his other side, with a kind of furtive fury. They had had to stand in a queue outside for more than thirty minutes, Garfield in mortal terror lest he be recognized. The ineffable Potts had been able to suggest no other way of beating the queue than to go and announce themselves openly to the chief usher; this of course would have been disastrous, for if his hopes worked out the last thing in the world he could afford was to be identified with Quildinning or his church in even the most casual way.

Now they were crowded near the back of the church, six to a pew intended to hold only five, two ancient foreigners caught up by mistake in the alien caravan of a children's pilgrimage. Garfield began looking around with the elaborate detachment of a visiting anthropologist, keeping the gum only in sufficient motion to remind the youth on his right that there was no cause for offence or comment.

It was a very old church in a very old district, one of the casualties of the peace between the Presbyterians and the Methodists. For several years it had been a furniture warehouse and at the time Quildinning took it over it had been doing service as a combination gymnasium, steam bath, horse parlour and bootlegging joint. Quildinning had made bold, spectacular changes. Where the stained-glass windows once had been, neon waterfalls cascaded down the tomb-like granite walls. The luminous waves of colour changed from purple to rose to yellow to the most ethereal of ambers; the amber faded behind its lingering glow and live silver maidens knelt in snowy robes, each in her own Gothic crypt halfway toward the vaulted roof, holding her pale round arms toward Heaven.

"The Silent Petitioners," the boy beside Garfield whispered.

The waterfalls deepened to the purple again and the maiden Garfield had been studying was gone. "They're up there praying right through the service," the boy announced emotionally. "Think of that, Dad. They're praying for you, Dad."

Garfield turned his attention to the front of the church. Another group of young women had arranged themselves before the altar; these also were in snow-white dresses, but each with a red satin heart sewn to its left breast. Above the altar a blood-red neon sign blinked on and off: God is Fun. Garfield found it all a bit oppressive, but it was plainly intended to be

anything but oppressive. The congregation, the great majority in their upper teens and in couples, were in a festive mood. Occasionally shouts of recognition were exchanged halfway across the church; at least two young men were pelting each other with wads of paper projected by elastic bands.

"It'll soon be starting," Garfield's neighbour told him comfortingly. Suddenly the young man noticed Potts, sitting erect and nervous on Garfield's other hand. A look of deeper sympathy and understanding lighted his shrewd, kindly, young face. "Your probation officer?" he whispered.

Garfield drew a handkerchief from his breast pocket and wiped his forehead. The unspeakable Potts had counselled him that, since he wished to appear as inconspicuous as possible, it would be best to wear inexpensive clothes, preferably not too well matched. Garfield had accepted the hint by combining a pair of fishing jeans with a worn tweed jacket and an old khaki shirt and tie.

"Don't think a thing about it," the young man at his side whispered staunchly. "We don't get many older men here. Usually they come because they've been in trouble of some kind. There's no better place in the world to get straightened out." After a pause the youth added with generous candour: "I know!"

Garfield lowered his eyes. "I wish they'd start," he fenced hoarsely.

"Hey!" Garfield's new friend had had an inspiration. "How long is it since you've talked to a girl? A nice girl, I mean. A decent Christian girl. Not that other—well, I bet it's a long time, isn't it? Isn't it?" Garfield wiped his forehead again. The heat was almost indescribable.

The young man was conferring in an urgent undertone with the neighbour on *his* right, the owner of the white plastic pumps. Garfield sought relief in a further study of the Silent Petitioners. He assumed an expression he hoped would pass for utter devotion, a mood too sacred to be intruded upon. But there was a rustling movement of bodies nearby. A soft white hand touched his arm and he turned reluctantly to find that he had a new companion: a girl barely beyond her adolescence, a pretty child wearing the misty, vaguely smug look that often accompanies the early awareness of womanhood.

The girl blushed and smiled: "He said you'd like me to sit beside you," she said shyly. Now Garfield was blushing too.

"Don't worry," she whispered warmly. "He's told me about you. Those things don't mean anything to the Apprentices. Why, Mr. Quildinning had a

bank robber right up there speaking from the pulpit one Sunday night last month." The girl paused and went on in delicious expectation: "Were you a . . ."

"No," Garfield croaked.

"Oh." She clearly had felt the rebuff but resumed the conversation with saintly determination. "I've put in for the Silent Petitioners. Aren't they beautiful? And so *good*. They can only take eight and there's a terribly long waiting list," she added sadly. "What's your name?"

"Smith," Garfield said.

"Oh. Well, if you'd rather not." Again she conquered her momentary hurt. "Would you like to come up to our house for supper next Saturday night? There'll just be him and me and my aunt and uncle. We're engaged, you know. We play euchre and sing. Do you play euchre?"

In spite of himself, Garfield was now just the least bit touched. "No," he said more affably, "I'm no good at cards at all."

"Of course you wouldn't have to play," she persisted. "And if you had to leave early nobody would mind. I mean, if there's a curfew or you have to report to that other man or anything like that."

Garfield was now reviling himself for the brief crack in his aloofness. Mercifully there was no time for a reply before a very tall, very blond, very athletic young man dressed in while flannel trousers and a blue blazer strode through a doorway near the altar, bounded up the steps in one swift leap like a tennis player hurdling a net, and held up his hands for silence. About him too there was a hint of neon, finer and less intrusive than the radiance of the walls.

Garfield dismissed it as an illusion, induced no doubt by the general bewilderment of effects and by the young man's air of luminous comeliness and health.

"God is Fun," the neon light announced over the head of the neon youth.

"Come on, folks, let's get out the ice pick," Michael Quildinning commanded in a bell-like voice, full of the rich baying virility of a good deer-hound on the first hunt of the season.

The girl at his side reached across Garfield's waist, grasped his far hand with her far hand and tugged him to his feet. In an automatic reflex that neither of them recognized in time to check, he and Potts found themselves similarly intertwined. From some faraway point of ambush a single organ

note shivered forth like a clap of thunder. The girl began swinging Garfield's arm as though winding up for a hammer throw and suddenly his diminutive body was caught up like a cork in a heavy sea.

"We're here because we're here because
We're here because we're here . . ."

Everybody but Garfield and Potts was singing with insensate abandon, as though in life-and-death competition against a decibel meter. The girl swung Garfield's left arm higher and higher, racking and buffeting his whole body. He tried desperately to disengage his other arm from the clutch of the unmentionable Potts, but Potts, torn between sheer panic and some feeble hope that he was at last achieving a state of genuine intimacy with his superior, finally interpreted Garfield's frantic wrenches as a manifestation of zeal. Not to be outdone, Potts himself wrenched, tugged and flung Garfield's arm down to the level of his knees, far above his head, back to the knees again, then up and around and over.

Potts even began to sing too.

"We're here because we're here because
We're here because we're here . . ."

He thrust his face, radiant with exertion and good fellowship, down toward the level of Garfield's helplessly gyrating head. Their heads bumped, but Potts smiled good-naturedly, his face an idiotic blur, as though to say it was all in the game.

"We're here because we're here because
We're here because we're here . . ."

"Let go!" Garfield commanded fiercely into the semi-melodious din.

"Let's go!" Potts acquiesced, swinging higher, beaming with the delight of perfect companionship.

Each time the organ showed signs of dwindling stamina, the voices rose in renewed energy and the tugging and mauling recovered their pristine tempo. Each time the voices flagged, the organ roared up louder. Once it seemed certain that both the organ and the voices were about to stop; it was the frayed baritone of the inexpressible Potts himself that egged them on to another round.

But at last it ended. Garfield sat back exhausted, hoping for a long sermon. Sickening inwardly he heard Quildinning announce: "For the benefit of any newcomers, I must make the usual explanation that there will

be no sermon tonight. The Apprentices of Nazareth believe thinking and doing are the only real ways of sermonizing. Let us pray."

Quildinning's young clear voice filled the massive building. "I ask thee, God, to help me tonight to a firmer understanding of the Power and Prevalence of Goodness. This, the first truth I was taught in my childhood, may Thou give me the strength to see anew. I pray that in Thy good time, O Lord, Thou wilt grant me the wisdom and humility to return, restored and refreshed, to that blessed haven and dwell in the faith of my fathers for ever."

Garfield was on his feet again, singing Joyce Kilmer's "Trees". On his feet, singing "Three Blind Mice", the males in competition with the females. On his feet singing "Mother Machree".

Sitting down, watching an old Ben Turpin movie, in which a wronged husband routed the villain with custard pies. Afterwards Quildinning shook with innocent, infectious laughter as he stepped to the altar. "Well, fellow Apprentices, it seems the Power and Prevalence of Goodness are truly everywhere, aren't they? And God *is* fun, isn't He?"

On his feet again singing from a sheet thrust determinedly before his face by the girl on his right.

"He loves me too, He loves me too,
I know He loves me too,
Because He loves the litt-le birds
I know He loves me too."

Sitting down again, watching a gigantic man dressed in a blue serge suit demonstrating a series of wrestling holds on Quildinning, who was thrown to the floor of the altar in a series of mighty crashes and rose each time smiling genially to interpolate breathless comments on the moral efficacy of the flying mare and the reverse arm lock. Listening to the other man's rambling narration of by-gone duels with Londos, Stasiak, the bottle and the devil, a recital which the congregation followed with obvious fascination. Listening to the closing colloquy between the pastor and guest. "And tell us, Strangler, what is the greatest lesson you have learned in the battle of life?"

"Just one simple thing, Michael: to put my faith in the Power and Prevalence of Goodness."

On his feet again singing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat", the people who lived in the East End in competition with the people who lived in the West End.

Sitting down, listening nervously to the encouraging, girlish whisper of his neighbour: “You going to stay for the Testimonies? You going to Testify yourself?”

“I—uh—”

“Don’t be afraid,” she appealed. She nodded in the direction of the young man whose place beside Garfield she had taken. “He Testified right after he got out. It was the making of him.”

“Perhaps some other time.”

“Maybe you’re right. It’s sometimes better to wait till you’re ready. Will you be here next week?”

“I hope so.”

On his feet, walking at last through the autumn night, with the hateful Potts a half-pace behind. “Potts!” he said sternly when he could bring himself to speak, “I notice that a lot of errors have been creeping into your page lately. Inexcusable errors, Potts.”

“We’ve run into a spell of bad luck with the proof-room,” Potts conceded meekly.

“An error is an error, Potts.”

“I . . .” Potts was completely helpless. Suddenly Garfield felt more kindly. It had, after all, been his own idea; the evening had not gone as he had foreseen, but it had established the essential facts. Quildinning had a personality. He was a leader and an organizer. He convinced people—there must have been two hundred dollars in the one collection plate that had circulated in their one relatively small block of pews. He was a man well worth watching and encouraging; given the right direction he might well do inestimable good.

“Never mind it for now, Potts,” he said more amiably. “Let’s stop by the office for a moment, shall we? I have something more important to discuss with you. A few random thoughts you might agree could be passed on to young Quildinning. You understand my name mustn’t come into it in any way.”

8

Hilary Bonnisteel scrutinized her visitor again, scrutinized the clean Donegal column of his body, the careless sculpture of the custom shirt against the hard curve of his chest, the tiny pearl nesting on the green hand-knitted tie, scrutinized the earnest blue eyes, the almost classic but thoroughly masculine lines of his nose and jaw, the almost imperceptible ripple in the almost golden hair.

"I'm still not sure I understand you, Mr. Quildinning. Perhaps I wasn't listening as carefully as I should have been."

Unless they were too fat or too short or too stupid or too clever, she always had trouble listening carefully to young men. If they were defective, all right; she could concentrate then. If she were ever married it would surely be to a defective young man, or—more probably—to a defective old man. The comedy, perfect ones induced sweet but painful aberrations.

She was wondering how this young man's voice would sound calling across a Saskatchewan farm-yard with the new snow drifted high against the barn and still coming down at twilight. . . This way, Hilly! Here I am, Hilly!. . . Could it have the note of plea and uncertainty that—too late! years too late!—might be remembered as the unheeded cry of loyalty and need. . . You walk on one side, Hilly; don't you see it's better this way, for us both, better for us both just this once? Just this once, but not for always? But she had not been able to see until long after the white horses in Trafalgar Square had become white sheets of notepaper on a desk and the saloon in Dawson City a series of lonely dormitories with books piled high on wooden chairs.

And then the inevitable trick of inversion, wondering whether Jockoboy would have grown up to be as unbearably clean and ingenuous as this young man. And then the other boy, in the moonlight by the Luxembourg. *Restez! Restez avec!* But of course by then the white paper and the books had established their loyalty and their need too. "I am very sorry," she had said to the boy in the Luxembourg, standing there stiff and aloof, with the threat of involvement and betrayal hanging over her again. She held out her hand; the French always shook hands, even the foolish and emotional ones who tried to draw you close. She shook hands and said, "I am terribly sorry. But I *do* have this other scholarship at McGill. If I ever said anything. . ."

“I’m afraid that must have sounded terribly rude, Mr. Quildinning.” Her left eye had gone distinctly out of focus.

“Gollywhiz, Dr. Bonnisteel, not at all,” he said earnestly. He was much blonder and taller than Jockoboy would have been, and the antiseptic nimbus that clung to him bore no relation to Jockoboy’s delightful, gap-toothed grin. On the other hand, he could not be more than twenty-four, and Jockoboy would have been thirty-five next month, if he had lived. But they were contemporaries, they were associates, however remote.

“May I give you some advice, Mr. Quildinning?” she begged him yearningly.

“Oh, yes, please.”

“Drop the whole idea.”

She saw the hurt quiver across his clean, eager face and leave its quick little scar of defiance. “I can’t let them down now. There are too many people counting on me.”

“And whether I come in or not, it’s going ahead anyway?”

“Yes.” It was not a direct challenge. But the one word had an impressive, square-shouldered sound. She scrutinized him again, more cautiously and carefully. Why, he’s not a child at all! He knows precisely what he’s doing, and he’s strong enough to do it.

“I’m sorry,” she said, almost cowed. “I’ve been unforgivably presumptuous.”

He blushed unhappily. O Jockoboy, O Jockoboy, stay there blushing. “We need you, though, Dr. Bonnisteel,” he said gravely.

“Who was it that first . . .” The sentence trailed off in her mind, too cold and brutal to be finished. She could not have borne again the little cycle of cause and effect, neither the giving of the hurt nor the witnessing of the scar.

He does believe in it, in his own way, she acknowledged sadly. I must stop him, but it will be so much better if I can stop him without leaving a wound.

“Who was it that first suggested it?” He smiled with the unbearable valour of the Spartan boy smiling on the fox. It had not been of his devising, she discerned at once. In his purity he was prepared to admit as much but the admission would be a pointless diminishment of his eager confidence.

“No, no,” she said quickly. “Suggested *my* name.”

“Do you mind if I smoke?” he asked simply. She refused the engraved case. “Gollywhiz, Dr. Bonnisteel, almost everyone I’ve talked to.”

“All of them because of the speech? The papers did make a great deal more of it than it was worth, but even then . . .”

“I’m sure the speech helped us all to focus.”

The speech had helped her to focus too. She marvelled at how little she had said, but the bare saying of it had stirred a half-forgotten satisfaction. Perhaps the mere marching out of the cloisters had been a greater experience than she had imagined it would be; perhaps the whole experience had only been an appeal to vanity. But her own words—a partial crib from Dr. Darty—now hypnotized and accused her: “We who value the rights of academic inquiry may soon be forced to surrender the privilege of our pure, academic detachment. We may discover, however much to our consternation and our horror, that we cannot defend intellectual freedom in an intellectual bathysphere.”

That was as far as she had gone. Afterwards Dr. Darty, offering his excited congratulations, had brought the focus in still closer. “Forgive me, Hilary,” he had said enviously, “I mistook you for a fellow funeral orator.”

He had not given her time to interrupt. “Sometimes I fear that’s all my generation is fitted for,” he had mused sadly. “We are old, we are tired, we are fat, we are venerated. We are ideally equipped to pronounce the Last Rites for the Innocents; only your generation is equipped to forestall them.”

Hilary found it hard to follow.

“Innocence,” the University President had sighed, “is coming to be a synonym for reasonableness. We innocents, substitute reasonable people, are more interested in making noble utterances about our principles than in getting down on the floor and fighting for them.”

“I disagree,” Hilary had flared. “I disagree completely.”

“Good. You must disagree. Your generation’s disagreement is my generation’s only hope. I hope you mean it. Now test your meaning. Here is the test: What would you do, my dear Hilary, if you found yourself locked up in a room with a person who was bent on destroying your freedoms—your freedom to talk, to read, to think, to teach, to look, to listen. Perhaps you would denounce him as a scoundrel or a fool and refuse to discuss the matter further. If so, you’d be behaving normally, but you’d still be perpetuating one of the errors of my generation. For this is the kind of argument the scoundrels and/or the fools never walk out on. They know the

issues are much too important to be left entirely to the brain. Appeals to fear, prejudice, confusion, emotion, superstition . . .”

“But you’re joking,” Hilary had interrupted anxiously. “You’re not suggesting that we innocents should begin countering that sort of appeal with the same sort of appeal?”

“No. Only that we are too quick to dismiss it as unworthy of our serious attention. That we refuse not merely to use the other people’s weapons—and I agree we must go on refusing—but that we refuse to examine them. We recoil from any contact with the other people, except on our own pure and reasonable terms, which they will never grant. We never get to know them, or the sources of their strength. Perhaps—who knows?—we might be able to defeat them on *their* terms if we would try. Perhaps—who knows?—we might even convert one of them now and then if we weren’t in so great a hurry to express our scorn for them.”

“The speech helped us all to focus,” Quildinning was saying. “Without it our little group mightn’t have been alert enough to realize how much we and you have in common. But your standing was there long before.”

“And I am the unanimous and spontaneous choice for president of . . .”

“LIGHT,” he said eagerly. “League for the Incorporation of Godly and Humanistic Training.”

“Most ingenious,” she admitted thoughtfully.

“I suppose it *is* a bit artificial,” he demurred eagerly. “But it *does* express the whole thing.”

“I’m to represent the Humanistic wing,” she said matter-of-factly.

“They’re both the same, aren’t they, really?”

“And I do agree they must be incorporated,” Hilary assured him. “But surely they can’t be incorporated like factories or banks, Mr. Quildinning?”

“Still, if the need exists, should we be ashamed to cry the need aloud? If the end is possible, need we fear to seek the end?” It sounded so much like Jockoboy crying “Through an Alpine Village Passed” that her desire to shudder dissolved again and she forgot completely that she was dealing with a very determined and possibly almost adult person.

“Tell me more about the other members, please.”

“There’s Weldon Carruthers. He’s owner and editor of the *Banner*. He’s *most* enthusiastic.”

"Isn't that the paper that set off the row over the Wells broadcasts?"

"I'm not sure," Quildinning looked genuinely puzzled. "Perhaps it was. Mr. Carruthers is a very alert man. Then, there's Dr. Kibblewhite. He's terribly keen too. And Canon Chantleigh. They're both just retired from the pulpit but brimming with health and energy."

"Thus far, then, only the churches are represented?"

"Represented? Gollywhiz, Dr. Bonnisteel, you mustn't ever use that word. We have no official backing at all. The sole idea so far as the churches are concerned is that a group of individuals, none of us representing any single church but each of us conversant with and—uh—in a position to reflect the conscience of our churches, will—uh—try to make that conscience heard."

"The churches approve of this?"

"So far as my own church is concerned"—Quildinning blushed again—"yes. But that's a rather special case. The others neither approve nor disapprove, officially. Weldon Carruthers put it rather neatly. Naturally, even though he is a layman, he wouldn't dream of taking on a thing like this without consultation. His Bishop's eye twinkled and he said: 'Weldon, my boy, if the heathen give you a bloody nose you needn't come to me for comfort. But if it should come to the matter of a quiet donation or an extra candle—oh, go ahead, my boy, and let's see what happens.' "

"And Dr. Kibblewhite and Canon Chantleigh have the same—understandings?"

"Very similar, only perhaps a little firmer. As you know, the Catholics already have a number of good strong lay organizations that can express the Church's point of view without getting the Church involved in embarrassing denominational squabbles. The UC's and Anglicans had both already been considering setting up their own advisory boards to deal with public issues of this sort. Although they can't endorse LIGHT formally, I don't think it's breaking a confidence to say that some of the best and keenest minds in their respective churches are behind Dr. Kibblewhite and Canon Chantleigh all the way."

"I still don't know why I'm necessary," Hilary said.

"Dr. Bonnisteel," Quildinning said emotionally, "in this work *everyone* is necessary. We want to build a new moral force that will be absolutely irresistible. Don't tell me you don't agree, Doctor; I *have* read your speech, you know. So have Mr. Carruthers and Dr. Kibblewhite and Canon

Chantleigh. When I showed the newspaper reports to them and proposed that you be begged to join us, do you know what Canon Chantleigh said? He said: 'That woman sees it all; she sees the whole issue; training and environment, training and environment, training and environment!' Do you know what Dr. Kibblewhite said?"

"Is—anyone else being asked to join?" Hilary cut in hastily.

"Gollywhiz, yes, Dr. Bonnisteel! This is just the nucleus. It's got to be an absolutely irresistible moral force. The Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides, the Canadian Congress of Labour, the IODE, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, we'll ask them all. Every organization with a stake in Christian Canadianism will be asked to join. Some of the ones I've mentioned have said they prefer not to come in, for one reason or another, but the way will be open to any worth-while group."

"Could you—is it too early—to give me an example of how Christian Canadianism will be applied?"

"A filthy book. A degrading movie. A radio broadcast that puts wrong ideas in the heads of growing children. LIGHT sends a committee to the booksellers and the librarians, a committee to the theatre manager, a petition to parliament, gives statements to the papers. Gollywhiz, Dr. Bonnisteel! It will be a rout! It's everything that's clean and Canadian and Christian marching in a single suit of armour. Who can defy us?"

"Who indeed?" Hilary said. "Do you anticipate any difficulty in deciding what is clean and Canadian and Christian?" She had almost put it more factually, almost said: "But how shall you decide what books to burn?" But Dr. Darty's words, half confession and half challenge, came back to her, and she denied herself the easy declaration of scorn. Panic tugged at her mind. "Send this dangerous young fool packing at once!" one part of her panic cried. "You don't dare send him packing—he's too dangerous!" the other part of it cried. "Don't get mixed up with them!" her panic cried. "But if I don't get mixed up with them how can I stop them?" her panic cried in answer.

"What is clean and Canadian and Christian? Oh, we've thought of that, Dr. Bonnisteel," Quildinning said. "We're not as impractical as we may seem. We recognized at once that if we tried to put it in all-embracing terms we'd never get anywhere. The thing we must remember is that our concern is not with what things are but with what things are *not*."

“I see,” Hilary said. She considered for a moment. “And you’ve absolutely decided to go ahead with it?”

“With it and with you, Dr. Bonnisteel,” Quildinning said fervently.

“Why president, though?”

“Mr. Carruthers and Dr. Kibblewhite and Canon Chantleigh all saw at once that we must have a layman for president, a layman with no prior connection with any other group or organization. With your personal prestige, Dr. Bonnisteel . . .”

“Excuse me,” Hilary interrupted, “I must be absolutely clear on this. Whether I join or not, you do propose to carry through?”

“Yes.”

“Then I accept,” Hilary said slowly.

“This is a milestone in the advance of Christian Canadianism, Dr. Bonnisteel,” Quildinning said emotionally. “I must leave at once and take the news to our colleagues.”

They shook hands solemnly. Hilary watched his tall, straight back through the door and when the firm click of his footsteps had almost faded away she ran suddenly and looked down the long corridor until his back had disappeared, much tinier now but still erect, like Jockoboy going away in the avenue of poplars. She was left there repining for Innocence and she realized with a flush of brazen pride and shame that she had no right to blame its departure on anyone but herself. In a moment another realization came: she did not really know what she had done or precisely why she had done it or what she proposed to do next. All she knew for certain was that she had sacrificed the luxury of cowardice without gaining the satisfaction of heroism. Fitting duplicity into her definition of virtue was not going to be easy; even Dr. Darty could scarcely have approved her in going this far. But, curiously, the only thing she could not bring herself to consider was the possibility of retreat.

9

"Harvard?" the Honourable Peter Rackstraw said unhappily.

He massaged his thin mahogany cheeks with his square freckled hands. He rubbed up toward the temples and continued rubbing until he had erased the quick scurry of nervous pain. "Of course I can't see Harvard."

He glanced unhappily toward the portrait of his party chief and Prime Minister, watching from its silver frame with an expression of amiable mockery. He could not read the inscription across the broad width of the desk, but now, as they always did when the picture entered his field of vision, the thin elegant strokes etched into the membranes of his heart like a diamond-tipped stiletto. "To my right hand—with affection and gratitude, Hiram."

If he'd only had the courage to follow through. He'd gone so far as to prepare a memorandum, typing it out himself, like a sneak, knowing he wouldn't have the courage to send it.

> To: The Prime Minister
>
> From: The Minister of Welfare and Communications.
>
> If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.

And then he'd scrawled below it in his own thick angry hand, disgust at his childishness giving him a moment's bitter pride: *I won't put up with it, Hiram. I'm through.*

And after that he'd sealed it in an envelope and torn the whole thing into small pieces and—not immediately, to his credit or perhaps to his further shame—set a match to it. It had been too late for escape even then. Now it was doubly late.

There had never been anything a person could get his teeth into, nothing that Hiram could be accused of. Not a word had been said in advance about Communications. It wasn't a subject on which anything needed saying. It was a matter of feel. So far as their own party was concerned it had been agreed, ever since the defeat of 1956, that Communications ought to have been made a separate portfolio—and a very junior one—long ago. No one had mentioned it openly, for that would have been a discourtesy to poor

Henry, who had actually lost his deposit; and the party was out of office anyway. And then, after the Conservative-Liberals had made the incredibly happy error of leaving Communications where it was, he and Hiram had refrained from talking about it even between themselves. Superstition probably; the kind of superstition that warns you not to pray your opponent will forget to take out the last trump.

After the Party's return to power, Hiram had done nothing about Communications in the first Cabinet appointments. That had seemed natural enough too; young Saunders was the obvious man, but he hadn't behaved too well during the last Wheat Board debate and it would do him good to cool his heels for a month or so.

And then the sickening, brutal misunderstanding about Family Allowances. That had been the main plank on which the party had ridden back to office—that and the unrest over the CBC, which the Conservative-Liberals, with their thin majority, had been too busy to correct during their short term in office.

The whole conduct of Family Allowances had been brilliant, quite as brilliant as the swift, incisive decision to change the party's name the day after the other people changed theirs. Hiram was no fool; when the weight of the past ceased to be an anchor and became a millstone, he had not hesitated to cast it off. And when the voice of the future cried for a new kind of political morality, it was Hiram who had found it.

"I suggest that the radio and television issue is not enough alone," he had told the party executive bluntly. "I propose that we give the voters an assurance of an immediate increase in the scale of Family Allowances. I propose, however, that we not specify the exact amount of the increase either in the first announcement of our platform or at any later stage of the campaign." It had been a gamble of wild and scornful daring. The party had almost rebelled before agreeing to go along; Peter still wasn't sure how much Hiram knew about the draft-Rackstraw movement which he himself had suppressed out of sheer selfless loyalty to Hiram and to the cause of party solidarity.

All through the campaign they had risked the next twenty years on a dogged generalization. "We propose—we promise—we guarantee—to increase that great invention of Liberal-Conservatism, the Family Allowance grant, by the utmost sum that is feasible within the nation's over-all economy." The Conservative-Liberals had leaped at the bait with delight. "How much and where are you going to get it?" they had cried. "That great

invention of Liberal-Conservatism, the practice of bribing the taxpayer with his own money!" they had cried. " 'By the utmost sum that is feasible within the nation's over-all economy,' " they had cried. "Vote Liberal-Conservative and they'll promise you anything; elect them and they'll remind you they promised nothing."

It had been desperately close. Even Hiram had almost lost his nerve toward the end. At the secret emergency convention ten days before election day, Peter had had to discourage the draft-Rackstraw crowd again. Hiram had repeated stubbornly over and over: "Gentlemen, I know it's going to be close. If we win, we have won not the next election but the next four elections."

It *had* been close, but they *had* won. And then, at the first Cabinet meeting, Hiram had unveiled the new morality, the shining concept of responsibility for which the inarticulate heart of the electorate had been crying for a hundred years. "Gentlemen," Hiram had said quietly, "we assured the people of Canada, prior to the election, that we would increase Family Allowances if this proved possible. Our opponents assured the electorate we would find it impossible. I propose, gentlemen, that we announce in the Speech from the Throne an immediate, across-the-board increase in Family Allowances of exactly one hundred per cent."

Hiram had smiled bashfully, like a small boy who has been accused of playing with matches while actually putting out a fire started by his elders. "You do see, gentlemen, why I could not put this proposal to the party before the election? Even had we not incorporated the details in our platform, our opponents would have heard of it and either made similar proposals or been less reckless in their attacks on our own good faith."

For the first time, perhaps in its history, the Privy Council chamber had echoed with cheers. A great and daring promise fulfilled not merely to the letter but to the mathematical power of two. Later there had been an uneasy, tense recess while the Minister of Finance made some hurried calculations. "It can be done," he had assured them. "I am hopeful that, being better at arithmetic than we, our friends across the floor will continue to assert that it cannot be done. But it can be done, nevertheless, and if that is your wish, gentlemen, it shall be done." Peter had offered up a silent prayer of thankfulness that he had never wavered, never once given Hiram the slightest cause, even when the draft-Rackstraw fever was at its height, to doubt his loyalty and faith.

Hiram had turned to him. “Since his will be the pleasant but onerous task of putting the new regulations into effect, I believe it would be appropriate if the Minister of Welfare were to make the first public announcement.”

“No, sir,” Peter had said at once. “With all respect, sir, I insist that so important a duty can only be discharged by the Prime Minister himself.”

Hiram had looked around with pretended helplessness. “What is your wish, gentlemen?”

Their wish had, of course, been unanimous. And it had been right. All other considerations aside, Hiram was sixty-four, Peter himself only fifty-two. One more term, at the most two. And then, with perfect good will on all sides, the natural laws of succession would assert their natural logic. By then the new Pensions scale would probably be in force too; Pensions *and* Allowances, perhaps health insurance too. As custodian of these benefices, the Minister of Welfare would almost automatically be the next Prime Minister . . . even if he were not also Peter Rackstraw, the next Prime Minister in his own right. But it was just and proper that Hiram should have the pleasure and claim the prestige of making the first announcement now. It was also inevitable, as both men had recognized throughout their courtly fencing.

“Very well, then,” Hiram had said. “I shall make the announcement next Thursday night for release in the morning newspapers of Friday. In the meantime I need hardly say that I rely on your complete discretion.”

Peter *had* been discreet. Completely discreet and abysmally unlucky. On the Tuesday he had returned to his constituency to make an absolutely private, absolutely off-the-record talk to his local party organizers. It was all very well for Hiram to minimize the importance of party organizers . . . all very well for Hiram, who could make his little gentlemen’s agreements with the other party leaders. Hiram hadn’t had to contest his own seat in thirteen years. But what about him, Peter? Thirty thousand miles he’d travelled outside his own constituency, working himself to the verge of a nervous breakdown for the good of the party—and then come within eighty-seven votes of losing his own seat. No wonder the local men were angry and restive. No wonder they wanted something more from him than a perfunctory, patronizing speech of thanks. They wanted meat, and they damned well wanted it now.

So Peter had told them, absolutely off the record and in absolute privacy, about the new scale of Family Allowances. And his lunatic, his utter, homicidal lunatic of a local chairman had leaked it to the local papers . . .

even added a statement of his own: “It seems incredible that the man who has brought the people of Canada this magnificent new piece of social legislation barely achieved election to the House of Commons here in his own native city. I am sure, however, that Wallaceville’s gratitude to the Honourable Peter Rackstraw and, yes, the entire nation’s gratitude to the Honourable Peter Rackstraw, will not be so slow to manifest itself in the future.”

Of course the other papers had picked it up. “Rackstraw Doubles Family Allowances . . .” “Welfare Minister Raises Baby Bonus.” “Wallaceville, Ontario, February 17—A four-hundred million-dollar windfall was assured the nation’s bread-winners, home-makers and children last night as Welfare Minister Peter Rackstraw redeemed and doubled in spades the Liberal-Conservative government’s election pledge of an increase in the controversial Family Allowances scale . . .”

Peter’s picture had been on almost every front page. A few of the more intelligent party organs had run Hiram’s picture too, but the damage was past repair.

Hiram had accepted his explanation with a wintry smile. “Accidents will happen . . . Forget it, Peter. Forget it, old friend. A temporary inconvenience, that’s all. After all, I *can* rewrite my speech and talk to the country about the —Wheat Board.”

“Hiram! This mustn’t come between us. I’ll do anything, Hiram! I’ll turn in my portfolio.”

“Unthinkable! Absolutely unthinkable, Peter! You’re making a mountain out of a molehill.”

They’d gone into the Cabinet meeting and not another word had been said about Family Allowances. Not a word.

“Well, gentlemen, we have a heavy agenda,” Hiram had said. “As you know, I have been planning to place radio and television under a separate Ministry. I think we are all agreed on the arguments in favour of this course. By channeling all the policies and—er, criticisms—pertaining to radio and television into a self-contained department of government we can, I hope, manage to save our national radio system while—if you don’t mind a facetious note—while still saving the Liberal-Conservative Party. I need hardly say that the new portfolio of Communications will be a difficult and delicate one, a portfolio which can be safely entrusted only to a Minister in whom the public reposes the highest confidence and esteem.”

“Hear! Hear!” Peter had cried. He wouldn’t have applied quite so lavish a phrase to young Saunders, but it *was* a murderous assignment. Might as well give the man as much heart for it as possible.

“I propose that the Ministry of Communications be placed in the strongest and most experienced and most respected hands at our disposal. I propose that the Ministry of Communications be incorporated into the present Ministry of Welfare.”

Peter hadn’t had a chance. There had been nothing to fight, nothing to get his teeth into. He’d found himself on his feet, gabbling like a child in a nightmare: “Undeserved honour . . . Only ambition to serve party and people in humble role of Minister of Welfare . . . Present responsibilities, while light and insignificant compared to great burdens of the Prime Minister, already proving great tax on limited abilities . . . Magnificent challenge and magnificent opportunities inherent in national radio and television only fully realized by man of youth and new horizons . . . Overwhelmed by new earnest of Prime Minister’s confidence and generosity, but . . . but . . . but . . .”

For a wild panic-stricken instant he had considered making an out-and-out break. For one desolate moment the ashes of the draft-Rackstraw movement lay there cold and heaped on the conference table. He glanced at the Minister of Finance and then at the Minister of Agriculture, and they turned their eyes away without mercy or remembrance.

“. . . altogether too modest, Peter.” The Prime Minister had sealed it finally with a bland smile. And one by one they’d moved around the table to shake Peter’s hand and feel upon it the chilly dew of doom.

“I can’t possibly see Harvard,” Peter Rackstraw repeated. But the secretary lingered, too patient to be impolite, too proud to be deferential.

“Mr. Harvard says it’s an urgent policy matter.”

Rackstraw massaged his mahogany temples again. “I simply cannot see him,” he said feebly. But the spectre of disaster was not so imminent that it had deprived him of the power to reason. “Very well, then,” he said. “I’ll see him.”

He had seen Harvard only twice before. He did not like Harvard’s flamboyant red ties. He did not like Harvard’s cool, intellectual manner. He did not like Harvard’s high half-bald head. He did not like Harvard’s deceptive status as the deceptive symbol of the deceptive CBC. He did not

like Harvard, in brief, as the heir and harbinger of a world he, Peter Rackstraw, never made.

"Well! well! Harvard!" he said. "How nice to see you."

"I'm sorry to trouble you, sir," Harvard said.

This was better. "You *should* be sorry, Harvard," Peter murmured severely. "I don't propose to put up with this sort of thing. I'm afraid if you insist on barging in like this we won't get along at all well."

"No, sir," Harvard said.

"In fact," Peter announced ominously, "we might find it impossible to get along at all."

"I quite understand," Harvard agreed sorrowfully. "I resign."

Peter floated off into an ionosphere of private torment. Everything hung there, detached and upside down; his whole career crouched and soaring in the great bath of space like an embryo translucent in a womb, and this wretched Harvard stabbing and poking from afar.

"You can't!" Peter cried in alarm.

"I'm not a coward," Harvard said quietly. "But I do know when I'm licked."

"What are you getting at, man?" One month, dear God, one month! Even in the Cabinet they'd have given him more than a month. A year at least! If he could stall the crisis off for a year—two years would be a triumph—there'd be some hope left.

"I resign, sir."

"Benjamin, my boy!"

"Bertram."

"Bertram, my boy! I won't hear of it. Tell me what's the trouble."

"Do you really want to know, sir?"

"If it's policy—yes," Peter said. "If it's an executive decision, any matter of routine—no. Make your own decision, Harvard, and stick to it and if your decision is right I'll back you till Hell freezes over!"

"I don't know whether this is policy or executive," Harvard said unhappily.

"Make your decision!" Peter repeated staunchly. "I don't even want to hear about it."

"But you *will* hear about it, sir," Harvard insisted dismally.

"Good!" Peter said. "Damned good. They'll soon see where *I* stand. Well"—he rose and put an arm on Harvard's shoulder—"thanks for dropping in."

"I think you'd better see the letter and judge for yourself, sir." Harvard remained rooted before the desk.

"What letter?" Peter asked petulantly. "Do you know how many letters come into Welfare alone? Do you know how many letters come into Communications? I can't possibly give my personal attention to them all. Harvard! You have my absolute confidence. You have my unqualified support. But I simply cannot undertake to read your mail."

"This letter," Harvard announced bleakly, "is from Garfield Smith."

"OH." Peter was conscious of the sudden note of enfeeblement. "*The* Garfield Smith," he sniffed with defiance and hauteur.

"Here it is, sir."

Peter read.

> Mr. Bertram Harvard, Chairman, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Ottawa, Ont.
> Dear Sir:
>
> Further to our conversation of recent date, I have been able to review my position with respect to the proposed Trans-Canada Network broadcast of the home games of the Queens d'Amour ladies softball team next June, July and August.
>
> For the complete facilities of the Trans-Canada Network during this period I am now prepared to offer $200,000 (two hundred thousand dollars). The time desired is the hours of eight to ten p.m. each Wednesday night, beginning on the second Wednesday in June and extending through a consecutive period of thirteen weeks.
>
> The proposed sponsors are the Chlorobreath Chewing Gum Company Limited of Canada; Winged Victory of Samothrace Deodorant, Inc.; and *True Blue Revelations Magazine*. The proposed programme, which has already been outlined to you in a

personal interview, will take the form of live actuality broadcasts of sporting events of wide national interest.

I understand that sustaining programmes of relatively low listener appeal now occupy the broadcasting periods mentioned in this tender. I understand also that these sustaining programmes have been maintained only at considerable expense to the Corporation and to the public which does not listen to them. I look forward to your earliest convenient decision on this opportunity to replace them with a profitable programme of assured following.

Yours truly,
Garfield Smith

cc. Hon. William Farnbrough, M.P.
Mrs. Clarabelle Prentiss, M.P.
M. Lucien Chartrand, M.P.

"He's sent a black to Farnbrough," Peter said weakly. "That's hardly fair, you know. He might have waited until he had our reply."

"He has our reply, sir," Bertram said.

"He has? Now look here, Harvard. If you've gone and committed the government to . . ."

"I've said no. That's why I think I'd better resign and get it over with."

"I won't hear of it. Why should anybody resign?"

"I've known Garfield Smith for more than twenty years, sir. No, that's not true. I knew him more than twenty years ago; which means a good deal more. I don't mind fighting him, Mr. Rackstraw. I think I'd enjoy fighting him. But I wonder, sir, if the government . . ."

"Now look, Harvard," Peter huffed, "I don't like that. I don't like that at all. We fought Smith and his crowd for nearly twenty years. Why, even the Conservative-Liberals stood them off in the few months they had in office. They've been after the CBC's scalp for two generations. Where have they got?"

"Then you support my decision, sir?" The words were an ejaculation of gratitude.

Rackstraw rubbed his temples. He pushed his swivel chair away and rose to his full height. "I did not accept this office," he said, "to preside over the

liquidation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation."

"It will come up in the committee," Harvard reminded him doggedly. "Mrs. Prentiss and Chartrand are both members. Mr. Farnbrough will probably take it to the floor of the House."

"Why do you think it necessary to tell these things to me?" Peter said reproachfully. "I have been in public life for twenty years."

"I'm sorry, sir," Harvard said fervently. "Particularly about what I said about quitting. Your courage puts me to shame, Mr. Rackstraw."

Peter smiled forgivingly.

"I can't tell you how much your decision means to me, sir."

"Decision?" Peter repeated nervously. "Ah, yes. Harvard"—he paused —"we who are in the public service never really make our own decisions. The public makes them for us, in the long run."

"Of course, sir," Harvard said respectfully. "But it means a lot in a case like this to have one's judgment confirmed."

"Judgment?" Peter repeated. "Judgment! Let's be clear on this, Harvard: It's *I* who am dependent on *your* judgment."

"I understand that, sir," Harvard said less happily. "But . . ."

Peter threw an arm around his shoulder. "A good talk, old man. Most useful to us both. Remember what I said: Steer a steady course, stick with it and, by God if you're right, I'll be behind you till Hell freezes over!"

When he was alone again, he put both elbows on the desk and made a cradle for his head with his long square fingers. He rubbed and rubbed and in a while most of the pain was gone again.

10

Garfield Smith pushed away the evening paper with a grimace of disgust. Two lousy paragraphs at the bottom of a running story on page seven: “Replying to a question by Lucien Chartrand (L-C, Montpellier, Que.) Welfare and Communications Minister Peter Rackstraw confirmed the fact that the CBC had refused an offer of two hundred thousand dollars for the use of a combined radio and television network next summer. Rackstraw said the offer had been made by Garfield Smith, Toronto publishing and radio magnate, who planned to use the time for broadcasting and televising the home games of a ladies’ softball team he acquired recently. ‘The only time which could be made available in the quantities desired by Mr. Smith would be on Wednesday nights,’ Rackstraw told the House. ‘While it is true that there would be a substantial saving to the CBC and to the taxpayers if Mr. Smith’s offer were accepted, it is the government’s opinion that the cultural programmes known as CBC Wednesday Night perform a useful public service.’ Rackstraw made an unsuccessful attempt to provoke a full-scale debate on the vexed and ubiquitous question of radio and television control when he said: ‘No doubt our friends on the other side of the House will challenge the wisdom of our ruling. Although their precise attitude is still disguised by two generations of fog, I believe I am correct in saying that, as the historic voice of Big Business, they would welcome a transfer to private hands of the public assets vested in our national radio and television system.’

“Opposition Leader William Farnbrough interrupted only long enough to say: ‘In its attitude toward radio and television, as in all affairs, the Conservative-Liberal Party will continue to be guided by one consideration and one consideration only: the public interest. For instruction concerning the public interest the Minister of Welfare and Communications does well to turn to Her Majesty’s Opposition; I suggest, however, that we can save a good deal of the House’s valuable time if I deliver the lesson to him in private.’ Rackstraw joined in the burst of laughter.”

Laughter, by God! Thirty thousand dollars for their lousy campaign fund and they spend it on gag writers. A great pillar of freedom, Bill Farnbrough, a staunch and fearless champion of individual rights and enterprise! Get the band wagon rolling and he’d be back on with both feet, but get it rolling by yourself, brother, get it rolling by yourself.

He pressed a buzzer. “Potts? Can you bring me up to date on LIGHT? Good . . . Five minutes, then.”

He took a folder marked “Costs, Queens d’Amour” from the top of his in-basket and inspected it with a troubled eye.

First instalment, park rental: $5,000. Material for uniforms: $2,200. Long-distance telephones, Cairo, Algiers, Karachi, Casablanca, Jerusalem, Hong Kong: $838.

Hong Kong! He stabbed the buzzer venomously. “Peterson! What in God’s name ever gave you the idea you’d get a Mohammedan infielder in Hong Kong? . . . Well, watch it, man, watch it!

“Baghdad? How the Hell should I know what religion they’ve got in Baghdad? You don’t have to phone Baghdad to find out, though, Peterson.

“Look, we’ve been through that before . . . I know they don’t play softball. They can learn, can’t they? . . . Certainly try Istanbul. We must have a trade commissioner there . . . I don’t care how unusual they keep telling you it is . . . Just explain what you want and if they give you any arguments tell them I’m perfectly willing to take it up personally with the Minister of External Affairs . . . But don’t make any more calls to China, Peterson.”

Special expenses, Hubert Rodney, Copenhagen and Oslo: $7,229. His hand shook as he reached for the Dictaphone.

Letter to Hubert Rodney comma Hotel Olafdorf comma Olso comma Norway period

> Dear Hubert colon paragraph
>
> Naturally I was disappointed that the man in Copenhagen turned us down period But the Oslo man sounds okay period Paragraph
>
> As you know comma Hubert comma I want you to have the very best of everything period Money comma within reason comma is no object period But I do think the man could be a little easier on us period Have you mentioned that we’re considering doing a story on him and his work in the *Guardian* query Have you mentioned that when we get the team going and the radio and television coverage firmed up comma this whole business is going to make headlines all over North America query This is a big thing for science period It’s my guess he’s not the kind of man who’d want to treat a big scientific project as a straight commercial

proposition period Have a talk to him and if he seems receptive try to establish a ceiling of around two or three thousand dollars at the most Paragraph

I notice you're still at the hotel period Don't you think you'd be more comfortable if you took a room somewhere with a good solid Norwegian family query It's up to you comma of course comma but I'd feel a lot better if I knew you were getting good regular home-cooked meals Paragraph

He pressed the buzzer. "Try Algeria," he snapped.

I'm delighted comma of course comma that the doctor thinks he might have you back here by August period It would be still better if you could be here for the start of the season comma but we can't expect miracles period By August the whole thing ought to be rolling nicely period Paragraph

As we expected comma the radio and television end is going pretty slowly period But I'm absolutely confident that common sense will prevail period In the meantime the whole project is proving terribly expensive period It can't possibly show black ink unless we get the network period If by any chance that falls through comma I'm in for the biggest bath of my life period Paragraph

It still sounded too impersonal, almost commercial. He had tried for the essential note of human feeling—the note that meant the difference between employees who were merely *with* you and employees who were *for* you—but he had not been able to disguise the faint feeling of distaste. For a moment he thought of making a reference to the Ty Cobb baseball and tying it in with a reminder of the warmth of simple sentiment. But he could think of nothing on that particular subject which Hubert had not already heard. He finished the letter:

Take care of yourself comma Hubert comma and write as often as you feel like period I miss you a lot period I guess I don't have to tell you that I've never looked on our association as a business association period You've been a real friend all the way comma Hubert period We're going to do big things together period I'm as excited as a kid comma for both of us period All the best comma Hubert period

He'd sign it simply Garfield, he decided. He frowned momentarily and picked up the Dictaphone again.

P.S. I hope you'll take my advice on this comma and I know you won't mind my being frank period Gertrude won't do period Your feelings about your mother do you credit and Gertrude is a good comma solid name that anybody can be proud of period I wish you'd reconsider Honeybear period In my book comma Honeybear's got real dignity and charm comma different without being too different period.

"Come in, Potts. Come right in."

"Good morning, Mr. Smith."

"Well, Potts," Garfield smiled. "How's this little crusade of yours progressing?"

Potts began an experimental smile but abandoned it. "Very well indeed," he said in a businesslike voice. "Quildinning tells me—on the quiet, of course, for I do agree that we editors and publishers can serve the public best by being heard but not seen—that Dr. Bonnisteel has been a tower of strength. It was she, you know, who insisted on streamlining the constitution. A very forward step."

"What about the constitution?"

"Seventeen words, utterly precise and utterly clear: 'The League pledges itself to struggle without fear and without remission against immoral, corrupt and un-Canadian influences.' "

"Umhum."

"The response has been overwhelming. On the first mailing alone, they received assurances of support from eleven Orange Lodges, seventeen branches of the Knights of Columbus and two field parties of the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Jehovah's Witnesses, unfortunately, were in jail for distributing subversive literature in Quebec and were ruled ineligible. A number of schools have made the pledge a regular part of the morning devotional period."

"There have been no reverses or disappointments at all, then?" Garfield asked.

"Canon Chantleigh caught pneumonia while acting as official marshal on the Gypsy Rose Lee picket line. He's fully recovered, however. A real

Tartar, Canon Chantleigh."

"Can you give me a list of the practical achievements?"

"Well, Miss Lee, of course, was forced to cancel her appearances both in Toronto and Montreal. *Ulysses* is no longer admitted to Canada and all the outstanding copies have been removed from most of the public libraries."

"Hell, Potts!" Garfield interrupted impatiently. "*Ulysses* was banned twenty years ago!"

"Quite right; its reinstatement was a particularly dismaying case of backsliding. I understand favourable action is pending on a number of the Shaw plays. And of course Erskine Caldwell is absolutely out."

"Anything else?"

"Three members of the Springwater Symphony were refused entry at the border. Dr. Kibblewhite did yeoman work on that one. Out-and-out-Communists, every one of them!"

"What about radio and television?" Garfield asked abruptly.

"They're watching the whole thing very closely, Mr. Smith, very closely indeed."

"I'll bet!" Garfield growled with sudden bitterness. "Did you hear Citizens' Forum last week?"

"No, I didn't, sir,"

"Well, I did, Potts. That man Halliday was in the chair again. They were talking about the Canadian divorce laws; the usual crowd of trained long-hairs, I needn't tell you who else. Oh, there were a couple of well-meaning fuddy-duddies among them, but as usual they got swamped. Our archaic divorce laws, Potts. Our stupid divorce laws. Our cruel divorce laws, our hypocritical divorce laws. Make divorce easy, Potts. Make it painless. Hand divorces out with box tops. And that"—Garfield's small voice struggled toward a deep crescendo, like thunder heard on a sixteen-millimetre sound track—"is what's going into the Canadian home, Potts! That's what the man who built the Canadian home is paying taxes to have taught to his children! Break up the home, Potts! Send the husband off to Florida with a blonde; send the mother back to the sweat shop; send the son to the pool-room and the gambling-dive; send the daughter out street-walking!"

Potts' eyes followed his employer back and forth across the carpet, like a cat trapped in a small room with a circling terrier.

"LIGHT!" Garfield wheeled and thrust a finger under Potts' nose. "Those people are living in a dream world, Potts! Joyce, Shaw, Caldwell, Commie fiddle-players—balls, Potts! Balls! I'm not a church man, Potts"—he paused for the briefest flicker of an instant, as though half-expecting an interruption—"but if I were, by God! I'd know that all the Joyces and all the Caldwells can't do one one-thousandth of the damage to the cause of Christian ideals that's being done right here, from within, almost every hour of the day—and by people that you and I are paying to do it! Paying to do it, Potts, and supplying with a place to do it from!"

Potts gulped.

Garfield placed a forgiving arm on his shoulder. "I'm sorry, Eustace," he said softly, "I got carried away. You see, Eustace, the kind of home I came from, the kind of bringing up I had—it's hard to explain. When I think of the millions of kids out there and this vicious, malicious thing they're trying to do to the very foundations of the home—not just this talk about cheap divorce, not just this talk about there not being any God—not just this talk about what a fiendish monster Santa Claus is—not just this talk about crawling in and out of bed—not just this talk that if you go out and rob a bank it's all Freud's fault—the whole pattern, Potts! the whole slimy pattern—Potts, it fairly sickens me!"

"I'll have a quiet word with Quildinning right away," Potts said uncertainly.

"I don't know. I doubt if Quildinning and his crowd are up to the task. Wait! I've just remembered something."

"Yes, sir?" Potts said anxiously.

"Wait. Eustace, I've never mentioned this to a soul. I mention it to you in the strictest confidence. You know how some ambitious young fellows save the first dollar they ever earned, out of sentiment? Potts, I saved my first *thousand* dollars. I put it in a separate bank account. I said, this thousand dollars is for something really big. It's going back to my country some day, I said, back to the country that made it possible for a kid like me to get a thousand dollars in the first place. For some important struggling cause: that's what it's earmarked for, I said. Well, Eustace, it's still there. It's grown to ten thousand dollars—interest and a lucky investment or two. Eustace, you're going to give that ten thousand dollars to LIGHT in the name of an anonymous well-wisher."

"Mr. Smith!" Potts breathed reverently.

“Wait. I’m still not satisfied those people are on the ball. I don’t want them using my ten thousand dollars to play hide-and-seek with fiddle-players from the American corn belt or get up petitions about books nobody reads anyway. I want them to use it where it will count. They get it on one single condition: so long as the money lasts it’s to be used to pay for making tape recordings of every network programme carried by the CBC and films of every telecast. Is that clear?”

“Perfectly clear, Mr. Smith.”

“They should have thought of it themselves. You can’t keep on top of a thing this big without a system. The mere fact they all missed that destructive forum on divorce is proof enough of that.”

“I’m sure this will be of the utmost help, Mr. Smith.”

“It may accomplish nothing,” Garfield said wearily. “But somewhere, perhaps, there’s a little family, beset by doubt and uncertainty, crying for something, Potts, crying out in trouble, pleading for rescue from this ceaseless propaganda that says the family is a joke, pleading for rescue, Potts . . .” His voice trailed off and the room was as still as a chapel.

In a moment Potts tip-toed away. Garfield sat on in silence for a while, remembering. The values that lasted were the values that came first. “I won’t let you down, Mum,” he whispered. “I won’t let you down, Dad!”

When his heart had grown completely calm he picked up the telephone. “Get me ten thousand dollars in cash, Peterson,” he said. “I’ll sign a cheque on the *True Blue Revelations* account.”

11

Yellow against the grey of the January twilight, the street lamp on the corner shone through the inverted lettering on the second-storey window.

The interior of the small grey room reflected the same air of radiance triumphant over a dark and hostile environment, of truth's ability to make itself intelligible in spite of all handicaps and distortions. The room's utilitarian contents consisted of half a dozen second-hand chairs, a long wooden table, two grey steel filing cabinets, Canon Chantleigh's 1912 Underwood typewriter mounted on Dr. Kibblewhite's 1902 rosewood secretary, and a brand-new mimeographing machine. Its aesthetic contents began and ended with a square of brown battleship linoleum and the chintz shade Hilary had supplied for the single hundred-watt light bulb in the middle of the ceiling. But if the geography was commonplace, the climate was full of expectation. Canon Chantleigh had only just brought his happy fidgeting under control and now his grey, oblong weathered head was tilted above the table like a pebbled glass decanter, awaiting only a signal to begin measuring out its mellowness and strength. Dr. Kibblewhite's new teeth gleamed out of his round russet face in an impatient smile. Michael Quildinning was a living monument to the atomic theory, his body a comely pillar of neutrons silently straining for release. Only Weldon Carruthers seemed relaxed, but even this was deceptive; he looked up and met Hilary's eyes with the fierce urbanity of a caged and drowsing grizzly bear.

"Shall we begin?" he suggested politely. Hilary told herself that the hint of challenge was all in her imagination. They trusted her, even Carruthers; this was at once the depth of her guilt and the height of her hope. Only another month, two months at most and they themselves would see the absurdity of it and then they would part quietly, the latent harm undone, with dignity and honour all round. It was growing more absurd all the time; surely they'd begin to see—perhaps tonight. In the meantime she could go on trying to apply a brake.

“Well, yes.” She smiled dismally. “Yes—I suppose we better had. I propose that we just get through with what we can this evening and put the rest over until next month.”

“My dear Madam Chairman!” Canon Chantleigh decanted the tiniest dollop of reproof. “My dear Dr. Bonnisteel!”

“Just trying to spare us old codgers, Chantleigh.” Dr. Kibblewhite thrust his russet face toward her from the other side, risked his new teeth in a sudden smile, recovered control of them at the last possible instant, and added: “Doesn’t realize that at our age the only possible motto is: ‘So little time, so much to do!’ ”

From the end of the table Weldon Carruthers’ dark, smouldering eyes regarded her with silent interest.

Michael Quildinning quivered hastily: “Gollywhiz, I’ve already taken the liberty of ordering sandwiches and coffee for later. I’m sure none of us expects to get home early.”

“Splendid!” Hilary said quickly. “Perhaps Mr. Quildinning will begin with the report on membership.”

“You all have your copies,” Quildinning said. “With the chairman’s permission I won’t read it all. The significant thing, of course, is that we have now reached and nicely passed the minimum target. With all the organizations that have indicated direct support or sympathy we can now claim that some seven million eight hundred thousand Canadians have endorsed our objectives. In other words, more than half the Canadian people are prepared to march with the legions of LIGHT.”

Canon Chantleigh and Dr. Kibblewhite drummed the table with the tips of their fingers. Hilary’s hands made a series of bleak taps. Weldon Carruthers stirred happily.

“Anything from the sub-committee on necklines in commercial and advertising art?” Hilary inquired.

“A brief but encouraging interim report,” Quildinning said. “Mrs. Price-Duncan of the Order of Anglo-Saxon Women and Mrs. Janciewicz of the Association of New Canadian Homemakers are working in the closest co-operation. Unfortunately they each had a national convention to attend this month, which has retarded their discussions to some extent. They were two and three-sixteenths inches apart when they began these discussions, I might say, and they are now within five-sixteenths of an inch of complete and harmonious agreement.”

“Hear, hear!” Dr. Kibblewhite murmured.

“Have you a report for the special committee on Mom Badger, Doctor?”

“I have indeed,” Dr. Kibblewhite said happily, unfolding a sheaf of papers. “Quite a lengthy report, I’m afraid. But then,” he added wistfully, “I suppose you only want its substance?”

“I’m sure we should have the whole thing,” Hilary said encouragingly.

“We’re all familiar with the background,” Weldon Carruthers cut in nervously from the end of the table.

Canon Chantleigh proffered a drop of emulsifier. “Just the essentials, perhaps, Kibblewhite.”

“I believe I can report a complete and unqualified victory.” Dr. Kibblewhite had become excited and his voice vibrated like a wire in the wind. “It wasn’t easy, I can tell you. Without the tape recordings I—well, I hope I needn’t tell you that I am not one to admit defeat with readiness, but without the recordings, I don’t know, I just don’t know.”

“I’m sure we’re all eager to hear of your actual progress,” Weldon Carruthers interrupted. Dr. Kibblewhite paused and glared at him. “I mean,” Carruthers said more tactfully, “it’s such an important case—a test case, you might say.”

“Quite right, Carruthers—a test case.” Dr. Kibblewhite, now fully in command of the situation, relaxed. “That’s why the recordings were so vital.”

“Shall I take notes, Dr. Bonnisteel?” Quildinning asked.

“Yes,” Hilary said, “I think you’d better.”

“Right at the outset I found myself arguing with this young producer about that one passage of dialogue. You recall the passage from the December seventeenth broadcast. Mom Badger’s stepdaughter, Susan, has just been for a Saturday afternoon motor-cycle ride with the young interne. As they part at the door Susan thanks him. He lingers a moment and says:

“ ‘Do you like motor-cycles, Susan?’

“ ‘Yes, Byron,’ she says, ‘very much.’

“ ‘You know, Susan,’ the interne says. ‘In some ways *you* remind me of a motor-cycle.’

“ ‘How, Byron?’ Susan asks.

" 'Oh, it's funny, Susan—you're so kind of strong and carefree and ready to surge and leap ahead with life if you'd only give yourself a chance.' "

Canon Chantleigh coughed. "We all remember, Kibblewhite."

"Well," Dr. Kibblewhite thrust out his russet chin, "would you believe it: when I taxed that young producer he tried to pretend he didn't know what I was talking about. He sent down for the manuscript and started reading it back to me word for word, without any of the inflections—inflections I need hardly say that I haven't tried to repeat in *my* reading. 'I don't understand. Dr. Kibblewhite,' he kept repeating. 'I really don't understand what your group found objectionable.' "

"Ah, I see," Canon Chantleigh chuckled virtuously. "And then you played the tape back to him?"

"Nothing of the kind," Dr. Kibblewhite said triumphantly. "I demanded to see the programme director of the corporation and I played the tape back to both of them. Oh, the programme director tried to pretend he was too busy to come and listen at first. But when I mentioned the name of LIGHT he found the time, you may depend on that. He was on the very next plane from Ottawa."

"And was there still any difference of opinion?" Hilary asked.

"Oh, none whatever! The programme director saw at once how utterly indecent the whole thing had sounded on the air. He seemed genuinely distressed. Explained the difficulty they're always having with young and over-eager actors, and young and over-eager producers, the steps they take to guard against this sort of thing. Really a most co-operative man; doing his very best to do a very difficult job, I'm quite satisfied."

"And then?"

"On my suggestion he allowed me to see the next five episodes of Mom Badger. I told him in no uncertain terms of our concern for the direction the programme appeared to be taking."

"Did you go into the Anton Devlin episodes?" Hilary asked.

"Of course." Dr. Kibblewhite looked mildly hurt. "That was the purpose of my mission, as you'll recall. And I found that our fears were amply justified. The mysterious Anton Devlin *was* the defaulting husband of Mom Badger's other daughter, Elaine. His purpose in luring Susan to Stanley Park *was* exactly what we had feared: blackmail and worse. Susan *had* fallen in

love with him. The mysterious person who kept leaving messages for Devlin *was* the leader of a narcotics ring."

Canon Chantleigh wore a look of fascinated frustration. "I've *always* found it hard to follow," he complained.

"Well, to cut a long story short," Dr. Kibblewhite went on, "the programme director and I spent several days discussing the whole thing in the friendliest possible spirit. Oh, I don't say we saw eye-to-eye on everything at once. For moral support I found it necessary to call upon a number of our other members. Mrs. Carmichael of the Young and Younger Matrons Society was a particularly staunch ally."

"And to cut . . ."

Dr. Kibblewhite glared at Weldon Carruthers again.

"It was agreed ultimately that Mom Badger's daughter Susan, whose temporary disappearance in Stanley Park was essential for dramatic purposes, should be lost there while leading her troop of girl guides. In that way no possible suspicion will be cast on her moral fibre even for an instant, much less for the period of five weeks in which the CBC had originally proposed to leave her—ah—rectitude in doubt. She is ultimately to be rescued by the young interne, on foot. Anton Devlin is to be revealed as a young under-cover agent of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police anti-subversive squad."

"Gollywhiz!" Michael Quildinning said warmly, "I move a vote of thanks to Dr. Kibblewhite!"

Dr. Kibblewhite lowered his eyes.

"Seconded!" Canon Chantleigh and Carruthers said in unison.

"Carried." Hilary poured herself a glass of water. "Canon Chantleigh, will you now please report on the Preliminary Pilgrimage to Ottawa?"

"The other reports have been so splendid that I'm not at all proud of the outcome of *my* little mission." Canon Chantleigh beamed proudly and decanted his head at its most generous angle.

"Your instructions were that I should see only two men—the leader of the Opposition and the Minister of Welfare and Communications. I am happy to say"—Canon Chantleigh straightened the decanter, as though in response to a hasty "when"—"that both the government and the Opposition see the need for LIGHT and acknowledged it without hesitation."

“Hear! Hear!” Dr. Kibblewhite said.

“I called first on Mr. Farnbrough, the leader of the Conservative-Liberals. He was already fully conversant with the existence and the aims of our group. Farnbrough, I should say, is a man of the highest perception, the utmost concern for the moral climate of our times. Repeatedly he reminded me that he himself has five growing daughters. He spoke with great feeling of some of the so-called literature that is being offered to the young people of Canada. He said quite frankly that he could not understand how the Liberal-Conservative government, which as he pointed out has been in office for twenty-four of the last twenty-five years, had been so indifferent to its responsibilities in this regard.”

“Did you happen to mention the Wells broadcasts?” Weldon Carruthers interrupted.

“Ah, yes. I’m afraid some of us who were so critical of Mr. Farnbrough and his party at the time of the Wells-Russell broadcasts may have been just a little unfair to them. As Farnbrough points out, it was not altogether reasonable to expect the Conservative-Liberals to clean up, in less than a year, a whole state of mind that the Liberal-Conservatives had been fostering, or at any rate tolerating, for some two decades.”

“Then,” Carruthers persisted, “he thought the Wells-Russell broadcasts were all right?”

“Absolutely not! He was as horrified as anyone else. He’d have sacked that chap at the CBC himself—what was his name, Bergenson?—except that the Liberal-Conservatives attacked him so venomously that Farnbrough felt he had to keep the man on in common humanity.”

“And common political necessity,” Carruthers reflected aloud.

“Now. Now.” Canon Chantleigh measured out a helping of charity. “Farnbrough not only invited me to come to his people for help: he urged me to. I rather promised him that we’d be coming soon—frankly, I had the Mom Badger affair in mind—but I suppose there’s no need for that now, is there?”

“None whatever,” Dr. Kibblewhite said firmly.

“So much the better,” Canon Chantleigh said. “For, by Jove, when I went to call on Rackstraw, he was equally helpful.”

“The Minister knew about LIGHT too?” Weldon Carruthers inquired.

"Even better than Farnbrough. He questioned me with the keenest interest about our membership and our precise relationship with our various affiliated groups. I won't say he sounded as enthusiastic as Farnbrough; as a matter of fact he wasn't feeling at all well that day and seemed to have something burdensome on his mind. But he was quite as sympathetic—oh quite!"

"Then," Carruthers said, "he promised to co-operate?"

Canon Chantleigh held his head in a state of suspension. "Rackstraw was frank with me—almost to the point of indiscretion. I'm sure he won't mind my being equally frank with you.

"He rubbed his hands across his temples—he was continually doing that; as I say, I think the poor man must have been under a great strain lately: 'Canon Chantleigh,' he said, 'I have four growing sons at home. This nation has no political office within its gift which could entice me, willingly, to allow one word to be said or one image to be shown over the stations of the CBC which might bring harm to them.'

" 'I understand, Mr. Rackstraw,' I replied.

" 'Canon Chantleigh,' he said, 'this may sound absurd to you. But do you know who is the loneliest—and in some ways the most helpless—man in all of Canada?'

" 'No,' I replied.

" 'A federal cabinet minister,' he said. 'No, let me explain,' he went on, and I must say he sounded as though he had thought it out very carefully and knew exactly what he was saying. 'On the one hand his wishes are subject—of necessity and quite rightly—to the wishes of the Cabinet, which means in effect to the wishes of his Prime Minister. On the other hand his actions—at least his apparent actions—are at the mercy of the actions of whatever branch of the Civil Service for which he, as a cabinet minister, is responsible.' "

Weldon Carruthers sat forward. "What was he driving at?"

"Exactly what I asked him," Canon Chantleigh said. "Although in perhaps more diplomatic language. Let me paraphrase: Rackstraw has the greatest respect and admiration for the Prime Minister; between the two there is nothing but complete loyalty. But the Prime Minister is an older man, concerned more perhaps with day-to-day exigencies than with what to him may seem rather fine points of morality. As an example of the cordial difference of viewpoint that can sometimes occur between a cabinet minister

and a Prime Minister, Rackstraw mentioned the Hilda Morganson broadcasts of a few years ago. As we all remember, they were a low point in taste up to that particular time and as we all know they resulted in an election. Rackstraw tells me that the instant he heard about the broadcasts he went to the Prime Minister and begged him to make a public apology to the listening public and ask for the resignation of the CBC chairman—it was Dobbs then, wasn't it? The Prime Minister said Rackstraw was making a mountain of a molehill. Rackstraw said no: the CBC had delivered an unforgivable affront to the entire Christian public and must make amends at once. The Prime Minister refused to take his advice. The next thing he knew the whole thing had blown up in the House and the Liberal-Conservatives were out of office."

"All right," Weldon Carruthers said. "But now Rackstraw is in charge."

"Not entirely. Rackstraw says he practically had to beg the Prime Minister to give him the Communications portfolio. He's known all along that it's going to be a headache, to use his own term. But since his own ideas about the implications for our young people are so strong he felt he simply had to ask for a chance to tackle it himself."

"Anyway," Carruthers said, "it seems we can count on a more enlightened policy in the future."

"I'm sure of that," Canon Chantleigh said. "Rackstraw asks only that we be patient. It was the Prime Minister's first intention to give the Communications portfolio to a young and inexperienced man named Saunders, but Rackstraw . . ."

"Why should we be patient?" Carruthers demanded angrily. "*I* have no intention of being patient. If my Church had been founded on patience, we'd all—you, Canon Chantleigh, included—be saying our prayers toward Mecca."

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Carruthers?" Hilary asked in a tone of innocent inquiry.

The long canister of Canon Chantleigh's head was rigid and perfectly upright. Dr. Kibblewhite moved back in alarm, as though fearing to be splashed. He fixed Carruthers with a wrathful stare.

"Gollywhiz, gentlemen!" Michael Quildinning pleaded. "No sectarianism!"

"I'm sure," Hilary said soothingly, "that nothing of the sort was meant. Was there, Canon Chantleigh?" She closed her eyes, praying silently for the

blessing of strife.

Chantleigh's thin hands clutched the edge of the table, whitening around the knuckles.

The room was absolutely still. The dove of discord fluttered overhead and Hilary held her breath lest it be frightened away.

"My apologies, Canon Chantleigh," Carruthers said with an effort. "Please go on." The moment of opportunity was gone, Hilary conceded; there was nothing to do but hope the next one would bear more fruit.

Canon Chantleigh went on, also with an effort. "The new chairman of the CBC, Harvard, is not Rackstraw's appointment. He was appointed by the Prime Minister. Rackstraw asks only that we give him a fair chance to reach a working understanding with Harvard or, if that should prove necessary, to persuade the Prime Minister to replace him with a man of Rackstraw's own choice."

"In other words," Carruthers interjected, "Rackstraw has no real confidence in Harvard? Or possibly he's preparing an out for himself?"

"Shall we put it this way? Rackstraw is not the sort of man to condone breaches of the public trust. He as much as intimated that he means to keep a very close eye on Harvard and that if Harvard proves irresponsible Rackstraw will act without hesitation."

"Did you mention the Code?"

"I certainly did. Rackstraw's interest was so keen that he urged us to take it straight to Harvard. He volunteered to make the appointment personally."

"Gollywhiz!" Quildinning said, "let's agree on that immediately."

"I move that Dr. Bonnisteel, as our chairman, make the first official contact with the chairman of the CBC," Dr. Kibblewhite said.

"Seconded."

"Seconded by Canon Chantleigh," Hilary said mechanically. "Any other motions? Thank you, gentlemen." She consulted her agenda again. "The next order of business is the Code itself. Mr. Quildinning?"

"Mr. Carruthers and I propose that the provisions of the Code on Broadcasting and Television Standards be grouped under three main headings. One: Rights of Rebuttal. Two: Definition of a Minority. Three: Distinctions Between Freedom and Licence."

There was a light knock on the door.

“I think that must be the coffee and sandwiches,” Hilary said. “Shall we recess for lunch?”

Canon Chantleigh leaned across the table. “By the way, Kibblewhite, I had a most unusual experience this morning. One of those poll chaps came around to my door. Asked me two of the most extraordinary questions I’ve ever heard. First, he said: To which of the following words do you react most strongly: Divanettes; Chaises Longues; Courtesans; Coquettes; Inamoratas; Queens d’Amour?”

“Dear me!” Dr. Kibblewhite said.

“Beggar wouldn’t tell me what he was driving at,” Canon Chantleigh said. “Then he asked me: Of the following women’s names, which do you find the most alluring: Jezebel; Gertrude; Honeybear?”

12

By the time the meeting was adjourned a blizzard had been set in motion outside. Weldon Carruthers drove the chairman home through the stormy silent night. He had known instinctively that she would resist the suggestion, but his well-organized mind had already prepared the answers to all her objections. It was a mere two blocks out of his way and Canon Chantleigh, who lived in the east end, would surely insist on driving her if his, Carruthers', invitation were not accepted. Cabs would be impossible to get and the streetcars invariably folded up in the first heavy snow; to the Toronto street cleaning department, the first real visitation of snow always came as an alien shock, as unsporting and uncalled-for as an eruption of lava from the top of the Rosedale hill.

He had only two things to say to her. He said the first as they entered his Austin Four. "Don't you think, Dr. Bonnisteel, that we should be getting things done a bit more quickly?"

He scarcely heard her answer. He did not press the point with her, for he was already pressing it within the turbulent fastness of his own soul. An hour or a day or a week or a month might mean little enough to Chantleigh and Kibblewhite, with most of what they conceived to be their good works behind them. It might mean even less to Quildinning, with most of his work still ahead. But to him, Carruthers, with half a lifetime lost in sloth and error and no more than a third of it left, the cry to haste was no less sacred than the cry of Love. Kibblewhite himself had used the phrase—"so little time, so much to do."

It was no longer a matter of personal redemption. Redemption was mercifully easy, once one saw the way. Nor was it a matter of atonement. The acceptance of truth was in itself atonement of falsehood. It came down now to a straight matter of days and years and minutes, and no one saw the desperate significance of days and years and minutes. Least of all, he reminded himself—remembering barely soon enough to be humble—those who had put their own days and years and minutes to the fullest and most significant use.

He had tried to convey it to the priest, to the bishop, even to the archbishop. The *Banner* was a great paper, one of the finest Catholic periodicals on the continent, and they all said he was a great editor and the

measure of his helplessness was that they insisted on talking to him as an editor and did not really listen to his soul.

"Well now, my son, perhaps you're right."

Don't say perhaps! his silent soul had cried. *Don't, don't say perhaps. Say that I am in sin or say that I am in grace, but spare me the torture of perhaps.*

He had tried to explain, to plead that there was a greater urgency upon men such as he. "Father, patience is well for you, whose roots go back through many generations. But what of me, Father, what of me?"

"God does not maintain a seniority system, my son."

A friendly, urbane smile, of course. And then the crisp invitation to return to the world of men of the world. "A very interesting issue this week. Very stimulating and provocative."

Perhaps words. *But-on-the-other-hand* words. "Father!" he had cried in agony. "The *Banner* is nothing! It is less than the sunny crooning of a child. Oh, it's true we played our part in the discussion over Wells and Russell and even gave some leadership. But this other thing can be so much bigger; is that all you have to say to me, that perhaps I'm right?"

"The church will not disapprove. I'm almost certain of that. You don't happen to have a cigarette, do you?"

"But will it approve?"

"Weldon, my son, what does your conscience say? Has it not spoken to you already?"

"I have accepted. It's not too late to back out, but my conscience has told me to accept."

"Well, if you want to ask me personally, I'd say there's not a thing in the world wrong with it. In matters bordering on the secular, perhaps"—again the syllables of aloofness: of shirking almost—"we need more give and take. This organization BRIGHT . . ."

"LIGHT, Father."

"May or may not achieve what you hope. But if it does no more than remind people that liberalism, like conservatism or fascism or communism or catholicism, must be judged finally on its performance, then it will have served a great purpose. Purely for the sake of argument, let us accept the terms of reference of those who do not believe as we do. In short, let's leave

God out of it; man still has an inescapable responsibility to man. If man encourages man to undermine and denigrate the conditions and conventions which have made his earthly life tolerable, then he will suffer here on earth, forgetting the hereafter. As for the question of the soul . . .”

“Why,” Weldon had been on the verge of protesting, “will you not admit me? Do you talk to the others like this: as though their faith were some uncertain new-found skill like laying bricks, requiring the cold measurements of the hod? How can I make it believed that I believe in every cell? How can I make it understood that the only question now is how to serve?”

Instead he had said: “Father, I had not hoped for the *Imprimatur*. May I take it that I have the *Nihil Obstat*?”

“A good way of putting it, Weldon. Let’s leave it there. I shall watch what happens with the utmost interest. I’ll see that the Cardinal himself is kept fully informed.”

It had not been quite so healing as a command, but it was better by far than the bleak evasions. “Will you, Father?” Weldon had said gratefully.

Now he was helping Dr. Bonnisteel from the car and it was time to say the second thing to her. He looked directly into her pretty young face, read again its cool intelligence, read again the pitiable uncertainty beneath. It was the face of a person one could sympathize with, even pray for, but could not wholly respect.

“Dr. Bonnisteel,” he said gently, “I’m sorry if I may have seemed a trifle critical. I’m sure you realize as well as I do that this is an absolutely vital and urgent undertaking. I’m sure you realize that nothing must”—he paused —“or shall, stand in its way.”

Their eyes met through the slanting ripples of snow. “Good-night, Dr. Bonnisteel,” Carruthers said politely.

13

"I implore you, gentlemen!" Peter Rackstraw rubbed his temples and looked around the table in the hope but not the expectation of support. "Freight rates are of secondary importance."

The Prime Minister smiled tolerantly. "Come, come, Peter!"

"I tell you," Rackstraw said desperately, "that man Chantleigh's a lunatic. He actually tried to persuade me that the CBC had put the younger generation in jeopardy by comparing a soap-opera heroine to a motor-cycle."

"Canon Chantleigh," the Prime Minister said severely, "represents a very large and responsible group of citizens."

"I assure you he received a respectful and attentive hearing," Peter broke in hurriedly. "By the way, I'm sure he's already been to Farnbrough."

"As is any citizen's right," the Prime Minister reminded him with an infuriating air of virtue. "Farnbrough can be troublesome in this matter only if the Minister of Communications permits the government to be committed to a troublesome position. I am confident we need not fear that."

Rackstraw persisted, like a man in a trance. "Chantleigh kept harking back all the way to Hilda Morganson." The Prime Minister flinched slightly. Peter went on quickly: "He seems to hold you personally responsible for the Hilda Morganson thing, Hiram. I kept assuring him that wasn't so, of course, but I couldn't seem to get the idea out of his head."

The Prime Minister flushed. He removed his heavy spectacles and placed them on the table. "Very well, we'll take a moment if you insist. It is your considered opinion that Communications should be made a one-man portfolio?"

"Yes, Hiram," Rackstraw said eagerly. "It's going to be infinitely larger and more delicate than any of us had foreseen. Besides, young Saunders deserves . . ."

"And it is my understanding that you desire to resign from the Welfare portfolio in order to give your undivided attention to Communications?"

"No, Mr. Prime Minister," Rackstraw said, alarmed and utterly hopeless. "No, sir. Naturally, the Cabinet's and the Prime Minister's wishes . . ."

"Very well then, gentlemen." The Prime Minister's gaze sauntered gently around the table, offering no challenges, but still available to any other gaze that cared to meet it. He smiled and sighed. "Very well, gentlemen, shall we proceed to freight rates?"

"I'm not disputing it at this point," Bertram Harvard said equably. "I just want to make sure I fully understand."

Hilary nodded glumly. They had been talking for no more than five minutes, and already she saw that wherever hope lay it did not lie here. Everything about him fairly shrieked of niceness, of splendid, incorruptible decency, of the doggedly open mind. He had spoken no word to betray either a sense of shock or outrage. He had simply listened with an air of gracious, courtly puzzlement, occasionally throwing in a suggestion of apology for his slowness to comprehend. His appearance was as dismaying as his manner. His grey eyes were soft, thoughtful and rather resigned—not altogether the eyes of a poet, Hilary thought, forgetting for the moment her impatience with people who generalized about poets. No, perhaps the eyes of a man who would like to be a poet but didn't quite dare try. He had a good strong, clean face and head, not unlike the bust of a youngish consul of Rome. But all the strength lay in purity of line; there was no toughness there at all, not the slightest hint of a geological fault. No, he would not fight. He would not believe in fighting.

"You interpret the Rights of Rebuttal in this way," Harvard was saying. "If any programme presented over our radio or television outlets shall be deemed—do you mind reading me the exact phrase?"

"Deemed to be in possible conflict with fundamental spiritual or ethical beliefs held by the majority of Canadians," Hilary said severely.

"Thank you. Then a spokesman for those majority beliefs shall be given at least five minutes immediately following that particular programme to . . ."

"To make whatever comments he considers appropriate." Hilary did her best to sound bitchy and imperious. She was still not ready to give up formally and completely on Mr. Harvard. To do so would have been to accept a total defeat before the struggle was really begun. If LIGHT captured the CBC, she had been telling herself all week, it captured everything; books, magazines, newspapers, even soap boxes would ultimately have to come to terms. And if the CBC would not defend itself—

if this courtly poet-consul would not even put his armour on—what could prevent its capture? Hilary glowered at Mr. Harvard, hoping her look and her tone between them might goad him at least to some token show of wrath.

Mr. Harvard fingered his maroon tie. "Quite interesting," he said politely. "Please don't consider this an observation, it's only a question: If we were to do—oh, let's say *Mrs. Warren's Profession* or a stage version of *The Miracle*—LIGHT might designate someone to come on immediately afterward and say . . ."

"And say the whole thing is muck!" Hilary snapped recklessly.

Harvard looked up mildly. "And if we carried a talk on Voltaire by a speaker sympathetic to Voltaire, LIGHT would have a speaker standing by . . ."

"To point out that Voltaire was a dangerous heathen!" Hilary said vehemently.

Harvard fingered his tie again. Damn him! Hilary wept inwardly, he's exactly the sort of person I am. He's behaving precisely as I ought to be behaving, precisely as I *would* be behaving if I hadn't let my imagination run away with me and tried to be a Joan of Arc. Joan of Arc! More like Typhoid Mary. Perhaps I'm even infecting him.

"I suppose it's workable," Harvard reflected pleasantly. "Something of the kind was proposed by one or two of the churches as far back as nineteen-fifty-two, I believe; basically, an extension of the open forum." While his reasonable voice drawled on, Hilary considered and almost instantly rejected a complete change of tactics. Why not tell Harvard exactly how she had come to get mixed up with LIGHT, exactly what she thought of it? It might give him new heart; it would at least assure him that he was not without allies, some of them in unexpected places. But before the plan was formed she discarded it. Harvard was not a conspirator. He was less a conspirator, indeed, than she was; deception, which left her feeling merely soiled and shamed, would have been completely unthinkable to this splendid poet-consul. She was now prepared to hate him.

"Of course, Dr. Bonnisteel," Harvard was saying reasonably, "in one way or another the people who disapprove of people like Shaw and Voltaire already receive fairly large allotments of radio and television time on the CBC."

“LIGHT doesn’t consider the time sufficient,” Hilary said aggressively. “Besides, what other way is there of guaranteeing that the same people who are exposed to the beliefs of Shaw and Voltaire will also be exposed to the beliefs of people like our Canon Chantleigh and Dr. Kibblewhite and Weldon Carruthers?”

“None, I suppose,” Harvard admitted.

“You must realize,” Hilary said firmly, “that we are absolutely insistent on this. Radio and television go into nearly every Canadian home. We can’t, perhaps, be absolutely sure that no unhealthy ideas will go into the home with them, but we are determined that the antidote, so to speak, shall be administered at once.”

“Yes.” Harvard spoke almost absently.

“You are aware, too,” Hilary said, “that the Code we propose now is only experimental. LIGHT is by no means certain it will prove strong enough. By accepting the present Code you do not deprive us of our right to demand that it be strengthened later.”

“Of course not,” Harvard said mildly.

“Is there anything more you’d like to know about our Definition of a Minority? We absolutely insist on complete freedom of expression for all minorities, regardless of their nature or beliefs.”

Harvard’s glance contained a vestige of scepticism, but it also contained a sudden flash of hope.

“There shouldn’t be any difficulty there,” he said. “Actually we aren’t quite that liberal. There are a few minorities that, rightly or wrongly, we’ve decided we must classify as either plain crack-pot or subversive, and we more or less exclude them altogether. But I’m sure that if public opinion demanded it we’d be quite happy to give them reasonable access to the air too.”

“No doubt we can be of great mutual help,” Hilary said. “LIGHT naturally agrees with the CBC that there must be exceptions to every rule, if society is to work at all. LIGHT proposes that the minorities be divided into two categories: Canadian Minorities and un-Canadian Minorities. Although the un-Canadian Minorities may be beyond the reach of the law, they can hardly expect the State to provide them with an outlet for their propaganda. In short, they would be entirely banned from the air. Ultimately, of course, they will be denied access to the press and other means of communication as well.”

"Very interesting," Harvard remarked. "And your definition of an un-Canadian Minority is?"

"Any minority whose views, actions or attitudes are manifestly offensive to the majority."

"I suppose that in cases of doubt LIGHT would be willing to offer guidance? I understood you to say that LIGHT already represents the majority of the public?"

"We're prepared to do more than offer guidance," Hilary said belligerently. "We've drawn up our lists of Canadian and un-Canadian Minorities already. At the appropriate time we shall be ready to submit them for incorporation into the regulations of the CBC."

"That seems quite clear," Harvard said.

"Then I take it you approve?" Hilary demanded, making it sound as much like a dare as she dared.

"I'd rather not say at present," Harvard replied.

Hilary's bad eye had begun to act up. "Is there anything further you'd like to hear about Distinctions Between Freedom and Licence?"

"No, thank you. I think that part's quite clear. Oh, one small point. In this—rather generalized—subsection at the end, under Miscellaneous Matter Inimical to Appropriate Standards of Intelligence and Taste. Did you intend that commercials be included under that heading?"

"Oh," Hilary said, "jingles about laxatives and all that sort of thing? No, certainly not. Although we perhaps don't welcome them as individuals, we don't feel they are our concern as a group. We don't feel they represent any attack on essential values."

Harvard rose. "Thank you, Dr. Bonnisteel," he said with grave courtesy.

"Is that all you have to say, Mr. Harvard?" she said, barely containing her fury.

He smiled, again with the air of gracious, courtly puzzlement. "What is there to say? I shall place your proposals before the next meeting of the Board of Governors. If accepted there they would represent a considerable departure from our present policy. The Board might wish to consult the Minister before actually putting them into effect. The Minister might wish in turn to consult the Cabinet."

"But your own recommendation will carry a great deal of weight?"

“Normally I believe it would,” Harvard agreed modestly.

“Why don’t you say it?” Hilary’s bad eye was behaving very awkwardly. “You believe that LIGHT is made up of fools and bigots!”

“Why, no, Dr. Bonnisteel!” Harvard protested mildly.

“You think we’re hypocritical and narrow-minded. You think we’re vicious and autocratic. You think . . .”

“No, really,” he assured her.

“Do you know what I think, Mr. Harvard?” Hilary snapped scornfully. “I think you’re a coward.”

“Perhaps,” Harvard said, a trace less mildly. “But the fact remains I don’t think those things at all.”

“Then what in heaven’s name *do* you think?” Hilary cried.

“Why,” he said gently, “the only thing I think about you is that you’re wrong.”

“Do you? Do you?”

Hilary’s tone surprised her. It appeared to leave him completely bewildered. “Yes,” he murmured, “that’s all I think. I just think you’re wrong.”

“And you’re going to tell them so?”

“Of course,” he said mildly. “Why, of course. Good afternoon, Dr. Bonnisteel.”

14

Paragraph—Garfield resumed dictation. Please ask the doctor if it's too soon for you to begin training period If it's okay I thought I'd send a coach over there and have him work out with you two or three hours a day period You're going to be a great success comma Hubert comma whether you can hit the old apple or not comma but I want you to be a star in your own right too period Paragraph

He paused to bestow his attention on the loudspeaker, murmuring reassuringly in the background: "And now for your listening pleasure Chlorobreath again brings you that most beautiful and haunting of all musical events, the incomparable Diana Diane singing the incomparable 'Black Pillow'." He smiled. The Chlorobreath people had not only renewed but had transferred the remainder of their entire appropriation to CNOTE, with twenty-four daily spots preceding the hourly renditions of 'Black Pillow'. The ratings were more than satisfactory.

Nothing concrete yet on the radio end period But quite a wave of grass-roots feeling has sprung up in the last few months against the dictatorial policies of the CBC period My guess is that public opinion may finally force the government out of the radio and television business altogether and give the industry a chance to really spread its wings period Even if that doesn't happen right away comma I'm confident that popular resentment against their current programmes will force them to admit that a man who's willing to give the taxpayers two hundred thousand dollars a year for the privilege of entertaining them is entitled to something more than the back of the CBC's hand period Paragraph

Oh comma by the way comma I had the research people take a poll on the names period The result was dash Honeybear forty-eight comma Jezebel thirty-one comma Gertrude four comma undecided seventeen period Convinced query Queens d'Amour won the team-names poll in a landslide period Paragraph

As ever end letter

He pressed the buzzer. "You may send Potts in now."

Potts entered, beaming.

"I've just had a chat with Quildinning, Mr. Smith. The news is terrific."

Garfield frowned slightly. "In what way?"

"LIGHT has prepared a very sound, forward-looking Broadcasting Code, covering just about the whole range of problems that have been of so much concern to us all. The CBC's about ready to accept it, or rather the government is. From now on it looks as though LIGHT and the CBC will be working in very close harmony for the good of everyone."

"What makes you so sure?" Garfield eyed his employee with something bordering on alarm.

"Representations have already been made to Rackstraw, Farnbrough and Harvard. Rackstraw and Farnbrough haven't seen the Code itself, but they've both as good as promised their support. Seven million Canadians simply cannot be ignored. Harvard, of course, is a CBC career man and he can't very well do anything but pretend to oppose the Code, since it's a negation of the CBC's whole record. The people at LIGHT don't think he has his heart in it, though."

"How far has this thing gone?" Garfield asked.

"A sympathizer on the Board of Governors has told Canon Chantleigh that the Board is going to refer the question to the Cabinet. The majority report favours the Code. Harvard will present a minority report in opposition. The majority report will undoubtedly be accepted. No one has spoken to the Prime Minister as yet, but he'd scarcely dare overrule both the Board of Governors and his own Minister of Communications."

"And you consider this a happy development, Potts?" Garfield asked drily.

"A wonderful development, Mr. Smith. Everything will be clear sailing from now on. At last the CBC is to be given a clear mandate to desist from its assault against our moral and spiritual values. The battle is over, it's as good as won."

Garfield rose and began parading with a funereal and ominous tread.

"Potts!" he said sadly. He took four more slow steps. "Potts!" he repeated.

"Sir?" Potts responded anxiously.

“The battle, my dear Potts, is far from won.” Garfield stood still and raised his slightly lowered head, like a man determined not to bow to fate. “This, Potts, is the kind of shady political manoeuvring you can expect from people like Rackstraw and Farnbrough. You can expect it; but do you have to be taken in by it?”

“I don’t understand, Mr. Smith.”

“ ‘If you can’t lick ’em, join ’em.’ That’s any politician’s motto, any time. Don’t you see what they’re up to—Rackstraw particularly? A great moral force like LIGHT must remain militant and independent. Rackstraw wants to turn LIGHT into a tame lobby for the Liberal-Conservative Party. He wants to fob off his own responsibility on his most dangerous critics. He’s smart enough to realize that if he succeeds his critics will be silenced forever.”

“But surely, Mr. Smith, if the government will accept LIGHT’s demands . . .”

“They’ll accept its demands for this week. For next week, too. But what about next year, Potts? By next year LIGHT will have ceased to exist. Its reason for existence will be ended. And then everything will be right back where it started. With one important difference, Potts. With the important difference that millions of little people who put their faith in LIGHT will know they’ve been sold down the river and they’ll be too tired and disillusioned to rally themselves again.”

“Are you suggesting,” Potts asked in some bewilderment, “that LIGHT should stop pressing for the Broadcasting Code?”

“I’m only suggesting, Potts, that LIGHT keep clear of deals. Whoever heard of a crusader making bargains with the enemy? When is this thing coming up before the Cabinet?”

“Not before the week after next, I understand. They’ll be on freight rates until then.”

“All right,” Garfield said, “they think they’ve got us. Perhaps they have; perhaps they haven’t. Look, Potts, I’m going to do something that those babes-in-arms over at LIGHT won’t possibly be able to understand. I’m going to attack them for their own good. If anybody asks you about it, say I’ve thought they were crazy from the beginning. Say the only reason you’ve been keeping in touch with them is because you, personally, are in favour of them. Say you’ve been doing it behind my back.”

"I'm sorry if they've been a bit precipitate, Mr. Smith," Potts said uncertainly. "I just thought . . ."

"Never mind, Potts," Garfield said. "Send over that fellow who writes the good editorials, will you?"

Two days later and three hundred miles away Hiram Jobin looked up from his grapefruit, transferring his uncertain attention across the table to his wife.

"No, dear, I get the *Guardian* at the office, but I had no idea you'd be interested in seeing it. Never read it myself if I can help it."

"How strange. It *is* addressed to me. Oh, it's marked on the outside: See Page Eight . . . Oh, no wonder—Hiram, they've got your picture on the editorial page."

The Prime Minister made a sound halfway between appeal and protest. "Please, Martha, not at breakfast. I suppose it's the one they always use?"

"Which one, dear?"

"The one that makes me look like Mussolini."

"But no, Hiram! It's that lovely one that Mr. Karsh took four years ago."

"Huh! What does it say underneath? 'Wanted'?"

"You're so pessimistic, Hiram."

"My breakfast is ruined already, Martha. You might as well go ahead and read the caption."

" 'Prime Minister Hiram W. Jobin'," Mrs. Jobin read. " 'A Pillar of Freedom'."

The Prime Minister coughed on a mouthful of coffee. "Good God!" he gasped.

"Shall I read the article, Hiram?"

"No," the Prime Minister said firmly. "They're being sarcastic again. I am *not* going to have that man Smith shrieking and howling at me across my own breakfast table."

"Very well, dear."

The Prime Minister returned to his food in silence. In a few moments his wife spoke again, this time with pride and emotion. "Hiram, it's absolutely

the loveliest thing that has ever been written about you. Anywhere, Hiram. Ever. Do let me read it."

The Prime Minister put down his utensils and looked at his wife fondly but suspiciously, as though upon a beloved and misguided child. "All right, Martha, if you insist."

"I'll just read it right through, dear. I do hope I won't break down. It's *so* beautiful."

"Read it, Martha."

It is no secret that the "Guardian" is opposed both to the existence of the CBC and to the programmes of the CBC. It is no secret that one of the owners of the "Guardian" is also the owner of a private radio station and has been accused, perhaps with some justice, of having a personal stake in the historic conflict between private and public broadcasting.

"You can say that again!" the Prime Minister grunted inelegantly.

"Please, dear! *But regardless of any other issues, the 'Guardian' believes that if public radio and television are to stay in Canada, they must stay where all national properties belong—in the firm control of parliament. This is an essential condition of any democratic institution and of democracy itself.*

"Here it comes!" The Prime Minister chuckled mirthlessly. "They're whinging about those orders-in-council again."

"Hiram! *Incredible as it may seem, a very strong and very dangerous movement has arisen which, if successful, will have the effect of shifting the real control of the CBC from the hands of all the people—where it belongs—into the hands of some of the people, where it does not belong. The movement to which we refer is the well-publicized organization called the League for the Incorporation of Godly and Humanistic Training, colloquially known as LIGHT.*"

The Prime Minister squirmed slightly but did not interrupt.

LIGHT's ultimate goals are sufficiently well known that they need no explanation here. At the risk of seeming guilty of a second contradiction we hasten to align ourselves with those goals. But with the methods proposed to reach them we are in complete and unalterable disagreement. LIGHT which, although quasi-public in its membership, is really a private body, proposes to draw up a rigid Code of Broadcasting Standards. This Code, if accepted, will become a censorship directive for our national radio and television

systems in all questions of taste, ethics and morality. No private body, however large, however well-intentioned and responsible, has a right to dictate to the public at large on matters so essential to our basic freedoms as these.

"Ha!" The Prime Minister snorted. "That horrible little station of Smith's has got into trouble, that's it! Probably one of his disc jockeys told a sex joke and they're threatening to boycott him."

"Hiram! *We understand that LIGHT's proposals have already won considerable support within the CBC's Board of Governors. We understand that the Cabinet will consider them in a week or so. We have other information indicating that several members of the Cabinet including Welfare and Communications Minister Peter Rackstraw himself, are inclined to accept them.*

"Peter's in a hell of a flap," the Prime Minister conceded.

His wife went on: *We do not believe, nevertheless, that the proposals will be accepted. Fortunately for the Canadian public, Prime Minister Jobin is still the man who makes the Cabinet's main decisions. The "Guardian" has criticized Premier Jobin for some of his actions in the past and no doubt will criticize him again in the future. We have never held his courage in question, nor have we ever found him in the least way hesitant to defend our fundamental liberties. In this age of confusing labels and temporizing principles Hiram Jobin is that rarest and most indispensable of all beings—a genuine liberal.*

The Prime Minister almost choked on his coffee again. He did his best to resist the seductive words but a far-off smile crossed his lined face and for an instant, just an instant, time retreated almost forty years and a very intense young man in peg-top trousers was standing before the Young Liberals Club in a far-off town, cruelly far off in time and in space, and talking in the way in which intense young men once had talked. "Mr. Chairman, gentlemen"—the far-off voice trembled with fright and the excitement of discovery—"in entering this public-speaking contest, I have chosen Topic Number Three: A Brief Definition of Liberalism . . ."

His wife was still reading: *Hiram Jobin, moreover, has a political mind of the keenest order. Unlike some of his more timid colleagues, Hiram Jobin will not be deceived for an instant by LIGHT's blatant claim that it represents more than seven million Canadian voters. Hiram Jobin will know, as all men of intelligence and ordinary scepticism know, that even though its directorate includes highly respected members of our three largest churches,*

LIGHT does not necessarily speak for all the people who attend those churches. Hiram Jobin will know that the many lay organizations which are represented in LIGHT do not necessarily consist of individuals who are unanimously prepared to support LIGHT either in principle or at the polls. Hiram Jobin will know too that, as is inevitable in any organization so sprawling and amorphous, the membership rolls of LIGHT undoubtedly contain a high percentage of minors and a high percentage of people who have been enrolled under two or three different banners and in all likelihood a high percentage of people who enrolled without any intention of encroaching on the rights of others.

"A lot *to* that!" the Prime Minister reflected with half his mind. The other half was soaring above the far-off lectern: "Unless a man watches it carefully, the margin between logic and conviction can shrink to the size of the margin between conviction and prejudice. It is a wonderful thing to be sure, but it can also be a dangerous thing to be sure. The man who thinks he is right and acts accordingly is very likely to be a liberal. The man who knows he is right and admits no possibility of his being wrong cannot be a liberal, by definition. God protect our world not from the Kaiser, lions; Karl Marx, tigers; Jack the Ripper, cancer; Brigham Young, starvation; but God protect us above all else from the people who *know* that they are right!" Billy King himself—poor old Billy, too, had had to leave his hostages behind as the years went on—had been the first to wring his hand. Sir Wilfrid had written him a personal note suggesting that he try for the nomination in his riding. Everything dated from then.

We await Prime Minister Jobin's decision with the utmost confidence. Hiram Jobin will not let the people down. If, through his innate courage and his characteristic respect for democracy, Hiram Jobin should find himself under attack by the special interests of LIGHT, we predict that the people will support him as staunchly as he has invariably supported them.

Mrs. Jobin's voice had grown weepy and tremulous. Her husband now wore the expression of a man who has simultaneously won a sweepstake and been shown a glimpse of the Holy Grail.

"Well!" he muttered.

"Isn't it lovely, Hiram?"

"Lovely! Hell's bells, Martha, it's . . . it's lovelier than you can possibly guess. I'd give a million dollars to see Farnbrough's face when he sees it. Take the *Guardian* away from him—take Toronto away from him— Hell, the only thing left for him is euthanasia!"

"What will Peter think?"

"Peter Rackstraw—I wouldn't say this to anyone but you, Martha, but Peter hasn't much innate courage. His political judgment isn't too sound either. I think Peter would like us to fold up and let Chantleigh and that crowd have their way."

"Of course, Canon Chantleigh *is* a lovely man," Mrs. Jobin put in.

"Mind's going," the Prime Minister said, still only partly out of his reverie. "Rackstraw tells me he's developed some kind of a fixation about motor-cycles."

"Goodness! . . . I don't want any secrets that I shouldn't have, dear, but have you . . ."

"Made my decision? No, Martha. No. It's very delicate. I'm not sure that man Smith hasn't made it even more so. When one of our own papers says something nice about me, I can afford to ignore it. But now . . . I wonder if the *Guardian* really *is* on the verge of swinging over?"

The Prime Minister rose. As he walked around the table to kiss his wife good-bye, he glanced in the sideboard mirror. His face, in profile, was a study in innate courage.

15

With the exception of Michael Quildinning, the national officers of the League for the Incorporation of Godly and Humanistic Training were in a state that could only be described as the sulks. Weldon Carruthers surveyed the chairman with a look bordering on outright dislike. Dr. Kibblewhite's veined face was as flaccid as a very old piece of tapestry hanging on a clothes-line on a breezeless morning. Canon Chantleigh's grey decanter of a head was quiescent under its tufted stopper of white hair. The chairman, Hilary Bonnisteel, looked as gorgeous and devoid of purpose as a newly plucked crocus.

"Gollywhiz!" Quildinning said. "If I could only have the floor . . ."

"Deliberately insulting." Canon Chantleigh decanted a pony of liquid wormwood. "In a man of Jobin's stature it seems almost incredible."

"For my part," Weldon Carruthers said, "I have no intention of putting up with it."

"Nor I," Dr. Kibblewhite added. "Tell me, Chantleigh, are you sure you haven't overlooked anything?"

"As I have told you," Canon Chantleigh said petulantly, "my entire hearing lasted less than ten minutes. Harvard spoke first. He said the Board of Governors had recommended the adoption of the Code. He said that he, as chairman, did not concur in the recommendation. He gave his reasons very briefly. As I have said, he spoke utterly without conviction."

Hilary drew a picture of Bertram Harvard on her pad of scratch paper. The picture was almost ludicrously tall and muscular and young. With bold, defiant strokes she pencilled in a thick head of hair.

"You mustn't jump to conclusions, Mr. Harvard," she had said yesterday morning on the telephone. "But I do want to tell you nothing personal is involved."

"I'm sure there isn't, Dr. Bonnisteel," he had said gravely.

"Canon Chantleigh is presenting his brief to the Prime Minister on behalf of all of us. I am a party to it."

"Yes," he had said courteously. Hilary had driven from Toronto to Ottawa many times and now she tried to picture the telephone wire between

the two places cutting through the rocks and the pines and making its beleaguered passage around the lakes. A disputed passage all the way. The words between them made disputed passage too, not comprehended or even taken at the value of their limited comprehension.

"I know you're honestly opposed to us," she had said. "Do, please, understand that we all admire your honesty."

"Thank you," he had said.

"I can't wish you good luck," she had said feebly.

"But thank you for calling," he had said. He had sounded abject and beaten and she had hung up feeling abject and beaten too. But now . . . the whole adventure was still foolish, vain and sordid; it would produce nothing perhaps, nothing at all except a vain spark of womanhood achieving an instant's synchronization with a foolish spark of manhood. Each had done what could be done, she deceitfully and contemptibly; he with his deceptive, stainless and reluctant courage. That at least was something.

Canon Chantleigh was still speaking . . . "Not two minutes. I hadn't been speaking for two minutes when Jobin got up and walked to the window. He stood there, holding his profile toward us, as though he were waiting for someone to take his picture. 'I cannot accept this, Chantleigh,' he said. 'The CBC will continue as best it can to serve all the Canadian people without giving avoidable offence to anyone. But the government cannot and will not surrender its trust to your organization or to any other organization. Mr. Rackstraw will continue to exercise that trust at the policy level as the Minister of Communications. Mr. Harvard will continue to give it the necessary executive direction as the chairman of the CBC. I have considered your request, Canon Chantleigh. I thank you for making it. And my answer is no.' "

"No!" Dr. Kibblewhite echoed.

"He's finally gone too far," Weldon Carruthers predicted darkly.

"Gollywhiz!" Michael Quildinning said, "I think what I have to say is extremely relevant at this point."

"It's that man Smith!" Weldon Carruthers said. "If the *Guardian* hadn't . . ."

"Gollywhiz!" Michael Quildinning said. "If I could only have the floor."

"All right, Mr. Quildinning," Hilary agreed.

"Just this afternoon, not more than an hour after the papers were out with the news of the Prime Minister's high-handed reception of Canon Chantleigh, I had a telephone call from Mr. Potts . . ."

"Potts!" Carruthers glowered. "He works for the *Guardian*, doesn't he? After that destructive editorial, I say . . ."

"No, no!" Quildinning spoke with unexpected heat. "Mr. Potts is the first to admit that the *Guardian's* official policy is harmful and short-sighted. He told me quite candidly that he and Garfield Smith are at loggerheads on the question of LIGHT and the CBC."

"Why are we discussing Potts?" Weldon Carruthers demanded.

"Because," Michael Quildinning announced dramatically, "Potts has just brought more news from our anonymous well-wisher."

"The man who gave us the ten thousand dollars?" Dr. Kibblewhite asked.

"Yes!" Quildinning cried. "And now the same man wishes us to accept a further donation of twenty thousand dollars!"

"Why?" Hilary inquired, fighting back an urge to give up the struggle then and there.

"Because," Quildinning said, "our friend still believes in us. Whoever he is, he was as much disturbed as we were when he read the press reports of our discourteous reception from Mr. Jobin. He says it would be criminal if we were to quit now."

"What does he suggest?" Hilary asked. "Don't you think it would really be better—for purely tactical reasons, of course—if we decided to discontinue our activities for a while?"

"He suggests," Quildinning said, "that we organize protest meetings in the five largest Canadian cities. Use what is left of his first donation of ten thousand dollars to prepare a two-hour tape recording of all the un-Canadian and un-Christian material carried by the CBC over a period of, say, a month. Then use this new donation of his to put this material before mass meetings and acquaint the people with the real gravity of the situation."

"I'm not altogether clear," Hilary said. "He wants us to prepare a set of horrible examples and parade them across the country?"

"He wants us," Quildinning said, "to show the public exactly what is happening."

“But I’m sure we all want to be clear on this,” Hilary said. “Is the idea that we present the horrible examples in their context or out of their context? We do want to be fair.”

“What difference does it make?” Weldon Carruthers’ brooding spirits had been regalvanized. “This is a brilliant idea! As for its fairness, it’s really only an extension of Jobin’s own terms. He has, in effect, dared us to appeal our case to the public. Surely the chairman is not suggesting that we drop our case because we have had a temporary setback?”

“No,” Hilary said quickly. “Certainly not. Perhaps temporarily to—er—re-group, so to speak. I’m just wondering whether this particular tactic—let me be frank: when we accepted the first anonymous donation through Mr. Potts I confess that I had doubts about the wisdom of doing so. Should we accept large donations from anyone with whose identity and motives we are unacquainted?”

“As for motives,” Quildinning interrupted, “I can see no reason in the world to question what Mr. Potts says. Our friend is one of those people—we all know many like him—who prefer to do their good works in utter secrecy, asking no recognition for themselves.”

“But Mr. Potts himself”—Hilary interjected—“Mr. Carruthers has just asked whether Mr. Potts himself, in view of his connections, is the sort of man on whom we can depend.”

“Nothing of the kind,” Carruthers amended quickly. He paused. “Surely the Chair is not suggesting that there can be any connection between this new donation and Garfield Smith or the *Guardian*?”

“Well . . .” Hilary said dubiously.

“Preposterous!” Carruthers snapped. “Smith and the *Guardian* have done their best to destroy us. By what substitute for logic are we now invited to assume that they are our chief source of financial support?”

“Quite preposterous!” Canon Chantleigh measured out the chaser.

“Of course,” Carruthers said sarcastically, “if the Chair considers it necessary to have a vote before we avail ourselves of the wherewithal to carry on our work . . .”

“Not at all,” Hilary said meekly. “It is clear what the sense of the meeting is. I accept your decision, gentlemen.”

“Potts,” Quildinning said eagerly, “has offered some very good-sounding recommendations. He urges that the bulk of the material for our protest

meetings be prepared at national headquarters but that the individual meetings be turned over to the provincial Shafts. In each city, he feels, we should engage the largest hall or arena available and conduct an intensive advertising and publicity campaign in advance. Admission should be free, but we should make very prominent advance announcements that no one under twenty-one shall be admitted."

"Won't this exclude a very important part of the public?" Hilary asked.

"Ah," Quildinning said, "but how better can we dramatize the fact that many CBC programmes are simply unfit for the eyes and ears of young people? And how better can we . . ."

"Get across the idea that we're offering something rather spicy?" Hilary finished.

"Dear me," Dr. Kibblewhite said reproachfully. "Dear me, Dr. Bonnisteel!"

"I am sure the chairman was being facetious," Carruthers said heavily.

"Yes, of course." Hilary smiled, and behind the smile her will solidified. To quit now would be to flee from a whirlwind she had helped to sow. It was true she had helped to sow it only in the hope of averting the day of reaping. But now that the hope was gone, so was the excuse for flight. "Perhaps we'd better proceed to the details. Can we agree on the cities in which these mass meeting should be held?"

"Toronto first, I should think." Canon Chantleigh tilted his jug-like head. "I suggest we engage Massey Hall at once for Easter Week."

16

At first Hilary had decided not to attend at all. It had been agreed that national headquarters should play as unobtrusive a part as possible in the local arrangements. Only Canon Chantleigh, as an acknowledged elder statesman, was to sit on the platform. The others were to attend as humble bearers of banners, Dr. Kibblewhite with the vestrymen of his old congregation, Quildinning with the choristers of the Apprentices of Nazareth, Carruthers with the Lay Society of St. Thomas Aquinas. Hilary had been forced to apologize for her failure to muster an organized party from the University. “I’m afraid some of my fellow-professors have got the issues mixed up in some way with academic freedom,” she had explained. “Dr. Darty asked that there be no formal delegation, although many faculty members will be attending as individuals.”

In her growing panic she had gone to Darty, her only confidant on the faculty. She had made no other friends in her brief time at the University and had become so preoccupied with her classes, her new poem and the shame and absurdity of her involvement in LIGHT that she had been slow to recognize the suspicion and outrage of her mere acquaintances. One day at lunch in the faculty dining-room she had introduced the word LIGHT at a table for four, hoping for she knew not what, certainly not for sympathy, perhaps for nothing more than the astringent scorn of her own kind. The subject had been changed, politely and firmly, as humiliating or indecent subjects are changed by the well-bred and the tolerant.

Hilary had hurried across the campus to Dr. Darty’s office, in full flight from the awful feeling that she was on the verge of disappearing from the face of the earth, leaving no trace of her sojourn there but the crumpled identity papers and half-legible laundry marks of someone she had never known. At the worst she expected words of reproach, a suddenly vital reminder that she, Hilary Bonnisteel, could never really be mistaken for anyone else, no matter how confusing the evidence might be; at the best she had faint expectations of the full annealment of a full confession.

“Ah, yes, my dear.” The president had regarded her like a respectful basilisk. “LIGHT. You people are certainly making the country sit up and take notice.”

“Dr. Darty,” Hilary had said earnestly, “do you remember that talk we once had about the Last Rites for the Innocents? About how the reasonable people are sometimes more interested in making noble utterances about their principles than in getting down on the floor and fighting for them?”

“I don’t say I agree with all you’re doing, Hilary,” Darty had cut in, “but I must say I admire your energy. You’re getting things done and that does count, doesn’t it?”

“You said if I found myself locked up in a room with a man who was bent on destroying my freedoms I’d denounce him as a fool or a scoundrel and walk out on him.”

“I suppose you know,” Darty cut in again, “that some of the faculty are fairly hostile toward you. You mustn’t let it worry you, my dear. What you do outside the University is no one’s affair but your own.”

“But Dr. Darty!” She sought but could not find his eyes.

“The right of dissent is not a one-way street,” he reassured her. “It includes the right of dissension from the dissenters. You mustn’t feel that you have damaged the University in any way. Quite the contrary, I’d say. Too many people think universities are wholly staffed by wild-eyed radicals, free-thinkers, iconoclasts and whatnot. Doesn’t hurt to remind them that we also have plenty of people whose convictions run along more—ah—conventional lines.”

“Convictions!” Hilary cried dismally. “Do you think—Dr. Darty, have you been listening to me? Do you or do you not remember that talk we had?”

“Why, yes.” The president’s direct gaze somehow seemed more evasive than had its earlier concentration on the window. “A little nonsense now and then, you know, my dear. By the way, I was interested to hear that the Chairman of the Board of Trustees has seen fit to join your Ontario Shaft of LIGHT.”

Suddenly she knew it was unfair to go on. How much the president had guessed she was too bewildered and desolate to guess herself. She excused herself. As she walked back across the campus the greater part of her sorrow had been transferred to Dr. Darty. At least, she reflected defiantly, I haven’t yet been driven to deceiving myself.

Canon Chantleigh had been completely understanding about the University’s indifference to the meeting. “Ah yes,” and he had smiled indulgently. “But you mustn’t feel you’ve let us down in any way, Dr.

Bonnisteel. For my part I am confident we are coming to the climax of our work; no one's contribution has been more vital than yours."

"Thank you," Hilary had said.

In the end she had realized that it would be unthinkable to stay away and now she stood uncertainly in a corner of the thronged and dingy foyer. If she was to find a seat at all she'd have to hurry; Weldon Carruthers' instinct had been as unerring as usual when he'd predicted that not mere hundreds but thousands would be turned away.

She saw Carruthers filing in now at the head of a sober little procession, bearing one end of a banner that read: WE FIGHT FOR OUR FAITH. LET US HELP YOU FIGHT FOR YOURS. A moment later Quildinning went past with a squad of remarkably shapely young women in white dresses, each wearing a huge cardboard button that said: THE POWER AND PREVALENCE OF GOODNESS ARE EVERYWHERE—EXCEPT ON YOUR RADIO OR TELEVISION SET. Dr. Kibblewhite marched through proudly with a double rank of elderly businessmen. They all clutched pennants which urged: DEFEND THE CANADIAN HOME. PROTECT THE CANADIAN CHILD. Inside, an organ was playing a spirited anthem and through the doorways flashlight bulbs blazed out the credentials of an important news event.

A single figure, as detached and uncertain as herself, broke out of the torrent of bodies and joined Hilary in her little eddy of quiet, just inside the foyer.

"Why"—she exclaimed—"it's Mr. Harvard, isn't it?"

He lifted his hat with quiet, old-fashioned courtesy. "Dr. Bonnisteel," he smiled. "I—I suppose it's all right for me to be here? I wasn't quite certain, but the Minister thought it was my duty to come rather than rely entirely on the press reports."

"I'm sure you're more than welcome," Hilary said. "But frankly, Mr. Harvard, I think I'd better warn you that it's going to be . . ."

"Unpleasant? Yes, I suppose so," he said diffidently. He raised his hat again and began to move away. As he neared the doorway two delegations, pressing in from opposite sides, engulfed him briefly and then disgorged him back into the lobby. "Pardon me," she heard him say, as he made another attempt to reach the door. A group of large and determined ladies swept him aside and he stood alone again, clutching his hat.

Hilary put her elbows out like flanges and carved a passage to his side. “Are you”—she said timidly—“. . . would you care to sit together, Mr. Harvard?”

He smiled gratefully. “But wouldn’t that be rather—embarrassing? Not for me, I mean,—for you?”

“I’m sure we won’t be recognized,” Hilary said. “But why shouldn’t we sit together? Perhaps we might even accomplish something.”

“Well, then, thank you very much,” he said gravely.

Hilary guided him firmly into a tiny fissure in the moving wall of bodies and they found a place to sit near an aisle at the rear of the hall. They did not talk, for the hall was filled with organ music and voices raised in friendliness and expectation, as though at the assembly of a picnic.

In a short while the doors were closed. Canon Chantleigh walked to the centre of the platform and spoke a brief prayer. The meeting rose and sang “Rock of Ages”.

“A wonderful old hymn,” Harvard said appreciatively.

Now all the lights in the hall were turned out and from far above the balcony a single column of light played down on the platform. A young and quite beautiful woman stepped into the light.

“My name,” the woman said in a soft and yearning and infinitely kindly voice, “is Marjorie Jones. It is a very ordinary name and I am a very ordinary person. I have three children. I belong to a women’s club—the name of the particular club doesn’t matter. I go to a church—the name of the church doesn’t matter either. I have been asked to be your mistress of ceremonies because I am no more and, I hope, no less than a Canadian and a Christian.”

Mrs. Jones paused and smiled. “Do not let me frighten you,” she said. “I am not going to make a speech. No one is going to make a speech. The League for the Incorporation of Godly and Humanistic Training, under whose auspices this meeting is held—and other meetings are to be held elsewhere in Canada—has prepared a number of extracts from programmes which have been offered to your home and mine by our nationally-owned radio and television service during the last four weeks. These extracts will be played and shown to you. I do not pretend to know what your feelings will be after you have heard and seen them. I would not presume to tell you what action you may feel like taking. I shall do no more than ask you a few

questions, questions which it is in our power here to answer if we should so desire."

Mrs. Jones turned and nodded toward the dark cavern of the stage.

"Do you believe in the sanctity and value of the Canadian home?" Mrs. Jones inquired now. "You are about to hear a portion of a programme bearing on that subject which was transmitted on March twenty-first of this year over the Trans-Canada radio network of the CBC."

An electronic growl filled the dark and waiting hall, like the clearing of some astral throat. It was followed by the sound of a human voice, loud and plaintive:

". . . to argue that human felicity and usefulness are tied forever to a static, never-changing concept of the family, seems faintly ludicrous. It may appear like splitting hairs to debate whether the family is an end in itself or the means to an end—the important end, however it may be reached, being a stable and happy society. Nevertheless, there have been successful societies in which it was demonstrably in the public interest that institutions as abhorrent to our own society as polygamy, polyandry, and even prostitution, were not only tolerated but encouraged. Here, of course, we have no burning need to concern ourselves with those particular issues; so far as our society is concerned, two of them are entirely academic and the third is almost irrelevant. But there are other issues closer to us. Our repressive—one might almost say our savage—determination that no married couple, however unsuccessfully mated, shall be allowed to part in dignity and honour is one. In some Canadian families birth control is not only a real issue but a desperate, urgent need. It is conceivable that in time, as the needs of society itself change, artificial insemination will become much more widely accepted than one would now envisage. It is conceivable that, in time, we will alter our cruel treatment of the unmarried mother and of her child . . . All these things negate the idea that the family under its present rules is too important an institution to consider with an open mind."

An angry murmur rushed into the instant's silence that followed.

Mrs. Jones was back on the stage, holding up her white hands: "Do you believe in God? You will now hear a portion of a talk that was transmitted over the same network last March thirtieth."

Hilary felt cold. She turned and looked around her, trying to pierce the gloom, to see the faces turned upward toward the pool of white on the platform. If she expected to find anything dramatic or frightening written

there—and she herself had not been sure—her expectations were not fulfilled. The faces were intent but that was all. Without question they were, in the words of Mrs. Marjorie Jones and of the constitution of the League, the faces of Canadians and Christians. But had they been the faces of Welshmen and Mohammedans or of Americans and Buddhists or of New Zealanders and Jews, the facts would have stood neither more nor less in need of advertisement. The only certain thing was that all the faces were faces of people.

The electronic preliminaries were followed now by a milder voice: "As I have been telling you, we astronomers have really discovered astonishingly little about the nature of the universe. In my own thirty-eight years as a student of the stars and planets I have arrived at only one conclusion that strikes me as being of the slightest importance: The more I know the less I'm certain of. Ten years ago I believed in God. This year I do not believe in God. Perhaps next year I shall believe again. I certainly hope I shall, but I fear, alas, that what passes with me for scientific reason may not permit it."

This time the murmur rose to a wave of scandalized keening, and the faces that Hilary could distinguish had grown dark and angry. When she came back into the pool of light, Mrs. Jones had to hold up her hands for more than a minute before quiet was restored.

"Do you believe in your fundamental right and duty to protect yourself and your family against subversive influences?" Mrs. Jones asked. "The following is an extract from a panel discussion carried over the Dominion network of the CBC last April third."

Three voices came on simultaneously, jockeying for attention.

"Do you,—I do not—Mr. Chairman—please, gentlemen—"

The voices rearranged themselves in sequence.

"No, of course, I don't think we should close our speaking halls or our presses or for that matter even our borders to Communists, at least until we are willing to say that Communism itself is unlawful. The only point I was making is that . . ."

Another voice broke in: "Is that the Gouzenko spy trials, which you admit were illegal, were nevertheless good and necessary. I simply do not understand you. You want to stamp out Communism; perhaps I do too. But how in heaven's name can any enlightened man argue that any court, any police body, or any government, has the right to deny the full processes of justice to any accused person in a time of peace?"

"You, of course, do not really consider the Communists dangerous," the first voice said testily.

"I don't profess to know how dangerous they are," the second voice interrupted. "But if the degree of our fright is the thing that's going to determine the degree of our justice, I don't mind telling you this: I personally am a hell of a lot more frightened of our good friend and neighbour, Joe McCarthy, than of all of this continent's Communists put together!"

Mrs. Jones was back in the light, holding up her hands. When the sounds of anger had subsided she smiled and said: "I do hope you didn't mind the profanity. The important thing is that our children should be taught to be kind to Communists. If at the same time they're being taught to swear, I suppose that's really so much the better."

"Not bad," Harvard whispered to Hilary, "not bad at all."

His words were obliterated by a mass ejaculation, half whimper, half battle cry. The sound was so extraordinary, such a remarkable amalgam of a protest from the gastric regions and thunder from Olympus that Hilary thought at first some entirely new form of utterance had been invented and was being voiced simultaneously and identically by the entire assemblage. But in a moment she discerned it was a blending of many individual notes. A woman behind her was shouting "Shame! Shame! Shame!" Another woman was laughing bitterly. Another was hissing vindictively to an unhappy male companion: "See then? See then?" and, somewhat less accountably, an intense young man in a green leather windbreaker had risen to his feet and begun shouting something that sounded like: "Down with fascist imperialism! Long live the freedom-loving government of People's China!" Another, much older, man, who wore a large hearing aid and seemed to have been misled into thinking that the floor had been thrown open for questions also rose and shouted toward the platform: "I represent the Convention of Faith Healers! I demand a hearing! I represent . . ."

Now the gallery began to stamp its feet and clap its hands. Mrs. Jones stood helpless in her island of electricity, suddenly deprived of its magic. A villainously shabby man in an overcoat several sizes too large lurched down the main aisle, tears streaming from his eyes, paused to wrest Dr. Kibblewhite's pennant from the astonished but reluctant old gentleman's grasp, lumbered on to the vacant orchestra pit waving aloft the message: DEFEND THE CANADIAN HOME. PROTECT THE CANADIAN CHILD, and then turned to harangue the audience in the half-sly, half-proud

tones of a professional penitent. “My friends! If you had told me one short year ago . . .”

For no apparent reason, a fist fight broke out nearby. Mrs. Jones fled from the centre of the stage. Instantly the valiant, benign figure of Canon Chantleigh darted into the empty pool of light. Canon Chantleigh tilted his tufted, cylindrical head at a reproachful but understanding angle. He smiled and held up his hands.

“That’s Rackstraw, the Minister of Communications,” a thin, knowing woman on Hilary’s left shrieked above the din. The woman leaned forward and repeated the announcement to the row ahead.

“He’s got his gall!” someone shouted back from the row ahead. “It was him that started all that filth. And now he wants to make a speech. Boo!”

“Boo!”

“Boo!”

The cry spread. Canon Chantleigh drew his head erect and held his hands higher. “Boo! Boo! Boo!” The meeting had reached a state of crisis and was rapidly approaching a state of chaos.

Suddenly a ghostly procession moved from the wings of the stage, at first only a gliding half-seen ribbon, then, as it burst into the spotlight, a great white living chrysanthemum. Surrounded by the ethereal petal work of the twelve most ethereal maidens of the Apprentices of Nazareth, the head of Michael Quildinning nodded like a golden pistil. Sweet voices rose in song.

Lead kindly LIGHT amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!

The sounds in the auditorium merged into a final gasp, like a door swinging closed on a pneumatic hinge.

Yes, kindly LIGHT, staunch champion of the home
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou me straight; I’d neither hear nor see
The impure and vile; the good enough for me.

When the last note faded, the hall was completely silent. Quildinning bowed. The maidens bowed. They marched away as quietly as they had come. Mrs. Marjorie Jones, her purpose and composure fully restored, returned to continue the order of business. To the events that had passed she made no reference; it was as though they had not passed at all.

"And now," Mrs. Jones was saying, "for a little visual relief. We're going to show you part of a very clever and sophisticated play by a very clever and famous author. It appeared last April seventeenth on the television network of the CBC. There isn't time to show it all to you. It's on a very clever and sophisticated theme: something called the *ménage à trois*. The heroine, who is a most admirable person, of course, is living not with one man but with two. Naturally she isn't married to either one of them . . ."

Harvard looked at his watch. "Would you mind if I left?" he whispered apologetically. "I—I don't want to seem rude, but I might as well admit I'm not deriving much benefit from this."

"Of course I don't mind," Hilary said. She hesitated. "Would you mind if I came with you?"

He turned to her with the same expression of quiet puzzlement she had noticed at their first meeting. "That would be nice," he said uncertainly.

When they had reached the street there was one of those abject little moments of disintegration when people depart from one another because there is no reason why they should do otherwise. Harvard had begun to raise his hat.

"I don't suppose," Hilary said wistfully, "that you feel like buying me a drink?"

For the first time she saw him grin. "You surely don't approve of drinking, Dr. Bonnisteel?"

"I approve," Hilary said tragically, "of a number of things that aren't apparent."

He took her arm and they walked down Shuter toward Jarvis Street in the cool spring night.

"May I talk candidly?" Hilary said when they were seated.

"Couldn't we just have a drink?" he pleaded.

"You think I'm quite preposterous, don't you?" Hilary asked. Again she felt the panic-stricken urge to announce her purposes and her motives and thus to re-claim her own identity, lest it be lost and forgotten forever. Again, as in the interview with Dr. Darty, she saw that to do so now would place her confessor in an impossible position. She felt herself entitled to yearn only for reproach.

“But I don’t,” he said gravely. “Truly I don’t. What I told you that day in my office is all I have to tell you: I just happen to think you’re wrong.”

“What are you going to do?” she asked timidly.

“You mean—after? I don’t know. I have always thought I’d like to write.”

“Why do you say—after? You haven’t given up already, have you?”

“What I do isn’t particularly material, is it? That was a very effective meeting, Dr. Bonnisteel. I’m sure the other meetings will be equally effective. I happen to believe that every point made there was false and dangerous and, moreover, that it was made not through any fair method of debate but through—please understand there’s nothing personal in this—demagogic trickery. But the points *were* made.”

“And so you *do* accept defeat?”

“No. I foresee defeat. I do not yet accept it.” He looked around for the waiter. “Do you know Peter Rackstraw?”

“The Minister of Communications? No.”

“He’ll have to fire me very shortly, I should imagine. But—I hope this doesn’t sound priggish—I have more sympathy for him than for myself. Mr. Rackstraw holds his office not through appointment but through election. Unlike me, he cannot always afford, once a point has been made, to embark on his private distinctions about its validity or the way in which it was made. Perhaps I have been slow to make my distinctions; perhaps I have waited for them to be forced on me, but in one way or another my distinctions will, at least, be made.”

“You *do* believe in your side of the question, don’t you?” Hilary asked.

“Sometimes I wonder. Perhaps, after all, the final truth is on the side of my old friend Garfield Smith and the others who believe that radio and television should offer people only what most of them really want and most of them are really prepared to pay for. Perhaps the other part of the truth is on your side. A radio receiver or a television set is harder to control than a book or a magazine. A parent who is afraid to allow his child to read, say, D. H. Lawrence or Aristophanes or Bulls-Eye Comics or the more salacious passages from the Bible—or who is afraid to read the same things himself—can generally devise his own means to guard against improper reading habits in his own home. But radio and television . . .”

“But, surely,—that is, if you believe in your own side of the argument—you must also believe that the first principles of intellectual freedom apply to all mediums? You must believe that censorship is the Götterdämmerung of reason, the twilight of the brain. I don’t, of course,” she added hastily, “but—”

“Yes, that’s what I believe. You, nevertheless, detect a note of doubt. Do you mind if I say something personal, Dr. Bonnisteel? My doubt is partly to your credit. I can see LIGHT’s point of view. The reason I can see it is that I cannot imagine your espousing a point of view which is altogether thoughtless and untenable.”

“I?” Hilary asked.

“As I’ve said, I have suppressed ambitions to be a writer. Every writer, suppressed or not, must have his model. You happen to be mine.”

“Oh, no.” The pain was almost physical.

“The first thing of yours I read was one of your early poems: ‘Us’. You remember?”

“Yes,” Hilary said sadly, “I remember.”

He was reciting:

> “The mind is lonely and the questing heart
> Moves unwanted in the unwanting crowd;
> But they are not and cannot be apart—
> Affinity shines stubborn from the most neglected shroud.”

“Not very original,” Hilary said piteously.

“Perhaps not,” Bertram conceded. “Until five years ago I was a very ordinary, a far from distinguished announcer. I used to do readings of poetry every Sunday night. I read that poem eleven times. If a thing is true does it have to be original?”

Hilary looked at the clock. “Your train?” she said miserably.

She watched him walk down the street, as staunch and defenceless as a child on the first day of school. *Jockoboy!* her heart cried after him. *Jockoboy! Jockoboy! Restez, restez! Restez avec!*

17

The long round table in the Privy Council chamber was strewn with newspapers.

"This one's from Winnipeg," the Minister of Finance said bitterly. " 'Citizens Denounce CBC as Atheist, Amoral'."

"*Vancouver Sun*," the Minister of Agriculture announced. " 'Mass Meeting Protests 'Salacious, un-Christian' Propaganda on National Radio, TV Nets'."

"*Montreal Gazette*," the Minister of Defence announced. " 'Provincial Premier Joins in Drive to Clean up CBC'."

Peter Rackstraw repeated doggedly: "You asked for it, gentlemen. Now you've got it."

"We?" the Prime Minister said distantly. "We?"

Peter looked the Prime Minister in the eye and said with reckless anger: "Get this straight, Hiram. In the first place I didn't want the job. In the second place, this collision with LIGHT was not of my doing. On the contrary, I recommended that we give them what they wanted; it was you yourself who overruled me. If you think, now that my good judgment has been confirmed, that I'm going to take the consequences of your bad judgment, you're seriously mistaken."

"Peter . . ." the Prime Minister interjected.

"You're afraid the back-benchers will bolt," Rackstraw said recklessly. "And well you might be. But have you considered the possibility that a Minister of this government might cross the floor?"

"Peter!"

"It is within your rights to ask for my resignation as Minister," Rackstraw went on relentlessly. "It is not within your rights to ask for my resignation as a member of parliament. As a private member I am not at all sure that Bill Farnbrough and I . . ."

"Peter! It would wreck the party!"

"I have no desire to wreck the party," Rackstraw said. "On the other hand, I have no overwhelming enthusiasm for the party's apparent desire to

wreck me."

The Prime Minister glared up and down the table. "Is there anyone here who feels that Mr. Rackstraw is entitled to less than our undivided loyalty and support? Speak up, gentlemen; we might as well know where we stand. No?"

The Prime Minister put his hand on Rackstraw's arm. "You see, Peter?" he said in a voice warm with emotion. "You see? We've gone through tougher times than this, and we've gone through them together. That's the way we're going through this, Peter. Together."

"Thank you, Hiram," Rackstraw said drily. "Thank you, gentlemen."

"Now," the Prime Minister said, "let's see exactly where we stand. What, precisely, do the whips say?"

The Minister of Agriculture consulted a sheet of paper. "Four of the Quebec members will definitely desert if it comes to a division. Five others can only be classed as highly uncertain. The two independents from British Columbia had lunch with Farnbrough yesterday. Briggs from Winnipeg North and Harshaw from Saskatoon—they were both marginal ridings to begin with—say they'll stick if the party insists. But they say that if there's a division in the House over the CBC and they stick they can't possibly be re-elected."

The Minister of Finance said bleakly: "As of this moment, I couldn't be re-elected myself. I have just received a petition with four thousand names on it. That's in addition to seven hundred and eighty-four wires and letters from people who claim they voted for me last time and are now promising not to repeat the mistake."

"The LIGHT people have organized these petitions and letters very well," the Prime Minister conceded. "If *you* think you've been hard done by, drop in and take a look at *my* in-basket."

"Panic," Rackstraw reminded them on a note slightly tinged with panic, "will accomplish nothing."

"We have thirteen days before the recess ends," the Prime Minister said in the clipped heroic tone of a man counting the remaining cartridges while under siege. "Farnbrough will place some questions on the order paper. Then, whatever the answers are, he'll move no-confidence. What can we do in those thirteen days?"

“Announce the reconvening of the parliamentary committee?” the Minister of Defence suggested timidly.

The Prime Minister raised his eyes toward the ceiling.

“A Royal Commission?” the Minister of Finance offered.

“Gentlemen! Gentlemen!” The Prime Minister shook his head sorrowfully. “In less than two weeks this government will be fighting for its life. Another Royal Commission will not be of the slightest help.”

“Of course,” Rackstraw said, “there’s one possibility we’ve overlooked.”

“Yes, Peter?” the Prime Minister said respectfully.

“We could always say that we have reconsidered LIGHT’s demands and decided to grant them.”

“No. No, Peter,” the Prime Minister said firmly. “This is not the time. We’ll have to make concessions to them ultimately. But we simply cannot surrender at this point without making it seem that we are surrendering to Farnbrough.”

“Harvard is prepared to resign at once,” Rackstraw said. “In fact, his resignation is on my desk.”

“Absolutely not!” the Prime Minister said. “No one will be pacified and Farnbrough will only accuse us of using Harvard as a scapegoat. Doubtless Harvard will have to go later, but not until we’re through the immediate crisis.”

“He’s a damned decent fellow,” Rackstraw interjected impulsively.

“I’m sure,” the Prime Minister said. “The problem, as I see it, is this: We must abandon our position without at the same time repudiating it. We must seek some kind of mandate from the people without, at the moment, seeking an election. If there were only some way of bringing the people as a whole into the debate . . .”

“The CBC itself . . .” Rackstraw said.

“Yes, Peter, we’re thinking on the same lines. Suppose there were a public debate over the CBC itself, a spokesman for LIGHT versus a spokesman for the CBC. Well publicized in advance. Carried over both networks. Every listener specifically invited to send in his comments afterward.”

“We might be swamped, Hiram,” Rackstraw warned. “Let’s not forget that LIGHT is a pressure group and a very businesslike one. The other side isn’t organized.”

“Suppose we *are* swamped?” the Prime Minister said. “We merely say that we have consulted the nation’s wishes through the most speedy means at our disposal, that the nation has decided in favour of LIGHT and that we accept the nation’s decision. Where does that leave Farnbrough? He wouldn’t dare move no-confidence on that. If he did it wouldn’t matter; the party would be solid again.”

“Suppose, on the other hand, that LIGHT is swamped?” Rackstraw speculated. “We’re back where we started.”

“By no means, Peter. In that case we’ll stand absolutely firm on the present policy. We will be in a position to tell LIGHT, if I may lapse into vulgarity, to go climb a tree. And Farnbrough won’t dare challenge us on it.”

“Hiram!” Rackstraw said reverently. “This is statesmanship!”

“Thank you,” Jobin said modestly. “Any other observations? . . . You’ll lay it on, then, Peter? I should think Harvard himself is the person to speak for the CBC. He’s the only man who can talk policy without being accused of talking politics. I suppose we should invite his opposite number on LIGHT to present the other side.”

“Dr. Bonnisteel,” Rackstraw said. “I suppose,” he added doubtfully, “we’ll have to carry it on television as well? They tell me she looks like a blonde Hedy Lamarr.”

18

"I'm sorry, gentlemen," Hilary said firmly, "I don't make many speeches. When I do I insist on writing them myself."

"No one is suggesting anything different," Weldon Carruthers protested. "The point is that LIGHT and everything it represents may stand or fall on what you say. If you refuse to make use of the national council's advice . . ."

"Gollywhiz!" Michael Quildinning broke in. "It's not a major point, is it?"

"I'm inclined to agree," Dr. Kibblewhite said. "We all feel so strongly about our position—we've discussed it so often—we are in such complete agreement . . ."

Canon Chantleigh decanted the dregs of the argument "—that whatever Dr. Bonnisteel sees fit to say is certain to be an accurate reflection of all our views."

"Very well," Carruthers said glumly. "All I hope is that the chairman's passion for what she calls fairness will not persuade her to turn the other cheek."

"I assure you," Hilary said meditatively, "that whatever I say will be said in good conscience and according to my best judgment."

"Of course," Canon Chantleigh said warmly.

"It is my understanding," Dr. Kibblewhite said, "that you are not to see Harvard's remarks in advance and that he is not to see yours."

"That is correct," Hilary said. "The programme is to last an hour. We are each to have twenty-eight minutes to say whatever we wish to say. From then on it's up to the listeners and viewers."

"I don't think we need waste time guessing what Harvard's remarks will be," Carruthers suggested. "It will be the usual stuff about freedom of inquiry, open debate, the unrestricted forum. Probably he'll fall back at some point on the old argument that the CBC isn't completely beholden to advertisers."

"The Code." Dr. Kibblewhite said. "Should Dr. Bonnisteel be in doubt she need only consult the Code. Harvard will doubtless try to make it seem

that we are advocating some limitation of freedom. The Code makes it clear that we are only advocating necessary limitations on licence."

"Yes," Hilary said. "I propose to quote the Code extensively. I intend to quote directly the definition of un-Canadian Minorities."

"Admirable," Canon Chantleigh said. " 'Any minority whose views, actions or attitudes are manifestly offensive to the majority'."

Hilary nodded. "I've always felt our definition of minorities sums the whole thing up in a nutshell."

"Well, then . . ." Canon Chantleigh pushed back his chair. "Will you join me for dinner, Dr. Bonnisteel?"

"Thank you," Hilary said. "I write very slowly. I think I'd better stay behind and begin working on the talk."

When they had gone, she put her head between her hands and slumped across the desk in an attitude of helplessness and supplication.

After a while she sat up and brushed her eyes. She put a fresh sheet of paper in the typewriter beside the desk; the sheet was not a shade whiter than her face.

She began typing, laboriously, with two fingers. "It is not a pleasant thing," she wrote, "to confess oneself a traitor—even to a cause which one abhors . . ."

> Garfield Smith, too, was working late. ". . . a beautiful spring-like afternoon and the team held its first work-out period Some things still a little ragged and to my disappointment one or two of the girls complained that they were too cold in the new uniforms and one or two of the others kept giggling period However I'm confident that when they develop the right team spirit they'll realize what a privilege it's going to be to be an original member of the Queens d'Amour period Paragraph
>
> I saw Mavis Rebchuck for the first time and it was quite a shock period She's got legs like Honus Wagner period I'm afraid I'll have to trade her period"

Garfield paused and glanced at his evening newspaper again. The headline expelled the unwelcome picture of Mavis Rebchuck: CBC TO STAKE PROGRAMME POLICY ON PUBLIC DEBATE WITH LIGHT.

He picked up the dictaphone again. Paragraph I think the network is as good as settled period The CBC itself is still going through the motions of defending the old long-hair comma public-be-damned tradition comma but it looks as though the government itself is ready to give clean entertainment top billing period

Now that his triumph was in sight he felt the agreeable warmth of rewarded virtue, but there was no vindictiveness in it. He had been in many fights since the days back in Winnipeg; most of them he had won, but some he had lost. He had tried to be a good loser, and now he wanted nothing more than to be a good winner. After it had blown over he'd phone Bert Harvard, perhaps offer him a job. Bert was a good radio man, or had been once. Yes, by God, and if Bert wanted to he'd even let him put some of that long-hair stuff out on CNOTE. Not at the peak listening periods, of course; that would be irresponsible. But if Bert could find a good dignified sponsor for, say, an hour of opera on discs, or if he could line up a good amateur theatrical troupe to try some experimental plays . . . maybe even organize a good hard-hitting forum programme. There was nothing wrong with a private station doing that sort of thing. It wasn't doing it at the public expense, and if the public didn't like it the dial was within easy reach. But government radio had to lose the fundamental arguments whether it went non-commercial or commercial. If it went non-commercial, it automatically neglected or offended most of the very people who owned it—and, moreover, it incurred red ink in doing so; if it went commercial it was only duplicating a job that private radio was doing already and doing better and doing cheaper. Even poor old Bert must see that by now.

The waiting dictaphone called him back from his reverie. Paragraph So far as you're concerned we want to handle the initial publicity very carefully period When you tell me everything is set I'll tip off the wire services period When they show up for interviews tell them about your desire to serve science period Throw in a good quotable remark period I suggest colon and quote I just wanted to see what it would be like period unquote After the first interview dash this is important dash get on the first plane and fly right here period Don't tell anybody where you're going period This will add to the interest and mystery period Wire me when to expect you and when you reach Toronto come right to the office stop Then we'll hold a press and radio conference and sign the contract right then period

Well comma—Garfield hesitated, squirming briefly over the appropriate form of address—well comma Baby comma it won't be long now period As ever end letter.

19

Bertram Harvard and Peter Rackstraw sat at opposite sides of the desk in attitudes of solemnity and ease. It had been a long and wearing day for each of them. Rackstraw had come over to his, Bertram's, office: *noblesse oblige*, Bertram had reflected without bitterness. They had been together for the last hour and everything that could be done had been done. Now, as the gathering lights of Ottawa reflected in through the window from the darkening sky, Rackstraw loosened his tie and tugged a footstool close with his heels and Bertram leaned back in his swivel chair.

"Let's just look at page three once more," Rackstraw said. "I'll follow it on the black."

"Page three," Bertram repeated.

"Say," Rackstraw asked in a gingerly but hopeful tone, "I don't suppose you keep a drink hidden around here do you?"

"No," Bertram said. "But I think I know a man who does."

He was back in a moment with a fresh bottle of rye. He half-filled two desk tumblers and added water. Each man took a long appreciative gulp.

"It's a good speech," Rackstraw said and added a hasty rider, "or it would be a good speech if it weren't too late for any speech to be good. Page three."

"I have it."

"This table showing the time allotted to the churches against the time allotted to people who've been accused of being unfriendly to the churches. Isn't that ratio of twenty to one a little high?"

"We've gone over it very carefully ourselves," Bertram said. "And I've had all the scripts checked by three local clergymen—one Roman Catholic, one Protestant and one Jew. They agree the figures are more than fair to the churches."

"I don't understand," Rackstraw said. "I can't understand that at all."

"That three clergymen should see anything in our side of the case, or even be willing to look at it calmly? Oh, lots of them do. In their attitude to radio and books and things like that preachers are pretty much like

housewives and steamfitters and anybody else. It's usually only the ones who get mad that you hear from."

"Well, but what system did you use for deciding what broadcasts were unfriendly to the churches? I still think you must have given us the best of it."

"We tried not to," Bertram said respectfully. "Any broadcast that in any way expressed a point of view incompatible with the idea of a heaven after life for humans, or that offended certain more intimate tenets of dogma held by the largest churches, was classed as anti-religious."

"For instance?"

"For instance, sir," Bertram said, "we carried a little play the other night in which a boy's dog dies. The boy closes the play by saying: 'Some day I'm going to die too, and when I get to Heaven old Spike will be right there, waiting.' We classed that as a straight thirty minutes of anti-religious broadcasting."

"You're out of your head, man!" Rackstraw said.

"I don't think so, sir." Bertram smiled amiably. "I would never admit that particular broadcast to be an anti-religious broadcast in an ordinary discussion. The three clergymen who looked the table over insisted, as a matter of fact, that this particular broadcast had nothing to do with religion. But they, by the way, are not members of LIGHT. If LIGHT wants to challenge our figures, I think it's important that they be able to prove nothing on this point except that we've leaned over backwards."

"And you're sure it's twenty to one?"

"Absolutely, sir. In the other main division—what might be called moral broadcasts as opposed to immoral broadcasts—it's impossible, of course, to find any agreed definitions. So all we can do is try to persuade people, mainly by argument, that we stand for virtue, even though we recognize the occasional presence of evil."

"But twenty to one!" The Minister put down his drink. "Damn it, Harvard! I wish you wouldn't use figures."

"It's really the best and hardest talking point we've got in this particular debate," Bertram said.

"I know. I know. But . . ."—Rackstraw poured himself another drink. "Look, Harvard! We say to these people: You're already getting twenty hours of straight religious broadcasting on the air for every hour that in any

way questions or shows a reluctance to accept the orthodox religious beliefs. What's their answer going to be?"

"I don't think they have an answer. Not on that particular point."

"But, damn it, they have! You know what their answer will be? They'll say we're claiming that the listening public is getting *too much* religion over the air! Where does that leave us?"

"I see," Bertram said forlornly. "I'll strike it out if you prefer." He put down the sheet of manuscript and reached for the bottle.

"You don't trust me, Harvard, do you?" the Minister said sadly.

Bertram looked up curiously. "It's funny you should say that," he remarked, his tone carrying nothing heavier than an academic interest. "Dr. Bonnisteel, my opposite number at LIGHT, has made similar observations to me each time we've met. And the truth is that I've admired her and her work for years."

"But you don't admire *me*," Rackstraw persisted glumly. "You think I'm selling you down the river."

"No."

"Well, you're right. You're going on the air next week. You're going to carry the can for the CBC, for an idea that's stood for nearly thirty years. You're going to carry the can for me. Unless a miracle happens, that Bonnisteel woman will eat you alive. Oh, you've got a good speech there; it's a fine speech even after I've made you tone it down so it won't put the government in more trouble than it's in already. But the thing is past the point of speech-making. It's past the point of sensible debate. It started to go past away back in nineteen-fifty-one or fifty-two when the good people and the Godly people began to lose faith in their own good and Godly ideas and tried to censor any suggestion of an idea that wasn't in line with theirs. The Opposition saw its chance and went along. So we got thrown out for allowing freedom of expression. But the shouting wasn't over. After we got thrown out, it was our turn to join the shouting. So our opponents got thrown out for allowing freedom of expression. And, well, here we are again."

Bertram shook his head. "No, Mr. Rackstraw, that's too cynical. People can be confused, they can even be a little frightened or a little concerned without being scheming or dishonest."

"So after the Bonnisteel woman is through eating you alive, what comes next? We'll get eight million letters and wires and eight million names

attached to petitions saying that Bonnisteel is right and you are wrong. Most of the letters will have been written before the broadcast. Most of the petitions are out being circulated right now. Well, this is a democracy, Harvard . . .”

“In spite of everything . . .”

“I know. I know. In spite of everything we wouldn’t have it any other way. Look, Harvard, I don’t want to have to hit you over the head, but you’re through! You’re through!” Rackstraw poured himself a drink.

“I know that, sir,” Bertram said without emotion. “I imagine I’ve known it all along.”

“But, damn it!” the Minister cried, “you couldn’t have known it was coming in this way! You surely couldn’t have known that when it came to the pinch, I’d, I’d just . . . I’d . . .”

“No,” Bertram said. “I wasn’t sure whether it would come in this way or not. I thought the main line of attack would be over controls.”

“You couldn’t have known I’d . . .” The Minister stopped and went on sourly but less vehemently. “Oh, hell! Sure, Harvard, controls. That would have been my guess too. I’d have thought the delays and costs and bad programmes and general ball-ups over television would have given the private-station boys their second wind. But whether they know it or not they’ve finally won a round just by shutting up.”

“The curious thing,” Bertram said absently, “is that I don’t think the LIGHT people have the faintest idea where all this is leading to in the end.”

“Of course they don’t.” Rackstraw began rubbing his temples. “Of course they don’t! The churches don’t want radio and television thrown to the soap-makers and depilatory manufacturers any more than you and I do. But they don’t realize that if they demand that we never displease any of the people any of the time, then all we can do is try to please all of the people all of the time. So whether you call it private radio or public radio here come eight more Johnny Rays, six more Bob Hopes and five more Rosemary Clooneys, and there goes one little Christopher Fry and one little Benjamin Britten and one little Bertrand Russell right out the studio door and on to the street.”

For the first time Bertram’s tone showed surprise. “You feel exactly the same way I do!”

"No!" The word leaped from Rackstraw like a virgin springing, suddenly aware, from the clasp of a seducer. He went on primly: "It belongs to the people, after all. It's their right to do whatever they want with it."

"I feel that way too," Bertram said. "But . . ."

"You're through, Harvard!" the Minister said, with anxious gruffness. "Why don't you let me have it and get the whole thing over with?"

Bertram smiled gently and shook his head. He replenished the two glasses.

"The Senate!" the Minister cried, bursting with unforeseen discovery. "You get the next Senate vacancy, Harvard! That's a promise, Harvard! The very next Senate vacancy." In his eagerness to seal the matter Rackstraw leaped from his chair with his hand outstretched and narrowly avoided falling over the footstool.

"Thank you, sir," Harvard said warmly. "I can't tell you how grateful I am. But I—you mustn't think I'm sullen or aggrieved, Mr. Rackstraw, but I just don't want to go to the Senate."

"Why shouldn't you be sullen?" Rackstraw's voice now held a delicate blend of despair and belligerency. "Why shouldn't you feel aggrieved?"

"You've given me a chance to do my best." A sudden trace of anxiety entered Bertram's voice. "You *are* going to let me play out the string, aren't you? I mean the speech is still all right, isn't it—with the table cut out, of course?"

"Yes, yes." The Minister carefully inspected his glass. "God!" he cried dismally. "If Billy King were only still alive! He'd have *Farnbrough* on the defensive by now." He contemplated his glass for a while longer and groaned a little thickly, like someone calling from purgatory through damask curtains: "Damn it, Harvard, *why* won't you take a seat in the Senate?"

Bertram shook his head again, his amiability touched with sudden regret, and the two men sat on, watching the street lamps thicken in the dusk.

20

This, Hubert Rodney reflected abysmally, turning away from the blue night light, was not mere solitude. It was the distillation of solitude, the last refinement of isolation and rejection. A white hospital room in a far-off place called Oslo, Norway, and the door closed against the tiniest sound . . . and now, wakefulness at three o'clock on an April morning. The present like a tomb, the past repudiated and expunged, and even the future calling in a foreign tongue to a world where almost no one else had been.

Anger and self-pity burned with the sterile unfriendly glow of the room itself. *He had no right . . . I mean nothing . . . It's just the money!*

No! He sat up in terror and fumbled for the drawer of the bedside table. The worn letters were on top. He knew them so well that the half-opaque cobalt light was sufficient; its barest echo proclaimed each word. The warm phrases fell in place again like reassuring footsteps in the dark . . . "I want you to have the best of everything . . . Don't you think you'd be more comfortable if you took a room with a solid Norwegian family? . . . I'd feel a lot better if I knew you were getting good regular home-cooked meals . . . I miss you a lot . . . I guess I don't have to tell you that I've never looked on our association as a business association . . . We're going to do big things together . . ."

And underneath, the well-worn portrait in the polished wooden frame, the strong, demanding, searching face looking out like a young and bold explorer. Hubert sighed and turned back to face the wall. He was still very lonely, but he was much happier.

21

Weldon Carruthers sat alone in his apartment, savouring his remorse. It had qualities of the strange and of the familiar, of the sudden, aching thrill of some pain of childhood recollected after many years. There was time to savour it, time even to glance at the ivory heirloom clock on the marble mantel piece and see precisely how much time there was.

It was desperately close; two hours more and it would have been too late. He closed his eyes and let the gentle balm of his guilt have its way with him. But it was an act of self-indulgence really, a form of cheating, like confessing some trifling sin that has already been fully atoned and truly repented. He sighed and returned to the world of actuality. It was an actuality that he could *pretend* to have been remiss; it was not an actuality that he *had* been remiss. It was true that the physical evidence had come into his possession only within the last forty-five minutes. But it was not true that he had allowed himself to be deceived. He had suspected the Bonnisteel woman almost from the beginning. He would have found some means to stop her, even if the present means had not proved so absurdly easy. With the two admissions he relinquished his self-reproach, slowly and with regret.

He felt no anger toward her, only a sense of loss that she had not managed to be more clever. At one time, after one of the early meetings, he had struggled for three dark days, trying to decide whether the magnitude of the issues at stake would permit him to call on the services of a private detective. And even this afternoon, up to less than an hour ago, he had expected that he would be required to break into her desk. Her stupidity had denied him even that torment of conscience. He had simply dropped into the anteroom, ascertained that she had gone out for a sandwich and then waited until the secretaries left for the day. Then he had walked through an unlocked door into her office and found the evidence lying beside the waste-basket.

The bell from the foyer ended his reverie. Weldon pressed the buzzer releasing the downstairs door and in a minute Canon Chantleigh, Dr. Kibblewhite and Quildinning arrived together.

“We were delayed interminably in the lobby.” Dr. Kibblewhite’s apology carried a note of grievance. “Chantleigh *would* insist on pressing the wrong button.”

“You should have them attend to the lights down there, Carruthers,” Canon Chantleigh said severely.

“Please sit down, gentlemen,” Carruthers said impatiently. “I’m sorry to bring you out on such short notice, but the matter I wish to raise is vital.”

“Hadn’t we better wait for Dr. Bonnisteel?” Canon Chantleigh suggested.

“It’s Dr. Bonnisteel I want to discuss,” Carruthers said.

“Really, Carruthers,” Canon Chantleigh protested. “To say the least, this is very unusual.”

“I wish it were no more than that,” Carruthers said meaningfully. “Gentlemen, have any of you been in the office very often during the last week?”

“I’ve been doing a good of work getting the post-broadcast petitions ready,” Quildinning said. “I’ve been in the office every day.”

“So have I,” Carruthers said. “And I’ve been there one or two evenings. Quildinning, how long does it take you to write a sermon?”

“Oh, I don’t have sermons,” Quildinning explained.

“Canon Chantleigh?”

“It varied, of course. Once the text was settled it used to take a day or two.”

“Dr. Kibblewhite?”

“Perhaps ten to fifteen hours.”

“Exactly. Gentlemen, are you aware that for the twenty-eight-minute radio talk she is to make tomorrow night, Dr. Bonnisteel has been sitting over that typewriter some fourteen hours a day for eight consecutive days? She’s taken a leave of absence from the University, by the way.”

“These literary people,” Chantleigh interjected indulgently.

“It’s more than that,” Carruthers said impatiently. “Quildinning, have you noticed her face, her whole appearance lately?”

“She’s terribly drawn,” Quildinning acknowledged.

“Ah.” Canon Chantleigh beamed paternally on Carruthers. “Very thoughtful of you, Carruthers. We must insist that she take a rest after the broadcast is over.”

“I am not unduly concerned about our chairman’s health,” Carruthers said. “My concern is for the health of LIGHT itself!”

“Quite unnecessary,” Chantleigh assured him grandly. “I predict without hesitation that within forty-eight hours LIGHT will have won all its main objectives.”

“And I predict,” Carruthers amended dramatically, “that within forty-eight hours LIGHT will be as dead as the First Crusade!”

Their faces froze in the act of changing expression, like a stopped motion picture. Their disbelief and shock, held thus in an instant of suspension, was gratifyingly magnified.

“Now,” Carruthers said, “let’s get down to business.”

“Yes, yes,” Canon Chantleigh urged him weakly.

“It was the fact that Dr. Bonnisteel had been taking so long to prepare her talk that first made me suspicious. I agree with Canon Chantleigh that writers seem to be under some special ethical compulsion to take as long as possible to get their writing done. That could, conceivably, be the sole cause of her agitation. Her flat refusal to allow any member of this executive to see what she proposes to say in our behalf could, I suppose, be the result of nothing more serious than arrogance or some curious kind of self-consciousness.”

“Self-consciousness,” Canon Chantleigh said. “That was my view from the outset.”

“And I suppose also,” Carruthers went on quietly, “that what has seemed to be her relative lack of enthusiasm could be attributed to the fact that her special field is not, like ours, the spiritual; that she perhaps associates a good deal with the kind of people to whom doubt is a virtue.”

“Now see here,” Canon Chantleigh interrupted, “you’re not implying that Dr. Bonnisteel doubts us?”

“No,” Weldon said quietly. “Doubt is much too mild a word. Our chairman has no doubts about LIGHT. She has a serene and unshakeable certainty that LIGHT and the whole force behind it is wrong and sinister!”

“Carruthers!” Canon Chantleigh’s stunned ejaculation spoke for them all.

“To put it quite simply, gentlemen”—Weldon spoke now with the exultant calmness of a man so full of unheard truth that he has truth to

squander—"Dr. Bonnisteel is by far our most dangerous enemy. More dangerous infinitely than the sum of Hiram Jobin and Peter Rackstraw and Bertram Harvard and the entire organization of the CBC. More dangerous than this multiplied by the sum of all the indecent literature and all the indecent motion pictures ever created, and multiplied in turn by the wild shouting of all the godless philosophers and scientists who have set out to destroy the very edifice of faith. Look!"

He held out a single sheet of foolscap paper. "I found this two hours ago in the waste-basket beside Dr. Bonnisteel's typewriter. It was obviously part of the draft of her talk. Let me read it:

" 'Censorship,' "—he read it very slowly—, " 'is held by the adherents of censorship to be an act of responsibility. Even this faint murmur of justification has its own special note of falsity. Censorship is in fact a default of responsibility. The person who is truly and intelligently concerned with what his children or he himself shall read and hear does not commit a responsible act when he assigns to a board of censors—official or unofficial—the duty of asserting what is fit and what is not fit to see and hear. Fit for—whom? Because a given book or radio programme is unsuitable, or possibly—to grant the censors their favourite word—dangerous for a five-year-old kindergarten pupil, must the same book or radio programme be treated as unsuitable and dangerous for everyone? The censor, in my belief, is usually no worse than a fool, for he does believe in what he's doing. The person who acquiesces in censorship because it relieves him of some of his responsibility as a parent and a citizen is at the very best a miserable coward.' "

"One moment," Canon Chantleigh broke in hopefully. "Those are probably someone else's words. Dr. Bonnisteel no doubt intends to quote them merely for the purpose of exposing their foolhardiness."

"May I read the rest?" Carruthers asked gently. " '. . . The opponents of censorship are not, as is often supposed, advocates of unrestricted licence. They believe that there must be laws to govern such things as obscenity for its own sake. They believe that the people who break these laws must be called to account in the courts. Law is a wonderful and a marvellously workable process. Even if it were a good deal less workable than it is, it would remain one of man's most splendid inventions if only through its statement and restatement of one principle. This is the principle that anyone who is accused of doing wrong shall be entitled to hear the charge read out in court, to hear the evidence against him, to question the evidence if he chooses, to introduce evidence in his own behalf, and to have the verdict

promulgated and explained in his hearing and in the hearing of all mankind. The root theory of censorship is that law is no more than a rather extravagant inconvenience. The beautiful convenience of censorship is that it need waste no time listening to charges or hearing arguments; with the censor our honoured processes of justice boil down to a single sentence: 'I am a censor, and by the fact of my being a censor, my decisions are always just.' I have made it clear to you already that I am no longer a member of LIGHT and should never have been a member of LIGHT and would never have been a member of LIGHT except for my quixotic and—I humbly and shamefully concede—my shabby and by no means wholly defensible willingness to fight fire with fire. Now I hope I shall be able to make it clear to you that whatever protestations it may make, whatever aspirations it may proclaim, whatever honest delusions its followers have fallen into, LIGHT is quite simply and quite essentially a national board of censors determined to censor anything and everything which its leaders consider incompatible with their own ways of taste and of belief.' "

In the hideous silence that ensued the first sound was of Dr. Kibblewhite's quiet sobbing.

"May God have mercy on that poor young woman's soul," Dr. Kibblewhite murmured desolately.

"One well might hope so," Carruthers said drily. "If you'll excuse me, I'll go and make some coffee. Then perhaps we can discuss the immediate question: what are we going to do about her? She goes on the air in"—he consulted the ivory clock again—"one hour and thirty-eight minutes."

22

Bertram had always considered spring a time for waiting and this, above all else, was an evening of spring. Outside a red brick hotel toward the down-town end of Jarvis Street two prematurely sunburned pedestrians in jeans and new plaid shirts—prospectors?—were debating the iniquitous closing laws of the Ontario beer parlours. They wore the completely helpless and completely put-upon look of honest men who have planned, earned, saved for and begun an open, above-board drunk and found themselves becalmed at a critical juncture by the edicts of a bureaucrat. The whole venture was clearly in danger of disintegrating during the thirty-two minutes before the beer parlours were to re-open. Bertram very nearly retraced his steps to remind them that the hard-liquor saloons were not compelled to suspend business during the dinner hour and to direct them to the nearest one of which he had knowledge. But he did not do so. He walked on up the street with the uncomfortable feeling of having denied a good and decent instinct.

From the open ground floor window of a rooming house, a sleepy red-haired girl in a flowered wrapper spoke a conversational greeting. “Nice night.” Bertram had long subscribed to the local legend that all unattached females seen on Jarvis Street were street-walkers, unless, of course, they were of spectacularly advanced age or happened to be entering or leaving the studios of the CBC. Normally, therefore, to have replied to the red-haired girl would have been unthinkable, a little dastardly, even; but her voice was so diffident and uncoquettish that he was persuaded she had addressed him only through the most simple of motives, the generous desire to share a pleasant thought with the nearest human being at hand. “*Lovely* night,” Bertram said warmly, and went on feeling better; his conduct in the matter of the prospectors had been at least partly atoned.

The parking lot in the U of the three main buildings was half deserted. Despite the advance warnings, he had not realized that sentimentality and symbolism had been creeping up on him and he was surprised to find his pace slowing to a reluctant saunter. He was seeing things now that he had never seen before. The lot itself and the contents: the trimly sober little Austins and Morrises of the staff producers and the writers and the musicians; the defiantly unkempt 1937 Fords and Chevvies of the eager kids who were getting in on the ground floor of TV and didn’t mind the money or

the hours; the convertibles of the free-lance actors who were currently hot and busy. The wildly contrasting architecture: on the left the main radio building, a red and weathered fortress that had already been a respectable old academy for young ladies before radio was thought of; on the right, the clapboarded and cupolaed executive building—the Kremlin to all employees who weren't quartered there and to some who were; at their base the flat new television building, as hygienic and devoid of personality as a brand-new small-town hospital. Everything about the place, he discovered sadly, was either too old or too new; either wilted to the verge of decay or bright to the point of burlesque. It hasn't blended yet, he found himself confessing. The ideas haven't blended. A lot of it has been my fault, and Kev's and Andy's. It's no use blaming it on the damned politicians or the damned blue-stockings or the damned hucksters. It just hasn't blended yet. God, I hope they won't stop trying!

He crossed the lot to the television building. They were waiting here, too, the commissionaire, the receptionist and even the young producer. Their respect embarrassed him, for it was not perfunctory. "Good evening, Mr. Harvard," the commissionaire said. "Good luck, Mr. Harvard," the receptionist said. "We expect the biggest audience in the history of the CBC, Bert," the young producer said. "You want to make up now? We might as well do it in the men's can and save the trip upstairs."

He sat at the mirror with a disc of No. 6 pancake and a sponge, glad of the way of filling in the time, glad that his hand did not tremble. The producer had offered to bring in his script girl to help with the make-up, but had discovered she was working on another show. The two men were alone. "I guess this is the kid's last fight, Joe," Bertram said. The remark was banal or flippant or pathetic; neither of them was sure which, but they both knew it was one. The producer covered it up loyally.

"Say, Bert, you know when you got the job I heard a couple of actors talking about you in the cafeteria."

"Yes," Bertram said gratefully, studying his make-up.

"One of them said: 'He's terribly affected, you know.' 'How?' the other actor said. 'He's been in radio for more than twenty years and he's never worn a beard,' the first actor said."

Bertram laughed. "Can we go in now? I'd like to read it over again for time. I can never read for time unless there's a mike there."

He was sitting at a wooden table in a dark cavern flanked by two darkened cameras, a boom microphone hanging overhead and half a dozen bored and busy youngsters circling him silently with lengths of rubber cable. The producer's voice came to him again through a wall of glass.

"Coming up to eight in twenty seconds . . . Six, five, four, three, two, one, woof!"

"Good evening." Bertram placed the manuscript before him, touched his maroon tie, and began to read. "My name is Bertram Harvard. I am chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation."

A dozen blocks away Hilary glanced out of the window, past the reversed lettering.

—too bad we can't show it on the screen, she thought wryly; the contorted symbol, magnificently askew, said more than would be said in her whole twenty pages of typescript.

She tried to visualize the faces waiting in the far corners of the mysterious and monolithic air. A few perhaps would be hopeful and might take new hope from what they heard tonight and store it up for future use; she had thought, indeed, of speaking to these alone as though they were men already grown furtive in cellars, as pale and desperate as Maquisards.

But this would have been too extravagant. Many of the faces would be radiant with expectation, aglow with happy outrage and the certainty of long-postponed redress. But some, she had assured herself, would still be calm and inquiring, aware of the gravity of the decision they were about to take and willing to take it in full consultation with their reason.

It was these who must be reached, the millions who didn't care much either way, but might at last be persuaded that it was their business to care. She leafed through her typescript to the passage near the end:

"You have been invited by the government to express your views directly and at once on these issues. At last freedom has been boiled down to a simple mathematical equation. If four million people speak out against freedom tomorrow and only two million people speak out for it, then the

controversy over freedom will be settled and controversy itself will be driven underground. If four million people speak out for freedom and only two million speak out against it, freedom and controversy, which are so utterly interdependent, will be reinforced and reaffirmed."

She pencilled in two more lines: "Remember this: the opponents of freedom are far better arranged and far better prepared and far more closely allied than the friends of freedom. But it is not too late to save what is not yet quite lost."

She turned a few pages back. She was not entirely sure that she had put the essence of it as well and clearly as she might have done: "We Canadians pride ourselves, perhaps with some reason, in the relative success with which we have avoided that desperate North American phenomenon which goes under the name of McCarthyism. It is true that we have not allowed our seedy little handful of Communists to stampede us into an intellectual blood-bath in which the slightest leftist taint is the mark of the executioner. But thought control is thought control whether it stems chiefly from political brutality or cowardice or from that puritanical excess of religious faith which is really an insufficiency of faith."

She frowned and turned to another page . . .

"Why, one might ask, should those who are concerned for intellectual liberty be mainly concerned about what is happening in radio and television? Because in Canada, radio and television have a more strongly native flavour than most of our other great mediums of communication; radio and television, which we feel their limited number of outlets compels us to treat as a national possession, shape and reflect our national attitudes for better or for worse in a degree perhaps even greater than do books and magazines and newspapers and motion pictures. If we allow freedom of the air to be crushed, its crushing is far more than an act of carelessness susceptible of correction after more careful thought; it becomes an act of national policy. If we extend censorship of the spoken word we shall, inevitably, extend censorship of the written word."

Hilary glanced at her wrist watch. It would have to do she acknowledged bleakly. She rearranged the pages of her manuscript, put them in a blue folder and began to rise. A new and unreckoned torment assailed her now. She was physically helpless. Her whole body trembled; her legs would not support her. She had been like this only once before in her life, on the day she had followed Jockoboy to the tiny grave. She did now what she had done then. She put her face between her hands and whispered meekly:

“Forgive me, God, for weakness. But give me back my strength and my faith.”

In a moment she stood gratefully on her feet. She turned off the electric switch and stepped quickly into the anteroom. The room was suddenly drenched with illumination, and her four colleagues rose to greet her with sorrowing, reproachful faces.

“Let me see your manuscript, please, Dr. Bonnisteel.” Carruthers spoke politely and regretfully, like a judge pronouncing a particularly distasteful sentence.

“What are you doing here?” Hilary cried wildly. “There isn’t time! I have to go on the air in fifty minutes.”

“I don’t think you’ll be going on the air,” Carruthers said quietly.

“You can’t stop me!” she said defiantly. “I don’t know what you think! I don’t care what you think—except that—except that I’m sorry I have had to stoop so low.”

“We too are sorry.” Canon Chantleigh decanted a measure of kirsch, agonizingly bitter, unbearably sweet.

“You can’t stop me!” Hilary cried feverishly. “I—I’ll call the police.”

She squared her shoulders and made a pretence of marching straight through the picket line of their four unyielding bodies.

“No you don’t!” Canon Chantleigh reached out with his frail hand and clutched her sleeve.

All her rage and horror and disgust—her dismay for them and her desolation for herself—welled up in one pitiful tremor. “Take your hands off me!” she protested, “you old—” The *mot juste* would not come and she fell back, as in all great moral crises, on Jockoboy and the simple values of her Saskatchewan girlhood. She began again: “Take your hands off me, you old pisspot!”

The next thing she remembered with total clarity was running through the darkened streets alone. Canon Chantleigh and Dr. Kibblewhite and even Carruthers had been momentarily stunned. It was Quildinning who leaped first to the pursuit, but she had beaten him by a good four strides to the elevator and found it mercifully unengaged and waiting. But even as it gasped and wheezed down the silent shaft she heard Quildinning’s youthful footsteps racing down the stairway outside and she realized that she was trapped. But then, miraculously, she heard Carruthers bawling down the

stairway: “Never mind, Quildinning! Let her go!” and the footsteps had ceased and she had reached the street unimpeded.

She flagged a taxi. “The CBC on Jarvis Street,” she panted. “Please hurry.”

“Dr. Bonnisteel?” the girl at the reception desk inquired. “The small studio on your left, please. I believe Mr. Harvard is there now.”

Harvard was seated at a table alone, staring vacantly at a microphone and making little balls of paper from a disarray of foolscap sheets and throwing them briskly toward a dark television camera in the corner. Except for him, the studio was deserted. The adjoining control booth at the top of the tiny stairway was dark.

Harvard rose and bowed, as he always seemed to do, with an attitude of courtly puzzlement.

“Hello, Dr. Bonnisteel,” he said softly. “I’m sorry I wasn’t able to reach you by telephone. The broadcast has just been cancelled.”

“Cancelled!” Hilary gasped. “But that’s impossible!”

“Then you don’t know either?” he asked regretfully. “The Minister of Communications, Mr. Rackstraw, was just on the telephone from Ottawa. He ordered the cancellation personally.”

“Did he say,” Hilary asked him bleakly, “whether he had been speaking to any of my colleagues in the last ten or fifteen minutes?”

“Yes, I gathered that much. The whole thing seems indescribably confused. The Minister had been called from a State dinner to speak to someone from your organization. He was terribly agitated and I’m not certain whether I got his full meaning or not. But apparently the entire national executive of LIGHT have been on the telephone to him personally eight or ten minutes ago and have demanded that the broadcast not be allowed to proceed.”

“The entire national executive,” Hilary said, “except me.”

“I wondered about you,” Harvard said reflectively. “I couldn’t understand that part at all. Mr. Rackstraw seemed to be under the impression that your associates were accusing you and me of being in collusion to defeat the whole purpose of the broadcast.”

“Oh, no!” Hilary said sorrowfully. “Surely they didn’t believe *you* were in it too!”

“I assured him that you and I were the best and cheerfulest of enemies.” Harvard smiled ruefully. “But he still ordered me quite firmly to call the broadcast off and of course I have done so. I’m to take the overnight train back to Ottawa and report to him first thing in the morning. By then perhaps it will be a little clearer. At any rate,” he said gracefully, “one thing is plain. You’ve won, Dr. Bonnisteel. The argument is over. I’m sure the Code will be accepted almost at once.”

“By you?” Hilary asked hesitantly.

“No.” He smiled gravely. “You see, I still think the Code is grotesquely wrong. I would be the worst possible man to administer it.”

“I see,” Hilary said painfully. “So I have succeeded not only in preventing you from being heard but in costing you your job.”

“No, no,” he protested warmly. “This isn’t a personal matter. I have never doubted your sincerity and good will. I don’t doubt it now. In any case, it seems apparent that LIGHT is a much more powerful force than either you or I had realized. If it makes you feel better, I’m sure it would have ended this way even if you hadn’t come into it at all.”

“Mr. Harvard,” Hilary spoke almost timidly, “would you do me a very great favour?”

“If I can.”

“Would you—would you mind reading my speech, please?”

“Oh.” She saw that the request had placed an almost unbearable strain on his courtesy. “Why, yes,” he said gravely, “I’d like to.”

“Could I—could I please sit in there while you’re reading it?” she asked miserably.

“Why, of course.” He led her up the stairway into the darkened control room and left her seated there. She put her head in her arms and wept silently.

After a very long while the door opened again. His two hands were on her shoulders. “Please,” he said gently.

“No!” she said piteously.

“Don’t you see?” he said softly. His hands were still on her shoulders, and his voice was still ineffably gentle. “It’s all in your own little poem, really. Look at that silent microphone. It will not always be silent. *Affinity shines stubborn from the most neglected shroud.* The important thing is not that we’ve both made errors and both been compromised and defeated. The important thing—the only thing that I was terrified to face through it all—is the nature and permanence of affinity itself. I was terrified of and for you; if anyone who could write as you have written could truly take his stand where you appeared to stand, then affinity and hope and understanding, which are all the same thing, were themselves in desperate jeopardy.”

“Can’t you, please, say something just a little disagreeable to me?” Hilary begged him more cheerfully.

“Yes.” He grinned and drew her erect. “You’ve been pretty bloody dumb, if you don’t mind my saying so.”

“Thank you,” Hilary sighed, reaching for her handkerchief. “That’s the nicest thing you possibly could have done.”

Then they were outside, walking arm in arm through the spring night, walking for miles and miles through the quiet streets for no other reason than that there was nothing better nor nothing half so good to do.

23

"But damn it all, Hiram"—Peter Rackstraw massaged his temples urgently—"Harvard had absolutely no knowledge of it. I've just left him. He's determined to resign and I can't see any way out of that. But surely we don't have to hold him responsible for the whole miserable business!"

"He is the chairman of the CBC, Peter. He is responsible for what happens on the CBC."

"But it didn't happen, Hiram. Let's not lose sight of that."

The Prime Minister shuddered. "We have at least one small mercy to be thankful for. If the woman had actually been allowed to go through with it . . ." He shut the awful thought away.

"The morning papers have got it all wrong," Rackstraw persisted. "Chantleigh and his crowd have tried to give the impression that even I was a party to this alleged plot. They're saying, in effect, that they had to argue to get me to cancel the broadcast. The fact is that the minute I understood what they were driving at, I realized how much dynamite was sitting there and ordered it off at once."

"Look, Peter, this is no time for subtle distinctions. Here are the facts: We promised LIGHT a public debate with the CBC, over the CBC. In one way or another, two speakers who were supposed to be on opposite sides of the fence were prevented by a hairbreadth from going on the air and delivering a solid hour of argument in favour of the CBC. Chantleigh and his crowd were up all last night telling the papers that the CBC had somehow suborned LIGHT's official spokesman . . . on a vital debate on freedom of speech the CBC was conspiring to deny freedom of speech to its own critics. You take the ball from there."

"Oh, all right," Rackstraw said unhappily. "I'll admit that denials won't get us far."

"Denials," the Prime Minister said ominously, "will get us very far. They'll get us so far it will take us fifteen years to arrive back where we were twenty-four hours ago. Now, let's be calm and let's be sensible. Have you been talking to the whips this morning?"

"No. I've been with Harvard."

"Well, I have. Every Member has had an avalanche of wires already. Most of them support the Code. Most of them go a lot farther. Unless we act within two minutes of the opening of the House, the whips assure me at least fifteen of our own people will cross the floor. We'll be defeated."

"Go on," Rackstraw said wearily. "Go on, Hiram."

"Farnbrough will have a question. The only possible answer, Peter, is this: Admit without any hint of quibbling that LIGHT has got the CBC dead to rights. Apologize not only to LIGHT but to the whole nation for the inescapable fact that the CBC was about to allow what was advertised as an open debate to degenerate into a one-sided, propagandist monologue. Say that you have asked for and received the resignation of the chairman of the CBC. And—here's the essential point, Peter—announce that the government has reconsidered LIGHT's Code of Broadcasting and has decided to accept it in the national interest."

"Oh, God!" Rackstraw moaned.

"Look, Peter." Jobin put his arm on the younger man's shoulder. "It's not just the Party; no, and by God, it's not just you and me. Do you or do you not want Bill Farnbrough running the country for the next ten years?"

"No, I don't. But you know, Hiram, Harvard brought back the manuscript of the Bonnisteel woman's speech. I was fool enough to read it. It surprised even me to see how much sense it made. Damn it, Hiram, I know we may have to make this decision. But if we do, it will still be the wrong decision."

"All right, Peter, follow that line through. We refuse to make the decision. We are defeated in the House, now, this afternoon. Farnbrough goes to the country as a supporter of and supported by LIGHT. He knocks our ears off. The Code still goes in. We still get censorship, probably in a tougher form, that's all. What, precisely, has been accomplished?"

"You won't get sore if I say something sanctimonious, Hiram? I guess I was thinking of my own pride."

"Pride at a time like this is useless and selfish." Jobin now looked weary too. "Peter," he urged, "I'm getting too old for all this. I've talked it over with Martha, just now, just this morning, after I realized the awful dimensions of this particular mess. I'm not fighting another election, Peter. Let's get through this term together, on the old footing, Peter, with none of these silly misunderstandings that have come between us lately. Let's get through with it, Peter, and then let's go to the next nominating convention

together and help the party pick the next Prime Minister. There's only one candidate, really, Peter," Jobin finished.

"I've wanted it, Hiram." Rackstraw's head had grown preposterously light. "I won't deny I've wanted it. I won't deny I even played a little footsie with the boys who wanted to ease you out in the last campaign. We both know it, Hiram; let's not ignore it any longer."

"Yes, old friend," Jobin smiled, "I've known it. I haven't held it against you as much as you may think—because, well, perhaps because I've got my failings too. As long as we're facing truth, let me admit I fobbed Communications off on you because I felt Welfare was making you too popular."

"I've known that, Hiram," Rackstraw said contritely. "I'd have done the same thing. Particularly after that mix-up on the announcement of the new Family Allowances."

"Then," Jobin said eagerly, "I can count on you? The Party can count on you?"

Peter rubbed his forehead again. "There's still half an hour, Hiram. Let me put it this way: I hope you can count on me. But I still have some thinking to do."

"If it doesn't work itself out, Peter?"

"The Party won't suffer, Hiram. There'll be no split in the Party if I can help to avoid it. I'll go as quietly as I can."

"But you won't go," Jobin said warmly. "I know you won't go, Peter."

"No," Rackstraw said thoughtfully, "I guess I won't."

The intervening half-hour had been diabolically cruel. The simple, dogged phrases of the Bonnisteel manuscript would not be expelled from his mind. He had tried to think of his family, he had tried to think of the history books of twenty, thirty, forty, a hundred years hence and to look for his own name therein, but the dogged words, cruel with their helpless truth, recurred and recurred again.

But now he had found sanctuary. Here he stood at last where he had stood for almost thirty years, looking around the green and Gothic ramparts that had sustained him for more than half his life, and, yes! that he had sustained in return. Whatever his life had meant or was likely to mean, the

essence of it, the good along with the bad, was embodied in this stone, these soaring patterns of well-hewed wood. This was his anchor; it would do, it would suffice.

"I regret to say," he ran over each syllable, "that without the government's knowledge, and most emphatically without its consent, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation last night . . ."

Across the floor of the House of Commons William Farnbrough, flushed and expectant, was putting his question . . . "and in view of these repeated insults to and depredations against the spiritual and moral foundations of our Canadian way of life, and particularly in view of the CBC's refusal last night to give a fair hearing to those who cherish our spiritual and moral foundations—in view of these not inconsequential matters, will the Minister of Communications now tell the House whether he has or has not seen fit to ask for the resignation of the chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation?"

Peter rose slowly to his feet. He looked across the floor into Farnbrough's eager face and looked around again at each familiar detail of his home. As he began to speak he was still not sure what he was going to say. But at the last split second, a decisive, absurd and unforeseeable factor came into his calculations: he just didn't like Bill Farnbrough.

"I will not," the Minister of Communications told the House of Commons firmly, and largely to his own surprise, "turn my back on Bertram Harvard."

He was halfway across the Hill before he felt the Prime Minister's hand upon his arm.

He turned. "It didn't do any harm, Hiram?" he asked beseechingly. "Not to the Party, I mean? If I had been able to warn you, I would have; but there was no time. Even then I was certain you'd know what to do."

"Why did you use that particular phrase, in God's name?" The Prime Minister's voice contained the wonderment and respect usually withheld for occasions of pure lunacy and splendour.

"About turning my back? I don't know, Hiram. It just occurred to me."

"Acheson and Alger Hiss; remember?"

"Oh, God, of course! I *am* sorry, Hiram. I guess that really tore it."

“No, Peter,” Jobin said sympathetically. “I think it’s going to be all right.”

“You’ve announced that both Harvard and I have resigned. I knew you’d do that instinctively. And believe me, Hiram, I think the instinct that made you do it was good and necessary.”

“Thank you, Peter. I haven’t done it yet. With your permission, I will, of course, after the recess.”

“You’ve managed to get a recess?”

“Yes. The instant you left, I moved that we rise until three o’clock. Farnbrough was so stupefied by his own exultation and confidence that he didn’t raise a whimper. He obviously thinks it’s only a matter of time now.”

“And?”

“And this afternoon, Peter, Farnbrough will come back prepared to ask for your resignation, for Harvard’s resignation, and for the government’s resignation. He’ll be prepared to ask for the immediate acceptance of the Code. And he’ll be expecting me to fight.”

“And?”

“He’ll get his fight. On our terms, not his. Before he opens his mouth I’m going to give him everything he can possibly ask for: your resignation, Harvard’s resignation, and, yes, by heaven, the government’s resignation. I’ll announce that the Code goes into effect immediately. And then, Peter, I’ll announce my intention of asking the Governor-General for an immediate dissolution so that the people may decide whether we have acted properly.”

“It will be close, Hiram! Terribly close.”

“No it won’t, Peter. Do you know what our chief plank is going to be in the election? The outright abolition of the CBC. We’ll admit it hasn’t worked to the public’s satisfaction as a State concern, and we’ll announce our intention of liquidating it and selling it back to private enterprise.”

“Hiram!” Peter said reverently. “That’s what Farnbrough’s wanted to do all along.”

“Yes,” Jobin agreed. “But he’s never quite had the guts to say so. It’s too bad, but we’re going to beat him to it. Now, if he wants to find an election issue in radio and television he’ll have to set himself up as the defender of the CBC.”

“Are you sure,” Peter asked, “that this is for the country’s . . .”

“Good? Yes, Peter, I’ve thought of that. I’ve thought of it very hard. Whether Farnbrough kills it or we kill it, the CBC is already as good as dead. Last night was only the *coup de grâce*. The only question now is who’s going to be left running the country.”

The two men paused on the green slope. “I’m sorry I had to get stuffy at the last minute,” Rackstraw said sadly. “I didn’t mean to, but Farnbrough just looked too damned smug.”

The Prime Minister nodded with traces of admiration, stupefaction and envy. The two men shook hands and walked on in opposite directions.

24

All of July had been an exciting and fruitful month. First the quick election and the overwhelming decision to abandon the CBC; Farnbrough hadn't dared oppose it in the campaign and Jobin had left him with no real issue except the promise of a further one hundred per cent increase in the Family Allowances for children, and at the last minute Jobin had countered even that with his Bachelors, Spinsters and Spouses Allowances.

At the club, of course, Garfield joined in the dismal rounds of speculation. He didn't know what the country was coming to either, with all this berserk impetus of the welfare state. Still, his bid, made in conjunction with the New York-California Broadcasting Company, had given him the twelve best radio stations in Canada along with the television outlets in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver and Winnipeg. The end product of the merger, the Palms-to-Pines network, had already established the most satisfactory of working arrangements with Columbia, National, American and Mutual, and its slogan—"The Best of Hollywood is None too Good for Canada"—had been an instantaneous success.

In straight fiscal terms he could now afford to write off the Queens d'Amour as a bad guess. But they hadn't been a bad guess and, moreover, of all his brain children they had the greatest claim on his sentimental regard. There'd been some bad luck, it was true; the Mohammedan girl had turned out to be a sucker for left-handers and had been unveiled in the first month. His best left-handed pitcher had eloped with the bat boy. Foster Hewitt had refused to take over the broadcasts. On successive nights two of the Princes d'Amour had turned up drunk. It had rained all through the last half of June. Even after the broadcasts began with the nation's second best sports announcer at the microphone, the increase in attendance had hardly kept up with the increase in costs.

In a sense the Queens d'Amour had become a point of pride with him. And now, today—in less than ten minutes—they'd know how much he allowed folly to interfere with his pride. He looked at the stack of clippings on his desk.

HONEYBEAR RODNEY DISAPPEARS
HONEYBEAR BELIEVED ABDUCTED
HONEYBEAR SAID VACATIONING WITH FAROUK

The news play from the start had been as spectacular as he had known it would be. He visualized tomorrow's play and smiled:

HONEYBEAR JOINS QUEENS D'AMOUR

They'd trample the gates down. He pressed the buzzer. "How many are out there now, Peters?" His face set. "Look, Peters, I promised them the biggest story of the year. I could have made it exclusive to the *Guardian* but this is a story of international importance. I'm willing to cut all the papers in on it. If they don't want to wait for it, there's no padlock on the door . . . Now, when she comes, make sure she comes up the back elevator. I'll want about five minutes before I take her out to meet them."

Perhaps he should have met Hubert at the airport. *Not Hubert, damn it! Honeybear!* It was important to remember.

But airport receptions were chancy and difficult to control. He'd met the Mohammedan girl at Malton and if he hadn't, on some God-given impulse, stepped inside the plane just before she came out the whole project would have ended right there, in preposterous disaster. That lunatic Peters had neglected to explain about the veil and Garfield had found the girl powdering her nose and fixing her smile and giggling inanely to the stewardess about some entirely fancied resemblance to Yvonne de Carlo. In twenty seconds she'd have been beaming into the news cameras, reducing the forbidden mystery of the Orient to the level of a tooth-paste ad. Fortunately, the girl had spent most of her New York stopover shopping at Gimbel's and had acquired a large silk scarf that served quite adequately as a veil, once Garfield had persuaded her that the veil still had a place in modern society.

The arguments against airport receptions, nevertheless, remained. And, although the admission was a painful one, there was an extra argument in this case: Garfield was not looking forward to meeting Hubert anywhere, any time. *Honeybear, damn it all!*

It was not that he had come to dislike Hubert. Hubert might be faintly contemptible, but he was far from pitiful, and pity was the only true synonym for distaste. Hubert was doing all right, he was doing better than all right. He would soon be a key figure in a million-dollar enterprise, drawing his fifteen thousand a year for half the effort it once had cost him to earn sixty dollars a week. And besides, it had been Hubert's own idea really. Who had first put it into words Garfield could no longer remember, but there was no doubt where the *basic* suggestion must have originated. There was no reason why he should feel uneasy about this meeting, although he was

glad that the first part of it could be gotten over in private. And afterwards, after the contract was signed, he could conduct his dealings with Hubert through the manager. *Honeybear, damn it!*

On the opposite side of the small corner entrance to his office he heard now a timid rapping. He flew to the door and flung it open.

"Baby!" he cried, and held out both hands.

Honeybear Rodney, *né* Hubert Rodney, stepped across the threshold as gorgeously forlorn as the heroine of a Verdi opera. Her figure was trim but more than adequately rounded; her face solemn with the burden of unshed tears, and soft with a fragile beauty. She wore a close-fitting satin dress and above it a long stole of fur.

"Mink!" Garfield croaked, doing his best to forget the balance sheets. "You look wonderful, uh!"

Honeybear touched him limply, with melancholy, and rushed across the room to the window. "Oh!" The voice was wonderfully soft and feminine.

Garfield went to her. "What's the matter, uh?" he asked anxiously. He found her a chair and she lowered herself with quick and silent gratitude.

"What's the matter, uh?" Garfield repeated. He felt no distaste, absolutely none, he reassured himself.

The sobs came to him through a tiny handkerchief, as fragile and piteous as a bird crying beyond budding leaves. "It's been awful!"

"No!" he protested, much distressed. "No, uh."

"So alone! No one has ever been so alone."

"I know, uh," he said with immediate sympathy. "It's all over now."

"It's only beginning," she murmured desolately. "Even you can't say my name! Even I can't say it!"

"Why"—Garfield gulped—"why, Honeybear!"

She looked up for the first time. "I think I'll enter a convent."

"No!" he cried. "No, no, Honeybear!" He went on, choosing each word with a care born of something akin to panic: "You've got a great career ahead of you, Honeybear. Hawkins tells me you've got the makings of the best little third baseman in the business. Right at this minute the reporters and photographers . . ."

“Oh, I simply couldn’t stand any more of *that*. Even in Oslo it was terrible.”

“Now, now,” Garfield pleaded helplessly.

“Garfield?” She regarded him innocently above the handkerchief.

“Yes, Honeybear?”

“I met a man on the plane. He recognized me. He said he was an executive of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. He offered me . . .”

“Honeybear!” Garfield cried in horror.

“But I still think”—she had grown considerably calmer, more grave and thoughtful—“I’ll enter a convent.”

“Honeybear! The whole thing depends on you. It’s all been built on you. You wouldn’t . . .”

“Garfield?” She was pouting now.

“Yes?” he said meekly.

“You didn’t mean all those things you put in your letters, did you?”

“What things, Honeybear?”

“Oh, about how much more I meant to you than anyone else. About doing exciting things together.”

“Of course I meant them,” he said staunchly.

“Did you?” she asked timidly. “Did you, Garfield?”

“Yes!” he croaked. “Every word.”

“Garfield?” She sighed less unhappily. “You know there’s nothing I could ever do to disappoint you, don’t you?”

“Yes,” he said eagerly. “Yes, of course.”

“Then”—she seemed much more at peace—“you don’t mind if we don’t sign the contract right away? You wouldn’t mind that, would you, Garfield? Just to humour me?”

“Why”—Garfield squared his shoulders; fate was sometimes bitter, but it was, after all, fate—“why, no Honeybear, dear.”

He put his hand on her shoulder and they went out together to meet the press.

25

Hilary and Bertram returned from their wedding trip in August. They had not yet decided what to do or where to settle, but in the meantime Hilary's bachelor apartment was home enough. They spent the early part of the first evening catching up on the mail that had accumulated in their absence. Bertram sat in a corner chair, with his maroon tie loosened and his stockinged feet on a stool. Hilary was wearing her eye-patch; at first she had been strangely shy about wearing it in his presence, but now they were fully at home with each other. She sat nearby at the end of the chesterfield.

"Here's a note from Senator Rackstraw," Bertram said with sudden pleasure. Hilary chuckled. He had told her about his last evening with Rackstraw. She had listened with amusement and a foolish, perverse pride and had told Bertram how much dignity and vigour his clean, strong bald head would have lent to any senate; preferably in Rome, she had observed, but Ottawa was not altogether undeserving.

"Senator Rackstraw wants us to know he's delighted to hear of our marriage," Bertram continued. "He also wants us to know he's managed to get himself appointed to the Senate Committee on Comic Books."

"Oh, the poor man!"

"Poor man, nothing. He says he's going to have the time of his life. He's writing a brief on violence and vengeance in literature and their effects on the young. Says he's about to prove that the government is obliged to repeal the ban on Dick Tracy and ban the Old Testament instead."

"Um." Hilary frowned slightly over another letter. "Speaking of bans, all my books have been removed from the Toronto Public Libraries."

She had said it quickly, without thinking. Now, with a tug of guilt, she realized that she wished she hadn't said it at all. Just for now, such things were better pushed away, forgotten. What had these frantic intellectual squabbles to do with the essences of life? She had done what she could do—they had both done what they could do. They had taken the consequences; surely they were entitled to their happiness.

"Why? Why, Hilary?" Bertram had risen and walked quickly across the room. He turned and walked halfway back, a man grown suddenly desperate with a passion for which he could find no outlet. "Why, damn it!"

Their happiness. Three months ago she would have been proud of his anger, would have taken hope in it. Now it seemed nothing but a vain challenge to their tranquillity and she wished again that she had kept her silence. She knew, without the slightest trace of regret, that she had become what she once had considered the stodgiest and smuggest and most inert of all God's creatures: a successfully married woman.

She returned an anxious, conciliatory smile. "Representations from LIGHT." He walked back toward the wall and she said quickly, "It's not my work they object to."

"Then what in God's name . . ."

"They consider me morally unstable." It had been the wrong thing again. "We must try to see it from their point of view, Bertram," she pleaded.

"I do, Hilary." Bertram had gained control over himself. "I think I see their point of view quite clearly. I think I always have. Now their point of view has prevailed and they refuse to see mine, and yours." He sat down at her side and took her hand. "Let's go to England, dear."

It was what she had been fearing. "Oh, Bertram, let's not go into that again—not yet. You promised to . . ."

"To wait and see what happens. Well, haven't we seen?"

She gave him her other hand. "It's such a step," she said appealingly. "I *do* intend to have children, you know. I keep thinking of—oh, the winters on the prairie, and all the foolish, irrelevant factors."

"And I . . ." Bertram began much more gently.

". . . keep thinking of the Third Programme and two-hour plays and almost no commercials. Of the relevant factors, like slightly freer speech, and slightly less assured do-gooders, and slightly less effective pressure groups in general. And you're right and I'm wrong, Bertram."

"But you still want to stay here," he said softly.

"Bertram, darling"—as she groped for the suitable words it came upon her that the Bertram part of her happiness could never be separated from the sadness that belonged to Jockoboy and that other boy in the Luxembourg —"Bertram, I'm sick of listening to my head. I tried to stop listening to my heart when I was eleven years old. I've just learned to hear it again. My ear's not trained to catch the sounds and they have a queer preposterous ring. My heart says: stay."

“Let’s drop the subject, Hilary,” he comforted her.

“Thanks, dear.” Now she felt at peace. “Want to read to me?”

“Sore throat. How about you?”

“I don’t think my eye’s up to it. Shall we try the radio?”

Again she had spoken without thinking, and again she realized it had been a mistake. “What time is it?” he asked.

“Coming up to eight.” She added stupidly, “Never mind though.”

Bertram was occupied with the back half of the evening paper. “CBL has the Bob Hope show, guest Bing Crosby. CJBC has the Bing Crosby show, guest Bob Hope. CNOTE has the Danny Kaye show, guests Bing Crosby *and* Bob Hope.” He made the announcement without inflection of any kind.

“That’s not possible,” Hilary said.

“Transcriptions.”

“What about television?” Hilary inquired weakly.

“Channel Eight: I Love Lucy. Channel Four: I Married Joan. Channel Twelve: I Wed Wanda.”

“Oh.”

Bertram sat forward. “Here’s a new one on Channel Ten, though.”

“What?”

“I Adore Adele.” Bertram spoke without sarcasm. If he was thinking of England, even in the faintest way, his voice did not show it.

“Oh.” They were silent.

“Want to go out somewhere? Want to try the Royal Alex?”

“What’s on, Bertram?”

“Isn’t it that new thing of Tennessee Williams? Oh no—I seem to remember somebody on the plane saying the police did something about it. Wait. I’ll see what they’ve substituted.”

“Well?”

“*Charley’s Aunt.*” She looked up quickly. His expression was slightly pained; it bore no hint of cleverness or guile.

“Oh.”

“Oh, look, Hilary! At eight-thirty CBL is carrying the Queens d’Amour versus the Cincinnati Barmaids. That’s Garfield Smith’s team. I guess I never told you: for a while there before the LIGHT thing blew up, I thought Smitty and the Queens d’Amour were going to give me Hell’s own time.”

“But they didn’t?”

“No. That’s one thing about Smitty. He was always in the middle of the fight over controls but when the morals fight got going he didn’t try to take advantage of it. I suppose it would be terribly boring, but—well—just for old time’s sake I’d like to have one look at Smitty’s team.”

“All right,” Hilary said indulgently. “I can always finish reading the mail if it gets too dull.”

When he heard the address, the cab driver said enviously: “You folks got tickets?”

“As a matter of fact we haven’t,” Bertram said.

“You’ll never get in,” the driver prophesied. “Ever since Honeybear joined the team every game has been like Grey Cup day. And tonight it will be twice as bad.”

“Why worse tonight?”

“You pulling my leg?” the driver said huffily.

“No, really.”

“Don’t you read the papers? Don’t you listen to the radio?”

“We’ve been out of town,” Bertram apologized.

“Oh.” The driver was mollified. “Well, if you really want to get in, the scalpers usually hang around the west gate. Most nights they get twelve dollars a pair. Tonight it will be at least twenty.”

“Let’s go somewhere else,” Hilary urged.

But Bertram’s curiosity had now been goaded beyond containing and with it went a queer warm kind of pride. Smitty had told him he’d be turning them away and what he’d foretold had come true. Parts of it were saddening, but parts of it stirred a paternal, Uncle-Wilburish affection. “Just once, Hilary,” Bertram said firmly.

They found their scalper and they found their seats, far down the third base line, in front of two elderly men with binoculars. They stood for a moment surveying the diamond before they seated themselves. The elderly

men hissed: “Sit down!” in unison and rose and lowered themselves like submarine commanders clinging to their periscopes in a heavy sea, not taking their binoculars off the scene before them for an instant.

The game was in the second inning. The stands were wholly dark but the emanations of their fullness were as unmistakable as the emanations from a jungle; the night air was alive with faint, electric sighings and throbbings, and from far up under the eaves of the stand scented breezes drifted forth from giant atomizers. There were no sounds louder than the patter of feet across the green diamond and an occasional inarticulate moan of disappointment or delight from the stands.

The diamond was occupied by nine gossamer nymphs in scarlet bodices and the long black opalescent pantaloons frequently associated with harems. Their white arms glistened under the arc lights like fronds of white lace rustling under a summer moon, and when they moved about the diamond unheard tom-toms caressed each graceful motion.

At first Hilary had difficulty in adjusting her eyes to the exotic sight. Even after her eyes had become adjusted her mind remained adamantly unreceptive. She had forgotten, or perhaps had never known, that girls played baseball except in calico dresses or denim jeans amid the sweat and grime of dusty school yards; the shouts of scornful boys and playful dogs were needed to give meaning and stature to the scene.

On an urgent, unmeasured impulse, she turned to one of the softly panting old men behind them. The team in the field had just glided in to take its turn at bat. She broke the cathedral hush and asked: “Who’s coming up?”

“Shhhh!”

“But who’s up?” she demanded persistently.

“Mavis Rebchuck,” one of the old men whispered, hastily disposing of the bitter interruption.

Mavis Rebchuck’s gossamer-clad buttocks quivered enchantingly as their owner pirouetted too late after a fast ball. Her white arms made a voluptuous swirl against the velvet night.

Suddenly Hilary shouted at the top of her lungs: “Come on, Mavis, the old hustle, Mavis, come on Mavis, the old hustle!” Forty thousand pairs of eyes turned in Hilary’s direction; she could not see their expression but the mass sound that burst from forty thousand throats bespoke grief, despair and hatred in a hundred shadings. She gazed stonily ahead; it had been a despicable trick on everyone but Mavis Rebchuck. Mavis Rebchuck, she

was certain, would understand that in spite of everything she was not alone, that somewhere in this alien market place there was someone left to defend the dignity of womanhood.

Mavis Rebchuck rewarded her by screwing up her face like a steam-fitter and belting the next pitch for three bases. She rounded second base at the wild scampering gait of a spring heifer, and slid into third on her enamelled nose. She got up wiping dust from her face and from her pantaloons, but she was grinning happily; she was the only happy player on either team.

The next batter, a tall platinum blonde, walked uncertainly to the plate. She banged her bat tentatively on the ground. A harried-looking male in a coach's uniform ran out from the direction of third base and began making gesticulations. The platinum blonde shrugged and took a more feminine, less belligerent stance. She rolled her lovely shoulders at a slow ball.

"Strike one!"

"Outta the lot, kid!" Hilary shouted. "Right outta the lot!"

The platinum blonde tilted her head speculatively. She stepped out of the batter's box. She spat on her pale white hands. Then she leaned down and rubbed them in the dirt, straightened up again and hit a double.

A disconsolate keening emanated from the crowd, rather like the sounds at an Oriental funeral. Bertram was studying his wife with a mixture of disbelief, appreciation and indulgent reproof. "Take it easy," he whispered. "If you keep that up the whole thing will degenerate into a ball game." He squeezed her hand.

"All right," Hilary said meekly. She had just noticed that one of the old men behind them was actually shedding tears of helpless disenchantment.

The game resumed its more stately and sinuous pace. The half-inning ended with a burst of polite hand-clapping and then the nine members of the Queens d'Amour, plus half-a-dozen substitutes from the dug-out, marched with slow rhythmic steps to the centre of the diamond and ranged themselves in two rows beside the pitcher's mound. A new kind of ejaculation, expressive of some emotion too deep and subtle for definition, escaped the massive crowd.

Over the loud-speakers a voice now crooned with infinite tenderness: "So that the five million radio and television followers of the Queens d'Amour may not be deprived of one instant of this great and radiant night, the ceremony we have all been waiting for shall commence at once."

A tall blond young man wearing tails and white tie walked into the centre of the pool of light beside the pitcher's mound and turned to face home plate. "Why, it's Michael Quildinning!" Hilary whispered.

"Shhh!" The old men hissed again in unison from behind their trembling binoculars.

An unseen orchestra struck up the Mendelssohn wedding march, and now, walking on the arm of a man in conventional baseball uniform, a singularly beautiful and singularly happy young woman began marching toward the place where Quildinning stood. She was dressed as the Queens d'Amour were dressed, but a very thin white veil flowed back from her shining dark head and undulated in harmony with the haunting outlines of her round firm limbs. "Honeybear!" the two old men cried in ecstasy and desolation. "Honeybear!"

"Honeybear!" the other spectators cried as one.

Two more male figures emerged across the edge of light, one of average size, the other tiny but very resolute. Both were dressed like Michael Quildinning in white tie and tails.

"It's Smitty!" Bertram gasped. "Hilary, it's Garfield Smith!" He looked anxiously at Smitty's face. The expression was—he remembered now, it was like the pictures of Kevin and Andrew—the expression had the stunned and determined amiability of a mounted salmon.

"Dearly beloved . . ." The music had stopped and Michael Quildinning was addressing Garfield Smith and Honeybear Rodney through a lapel microphone.

"All right, Bertram," Hilary said sadly. "All right, Bertram. We'll go to England."

"We are gathered together . . ." Honeybear moved a half-pace closer to Garfield Smith. Garfield was seen to make a small, involuntary start, but he smiled manfully and stood his ground. In a while he stole another look at Honeybear. What he saw was infinitely reassuring. The viewers would not be disappointed. The listeners would love her warm, vibrant voice. It was, after all, an occasion in which any man might take pride—yes, an occasion even of some consequence to the nation itself. It was in no sense sacrilegious, even the crackpots couldn't say that with any degree of honesty. As for morality, nothing was more moral than marriage. And it wasn't costing the taxpayer a cent.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled 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.

When nested quoting was encountered, nested double quotes were changed to single quotes.

[End of *The Chartered Libertine* by Ralph Allen]