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COLLEGE COLLECTION

SKETCHES IN BLACK AND WHITE

by

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## INTRODUCTION

### I

Living in a foreign country is very different from visiting it as a tourist, moving about in a regimented way, peering from busses, listening to megaphoned information, stopping at intervals for a hurried look at something of special interest. Living in a new country over a period of months is a sensitizing experience. It revives some of the fresh outlook and wonder of childhood in seeing things for the first time. There is time to investigate and arrive at conclusions, to get acquainted with many things from strange insects to titled folk; there is the opportunity to weed out prejudices and discover the merits of another way of life, to enjoy its beauty and share its problems.

The years immediately following World War II were interesting ones in Jamaica: it was a time when the job of the American soldiers stationed there was more diplomatic than military. Rising out of the restrictions and shortages of wartime, the English were turning their attention to colonial problems and to reestablishing a gracious way of living which they shared generously with those from the States. The Americans were able to make a contribution in supplies and services.

The beauty of Jamaica immediately inspires the desire to capture it in words. Color seems to pervade the place. As Jane Talbot observes in "Tea as Usual," it is beauty with a "strange, sinister undertone." The port city of Kingston looks out toward the sea like an old, old woman with the memory of the past in her eyes, brooding over earthquake,

hurricane, disease, but calmly happy in the present. Riding for the first time in a native taxi with flapping isinglass curtains, stopping for a goat to cross a city street, traveling forty-five miles in an army carry-all through open country and suddenly entering an American Air Base, bustling with modern efficiency, in the midst of sugar cane fields--all were experiences to arouse curiosity, to sharpen awareness. Those stories which have a tropical setting are efforts to catch some of the special flavor of Jamaica, to portray some of its beauty and its hazard.

"The Fuddling-Cup" is included because it has had favorable criticism from writers whose opinion is valued. Elizabeth Bowen thinks the texture of the story makes it suitable material for expansion into a novel. It probably keeps to the line of straight story more than any of the others, making no attempt to give a panoramic impression of a place through description. It is the story of a little girl caught between an inherited loyalty to a dictatorial grandmother and a spontaneous congeniality with a more lovable but slightly degenerate great-uncle. In a sense, it might be considered an introductory story. Depending on whether Margaret Ann followed the example of her tradition-bound grandmother or her good-natured Uncle Will, she could have grown up into the repressed Miss Annie of "The Doctor Blows Up," the sheltered Janet of "And Overhead, the Moon," or the better adjusted Jane or Marian of "Tea as Usual" or "The Charm." The tropics could have turned her into the fuddling-cup that symbolizes Uncle Will.

In "Tea as Usual," Jane Talbot has come to a new country with prejudices based on trivial things. Her husband's easy acceptance of new customs seems to put a gulf between them; she resents the "must-do's"

of a military life. During the course of the story, she experiences a reversal of attitude when she sees how gallantly the English handle one of the problems connected with a colonial government.

"The Doctor Blows Up" portrays the humanizing effect of the tropics on Miss Annie Calhoun. In the end, she realizes that Emerson has a message for her in her minor decisions, as well as for the boys who might have to jump on Corregidor. The last sentence suggests that her life will "spread in a widening circle" of participation and enjoyment. This idea is foreshadowed in her interest in the editors of Time and Town and Country: one man concerned with the realities of event; the other, with the pleasures of leisure.

In "And Overhead, the Moon," Janet Warren, who, as a child, had been "shut in from the frightening world" by the high wall of her mother's garden, fights her way through a hurricane. Standing on the rubble of another garden wall, she senses a new meaning in the moon, as a "warm, friendly thing." Hilda, who does not appear in the story, is a symbol of the spirit of the Jamaican native, who endures frequent disasters but finds solace in a primitive creed which puts its trust in nature, as visible evidence of a Superior Arbitress.

"The Charm" combines some of the beauty that nature has lavished on Jamaica with some of the hazard--disease. Matthew is one of the thousands there who have a simple, unshaken faith in the power of magic, who believe that a bundle of sticks, placed on a door-step, has the power of life or death, depending on whether it has been blessed or cursed. Measured by the aesthetic yardstick of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Matthew could have qualified as an artist. The story is intended to

be his. It is told from the point of view of Marian Etheridge, in order to avoid the presumption of trying to fathom the native mind. The point which the story hopes to make is that people of different races can find a congenial meeting-ground in the field of creative activity, that understanding may come out of working together to make the world more beautiful. There is a suggestion of continuing life in the "tiny, new buds" of the last sentence.

If there is any over-all theme, it is possibly one of tolerance--tolerance between people of different races, different nationalities, different creeds--tolerance between members of one family.

## II

In writing these stories, no author has been consciously taken as a model. Some authors have been more inspiring than others: Chekhov with his detached, objective way of saying something important, his genius for names, his use of the coda which projects rather than jolts; Elizabeth Bowen with her vivid, impressionistic way of bringing a scene to life. There have been others too numerous to mention. Everything from a long-ago first reading of Alice in Wonderland to a recent re-reading of stories in Peter Taylor's last book has, no doubt, had an intangible influence. The stories included here were written as they emerged from a store of lasting impressions, from the recollection of people who were interesting, places that had a special quality, incidents that seemed significant. The inspiration to try molding and filing these impressions into short story form came from the example and consistently-held high standards of authors who have conducted the Creative Writing Workshop.

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## THE FUDDLING-CUP

Uncle Will's room was an enchanting place. To Margaret Ann, spending an afternoon there was like a trip on a magic carpet. She could almost count on the fingers of her two hands the afternoons that she had spent there; that is, with the permission of Mother, whose reluctance was due to Grandmother's evident disapproval. Father seemed to think the whole thing silly, and dismissed any discussion on the subject with a vehement "Bosh!" In fact, Father had even been located down in Uncle Will's room one evening when Grandmother and Mother had gone to a musicale, and there had been an urgent long distance call. Margaret Ann remembered how gay he had sounded talking over the telephone and how he had gotten out his clarinet afterwards. He had dusted it off and played to her enthusiastic accompaniment, laughing when he hit a sour note and she missed an entire chord. What fun they had had scampering upstairs to bed when they heard Grandmother's carriage drive up under the porte-cochere!

The next day, things had slipped back into the old ceremonial routine with Grandmother at the helm: breakfast at 8:30, luncheon at 1:00, dinner at 7:15 sharp, and always tea at 4:00 in the very best English manner. All intervening activities were planned toward the careful cultivation of the family tree. The passing days were like a string of defenseless paper dolls cut to the pattern of Grandmother's will and neatly clipped off with the scissors of her self-assurance. To Margaret Ann, she was the Law of the Medes and Persians, the Magna Carta, the Constitution of the United States—all wrapped up in one



bundle of swishing black taffeta.

In twelve long years, Margaret Ann had never seen Grandmother show any signs of defeat except on two occasions. Certainly, Father had lost time and time again just as he did when he brought a deck of cards home: "Gaming in this house!" Grandmother had said, straightening up to her five feet eight inches. "Indeed, no! What would our Scotch ancestors think of such an--an iniquitous innovation!" She had thrown them straight into the open fire. Mother had stood by, looking like a pale Dresden doll. Father had laughed--weakly.

But there was the day that the irresistible lamp salesman with the slight British accent had come by. Grandmother had said, "Margaret Ann, fetch your parents while I ring for the servants. I have made a remarkable purchase today. You must all see it." Then to the assembled household, "Now, see here," she had continued, lifting an odd looking gas lamp from the table, "this lamp is unbreakable. Fancy that! As a matter of fact, the salesman even threw one on the floor--so!" With the confidence of a Wellington in anything British, Grandmother dropped the lamp. . . It shattered into a thousand glassy splinters. Father had almost laughed but controlled himself, remembering that he was only an in-law. Margaret Ann had shrunk back to a corner of the room, seeing the expression on Grandmother's face as she turned to the maid and said, "Bessie--go fetch the broom." It had never been mentioned again.

Then there was the time that Uncle Will had come to live in the basement room which had been Grandfather's office when he was alive and, more recently, a playroom. Margaret Ann had come skipping up the boxwood-bordered walk. . . "Daughter," Grandmother had said, "we have

had--quite a surprise today. My brother, your great-uncle William has come back. He will have the basement room. Your doll house and other things have been moved to the attic room, and I--I hope you will keep to the upper part of the house more."

Margaret Ann had looked up fearfully, sensing that same tone of voice that Grandmother had used when she told Bessie to go fetch the broom.

"You are really a big girl now," Grandmother had continued in her usual dictatorial manner, "and should not spend so much time with the help in the kitchen--or with John while he is busy with the gardening."

In a faint voice, Margaret Ann had said, "Yes, mam," hung her school bag on the hatrack in the dark back-hall and run upstairs to her room, blinking hard against the hot, insistent tears. She glanced at the battery of family photographs on the mantel, looked at the pink and blue little-girl rightness of her room with rising hate. . . . Not to play in the basement room any more! Why, it had always been her favorite spot! with the cheerful, carefree laughter of the servants, the smell of spice cake and smoky hams baking in the big oven of the range room, the mysterious cavern of the inner pantry, guarded by old Anna with her jangling bunch of keys. All the fun in the house had been there in the basement, not in the upper part of the house with its silent, carpeted floors, dark furniture, ghost-like lace curtains. Margaret Ann had thrown herself across the bed, weeping. . . .

She was weeping again now over the cruel fate of Uncas. She opened the book and reread the passage through blurred eyes. . . . Yes, Uncas was dead. That was really the last of the Mohicans. She must

share this news with some one. . . Uncle Will! She walked slowly to the stairs, hesitated--and started down. Perhaps she shouldn't go to Uncle Will's room again without permission. . . But there was a delightful feeling of adventure--doing something without forever asking some pre-occupied grown-up. Anyhow, Grandmother had said a year ago that she was a big girl. It was certainly time to start making a few decisions for herself. She hugged The Last of the Mohicans more tightly and slid her hand along the polished banister.

The grandfather clock in the hall below struck a mellow four, reminding Margaret Ann that Grandmother and Mother were at this very minute having their first cup of tea with Aunt Ellen, and that Father was hurrying to the Old Hickory Club for his weekly game of chess. A visit to see Aunt Ellen usually took three hours with the long drive to the plantation and back. Three whole hours for her very own! Three times sixty--one hundred and eighty minutes! There was plenty of time. . . . But perhaps she had better think things over before risking one of Grandmother's tirades. . . .

She lifted a big metal disc from the record cabinet in the music room, feeling the rough underside and wondering again how this lifeless thing could make such lovely tunes. She must remember to ask Uncle Will. She placed the disc on the music box and sat down on the edge of the horse-hair sofa. . . "The Bells of St. Mary's" tinkled to a finish, followed by "Push Dem Clouds Away." Margaret Ann jumped up and turned the music off. How could she push the clouds away when Uncas, that brave Indian, lay there dead! She walked quickly to the library, but the fire had died down and it was chilly there. The ceiling-high shelves

with their heavy volumes were formidable walls, closing in on her. The row of books on the bottom shelf was frightening: Plato's Republic, Hippocrates' Ancient Medicine, Sextus Empiricus, Galileo's Two New Sciences, Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary, St. Thomas' Summa Theologica, On Truth, Falsity and Human Knowledge, Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead. . . "The dead!" Margaret Ann repeated in an awed whisper. "Oh!" She hurried from the room, opened the door to the basement, ran down the steps into the warmth of Uncle Will's room.

"Well, well," said Uncle Will, knocking his pipe out on the hearth, "this is a real tonic for a rainy day. Bessie told me you were in your room with a cold, and here you come flying out of the air like a golden-haired fairy! Sit down here in front of the fire and catch your breath. You're breathing like a scared rabbit."

"Oh, I don't really have a cold, Uncle Will. I sneezed and coughed several times, so Grandmother said I'd better stay in and take some vaseline and sugar. Ugh! have you ever had to take that, Uncle Will?"

"No, child, no. They tried to make me take it, but I got away before they caught me." Uncle Will chuckled. "I find a little rock and rye a better prescription--and more palatable--Harrumph--as a matter of fact, I've had a slight cold myself."

Margaret Ann promised herself that she would certainly ask Grandmother to give her rock and rye the next time instead of vaseline and sugar. "Here's your book, Uncle Will. I finished it today. Wasn't it terrible about Uncas? Why couldn't he marry Cora Munro? It was so sad when--"

"Now, now, my dear, don't worry your pretty head about such things. It's just a story, just a story and not really--" Uncle Will stopped abruptly and looked into the dancing flames. A cloud seemed to pass over his face, just as the clouds had hidden the April sun and brought the showers today.

"Never mind, Uncle Will. I know it's just a story, and I would like to have another one of your books if I may." Margaret Ann sighed. "I believe the ones in the library are too old for me."

Uncle Will threw back his head and laughed. Margaret Ann joined in, not seeing anything particularly funny, but happy that the cloud had passed and all was sunshine again.

"Those books upstairs happen to be my books, too," he said. "I read them all back in the days when I was studying to be a lawyer—just before I went off to war. . . I haven't seen them since."

"Why don't you ever come up to the library and read them? You never come up—" Margaret Ann stopped short, seeing a shadow start across his face again. "I don't blame you at all, Uncle Will. It's really much nicer down here. May I look at some of your pictures? I finished the ones from the Pacific Islands last time."

"Of course you may. You'll soon be a widely traveled young lady, at this rate. Here we are." He placed a big basket of pictures by her and handed her a stereoscope. "Just to help you forget that old vaseline and sugar, I have a surprise for you. You go ahead with the pictures and I'll find it."

"But, Uncle Will, I want you to tell me about the pictures. That's what I like about them."

"Well, you just browse around a bit, and I'll be back in a minute."

Margaret Ann watched him as he walked a little unsteadily to the back room which served as a combination dining room and kitchen. She had often wished that she could have her meals down here with Uncle Will instead of upstairs in the big, high-ceilinged dining room. She looked around the room at the collection of strange things of which she never grew tired; then she walked over to the walnut cupboard in the corner and read again the labels in Uncle Will's wavy handwriting. There was the devil fish, the whale's tooth, a boomerang, a rusty old pistol, a machete, bright-colored things woven by Indians--really things from all over the world. And there on the little table from Haiti was the funny old thing that Uncle Will called an English fuddling-cup. What thirsty people the English must be to have such things! Imagine six cups all connected inside--and having to empty them all before you could empty one. Why she couldn't have drunk that much lemonade, as much as she loved it! She lifted the vessel to her lips. There was the same odor about it that she associated with Uncle Will. It was damp inside. She put it down quickly. . . . It even looked like him in a way--fat, jolly and generous--but she didn't like to hear people calling Uncle Will "Old Fuddlecups." It was more the way they said it than anything else.

She heard the clinking of glass, and water as it coughed from the spigot in the next room. Uncle Will, sputtering and chuckling, came back and dropped heavily into the big morris chair. He held a long black instrument in his hands. "Here's your surprise," he said, "but let's get to the pictures."

"What in the world is it, Uncle Will?"

"It's a telescope, my dear, but I'll tell you about it later. . .  
What do we have as our first stop?"

"This one," said Margaret Ann, handing him the stereoscope. "This great big mountain."

He took the stereoscope in his hands. Margaret Ann noticed that they were shaking, his eyes a glittery blue and the scar on his left cheek hardly noticeable against the red of his face. There was a trace of brown on his usually snow-white mustache. He leaned forward to adjust the back of the chair. She caught the strong odor of tobacco mixed with that other strange smell.

"This," said Uncle Will, settling back in his chair, "is the Blue Mountain Peak--the highest mountain in the West Indies."

"Were you really there, Uncle Will?"

"Just a few miles below there at the British rest camp. There are only two of those in the world. The other one is in India, but this is much more beautiful--way up in the mountains of Jamaica, the island of springs. Coming up that narrow road--you can see a bit of it there in the picture--" He handed the stereoscope back to Margaret Ann. She glued it to her eyes. "Coming up that road, there are three hundred and sixty-seven hairpin turns. Those first lorries were hardly fit for the journey, but--we made it somehow. We had to or die with yellow fever."

"Did the men really turn yellow?" asked Margaret Ann moving her stool nearer.

"Yes--some of them did, but not always from the fever."

"Really, Uncle Will? What--what shade do they turn?"

"Oh, let's see--a sort of lemon yellow--on the outside. . . But

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"Really, Uncle Will? What--what shade do they turn?"

"Oh, let's see--a sort of lemon yellow--on the outside. . . But



it was beautiful up there at Newcastle--cool, and the vegetation was just like that in England."

"Then, why didn't you just stay on up there?" asked Margaret Ann, her arms folded on his knee, cushioning her chin.

"There was work to do, my dear--work to do. We had to teach those damn Spaniards a lesson."

She looked at Uncle Will with admiration. His "damn's" were so much more exciting than Father's "bosh's" and "thunderation's."

"It was on the last trip down, one day, that one of the lorries broke away and went over the cliff."

"Was any one killed, Uncle Will?"

"Yes--yes, she would have been your--your--Yes, a nurse. A very beautiful woman. . . I got this scar trying to save her." He lifted his hand toward his face.

Margaret Ann sat silent, staring into the fire, thinking of all the wonderful people in the world who had died so cruelly--Uncas, and now this beautiful woman. "Tell me about her, Uncle Will."

"Some other day, dearie, some other day. We had better postpone the rest of our trip," said Uncle Will rather abruptly. "We'll go up to the cupola and take a look through the telescope before the folks get back."

Margaret Ann's disappointment was lost in the excitement of a new adventure. . . "But," she said with doubt, "do you think you really should?"

"What?" said Uncle Will in an explosive tone. "Not go upstairs in my own house, the house that was my father's and his father's before him? Do you--?"

"Oh, not that, Uncle Will! It's--it's such a steep climb up to the cupola, and I thought--"

"Tch, tch, child, don't you worry about your old uncle. . . He's been higher than a cupola in his life!" He arose from the chair with effort. "You lead the way." They started up the first flight of steps.

"Here, Margaret--Ann," he said as they reached the second flight, "can you give me a hand with this? You take the telescope. . . I can manage the tripod."

Uncle Will was panting and puffing as they climbed the narrow steps from the attic to the cupola. He sat down on the top step, his breath coming in short gasps. "Here you are--my dear. . . Place--the--the telescope--on this--this tripod--and take--take a look--out the--window--while I--catch my breath. . . Pull it in or--out--until you can see--clear--ly."

"Are you all right, Uncle Will?"

"Certain--ly, certain--ly."

Margaret Ann set the instrument up, squinted one eye and started peering through it. . . "Oh!" she exclaimed, "there's a mountain! It must be Boone Mountain. It looks so close and so big! But I always thought it was just a bluff and--"

"A bluff!" Uncle Will laughed noisily. "Hahahaha, your Grandmother used to tell me that I was just like Boone Mountain--a big bluff overlooking the--"

"But, Uncle Will, maybe she was joking."

"Joking? Your Grandmother joking! Oh my, oh my, oh my!" Uncle Will slapped his knees and laughed more loudly.

"And there's the river! I can almost touch the water!" Margaret Ann stretched out her hand.

"Better not, better now," sputtered Uncle Will. "I got my first real whipping for--for going out there and--going swimming."

"Oh, Uncle Will, I'd love to know how to swim."

"Maybe, we can run away--some day--and I'll--teach you."

"But, Grandmother thinks swimming suits are indecent."

"Indecent! Bah! They're just--a damn nuisance."

"Look! There's Miss Sally Sharpe way down the street. She's--"

"Sitting on the front porch--rocking." Uncle Will chuckled.

"How did you know?" asked Margaret Ann, looking perplexed.

"That's what she was doing this time--thirty years ago. It's about time for--old Judge Adams to come around the corner--on his way home."

"Oh, there's the water tank!" Margaret Ann slowly tilted the telescope to its highest angle. . . "I'm going up the ladder. . . Now I'm right on top. . . Whew! I'm getting dizzy."

"So you like the telescope," said Uncle Will coughing hard, his face turning a purplish red. "Then it's all yours."

"Thank you, thank you, Uncle Will. But don't you think we'd better go down stairs now?" she said, seeing him slump against the wall.

"Maybe so, dearie, maybe so. We'll take a look at the eclipse--next week."

"The eclipse? What's--?" She jumped to catch Uncle Will's arm as he arose, gave her full attention to his hazardous swaying as he started down the ladder-steep steps.

"Better--stop--in your room," he said as they reached the third floor.

"All right, Uncle Will," said Margaret Ann, stopping reluctantly on the top step as Uncle Will slowly descended the stairs to the second floor. "Thank you for everything."

She laid the telescope down tenderly. She would keep it on the bottom shelf of the bookcase. There would be plenty of room for it there if she moved all those books. She was through with them anyhow. Grimm's Fairy Tales, Alice in Wonderland, Uncle Remus, The Little Colonel and those silly Elsie Dinsmore books. How could she ever have suffered so over Elsie Dinsmore? She walked to the door and listened to Uncle Will as he heavily went down the basement steps. He's safe now, she thought, hearing him on the last flight. No! There was a loud bumping as if he had missed a whole step--maybe two. She ran out into the hall and leaned over the banister, listening. . . With relief, she heard him continue down the steps and slam the door of his room. Thank goodness! She should never have let him climb up to the cupola. It would have been all her fault if he had fallen down those rickety attic steps. She had fallen down many times, herself, and she was much younger than Uncle Will. She had really never thought about how much older Uncle--Why, when she was his age, Uncle Will would be--be--but she wouldn't think about that.

Picking up the telescope, Margaret Ann went over to the white bookcase with its border of hand-painted rose-buds. She dropped to her knees on the cool matting and removed the books from the bottom shelf. She ran lightly through the pages. A paper doll fluttered out of Alice

in Wonderland. It had marked a page on which there was a picture of Alice. She remembered how she had always skipped over that page, warned by the paper-doll marker. The idea! The very idea of being afraid of Alice with that silly long neck, and having nightmares about it! But it was a disagreeable sort of picture. . . She put the paper doll back.

Margaret Ann dropped the book and stood up. What in the world was that noise? A scream! Yes--there it was again. She ran to the top of the steps. There was the sound of excited voices--in the basement! Something terrible must have happened. She took the steps two at a time, ran through the hall and almost collided with Bessie coming up from below.

"What's the matter?" asked Margaret Ann, alarmed at the look on Bessie's face.

"Somethin' turrible, Miss Margaret. Where's your papa?"

"He's not home yet. What is it, Bessie?"

"Mr. William's done hurt hisself and--"

"Hurt hisself? Right in his own room?"

"Mebbe it's a stroke--him with the high blood," said Bessie, breathing hard. "I went to take him his clean wash--and there he was--lyin' flat on the floor with the blood runnin'--"

"Blood!" cried Margaret Ann, slipping past Bessie and running down the basement steps.

The other servants were standing over Uncle Will, like dazed sheep. Margaret Ann kneeled down beside him, shook his arm gently. He didn't move. "Do something! Oh, please do something! Can't you see he's hurt?"

"I'll go git a wet rag," said Bessie, scurrying toward the kitchen. "You all try to git his head h'isted up a little."

Margaret Ann put her arm carefully under Uncle Will's neck.

"Umph, umph," said Anna, "and sech a fine gent'eman."

"He musta butted into this here," said John, setting the little mahogany table upright, "and cut hisself on this contraption." He picked up the jagged pieces of the fuddling-cup.

"Yes, I suppose he did," said Margaret Ann, tearfully. She placed the wet cloth tenderly on the cut across Uncle Will's forehead. "Look! The blood's still coming through--and he won't wake up. What shall we do?"

"You reckon a little blackberry cordial would bring him 'round?" asked Anna, more brightly.

"Go 'way frum here," said John. "You think that stuff'll cure anything. We gotta do somethin' quick now. Dat's too much bleedin' and he's gittin' mighty white."

"Father!" Margaret Ann called loudly, hearing the front door upstairs open. "Father!"

Father was there in a minute, Mother close behind. . . Then Grandmother came rustling in, her bonnet slightly askew.

"Call the doctor as quickly as you can," Father said to Mother. "And here—" He beckoned to the servants. "Give me a hand. The four of us can lift him to his bed."

"You had better go to your room, Margaret Ann," said Grandmother, her mouth snapping into a grim line. "This is no place for a child--here with this--this drunken--"

"Grandmother!" shrieked Margaret Ann. "He is not--dr--He's been sick and only took a little rock and rye!"

Grandmother looked as she did the day the family horse ran away and threw her from the carriage.

"Well--if he is," said Father, adjusting the pillow under Uncle Will's head and dismissing the servants who filed out on tiptoe, "I don't blame him. I think it's our fault. We've given him a pretty raw--"

"What are you saying?" asked Grandmother, turning on Father.

"It's not what I am saying," said Father, feeling Uncle Will's pulse. "It's what the whole town is saying."

"Do--you--mean--that people are criticizing--me?" exclaimed Grandmother.

"I mean that people are criticizing us--for letting a member of the family live in his own home like a criminal. What would our Scotch clan--?"

"Oh, please, please," said Mother, turning pale and looking at Father as if she were seeing him for the first time. "Dr. McKenzie is on his way here."

"Well, of all things!" said Grandmother. "I would like to know how they would handle such stubborn and willful--irresponsibility."

"Grandmother," said Margaret Ann, standing by, wide-eyed and ignored, "I read a fable once about the Sun and the North Wind and how the Sun always--"

"Margaret Ann!" said Mother, "go on to your room."

Grandmother had not taken her eyes off Father. She went over and sat on the edge of Uncle Will's big chair, jolting her bonnet farther down over her right ear. "Are you sure people are saying such things?" she asked, her voice a little shaky.

"Yes--yes, I am. You are an unusually--unusually infallible person--" Father was saying as Margaret Ann started slowly up the steps. The rest was drowned out by Uncle Will's heavy snore.

Tears streamed down her face and mingled with the blood stains on the blue dotted-swiss dress. How could she wait here in her room, not knowing whether Uncle Will was going to d-- was all right? What would happen to Father for calling Grandmother names? But how could Grandmother say such things about her own brother? Scraps of overheard conversation went reeling through her mind, scraps that had lain there like a crazy quilt of questions--things that Grandmother had said. She must have been talking about Uncle Will all the time! Fragments came back to her with new meaning: "roaming the earth," "squandering his fortune," "burying his talents," "riotous living," "involved with that nurse"-- And now Grandmother had called him a drunken--something even when he was lying there, bleeding and hurt and maybe--Margaret Ann jerked the blue ribbon from her hair, threw it on the floor, walked rigidly to the mantel and picked up the photograph of Grandmother. With trembling fingers, she stood holding it, staring straight into the open fire. . . . She turned suddenly and went over to the bookcase; slipped the paper doll from Alice in Wonderland and put Grandmother's picture in its place.



## TEA AS USUAL

The two-inch streamer which headlined the morning paper was not pleasant reading for the breakfast table: BLACK SATURDAY DAY OF TERROR IN KINGSTON. Jane Talbot pushed the plate of assorted tropical fruits away, untouched. Between quick sips of tea, her husband sputtered bits of news culled from the plethora of detail: "insufferable situation"; "of immense political import"; "a blasted, bloody mess"; "a frightful number of inmates have escaped from the asylum and--" Jane lifted the Peruvian silver bell and rang it vigorously. . . "Some hot coffee, please, Icilda." "Yes, mistress." "You may take the fruit away--and bring the Colonel more hot water, please." "Yes, mistress."

Jane fingered her cup nervously. She had had her fill of the tropics. More than enough after only three weeks on the Base. Her first duty as wife of the Commanding Officer had been the funeral of a twenty-one-year-old private electrocuted at the power station. There had been the plane crash with a loss of five lives; the native shot by an M. P. Well, he was stealing. Now, the possibility of a malaria epidemic and Black Saturday already here.

"I suppose this will change our plans," she said hopefully.

"In what way?" asked her husband, peering over the newspaper.

"About going into Kingston. Why should we get involved in trouble in some remote little place?"

"Jane, there is no remote place--any more. Those planes out there are less than ninety hours from the farthest place you can think of. I can pick up that radio phone over there and find out what the weather is

in Hong Kong. The world's gotten to be just a big neighborhood. Our team has got to stay in there and pitch, or we may lose the ball game--yet."

"But it seems to me we have done enough for the English. Why, little Finland was the only--"

"Tut, tut, my dear." Robert turned his attention back to the newspaper.

Jane looked at him as if he were part of this ominous tropical place. How could he get that way in six months--tossing off "Tut, tut's," "Cheerio's," "Righto's," spearing his food with the fork in his left hand, drinking tea for breakfast. Shades of Sir Thomas Lipton! If he got to the "Pip, pip" stage, she would leave him.

"It's a must-do," her husband was saying as he crushed out a cigarette in a lignum vitae tray. "I may be able to help Sir Richard. We'll take a couple of automatics along." He arose abruptly. "Of course, if you think you can't cope, I'm sure Lady Barton will understand."

"I can cope," said Jane with sudden determination, "but unless you are a two-gun man, one automatic will be enough. You know very well I couldn't hit a boxcar even if--"

"Then it's all settled. While I check by Headquarters, you might run by the Commissary and get a few things to take to the Bartons."

Colonel Talbot acknowledged the exaggerated salutes of the native A.M.P.'s, as their car passed the gate. Jane looked up at the Stars and Stripes. How much she had always taken it for granted, waving above familiar places at home. It would never be that way again--not if she was lucky enough to get home alive.

Leaving the Base was like a leap in seven-league boots from the American continent to the West Indies. Inside was the United States transplanted: electricity, sanitation, radio, radar, guns gleaming in the sun, rows of B-29's poised like giant birds facing the Caribbean. Outside the steel barricade was Jamaica in its vari-colored dress, selling fruits and vegetables, haggling over a shilling's worth of plantains, always with hand outstretched for an extra sixpence.

"Do you know what we are getting into?" asked Jane as they jolted along the narrow road. "If you do, you had better--brief me."

"Just one of the usual political fights."

"You mean they are in the habit of doing such things--turning a lot of lunatics loose on the--?"

"Not always that bad." Robert slipped his pistol from the holster and checked its chamber. "Whatever we run into, just remember the old regimental slogan--Semper Paratus."

"What good is a Latin slogan against a crazy native with a machete? Besides, Robert, you said that we would just relax now that the war is over. You wrote me that we would go to--"

"Oh, we'll get around to that. You are getting a taste of the real Jamaica."

"Well, I hope I'll live to digest this particular morsel of it."

"You will. Take a look at that."

As Darley, dark-skinned and silent, maneuvered the car through a scattered herd of goats, they saw a small donkey approaching almost obscured by his cargo. The animal started past the car and collapsed with legs sprawled in four directions, spilling his load in a pile of fruit and chattering natives.

"Too many stuff," said Darley in brief explanation. "Old donkey smart fellow. When load too heavy, he just lie down."

"What will they do now?" asked Jane turning to watch the prostrate lone striker.

"Oh, they'll get there all right. The women will carry the baskets on their heads. The man and the donkey will tag along. You remember Faulkner's Mrs. Armstid only 'helped the mule.' Well, these native women can take over where a donkey leaves off." Robert leaned forward. "Take it easy, Darley. There seems to be quite a crowd collecting."

Jane heard the excited jabbering as men passed the car in streaks of color. "Do you suppose they are some of those escaped lun- ? Robert, they must be. They all have machetes."

"No, not that. They are just a crowd of honest day laborers. They've evidently been working in that cane field over there and are glad of any excuse to knock off for a little while. You have to watch these people out in the country. They'll do anything for a little extra money--sometimes even bump into your car on purpose--that's the latest racket--and roll on the ground screaming 'Pay me, pay me' when they are not hurt at all."

"You certainly don't have to pay them for something when it's their fault, do you?" asked Jane as if learning the rules for some odd new game.

"It's best to--right on the spot rather than get in the hands of a big, bad barrister who thinks Americans are a nation of geese that lay golden eggs." Robert leaned back in the car as they got safely by the last pedestrian.

"Well, aren't we? Not only lay them but toss them around the world like confetti. What if one of these Brahma bulls strolling up and down the road hits us?"

"He'd probably flip us over like a pancake."

"Then, we'd better try for no hits, no errors," said Jane laughing and feeling more relaxed.

"Righto!" said her husband.

Tut, tut, pip, pip and all that! thought Jane. She turned her attention to the passing panorama as Robert took an official looking letter from his pocket and began to read it. She really should get better acquainted with this island that was to be home for a while. She had made two trips into Kingston for social must-do's; one by plane, the other by army carry-all at night through forty-five miles of darkness punctuated by dimly-lit villages. This was her first opportunity to get a close-up view of the country-side. She wished that they might be going in for some happier occasion: another Chinese cocktail party with the petite Chinese women looking like animated dolls in their native costume. Jane wiped the moisture from her dark glasses and turned toward the window, becoming aware of definite objects that had seemed only a part of the bright blur of the outdoors. On the right, Poincianas crimson with bloom rose high above squat huts topped with yellow straw. Dusky, half-naked children swarmed about like hiving bees. On the left, stretched acres of tasseled sugar cane ripe for the machete. Along the winding road was the fitful flow of human and animal traffic; rickety carts with waving fronds to advertise coconut milk for thirsty customers. In the distance rose the peaks of the Blue Mountain Range, drifts of coffee plants cascading down the lower slopes beneath tall palms.

It is beautiful, thought Jane, forgetting their serious mission for the moment and leaning back against the cushion. Beautiful with a strange, sinister undertone, a brooding memory of earthquake, hurricane, disease. What a wonderful setting for Henry Morgan and his swash-buckling pirates. She had been told that their gold had been swallowed up by an earthquake and still lay on the bottom of Port Royal harbor, that Christopher Columbus had slept here. But why all the to-do about where men slept? Would any one be marking the spot where that young private was electrocuted or the shark-infested water where those five fliers went down? If she and Robert were hacked to death in the bloody mess in Kingston today--She shuddered at the thought. If they were, she sincerely hoped it would go unmentioned in the obituary column of the local paper. She remembered one she had seen only yesterday:

We did not see the blow they got,  
We only saw them die.  
We saw them silently pass away,  
We could not say goodbye.  
Yet they live in a land of glory  
Where sweet memories never die.

Robert's curt order to the driver roused Jane from her reverie. "Take a left here, Darley, through Half-way Tree. Better avoid the center of town." Turning to Jane, he continued in a low tone, "The news of this thing has evidently gotten about."

"Really!" Jane sat up straight, pulled on her white mesh gloves with the air of a warrior getting into his gauntlets.

Along the streets were men and women, talking in high-pitched voices, flailing the air with menacing gestures. The happy flavor of their language, with its broad a's and rhythmical inflection, had given

way to a gibberish hardly recognizable as speech. What an odd assortment of human beings! their features an unbelievable mixture of Indian, African, Spaniard, Chinese, English; their color ranging from white through cafe-au-lait and tawny copper to charcoal. Jane sat rigid, watching knives flash like jumping fish above the troubled pool of humanity. . . They turned in the entrance of Nelson Hall. Jane breathed deeply. She swayed with the motion of the car as Darley followed the curving drive through hedges of white poinsettias, past banks of flame oleanders and pools of water iris. The house gave her a feeling of reassurance, standing in the midst of ancient cottonwoods like a proud soldier who had never known defeat.

She and Robert started up the broad, stone steps to the front door. Three men in British uniform came out; they returned a hasty salute and hurried to their car. Inside, there was not the usual routine of formal introductions. Lady Barton apologized for her husband's absence. "Of course, his duty, as Colonial Secretary, is there in the midst of this deplorable incident. But we will carry on as planned unless—" She fingered her rings nervously. "Unless things get worse."

A maid appeared at the door. "Telephone please, mistress."

"Excuse me," said Lady Barton.

Jane watched her as she moved quickly but gracefully across the room, a slender, dark-haired woman in a white linen dress. There was nothing to set her apart from other women in the room. Jane felt a twinge of regret that the modern world denied its Knights and Ladies the identification of flashing armor and coronets.

"My dear, I'm simply charmed to see you." Jane turned to receive the effusive greeting of Mrs. deFaro. "Fancy you coming in all that way

on a day like this. The courage of you Americans is really amazing. I'm afraid you are getting a bad impression of our country."

"Oh, no--no indeed, Mrs. deFaro--but frankly, things have been a little different from what my husband led me to expect." Jane laughed, relieved at having a confidante with whom she could be utterly candid. Mrs. deFaro had been a favorite ever since their first meeting, always the leavening in the loaf of excessive formality. "Jamaica is beautiful, and the people--quite charming."

Quite charming. Jane smiled. She would soon be tut-tutting right along with Robert, no doubt. It was expressive. . . Two other guests had come in, Mrs. Graydon, whose husband had expected to be knighted today, and Dr. Anderson of the Rockefeller Foundation. Cocktails were passed, glasses lifted. Along with the others, Jane was saying "Cheerio!" It was a happy sort of word. Quite all right. It seemed to do something for her morale. She was beginning to feel better about things when Lady Barton came back into the room.

"The news is not encouraging." Lady Barton's face was pale but composed. "As a matter of fact, every inmate of the asylum has escaped--some by boat on the harbor side. Why they weren't mercifully drowned, I don't know. They are fighting in the streets with sticks, stones--anything they can lay their hands on. Sir Thomas Ames was knocked down in front of the American Consulate and--"

"Pardon me, Lady Barton," said Colonel Talbot, setting his cocktail down untouched. "I must leave at once."

"Robert!" Jane called after him, but he was gone. Once more she was left with those whose job it was to wait, to wait as she had through five years of war. If another war came, it would be a shooting war for



her, too, with uniform, military formation, brave salute--all that kept a man's spirit up in the face of death. It would be preferable to the treadmill of those days of waiting--again. It would be better than being left with people gloating over their hoard of tires, sugar, coffee, nylon hose; people growing fat on blackmarket food and rich on the world's misfortune. . . . And here were these people nonchalantly sipping cocktails while Robert was risking his life for--what? Why should an American get--?

"Mrs. Talbot," Dr. Anderson was saying, "I'd like to congratulate you on the fine job your husband is doing. He must find it rather dull here after piloting a P-38."

"I wouldn't say it's exactly dull here, Dr. Anderson," said Jane, forcing a smile.

"I'll admit this is a little unusual, but the big job now for us Americans is helping to build up good relations, and your husband is just the man for that. . . . Come along and look around a bit. This is a rather historic spot. You see, I have the lucky assignment of keeping the ladies entertained today."

Jane and the doctor passed through the high-ceilinged corridor to the verandah. The voices of the other three women were drowned out by waves beating against the rock-bound coast. Jane looked toward the sea. The salty freshness of the air seemed to wash some of the tenseness away. Her eyes traveled up one of the massive columns which rose two stories high.

"This was once a fort," said Dr. Anderson. "Those openings in the wall were gun emplacements."

"I'm beginning to feel very safe, doctor," said Jane, leaning

against one of the columns. "There for a while I could imagine I saw boat loads of savages coming in from the sea and heard tomtoms and--"

"Just relax. This trouble today is just a big neighborhood free-for-all. The political party responsible for freeing the inmates of the asylum thought they were doing a kindness. They're an impulsive lot with no thought of consequences. Besides, no one in his right mind would attempt a landing here."

No one in his right mind, thought Jane. That was small consolation, knowing that the city might be overrun with hundreds of demented people. She looked toward the sea again and stood staring. "There is a boat out there, Dr. Anderson. Look."

"Probably some fishermen with a load of rum on board or they wouldn't have the nerve to be in these waters."

"You don't suppose those--those people from the--"

"Hardly that." But there was a tone of doubt in his voice and a sudden seriousness in his expression as he watched the slow progress of the boat. "They seem to have stopped and are just bobbing around. I believe I heard luncheon announced. Shall we go in?"

Dr. Anderson stopped in the doorway and looked back. Jane watched him, thinking how much his broad shoulders and unruly crop of hair reminded her of Robert. She thought of what he might be going through right now and hurried into the house in the hope of some news.

"We are lunching on the garden terrace," Lady Barton announced. "Perhaps a little fresh air and sunshine will help dispel some of the gloom of this day. I see no necessity in waiting longer for the others. The Brigadier is of course detained at Government House, and Lady Ames thinks it unsafe to drive through the city. . . Will you lead the way,

'Admiral.'

"Charmed, my dear," said Mrs. deFaro, "but you needn't try to follow my exact path. I fear I have indulged too freely in your hospitality. Coasters! My favorite cocktail and my favorite color--pink! The combination is quite disarming." She was a jovial, portly woman who had been awarded the O.B.E. for outstanding work with men of the British navy during World War I, and the affectionate title of "Admiral" by her friends, who found her necessary to the successful steering of any affair.

As they sat down, Jane took in with a glance the perfection of the table appointments--the monogrammed linen, Wedgwood china, old English silver, the battery of sparkling wine glasses. Under the same circumstances at home, she would have been passing sandwiches and cokes to friends huddled around a radio for the latest morsel of sensational news. In contrast to the table setting, the menu consisted of native dishes--cock soup, lobster, rice, cho-chos, wild pigeon highly spiced. The assortment of cheeses, the olives and chocolates which she and Robert had brought from the Base were luxuries almost forgotten during the war years.

"Listen," said Mrs. Graydon, who had sat through the first two courses like a sallow ghost. "Do you hear a strange noise? A sort of chanting?"

"Yes--I do hear a faint sound," said Lady Barton. "There was a funeral over Mitchell Pen way last week. They are probably still carrying on."

"These natives!" said Mrs. deFaro. "They are utterly unpredictable. They will call on all the power of voodoo to kill a man. Then when he dies, they become a lot of mourning doves. . . This cheese is

excellent."

"How fortunate you Americans are," said Mrs. Graydon, turning her attention to a wedge of Camembert cheese. "Even during the war, your Commissary was amazing. We call your husband our--what is it you say in America?"

"Butter and egg man," said Dr. Anderson, in the tone of an amused diagnostician. "May I be excused to make a call, Lady Barton?" he asked in a more serious vein.

"Yes, of course. . . And Colonel Talbot has been such a dear about bringing us tea. Fancy that, an American understanding a Britisher's passion for tea!"

"I'm sure he understands that," said Jane. "In fact, he has a spot of tea every afternoon at four o'clock."

"My! how British you are getting, my dear," said Mrs. deFaro gaily. "A spot of tea! Oh my, oh my, how truly charming from an American. . . To your very good health!" She lifted a glass of wine toward Jane, who felt a slight regret at not mentioning Robert's pot of tea for breakfast.

"Don't you find it quite a nice custom?" asked Lady Barton.

"Yes, I do," said Jane. Yes, I really do, she admitted to herself. It was much more sensible than the raucous five o'clock parties at home.

Dr. Anderson came back with the news that the situation in town was under control. . . The conversation turned to the cricket tournament, the horse races, the beastly jockeys who often threw the races. Jane felt that it was just a brave front, like the forced optimism outside the door of an operating room when you felt that things were going badly and you waited to hear the--

"Look!" cried Mrs. Graydon pointing to the far edge of the property where it dropped away steeply to the sea. "I knew I heard something. I knew it." She jumped up from the table and started toward the house.

Dr. Anderson went to his car and returned with a pistol. He walked to the end of the terrace, keeping his eyes fixed on the edge of the cliff where a number of half-clothed natives were scrambling up from below, brandishing odd weapons indistinguishable in the distance. "I think you had all better go in--quickly," he said. A blood-curdling yell pierced the air. The intruders started toward the house.

"You are going, too," said Lady Barton, tugging at his sleeve. "Remember you are just a week out of the hospital. Dear God! there's another boat. Come along, doctor. There is no time to lose."

Inside, they closed the windows and bolted the heavy doors. The weird chanting, broken by frenzied screams, drew nearer and louder. The servants came running from the back. "Call Sir Richard and the police." Lady Barton's voice sounded as if it had come off ice. She opened the top drawer of a desk and picked up two pistols, slipping one into the pocket of her dress. Seeing the "Admiral," a little groggy, going upstairs for her usual siesta, and Mrs. Graydon in a state of collapse on the divan, she handed the other to Jane. "For self-defense--only," she said with a reassuring pat on Jane's arm. "Stand back from the windows. There may be some broken glass."

Jane picked up the gun. It was still warm from Lady Barton's hand. She grasped it firmly, feeling somehow that she would be equal to anything that Lady Barton expected of her. There was the trigger, and she could pull it--if any woman could. She was ready--and here they were,

coming up over the terrace. . .

The odd weapons were Lady Barton's own garden tools, evidently picked up from the gardener's quarters on the lower terrace. The air was filled with waving hoes, rakes, spades, picks, an axe. The eerie drumming sound came from a watering-pot that one old man was using as a tomtom. There was not a machete nor a gun in sight--so far. The group inside breathed more easily.

"What do you make of it, doctor?" asked Lady Barton.

"They're from the asylum. No doubt about that. The man with the axe was in the hospital for a frontal lobotomy. He's completely irresponsible--absolutely no sense of danger. He may have maneuvered the trip around the point or there may be some one in the crowd who thinks he's Christopher Columbus. How they made that landing is beyond me. If the boat had turned over, the sharks would have made quick work of them. Careful--some of them are heading for the door."

Jane could see them now at close range. She shuddered at the sight of their emaciated bodies and vacuous faces. One with a huge lion-like face was urging them on.

"That enlargement is the result of leprosy," said Dr. Anderson, as if in answer to her thoughts.

Jane, along with the others stepped back from the windows, expecting an assault on the door. It did not come. Lady Barton went back to a window. "My word!" she exclaimed, beckoning to the others. "How extraord'n'ry!"

Discovering the table of food on the garden terrace, the old man had thrown the watering-pot away. He was waving his more belligerent companions back. The man who had undergone a prefrontal leaped over the

bannister of the verandah like a wild deer. The others went tumbling and jostling down the steps, squealing with delight. Chattering and rattling dishes, they began to devour what was left, scrambling like children at an egg hunt for the food that had fallen to the ground.

"This is distressing," said Lady Barton. "They are quite starved. We must do something about this at once. Doctor, do you think we should give them something more, now? Yes--yes, I feel sure we should, doctor. I'll go and--"

The front door opened, and Mrs. Graydon went to meet the men. They came into the room, followed by a squad of native Guards.

"Where are they?" asked Sir Richard, sputtering.

"Pardon me, sir," said a young Englishman in the uniform of the Coast Patrol, who appeared in the room close on the heels of the others. He stepped up to Sir Richard with a jerky salute. "I regret to report, sir, that we were unable to make a landing on your waterfront. My men are outside. Are there any further orders, sir?"

"What's this all about?" asked Sir Richard, starting toward the window.

"It's just this," said Dr. Anderson. "I put in a call to the Patrol after seeing an unorthodox boat off your property and--"

"Gad!" exclaimed Sir Richard, aghast at the scene outside. "Fancy that! Fancy our combing the town for those jackanapes--the only ones still at large--and here they are lunching with my wife, right here in my own garden." He raised the heavy window. "They seem to have finished things off. We must see them safely home. You had better take over, Captain."

"Yes, sir." The Aide gave a brief order to the Guards. They

clicked their heels, turned with a quick British pivot and left the room.

"And for you, young man," said Sir Richard turning to the Patrol Officer, "I have no orders, but I suggest that you and your crew go along with our visitors and take a lesson in landing a boat."

"Are you all right, Jane?" asked Colonel Talbot, seeing her drop limply into a chair.

"Yes--yes, I'm all right, but those poor creatures. Just think of all the food we waste. Robert, can't we send them all of the Commissary surplus? Lady Barton has been wonderful, the most courageous—Why, Robert, she even made me feel brave."

Lady Barton took the pistol from her pocket and laid it on the desk as casually as if it were an unused cigarette. Calmly, she went over to the mantel and pulled the bell cord. "Richard," she said in an emphatic tone, "the situation at the hospital must have our immediate attention. . . . Captain, will you see that those wretched people are well taken care of. . . . And now," she continued with a flicker of a smile, "we shall have tea—as usual."

As she stood there for a moment, head held high, shoulders erect, Jane watched her with growing admiration, thinking how little she needed the identification of a coronet.

"Mrs. Graydon, will you be good enough to fetch Mrs. deFaro?" Lady Barton swung open the door onto the verandah. "Shall we have our tea in the garden?"

"Righto!" said her husband.

Sir Richard had beaten Robert to it, thought Jane. She was sorry that he had.



## THE DOCTOR BLOWS UP

For thirty-eight years, Miss Annie Calhoun's life had been bounded by the state lines of South Carolina and the whims of her parents. At the death of her invalid mother--two years after her father died, scoring his first losing fight--Miss Annie was faced with the startling privilege of making a major decision for herself. Prompted by the same sense of duty which had always caged her, she caught the wartime fever of patriotism and volunteered for foreign service. Three months later, she stepped from a plane in the West Indies and took over the job of Librarian at Fort Simonds.

After the ten years spent as Assistant in the small Public Library of Coopersville, Miss Annie felt very much at home in the alcove of the Service Club set aside for books. Old friends were there--Shakespeare, Dickens, Scott, Tennyson, Longfellow and Melville whose stories had always filled her with longing for adventure. New unpredictable friends were there, too--young B-29 trainees preparing for a tour of duty in the Pacific. It gave her a happy, important feeling to have them asking her to recommend a book or explain the meaning of some word. It was most stimulating because she had never known the meaning of the simple little word id, herself. Looking it up in the Encyclopedia, she became fascinated with libido, but found it confusing and went back to a second reading of Tristram Shandy.

Each week Miss Annie put a quotation on the bulletin board, one that she thought would be inspiring and helpful to young men going into combat. She liked the lines from Emerson especially: "Do the thing

you fear, and it will be the death of fear." She had left this on the bulletin board two weeks. Some day--Miss Annie was sure of it--perhaps even long after the war was over, one of her boys would write her a letter saying: "Dear Miss Calhoun, I just want to tell you how much I appreciate all you did for us when we were at Fort Simonds. When we got orders to jump on Corregidor, I thought of that quotation from Emerson, and it was a big help." At present, it was only natural that they preferred movie magazines and detective stories. In fact, it was her duty to keep up with their interests and be able to discuss such things with them. She could do some reading along those lines after hours, she decided, slipping several of the most worn copies into her knitting bag as she locked up for the night. Three hours later, she glanced at the clock on her bedside table. It was two o'clock, and she was still wide awake. She had brought herself up-to-date on the love life of Betty Grable and the beauty secrets of Lana Turner; she would take just one more hour to find out whether she was right about the murderer in The Case of the Purple Stockings.

Being informed on such subjects gave Miss Annie a pleasant, fluttery feeling, the same sort of feeling that she had had on her sixteenth birthday when she snipped a red petal from the artificial rose on her mother's Sunday hat, dipped it in water and rouged her cheeks for the first--and last--time. It gave her a new bond of congeniality with the boys who were beginning to ask her to help with posters for the dances, with letters to disgruntled "girl-friends" at home. There was so much to be done that Miss Annie rarely took her day off. Lunch was a quick, skimpy affair at the Service Club Snack Bar. Her one indulgence was two hours at her quarters for dinner: Nella was on duty at

that time. Miss Annie had hired Nella as a cook, had found it impossible to wean her from fiery pepper pots, and had kept her on chiefly as companion and entertainer. While Miss Annie dabbled at a dish of soupy gelatin thrown together before work in the morning, or picked at a bowl of nuts or fruit, Nella sweated over the ironing board, sang Jamaican songs and told stories of "How Bro Monkey Manage Annancy." It was like listening to Uncle Remus in person, except that Bro Monkey made Brer Rabbit seem a goody-goody sort of fellow. As a result of working many hours overtime and living on a bird-like diet, by Christmas Miss Annie had an accrued leave of two weeks and the bank balance to finance a real holiday. After reading Lady Nugent's Journal, she decided on Montego Bay, bought a camera and bicycle.

"But you can't possibly ride a bicycle to Montego," said the Special Services officer. "That's all the way across the island, and you've just missed breaking your neck riding it around the Base."

"These English bicycles are a little different, to be sure," said Miss Annie.

"And," the Captain continued, "you had better keep your hands on the handle bars from now on."

Miss Annie compromised by having the bicycle sent over on the mail truck, and arrived at the hotel with camera slung over her shoulder and a Guide to Jamaica under her arm. She wrote Miss Annie Calhoun on the register in a neat, precise hand, putting parentheses around the Miss, hesitated a moment and wrote U. S. Air Base, Fort Simonds. The clerk checked the signature and looked at her with a faintly puzzled expression as she adjusted the small, straight-brimmed hat above the prim bun of hair.

"Take Miss Calhoun's bags to 128," he said to the bellboy. The boy picked up the straw suitcase and big basket. "It couldn't be a WAC, could it?" the clerk asked his assistant in an undertone, watching Miss Annie as she went out. She followed the bellhop with a light, bouncing sort of walk, hands held slightly out as if making a stage entrance.

"Quite a number of people already here, I see," she remarked to the porter, who was placing her suitcase on a luggage rack.

"Yes mom, they come fast when the Doctah blow up." He flashed a toothy smile and stood waiting.

"The doctor? Oh, I almost forgot," said Miss Annie. She reached in her pocketbook and brought out a handful of English money. "Let's see now--oh, you just help yourself." She held the silver toward him. "Good heavens," said Miss Annie half aloud as the door closed behind him, "he really did help himself. I must start using English money more on the Base. Let me see--a shilling is twenty cents--a sixpence is a dime--a half-crown is--"

There was a knock on her door. A bandana-ed head appeared at Miss Annie's cordial "Come in, please." "Any pressing for the Mistress?" asked the maid.

"No, I believe not, thank you," answered Miss Annie, hoping she hadn't forgotten her traveling iron.

"May I hang the lady's clothes up?"

"Thank you, not this time. There are only a few things. You see, I'm only staying two--a fortnight." Miss Annie felt very British for the moment. "I can manage quite all right." The maid left with a "Call me if you need me, ma'm."

She must get this English money straight before she indulged too much in such luxuries. She started hanging up the plain cotton dresses that she had brought along, repeating to herself, "A pound is--four dollars. Five shillings make--a dollar. A bob is--Now what is a bob? Well--"

Some one was knocking at the door again. How exciting! "May I have your order, mom?" A native boy in white starched coat stood there with pad and pencil ready.

"What--order do you--?"

"From the bar, mom."

"Oh!" A delightful feeling of impending adventure spurred Miss Annie on. "Let me see--What do you have?" Realizing from the boy's expression that such a question must be in the same class as asking a telephone operator what numbers she had, Miss Annie corrected herself. "I mean, what do you suggest?" She had sipped a cup of rum punch at three parties on the Base, but this occasion seemed to call for something more exotic.

"I think the Mistress would relish a gin and bitters. They very good before lunch."

"Yes, that will be nice, thank you." She pushed from her mind what her father would have thought. He would certainly have turned over in his grave at the idea of her drinking at any time, and here she was ordering a cocktail before lunch. But he had prescribed hot toddies for colds, and she was sure that she had smelled liq-- intoxicants on his breath; always at Christmas--and other times when he was in a good humor. She had even heard him telling some friends that, after forty, a person needed a little stimulant--used wisely, of course. Her next birthday

would be her fortieth. . . She lifted the glass from the yucca table where the boy had set it, and walked out on the balcony overhanging the water. She held the glass high, watching the bubbles rise through the liquid, pink against the aqua of the sea. . . It's really delightful, thought Miss Annie, feeling the pleasant effect all the way to the top of her head. Gin and bitters! I must remember that.

Below, a small boat was approaching. At one end flew a British flag; at the other was a native in the outfit of a seasoned old salt. Just like a character out of Benito Cereno! She set the cocktail down and went to look for her camera. The boatman had taken on two passengers and was out of range. Her thoughts were off to the high seas. Absent-mindedly she answered the rap on the door, and there before her was another pink concoction.

"Oh, but I--" she began.

"First drinks at Christmas time--on the house, mom."

"Oh--thank you."

Miss Annie was a happy initiate. With camera and bicycle, she explored the village of Montego, walking when the hills became too steep for riding. She enjoyed to the last morsel all the odd, new dishes set before her--ackee soup, scalloped mountain crayfish, plaintain pudding, stamp an' go fritters and matrimony. Most challenging of all was the peeled orange served on a fork, a fat drooling lollypop of a thing. From a bench on the hotel terrace, she could see the crowd in front of the Beach Club. The girls were just like bronze water nymphs diving into the blue-green water. The bright prints that every one seemed to wear in some form--bathing suit, slacks, shirt--gave Miss Annie a gay feeling. There

was a middle-aged woman--she must have been well over forty--who always had on shorts of the same material, but they hardly showed beneath the man's shirt she was wearing. Miss Annie looked down at her own blue gingham dress. She was really the only one in sight with real clothes on. . . . Why, even in the hotel they walked around like this. . . . Miss Annie was happily unaware of the curious looks that followed her as she floated around the place with that lilting, tip-toe walk. No one knew that her world was peopled with Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci, that she was discovering a new Bimini, hand in hand with Ponce de Leon. Miss Annie did not know, herself, that she was under the spell of the Doctor.

Christmas Eve passed much as any other evening. No one seemed to care for any public celebration. The next morning, there was a scattering of "Merry Christmases" at breakfast, and then a hurrying out to the beach. Miss Annie went over to the desk to enquire about mail. She was not expecting any, but it was her usual routine. She was standing there, empty-handed, when she heard some one calling her name. "Merry Christmas, Miss Calhoun!"

"Oh, thank you! Thank you! A merry Christmas to you," said Miss Annie as if joining in some game.

"I am Jane Godfrey. I saw your name when we registered yesterday, and I'm just playing a hunch. Could you possibly be one of the South Carolina Calhouns? You look so much like--"

"Why, yes!" answered Miss Annie. "How did you--?"

"You see I visited in Cooper County many times when I was a girl. That was probably before your day, but I was just on the verge of marrying a Calhoun when this charming Lochinvar came out of the west." Mrs.

Godfrey reached for her husband's hand as he joined them and was introduced. Miss Annie extended a timorous hand, thinking how little this shaggy, St. Bernardish man looked like the young Lochinvar of her girlhood dreams.

"Let's see now--your name is--is--"

"It's Ann-- Cooper Calhoun." She had been intending to drop that ie for the past year, and now it was done.

"Then you must have been Charles' cousin. Isn't this a happy coincidence!"

"Yes--yes, indeed. The world is really a small place," Miss Annie heard herself saying. Why did such things always come out, when later she could have thought of such clever things to say?

"Won't you join us on the beach?" asked Mr. Godfrey. "Or are you holding out against the Doctor? He has been bringing us back here for ten years. In fact, he's the one irresistible force I know that has never met an immovable object."

"Thank you so much, but I had planned to go over and see the old Monastery at Myranda Hill."

"Are you by any chance writing a book, Ann?" asked Mrs. Godfrey.

"I still remember your father's editorials and--"

"No--no, not that," Miss Annie hastened to explain. "I'm--I'm just doing a little--little--research for the Library at Fort Simonds." Miss Annie groped awkwardly for the unaccustomed little white lie. It was far better, she consoled herself, than saying she didn't own a bathing suit, swam about as well as a length of lignum vitae, and hadn't gone bare-footed since she was a child--rarely then.

"How interesting. We'll see you later, then. Join us under our



umbrella--just any time." Jane Godfrey slapped a sun hat over her scrambled short hair.

Miss Annie watched them as they went out into the brilliant tropical sunshine. She went back to her room, which seemed a little stuffy for the first time, and picked up the Guide to Jamaica. With waning enthusiasm, she read: In Montego Bay stands the most important and interesting relic of Spanish history, the Monastery at Myranda Hill, situated about one-half mile from the Courthouse on the road to Falmouth. The garden wall and much of the building is still in fair condition. She looked toward the dressing table. . . "Yes--in fair condition," she said to the image in the mirror.

Further down the page, she read: Within a mile and a half from the center of town on the north shore, are the "White Sands" ("Doctor's Cave" Bathing Beach). "Doctor" is the legendary name given the trade winds which blow from the tropical belts of high pressure towards the equatorial belt of low pressure. Their regularity explains their name, the term "trade" being used in the otherwise obsolete sense of "course" (cf. "tread"). The natives in Jamaica think of the "Doctor" as a kindly, healing spirit, and rightly so, for the sufferer from overwrought nerves and many other ailments finds relief after submitting to the cure of the "Doctor".

"The Doctor," said Miss Annie half-aloud, musing on this kindly new friend. "And tread winds. . . How lovely." She liked the Latin form best. It had a romantic connotation--to tread a measure--to dance. She slipped off her shoes and stockings and tripped over to the long mirror. She stepped out of her dress and slip and ran an appraising look over her reflection in the mirror. She looked from the mirror down at her legs.

Yes, they were hers all right, those spindly things, and almost as white as the frog legs her father used to bring back from gigging trips. Well, she could start going without hose as every one else did and pick up a little tan. Perhaps it was better to be too thin than too fat, especially in a bathing suit. That woman who wore her husband's shirt around all day had legs like a piano. . . She held her hand tightly against her head, pushing her hair up, picked up the scissors and snipped a few straggly wisps. It would really be so much more comfortable and convenient—short, but— She thought of her father again. How often he had said, fingering her blond curls when she was a little girl, "This is a woman's crowning glory, my dear. Never give it up." She had better think things over before doing anything so rash. For the present her plans were unalterable, since she had publicly committed herself to a life of research. She dressed, picked up her camera and went out to the bicycle rack at the back of the hotel.

A week later, Miss Annie bought the culottes she had looked at several times. She had never heard of the color pistachio green before, but the clerk said she thought it would be a "cheery one for the Mistress." With camera in the wire, bicycle basket, she started out with no particular destination in mind. She turned down one of the narrow streets in the village of Montego and was soon at the waterfront. She heard the sound of laughter and singing from the dock where a boat was being loaded with bananas. She walked up closer and snapped a few pictures. She stood listening until the last lines of one of the songs became distinct:

What de use a you lace up, stays up?  
What de use a you lace up, stays up?  
When you character gone?

The last line was the only one that made any sense. What could the others mean? What de use a--? Miss Annie stepped back quickly to avoid being hit by handfuls of banana peelings that were being flung into the air. "Are they supposed to eat the fruit?" she asked a native who was standing idly by. "If you put butter in a puss mouth, him must lick it," the old man said with a sly smile. Miss Annie smiled back as if she understood, and walked over to get a close-up of a cart loaded with bananas. She stayed on, listening to the songs of the dock hands, until there was no time for further exploring. She would take the ocean drive back to the hotel. She remembered there were some road signs that she wanted pictures of. She stopped at the last one. It read "To Lard Bay." It was really the most unbelievable one. She simply couldn't imagine this beautiful place once being "an emporium for 'hog's butter,'" as the Guide Book said. She rode on, humming--What de use a you lace up, stays up? What de use a--? She pulled the brakes on, realizing she had gone past the entrance to the hotel.

Relaxing on the balcony, she thought of the Godfreys. She had caught glimpses of them, going about in beach clothes, evidently having their meals served in their room--since they never appeared in the dining room. She must see them again before she left, and tomorrow she would be getting ready to leave. How could two weeks have gone by so quickly? She had better wear the pink voile tonight. It had been hanging there in the closet waiting for some special occasion, and this was New Year's Eve. The dress was hardly appropriate for the costume dinner dance planned for the guests that evening, but she would only be going to dinner, and it

would have to do. She started to ring for the bar boy, then reconsidered. A rather poor way of starting New Year's Eve, having a cocktail alone. She could order at the table just as well.

Downstairs, she threaded her way through the noisy crowd in the cocktail lounge and went to her table in the corner of the dining room. Everything was happy confusion, people milling about, laughing in small intimate groups. There were many strange faces, evidently a lot of local residents out for the evening's celebration. Miss Annie sat waiting, trying to catch some familiar word in the rising inflection of the jumbled voices. All the bar boys seemed busy with private parties. She could have stopped in the lounge as the others had done. She could go back and-- A waiter handed her the menu. She would just go ahead and order. She wished she hadn't come down. Robinson Crusoe without Friday could not have felt as lonely as she did in the midst of this gay crowd. She hated the thing in her that had held her back from accepting the Godfreys' hospitality. . . . It was still not too late to have her meal sent to her room. Yes, a relic and not even in fair condition. She turned to beckon the waiter, and there was Mr. Godfrey coming straight toward her, not in some fantastic costume but in his usual casual clothes.

He dropped down in the chair opposite. "Would you like to get away from this?" His cordial smile restored her spirits. "We are going over to the Doctor's Cave Club and want you to join us. My wife says she won't take 'no' for an answer this time."

"Oh, yes, I would like to very much," said Miss Annie, "but--I have already or--"

"I'll take care of that," he said, coming around to move her chair back. "Come along." As they went out, he spoke briefly to the head

waiter, who replied with a glittery smile and an exaggerated bow. "Jane has already made her escape," Mr. Godfrey continued, as the crowd in the cocktail lounge went into a raucous version of Minnie from Trinidad. "She sent me back to rescue you."

"Thank you. That was very kind," said Miss Annie, beaming.

Inside the Club, she was introduced to another couple at the Godfreys' table, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Tichnor. Mrs. Tichnor was the woman who always wore a man's shirt. She was really not much more dressed up now. Everywhere were sunback dresses and slacks of the hand-blocked prints which, Miss Annie had learned, were done by Antonio, a native artist. Listening to the hum of familiar speech mingled with snatches of music, she felt that something was thawing inside her. She felt a little dizzy from the sudden shift of scene.

"This pianist is the best on the island," said Jane Godfrey, turning to watch the limber fingers of the native run the length of the keyboard. "It's unbelievable--the music they can produce with only a piano and a drum."

Oh, what a night! what a night! sang Mrs. Tichnor, tapping time to the music. "Arthur, ask them to sing Linsted Market."

"Don't rush them, dear," said her husband. . . "Here we are." The waiter handed them wine lists. "What will you have, Miss Calhoun?"

"Dear me, there are so many different things," said Miss Annie. Her eyes traveled down the list again and stopped. The name fascinated her. "I believe I'll have a zombie."

"Congratulations!" said Mrs. Tichnor. "You are just the accomplice I've been looking for. I've always wanted to try one of those. Make it two, waiter."

Miss Annie glowed at this unexpected approbation. The glow grew with every sip from the tall glass before her. Perhaps she should have stuck to her recent but more predictable acquaintance, gin and bitters. "Are you sure there's no dynamite in this?" She leaned over and put her hand on Mr. Godfrey's arm.

"Oh, perhaps a little--about as much as in a depth charge." He laughed and patted her hand.

"Don't believe a word that he says. He's just a newsmonger," said Jane. "Now--we are going to have some real Jamaican songs."

A trio had appeared and was singing in some strange lingo:

Hol 'im, Joe, hol 'im, Joe, hol 'im, Joe and-a hol 'im,  
Joe--

By the end of the song, Miss Annie had decided it was all about a donkey. On the chorus of the next song, the audience started singing along with the trio:

Run, Mongoose--yo' name gone abroad!  
Mongoose get in a Bedward kitchin,  
Tek out one o' 'im righteous chickin,  
Put i' in 'im weskit pockit.  
Run, Mongoose!

"Arthur, please, ask them to sing Linsted Market."

"Just give them time, my dear. Have you ever known them to skip it?"

"Arthur, you are just being a stubborn--donkey." Mrs. Tichnor's jolly laugh seemed to come all the way up from her portly legs.

"Are you enjoying yourself?" Mr. Godfrey asked, turning to Miss Annie.

"I should say so," she exclaimed.

"We always prefer this to the debacle going on over at the hotel. Same old thing going on in Chicago."

"Do you work in Chicago, Mr. Godfrey?"

"In and out of there. I do a little work for Time. Arthur, over there, does a real job for Town and Country."

"Really?" Miss Annie looked from one man to the other with an expression bordering on reverence.

"Oh, there it is," said Mrs. Tichnor clapping her approval.

Every one in the place must have joined the trio on Linsted Market. The whole room seemed to vibrate with its lusty rhythm. . .

Car' mi akee, go a Linstid Ma'ket,  
Not a quattie wut sell.  
Car' mi akee, go a Linstid Ma'ket,  
Not a quattie wut sell.

Lord, not a light, not a bite!  
What a Satiday night!  
Lord, not a light, not a bite!  
What a Satiday night!

Ev'rybody come feel up, feel up,  
Not a quattie wut sell.  
Ev'rybody come feel up, feel up,  
Not a quattie wut sell.

Miss Annie added her quavering soprano to the last two choruses, coming out with real gusto on What a Satiday night! A few more songs, a native rendition of Auld Ang Syne, the exchange of "Happy New Years" and the evening was over.

"When shall I see you again?" asked Miss Annie, postponing a final "Goodnight" to the Godfreys, who had seen her safely to her door. "Could you come out to the Base?"

"As a matter of fact, that's one of the reasons we're down here--to take a look at some of the Caribbean Bases."

"I'll be along," said Jane Godfrey. "I'll count on you to help me with some photography. . . Goodnight, Ann, and Happy New Year."

Back in her room, Miss Annie dropped down on the edge of the bed, reliving every moment of the evening. Surely, it couldn't have really happened--to her. She must have dreamed it all up. But there in her bag was the book of matches, the paper napkin and the muddler with Doctor's Cave Club on them. Could Mr. Godfrey have been serious about-- She rang for a bellboy. Everything was still wide open downstairs. She would get those magazines right away. . . She walked over to the long mirror. It was wonderful seeing yourself from top to toe. . . Or was it? The pink voile looked limp and paler than ever. What an anemic thing she must have been in that colorful setting tonight. The bun at the back of her head had slipped down her neck. She drew out the hairpins and shook her hair loose. She rang again. . . With all the to-do downstairs, there was probably no one free for room service. She would go down, herself. The shops wouldn't be open before the early train in the morning. "But, first," said Miss Annie, as if making a public declaration, "we'll do this!". . . The scissors clattered as she dropped them on the glass-topped dressing table. She stood for a moment looking in the mirror, turned and went downstairs.

The hubbub from the ballroom was deafening. The rhumba which the orchestra was playing was scarcely audible above the sound of horns, noise-makers and shrill voices. The place was a maze of confetti. Miss Annie worked her way through the crowd to the newsstand. "A copy of Time, please, and Town and Country." "Shay, girlie, you don't wanna read tonight, d'you?" A fat man in a pirate's costume teetered toward her. His bleary eyes were right in her face; his rummy breath hot



against her cheek. She grabbed up the magazines and hurried down the long corridor where bright lights blazed in the native shops. She made several purchases, as if picking up something already ordered, and went back to her room.

Yes--there it was on page seventeen of Time, Thomas Godfrey, Chief of Foreign Correspondents. . . Opening Town and Country she saw, right at the top of the list, Arthur Tichnor, Editor. Then it was all true. How wonderful to have been out with such celebrities. . . She sat down at the dressing table and ran the comb through her hair. What a comfortable, light-headed feeling. She pulled the big straw suitcase from under the bed and lifted it to the luggage rack. First, she put in the things that she had brought with her. Eagerly she opened the packages from the shops downstairs. On top of the pink voile, she laid the sun-back dress, shorts and bathing suit of Antonio block print. In the bottom of the basket carry-all, she put the bottle of gin and the bottle of bitters; then started tossing in the odds and ends that were strewn around the room. . . There was a knock on her door.

"Telegram for Miss Calhoun," said a voice that seemed to be part of a pleasant dream.

"Thank you, thank you," said Miss Annie, handing the bellboy a handful of silver. She tore the envelope open. . . "Happy New Year. See you in the Library tomorrow," the message read. She studied the signature: "The boys at the Service Club and Emerson."

Good heavens! The boys at the Service Club! She had hardly thought of them during the past two weeks. . . What would they think of this frivolous thing she had turned out to be? She walked over to the dressing table. The lifeless mane still lay there. She lifted it

carefully and coiled it into a bun. . . Of course—it could be pinned back—in some way. She dropped it on top of the gay prints and slumped to the bed, fingering the telegram. She read it again: "The boys at the Service Club and Emerson." Emerson? Why of course! Emerson! She picked up the mousy coil of hair, a box of hairpins from the dressing table; walked to the balcony and dropped them over the rail. . . There was a faint plop as they hit the water. She stood looking down. . . The ripple spread in a widening circle, out beyond the rim of light from the window below.

## AND OVERHEAD, THE MOON

The club lounge grew suddenly darker. From the window, Janet Warren could see the approaching line of wind on the far side of the sound. It struck the palms just outside. She heard the heavy thump of coconuts flung to the ground. On its heels came the rain with a roar, whipping the water of the sound into foamy windrows, rattling sharply against the glass. Janet went limp. How could all these women be calmly sitting here, playing cards and drinking tea, when they might be blown to smithereens any minute. There had already been several warnings over the radio and--

"Come along, Janet. We're waiting for you," called Nora McDonald. "This will be over in a minute. We are evidently getting the fringe of the storm. The hurricane is due to pass well east of the island." A door banged open at the end of the lounge. Janet stooped to pick up the cards and score sheets whisked from the table. "Will you have lemon or milk, Janet?"

"Oh--lemon, I suppose." Janet watched her aunt's steady hand lifting the Wedgwood teapot and felt the tremor in her own fingers let up a little. "Don't you think we should be going home soon, Aunt Nora?"

"Why?" said Phyllis Montague dipping her long fingers into a bowl of cassava chips. "We are quite safe here."

"But listen to that wind," said Janet. She could barely hear the voices of the other women scattered about the lounge in small groups. Rain sheeted the outdoors from view. "They said over the radio that--"

"Oh, that annoying wireless," said Judith Oldham with a shrug of

her bony shoulders. "We have heard the same thing, time and time again, here in Jamaica. It was the same back in August 1944, and we only lost a few coconuts on the north shore."

"A few! We lost seventy million," said Nora. "It made a big difference in my accounts at Ashton House. The more the price went up, the more my guests called for rum and coconut milk. And Hilda serves with a lavish hand."

"My husband wrote me about that," said Janet. "He flew over the hurricane territory when he was stationed at the Air Base here. It must have been terrify--"

"Of course! Captain Warren. What a fearless young chap he was. How is he?"

"He's still flying, Mrs. Oldham," said Janet with an air of resignation. "He's in South America now for the Hammacher Export Company. That's the reason I'm here."

"So you flew down with him?"

"Oh, no--no--I've never flown." Janet thought of how she had tried to make up her mind to fly with Tom, how she had almost been persuaded. When they had run into rough seas in the Gulf, she had thought of Tom soaring twenty thousand feet above it all and longed to be with him. She had almost cabled him to pick her up on the flight home. From others you could get the language and gesture of courage, but that feeling inside which gave you the strength to do the thing you feared must come from something else--some experience that she had missed.

The noise of the storm had died out. The radio came on with a raucous blast. They turned expecting another warning, but there was only a sputtering of music.

"Have you read High Wind in Jamaica, Janet?" asked Phyllis Montague, plopping another lump of sugar into her tea.

"No--no, I haven't," said Janet a little shortly. And it was the last thing she was interested in doing. She could remember old Anna, her childhood nurse, telling hair-raising tales of the tornado that had ripped through her hometown in Georgia the year she was born. That had been enough: "Lawd, Missy, they was arms and legs flyin' through de air. Dat old feller dey called 'Raw Meat an' Bloody Bones' was snatched through de door and dey never found no part of him." Janet added some more hot water to the strong tea and tried to revive the delightful lazy feeling of the past three weeks. The mountains had seemed to shut the village off from all noise and confusion.

A door slammed loudly. Janet started. Table cloths billowed fitfully. Curtains stood out on the retreating eddy of wind like storm signals.

"Really, Aunt Nora, don't you think we had better be going?"

"Why, my dear!" Mrs. Oldham's voice was shrill above the subsiding huff of wind. "You are taking this too seriously for some one from the land of the atomic bomb."

Janet set her cup down noisily, sloshing some of the tea into the saucer. "Did you know, Mrs. Oldham," she said in the calculating tone of a young scientist, "that it would take the energy of fifty atomic bombs to keep a hurricane going for just one second!"

"Really?" Mrs. Montague placed a half-eaten meringue back on her plate. "How extraod'n'ry!"

"Dear me, how you Americans do figger things out. Here, Janet, have a bit of rum in your tea and let's get away from such a devastating

subject." Mrs. Oldham took the stopper from a small decanter. "The sun is out again. See! I assure you, my dear, there has been no heavy loss of life here since the hurricane of August 1903. I was just about your age when--"

"August? So that was in August, too," said Nora. "Hilda must be right. I'm sorry I let her off for the weekend. She's quite a weather prophet. She has a saying about hurricans:

'June--too soon;  
 July--stand by;  
 August--don't trust;  
 September--remember;  
 October--all over!'"

"August--don't trust," repeated Janet. "This is August--if I haven't altogether lost my sense of time in this 'land where it is always afternoon.'" She was beginning to doubt Tennyson's judgment.

"And always tea, thank heaven," said Mrs. Montague, replenishing her supply of crumpets.

Suddenly, the allegro of Moment Musical was interrupted by the terse staccato of the fifth storm warning: "The Weather Office issues the following statement: The situation is serious. The storm of hurricane force in the Caribbean has turned and is approaching Jamaica. It is expected to strike the eastern end of the island at approximately 6:00 p.m. and travel over the southwest portion with winds up to 130 miles an hour. You are advised to take the usual precautions. Storm warnings have been placed since yesterday on the bulletin boards outside your local Post Office, where you will also find notice of your nearest Red Cross station. Be calm. Stay in doors where you will be safer than outside from flying shingles, sheets of corrugated iron, falling trees and the like. It is tremendously important that you heed this warning.

We may be forced to leave the air at any moment. Above all things be calm and--"

"That settles it," said Nora, rising abruptly. "After all, I have two guests at the House and no Hilda. Good heavens, she's in Kingston and it must be in the direct path of the storm! Of course, we are in the south west. . . Judith, we enjoyed having tea with you. We will expect you both for dinner Friday if--if Hilda is back."

Throughout the club, people were scurrying about, collecting bags, gloves, saying hasty goodbyes. Speechless, Janet followed Nora across the room. All were getting away as quickly as possible, some on foot, some on bicycles, others in small English cars. . .

Outside the club grounds, Nora and Janet drove along the winding street, stopping abruptly as some excited pedestrian darted in front of the car, moving on at the persistent tooting of a driver from behind. The hot sun was blazing down, the water of the sound once more like a mirror. The air was sticky as glue; Janet could hardly breathe against its weight. The hedge of hibiscus and allamandas which followed the curve of the low stone wall was like a still life in flaming red and brilliant yellow. Palms stood motionless in the intense amber light. Everything glistened with an uncanny sheen, washed by the heavy downfall of rain which was running in rivulets down the gutters.

"Aunt Nora, it's so calm. I don't see how-- Could they be mistaken about--?"

"I'm afraid not," said Nora keeping her eyes straight ahead.

As they reached the crest of a hill, they could see the ocean in the distance. A heavy swell was setting in. Before they were half way down the hill it was getting dark again. The sound of the surf became

louder and more menacing, there was a tremendous flash of lightning, and thunder seemed to roll right into the car. The wind sprang up again. Janet felt the car lurch forward as Nora stepped heavily on the accelerator.

"Aunt Nora, how do you stand living in a place where there is always danger of a disaster?"

"My husband left me property here and I have made a very good living out of it. Earthquakes and hurricanes are closer here, but so are the beautiful things of-- Look at that moon."

"The moon?" Janet looked toward the east where the moon was just clearing a mountain peak. It seemed only a chill, unfriendly thing. In the distance, the sea was like a giant vat of oil laboring under the weight of the air. There were no dancing white caps, only a shimmer of yellow on the crests of the heavy swells.

"Hold tight, Janet. I'm going to take the drive up to the house in high--or we may get stuck."

"Is this it?" asked Janet as rain splattered the wind shield.

"No, just another squall like we had this afternoon, but I'd rather get home ahead of the rain."

As they left the car, Scott, the houseboy, came running from the back door. "Mistress, plenty, plenty trouble coming!"

"Well, get your mind off it by bringing the furniture and swinging baskets in from the verandah and check the storm blinds. Janet, you'd better get into some old clothes."

The two dachshunds who usually ran out to extend a boisterous welcome waited, whimpering, at the door. Inside, Nora clicked on the radio. The static was deafening. . . There was a note from one of her



guests, Harold Evans, saying that he had gone into Kingston and could be reached at Red Cross Headquarters. The only other guest in the off-season was eighty-year-old Mrs. Pendleton. She had left word that she was in the midst of an exciting novel and would like a tray sent to her room.

"Janet, that's your assignment. Put a triple portion of coconut milk and rum on her tray and, if you can, smuggle her hearing aid out. There'll be no time for hysterical women. Then put the candles around. Run along. I must go put in a call."

Janet went about her job feverishly. . . Her fingers were like putty. She slipped the hurricane globes over the candles. With the vacuous look of a sleep walker, she started placing them about the room. Her thoughts went spinning in an aching cap of nerves. . . Why had she gotten into a thing like this? She felt anger boiling up in her, anger at Aunt Nora for living in a place such as this, anger at Tom for leaving her here. She could have been in South America. She longed to be back in her mother's garden, shut in from the frightening world by a high brick wall. She lifted the last hurricane globe and dashed it against the floor. "I can't--I can't--I can't!" she screamed.

Nora came running back into the room. "Janet, what's the matter?"

"Nothing, Aunt Nora. I dropped one of the hurricane globes." All at once, Janet was conscious that the wind and the rain had subsided. She walked through the front room to the door onto the verandah, where Scott was tugging at heavy pieces of furniture. "I'll help you, Scott. I'll take care of the hanging baskets and flower pots." She looked up. The moon had climbed higher in the sky, whipped into senseless patterns by the worried branches of trees. She called the dogs to follow her, but they whined and slunk back into the room. She went out and started

unfastening the hanging ferns. Out of the corner of her eye, she could see swarms of mosquitoes, flies, and strange small insects clinging to the screen. She heard the thud of birds as they sought the shelter of the eaves. A huge frog hopped across the terrace and disappeared under the house; she stepped back to avoid a skittering cockroach and felt the crunch of another under her foot. Nausea churned inside her. She worked on, dripping with perspiration. Inside, the lights were flickering, the radio sputtering. . . The sputtering ceased, the lights went out. Darkness came like a bronze-black cloud; the rumbling of the sea grew to a tremendous roar.

"It has happened!" said Nora, rushing from the back of the house. "The connection was bad, but I got this much: a 130 mile wind--Morant Bay is out--now it must be Kingston, the power is off. It's the worst yet--and Hilda in the--"

"Oh, Aunt Nora, do we still have the worst of it to--?"

A quick wind tore at Janet's skirt and whipped it over her head. An over-powering gust drove them into the house. They threw their weight against the door to close it. Through the pane of glass above, Janet caught faint glimpses of the moon between wind-driven clouds. There was the crack of shingles ripped from the roof, the loud bang of a loose shutter. The house shivered. . .

"Is this it, Aunt Nora?" Janet's face was bleached of all color except a smudge of dirt across her forehead.

"I suppose so--the barometer is down to twenty-eight:twenty." Nora kept busy moving a chair here, a table there, setting lamps on the floor. "Come along, Scott, we'll have to take these things to the back," she said, seeing water begin to trickle under the front door.

Janet stood, stupefied, in the middle of the floor. All consciousness seemed to drain out of her body and concentrate somewhere deep in her mind in one persistent thought: This is a hurricane, this is a hurricane, this is a hurricane. Her numb arms and legs made no response. She saw Nora and Scott moving about like phantoms in a nightmare. . . In a steady crescendo came the noise of wind-driven rain. The house shuddered. There was a crash as if a giant had fallen to earth. Some solid force, some mammoth bulldozer seemed to be straining at the foundation. . . Janet felt that the house had become feather-light and was being driven with inconceivable speed through the wall of wind. Nothing could be heard above the roar of the storm but the thunderous sound of falling trees, the sharp impact of flying debris. From cracks around the doors and windows came the rain like bullets, shot by the angry wind. Janet felt their sharp sting on her face and arms. Numbness gave way to resentment. She clutched the mop that Nora had put in her hands, started fighting the stream that was quickly covering the floor. Like an automaton she followed Nora, cramming old cloths into some of the larger crevices in the wall. She dropped to her knees and helped Scott stuff heavy towels under the doors and base-boards. Frenzy turned into strength: she lifted buckets of water, spurning Scott's help, and carried them to the kitchen. Through the window, she could see the summer-house, day-clear in a sheet of lightning, careening in the wind like a drunken man.

Mopping, sweating, insensible to fatigue, Janet worked on through the night. At intervals the faint thought came through: This is a hurricane, this is a hurricane, this is a hurricane. . . At one o'clock the storm ceased. By three, there was only a stiff breeze blowing. At

five, there was dead calm again. The moon looked down serenely on the devastation. Janet lay face down on a damp couch, feeling that she would never be able to get up again. Her blue jeans were wet as a sponge, her short hair matted with perspiration. The voices of Nora and Scott seemed to come from some distant place.

"Darg bark nebber frighten moon," Scott was saying. "I go make coffee, mistress."

"That's a good idea," said Nora sitting down for the first time, "if the kitchen is still there. You'd better get up and put on some dry clothes, Janet."

Janet pushed herself up and sat on the edge of the couch, looking around the room as if realizing for the first time what had actually happened.

"De kitchen, she all still dere, mistress, but my, my, de garden." Scott came back into the room, shaking his head. "I reckon we nebber see Hilda ag'in."

Nora got up abruptly, as though leaving such an idea behind. Janet followed her to the kitchen. She hadn't even thought of Aunt Nora, how worried she must be. If she had thought of anything, it was her self, her own plight. Silent, they stood looking out the window. Everywhere, they could see the destruction left by the storm: the splintered summer house, uprooted trees, the shattered garden wall. Janet looked at Nora's grim face, ran to her and threw her arms around her neck, sobbing.

"Oh, Aunt Nora, I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

"There, there now," said Nora putting her arm around Janet's shaking body. "There's nothing to be sorry for."

"There is, there is, Aunt Nora. I've been terrible. I broke your hurricane globe on purpose and—" The rest was lost in a flood of tears.

"I knew you did--and it was good for you. I felt like throwing things, too. I was just as frightened as you were. It's the first time in thirty years I've ever been through any thing like this without Hilda. Stop crying. There are things to be done. If you had broken all the globes, you have more than made up for it. I couldn't have gotten along without you."

Out of the relief of tears, Janet felt a strange new embryo of courage stirring inside her. . .

Days of waiting followed: no telephone, no radio, no transportation, no lights, only scattered rumors of the desolation in Kingston, the hundreds killed. Nora and Janet talked hopefully of getting into Kingston to Hilda, but news of impassable roads detained them. Scott worked from morning until night, trying to bring some order out of the shambles of the yard. Mrs. Pendleton made a brief appearance, apologized for leaving her hearing aid in the kitchen, exclaimed over the frightful mess and retired to her room on an increased ration of coconut milk and rum. It was Janet who suggested that they try to salvage the fruit scattered over the sodden ground. As they filled baskets and carried them to the back porch, it was always of Hilda that Nora spoke: "Hilda will make a wonderful paste out of these avocados. . . Yes, save all the citrus fruit for Hilda's marmalade." Each time a car approached, Nora turned expectantly; when it had passed, she turned grimly to her work. . . "You can just let those go, Janet," she said, pointing to a pile of ripe ackees.

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"Oh, mistress," said Scott, pausing in the midst of disentangling

a yard chair from a mass of branches, "Scott take keer o' that. My, my, ackee and codfish! Better belly bust dan good food spoil."

"I doubt the wisdom of that when we are running low on intestinal fortitude," said Nora with a glimmer of her old sense of humor.

It was Harold Evans who brought the news of Hilda two days later. "It was a miracle," he told Nora. "It was too late to get down to the water front after you called me. I got down there the next morning--just in time. Hilda had spent the night alone. Her son had to stay on the job at the Myrtle Bank Hotel."

"Is she all right?" asked Nora.

"Yes--but how she lived through that experience, I don't know. I found her almost unconscious. A tree had crashed through the roof and caught her by the neck. She had stood in that position all night--she was afraid the tree might fall and crush her. We got her out with only a few scratches--but it took six men to do it."

Nora dropped into a chair.

"She said--wait a minute, I have it written down here." Harold Evans took a slip of paper from his pocket. . . "She said 'Hilda keep her eye on the moon 'cause little wind don't fluster big moon.' She said she was sorry to be away from her job so long and would be back Friday. . . Here's a note she asked me to give you."

Nora leaned to read the note in the light of a candle. Janet walked out into the yard. . . She climbed up on the rubble of the garden wall; she could see the yellow rim of the moon rising above a distant peak. It seemed close enough to touch, a warm, friendly thing. . . She remembered now that she had been vaguely aware of the moon all through the storm. . .

It had always been there when she looked up. . . "Overhead--the moon--  
sits--" Janet groped for the words. "Sits arbitress." "Arbitress?"  
The words took on new meaning and went singing through her mind. . .



## THE CHARM

It was not until after the war that Marian Etheridge arrived in the West Indies to assume her duties as wife of the Commanding Officer of an American Air Base and the unexpected role of "The Mistress" to Matthew. It was not until she was leaving that she could have realized the importance of a day five years earlier when Matthew, slight and tawny-faced, had stood in line under the tropical sun, seeking employment with the bristling Engineers who had moved into his remote world of swamp and sugar cane field: "What experience have you had?" the Personnel Officer had asked. "Sir, I been bird boy," Matthew answered, standing erect and rigid as if he had practised this military pose for the occasion. "Bird boy? What's that?" "When mon shoot birds in swamp, bird boy fetches." "Fetches? Isn't that a dog's job?" asked the Lieutenant, swinging around to inspect this human retriever. "Alligator eat dog. Bird boy swim fast and get away," explained Matthew with unconcealed pride. "You mean--? Never mind. We're not on that sort of hunting trip. . . What else can you do? Know anything about planting--gardening--or whatever you call it down here?" "Oh, please sir, me and the flowers are playmates! Over at Money Musk--" "That'll do. You're hired. We're short on playmates right now. How old are you, Matthew?" "Sixty--mebbe." "Sixty! Well, you may not be able to take it, but we'll try you. Come along tomorrow at 6:30 and bring your--your--" "Machete?" supplied Matthew, his eyes brightening. "Right!" said the Lieutenant. . . "Next."

By the time Marian Etheridge arrived at Fort Simonds, Matthew had risen from the ranks of the chattering native workmen who started

slashing through the tangled undergrowth that first day to the position of official gardener. He took special pride in the grounds of the Commanding Officer and seemed to enjoy a happy feeling of authority there: during the tour of duty of a half-dozen C.O.'s, none had found any reason for briefing the wiry little man who came and went about the place, bringing choice plants from the color-splashed world outside the Base.

"It's amazing," said Marian to her husband as they wandered about the grounds the afternoon of her landing. "We must have everything that Adam and Eve started out with right here in our own backyard." The warm, solid feel of the earth was good after the bumpy flight through a storm. She leaned over a red blossom that looked like a giant powder puff and took a deep breath. . . . "That's strange. Don't the flowers down here have any fragrance, Donald?"

"You'll have to ask Matthew about that," the Colonel answered, tapping his pipe against the trunk of a banana tree. "He seems to be AWOL today."

"Oh, it doesn't really matter, Donald. There are so many different kinds that I've never seen before." She stooped to examine a drift of yellow that looked like tiny fallen stars. "And just think, Donald, if all of these flowers were fragrant, we just couldn't take it in, could we?"

"What are you talking about, Marnie?" He looked at her with an indulgent smile.

"Just that we would have to grow great big noses to appreciate so much sweetness. I'm sure this little pug of mine wouldn't be adequate."

"Heaven forbid! I look enough like Pinocchio now--and I like

your nose as it is--freckles and all. . . You and Matthew are going to be an unbeatable team. He already has a name for everything and here you come along with the reasons."

"And I don't believe the birds sing, Donald. The air is just full of them. Look at all the different colors! But I haven't heard a chirp from--"

"It's just because--if they did--we would all have to grow great big ears--"

"Oh, Donald, you are making fun of me." They laughed as he helped her fasten a white blossom in a damp curl over her ear.

"One thing I'm sure of," he said, "is that the fruit tastes good. Here--try this." He reached up and pulled a bronze-colored fruit from the tree above. "A love apple for Eve."

"Love apple? How lovely. Is that the real name?" She turned the odd fruit over in her hand.

"Now, that I don't know," he answered, picking another and biting into its juicy meat, "but that's what Matthew calls them. He even has names for the wasps, and they never seem to sting him. When you ask him why, he says, 'Oh, it's the charm, sir.' Probably some superstition he got from his Indian ancestors."

"Imagine charming a wasp," said Marian fascinated with the idea. How lucky to be in this beautiful place and have so many exciting things to look forward to. How good to be young enough to--

"Come along now," Donald was saying, "Sara will have tea ready, and Matthew can give you all the answers tomorrow."

"Tea? Oh, yes." Marian came back to reality.

"Since we are celebrating the arrival of a V.I.P., perhaps I'd

better introduce you to the Jamaican favorite--'a bit of rum punch.' 'Two of sour, one of sweet, three of strong, and four of weak,' he chanted. "This will be our sour." He picked a handful of limes from a heavily fruited tree and pulled her arm through his as they walked toward the house.

As they entered the broad-eaved bungalow, the outdoors seemed to follow them in and find its counterpart in bamboo and bright native prints. Marian dropped into a chair and ran her fingers along its smooth, jointed arm. She leaned back limply, resting her head against the cushion. It was good to hear Donald pattering around in the kitchen, again: the whirr of the electric blender was soothing, like the drone of a giant bluebottle. She could feel the tautness in her nerves giving way to happy tiredness. A red bird flamed briefly against the window screen. Marian smiled, thinking of her girlhood superstition: If you see a red bird,/ A sure sign it'll be/ To the first man seen,/ You'll married be. She remembered how she had tried to keep her eyes shut one day after seeing a cardinal until time for Donald to pass by on his way from High School, and how she imagined he had spoken to her as someone more important than just one of his kid sister's friends. It was good to see some of that happy expectancy of twenty years ago coming back into Donald's face, taking the place of the haunted look he had brought from the Pacific. It had made him seem almost a stranger, this sad aloofness as if he held a perpetual picture of death before his eyes. She regretted her rebellious feelings about his volunteering. Now that it was all over, the hours of waiting which had been like thousands of separate, lonely islands seemed as remote as the tiny spots on the map which represented three years of war for Donald. How wonderful to be

through with the business of death and be here in the midst of life with so much to look forward to, new friends and--

"Here we are," said Donald, swinging the door open with his foot. He set a tray down on the bamboo coffee-table, speared a thumbnail-sized oyster and handed it to her. "Try this."

"Why it's just like the Little Bear's porridge! Where in the world did you get these tiny things?"

"Matthew says he gets them off an 'oyster bush' in the black mango swamp," said Donald, handing her another.

"An oyster bush! Imagine that," said Marian, laughing gaily. "Oh, Donald, I'm so completely happy. If I were a kitten I would hump up and purr. Is there anything that isn't perfect about this place?"

"A few things," said Donald in a more serious tone. "Two insects, man and the mosquito, have brought the real curse to this island--disease. . . . But let's just think of the beautiful things tonight. Nature has done a real job. Look out that window."

As far as Marian could see beyond the dusky mountain range, the sky was an inverted sea of lapis lazuli, white-flecked. . . .

Matthew came in the next morning to explain his absence the day before. "I had to go down Kingston way and get new drudgery shoes, sir." Timidly, he added, "And these for you, mom." He handed Marian an armful of white spray orchids and one end of a rope leash. On the other end of the rope was an unusually long and underslung dachshund. "Jock he name, mom."

"Thank you, Matthew. What beautiful flowers! Here's a place just waiting for them." Marian started toward the table by the window, but Jock pulled back, resting his head on Matthew's heavy-soled shoes.

"There--I don't believe Jock wants to leave you, Matthew. Perhaps you had better take care of him for me."

Matthew smiled broadly, leaned down and patted the dog.

"Where did you come by him?" asked Colonel Etheridge, taking the leash from Marian and pulling the dog toward him. "Good heavens, he's laughing at me."

"He follow me home, sir. Me and him already good friends. He keep the Mistress company when you fly away."

"You're sure he followed you?" asked the Colonel in an amused tone.

"Yes, please sir. I pick up old piece of rope, and there on the end was him." Matthew continued stroking the animal. "Good dog, this." Jock responded with his funny grin.

"Ah, look. Isn't he cunning?" said Marian.

"Yes, he must have followed you," said her husband. "There wasn't much choice with that rope halter around his neck. You'd better police him up a little with a good bath, but right now you can show Mrs. Etheridge your garden."

"Splendid," said Marian, starting toward the back door, followed by Matthew and the cheerful dog.

"A grinning dog! What will it be next?" Donald picked up his cap and rang for his driver. "Looks as if he might have a charm up his sleeve, too."

Outside, Matthew tied Jock to a gate post, then started introducing Marian to trees and plants as if they were human beings. "Me and this old coconut been through a hurricane together. A sharp fellow, this pineapple. And some time the orange and lemon grow so heavy, the

tree lean over and groan."

There were trees that Marian had never seen before--avocado, mango, papaya. She caught Matthew's enthusiasm and examined them closely. Everywhere, there was color--the yellow of the Jerusalem candle tree, the delicate blue of the lignum vitae bloom, the henna-berried annatto. Bougainvillea banked the gray house and hung in scarlet clusters from its eaves. The air was alive with butterflies.

"Where did you get so many beautiful things, Matthew?" asked Marian, thinking of her small garden at home and the hours spent in fighting crab grass and red clay.

"Hope Garden, mom. Every time there come trip to Kingston, there come trip to Hope Garden. They give everything," said Matthew, with evident pride over this British contribution to America.

"But, isn't that a long way to carry a tree, Matthew?"

"They little then, but they not so heavy, big--see." He slipped a machete out of his belt, with a few strokes cut down a banana tree and lifted it to his shoulder.

"Oh," cried Marian stepping back as the tree fell. "Should you have done that?"

"No worry, Mistress, banana tree grow fresh every year."

"Well, I didn't know that," said Marian relieved. "And what is this flower?" She stopped to examine a tall plant whose white blossoms hung like porcelain bells against the black-green foliage.

"I call her White Lady Flower. When wild orchids come, they beautiful, but no sweet smell. When night come, this Lady Flower open wide and smell sweet 'til the hot sun wilt her down."

"How interesting," said Marian pulling one of the half-closed blooms toward her. "It has a wonderful fragrance, so delicate." She stood looking up at the slender flowers. They reminded her of the feeling she always had at Easter, a feeling of renewed hope and joy in the promise of continuing life.

"Yes, mom," Matthew was saying, "but some things beautiful have danger inside." He lifted his finger warningly. "The Mistress must take care. Over here is old mon ackee tree." He reached up and plucked a burnished fruit from the heavy canopy of glossy leaves. "This good only one time. If time not right, mon get sick. If time right--Massa! ackee and codfish make a fine dish. . . Humph, what you doin' here?" Matthew picked up a wasp that had lit on the fruit.

"Matthew! You'll be stung," said Marian feeling mingled concern and admiration.

"Not old Matthew," he chuckled, "I got the charm."

Marian watched him as he let the wasp crawl over his hand and fly away. "I think you had better pass your secret on to me. There was a lizard on my screen this morning."

"Lizard nice old fellow, Mistress," said Matthew in a comforting tone. "He don't mind your bein' here. And old Brer Frog come right in the house sometime, but he just jump and set."

"What about snakes, Matthew?"

"No snakes in Jamaica, mom. Old mongoose run 'em out. But the Mistress must keep away from scorpion. He mean old codger. He bite to kill--like alligator. Must shake shoes every time. Scorpion love to hide in toe."



Marian dabbed the perspiration from her face. Could scorpions hide in open-toed shoes, she wondered. She felt a little faint. The white cotton dress, which had been crisp as iceberg lettuce when she put it on, was growing damp and limp in the steaming heat.

Matthew looked at her solicitously. "The Mistress better go in house now. This sun mighty hot. When blood thin down, everything be all right."

During the thinning process, there were days when Marian knew that she would have to be picked up on a stretcher from the floor of the Commissary or Post Exchange. She learned to carry salt tablets, lie down for a while after a bath, take a siesta and live to the hum of electric fans. . . . But always after the breathless heat of the day, came the night like the touch of a cool hand on her forehead, sleep under a blanket with the sound of heavy dew falling on the broad-leaved shrubs outside the unglassed window. Always at sunset a breeze blew in from the sea, swaying the giant palms against the star-crowded sky.

It was because of these nights that Marian was able to bear with grace the endless routine of receiving callers, accepting military must-do's, seeing that the guest house was always ready for visiting V.I.P.'s who dropped out of the air on five minutes notice by radio. She had lost count of the times that Sara had said, "Telephone please, Mistress," and the message had been: "General So-and-so's plane is five minutes out. He and his Aide will be here for the night;" or, "Four Congressmen are arriving in twenty minutes for an indefinite stay." One Colonel and his party had eaten Thanksgiving dinner at 1:00 in Puerto Rico and at 8:00 in Jamaica. The whole crew of a Dutch Air Lines plane

had been entertained for three days while the weather cleared and the Brigadier who was aboard recovered from his first flight in a storm.

Sara relieved Marian of many household duties and performed them with artistry. "Why mend?" thought Marian. "Sara's mending looks like professional reweaving, and a caterer at home couldn't touch her cooking." Matthew never stopped from early morning until night. Marian often watched him out the window, washing Jock as if he were a car and talking to him as if he were a human being, polishing brass for the visitors, carrying clothes back and forth to be pressed, cleaning wild duck, handling a live lobster and finally getting back to his gardening with enthusiasm. She had ordered seed by air mail for him: they had watched them burst from the rich soil and grow to maturity in ten days.

It was while she and Matthew were admiring the latest horticultural success, one perfect bloom on the Etoile de Hollande, that three V.I.P.'s arrived with no notice whatsoever. An Investigating Committee from Washington. "Yes, I feel sure we can handle it," Marian told the Executive Officer over the telephone. "I don't believe my husband would have postponed this trip to San Juan even if he had known they were coming. It has something to do with the welfare of his men. Have his driver bring them over as soon as they like."

The Committee wasted little time in arriving and still less in tossing off a number of Jamaican favorites. After being shown to the guest house where Sara was to serve their meals, they were not heard from until the next afternoon, when Mr. Mims appeared in the back yard. He had seemed the official spokesman for the group, so Marian had jotted down some information that she thought would be of interest to him. She

had gotten up an hour earlier than usual and rehearsed it, aloud, under the shower that morning. She stood at the window and watched him as he walked unsteadily across the yard to the rose bed where Matthew was working. His face was flushed, his voice loud.

"So this is Jamaica," he said, snapping off the Etoile de Hollande bud and sticking it in his buttonhole after several tries.

Matthew looked up in silent protest.

"Is this all you lazy rascals can do for the war effort--putter around in a garden?"

Marian winced and gripped the window sill as Matthew slowly got to his feet. "Cuss-cuss no bore hole in my skin--sir."

"None of that foreign talk. Come along and show me what you got here--and leave that damn dog behind. I don't like the way he looks at me."

"Dawg hab liberty to watch a Gov'ner, don't he?"

"No more of that back talk," said the visitor, swaying as he leaned heavily on his walking stick. "Now, what do we have here?" He beat the low branches of an ackee tree with his cane.

Marian walked to the back door with clenched fists. . . . No--it was better for her to stay out of this: it would be less embarrassing. She heard Matthew cry, "Take care, take care!" and ran back to the window.

A swarm of wasps shot out of the tree with the speed of pursuit planes. Mr. Mims stood for a moment, flailing his arms against their angry attack, turned to retreat, stumbled over his cane, fell flat. Matthew was quick to the rescue. He dropped to his knees beside the flabby victim, waving his arms gently. When he stood up, both arms

were a mass of milling wasps. Matthew walked back to the ackee tree. Slowly, the wasps returned to its dense foliage. Mr. Mims got to his feet with Matthew's help. He turned as if to let loose a blast of invective. Kicked his cane into the air. Grabbed his nose, which was fast emerging from the doughy flesh of his face. Ran zigzag toward the guest house.

From the window where Marian still stood, spell-bound, she could barely hear Matthew's comment: "No matter how drunk cockroach get, he don't walk by fowl yard." With effort, she controlled a rash impulse to applaud Matthew--and the wasps. She felt no concern whatsoever for Mr. Mims--his even living to get back to Washington. She whirled from the window and started toward the garden. "Cockroach," she muttered, tingling with the fury of vicarious combat.

After two weeks of steady rain, Marian sat on the verandah, enjoying the fresh green outdoors as the sun broke through, promising fair weather again. There was a knock at the door; two M.P.'s appeared.

"Mrs. Etheridge, we have orders to leave these," said one of the Sergeants, placing an odd assortment of things on the window seat.

"But--what--?"

"Here's the sheet of instructions, ma'm." With a hasty "Good day," they were gone.

Marian examined the lengthy page in her hand. It read: REGULATIONS ON PRECAUTIONS AGAINST MALARIA. She sat down and read it through. It sounded serious. Why hadn't Donald told her about this?

"I didn't want to alarm you," he said in answer to her round of

questions that night. "It's one of the things we discussed in San Juan-- new treatment for malaria. After the rainy season, there is always danger of an epidemic. There are already a number of cases outside the Base. Some of our workmen live off the reservation and that makes it difficult. We can more or less control things here if every one will take these precautions."

So the routine became one of spraying the quarters three times a day, sleeping under mosquito nets, rubbing all exposed parts of the body with insect repellent. For those from outlying districts, there were prescribed doses of quinine or atabrine. As the disease grew to epidemic proportions in the villages at the edge of the Base, planes flew over, raining a heavy spray of D.D.T. on the entire area. For days, everything smelled and tasted of kerosene. Butterflies and wasps fell to the ground, dead; birds flew feebly away. The garden looked as if it had been caught in the grip of some sudden blight.

It was not until Matthew had been taken to the hospital that the M. P.'s checked his quarters and found the mosquito net folded just as it had been delivered, the seal on the D.D.T. bomb, unbroken.

"What could he have been thinking of?" said Colonel Etheridge, impatiently. "He's always had ideas of his own, but it's not like him to disobey orders so flagrantly."

"Oh, Donald, it may be my fault," said Marian in a tone of self-reproach.

"Your fault? How in the world could--?"

"It's just that I have probably encouraged Matthew in thinking that he led a charmed life. Perhaps he has become too sure of it. It

was simply amazing the way he handled those wasps the day that--that man from Washington was here. The day after that, he even brushed a scorpion off the kitchen wall with his bare hands and was about to pick it up when Sara killed it with the broom. He does have some sort of--"

"He's had what I call luck," said her husband cutting off the fan, "or he would never have lived through being a bird boy, certainly not with all his arms and legs. He's dodged the old Anopheles a long time, but the count today was really alarming. The planes are spraying again tomorrow."

"What count, Donald?" Marian moved to the edge of her chair.

"Do you mean deaths?"

"No, not that. There's nothing a mosquito loves more than a donkey. In fact, any animal draws them, but donkeys are immune to malaria. We have a number of screened pens, put a donkey in each one over night, spray the traps in the morning and count the dead anopheles-- not the dead men, dear." He reached over and patted her hand. "I came by the hospital on the way home, and things don't look good."

Marian asked the question she had been putting off. "Donald, how is Matthew?"

"He's worse. Bleeding some through the skin."

"Dear God!" said Marian, pacing the floor. "Isn't there anything we can do?"

"Nothing more. We've tried quinine and atabrine. That's all there is--to date. Matthew isn't the only critical case in the hospital. There are thirty-five. I suppose we're lucky at that. There were 1900 cases in Trinidad one year. . . I'd better check by the hospital before I turn in."

"May I go?" asked Marian.

"No, dear, no," said Donald with sudden sternness. "You are to stay out of this. I don't want you to take any risk. There's too much--" He stopped suddenly, picked up his pipe, dropped it back on the table noisily. "Besides, Jock is on duty--right outside the door. I told the Mess Sergeant just to feed him there."

"Donald," said Marian as if dreading the answer, "could Jock have--have drawn the mosquitos to Matthew's quarters?"

"Well--"

"Oh, Donald, Jock wouldn't have been here if Matthew hadn't brought him to me."

"There, there now, Marnie, if it wasn't Jock, it would have been something worse probably. Last year it was a goat. . . How about taking an order for two tall juleps, frosted--remember?" Donald picked up his head net and canvas gauntlets. "I'll be back shortly."

It took several days for Marian to make up her mind to take things in her own hands and visit Matthew. Anyhow, Donald had told her at dinner the night before that things were "looking up": that Matthew was better and that orders had come for a momentary transfer to Antilles Headquarters before going home. They might be leaving on very short notice. . . She walked down the long corridor of the hospital, breathing hard against the heavy odor of disinfectants. An orderly answered her knock on the door of room 58, marked NO VISITORS. Matthew turned his head toward her and smiled wanly. How could he have shrunk so in such a short time? She placed a vase of roses by his bed. His fever-bright eyes said a mute "Thank you, mom." He made an effort to sit up and fell back weakly,

as if perplexed by this strange thing that had happened to him.

"Matthew, we are so happy that you are better." But how could he be, thought Marian, seeing the ghastly color of his skin.

"Thank you, Mistress," he said in a hoarse whisper.

"You must be more careful, Matthew. It looks as if mosquitoes can give you almost as much trouble as--as scorpions," said Marian with a forced smile.

"But Jock play with 'squitoes--while Matthew sleep. . . I tell him the charm and--"

"Yes, Matthew, but--" Marian stopped short. She couldn't destroy his faith now in something that had been his creed for sixty years.

"Just promise me that you will take better care of yourself. We may be leaving soon and--"

"Oh, please mom--" A shadow passed over his face.

"Oh, we'll be coming back, and we'll expect to find you right here keeping things beautiful." Marian tried to control the tremor in her voice. "Then--some day you may come to the States and make a garden for us. Would you like that?"

There was a hint of the old twinkle in his eyes as he nodded his head.

"I'd better go now, Matthew."

"Good--bye, Mistress. Matthew wish you the bloom of the year." His eyes followed her as she left the room.

Orders came that night for them to leave at 10:30 the following day. There was little for Marian to do the next morning. Sara had done an expert job of packing. There was still an hour before time for the



plane to leave. Marian stood looking out the window, turned suddenly and picked up the telephone receiver. The hospital line was busy. Her fingers tapped the top of the table nervously. The vase was still there, empty, which had held the white spray orchids. She tried the line again--still busy. . . . If she hurried, there was still time to go by the hospital just to be sure that-- She started toward the door and stopped. Her husband was coming up the front steps.

"Donald," said Marian, pouring him his second cup of coffee, which he had not waited for earlier, "are you sure there is nothing more we can do for Matthew?"

"Absolutely, Marian. We couldn't have done more for the President of the United States. In spite of it all, he has gone into another cycle with--Marian his fingers are white as yours, and his nails blue as--"

"Oh, Donald, he looked so pitiful, lying there with--"

"You mean--you've been to the hospital?"

"Certainly," said Marian calmly.

"You shouldn't have taken that chance."

"You've taken some chances, Donald. You left a profession that you had bet your future on and volunteered for duty in the Pacific when--"

"All right, all right, Marnie. You win, and I might as well tell you--there is no hope for Matthew. Sorry, dear."

Marian set down her coffee cup and walked to the window.

"I'll be back for you in thirty minutes. I have some papers to turn over to the new C.O. His plane is due in ten minutes." Donald

picked up his brief case and hurried back to the waiting car.

Marian put on her hat without looking in the mirror, picked up her gloves with numb fingers and started down the steps into the back yard. "Call me when Colonel Etheridge returns, please, Sara." Everything in the garden was fighting its way back to life after the paralyzing baptism of spray from the planes. A few pale blue butterflies hovered over the clematis that Matthew had helped her plant. A scarlet tanager darted past and was lost in the seared bloom of a poinciana tree. . . . "The Colonel please, Mistress." Sara's voice seemed to come from miles away. Marian turned slowly. As she went back to the house, she passed the White Lady Flower. Its last blossom had fallen to the ground, crumpled and brown, but underneath the sombre foliage, tiny new buds were showing.