

wildly pounding onrush of flying figures.

"See you later, Lady Bountiful," Tom sarcastically muttered as he stood up a bit unsteadily and walked out of the box. Ellen tried to ignore his accusing look. She realized he still might have enough money to head for the bar, or perhaps he hoped at this last minute to run into someone near the ticket windows who would lend him money to bet on this last race. She found it really no longer mattered.

## Market Day

David W. Heard

T IRED of sitting in the loaded fruit truck, Jonathan decided to join the chattering throngs of labourers milling through the huge open-air market. The bedlam of different tongues rising high in the air seemed to float away with the combining odors of men, animals, and the clear sweet smell of freshly picked grapes.

As he turned through the old, seldom used packing shed, Jonathan's entrance brought a sudden stillness over a group of talking men. The pungent sickly aroma of *dagga* assailed his nostrils as he walked in. His heavy farm boots ringing loudly on the floor made him think of the absurdity of why the gang of labourers should suddenly quiet at the sight of a white man. Even if they were smoking the illegal drug *dagga*, he was not the law anyhow. The pregnant silence was broken by a sudden vehement curse in Basuto.

"White man, my knife is yours today!"

Jonathan, turning quickly, noted that the gang of loafers had split fast in anticipation of a fight, some blocking the sun-lit door through which his safety lay, others forming behind the leader like vultures awaiting the kill. Involuntarily backing towards the wall for what little protection it offered, he recognized the leader as a tall, lean mulatto with a badly pock-marked face who had been fired from his farm several months ago as a trouble-maker and habitual drug addict.

Unarmed he saw the futility of trying to bluff his way out. This would have to be a quick knifing so they could scatter into the crowds for protection.

The mulatto, his pupils contracted to pinpoints and blind with the evil smoke, mouthed venomous curses as he sawed the air with a razor-sharp packing knife, stirring himself up into the killing frenzy. Jonathan jerked back fast as the knife came across at his ribs in a feinting slash. The mulatto, arms shoulder high for the next deadly thrust, stiffened as a light thud stilled him for a second. His eyes and head lowered to look at his left armpit. The sight of a slim

hilted throwing knife deeply embedded in his chest wall broke the spell. With a fleeting rush of feet the vultures fled, and the huge figure of Jonathan's faithful *baas-boy* Zambie appeared from the far doorway. Shakingly Jonathan knelt by the side of the writhing man. The shadow of death had dispelled all the clouds of madness from the stricken man's eyes. The writhing stopped as his eyes focused on the kneeling white man's face.

In his native tongue he said quietly, "I was a fool to forget the shadow always behind you."

His next breath ended with blood welling out of his mouth in a crimson gush, staining his dirty shirt and coarsely matted chest hairs.

Jonathan straightened up. "Go find a policeman, Zambie," he ordered quietly.

"Yes, Bwana," Zambie said, plucking loose his murderous knife and carefully wiping off the blood on the dead man's trousers.

## Childhood

Diane S. Masters

**A**UNT JEAN lived in the country, and Connie was visiting her and Uncle Joe for a whole week. Better than that, Durbin was coming, and Aunt Jean had said he would arrive just any minute.

Connie sat down on the long narrow front porch and looked around the yard. She loved everything about the farm: the big maple trees in the front yard, the smell of the clover fields and the fresh hay, the bright blue sky with its puffy clouds, the warm foamy milk Uncle Joe squirted into her mouth when he milked Ol' Jersey.

Something cold and hard poked her hand, and she felt a gentle thumping on her leg.

"Hi, Poochie."

Girl and dog exchanged solemn brown-eyed glances. Poochie turned around and nudged Connie with his rump. Obediently, the girl scratched and rubbed the dog's back. Pooch thanked her with a wet lick and ran off after an imaginary rabbit. Connie sighed.

"Guess I'll count birds 'til Aunt Margaret brings Durb," she murmured.

Presently a cloud of dust warned her of their arrival. She jumped up and ran to the sidedoor. "Aunt Jean! Aunt Jean! He's here!" she yelled, and without waiting for a reply, she ran to the gate.

Durbin hopped out of the car, lugging his suitcase and waving goodbye to his mother. He dropped the bag beside the pump and greeted his cousin.

"Hi, cuz."