

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Three Star Hennessy.

Mann, Klaus

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It's no fun to have dinner by yourself. You don't enjoy your food without company, particularly in a restaurant, and there is something embarrassing about listening to the conversations going on at the other tables. You don't want to overhear them, of course; but you just can't help it. For, curiously enough, even the most futile talk between two people whom you have never seen before and will never see again, is somehow more attractive than a magazine or a paper.

You may be struck by a voice before you have a chance to catch the first glimpse of the face to which that voice belongs. Those two women, for instance, were at first nothing but two voices -- the mellow and kindly speech of a stolid matron and the penetrating whisper of a younger woman.

The older suggested, in a friendly, conversational tone; "You'll find things in Boston much less changed than they are here, in New York." Whereupon the younger voice, glum and drowsy: "I don't think New York has much changed since I saw it last."

"Eleven years is a long time," observed the old voice, somewhat cryptically. And the young one: "Eleven years? It seems so much longer to me. . . Let's see. . . 1925. . . . I left for France in '25."

"Exactly," confirmed the old cadences, adding with a certain tender pedantry: "But you've been here twice since that time. Once in '28 and then, of course, the '29 trip."

"Why do you say, 'of course?'"

"I'll always remember how your poor mother died." The sonorous organ was shaking with sad memories and disapproval of the younger woman's lack of them.

The brighter voice sounded rather nonplussed as it exclaimed, hastily and a bit too loud: "Of course, how silly I am! I came just too late for the funeral. . . ." There was an abrupt little giggle as if at a funny incident. I didn't like the chuckle and then, all of a sudden, the stillness. I finished my whisky and turned my head to have a look. The two ladies were sitting fairly close to me. I could easily watch them

when I turned my head just a little bit to the right.

The older woman - stately and in her middle sixties - was dressed all in white which gave her appearance a touch of solemn serenity -- something almost priest-like. She looked ^{mv}evitably cool and immaculate. The place was not air-conditioned and it was hot outside -- one of those summer nights in New York when the vast masses of towered stones seem to exhale the accumulated glow of the day like tremendous stoves.

The matron looked dignified and a trifle quaint; but there was something surprising, almost frightening about her younger companion. That black costume of hers certainly was a queer sort of a dress to wear -- completely bare of any adornment and conspicuously tight. The attractive fragility of her body was displayed, with a kind of austere shamelessness, under the supple stuff. Her little hat was unexpectedly saucy -- a coquettish cap made of a hard, lustrous material, almost metallic: it crowned the disquieting pallor of her face with a tiny helmet. She looked at once weary and aggressive -- half like a worn-out Amazon, half like a pugnacious nun.

Both women seemed utterly out of place in this cheap restaurant full of clamorous, sweating men. Besides, it was rather late -- long after the regular dinner hour, about ten-thirty or so. A bunch of sailors were having a good time at the bar. Their savage laughter drowned all the other voices. It was just when the hilarity of the sailors reached its climax that I heard the voice of the younger woman again-- struggling with a sort of desperate energy, against the detonations of so much violent joy. "My" she exclaimed -- and, even without looking at her I knew the wry smile distorting her pallid lips. "Aren't we gay!" She seemed exceedingly irritated.

"They are young," the old lady observed apologetically. And she added with tender reproach: "I warned you not to come here, Catherine. It's not the right kind of a place for you. It's vulgar."

Catherine, swiftly and angrily: "It's a lot better anyway than your so-called swanky restaurants."

"Well, I thought you might prefer French food -- that's all." The old lady kept smiling but obviously was a trifle hurt.

"French food - in New York!" Catherine jerked ~~h~~ with despise. The tone of her voice was scathing - so utterly scornful, indeed, that even the good-natured matron seemed irritated. "I am sorry we are not in Paris," she said, rather coldly. - "So am I," Catherine flashed back.

There was a silence - dismal and apprehensive.

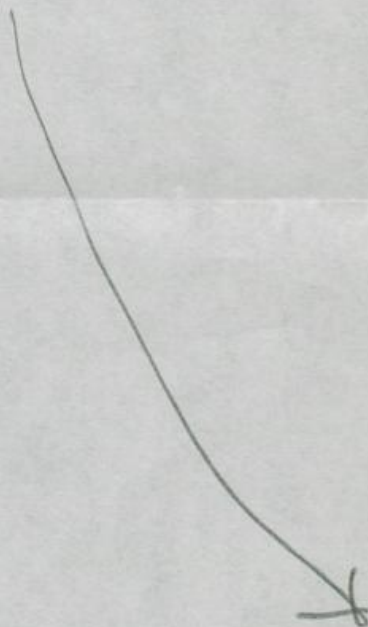
I felt like another whiskey. But the waiter didn't come when I called him. I was busy writing down the orders of the two women.

"Don't you care for dessert?" the older one asked, in that tenderly reproachful voice of hers.

"No, Aunt Jane. Thank you ever so much. Not apple pie with cheese." And then, rather abruptly, with a sharp turn of ~~the~~^{her} head towards the waiter: "Do you have any cognac?"

As the waiter didn't understand what was meant, Aunt Jane explained to him - all indulgence and motherly dignity: "Brandy, young man! The lady wants to know if you have any brandy."

He blushed and stammered. "Why... Yes... of course, Ma'am.. We have a domestic



~~the~~ brandy. . . Very good stuff, they say. . . ."

Catherine interrupted him sharply: "I want a Three Star Hennessy, or nothing." And the old woman added, with a reconciliatory smile: "The lady wants an imported brandy, young man. Would you be good enough to ask the bartender if he has any French brandy left."

The waiter rushed to the bar, winged with zeal to please that severe and exotic lady. "Here we are," he beamed, still panting, his forehead moist with sweat. "And it's a real imported too. The last bottle we've got, No more Hennessy now. No sir. The Nazis are getting tight on all that French champagne over there." He had an abrupt, bellowing laugh, as though surprised by his own daring.

Catherine gave him one of her swift, piercing glances. "Ca suffit," she said in an icy voice.

The huge fellow was rather frightened. "Do you care for a pony?" he asked and took a stiff little bow..

"A pony?" She seemed strangely irked, even offended by this expression as though it meant an indecent proposition.

"Why, we serve drinks or ponies," he tried to explain, with a helpless grin. "A pony is a small drink. A drink is a double pony."

"A drink, then, I should say!" Catherine shrugged her shoulders; her voice was shaking with contempt and impatience.

When she had emptied her glass-- it took her just a few seconds - she demanded another one: "But no pony, if you please!" she warned the waiter, a little more graciously.

"I've just come from France," she observed, while he poured the golden liquid into her glass.

"Yes, Ma'am."

"I am very fond of Hennessy," she continued. "My husband, too, was very

fond of it. It was his favorite brand."

There was a musing tenderness in her voice. The waiter didn't know what to say. Catherine lifted the glass as for a solemn toast. "He is dead," she informed the waiter, always with that hazy, oblivious smile. "Yes, he was a pilot. Has been killed by the boches."

"Yes, Ma'am."

She had emptied the glass.

"Another one," she said softly, looking very proud and absent-minded.

This time she drank slowly, tasting and enjoying every drop. It was only when she had finished that she turned to Aunt Jane again. "Gaston was really fond of this stuff," she said, as though the old lady had questioned it.

"I know," Aunt Jane nodded, mildly.

But for some reason this harmless remark annoyed her irritable niece.

"What's wrong about it?" Catherine snapped. "All Frenchmen feel the same way. In fact, most civilized people do," she concluded pugnaciously.

There was another one of those stone-like silences. Finally Aunt Jane said: "You aren't in a very good mood tonight, Catherine. I am sorry. Don't you think we'd better go?"

"Let me have one more fine!" Catherine begged, with a pathetic effort to look like a spoiled, cute little girl. "Just one tiny little glass!" she cooed -- while Aunt Jane bent her face in silent resignation.

After this new refreshment the young widow grew nostalgic and alarmingly gentle. "You are so sweet and patient, Auntie," she sighed, and tried to catch the old lady's hand. "Don't be cross with me, please! Please, darling Auntie, tell me that you are not cross!"

"Of course not," the old lady suddenly looked very tired as if exhausted by a long, hopeless struggle. "Why should I be cross with you? I would like to go now, that's all."

Without paying any attention to Aunt Jane's request, Catherine continued

to accuse herself in a whining, unsteady voice: "I hate to be such a bore! Do you think I don't know what a bore I am. how I must get on your nerves? I am making such an ass of myself!"

"Don't be silly!" the old lady said. "You don't get on my nerves at all. But it is pitiful to watch you torment yourself. Couldn't you try to forget Paris and the war and your poor husband, just for a little while?"

"How could I ever forget those things?" Catherine had a wide, unfocussed look into space. "They are my life. I don't want to forget them. They are all I have."

"But now you are here, Catherine!" the old woman reminded her in an imploring voice. "This is your life, Catherine! This is your country, your future!"

"Is it indeed my country?" It sounded pensive and sorrowful rather than bitter. She seemed to wait for an answer; but while Aunt Jane mumbled something about the necessity of adapting oneself to the actual conditions of life, Catherine continued her plaintive monologue. "Here, in America, things have no life, no substance. They don't smell, they don't suffer. There is no authentic joy nor is there authentic drama, because there is no history, no tradition. If one has lived in Paris. . ."

"That's enough!" The old lady assumed an attitude of forbidding majesty. "I don't want to hear about Paris any more! Do you understand me, Catherine? I am fed up with Paris."

Her indignation was so vehement and absorbing that she even failed to notice Catherine's secret conspiracy with the waiter.

"What's your name, my friend?" Catherine whispered. He was surprised and flattered. "Carl", he grinned.

He was a good-natured fellow - ungainly and tall, with a blank, healthy face. He was of Swedish descent and came from the Middle West.

Nothing could be more preposterous - said Aunt Jane - than the European arrogance of certain Americans who had spent a few years "over there". She asked her niece what, in her opinion, was so impressive and admirable about the French defeat

and the political system that had led to this shameful collapse.

Carl, meanwhile, had understood that the lady in black wanted another drink. While he refilled her glass, the old lady exclaimed: "After all it's not a very inspiring spectacle your grande nation is giving the world! Not what I would call a very great performance!"

Catherine sipped her cognac, gazing thoughtfully into the glass. "If you are right," she observed at last, with ominous casualness, "if what you say is correct, Aunt Jane -- and I suppose it is -- then Gaston has died in vain."

It was pathetic to watch how the old lady's face paled and became motionless. She was profoundly embarrassed. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, Catherine, dearest," she stammered. I was afraid she was going to burst into tears.

"It's all right," said Catherine, without a smile. "Forget it." She emptied her glass, then continued: "There's nothing wrong about what you've just said. Do you really believe I didn't know all these things? Sometimes I am afraid that Gaston might have known them as well. . . ."

For one moment she covered her eyes with a trembling hand as if to banish an unbearable vision. "What do you think is it that haunts and torments me so?" she asked, her brow still hidden behind the delicate lattice of her shaking fingers. "It's not that I lost Gaston. I was very happy with him. It couldn't last. I always knew I would lose him. He was a pilot, and he loved his profession almost as much as he loved me. I tried to be as courageous as he always was. Yes, I tried very hard. . . ."

She took her hand from her eyes; they were blinded and widened with fear. "I tried to be brave," she said. "But I really was half dead with terror -- during all those years. I was scared stiff, every time he left me. I wonder if you can imagine what I went through, Aunt Jane. . . . When he made that crazy expedition to Africa and I had no word from him for weeks -- do you have any idea what that means, Aunt Jane?"

There was a little pause. The young woman in mourning was sitting very erect: the expression of her face had altered. What a strange transformation, under the saucy crown of her coquettish and militant hat! A flash of white light animated her features. Her smile was radiant with pride as she continued:

"But when the war came, there was no fear any more. For he believed in the cause he was called to fight for. Many of his friends did not believe in it, but he did, and so did I. Yes, both of us believed in France -- passionately, without questioning. We were so firmly convinced that France would fight and conquer, and lead the suffering peoples of Europe to a better future. Sometimes I had certain doubts, but I thought I ought to suppress them -- for the sake of Gaston. It was only when he was dead, and when I re-read his letters, hundreds of times, until I knew all of them by heart: it was only then that I began to wonder if he, perhaps, had been thinking the same things, and had been haunted by the same qualms and the same apprehension, and had sacrificed his life -- knowing that it was in vain; and had died hopeless and faithless and bitterly disillusioned."

"Poor child." Aunt Jane was profoundly moved. "Poor Catherine," she said.

Poor little Catherine had a short, nasal laugh: it was scathing. Then she turned the upper part of her body, with a savage provocative motion. "Gargon!" she cried, and her voice was so shrill that it attracted attention, even in this clamorous place. People began to look at her and to grin.

She turned very angry as Carl lingered in a distant corner of the restaurant. "Gargon! Est-ce que vous êtes sourd?" she shouted. "Merde alors!" Whereupon the old lady writhed as if smitten by a convulsive aching. "Catherine! Please!" she whimpered. But her niece, wanton and merciless as a naughty child, repeated at the top of her voice: "Merde - merde - merde alors!" -- "I only hope that no one understands French in this place!" sighed Aunt Jane.

Carl had an anxious grin as he presented the bottle - humbly and apologetically, as one offers a due tribute to a capricious tyrant. "Another pony, Ma'am?"

he asked with awkward irony.

Catherine said in an ominously lowered voice: "Give me the bottle."

He hesitated, grinned, didn't know what to do.

"Give me the bottle!" she repeated piercing him with terrifying looks.

"Why . . . Ma'am. . .," he stammered. "If you care for another drink, lady, I'll be only too glad. . ."

"How do you dare?!" Catherine hissed, her face taut with fury.

"Catherine! Please!" Aunt Jane raised her hands, with a theatrical gesture, and wrung them near Catherine's stiff face. "Let's go, darling! Please don't make a scene!"

"I am not going to make a scene," the young widow declared with that forced dignity characteristic of women in that stage of intoxication preceding the total collapse. "Just let me handle this little affair myself. - Thank you. I appreciate it," she added with a frozen, absent-minded smile.

"Which affair, for God's sake?" the old lady groaned.

"This young man understands me perfectly well." She darted murderous glances. "He's a spy," she concluded softly, with terrifying gentleness.

"Why... lady ..." His mouth sagged wide open. He was completely perplexed.

"Do you deny it, young man?" She looked her arms across her chest.

"I don't know what you mean," he finally managed to say.

"Is that so?" She emphasized every syllable of her rhetorical question while her merciless eyes examined his purple face. "I'll tell you what I mean - you scoundrel!" she shouted with a sudden outburst of anger. "Your name is Carl, isn't it?" She jumped up from her chair and made three strides towards him. "Isn't it?" she repeated facing him from menacing proximity.

He nodded, dumbfounded with surprise - whereupon she gave a hoarse, triumphant laugh. "A German name!" she exclaimed with a slight turn of her head as if addressing an imaginary audience. "Exactly what I anticipated. - The case is only too obvious,"

she concluded with a restrained but expressive gesture. "Carl, the waiter, is guilty of Fifth Column activities and high treason." She made a stiff little bow - paying homage to a martial court that she had just convinced of the defendant's culpability.

Then her knees gave way; she tottered. Carl held her up with an automatic politeness and guided her to a chair. As soon as she was seated she re-assumed her menacing attitude. "My bottle!" she demanded, while the old lady whimpered: "Catie! Child! Don't you realize what you are doing to me! Stop it! Please! Ah! the scandal! the shame!"

"Cut it out!" the young widow interrupted her, merciless and rude. It was only now that Aunt Jane began to weep -- noiselessly and without hiding her face. "We have to get up at seven o'clock tomorrow!" she mumbled, while tiny tears like pearls adomed the extensive plain of her wrinkled face. "Don't you remember! The eight o'clock train! Our dates in Boston!"

"My bottle!" Catherine repeated - and suddenly she snatched the bottle from Carl who was just making a clumsy attempt to hide it behind his back.

She had the bottle; she beamed and triumphed; she caressed it, rocked it in her lap as if she had regained her beloved baby after a long period of cruel separation. "Mon chou!" she whispered pressing her cheeks and lips tenderly against the cool curvature of the amber-colored glass. "Mon chou - fleur! Ma petite bouteille!"

There was a little sucking noise when her mouth embraced the round opening. She took slow, heavy gulps out of the bottle which she held with both hands, almost in a right angle from her relaxing face.

People began to gather around her. Laughter and ironic applause accompanied the scene. Sailors, waiters and girls gloated on Catherine's degradation. "She sure can take it," observed one of the sailors, and the whole crowd guffawed. A girl with a face like a glaring mask said in a pointed, malicious voice: "The merry widow. Isn't

she a honey!"

In the midst of the general uproar I heard Aunt Jane groaning: "What a scandal! My Lord! How do we get out of here! Oh, my Lord!"

It was at this moment that Catherine began to sing. At first it was only a humming noise; but gradually it grew stronger as though she were trying to drown Aunt Jane's monotonous jeremiads. Catherine sang in a strangely colourless voice -- the upper part of her body swaying with the rhythm of the tune.

"Valencia, tu es une fille strange. . ."

Her face remained pale and motionless -- frozen in a sort of cold and cruel ecstasy.

"Savez-vous planter des choux -- à la mode de chez nous. . . À la mode, à la mode. . ."

One of the sailors knew a little French. His vigorous bass joined Catherine's shrill soprano. Others chimed in -- girls, sailors, and waiters.

"J'ai deux amours -- mon pays et Paris. . ."

"She has always been different. . ." The old lady talked to me - surprisingly enough. Her distress and terror were such that she forgot all about her fine, reserved manners, her dignified New England attitude. Her eyes widened with anguish, she chattered to a man at another table - a man she had never seen before: a stranger who had been tactless enough to overhear her conversation - unfortunate enough to witness the macabre misbehaviour of her eccentric niece. "Catherine is so different" my poor sister used to say to me. . . She died many years ago when Catherine already was abroad . . . to study music - so she said. . ." Aunt Jane laughed bitterly and had a twinkle in her eyes as if she wanted to intimate that, in her opinion, the music lessons were nothing but an obvious pretext for all kinds of loose and sordid goings-on.

"Mais je l'aime! c'est mon homme!" Catherine's voice sounded shriller than ever before: it was a yelling rather than a singing. "He's my ma-an" repeated the chorus drawing the last word with an outburst of sensual enthusiasm.

Aunt Jane, meanwhile, continued to address her desperate whisper to me: "I disapproved of it from the very beginning. . . A young girl - alone in Paris! Think of the temptations! .. the vicious foreigners! ... But Catherine refused to come back ... Said she couldn't stand America. What nonsense! After all, she is an American girl. Why should she spend her life in Montparnasse cafés drinking Hennessy and all sorts of ugly things? Why should she, if you please?"

The old lady made a dramatic pause as if she expected me to reply. But I didn't know what to say and only shrugged my shoulders, while the thundering chorus intoned, It's a long way to Tipperary. Catherine had apparently regained her physical energies. Now she jumped on a chair to conduct the singing mob from this elevated position. Aunt Jane preferred to ignore this new and most shocking development. Moving a little closer to me, the upper part of her body bent forward, she sighed and talked and sobbed with a sort of sorrowful intimacy. "And then, that marriage!" she said. "A daughter of Patricia Ferguson - and some unknown little Frenchman! Think of it!"

"We built a little home - just made for two. . ." Catherine's voice radiated with savage jubilation.

"And a pilot of all things!" Aunt Jane shook her head: the fact of Catherine's French husband having been a pilot seemed more inconceivable to her than anything else.

This was the Marseillaise: Catherine sang it alone - standing very erect on her fragile platform, brandishing the empty bottle as a weapon or a banner.

"Allons, enfants de la Patrie. . ."

As only a few sporadic voices responded, she stopped and held her open hand behind her ear with that humorous gesture typical of certain popular chansonniers who want their audience to chime in the refrain of their song. "What's the matter?" the merry widow asked, with a faked French accent. "I don't hear anything!" She made encouraging gestures; repeated the beginning of the anthem, and then paused again - not yet satisfied with the reaction.

"Mais c'est honteux!" she scolded. "Can't you open your mouth - you there? Fifth Column!"

It was Carl, the waiter, to whom she thus appealed. He blushed and tried to hide behind the back of a gigantic sailor. But Catherine, merry and relentless, didn't let him get away: she called him a coward, and a naughty boy, and insisted he had to sing. The crowd seemed highly amused by this gay performance. The sailors roared with laughter and pushed each other with their elbows to demonstrate how much they enjoyed the show. "She's O.K.," they declared. And others said, "She's nuts," or, "She's lots of fun." One of the girls added, full of interest and appreciation, "She's drunk as hell." Undoubtedly, Catherine was a considerable success.

Some colored boys who worked in the kitchen and had been attracted by the increasing noise, echoed the melody of the Marseillaise while they laughingly aped Catherine's bold and dramatic pose. I suddenly noticed a variety of new faces in the motley crowd: a little Chinese girl, two old men with long grizzly beards, a stout heavy woman talking very loud in Russian to a chubby little boy, several American soldiers arm in arm with a bunch of British mariners, a young lady in a gorgeous evening gown - conspicuously handsome, jealously guarded by an aging cavalier sweating in his tuxedo. I had no time to wonder whether all these people had joined our group from outside or had been sitting in this restaurant -- hidden in secret niches. However, here they were as by magic -- filling, overcrowding the scene, as does the chorus when it invades the stage in the pompous finale of an opera. But the noise they produced was not precisely what one may expect from a well-trained operatic ensemble. The magnificent and familiar tune of the Marseillaise was paraphrased, transformed, distorted in the most arbitrary fashion. Some of the singers improvised an absurd English text. Others just screamed and whistled, while again others shouted different songs - God Bless America or Old Man River or God Save the King.

It was an amazing scene -- a grand spectacle of sweeping drunkenness, crazy joy and savage fraternization. The men and women laid their arms around each other's

shoulders; they trampled and brayed and swung - shaken and winged by a sort of Dionysiac rapture. One of the soldiers kissed the Russian matron while a British sailor began to dance with the gorgeous girl -- very much to the vexation of her flabby companion.

Catherine -- an irresistible maenad - conducted and enchanted the crowd. She was alarmingly beautiful - transfigured in a sort of wild and aggressive trance. I looked at her, with delight and apprehension. What a disquieting goddess of intoxication! - the white flame of her face, crowned by the slanting helmet; the fumbling grandeur of her gestures; splendor and misery of her meagre body. Her mouth was wide open - a black hole in a tragic mask.

"Le jour de gloire est arrivé. . ."

Catherine's outcry - raucous and triumphant - soared beyond the chaotic noise. But now her voice faltered. I noticed, with painful surprise, that the shining pallor of her face could turn even more colorless. She staggered: in a moment or two she would fall. I felt that I ought to prop her, to protect her, to call for a doctor, the police; to do something....

But I remained motionless and speechless, - paralyzed with dread and pity and admiration. I didn't want to think of her inevitable collapse - not of Dr. Pelferton, the sanatorium, the nurses. Not now! Not while this tremendous moment still lasted -- the moment of the collective song, the general embrace, the bacchantic communion. Nor did I want to disturb her frenzied and ravishing pantomime -- the beatitude of her smile, the swinging motion of her spread-out arms - challenging and blessing the crowd which she united and dominated for one transient and miraculous second.

* * * *

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"Le jour de gloire est arrive. . ."

". . .always been a problem child. . .always different. . ." This was the bleak lament of the unhappy Aunt. Most of her words were swept away by the explosions of inspired clamor. ". . .If my poor sister were still alive to see this!.... What a disgrace! What a scandal! . . .Always something strange about her. . .streak of ~~it~~ vulgarity in her character. . .something morbid. . .Used to play with colored children . . . No dignity. . .sanatorium. . .Doctor Pelferton, old friend of the family. . .mental disorder. . .utterly embarrassing. . .disgrace. . ."

"Le jour de gloire. . ."

Catherine's outcry -- raucous and triumphant -- proved stronger than Aunt Jane's frantic whisper. But now her voice faltered. I noticed, with painful surprise, that the shining pallor of her face could turn even more colorless. She staggered: in a moment or two she would fall. I felt that I ought to prop her, to protect her, to cry for help: Doctor Pelferton! police! an emergency car to take her away, to a hospital. .

But I remained motionless and speechless -- paralyzed with dread and pity and admiration. I didn't want to think of her inevitable collapse -- not of Dr. Pelferton, g the sanatorium, the nurses. Not now! Not while this tremendous moment still lasted -- the moment of the collective song, the general embrace, the bacchantic communion. Nor did I want to disturb her frenzied and ravishing pantomime -- the beatitude of her smile, the swinging motion of her spread-out ~~of her~~ arms -- challenging and blessing the crowd which she united and dominated for one transient and miraculous second.



It's no fun to have dinner in a restaurant by yourself. You don't enjoy your food without company, and there is something depressing about sitting alone in the midst of a noisy crowd. What makes it so unpleasant is that you have to listen to the conversations going on at the other tables. You don't want to, of course; but you just can't help it. Curiously enough, even the most futile talk between two people whom you have never seen before and will never see again, is somehow more attractive than the reading of a paper. If they speak loudly you overhear automatically what they say - and if they begin to whisper you it makes you even more curious.

The two women irritated me because I couldn't catch a single word of their conversation. They were sitting fairly close to me, though. I could watch them when I turned my head just a little bit to the right. One of them looked matronly - a stolid lady in her sixties, very composed and serene. She was dressed all in white, which gave her appearance a touch of solemn innocence - something almost priest-like. There was, by the way, nothing really excentric about her immaculate white set-up. For it was, indeed, a pretty hot evening - one of those summer nights in New York when the vast masses of towered stones seem to exhale like tremendous stoves the concentrated glow of the day.

It was rather the black costume of the younger woman that struck me as somewhat surprising. It certainly was an austere sort of a dress to wear - completely bare of any friendly adornment, and exceedingly tight. The attractive fragility of her body was displayed, with a kind of austere shamelessness, under the supple stuff. Her little hat was surprisingly saucy - a coquettish cap made of a hard, lustrous material, almost metallic: it crowned the disquieting pallor of her face like a tiny helmet.

She looked at me in a way and I was struck by a woman - a woman who tried to feel the heat by 60.

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half ~~from~~ ^{from} worn-out Ammager, half from a
paragonous man.

When you the young woman
of me and discuss it. I didn't
notice much ~~many~~ changes
perchance of a ~~change~~ ^{change} ~~to~~ in
that N.Y. has ~~change~~ ^{change} ~~to~~ in
I saw it. But.

"Elder years is a long time

And the young one is ~~marrying~~
in a missing young woman
for singing it. Elder years
it seems so much longer to
me. Didn't I leave for
1945 as - "But"

From in 1945 as - "But"
which have been here twice then,
said the old woman, with a
twain. Under. Under. Under.

"Why do you say 'of course' as
asked the young woman, with
a sudden smile."

Both women, the younger one as well as her aged companion, seemed utterly out of place in this popular joint, full of clamorous, sweating men. Besides, it was rather late, - about ten-thirty or so. A bunch of sailors were having a good time at the bar. They guffawed and yelled teasing one of the buxom girls walking around with candies and cigarettes. These savage ~~sales of~~ ^{the detonations} laughter annoyed me as they drowned the voices of my two mystery ladies.

Strangely enough, however, it was just when the hilarity of the sailors reached its vociferous climax that I heard for the first time the voice of the younger woman - struggling, with a sort of desperate energy, against ~~the these sales of~~ ^{the detonations} violent merriment.

"My!" the young woman exclaimed, her lips slightly distorted by a wry, bitter smile. "Aren't we gay!" ^{How nice didn't you sound very pleasant.}

"They are young," observed the lady in white, all understanding kindness. "I warned you not to come here, Catherine," she added with a tender reproach, "It's not the right kind of a place for you. It's a vulgar place."

Catherine seemed extremely irritated. "It's a lot better than your so-called swanky restaurants," she said, ~~swiftly and angrily.~~

"Well, I thought you may prefer French food," said the older woman - obviously a trifle hurt but still beaming with indulgence and serenity.

"French food!" Catherine jerked with despise. "I wonder where you find such a thing - in this ~~grand metropolis.~~" ^{A Polish cook, a bunch of Italian porters, a bunch of 3 dollars for a strip with}

This went too far - even for the good-natured matron. "I am sorry we are not in Paris," she said, rather sharply. ^{But first of all}

"So am I," flashed the younger one. ^{Back!}

There was a silence - rather heavy and apprehensive. To overlook this mute controversy quarrel, was much more embarrassing than to listen to any talk. I felt that I blushed a little. The silence continued. I tried to concentrate on my paper.

^{My wife infinitely more indifferent to writing}
^{This must have been}

Finally the whole
the crowd

This was the Thaw in Paris:
(a few sent it along -
staggering way went on
her fragile platform
brought dish of the empty
bottle as a weapon or
a flag-bearer)

Almost nobody joined in.
As under a few sporadic notes
she listened to the whole

stutter and held her open
hand behind her head
with that harmonious gesture
characteristic of certain
night choruses in public in night
she made accompanying gestures, started
again and panted once more
as the vibration was not yet
as still as the first time? R.

I read something about the British and the Free French forces fighting the troops of the Vichy government in Syria. Pretty terrific news; but for some reason it failed to touch me. I couldn't quite grasp the meaning of what I read. The printed words looked strangely confused to me. Why did the Free French jump at the unfree ones? And why in Syria, of all places? I knew, of course, the sinister story behind it. Darlan...Pétain... Occupied zone, Unoccupied zone... Laval, General de Gaulle... ^{it} all seemed blurred and exceedingly far away. It had no reality. It was sad and rather nauseous. But it had no reality.

The laughing sailors had reality. The ^{glass} beer, the bread, the table. This was reality. But the news from Syria, ~~seemed so ghost-like~~ ^{from the East and Africa} dispatches in the paper sounded like hollow, deceitful messages from a nightmarish world. I didn't want to listen. Not now. I didn't want to spoil this evening - this warm, seductive night full of a sensual restlessness, human smells and ~~human~~ ^{Amusing} laughter and the intoxicating exhalation of that gigantic, ^{Amusing} living organism - the City.

I did not want to spoil the evening. I wanted another whisky. I called the waiter. He was busy taking the orders of the ~~two~~ two women.

"So you want no dessert?" asked the older one, ~~again~~ ^{of hers.} in that tenderly reproachful voice.

"No, Aunt ^{Mame.} Catherine. ~~Thanks.~~ Thank you ever so much. I am not crazy about apple pie with cheese."

Aunt Jane smiled forgivingly. "For me, it's an old-fashioned strawberry short-cake," she decided after having studied the card.

"Yes Ma'am." The waiter was on the point of withdrawing when Catherine inquired - somewhat suspiciously: ^{Satisfactorily} "Do you have a ~~brandy?~~ ^{cognac?}"

A sort of Swan-fairytale

They whole
Sime of / am

They from
It was a big jar — a note
and 3 more of St. John's
in drink, in 1850
and 3000

shaken by a sort of
Diomysia naffar

Cathwinds ~~noir~~ — a
indestructible H. married,
led and imitated it.

"A brandy, Ma'am?" he asked.

She looked at him, askance, ~~and didn't reply for a while~~. "A cognac," she ~~insisted~~ - ~~emphasizing~~ emphasizing the word, this time, in ~~an almost~~ a rather ominous way.

He nodded quickly: "I understand. ^{now that it} An imported brandy - that's what you mean."

He was a tall young fellow - very fair, with a blank, healthy face; ^{an} ~~at once ungainly~~ ^{you're colossal but not a bit} and yet ~~of~~ a certain clumsy alertness. He ~~ran~~ ^{hopped} almost ~~hopped~~ to the bar, - winged with zeal to please that severe and exotic lady. It took hardly a minute until he returned to the table. "Here we are," he beamed. "And it's a real imported one, too. ~~Hennessy~~ ^{Hennessy} with three stars..." He ~~read the name from the bottle he announced~~ ^{previously} He mispronounced the foreign name, his face purple with pride and embarrassment.

"Sans blague," ~~said~~ Catherine said, with a dry little laugh. "Du vraie Hennessy! Et même ^{aux} ~~avec~~ trois étoiles..."

The waiter stared at her as though she had been speaking Chinese. ~~She had a strangely~~ snatched the bottle from him, with an almost violent gesture. "It's Hennessy, all right," she confirmed while she examined the label. I was surprised to notice that she used a tiny lorgnette - a real little bijou made of nacre and gold. Probably she was very near-sighted. That's why her eyes had that moist lustre, at a once intense and weary, as it is characteristic of very near-sighted women who are too vain to wear ~~the~~ eye-glasses.

She still studied the label of the cognac bottle as though it were ^{labeled} ~~intricate~~ inscription on an ancient ~~grave-stone~~ tombstone. "It's the right thing," she concluded at last, with a wistful solemnity.

"It's the last bottle we've got," said the waiter. "Yes, sir. No more Hennessy now. Now the Nazis are drinking Hennessy." He ~~laughed~~ ^{had}

And the old lady added,
with a reproachful smile.

How French
she got seemed natural and not
got bi. How falling into French
got seemed perfectly natural
and spontaneous, but she
spoke French at first
familiarly with the French
family was obvious, not
down in these brief and
casual examinations.

an abrupt, bellowing laugh, as though horrified himself by his daring jocularity. *She gave him another eye of the Swift.*

"It's all right," *she* said Catherine, in a hoarse little voice. "Give me a glass of this cognac, please."

The huge fellow was rather frightened, ~~by her~~. "A pony or a drink, Ma'am?" he asked and took a stiff little bow.

"~~A~~ A pony? What's that?" She seemed strangely irked, even offended by this expression as it were likely to mean something utterly obscene.

"A pony means a small drink," explained Aunt Jane, as the waiter blushed and stammered.

"A drink, then," ~~said~~ Catherine decided. "A large drink, please! A double drink!" she added, with a ~~sudden~~ flash of greed in her eyes.

When she had emptied her glass - it took her just a few seconds - she ~~asked~~ asked for another one: "But no pony, if you please!" she warned him, with a disquieting merriment. He had a horrified grin as he poured the second double-drink into her glass which she held out to him: he didn't need stoop as he filled it.

"I'm just coming from France," she observed as though this irrelevant fact could explain her weakness for alcoholic liquids.

"Yes, Ma'am." He was completely absorbed in his effort to fill her glass up to the edge without spilling a drop.

~~"Hennessy with three stars happened"~~

"I am very very fond of ~~of~~ Hennessy," she continued, with a musing tenderness. "It happened to be ~~the~~ *my husband's* favourite brand, ~~of my fiancé.~~"

"Yes, Ma'am."

50th She lifted her glass as for a toast. "He is dead," she ~~said~~ *informed the waiter*, always with that ~~tender~~ *happy*, absent-minded smile. "Yes. ~~He~~ Has been killed by the Germans."

"Yes, Ma'am."

She had emptied her glass.

"Another one," she demanded hastily.

"I think it's enough now," child," The old lady, ^{very timidly,} touched Catherine's wrist. But Catherine didn't ^{even} look at her. ^{Next.} ~~"Another cog Une autre fine,"~~ she insisted, and then repeated her order in American. ^{The waiter didn't understand the words} ~~her gesture was expressive enough.~~ ^{Unmistakable} ~~This time~~

She drank very slowly, tasting and enjoying every ~~bit~~ ^{drop} drop of it. It was only when she had finished that she looked at Aunt Jane again. "Gaston was really very fond of this stuff," she said, as though the old lady had ~~questioned~~ ^{contradicted} her. ^{in a manner that was almost} ~~contradicted~~ ^{4 repetitions}

"I know," said the old lady mildly.

~~"How do you know?"~~ But for some reason even this harmless remark annoyed the termagant young woman. ~~"Why do you say that - I know?"~~ "What a silly "I know...I know..." She had a rather malicious way of imitating her ~~aunt's~~ ^{way of talking} gentle and voice. "What an absurd thing to say! After all, you've never met Gaston."

"But I know what type of a man he was," the old lady said, ^{firmly but with a hint} "And I always took it for granted that he didn't dislike Hennessy with three stars."

"What's wrong about it?" ^{Catherine} snapped. "All Frenchmen feel the same way. - In fact, all civilized people do," she concluded aggressively.

There was another silence. Then Aunt Jane said: "You are not in a very good mood tonight, Catherine. I am sorry. Don't you think ~~we ought to be going?~~ we'd better go?"

"I have another fine," ~~said~~ ^{theatrical} Catherine said, - whereupon her aunt had a surprisingly ~~gesture~~ ^{gesture}, raising her arms in the wide, white sleeves as if ~~then~~ trying to exorcize an evil demon. "No!" she said hastily. But Catherine had already called the waiter.

After this double-brandy - the fourth one within ten minutes, ~~as -~~ ~~I counted~~ she turned gentle and nostalgic. "I am so sorry, Jane," she sighed. "You are ^{awfully} ~~terribly~~ sweet and patient, and. I hate to be such a bore!"

"Don't be silly," the old lady said. "You don't bore me at all."

But it's pitiful to watch you tormenting yourself. - Couldn't you forget,

"Don't be cross, please!" - "Of course, not!" - "I know you wouldn't!"

"I have another fine" such an ass of a woman

from a Siberian
to look / part, ~~man~~
from

just for a little while, all these terrible things - Paris, and the war, and Gaston? It corrodes you, it mangles you..."

"I can't help it," It sounded determined and indescribably sad. "I just cannot help it," she ^{repeated} shaking her head ~~as though she~~ very slowly as if in a helpless and deep surprise. "C'est plus fort que moi," she whispered. Her face was terribly white under ~~that bold~~, the glittering black of that coquettish little helmet she wore.

"I am afraid you are one of those women who just want to suffer," Aunt Jane observed - strangely detached, almost cold. "You've always been different. A difficult child. I remember that your poor mother used to say to me..."

Catherine didn't let her finish the sentence. "I was happy," she interrupted her, in a soft but resolute voice. "I was perfectly happy - with Gaston, in France."

"All of us have to separate from our beloved ones - a little sooner or a little later." It sounded a trifle unctuous: Catherine jerked, bit her lips, lighted a cigarette. The old woman continued: "In the beginning you ~~always~~ think that you couldn't bear it..." An experienced smile, magnanimous and resigned, embellished her wrinkled face. "But you can," she concluded, almost cheerfully. "You can bear a lot."

"It's not that I lost Gaston," said Catherine, with a sudden intensity as though it were of the utmost importance that she convinced her aunt in this particular point. "It's not that they shot him down. ^{A woman who} ~~A pilot's wife~~ ^{mustn't be} has to get used to the idea that her husband may ~~be shot down~~ have an accident ~~even in times of peace~~. I always waited for it - long before the war..." There was a pause. The young widow made a sign to the waiter. While he filled her glass she began to talk again - rapidly, in a breathless voice: "He was not afraid, and I tried to be as brave as he always was. Yes, I tried very hard... No, it's not that he died. It's that he died senselessly what eats me and destroys me - what I cannot bear. "That they fooled him and cheated him - that's ~~so~~ what I cannot forget. "They told him there was

"How could my poor P.S.
things? (a woman asked,
with a wide, anxious smile
look into space. "I don't
want to fight them."
They are all here."

They are my life.
It's not now you are here. I am
you to California! You
are home in America!
Tomorrow we'll be in
Boston! You will see
many old friends again!
Tomorrow, in Boston, you may
see quite a few of them.
I kept asking after you, & the
whole family. How is

a war and ~~a~~ a cause to fight for, but really there was no war and no cause ; there was nothing but a sordid mess... nothing but treachery... Ah, les traitres!" she groaned, protecting her ~~see eyes~~ eyes, with her hands as though if ~~the sight of the traitors~~ to avoid the revolting sight of the traitors. "Ah, les assassins!... les assassins!"

"Come, come!" The old lady was seriously worried. "Come, come, Cather = ine!" she repeated helplessly. "Pull yourself together! You are in your country now - with your old aunt Jane! France is faraway. The murderers and traitors have no power here..."

"Do they have no power over here?" Catherine asked, with a sort of doubtful hope in her voice. The old lady murmured, ~~in place of~~ : "Europe is far away..."

But this was no satisfactory answer. Catherine removed her hands from her eyes, which had appallingly changed while ~~she had been hiding~~ they had been hidden behind the trembling mask of her fingers. Her lovely, ~~short~~ nearsighted eyes were ~~wide open~~ blinded and widened with fear, pain and disgust. They didn't see anything.

"Far away...." ~~Her voice~~ It was ~~only~~ a violent whisper - rather frightening. "But I can see it... smell it... touch it... Here, in this country, things have no life, no substance. They don't smell, they don't shine, they don't suffer. These sailors, this table, ~~this~~ fruits, the streets and buildings out there. A I don't believe in their reality. They don't convince me.

Don't move me. They bore me!" the young widow exclaimed - and then repeated as if this boredom were more painful than any tribulation: My coun

"This restaurant bores me... New York bores me... You bore me... America bores me..."

"Catherine! If you please!" - Aunt Jane's voice was shaking with indignation. Her figure seemed to grow and to stiffen: she looked more impressive ~~than~~ than ever as her right hand tapped the table-top with three hard and precise little slaps. "That's enough," she decided. "You have forgotten

You will find it so boring away...
No...

Don't bore! You are an American!

lost

nothing to tell me, more
to give me ... they know
it so soon ... and so far away
I know that I played hard
miss a with that ... 50

They are so far away
many things have happened

My life before
Boston ... away ...
"Just from home ...
fact ...
Honest ...
how ...
this day and ...
statement ...
definitely ...
do ...
"My full ...
and ...
"This country has no viability.
Not for ...
they don't ...

your manners, over there."

Senses are for...
"Forgive me," Catherine said, very softly.

"It's all right," the old lady grumbled. "Let's go now. - Waiter!"

She asked for the check. While she searched her purse, Catherine kept blinking and whispering to the waiter: "Une autre fine, s'il vous plait!" He understood and nodded, grinningly. There was a sort of indecent intimacy between the clumsy lad and the tragic lady.

became notice - 1.55
Aunt Jane ~~was petrified with surprise and disapproval~~ when he ~~came~~ *returned* back with the Henessy bottle: "What is this?" she asked, all disapproval and majesty. - "Why, our Henessy," he explained ~~innocently~~ with ~~his~~ *his* broad, innocent grin. "There is not very much left of it," he added, as though this fact was certain to reconcile the matron.

The bottle was almost empty.

"Catherine! Dearest!" the old lady exclaimed. "We have to get up at seven o'clock tomorrow!"

"I don't care," the widow replied, rude and merciless.

"But we have to make the eight-o'clock train, ~~for~~ They expect us in ~~Maine~~ Don't you remember? Our date in Boston!"

"Pretend it's a family she's living with!"
"I don't want to go to Boston," said Catherine in an ominously lowered voice. "I want my Henessy. Garçon!" she hissed, with a sudden vehement turn of the upper part of her body. *What is it, dear, you* "qu'est-ce qu'il y a? J'ai demandé une fine!" *meaning for...*

"A pony?" he asked with an awkward banter.

"How do you expect dancing...?"
"A pony?!" - It was a yell: ~~the sailors and the other people~~ *the whole* the whole noisy crowd in the bar turned around. People began to look at her and to giggle. But she didn't notice it. There she sat, panting with anger. "A pony!" She raised her hands as if ~~to~~ *to* implore God to witness the nasty treatment ~~that~~ she had to endure in this country. Then, suddenly composed and with grim determination: "Give me the bottle!" she demanded. And as he hesitated, she ~~shouted~~ *she* snatched the bottle from him, with a ~~trulent~~ *trulent* gesture.

The bartender

" This is something
" This is " You will find it
would be just the same
you

And he added, as the
this statement
" Another point, T. H. M.
he asked, with an answer can

" M. W.
" How do you do? " (at dinner)
blessed, but he has been
with my own contempt.

" I am not going to make any
sense -

He began with that kind
of foreign politeness and still
dignity disinterested of still
wonder the last moment immediately
the last evening of the
collaboration.

"But, Ma'am..." He stood, There he stood - ^{mouth open and bewildered} - ~~helpless, terrified,~~ and didn't know what to do. He watched her as she lifted the bottle, ~~and~~ Her pale, ~~greedy~~ ^{cool} lips, pursed as for a kiss, ~~waited~~ ^{seemed to wait} with a shocking greed ~~for~~ ^{cool} the touch of the glass. There was a sucking little noise as her mouth embraced the round opening. She took slow, heavy gulps out of the bottle which she held with ~~both~~ ^{both} hands, almost in a right angle from her relaxing face.

^{There was} ~~There was~~ laughter and ironic applause and a lot of dirty jokes accompanied the ignoble ~~pantomime~~ ^{terrible} ~~pantomime~~. The whole crowd was gloating on Catherine's ~~deeds~~ ^{deeds} on this weird and shameful spectacle: ~~the~~ ^u a young lady in morning with a amazon-like little hat, drinking brandy out of a bottle...

In the midst of the general uproar, ~~the~~ I heard Aunt groaning: "My Lord! Oh, my Lord! What a scene! what a scandal! How do we get out of her! What a scene!..."

It was at this moment that Catherine began to sing. At first it was only a humming little noise she produced; but gradually it grew stronger as though she were trying to drown ~~the~~ Aunt Jane's ~~monotonous~~ lamentations. Catherine sang in a strangely colourless, voice - her white, obstinate face bent backwards, ~~and~~ the upper part of her body swaying with the rhythm of the tune. There was nothing ^{gay and} spontaneous about her singing ~~no hilarity~~ ^{stale & rigid}: her face remained ~~utterly~~ ^{stale & rigid} grave and cold - numb, with ~~by~~ sort of cold and cruel ecstasy.

"Valencia, tu es une fille etrange..."

The old lady writhed at the sound. "Catherine!" she cried. "Stop it! You are crazy! Let's go! ^{Phia} Let's go...", she whimpered.

But her terrible niece continued, mercilessly, her absurd performance. "Auprès de ma blonde, il fait bon dormir dormir," she sang; and, "Savez-vous planter des choux?", and, "J'ai deux amours, mon pays et Paris..."

The old lady had risen; she was standing now behind the chair of the merry widow, shaking her shoulders, imploring her to get up, to follow

17 on down)
to, which had
tenderly
pressing her lips
and lips

"This young man ~~has~~ ^{understands} perfectly well
what I mean," ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~laughed~~
She ~~laughed~~ ^{laughed} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~smiled~~ ^{smiled} ~~triumphantly~~ ^{triumphantly}.

"He is a boy!" she concluded
"So I shall tell you
The waiter, ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~66~~ ⁶⁶ ~~behold~~ ^{behold}
to ~~contrast~~ ^{contrast} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~good-looking~~ ^{good-looking} ~~boy~~ ^{boy}
stand at ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~entrance~~ ^{entrance} ~~judging~~ ^{judging} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~boy~~ ^{boy}
— his ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~sedition~~ ^{sedition} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~boy~~ ^{boy}
the ~~light~~ ^{light} ~~uniform~~ ^{uniform} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~boy~~ ^{boy}
dress, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~boy~~ ^{boy}
slanting ~~above~~ ^{above} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~white~~ ^{white} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~boy~~ ^{boy}
rigid ~~from~~ ^{from} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~boy~~ ^{boy}
the ~~high~~ ^{high} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~words~~ ^{words} ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~a~~ ^a
fast ~~man~~ ^{man} ~~—~~ [—] ~~vagued~~ ^{vagued} ~~an~~ ^{an}
meaning, ~~less~~ ^{less} ~~a~~ ^a ~~feigning~~ ^{feigning} ~~from~~ ^{from}

her, to stop this impossible exhibition. But Catherine didn't react. She interrupted her ludicrous repertoire after having recited, "J'ai deux amours...": but only in order to observe: "It's a lie. I don't have two loves - Paris and my country. Of course not. I had one love - and ~~lost it.~~" *that's out.* *Massillaise*

There was a silence: just a few speechless seconds; but how heavily charged with the drama of these two women! Catherine's childhood ... the New England town... Aunt Jane coming from Boston... Catherine - always "different", constantly dissatisfied, the "interesting child" ... *ambitions (educative) ...* Going to Paris to study art or music... Falling in love with the place ... Staying there, against the will of her family... They threatened they would cancel her allowance but then, of course, didn't: just cut it down a little... Her life in Montparnasse; the summer months on the Cote d'azur... Juan les Pins, St. Tropez... I could see her... Then, the great love: Gaston... *My doubt ... A foreigner, on both sides ...* The war... The return... Aunt Jane fetching her at the pier... *frustration - Sarcasme*

"Let's go..."

Catherine, staggering - *brandishing bottle, like weapon* - fumbling... leaning upon her aunt...

"Come along, Fifth Column!" - The waiter whom he had ~~obs~~essed... now, clinging to him... He seemed first embarrassed, then flattered. Guiding, almost carrying her, not without a certain clumsy gallantry. His broad grin. A good-natured fellow.

following A ~~fumbling~~ amazon, her metallic little helmet, slating on her head... She started to sing again: "It's a long way to Tiberarry..."

The sailors joined her. Her shrill ~~voice~~ *soprano* hovering above their raucous voices... *A insane ... shows...*

"So long, honey!"

She brandished the empty bottle - a spectacular farewell...

"A tout à l'heure, mes amis!" Her knees seemed to give way. But they had reached the door.

And Catherine
sh. Only for Paris sh. don't
sh. is an A. girl. Why don't
sh. I mean

... father to me & surprisingly
... enough. Sh. forget her
... all about her former
... moments - her life in N.C.
... a little. Sh. called her
... eyes widened with fear
... anguish. Sh. shivered
... for a moment a piece of
... another
... "My poor sister always had
... do so

to stay in her opinion! The minute
that in her opinion
... lesson were not
... for all the kinds of dogs
... and Arabian girls. Can
... to address her family as finger
... "I'm
... "The disappearance of ... from
... Aunt

By Klaus Mann

Her voice didn't sound very pleasant - surprisingly sharp and dried-out. I managed to catch a glimpse of her face. Her face, powdered a

She was dressed all in white
which was made of a fine
appearing a touch of color in
in no more than a slightly pinkish line
That other
Even the silver of a

rough
Mr. They talk so easily
you know as an automatic
what they say - and it makes
they begin to whisper it makes
you were more curious.

Those two women for instance
one of them always go
sitting just a few steps
of radiation in that of conversation
catch a word of the conversation

The two women indicate in
because of their conversation
single word of their conversation
They know sitting fairly close
to me in the room when I hear
I could see them when I hear
my heart just
One of them looks very markedly -
in solid person in her sixties,
very composed and serene.

dead white which made her look as though she were wearing a mask, was slightly distorted by a wry, unkind smile. Presently the smile died away and the expression of her face altered, ~~assuming a sort of~~ ~~of tense, vigilant seriousness~~ - suddenly tense and hardened with a sort of vigilant seriousness.

She was handsome enough : in fact, the dainty oval of her face was almost beautiful but not really attractive. Or rather, she was attractive, perhaps; ~~in a sense~~ but in pallid, distracted way, the type of woman one calls "interesting" but doesn't really enjoy to look at. Both women, the younger one as well as her aged companion, seemed utterly out of place in this popular joint, full of clamorous, sweating men - most of them ^{rather} ~~some~~ drunk.

It was a ^{warm} Saturday night, and Times Square was swarming with fellows in uniform and other fellows in shirt sleeves, and with very colourful girls. I think it is lots of fun - Times Square, on a summer evening: very gaudy and refreshingly vulgar and quite electrifying, indeed. There is something in the air, - in that ^{heavy} ~~summer~~ air of New York City - New York is a very ^{magnificent} ~~exciting~~ city, and ~~exciting~~ ^{all} cities maintain their thrilling charm and their mystery, no matter ^{of these streets} ~~if you see them on a chilly, rainy day or~~ ^{on a hot day in May} with the asphalt melting under the glowing caresses of a merciless sun. The constant humidity in the ^{N.Y.} air is, of course, quite a nuisance, but it is an exciting sort of humidity because it is an exciting sort of the city, and its atmosphere is always charged with the pulsing energies, the vast sensuality of its life.

All this I felt very strongly, and with a sort of protest, ^{when} ~~as~~ I ~~hard~~ ^{the} saw ~~that~~ pale, haughty face of the that unknown women, and watched her as she lowered her eyes and the let her mouth sag with an indescribable expression of disgust, boredom, and ~~frustration~~ ^{frustration}. "It's so dull here," she said, ^{dramatic} ~~emphasizing~~ the word "dull" with a sort of ^{naughty} ~~malicious~~ mock-lament.

~~But~~
"Let's go now. It's all right.
— The duck waited. ~~The~~ One
duck, plus. She asked for
white ~~the waiter~~ ~~the duck~~
white ~~the Aunt Jane~~ ~~the duck~~
white ~~the duck~~ ~~the duck~~
Grandma ~~the duck~~ ~~the duck~~
blinked ~~the duck~~ ~~the duck~~
" ~~the duck~~ ~~the duck~~
"Then both is not very smart

Aunt Jane seemed not far
from
"Catharine! Dressed!" the old lady
exclaimed. "We have to go
up at seven o'clock."
This was the first time
that C.'s voice filled so
panting with a crazy, sense
The whole crowd was gloating
on ~~the~~ C.'s ~~madness~~
degradation.

It's no fun to have dinner ~~alone~~^{by yourself}. You don't enjoy your meal without company, and there is something strangely depressing, indeed, something embarrassing about sitting ~~quite~~ alone in the midst of talking, gesticulating people. ~~Makes you feel pretty sad - as if you were a paria,~~
~~- not admitted to the excluded from the laughters and conversations~~
of the others... It's so utterly dreary to listen to what the people at the next table are talking. ~~They are talking~~ Usually it's a great deal of rubbish, anyway. If they are discussing their private affairs - ~~that~~ their financial problems, or that they don't love each other any more - it is, of course, much more interesting but at the same time makes you feel even worse....

So ~~of course~~ I did not want to overhear what those two ladies chattered, the other night, in that bar near Times Square. In the beginning, when I started my dinner, I didn't even have the technical possibility to catch anything of their conversation. All I noticed was that one of them was elderly and very dignified, and that the younger one ~~were a~~ was all dressed in black - a conspicuously slender woman, in a tailor-made costume. ~~Both seemed to be rather highly civilized girls~~ They ~~seemed to be~~ looked to me like pretty intelligent girls - kind of sophisticated, ~~as~~ and a trifle pretentious. ~~Hardly~~ noticed what was going on around them - absorbed in their soft, intimate conversation, their two pale faces strangely close together...

Yet the bar was rather gay at that evening. Sailors singing...

Men playing cards; sweating; hot outside...

Tried to read my paper. ~~Something about France...~~ Full of gloomy news; ambiguous dispatches from Berlin;.... I was reading something about France - a statement of Vice Premier Darlan - when I heard the younger woman saying a few words in French.

"Sang blague," she said to the waiter.
"Donnez-moi Hennessy!"
"Trois!"
"Trois!" - She laughed.

It makes you feel sort of man
(usually) enough, even the dull
most faithful talk between a man
and a woman you have now
seen before and will now
see again, it must be so.

The conversation of a young
man ~~What~~ man is less exciting
for they usually talk business
or politics. Two women have
something very funny (they
to confide to each other.

Concerning people whom you do not
know.

~~A woman...~~ at the club next
Those two ladies, for instance, —
what a ~~would~~ ^{what} ~~was~~ ^{is} they discuss
so zealously —
discuss.

his gentle face quite withered and
sunken and almost.

little " — American
account.

Wife: "Yes, Ma'am." Didn't understand.
She was a way smile: "You are
a German, aren't you?"

"No, Ma'am." — rather ungainly,
He was a large fellow — a suppose
but not a bad man, a suppose
"Give me the both." She

insisted, in a friendly shrill
tongue & voice. "My's my
Hannacey — it's not his."

~~"I just came back from France" — aggressive.~~
~~She didn't like it here.~~

I knew the sort of life she was
used to. I had watched so
many of them — in the
cafes of Montparnasse, and
in those little watery places
on the Côte d'Azur — Sancy
St. Tropez
She couldn't ~~adapt~~ ^{adjust} herself to Times
Square. Any French woman could but
she couldn't.

..... Snowed out of

" You haven't know Jean - Marie",
she insisted.

" Yes, dear, the old one replied,
with a certain firmness.
" I have known your father."

He was drawing.
But the younger one shook her
head - her face white and
obstinate.

" It's not that they shot him
down. He was not afraid - and
I tried to be as brave as he
was - yes, I tried very hard ...
No, it's not that he died.
It's that he died senselessly."

" Ah, my friends!" she
groaned - " a story of ~~passion~~
violence!" " whisper " Lis assassins!
" Catherine said the older
lady. " Now you are here -
with your friends, your family ...
With me, your old aunt Mary ...
Now you are at home!"

"At home!" What a howling
~~sound~~ ^{some} had the laughter! —
 clapping as the sound of a
 broken bell. "At home!" she
 repeated, still laughing — and
 was afraid she would burst out
 into tears. ^{afterwards} ^{she} ^{took} ^{the} ^{house}
 into ^{her} ^{arms} ^{and} ^{whispered} ^{to} ^{her} ^{husband}

He is a Nagg, she whistled
the Mags & whistled!

"Un espion. ma chère! ta se
ta se voit, — blindé and wounded
ta se voit! — wife dead, father in
the war. You are, Catharine!"

"How silly you are,
... And you would sound
via smiling but you could feel
that she was a new individual.
... a decent chap, I am

" He " " I don't chap " - Show him y
 sum. laugh w. " x least amount.
 " A with ! " Terribly
 loss at the man

with the family
a loss! "-----
She twisted the man -----
He died -----
annoyed.

She started ...
" My m. a. man ...
" My m. sick and ...
She announced ...
Tired of it ..."

" Dear me! What a way of
sort of speech
" That's the way my friends
used to talk — over there ... "
" Well, now you are down ...
Aunt Jane declared with
a sudden difference from
There was a little silence.
Then she began to sing.
Then she began to sing.
" My's a long way to Tibaway ... "
..... old lady, petted

" Let's go ...
" Tom & na this time, Madame
la Marquise for a strangely
colorless voice ...
" Let's go, father ...
She implored her ... commanded ...
biggest ... that in vain ...
the sailors, the woman ...
floating on her excitement ...
father! clinging to the
fumbling ... had so abused, whom
was for whom she
she hated and feared ...
SO

By Klaus Mann.

It's no fun to have dinner ~~in a restaurant~~ *particularly* by yourself. You don't enjoy your food without company, and there ^{is} something embarrassing about listening to the conversations going on at the other tables. You don't want to overhear them, of course; but you just can't help it. For, curiously enough, even the most futile talk between two people whom you have never seen before and will never see again, is somehow more attractive than a magazine or a ~~book~~ paper.

You may be struck by a voice before you have a chance to catch the first glimpse of the face to which ~~that~~ voice belongs. Those two women, for instance, ~~then I was then to watch with so much interest~~ first were nothing but two ~~female~~ voices - the mellow and kindly speech of a stolid matron and the penetrating whisper of a younger woman.

The older ~~voice~~ suggested, in a friendly, conversational ~~way~~ *tone*: "You'll find things in Boston much less changed than they are here, in New York." Whereupon the younger voice, glum and drowsy: "I don't think New York has much changed since I saw it last."

"Eleven years is a long time," observed the old voice, somewhat cryptically. And the young one, ~~in a musing tone, almost singing~~.

"Eleven years? It seems so much longer to me... ~~wasn't it in 1925...~~ *Let's see*
~~that~~ I left for France *in '25.*

"Exactly," confirmed the old ~~voice~~ *cadences*, and adding with a certain tender pedantry: "But you've been here twice since that time. Once in '28, and then, of course, ~~in 1929.~~ *Trip.*"

"Why do you say, 'of course'?" asked the young woman, ~~with a sudden suspicion.~~

42 always remember how
"Because ~~it was the year~~ your poor mother died." The sonorous organ of the ~~older woman~~ was shaking with sad memories and disapproval of the younger woman's ~~forgetfulness.~~ *lack of them.*

The ^{brighter} ~~younger~~ voice sounded rather nonplussed as it exclaimed, hastily and a bit too loud: "How silly I am! Of course! I came just too late for the funeral..." ^{there was} ~~she had~~ an abrupt little giggle as if ~~remembering~~ ^{at} a funny incident. I didn't like the way she chuckled and then all of a sudden ^{the stillness finished my whisper and} ~~was still~~. I turned my head to have a look ~~at her~~. The two ladies were sitting fairly close to me. I could easily watch them when I turned my head just a little bit to the right.

The older woman - ~~a~~ stately ^{and} ~~matron~~ ^{her} in the middle ~~of her~~ ^{her} sixties - was dressed all in white, which gave her appearance a touch of solemn serenity - something almost priest-like. She looked enviably cool and ~~composed in her immaculate white setup~~. The place was not air-conditioned and it was hot outside - one of those summer nights in New York when the vast masses of towered stones seem to exhale ~~like tremendous~~ ^{live tremendous stoves} ~~stoves~~ the accumulated glow of the day.

The matron looked dignified and a trifle quaint; but there was something surprising, almost frightening about her younger companion. That black costume of hers certainly was a queer sort of a dress to wear - completely bare of any ~~friendly~~ adornment and conspicuously tight. The attractive fragility of her body was displayed, with a kind of austere shamelessness, under the supple stuff. Her little hat was unexpectedly saucy - a coquettish cap made of a hard, lustrous material, almost metallic: it crowned the disquieting pallor of her face ^{with} ~~as~~ a tiny helmet. She looked at once weary and aggressive - half like a worn-out Amazon, half like a pugnacious nun.

Both women, ~~the younger one as well as her aged companion~~ ^{chapman}, seemed utterly out of place in this cheap restaurant full of clamorous, sweating men. Besides, it was rather late - long after the regular dinner hour, about ten-thirty or so. A bunch of sailors were having a good time at the bar. Their savage laughter drowned ^{all other} ~~the~~ voices. ~~the two mystery ladies.~~

~~Strangely enough~~, It was just when the hilarity of the sailors reached its ~~vacillations~~ climax that I ^{heard} the voice of the younger woman again - struggling, with a sort of desperate energy, against the detonations of so much violent ^{joy} ~~manifestation~~. "My!" she exclaimed - and, even without looking at her, I ^{could} ~~could see~~ the wry smile distorting her pallid lips. "Aren't we gay!" She seemed exceedingly irritated.

"They are young," the old lady observed apologetically. And she added with tender reproach: "I warned you not to come here, Catherine. It's not the right kind of a place for you. It's a vulgar place."

Catherine, swiftly and angrily: "It's a lot better, anyway, than your so-called swanky restaurants."

"Well, I thought you might prefer French food - that's all." The ~~kind~~ old lady kept smiling but ~~was~~ obviously ^{was} a trifle hurt.

"French food!" Catherine jerked with despise. "A Polish cook, a bunch of Italian waiters, and three dollars for a soup with foul fish - that's what they call 'French food' over here!"

This ^{was going} ~~went~~ too far, even for the good-natured matron. "I am sorry we are not in Paris," she ^{said} ~~said~~. - "So am I," Catherine flashed back.

There was a silence - dismal and apprehensive. I felt utterly uncomfortable. To witness this mute quarrel was infinitely more indiscreet than to overhear the most intimate conversation.

I tried to concentrate on my paper.

French troops fighting other French troops, somewhere in Syria... A French admiral ^{made a statement} ~~said something~~ to the effect that Germany is the most reliable, most unselfish friend the French nation ever had... Occupied zone, unoccupied zone... Laval, Pétain, le général de Gaulle... It seemed all blurred and crazy and terribly far away. It had no reality. It was sad and rather nauseous. But it was not real.

The laughing sailors were real. The ~~is~~ glass, the ~~is~~ bread, the ~~is~~ table. - ~~this~~ ^{they}

~~was~~ ^{were} real~~ly~~. But what the papers said sounded hollow - deceitful mes-
sages from a remote, nightmarish world.

I wanted another whisky. The waiter said, "Yessir, one moment sir;"
but he didn't ~~come to my table~~ ^{move}. He was busy writing down ~~the orders~~
the orders of the two women.

"~~So you want~~ ^{Don't care for} dessert?" the older one asked, in that tenderly
reproachful voice of hers.

"No, Aunt Jane. Thank you ever so much. ~~I am~~ ^{Not} ~~anxious about~~ apple
pie with cheese."

Aunt Jane smiled forgivingly. "For me, ~~it's an~~ old-fashioned straw-
berry short-cake, ~~with whipped cream,~~ ^{with mild determination,} she decided ~~after having studied~~
~~the card with a certain casual carefulness,~~

"Yes, Ma'am." The waiter was on the point of withdrawing when Catherine
inquired - somewhat sceptically: "Do you have ^{any} cognac?"

As the waiter didn't understand what ~~was~~ ^{was} meant, Aunt Jane explained ^{to}
him, all indulgence and motherly dignity: "~~A~~ Brandy, young man! - the lady
~~wants~~ ^{any} wants to know if you have ~~a~~ brandy."

He blushed and stammered. "Yes...Why...of course, Ma'am... We have
a domestic brandy... Very good stuff, they say..."

Catherine interrupted him sharply: "I want a French cognac, or
nothing." And the old ~~lady~~ ^{woman} added, with a reconciliatory smile: "The
lady wants an imported brandy, young man. Would you be good enough to
ask the ~~barman~~ ^{waiter} if ~~he~~ he has any ~~French~~ brandy ~~left~~ ^{left}."

The waiter rushed to the bar - winged with zeal to please that
severe and exotic lady. [He was a good-natured fellow - ungainly and
tall, with a blank, healthy face. They called him Carl. He was of Swedish
descent and came from the Middle West.]

It took hardly a minute until he returned to the table. "Here we
are," he beamed, still panting ~~from his run~~ and his forehead moist
with sweat. "And it's a real imported, too. - ^HHennessy ~~with~~ Three-Stars..."

Insert
A
p.9

You want deny that it
No way can deny that it
is a state of most
... a

— of — that it is not
... ..
and

He mispronounced the foreign name, his face purple with pride and embarrassment.

seemed surprised.
"Sans blague!" Catherine ~~gave a~~ ^{gave a} little laugh. "Du vraie Hennessy!"
aux
Pas possible! Et même ~~avec~~ ^{aux} trois étoiles!"

It seemed perfectly natural and spontaneous that she spoke French at the familiar sight of the Hennessy bottle. Her American accent was obvious, though - even in these brief and casual exclamations.

The waiter stared at her as though she were speaking Chinese.

She studied the label of the cognac bottle as if it were the faded inscription on an ancient tombstone. I ~~was surprised to~~ noticed that she used a tiny lorgnette - a ~~real~~ ^{gem} little ~~bijou~~ ^{leather-of-pearl} of ~~pearl~~ and gold. Probably she was very near-sighted - ~~which~~ ^{that} gave her eyes that disquieting lustre, at once intense and weary, ~~as it~~ ^{which} is characteristic of near-sighted women who are too ~~vain~~ ^{vain} to wear eye-glasses.

"It's Hennessy, all right," she concluded at last, with wistful solemnity. "It's the ~~right~~ ^{real} thing."

"The last bottle we've got - ~~the~~ ^{according to} ~~barman~~ ^{tender}," declared Carl - his eyes, full of awe, wandering between the valuable bottle and the pale lady in black. "No more Hennessy now. No ~~more~~ ^{no} sir. ~~Now~~ ^{now} the Nazis ~~will~~ ^{will} get tight ~~with~~ ^{on} all that French champagne over there." He had an abrupt, bellowing laugh, as though surprised by his own daring, ~~boldness~~.

Catherine gave him one of her swift, piercing glances. "Ca suffit," she said in an icy voice.

The huge fellow was rather frightened. "Do you care for a pony?" he asked and took a stiff little bow.

"A pony?" She seemed strangely irked, even offended by this expression as though it meant an indecent proposition.

"Why, we serve drinks or ~~pony~~ ^{ies}," the waiter tried to explain, with a helpless grin. "A pony is a small drink. A drink is a double pony."

"A drink, then, I should say!" Catherine shrugged her shoulders;

her voice was shaking with contempt and impatience.

When she had emptied her glass - it took her just a few seconds - she demanded another one: "But no pony, if you please!" she warned the waiter, a little more graciously.

"I've just come ~~from~~ from France," she observed, while he poured the golden liquid into her glass.

"Yes, Ma'am."

"I am very fond of Hennessy," she continued. "My husband, too, was very fond of it. It was his favourite brand."

There was a musing tenderness in her voice. The waiter didn't know what to say. Catherine lifted ~~the~~ ^{the} glass as for a solemn toast. "He is dead," she informed the waiter, always with that hazy, ~~absent-minded~~ ^{oblivious} smile. "Yes. He was a pilot. Has been killed by the boches."

"Yes, Ma'am."

She had emptied the glass.

"Another one," she said softly, looking very proud and absent-minded.

"I think you've had enough, child." The old lady, very timidly, touched Catherine's wrist. But the young widow did not react. "Une autre fine," she insisted. Carl didn't understand the words, but her imperious gesture and the ~~third~~ ^{staring} look of her eyes were unmistakable.

This time she drank very slowly, tasting and ~~enjoying~~ ^{relishing} every drop. It was only when she had finished that she turned to Aunt Jane again. "Gaston was really very fond of this stuff," she said, as though the old lady had questioned it.

"I know," ~~said the old woman~~ ^{Aunt Jane nodded} mildly.

But for some reason ~~even~~ this harmless remark annoyed her irritable niece. "I know...I know..." She had a rather aggressive way of imitating the old lady's gentle voice. "What a ludicrous thing to say! After all, you've never met him!"

"But I know what type of a man he was," Aunt Jane replied, ~~friendly~~ ^{calmly}

but determined. "And I always took it for granted that he didn't dislike
n
Honey with three stars."

"What's wrong about it?" Catherine snapped. "All Frenchmen feel the same way. - In fact, most civilized people do," she concluded pugnaciously.

There was another one of those stone-like silences. Finally Aunt Jane said: "You aren't in a very good mood tonight, Catherine. I am sorry. Don't you think we'd better go?"

"Let me have one more fine!" Catherine begged, with a pathetic effort to look like a spoiled, cute little girl. "Just one tiny, little glass!" she cooed - while Aunt Jane bent her face in silent resignation.

After this new refreshment - Catherine had this time insisted on a double-drink - the ~~widow~~ *Young* grew nostalgic and alarmingly gentle. "You are so sweet and ~~pat~~ *patient*, Auntie!" she sighed, and tried to catch the old lady's hand. "Don't be cross with me, please! ~~please~~ Please, darling Auntie, tell me that you are not cross!"

"Of course not," The old lady ~~said~~ suddenly looked very tired as if exhausted by a long, hopeless struggle. "Why should I be cross with you? I would like to go now, that's all."

Without paying any attention to Aunt Jane's request, Catherine continued to accuse herself in a whining, unsteady voice.: "I hate to be be such a bore! Do you think I don't know what a bore I am? how I must ~~be~~ *get* on your nerves? Ah!" she lamented, "I am making such an ass of myself!"

"Don't be silly!" said the old lady. "You don't ~~bore me~~ *get on my nerves* at all. But it's pitiful to watch ~~how~~ you torment yourself. Couldn't you try to forget ~~just for a little while, all these terrible things~~ Paris, and the war, and your poor husband? *just for a little while?*"

"How could I ~~forget~~ *even* these things?" Catherine had a wide, unfocussed look into space. "They are my life. I don't want to forget them. They are all I have."

"But now you are here, Catherine!" the old woman reminded her in an imploring voice. "This is your life, Catherine! This is your ^{country,} ~~home,~~ your future! Here are the people who love you. Tomorrow, in Boston, you'll see ~~quite a few of them~~: your sister Amelia, and old Mrs. Prixy - it's amazing how well she ^{comes} ~~bears~~ her seventy-seven years! - and Philip - good old Philip: he kept asking after you, during all ^{this time} ~~these years~~. ^{How is} Catherine? he'd ask me - faithful old creature he is! 'Doesn't Catherine come back to us?' - ^{Between ourselves} ~~Entre nous~~, I am pretty sure he still has a secret little weakness for you." ^{she added} with a timid attempt to produce a roguish smile.

"Mrs. Prixy...Amelia...Philip..." Catherine repeated the names as the fragments of an old song that she had long forgotten. ~~Then she shook her head, with a faint, plaintive smile.~~ "I remember the names, but I cannot remember the faces. ~~I know that I played Chamber~~ ^{with Philip} music with Mrs. Prixy. And ~~that Philip used to take me to the theater~~ ^{all this seems} But ~~so~~ ^{too} long ago. And so many things have ~~since~~ happened. Boston is far away."

"Just four-and-a half hours if we make the fast morning train." Aunt Jane tried to call her back to reality with this sober statement. ~~A trip to Paris takes longer,~~ ^{she added drierly.}

"I felt it right away when I arrived here," Catherine said in a tone as ^{if} talking to herself. "This country has no reality. Not for me. The skyscrapers, the cars, the people, the drugstores, the movie theatres - they have nothing to tell me, nothing to give me: everything is so pompous and huge and so terribly empty."

"Don't forget, Catherine, it is your country you are talking about!" the old lady said gravely.

"Is it ~~my~~ indeed my country?" It sounded pensive and sorrowful rather than bitter. She seemed to wait for an answer; but while Aunt Jane mumbled something about the necessity of adapting oneself to

the actual conditions of life, Catherine continued her plaintive monologue. "Here, in America, things have no life, no substance. They don't smell, they don't shine, they don't suffer. There is no authentic joy nor is there authentic drama, because there is no history, no tradition. ~~I suppose all dignity and charm of a civilization are derived from its past.~~ If one has lived in Paris..."

That's "That's enough ~~now~~!" The old lady assumed an attitude of forbidding majesty. "I don't want to hear ~~anything~~ about Paris any more! Do you understand me, Catherine? I am fed up with Paris!"

insert # Her indignation was so vehement and absorbing that she even failed to notice Catherine's secret conspiracy with the waiter. Nothing could be more preposterous - said Aunt Jane - than the European arrogance ~~of Americans~~ *certain* who had spent a few years "over there". While she was talking, Carl ~~filled~~ *re-* Catherine's glass, ~~with brandy~~. Aunt Jane, meanwhile, insisted that ~~this~~ *Catherine's* kind of haughtiness was all the more absurd considering the state of affairs in Europe - particularly in France. *i* She ~~wanted to~~ asked her niece to inform her what, in her opinion, was so impressive and admirable about the French defeat and the political system that had led to this shameful collapse. "It isn't a very inspiring spectacle France is giving the world! Not what I would call a very great performance!"

the Catherine sipped ~~little gulps of~~ *her* cognac, gazing thoughtfully into ~~her~~ glass. "If you are right," she observed at last, with ominous casualness, "if what you say is correct, Aunt Jane - and I suppose it is - then Gaston has died in vain."

It was pathetic to watch how the old lady's face paled and became motionless. She was profoundly embarrassed. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, Catherine, dearest," she stammered. I was afraid she ~~might~~ *was going to* burst into tears. ~~Please, forgive me!~~ *she* ~~whispered, her lips numb with fright~~

~~about her shocking blunder,~~

"It's all right," said Catherine, without a smile. "Forget it."

She emptied her glass, then continued: "There's nothing wrong about what you've just said. Do you really believe I didn't know all these things? Sometimes I am afraid that Gaston might have known them *as well* ~~himself~~..."

For one moment she ~~protected~~ *covered* her eyes with a trembling hand as if to ~~avoid~~ *banish* an unbearable vision. "What do you think is it that haunts and torments me so?" she asked, her brow still hidden behind the delicate lattice of her shaking fingers. "It's not that I lost Gaston. I was very happy with him. It couldn't last. I always knew I would lose him. He was a pilot, and he loved his profession almost as much as he loved me. I tried to be as courageous as he always was. Yes, I tried very hard..."

She took her hand from her eyes, which had appallingly changed: they were blinded and widened *with* fear. "I tried to be brave," she said. "But I ~~was~~ *ready* ~~always~~ half-dead with ~~grief~~ *to lose* - during all those years. I was scared stiff, every time he left me. I wonder if you can *imagine* ~~figure~~ what I went through, Aunt Jane... When he made that crazy expedition to Africa, and I had no ~~news~~ *word from him for* for three and a half weeks ~~three endless weeks~~ - do you have any idea what that means, Aunt Jane?" ~~and another three days that seemed even longer than those three that had dragged like three painful years...~~

There was a little pause. The young woman in mourning was sitting very erect: the expression of her face had altered. What a strange transformation, under the saucy crown of her coquettish and militant hat! A flash of white light ~~waned~~ and animated her features. Her smile was radiant with pride as she continued:

"But when the war came, there was no fear any more. For he believed in the cause he was called to fight for. Many of his friends did not believe in it, but he did, and so did I. Yes, both of us believed in France -

passionately, without questioning. We were so firmly convinced that France would fight and conquer, and ~~that she was to~~ lead the suffering peoples of Europe to a better future. Sometimes I had certain doubts, but I thought ^{I ought to} ~~to~~ suppress them - for the sake of Gaston. It was only when he was dead, and when I ~~had~~ re-read ~~all~~ his letters, hundreds of times, until I knew all of them by heart: it was only then that I began to wonder if he, perhaps, had been thinking the same things, and had been haunted by the same qualms and the same apprehension, and had sacrificed his life - knowing that it was in vain; and had died hopeless and faithless and bitterly disillusioned."

"Poor child." Aunt Jane was profoundly moved. "Poor little Catherine," she said. "Your sister and I will try to cheer you up. ^{little} ~~little~~ ^{was} ~~was~~

Poor little Catherine had a short, nasal laugh: it ~~sounded rather~~ scathing. Then she turned the upper part of her body, with a savage, provocative motion. "Garçon!" she cried, and her voice was so shrill that it attracted attention, even in this clamorous place. People began to look at her and to grin.

She turned very angry as Carl lingered in a distant corner of the restaurant. "Garçon! Est-ce que vous êtes sourd?" she shouted. "Merde alors!" Whereupon the old lady writhed as if smitten by a ^{convulsive} ~~convulsive~~ ~~aching~~ ^{aching}. "Catherine! Please!" she whimpered. But her niece, wanton and merciless as a naughty child, repeated at the top of her voice: "Merde - merde - merde alors!" - "I only hope that no one understands French in this place!" sighed Aunt Jane. ~~It was touching to watch how the extensive, wrinkled plain of her face glowed, for one transient second, with the flame of a hectic blush.~~

Carl had ^{an anxious} ~~an anxious~~ grin as he presented the bottle - humbly and apologetically, as one offers a due tribute to a capricious tyrant. ~~"Excuse me, Ma'am," he panted, still out of breath after his~~ ^{irony} ~~run~~ "Another pony, Ma'am?" he asked, with ~~an~~ awkward ~~bent~~ ^{irony}

Catherine said, in an ominously lowered voice: "Give me the bottle."

He hesitated, grinned, didn't know what to do.

"Give me the bottle!" she repeated, piercing him with terrifying looks.

"Why... Ma'am...", he stammered. ~~I'll give you another drink... with pleasure...~~ ^{100%} If you care for another drink, lady, I'll ~~certainly~~ be only too glad..."

"How do you dare?!" Catherine hissed, her face rigid with fury, ~~and contempt.~~

~~The poor chap gazed at her - mouth ajar, utterly bewildered. Here is nuts...;~~ this was all he could think and feel.

"Catherine! Please!!" Aunt Jane raised her hands, with a theatrical gesture, and wrung them near Catherine's ~~astonished~~ ^{stunned} face. "Let's go, darling! Please don't make a scene!"

"I am not going to make a scene," the young widow declared with that forced dignity characteristic of ~~intoxicated~~ ^{a certain} women in the stage of intoxication preceding the total collapse. "Just let me handle this little affair myself. - Thank you. I appreciate it," she added with a frozen, absent-minded smile.

"Which affair, for God's sake?" the old lady groaned.

"This ~~young man~~ ^{understands me} ~~knows~~ perfectly well, ~~what I mean~~ She ~~smiled~~ ~~ominously~~ and darted murderous glances. "He is a spy," she concluded softly, with ~~a~~ terrifying gentleness. ^{completely paralyzed}

"Why... lady..." His mouth sagged wide open. He was ~~stunned~~ ^{surprised}

^{it} "Do you deny, young man?" She locked her arms across her chest, ~~looking~~ ^{utterly ridiculous}

"~~My~~ ~~sure~~ don't know what you mean," he finally managed to say.

"Is that so?" She emphasized every syllable of her rhetoric question while her merciless eyes examined his purple face. "~~So~~ I shall tell you what I mean - you scoundrel!" she shouted with a sudden outburst of anger.

"Your name is Carl, isn't it?" She jumped up from her chair and made three strides towards him. "Isn't it?" she repeated facing him from menacing proximity.

He nodded, dumbfounded with surprise - whereupon she ^{gave} ~~had~~ a hoarse, triumphant ~~laugh~~ laugh. "A German name!" she exclaimed with a slight turn of her head as if addressing an imaginary audience. "Exactly what I had anticipated. - The case is only too obvious," she concluded with a restrained but expressive gesture. "~~The defendant~~ ^{waiter Carl, the waiter,} is guilty of Fifth Column-activities and high treason." She ^{made} ~~took~~ a stiff little bow - paying homage to a martial court that she had just convinced of the defendant's culpability.

Carl stared helplessly at that ^{incredible} ~~prodigious~~ lady - his ^{prodigious} ~~judge~~ judge, forbidding and yet attractive, very erect in the tight uniform of her mourning dress, the glittering helmet slanting above her white, rigid face. ^{Mouth ajar} ~~Wide-eyed~~, in a stupor of bewilderment, he listened to her ragged and meaningless words: ~~the stupendous enigma she dented against him~~

"Ah! le misérable! comme je le déteste! Le chien! Ah! le traître! C'est lui qui a tué mon ~~bien-aimé~~ bien-aimé; qui a ruiné la patrie... Le voilà! - l'assassin! le boche! l'agent du diable!"

Her knees gave way; she tottered. He ^{upheld} ~~supported~~ her, with an automatic politeness, and guided her to a chair. As soon as she was seated, she re-assumed her ^{menacing} ~~menacing~~ attitude. "My bottle!" she demanded, while ~~she~~ ^{whimpered:} ~~stammered and grinned~~ the old lady kept appealing, futilely, to Catherine's ~~reason and decency~~ ^{Don't you realize} "Catie! Child!" she ~~whimpered~~ ^{whimpered} "You don't know what you are doing to me! Stop it! Please! Ah! the scandal! the shame!" ~~Don't you think of your family? you don't think of the memory of your mother?~~

"Cut it out!" the young widow interrupted her, merciless and rude. It was only now that Aunt Jane began to weep - noiselessly and without hiding her face. "We have to get up at seven o'clock tomorrow!" she ^{the extensive plain of her wrinkled} ~~mumbled~~ mumbled, while tiny tears, adorned ~~her~~ ^{like pearls} face. "Don't you

remember! The eight o'clock-train! Our dates in Boston!"

"My bottle!" Catherine repeated - her ~~eyes~~ features numb with stubbornness.

And suddenly she snatched the bottle from Carl who ~~had just taken~~ was just making a clumsy attempt ^{to} ~~to~~ hide it behind his ~~right~~ back.

She had the bottle; she beamed ^{and} ~~and~~ triumphed; she caressed it, rocked it in her lap as if she had regained her beloved baby after a long period of cruel separation. "Mon chou!" she whispered pressing her cheeks and lips tenderly against the cool curvature of the amber-colored glass.

chou-fleur? "Mon chou de fleur! Ma petite bouteille!"

There was a sucking little noise when her ~~lips~~ mouth embraced the round opening. She took slow, heavy gulps out of the bottle which she held with both hands, almost in a right angle from her relaxing face.

Laughter and ironic applause accompanied the astounding scene. People began to gather around ^{her} ~~the elegant widow~~ incredible lady. Sailors, waiters and girls gloated on Catherine's degradation. "She sure can take it," observed one of the sailors, and the whole crowd guffawed. A girl with a face like a ^{glaring} ~~glaring~~ mask said in a pointed, malicious voice: "The merry widow. Isn't she a honey!"

In the midst of the general uproar I heard Aunt Jane groaning: "What a scene! My Lord! How do we get out of here! Oh, my Lord!"

It was at this moment that Catherine began to sing. At first it was only a humming noise; but gradually it grew stronger as though she were trying to drown Aunt Jane's ^{monotonous} ~~jeremiads~~. Catherine sang in a strangely colourless voice - the upper part of her body swaying with the rhythm of the tune,

"Valencia, tu es une fille étrange..."

Her face remained pale and rigid - frozen in a sort of cold and cruel ecstasy.

"Savez-vous planter des choux - à la mode de chez nous... À la mode,

à la mode..."

"The eight o'clock-train!" sobbed the aunt. "Mrs. Prixy will ^{be there} ~~have~~ to fetch us..."

And Catherine, brandishing the empty brandy bottle: "Auprès de ma blonde, il fait bon dormir dormir..."

One of the sailors knew a little French. His vigorous bass joined Catherine's shrill soprano. Others chimed in - girls, sailors, and waiters.

"J'ai deux amours - mon Pays et Paris..."

"She has always been different..." The old lady talked to me - surprisingly enough. Her distress and terror were such that she forgot all about her fine, reserved manners, her dignified New England attitude. Her eyes widened with anguish, she chattered to a man at ~~the~~ another table - a man she had never seen before: a stranger who had been tactless enough to overhear her conversation - unfortunate enough to witness the macabre misbehavior of her eccentric niece. "'Catherine is so different,' my poor sister used to say... She died many years ago, ^{to me} ~~then~~ ^{so} Catherine already was abroad... to study music ^{she said}..." Aunt Jane laughed bitterly and had a twinkle in her eyes as if she wanted to ^{intimate} ~~tell me~~ that, in her opinion, the music lessons were nothing but an obvious pretext for all kinds of loose and ^{sordid} ~~sublim~~ goings-on.

"Mais je l'aime! c'est mon homme!" Catherine's voice sounded shriller than ever before: it was a yelling rather than a singing. "He's my ^{ma-am} man...," the chorus repeated, drawing the last word with an ~~unshameless~~ outburst of sensual enthusiasm.

Aunt Jane, meanwhile, continued to address her ^{desperate} ~~frantic~~ whisper to me: "I disapproved of it from the very beginning... A young girl - alone in Paris! ^{Think of} ~~how~~ the temptations!... the vicious foreigners!... But ~~my~~ sister was so naive... And then, ~~what~~ there was nothing much she could do about it... Catherine just refused to come back... Said she couldn't stand America. What nonsense! After all, she is an American girl. Why should she spend her

life in Montparnasse cafés drinking Hennessy and all sorts of ~~vicious~~ ^{ugly} things? Why should she, ~~if you please~~ ^{if you please}?"

The old lady made a dramatic pause as if she expected me to reply. But I didn't know what to say and ~~only~~ ^{only} shrugged ~~on~~ my shoulders, while the thundering chorus intoned, It's a long way to Tipperary. Catherine had apparently regained her physical energies. Now she jumped on a chair to conduct the singing ~~mob~~ mob from this elevated position. Aunt Jane preferred to ignore this new and most shocking development. Moving ~~her, over~~ a little closer to me, the upper part of her body bent forward, she sighed and talked and sobbed with a sort of sorrowful intimacy. "And then, that marriage!" she said. ~~I was against it, right from the beginning. A~~ ["] ~~and~~ daughter of Patricia Ferguson - and some unknown little Frenchman! Think of it! ~~And then, those Frenchmen are so volatile...~~ ["] This she uttered in an emphatic whisper as if confiding to me a significant but somewhat dirty secret. ~~"So incredibly volatile - all of them!"~~

"We built a little home - just made for two..." Catherine's voice radiated with savage jubilation.

"And a pilot, of all things!" Aunt Jane shook her head: the fact of Catherine's French husband having been a pilot seemed more inconceivable to her than anything else. ~~She said "And to think that I came from Boston, just to welcome her at the pier!" she added with a plaintive, absent-minded smile.~~

This was the Marseillaise: Catherine sang it alone - standing very erect on her fragile platform, brandishing the empty bottle as a weapon or a banner.

"Allons, Enfants de la ~~Patrie~~ Patrie..."

As only a few sporadic voices responded, she stopped and held her open hand behind her ~~ear~~ ear with that humorous gesture typical of certain popular chansonniers who want their audience to chime in the refrain of their song. "What's the matter?" the merry widow asked, with a faked French

accent. "I don't hear anything!" She made encouraging gestures; repeated the beginning of the anthem, and then paused again - not yet satisfied with the reaction.

"Mais c'est honteux!" she scolded. "Can't you open your mouth - you there? Fifth Column!"

It was Carl, the waiter, to whom she thus appealed. He blushed and tried to hide behind the back of a gigantic sailor. But Catherine, merry and relentless, didn't let him get away: she called him a coward, and a naughty little boy, and insisted he had to sing. The crowd seemed highly amused by this gay performance. The sailors roared with laughter and pushed each other with their elbows to demonstrate how much they enjoyed the show. "She's O.K.," they declared. And others said, "She's nuts," or, "She's lots of fun." One of the girls added, full of interest and appreciation, "She's drunk ^{as} ~~like~~ hell." - Undoubtedly, Catherine was a considerable success.

~~She knew that she was a success. She was very drunk and terribly~~

Some colored boys who worked in the kitchen and had been attracted by the increasing noise, echoed the melody ^{of the Marseillaise} while they laughingly aped Catherine's bold and dramatic pose. I suddenly noticed a variety of new faces in the motley crowd: a Chinese little girl, two old men with long grizzly beards, a stout heavy woman talking very loud in Russian to a chubby little boy, several American soldiers arm in arm with a bunch of British mariners, a young lady in a ^{gorgeous} ~~white~~ evening gown - conspicuously handsome, jealously guarded by an aging cavalier sweating in his tuxedo. I had no time to wonder whether all these people had joined our group from outside or had been sitting in this restaurant - hidden in secret niches. However, here they were as by magic - filling, overcrowding the scene, as does the chorus when it invades the stage in the pompous finale of an opera. But the noise they produced was not precisely what one may expect from a well-trained operatic ensemble. The magnificent and familiar tune of the Marseillaise was paraphrased, transformed, distorted in the most arbitrary fashion. Some of the singers improvised an absurd English text, ~~as they thought the original French lines unpronounceable.~~ Others just screamed and whistled, while again others shouted different songs - Long Live America or Old Man River or God Save the King. God Bless

It was an amazing scene - a grand spectacle of sweeping drunkenness, crazy joy and savage fraternization. The men and women laid their arms around each other's shoulders ^{brayed}; they trampled and ~~swung~~ and swung - shaken and winged by a sort of Dionysiac rapture. One of the soldiers kissed the Russian matron, while a British sailor began to dance with the ^{gorgeous girl} ~~precious beauty in white~~ - very much to the vexation of her flabby companion.

Catherine - an irresistible maenad - conducted and enchanted the ~~hechantic~~ crowd. She was alarmingly beautiful - transfigured in a sort of wild and aggressive trance. I looked at her, with delight and

apprehension. What a disquieting goddess of intoxication! - the white flame of her face, crowned by the slanting helmet; the fumbling grandeur of her gestures; splendor and misery of her meagre body. Her mouth was wide open - a black hole ~~as~~ in a tragic mask.

"Le jour de gloire est arrivé..."

"... always been a problem child... always different..."; This was the bleak lament of the unhappy Aunt. Most of her words were ~~swallowed~~ swept away by the explosions of inspired clamor. "... If my poor sister ^{were} ~~would~~ still ~~be~~ alive to see this!... What a disgrace! what a scandal! ... Always something strange about her... streak of vulgarity in her character... something morbid.... Used to play with colored children... ~~My poor sister often complained....~~ No dignity... sanatorium... Doctor Pelferton, old friend of the family... mental disorder... ~~Shock of ex-~~ ~~periences over there... vicious foreigners...~~ utterly embarrassing... disgrace..."

"Le jour de gloire..."

Catherine's outcry - raucous and triumphant - proved stronger than Aunt Jane's frantic whisper. But now her voice faltered. I noticed, with painful surprise, that the shining pallor of her face could turn even more colorless. She staggered: in a moment or two she would fall. I felt that I ought to prop her, to protect her, to cry for help: Doctor Pelferton! police! an emergency car to take her away, to a hospital...

But I remained motionless and speechless - paralyzed with dread and pity and admiration. I didn't want to think of her inevitable collapse - not of Doctor Pelferton, the sanatorium, the nurses. Not now! Not while this tremendous moment still lasted - the moment of the collective song, the general embrace, the bachantic communion. Nor did I want to disturb her frenzied and ravishing pantomime - the beatitude of her smile, the swinging motion of her spread-out arms - challenging and blessing the crowd which she ^{united} ~~united~~ and dominated for one ~~miraculous~~ ~~and~~ transient and miraculous second.

*

By Klaus Mann.

It's no fun to have dinner in a restaurant by yourself. You don't enjoy your food without company, and there something embarrassing about listening to the conversations going on at the other tables. You don't want to overhear them, of course; but you just can't help it. For, curiously enough, even the most futile talk between two people whom you have never seen before and will never see again, is somehow more attractive than a magazine or a ~~book~~ paper.

You may be struck by a voice before you have a chance to catch the first glimpse of the face to which the voice belongs. Those two women, for instance, ~~when I was then to watch with so much interest~~ first were nothing but two female voices - the mellow and kindly speech of a stolid matron and the penetrating whisper of a younger woman.

The older voice suggested, in a friendly, conversational ^{tone} ~~way~~: "You'll find things in Boston much less changed than they are here, in New York." Whereupon the younger voice, glum and drowsy: "I don't think New York has much changed since I saw it last."

"Eleven years is a long time," observed the old voice, somewhat cryptically. And the young one, ~~in a musing tone, almost singing~~, "Eleven years? It seems so much longer to me... Wasn't it in 1925 that I left for France?"

"Exactly," confirmed the old lady, and added with a certain tender pedantry: "But you've been here twice since that time. Once in 1928, and then, of course, in 1929."

"Why do you say, 'of course'?" ~~asked the young woman, with a sudden suspicion.~~

"Because it was the year your poor mother died." The sonorous organ ~~of the older woman~~ was shaking with sad memories and disapproval of the younger woman's forgetfulness.

The ~~younger~~ ^{brighter} voice sounded rather nonplussed as it exclaimed, hastily and a bit too loud: "How silly I am! Of course! I came just too late for the funerals..." She had an abrupt little giggle as if remembering a funny incident. I didn't like the way she chuckled and then all of a sudden was still. I turned my head to have a look at her. The two ladies were sitting fairly close to me. I could easily watch them when I turned my head just a little bit to the right.

The older woman - a stately matron in the middle of her sixties - was dressed all in white, which gave her appearance a touch of solemn serenity - something almost priest-like. She looked enviably cool and composed in her immaculate ~~white~~ set-up. The place was not air-conditioned and it was hot outside - one of those summer nights in New York when the vast masses of towered stones seem to exhale ~~like tremendous~~ ^{like tremendous} ~~stoves~~ the accumulated glow of the day.

The matron looked dignified and a trifle quaint; but there was something surprising, almost frightening about her younger companion. That black costume of hers certainly was a queer sort of a dress to wear - completely bare of any ~~felicitous~~ adornment and conspicuously tight. The attractive fragility of her body was displayed, with a kind of austere shamelessness, under the supple stuff. Her little hat was unexpectedly saucy - a coquettish cap made of a hard, lustrous material, almost metallic: it crowned the disquieting pallor of her face as a tiny helmet. She looked at once weary and aggressive - half like a worn-out Amazon, half like a pugnacious nun.

Both women, the younger one as well as her aged ~~companion~~ ^{chaperon}, seemed utterly out of place in this cheap restaurant full of clamorous, sweating men. Besides, it was rather late - long after the regular dinner hour, about ten-thirty or so. A bunch of sailors were having a good time at the bar. Their savage laughter drowned the voices of the two mystery ladies.

Strangely enough, it was just when the hilarity of the sailors reached its vociferous climax that I heard the voice of the younger woman again - struggling, with a sort of desperate energy, against the detonations of so much violent merriment. "My!" she exclaimed - and, even without looking at her, I could see the wry smile distorting her pallid lips. "Aren't we gay!" She seemed exceedingly irritated.

"They are young," the old lady observed apologetically. And she added with tender reproach: "I warned you not to come here, Catherine. It's not the right kind of a place for you. It's a vulgar place."

Catherine, swiftly and angrily: "It's a lot better, anyway, than your so-called swanky restaurants."

"Well, I thought you might prefer French food - that's all." The ~~kind~~ old lady kept smiling but ~~was~~ obviously ^{was} a trifle hurt.

"French food!" Catherine jerked with despise. "A Polish cook, a bunch of Italian waiters, and three dollars for a soup with foul fish - that's what they call 'French food' over here!"

This went too far, even for the good-natured matron. "I am sorry we are not in Paris," she ~~said~~ ^{said}. - "So am I," Catherine flashed back.

There was a silence - dismal and apprehensive. I felt utterly uncomfortable. To witness this mute quarrel was infinitely more indiscreet than to overhear the most intimate conversation.

I tried to concentrate on my paper.

French troops fighting other French troops, somewhere in Syria... A French admiral ~~said something~~ ^{made a statement} to the effect that Germany is the most reliable, most unselfish friend ^{of} the French nation ~~ever had~~... Occupied zone, unoccupied zone... Laval, Pétain, le général de Gaulle... It seemed all blurred and crazy and terribly far away. It had no reality. It was sad and rather nauseous. But it was not real.

The laughing sailors were real. The glass, the bread, the table - ~~this~~ ^{they}

~~more~~ ~~was~~ reality. But what the papers said sounded hollow - deceitful messages from a remote, nightmarish world.

I wanted another whisky. The waiter said, "Yessir, one moment sir;" but he didn't ~~come to my table~~ ^{move}. He was busy writing down ~~the orders~~ the orders of the two women.

"So you ~~want~~ ^{don't care for} dessert?" the older one asked, in that tenderly reproachful voice of hers.

"No, Aunt Jane. Thank you ever so much. I am not crazy about apple pie with cheese."

Aunt Jane smiled forgivingly. "For me, it's an old-fashioned strawberry short-cake, ~~with whipped cream~~ ^{with mild determination} she decided ~~after having studied~~ the card with a certain casual carefulness.

"Yes, Ma'am." The waiter was on the point of withdrawing when Catherine inquired - somewhat sceptically: "Do you have ^{any} cognac?"

As the waiter didn't understand what you meant, Aunt Jane explained him, all indulgence and motherly dignity: "A brandy, young man! - the lady ~~wants~~ wants to know if you have a brandy."

He blushed and stammered. "Yes... Why... of course, Ma'am... We have a domestic brandy... Very good stuff, they say.."

Catherine interrupted him sharply: "I want a French cognac, or nothing." And the old ~~lady~~ ^{woman} added, with a reconciliatory smile: "The lady wants an imported brandy, young man. Would you be good enough to ask the barman if ~~there~~ he has any ^{French} brandy ^{left}."

The waiter rushed to the bar - winged with zeal to please that severe and exotic lady. He was a good-natured fellow - ungainly and tall, with a blank, healthy face. They called him Carl. He was of Swedish descent and came from the Middle West.

~~It took hardly a minute until he returned to the table.~~ "Here we are," he beamed, still panting ~~from his run~~ and his forehead moist with sweat. "And it's a real imported, too. - ⁿ Hennessy with Three Stars..."

He mispronounced the foreign name, his face purple with pride and embarrassment.

seemed surprised.
"Sans blague!" Catherine ~~had a very little laugh~~ *aux* "Du vraie Hennessy!"
Pas possible! Et même ~~avec~~ *aux* trois étoiles!"

8 It seemed perfectly natural and spontaneous that she spoke French at the familiar sight of the Hennessy bottle. Her American accent was obvious, though - even in these brief and casual exclamations.

The waiter stared at her as though she were speaking Chinese.

She studied the label of the cognac bottle as if it were the faded inscription on an ancient tombstone. I ~~was surprised to~~ noticed that she used a tiny lorgnette - a real little bijou of nacre and gold. Probably she was very near-sighted - which gave her eyes that disquieting lustre, at once intense and weary, as it is characteristic of near-sighted women who are too vane to wear eye-glasses.

"It's Hennessy, all right," she concluded at last, with wistful solemnity. "It's the right thing."

"The last bottle we've got - says the barman," declared Carl - his eyes, full of awe, wandering between the valuable bottle and the pale lady in black. "No more Hennessy now. No Sir. Now the Nazis ~~drink all~~ get tight with all that French champagne over there." He had an abrupt, bellowing laugh, as though surprised by his own daring jocularly.

Catherine gave him one of her swift, piercing glances. "Ca suffit," she said in an icy voice.

The huge fellow was rather frightened. "Do you care for a pony?" he asked and took a stiff little bow.

"A pony?" She seemed strangely irked, even offended by this expression as though it meant an indecent proposition.

"Why, we serve drinks or ^{ies} pony," the waiter tried to explain, with a helpless grin. "A pony is a small drink. A drink is a double pony."

"A drink, then, I should say!" Catherine shrugged her shoulders,

her voice was shaking with contempt and impatience.

When she had emptied her glass - it took her just a few seconds - she demanded another one: "But no pony, if you please!" she warned the waiter, a little more graciously.

"I'm just coming from France," she observed, while he poured the golden liquid into her glass.

"Yes, Ma'am."

"I am very fond of Hennessy," she continued. "My husband, too, was very fond of it. It was his favourite brand."

There was a musing tenderness in her voice. The waiter didn't know what to say. Catherine lifted ~~her~~^{the} glass as for a solemn toast. "He is dead," she informed the waiter, always with that hazy, ~~absent-minded~~^{oblivious} smile. "Yes. He was a pilot. Has been killed by the boches."

"Yes, Ma'am."

She had emptied the glass.

"Another one," she said softly, looking very proud and absent-minded.

"I think you've had enough, child." The old lady, very timidly, touched Catherine's wrist. But the young widow did not react. "Une autre fine," she insisted. Carl didn't understand the words, but her imperious gesture and the thirty look of her eyes were unmistakable.

This time she drank very slowly, tasting and enjoying every drop. It was only when she had finished that she turned to Aunt Jane again. "Gaston was really very fond of this stuff," she said, as though the old lady had questioned it.

"I know," ~~said the old woman~~^{Aunt Jane nodded} mildly.

But for some reason ~~even~~ this harmless remark annoyed her irritable niece. "I know...I know..." She had a rather aggressive way of imitating the old lady's gentle voice. "What a ludicrous thing to say! After all, you've never met him!"

"But I know what type of a man he was," Aunt Jane replied, ~~friendly~~

~~but determined~~ "And I always took it for granted that he didn't dislike ⁿHennessy with three stars."

"What's wrong about it?" Catherine snapped. "All Frenchmen feel the same way. - In fact, most civilized people do," she concluded pugnaciously.

There was another one of those stone-like silences. Finally Aunt Jane said: "You aren't in a very good mood tonight, Catherine. I am sorry. Don't you think we'd better go?"

"Let me have one more fine!" Catherine begged, with a pathetic effort to look like a spoiled, cute little girl. "Just one tiny, little glass!" she cooed - while Aunt Jane bent her face in silent resignation.

After this new refreshment - Catherine had this time insisted on a double-drink - the ^{you - ?}widow grew nostalgic and alarmingly gentle. "You are so sweet and ~~patient~~ patient, Auntie!" she sighed, and tried to catch the old lady's hand. "Don't be cross with me, please! ~~Please~~ Please, darling Auntie, tell me that you are not cross!"

"Of course not," The old lady ~~said, and~~ suddenly looked very tired as if exhausted by a long, hopeless struggle. "Why should I be cross with you? I would like to go now, that's all."

Without paying any attention to Aunt Jane's request, Catherine continued to accuse herself in a whining, unsteady voice.: "I hate to be be such a bore! Do you think I don't know what a bore I am? how I must go on your nerves? Ah!" she lamented, "I am making such an ass of myself!"

"Don't be silly!" ^{go on my nerves} said the old lady. "You don't ~~care~~ at all. But it's pitiful to watch ~~how~~ you torment yourself. Couldn't you try to forget ~~just for a little while, all these terrible things~~ Paris, and the war, and your poor husband - ^{ever} just for a little while?"

"How could I ^{ever} forget these things?" Catherine had a wide, unfocussed look into space. "They are my life. I don't want to forget them. They are all I have."

"But now you are here, Catherine!" the old woman reminded her in an imploring voice. "This is your life, Catherine! This is your ^{Country,} ~~Home,~~ and your future! Here are the people who love you. Tomorrow, in Boston, you'll see quite a few of them: your sister Amelie, and old Mrs. Prixy - it's amazing how well she bears her seventy-seven years! - and Philipp - good old Philipp: he kept asking after you, during all these years. ~~How is Catherine? he'd ask me - faithful old creature he is! 'Doesn't Catherine come back to us?'~~ - Entre nous, I am pretty sure he still has a secret little weakness for you." ^{she added} with a timid attempt to produce a roguish smile.

"Mrs. Prixy...Amelie...Philipp..." Catherine repeated the names as the fragments of an old song that she had long forgotten. ~~Then she shook her head, with a faint, plaintive smile.~~ "I remember the names, but I cannot remember the faces. I know that I played chambre music with Mrs. Prixy. And that Philipp used to take me to the theater. But ^{all this seems} ~~it's~~ so long ago. And so many things have since happened. Boston is far away."

"Just four-and-a half hours if we make the fast morning train." Aunt Jane tried to call her back to reality with this sober statement. ~~"A trip to Paris takes longer," she added drily.~~

"I felt it right away when I arrived here," Catherine said in a tone as ^{if} talking to herself. "This country has no reality. Not for me. The skyscrapers, the cars, the people, the drugstores, the movie theatres - they have nothing to tell me, nothing to give me: everything is so pompous and huge and so terribly empty."

"Don't forget, Catherine, it is your country you are talking about!" the old lady said gravely.

"Is it ~~was~~ indeed my country?" It sounded pensive and sorrowful rather than bitter. She seemed to wait for an answer; but while Aunt Jane mumbled something about the necessity of adapting oneself to

the actual conditions of life, Catherine continued her plaintive monologue. "Here, in America, things have no life, no substance. They don't smell, they don't shine, they don't suffer. There is no authentic joy nor is there authentic drama, because there is no history, no tradition. ~~I suppose all dignity and charm of a civilization are derived from its past.~~ If one has lived in Paris..."

"It's enough now!" The old lady assumed an attitude of forbidding majesty. "I don't want to hear anything about Paris any more! Do you understand me, Catherine? I am fed up with Paris!"

Her indignation was so vehement and absorbing that she even failed to notice Catherine's secret conspiracy with the waiter. Nothing could be more preposterous - said Aunt Jane - than the European arrogance of ^{Certain} Americans who had spent a few years "over there". While she was talking, Carl ^{we-} filled Catherine's glass. ~~with brandy~~ Aunt Jane, meanwhile, insisted that this kind of haughtiness was all the more absurd considering the state of affairs in Europe - particularly in France. She ~~wanted to~~ asked her niece to inform her what, in her opinion, was so impressive and admirable about the French defeat and the political system that had led to this shameful collapse. "It isn't a very inspiring spectacle France is giving the world! Not what I would call a very great performance!"

Catherine sipped ~~little gulps~~ ^{her} cognac, gazing thoughtfully into ^{the} ~~her~~ glass. "If you are right," she observed at last, with ominous casualness, "if what you say is correct, Aunt Jane - and I suppose it is - then Gaston has died in vain."

It was pathetic to watch how the old lady's face paled and became motionless. She was profoundly embarrassed. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, Catherine, dearest," she stammered. I was afraid she might ^{presently} burst into tears. ~~Please, forgive me!~~ she whispered, ~~her lips numb with fright~~

about her shocking blunder.

"It's all right," said Catherine, without a smile. "Forget it."

She emptied her glass, then continued: "There is nothing wrong about what you've just said. Do you really believe I didn't know all these things? Sometimes I am afraid that Gaston might have known them ~~as well~~ ^{as well} ~~himself...~~"

For one moment she ~~protected~~ ^{covered} her eyes with a trembling hand as if to ~~avoid~~ ^{banish} an unbearable vision. "What do you think is it that haunts and torments me so?" she asked, her brow still hidden behind the delicate lattice of her shaking fingers. "It's not that I lost Gaston. I was very happy with him. It couldn't last. I always knew I would lose him. He was a pilot, and he loved his profession almost as much as he loved me. I tried to be as courageous as he always was. Yes, I tried very hard..."

She took her hand from her eyes, which had appallingly changed: they were blinded and widened ~~with~~ ^{ready} fear. "I tried to be brave," she said. "But I was ~~always~~ half-dead with funk - during all these years. I was scared stiff, every time he left me. I wonder if you can figure what I went through, Aunt Jane... When he made that crazy expedition to Africa, and I had no ~~news for three and a half weeks~~ ^{word from him for} ~~three endless weeks~~ - do you have any idea what that means, Aunt Jane?" ~~and another three days that seemed even longer than those three that had dragged like three painful years...~~

There was a little pause. The young woman in mourning was sitting very erect: the expression of her face had altered. What a strange transformation, under the saucy crown of her coquettish and militant hat! A flash of white light waned and animated her features. Her smile was radiant with pride as she continued:

"But when the war came, there was no fear any more. For he believed in the cause he was called to fight for. Many of his friends did not believe in it, but he did, and so did I. Yes, both of us believed in France -

passionately, without questioning. We were so firmly convinced that France would fight and conquer, and ~~that she~~ was to lead the suffering peoples of Europe to a better future. Sometimes I had certain doubts, but I thought ^{I ought to} ~~to~~ suppress them - for the sake of Gaston. It was only when he was dead, and when I ~~had~~ re-read ~~all~~ his letters, hundreds of times, until I knew all of them by heart: it was only then that I began to wonder if he, perhaps, had been thinking the same things, and had been haunted by the same qualms and the same apprehension, and had sacrificed his life - knowing that it was in vain; and had died hopeless and faithless and bitterly disillusioned."

"Poor child." Aunt Jane was profoundly moved. "Poor little Catherine," she said. "Your sister and I will try to cheer you up. ~~little~~"

Poor little Catherine had a short, nasal laugh: it sounded rather scathing. Then she turned the upper part of her body, with a savage, provocative motion. "Garçon!" she cried, and her voice was so shrill that it attracted attention, even in this clamorous place. People began to look at her and to grin.

She turned very angry as Carl lingered in a distant corner of the restaurant. "Garçon! Est-ce que vous êtes sourd?" she shouted. "Merde alors!" whereupon the old lady writhed as if smitten by a ^{convulsive} ~~aching~~ ~~aching~~. "Catherine! Please!" she whimpered. But her niece, wanton and merciless as a naughty child, repeated at the top of her voice: "Merde - merde - merde alors!" - "I only hope that no one understands French in this place!" sighed Aunt Jane. ~~It was touching to watch how the extensive, wrinkled plain of her face glowed, for one transient second, with the flame of a hectic blush.~~

Carl had ^{an anxious} ~~fearful~~ grin as he presented the bottle - humbly and apologetically, as one offers a due tribute to a capricious tyrant. ~~"Excuse me, Ma'am," he panted, still out of breath after his run.~~ "Another pony, Ma'am?" he asked, with ~~an~~ awkward banter.

Catherine said, in an ominously lowered voice: "Give me the bottle."

He hesitated, grinned, didn't know what to do.

"Give me the bottle!" she repeated, piercing him with terrifying looks.

"Why... Ma'am...", he stammered. ~~"I'll give you another drink... with pleasure..."~~ ^{four} "If you care for another drink, lady, I'll ~~certainly~~ be only too glad..."

"How do you dare?!" Catherine hissed, her face rigid with fury, ~~and con-~~
~~tempt.~~

~~The poor chap gazed at her - mouth ajar, utterly bewildered. "She is nuts..." this was all he could think and feel.~~

"Catherine! Please!!" Aunt Jane raised her hands, with a theatrical gesture, and wrung them near Catherine's adamant face. "Let's go, darling! Please don't make a scene!"

"I am not going to make a scene," the young widow declared with that forced dignity characteristic of ~~intoxicated~~ ^{a certain} women in the stage of intoxication preceding the total collapse. "Just let me handle this little affair myself. - Thank you. I appreciate it," she added with a frozen, absent-minded smile.

"Which affair, for God's sake?" the old lady groaned.

^{understands and} "This ~~young~~ young man ~~knows~~ ^{understands and} perfectly well. ~~what I mean~~ She ~~smiled~~ ^{smiled} ~~and~~ darted murderous glances. "He is a spy," she concluded softly, with ~~a~~ terrifying gentleness.

"Why... lady..." His mouth sagged wide open. He was ~~surprised~~ ^{completely perplexed} with

^{it} "Do you deny, young man?" She locked her arms across her chest, looking ~~utterly~~ ^{utterly} ~~very~~ ^{very} ~~bullheaded~~ ^{bullheaded}.

"My sure don't know what you mean," he finally managed to say.

"Is that so?" She emphasized every syllable of her rhetoric question while her merciless eyes examined his purple face. "So I shall tell you what I mean - you scoundrel!" she shouted with a sudden outburst of anger.

"Your name is Carl, isn't it?" She jumped up from her chair and made three strides towards him. "Isn't it?" she repeated facing him from menacing proximity.

He nodded, dumbfounded with surprise - whereupon she had a hoarse, triumphant ~~laugh~~ laugh. "A German name!" she exclaimed with a slight turn of her head as if addressing an imaginary audience. "Exactly what I had anticipated. - The case is only too obvious," she concluded with a restrained but expressive gesture. "~~The defendant~~ ^{Walter Carl} is guilty of Fifth Column-activities and high treason." She took a stiff little bow - paying homage to a martial court that she had just convinced of the defendant's culpability.

Carl stared helplessly at that ^{incredible} ~~prodigious~~ lady - his ~~mother's~~ ^{prodigious} judge, forbidding and yet attractive, very erect in the tight uniform of her mourning dress, the glittering helmet slanting above her white, rigid face. ^{Mouth ajar} ~~wide-eyed~~, in a stupor of bewilderment, he listened to her ragged and meaningless words: ~~the stuporous arrangement she dashed against him~~

^{Il me dégoûte.}
"Ah! le misérable! comme je le déteste! Le chien! Ah! le traître! C'est lui qui a ~~tué~~ tué mon ~~bien-aimé~~ bien-aimé; qui a ruiné la patrie... Le voilà! - l'assassin! le boche! l'agent du diable!"

Her knees gave way; she tottered. He ^{upheld} ~~supported~~ her, with an automatic politeness, and guided her to a chair. As soon as she was seated, she re-assumed her ^{menacing} ~~rejection~~ attitude. "My bottle!" she demanded, while ~~she~~ ^{whispered:} ~~stammered and gaped~~, the old lady kept appealing, futilely, to Catherine's reason and decency. "Catie! Child! ^{Don't you realize} ~~she whispered~~ ~~you don't know~~ what you are doing to me? Stop it! Please! Ah! the scandal! the shame!" ~~Don't you think of your family? your dead mother? the memory of your mother?~~

"Cut it out!" the young widow interrupted her, merciless and rude. It was only now that Aunt Jane began to weep - noiselessly and without hiding her face. "We have to get up at seven o'clock tomorrow!" she mumbled, while tiny tears adorned ^{the extensive plain of her wrinkled} ~~her~~ face. "Don't you

like pearls

remember! The eight o'clock-train! Our dates in Boston!"

"My bottle!" Catherine repeated - her ~~the~~ features numb with stubbornness.

And suddenly she snatched the bottle from Carl who ~~had just taken~~ was just making a clumsy attempt ^{to} ~~to~~ hide it behind his ~~mighty~~ back.

She had the bottle; she beamed ^{and} ~~and~~ triumphed, she caressed it, rocked it in her lap as if she had regained her beloved baby after a long period of cruel separation. "Mon chou!" she whispered pressing her cheeks and lips tenderly against the cool curvature of the amber-colored glass.

"Mon chou de fleur! Ma petite bouteille!"

There was a sucking little noise when her ~~lips~~ mouth embraced the round opening. She took slow, heavy gulps out of the bottle which she held with both hands, almost in a right angle from her relaxing face.

Laughter and ironic applause accompanied the astounding scene. People began to gather around ^{her} ~~the elegant widow~~ ~~incredible lady~~. Sailors, waiters and girls gloated on Catherine's degradation. "She sure can take it," observed one of the sailors, and the whole crowd guffawed. A girl with a face like a ^{glaring} ~~colourless~~ mask said in a pointed, malicious voice: "The merry widow. Isn't she a honey!"

In the midst of the general uproar I heard Aunt Jane groaning: "What a scene! My Lord! How do we get out of her! Oh, my Lord!"

It was at this moment that Catherine began to sing. At first it was only a humming noise; but gradually it grew stronger as though she were trying to drown Aunt Jane's ^{monotonous} ~~jeremiads~~. Catherine sang in a strangely colourless voice - the upper part of her body swaying with the rhythm of the tune,

"Valencia, tu es une fille étrange..."

Her face remained pale and rigid - frozen in a sort of cold and cruel ecstasy.

"Savez-vous planter des choux - à la mode de chez nous... À la mode,

à la mode...

"The eight o'clock-train!" sobbed the aunt. "Mrs. Prixy will ^(be there) come to fetch us..."

And Catherine, brandishing the empty brandy bottle: "Après de ma blonde, il faut bon dormir dormir..."

One of the sailors knew a little French. His vigorous bass joined Catherine's shrill soprano. Others chimed in - girls, sailors, and waiters.

"J'ai deux amours - mon Pays et Paris..."

"She has always been different..." The old lady talked to me - surprisingly enough. Her distress and terror were such that she forgot all about her fine, reserved manners, her dignified New England attitude. Her eyes widened with anguish, she chattered to a man at ~~the~~ another table - a man she had never seen before: a stranger who had been tactless enough to overhear her conversation - unfortunate enough to witness the macabre misbehavior of her eccentric niece. "'Catherine is so different,' my poor sister used to say... She died many years ago, ^{to me} when Catherine already was abroad... ^{so} to study music, she said..." Aunt Jane laughed bitterly and had a twinkle in her eyes as if she wanted to ^{intimate} tell me that, in her opinion, the music lessons were nothing but an obvious pretext for all kinds of loose and ^{so did} ~~subtle~~ goings-on.

"Mais je l'aime! c'est mon homme!" Catherine's voice sounded shriller than ever before: it was a yelling rather than a singing. "He's my ^{ma-dam} man..." the chorus repeated ^{you} yawling the last word with a shameless outburst of sensual enthusiasm.

Aunt Jane, meanwhile, continued to address her ^{desperate} ~~plaintive~~ whisper to me: "I disapproved of it from the very beginning... A young girl - alone in Paris! ^{Think of} ~~was~~ the temptations!... the vicious foreigners!... But ~~my~~ sister was so naive... And then, ~~was~~ there was nothing much she could do about it..." Catherine just refused to come back... Said she couldn't stand America. What nonsense! After all, she is an American girl. Why should she spend her

life in Montparnasse cafés drinking Hennessy and all sorts of ^{if you please} ~~vicious~~ things? Why should she ^{only} ~~after all?~~"

The old lady made a dramatic pause as if she expected me to reply. But I didn't know what to say and ^{only} ~~shrugged~~ my shoulders, while the thundering chorus intoned, It's a long way to Tibarrary. Catherine had apparently regained her physical energies. Now she jumped on a chair to conduct the singing ~~mob~~ from this elevated position. Aunt Jane preferred to ignore this new and most shocking development. Moving ~~her~~ a little closer to me, the upper part of her body bent forward, she sighed and talked and sobbed with a sort of sorrowful intimacy. "And then, that marriage!" she said. ~~"I was against it, right from the beginning."~~ "A ~~and~~ daughter of Patricia Ferguson - and some unknown little Frenchman! Think of it! ~~And then, these Frenchmen are so volatile...~~" This she uttered in an emphatic whisper as if confiding to me a significant but somewhat dirty secret. "So incredibly volatile - all of them!"

"We built a little home - just made for two..." Catherine's voice radiated with savage jubilation.

"And a pilot, of all things!" Aunt Jane shook her head; the fact of Catherine's French husband having been a pilot seemed more inconceivable to her than anything else. ~~"And I to think that I came from Boston, just to welcome her at the pier!"~~ she added with a plaintive, absent-minded smile.

This was the Marseillaise: Catherine sang it alone - standing very erect on her fragile platform, brandishing the empty bottle as a weapon or a banner.

"Allons, Enfants de la Patrie..."

As only a few sporadic voices responded, she stopped and held her open hand behind her ~~her~~ ear with that humorous gesture typical of certain popular chansonniers who went their audience to chime in the refrain of their song. "What's the matter?" the merry widow asked, with a faked French

accent. "I don't hear anything!" She made encouraging gestures; repeated the beginning of the anthem, and then paused again - not yet satisfied with the reaction.

"Mais c'est honteux!" she scolded. "Can't you open your mouth - you there? Fifth Column!"

It was Carl, the waiter, to whom she thus appealed. He blushed and tried to hide behind the back of a gigantic sailor. But Catherine, merry and relentless, didn't let him get away: she called him a coward, and a naughty little boy, and insisted he had to sing. The crowd seemed highly amused by this gay performance. The sailors roared with laughter and pushed each other with their elbows to demonstrate how much they enjoyed the show. "She's O.K.," they declared. And others said, "She's nuts," or, "She's lots of fun." One of the girls added, full of interest and appreciation, "She's drunk like hell." - Undoubtedly, Catherine was a considerable success.

Some colored boys who worked in the kitchen and had been attracted by the increasing noise, echoed the melody ^{of the Marseillaise} while they laughingly aped Catherine's bold and dramatic pose. I suddenly noticed a variety of new faces in the motley crowd: a Chinese little girl, two old men with long grizzly beards, a stout heavy woman talking very loud in Russian to a chubby little boy, several American soldiers arm in arm with a bunch of British mariners, a young lady in a ^{gorgeous} ~~white~~ evening gown - conspicuously handsome, jealously guarded by an aging cavalier sweating in his tuxedo. I had no time to wonder whether all these people had joined our group from outside or had been sitting in this restaurant - hidden in secret niches. However, here they were as by magic - filling, overcrowding the scene, as does the chorus when it invades the stage in the pompous finale of an opera. But the noise they produced was not precisely what one may expect from a well-trained operatic ensemble. The magnificent and familiar tune of the Marseillaise was paraphrased, transformed, distorted in the most arbitrary fashion. Some of the singers improvised an absurd English text, ~~as they thought the original French lines unpronounceable.~~ Others just screamed and whistled, while again others shouted different songs - Long Live America or Old Man River or God Save the King.

It was an amazing scene - a grand spectacle of sweeping drunkenness, crazy joy and savage fraternization. The men and women laid their arms around each other's shoulders; they trampled and ^{braved} ~~braved~~ and swang - shaken and winged by a sort of Dionysiac rapture. One of the soldiers kissed the Russian matron, while a British sailor began to dance with the ^{gorgeous girl} ~~precious beauty in white~~ - very much to the vexation of her flabby companion.

Catherine - an irresistible maenad - conducted and enchanted the bachantic crowd. She was alarmingly beautiful - transfigured in a sort of wild and aggressive trance. I looked at her, with delight and

apprehension. What a disquieting goddess of intoxication! - the white flame of her face, crowned by the slanting helmet; the fumbling grandeur of her gestures; splendor and misery of her meagre body. Her mouth was wide open - a black hole as in a tragic mask.

"Le jour de gloire est arrivé..."

"... always been a problem child... always different...": This was the bleak lament of the unhappy Aunt. Most of her words were ~~always~~ swept away by the explosions of inspired clamor. "... If my poor sister ^{were} ~~would~~ still ~~be~~ alive to see this!... What a disgrace! what a scandal! ... Always something strange about her... streak of vulgarity in her character... something morbid.... Used to play with colored children... ~~My poor sister often complained....~~ No dignity... sanatorium... Doctor Pelferton, old friend of the family... mental disorder... ~~shock of ex-~~periences over there... vicious foreigners... utterly embarrassing... disgrace..."

"Le jour de gloire..."

Catherine's outcry - raucous and triumphant - proved stronger than Aunt Jane's frantic whisper. But now her voice faltered. I noticed, with painful surprise, that the shining pallor of her face could turn even more colorless. She staggered: in a moment or two she would fall. I felt that I ought to prop her, to protect her, to cry for help: Doctor Pelferton! police! an emergency car to take her away, to a hospital...

But I remained motionless and speechless - paralyzed with dread and pity and admiration. I didn't want to think of her inevitable collapse - not of Doctor Pelferton, the sanatorium, the nurses. Not now! Not while this tremendous moment still lasted - the moment of the collective song, the general embrace, the bachantic communion. Nor did I want to disturb her frenzied and ravishing pantomime - the beatitude of her smile, the swinging motion of her spread-out arms - challenging and blessing the crowd which she ^{united} ~~inspired~~ and dominated for one ~~miracu-~~lous and transient and miraculous second.

*

THREE STAR HENNESSY

By Klaus Mann

It's no fun to have dinner by yourself. You don't enjoy your food without company, particularly in a restaurant, and there is something embarrassing about listening to the conversations going on at the other tables. You don't want to overhear them, of course; but you just can't help it. For, curiously enough, even the most futile talk between two people whom you have never seen before and will never see again, is somehow more attractive than a magazine or a paper.

You may be struck by a voice before you have a chance to catch the first glimpse of the face to which that voice belongs. Those two women, for instance, were at first nothing but two voices -- the mellow and kindly speech of a stolid matron and the penetrating whisper of a younger woman.

The older suggested, in a friendly, conversational tone: "You'll find things in Boston much less changed than they are here, in New York." Whereupon the younger voice, glum and drowsy: "I don't think New York has much changed since I saw it last."

"Eleven years is a long time," observed the old voice, somewhat cryptically. And the young one: "Eleven years? It seems so much longer to me. . . Let's see. . . 1925. . . . I left for France in '25."

"Exactly," confirmed the old cadences, adding with a certain tender pedantry: "But you've been here twice since that time. Once in '28 and then, of course, the '29 trip."

"Why do you say, 'of course?'"

"I'll always remember how your poor mother died." The sonorous organ was shaking with sad memories and disapproval of the younger woman's lack of them.

The brighter voice sounded rather nonplussed as it exclaimed, hastily and a bit too loud: "Of course, how silly I am! I came just too late for the funeral. . . ." There was an abrupt little giggle as if at a funny incident. I didn't like the chuckle and then, all of a sudden, the stillness. I finished my whisky and turned my head to have a look. The two ladies were sitting fairly close to me. I could easily watch them

when I turned my head just a little bit to the right.

The older woman - stately and in her middle sixties - was dressed all in white which gave her appearance a touch of solemn serenity -- something almost priest-like. She looked evniably cool and immaculate. The place was not air-conditioned and it was hot outside -- one of those summer nights in New York when the vast masses of towered stones seem to exhale the accumulated glow of the day like tremendous stoves.

The matron looked dignified and a trifle quaint; but there was something surprising, almost frightening about her younger companion. That black costume of hers certainly was a queer sort of a dress to wear -- completely bare of any adornment and conspicuously tight. The attractive fragility of her body was displayed, with a kind of austere shamelessness, under the supple stuff. Her little hat was unexpectedly saucy -- a coquettish cap made of a hard, lustrous material, almost metallic: it crowned the disquieting pallor of her face with a tiny helmet. She looked at once weary and aggressive -- half like a worn-out Amazon, half like a pugnacious nun.

Both women seemed utterly out of place in this cheap restaurant full of clamorous, sweating men. Besides, it was rather late -- long after the regular dinner hour, about ten-thirty or so. A bunch of sailors were having a good time at the bar. Their savage laughter drowned all the other voices. It was just when the hilarity of the sailors reached its climax that I heard the voice of the younger woman again-- struggling with a sort of desperate energy, against the detonations of so much violent joy. "My" she exclaimed -- and, even without looking at her I knew the wry smile distorting her pallid lips. "Aren't we gay!" She seemed exceedingly irritated.

"They are young," the old lady observed apologetically. And she added with tender reproach: "I warned you not to come here, Catherine. It's not the right kind of a place for you. It's vulgar."

Catherine, swiftly and angrily: "It's a lot better anyway than your so-called swanky restaurants."

"Well, I thought you might prefer French food -- that's all." The old lady kept smiling but obviously was a trifle hurt.

"French food!" Catherine jerked with despise. "A Polish cook, a bunch of Italian waiters, and three dollars for a soup with foul fish — that's what they call 'French food' over here!"

This was going too far, even for the good-natured matron. "I am sorry we are not in Paris," she said. — "So am I," Catherine flashed back.

There was a silence — dismal and apprehensive. I felt utterly uncomfortable. To witness this mute quarrel was infinitely more indiscreet than to overhear the most intimate conversation.

I tried to concentrate on my paper.

French troops fighting other French troops, somewhere in Syria. . . A French admiral made a statement to the effect that Germany is the most reliable, most unselfish friend the French nation ever had. . . Occupied zone, unoccupied zone. . . Laval, Pétain, le général de Gaulle. . . It seemed all blurred and crazy and terribly far away. It had no reality. It was sad and rather nauseous. But it was not real.

The laughing soldiers were real. This glass, this bread, this table — they were real. But what the papers said sounded hollow — deceitful messages from a remote, nightmarish world.

I wanted another whisky. The waiter said, "Yessir, one moment sir;" but he didn't move. He was busy writing down the orders of the two women.

"Don't you care for dessert?" the older one asked, in that tenderly reproachful voice of hers.

"No Aunt Jane. Thank you ever so much. Not apple pie with cheese."

Aunt Jane smiled forgivingly. "For me, old-fashioned strawberry short-cake," she decided with mild determination.

"Yes Ma'am." The waiter was on the point of withdrawing when Catherine inquired — somewhat sceptically: "Do you have any cognac?"

As the waiter didn't understand what was meant, Aunt Jane explained to him all indulgence and motherly dignity: "Brandy, young man! — the lady wants to know if you have any brancy."

He blushed and stammered. "Yes. . . Why. . . of course, Ma'am. . . We have a domes-

tic brandy. . .Very good stuff, they say. . ."

Catherine interrupted him sharply: "I want French cognac, or nothing."
And the old woman added, with a reconciliatory smile: "The lady wants an imported brandy, young man. Would you be good enough to ask the bartender if he has any French brandy left."

The waiter rushed to the bar, winged with zeal to please that severe and exotic lady. ~~He was a good natured fellow - ungainly and tall, with a blank, healthy face. They called him Carl. He was of Swedish descent and came from the Middle West.~~

~~Aunt Jane, meanwhile insisted that Catherine's kind of haughtiness was all the more absurd considering the state of affairs in Europe, particularly in France.~~

"Here we are," ^{he} ~~the waiter~~ beamed, still panting, his forehead moist with sweat. "And it's a real imported too — Hennessy Three Stars. . ." He mispronounced the foreign name, his face purple with pride and embarrassment.

"Sans Plague!" Catherine seemed surprised. "Du vraie Hennessy! Pas possible! Et même aux trois étoiles!"

The waiter stared at her as though she were speaking Chinese.

She studied the label of the cognac bottle as if it were the faded inscription on an ancient tombstone. I noticed that she used a tiny lorgnette — a little gleu of mother-of-pearl and gold. Probably she was very near-sighted — that gave her eyes their disquieting lustre, at once intense and weary, which is characteristic of near-sighted women who are too vain to wear eye-glasses.

"It's Hennessy, all right," she concluded ~~at~~ at last, with wistful solemnity.
"It's the real thing."

"The last bottle we've got — according ^{to} ~~the~~ bartender," declared ^(the waiter) ~~him~~ — his eyes full of awe, wandering between the valuable bottle and the pale lady in black. "No more Hennessy now. No sir. The Nazis are getting tight on all that French champagne over there." He had an abrupt, bellowing laugh, as though surprised by his own daring.

Catherine gave him one of her swift, piercing glances. "Ça suffit," she said in an icy voice.

The huge fellow was rather frightened. "Do you care for a pony?" he asked and took a stiff little bow.

"A pony?" She seemed strangely irked, even offended by this expression as though it meant an indecent proposition.

"Why, we serve drinks or ponies," ^{he} ~~the waiter~~ tried to explain, with a helpless grin. "A pony is a small drink. A drink is a double pony."

"A drink, then, I should say!" Catherine shrugged her shoulders; her voice was shaking with contempt and impatience.

When she had emptied her glass — it took her just a few seconds — she demanded another one: "But no pony, if you please!" she warned the waiter, a little more graciously.

"I've just come from France," she observed, while he poured the golden liquid into her glass.

"Yes, Ma'am."

"I am very fond of Hennessy," she continued. "My husband, too, was very fond of it. It was his favorite brand."

There was a musing tenderness in her voice. The waiter didn't know what to say. Catherine lifted the glass as for a solemn toast. "He is dead," she informed the waiter, always with that hazy, oblivious smile. "Yes, he was a pilot. Has been killed by the boches."

"Yes Ma'am."

She had emptied the glass.

"Another one," she said softly, looking very proud and absent-minded.

"I think you've had enough, child." The old lady, very timidly, touched Catherine's wrist. But the young widow did not react. "Une autre fine," she insisted. ~~Carl didn't understand the words, but her imperious gesture and the thirsty look of her eyes were unmistakable.~~

This time she drank very slowly, tasting and enjoying every drop. It was only when she had finished that she turned to Aunt Jane again. "Gaston was really fond of this stuff," she said, as though the old lady had questioned it.

"I know," Aunt Jane nodded, mildly.

But for some reason this harmless remark annoyed her irritable niece. "I know.. I know.." She had a rather aggressive way of imitating the old lady's gentle voice. "What a ludicrous thing to say! After all, you never met him."

"But I know what type of a man he was," Aunt Jane replied.

"What's wrong about it?" Catherine snapped. "All Frenchmen feel the same way. In fact, most civilized people do," she concluded pugnaciously.

There was another one of those stone-like silences. Finally Aunt Jane said: "You aren't in a very good mood tonight, Catherine. I am sorry. Don't you think we'd better go?"

"Let me have one more fine!" Catherine begged, with a pathetic effort to look like a spoiled, cute little girl. "Just one tiny, little glass!" she cooed -- while Aunt Jane bent her face in silent resignation.

After this new refreshment, ~~Catherine had this time insisted on a double drink~~ the young widow grew nostalgic and alarmingly gentle. "You are so sweet and patient, Auntie," she sighed, and tried to catch the old lady's hand. "Don't be cross with me, please! Please, darling Auntie, tell me that you are not cross!"

"Of course not," the old lady suddenly looked very tired as if exhausted by a long, hopeless struggle. "Why should I be cross with you? I would like to go now, that's all."

Without paying any attention to Aunt Jane's request, Catherine continued to accuse herself in a whining, unsteady voice: "I hate to be such a bore! Do you think I don't know what a bore I am? How I must get on your nerves? ~~I would like to~~ I am making such an ass of myself!"

"Don't be silly!" the old lady said. "You don't get on my nerves at all."

g But it is pitiful to watch you torment yourself. Couldn't you try to forget Paris and the war and your poor husband, just for a little while?"

"How could I ever forget those things?" Catherine had a wide, unfocussed look

look

into space. "They are my life. I don't want to forget them. They are all I have."

"But now you are here, Catherine!" the old woman reminded her in an imploring voice. "This is your life, Catherine! This is your country, your future! Here are the people who love you. Tomorrow in Boston, you will see your sister Amelia, and old Mrs. Prixy — it's amazing how well she carries her seventy-seven years! and Philip — good old Philip: he kept asking after you, during all this time. Between ourselves, I am pretty sure he still has a secret little weakness for you", she added with a timid attempt to produce a roguish smile.

"Mrs. Prixy. . Amelia. .Philip. . ." Catherine repeated the names as the fragments of an old song that she had long forgotten. "I remember the names, but I cannot remember the faces. Chamber music with Mrs. Prixy and the theater with Philip. But all this seems so long ago. And so many things have happened. Boston is too far away."

"Just four and a half hours if we make the fast morning train." Aunt Jane tried with to call her back to reality/this sober statement.

"I felt it right away when I arrived here," Catherine said in a tone as if talking to herself. "This country has no reality. Not for me. The skyscrapers, the cars, the people, the drugstores, the movie theatres — they have nothing to tell me, nothing to give me: everything is so pompous and huge and so terribly empty."

"Don't forget, Catherine, it is your country you are talking about!" the old lady said gravely.

"Is it indeed my country?" It sounded pensive and sorrowful rather than bitter. She seemed to wait for an answer, but while Aunt Jane mumbled something about the necessity of adapting oneself to the actual conditions of life, Catherine continued her plaintive monologue. "Here, in America, things have no life, no substance. They don't smell, they don't suffer. There is no authentic joy nor is there authentic drama, because there is no history, no tradition. If one has lived in Paris. . ."

"That's enough!" The old lady assumed an attitude of forbidding majesty. "I don't want to hear about Paris any more! Do you understand me, Catherine? I am fed up with Paris."

Her indignation was so vehement and absorbing that she even failed to notice

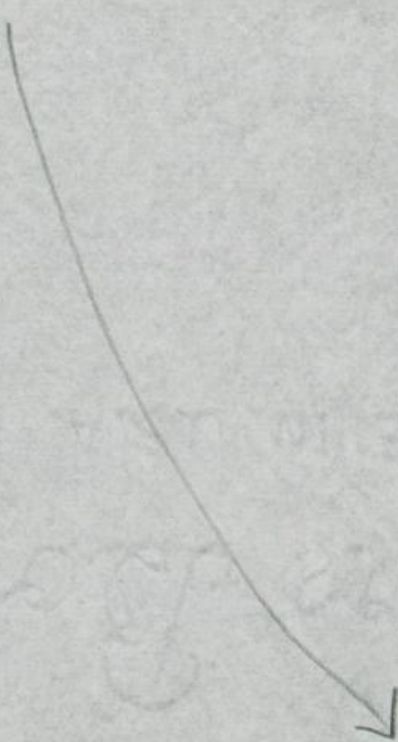
Catherine's secret conspiracy with the waiter.

"What's your name, my friend?" Catherine whispered. He was surprised and flattered. "Carl," he grinned.

He was a good-natured fellow - ungainly and tall, with a blank, healthy face. He was of Swedish descent and came from the Middle West.

Nothing could be more preposterous - said Aunt Jane - than the European arrogance of certain Americans who had spent a few years "over there." She asked her niece what, in her opinion, was so impressive and admirable about the French defeat and the political system that had led to this shameful collapse.

Carl, meanwhile, had understood that the lady in black wanted another drink. While he refilled her glass, the old lady exclaimed: "Nobody can deny that France is in a state of decay - thoroughly corrupt and rotten. It's not a very inspiring spectacle your grande nation is giving the world! Not what I would call a very great performance!"



Catherine's secret conspiracy with the waiter. Nothing could be more preposterous — said Aunt Jane — than ^{the} European arrogance of certain Americans who had spent a few years "over there". While she was talking, Carl refilled Catherine's glass. She asked her niece to inform her what, in her opinion, was so impressive and admirable about the French defeat and the political system that had led to this shameful collapse: "It isn't a very inspiring spectacle France is giving the world! Not what I would call a very great performance!"

Catherine sipped her cognac, gazing thoughtfully into the glass. "If you are right," she observed at last, with ominous casualness, "if what you say is correct, Aunt Jane — and I suppose it is — then Gaston has died in vain."

It was pathetic to watch how the old lady's face paled and became motionless. She was profoundly embarrassed. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, Catherine, dearest," she stammered. I was afraid she was going to burst into tears.

"It's alright," said Catherine, without a smile. "Forget it." She emptied her glass, then continued: "There's nothing wrong about what you've just said. Do you really believe I didn't know all these things? Sometimes I am afraid that Gaston might have known them as well. . ."

For one moment she covered her eyes with a trembling hand as if to banish an unbearable vision. "What do you think is it that haunts and torments me so?" she asked, her brow still hidden behind the delicate lattice of her shaking fingers. "It's not that I lost Gaston. I was very happy with him. It couldn't last. I always knew I would lose him. He was a pilot, and he loved his profession almost as much as he loved me. I tried to be as courageous as he always was. Yes, I tried very hard. . ."

She took her hand from her eyes, which had appallingly changed: they were blinded and widened with fear. "I tried to be brave," she said. "But I really was half-dead with terror — during all those years. I was scared stiff, every time he left me. I wonder if you can imagine what I went through, Aunt Jane. . . When he made that crazy expedition to Africa and I had no word from him for weeks — do you have any idea what that means, Aunt Jane?"

There was a little pause. The young woman in mourning was sitting very erect: the expression of her face had altered. What a strange transformation, under the saucy crown of her coquettish and militant hat! A flash of white light animated her features. Her smile was radiant with pride as she continued:

"But when the war came, there was no fear any more. For he believed in the cause he was called to fight for. Many of his friends did not believe in it, but he did, and so did I. Yes, both of us believed in France -- passionately, without questioning. We were so firmly convinced that France would fight and conquer, and lead the suffering peoples of Europe to a better future. Sometimes I had certain doubts, but I thought I ought to suppress them -- for the sake of Gaston. It was only when he was dead, and when I re-read his letters, hundreds of times, until I knew all of them by heart: it was only then that I began to wonder if he, perhaps, had been thinking the same things, and had been haunted by the same qualms and the same apprehension, and had sacrificed his life -- knowing that it was in vain; and had died hopeless and faithless and bitterly disillusioned."

"Poor child". Aunt Jane was profoundly moved. "Poor Catherine," she said. "Your sister and I will try to cheer you up."

Poor little Catherine had a short, nasal laugh: it was scathing. Then she turned the upper part of her body, with a savage provocative motion. "Garçon!" she cried, and her voice was so shrill that it attracted attention, even in this clamorous place. People began to look at her and to grin.

She turned very angry as Carl lingered in a distant corner of the restaurant. "Garçon! Est-ce que vous êtes sourd?" she shouted. "Merde alors!" Whereupon the old lady writhed as if smitten by a convulsive aching. "Catherine! Please!" she whimpered. But her niece, wanton and merciless as a naughty child, repeated at the top of her voice: "Merde - merde - merde alors!" -- "I only hope that no one understands French in this place!" sighed Aunt Jane.

Carl had an anxious grin as he presented the bottle - humbly and apologetically, as one offers a due tribute to a capricious tyrant. "Another pony, Ma'am?" he asked with awkward irony.

[Paragraph!]

Catherine said in an ominously lowered voice: "Give me the bottle." He hesitated, grinned, didn't know what to do.

"Give me the bottle!" she repeated piercing him with terrifying looks.

"Why ... Ma'am...", he stammered.

[No paragraph!]

✓ "If you care for another drink, lady, I'll be only too glad..."

"How do you dare?" Catherine hissed, her face rigid with fury.

"Catherine! Please!!" Aunt Jane raised her hands, with a theatrical gesture, and wrung them near Catherine's stiff face. "Let's go, darling! Please don't make a scene!"

"I am not going to make a scene," the young widow declared with that forced *dignity* characteristic of women in a certain stage of intoxication preceding the total collapse. "Just let me handle this little affair myself. - Thank you. I appreciate it," she added with a frozen, absent-minded smile.

"Which affair, for God's sake?" the old lady groaned.

"This young man understands me perfectly well." She darted murderous glances. "He's a spy," she concluded softly, with terrifying gentleness.

"Why... lady..." His mouth sagged wide open. He was completely perplexed.

"Do you deny it, young man?" She locked her arms across her chest.

"I don't know what you mean," he finally managed to say.

"Is that so?" She emphasized every syllable of her rethoric question while her merciless eyes examined his ^Wpurple face. "I'll tell you what I mean - you scoundrel!" she shouted with a sudden outburst of anger.

[No paragraph!]

✓ "Your name is Carl, isn't it?" She jumped up from her chair and made three strides towards him. "Isn't it?" she repeated facing him from menacing proximity.

He nodded, dumbfounded with surprise - whereupon she gave a hoarse, triumphant laugh. "A German name!" she exclaimed with a slight turn of her head as if addressing an imaginary audience. "Exactly what I had anticipated. - The case is only too obvious," she concluded with a restrained but expressive gesture. "Carl, the waiter, is guilty of Fifth Column-activities and high treason." She made a stiff little bow - paying homage to a martial court that she had just convinced of the defendant's culpability.

Carl stared helplessly at that incredible lady-- his prodigious judge, forbidding and yet attractive, very erect in the tight uniform of her mourning dress, the glittering helmet slanting above her white, rigid face. Mouth ajar, in a stupor of bewilderment, he listened to her ragged and meaningless words:

"Ah! le misérable! comme je le déteste! Le chien! Ah! le traître! C'est lui qui a tué mon bien-aimé; qui a ruiné la patrie... Le voilà! l'assassin! le boche! l'agent du diable!"

Her knees gave way; she tottered. He held her up with an automatic politeness and guided her to a chair. As soon as she was seated she re-assumed her menacing attitude. "My bottle!" she demanded, while the old lady whimpered: "Catie! Child! Don't you realize what you are doing to me! Stop it! Please! Ahh! the scandal! the shame!"

"Cut it out!" the young widow interrupted her, merciless and rude. It was only now that Aunt Jane began to weep--noiselessly and without hiding her face. "We have to get up at seven o'clock tomorrow!" she mumbled, while tiny tears like pearls adorned the extensive plain of her wrinkled face. "Don't you remember! The eight o'clock train! Our dates in Boston!"

"My bottle!" Catherine repeated - her features numb with stubbornness.

And suddenly she snatched the bottle from Carl who was just making a clumsy attempt to hide it behind his back.

She had the bottle; she beamed and triumphed; she caressed it, rocked it in her lap as if she had regained her beloved baby after a long period of cruel separation. "Mon chou!" she whispered pressing her cheeks and lips tenderly against the cool curvature of the amber-colored glass. "Mon chou ~~de~~ fleur! Ma petite bouteille!"

There was a little sucking noise when her mouth embraced the round opening. She took slow, heavy gulps out of the bottle which she held with both hands, almost in a right angle from her relaxing face.

People began to gather around her. Laughter and ironic applause accompanied the astounding scene. Sailors, waiters and girls gloated on Catherine's degradation. "She sure can take it," observed one of the sailors, and the whole crowd guffawed. A girl with a face like a glaring mask said in a pointed, malicious voice: "The merry widow. Isn't she

a honey!"

In the midst of the general uproar I heard Aunt Jane groaning: "What a scene! My Lord! How do we get out of here! Oh, my Lord!"

It was at this moment that Catherine began to sing. At first it was only a humming noise; but gradually it grew stronger as though she were trying to drown Aunt Jane's monotonous jeremiads. Catherine sang in a strangely colourless voice -- the upper part of her vady swaying with the rhythm of the tune.

"Valencia, tu es une fille étrange. . ."

Her face remained pale and rigid -- frozen in a sort of cold and cruel ecstasy.

"Savez-vous planter des choux -- à la mode de chez nous. . . À la mode, à la mode. . ."

"The eight-o'clock train!" sobbed the aunt. "Mrs. Prixy will be there to get us. . ."

And Catherine, brandishing the empty brandy bottle: "Après de ma blonde il fait bon dormir dormir. . ."

One of the sailors knew a little French. His vigorous bass joined Catherine's shrill soprano. Others chimed in-- girls, sailors, and waiters.

"J'ai deux amours -- mon pays et Paris. . ."

"She has always been different. . ." The old lady talked to me - surprisingly enough. Her distress and terror were such that she forgot all about her fine, reserved manners, her dignified New England attitude. Her eyes widened with anguish, she chattered to a man at another table - a man she had never seen before: a stranger who had been tactless enough to overhear her conversation - unfortunate enough to witness the macabre misbehaviour of her eccentric niece. "Catherine is so different, my poor sister used to say to me. . . She died many years ago when Catherine already was abroad . . . to study music -- so she said. . ." Aunt Jane laughed bitterly and had a twinkle in her eyes as if she wanted to intimate that, in her opinion, the music lessons were nothing but an obvious pretext for all kinds of loose and sordid goings-on.

"Mais je l'aime! c'est mon homme!" Catherine's voice sounded shriller than ever before: it was a yelling rather than a singing. "He's my ma-an" repeated the chorus drawling the last word with an outburst of sensual enthusiasm.

Aunt Jane, meanwhile, continued to address her desperate whisper to me: "I disapproved of it from the very beginning. . .A young girl - alone in Paris! Think of the temptations!.. the vicious foreigners!...But Catherine refused to come back...Said she couldn't stand America. What nonsense! After all, she is an American girl. Why should she spend her life in Montparnasse cafés drinking Hennessy and all sorts of ugly things? Why should she, if you please?"

The old lady made a dramatic pause as if she expected me to reply. But I didn't know what to say and only shrugged my shoulders, while the thundering chorus intonated, It's a long way to Tipperary. Catherine had apparently regained her physical energies. Now she jumped on a chair to conduct the singing mob from this elevated position. Aunt Jane preferred to ignore this new and most shocking development. Moving a little closer to me, the upper part of her body bent forward, she sighed and talked and sobbed with a sort of sorrowful intimacy. "And then, that marriage!" she said. "A daughter of Patricia Ferguson - and some unknown little Frenchman! Think of it!"

"We built a little home - just made for two. . ." Catherine's voice radiated with savage jubilation.

"And a pilot of all things!" Aunt Jane shook her head: the fact of Catherine's French husband having been a pilot seemed more inconceivable to her than anything else.

This was the Marseillaise: Catherine sang it alone - standing very erect on her fragile platform, brandishing the empty bottle as a weapon or a banner.

"Allons, enfants de la Patrie. . ."

As only a few sporadic voices responded, she stopped and held her open hand behind her ear with that humorous gesture typical of certain popular chansonniers who want their audience to chime in the refrain of their song. "What's the matter?" the merry widow asked, with a faked French accent. "I don't hear anything!" She made encouraging gestures; repeated the beginning of the anthem, and then paused again - not yet satisfied with the reaction.

"Mais c'est honteux!" she scolded. "Can't you open your mouth - you there? Fifth Column!"

It was Carl, the waiter, to whom she thus appealed. He blushed and tried to hide behind the back of a gigantic sailor. But Catherine, merry and relentless, didn't let him get away: she called him a coward, and a naughty little boy, and insisted he had to sing. The crowd seemed highly amused by this gay performance. The sailors roared with laughter and pushed each other with their elbows to demonstrate how much they enjoyed the show. "She's O.K.," they declared. And others said, "She's nuts," or, "She's lots of fun." One of the girls added, full of interest and appreciation, "She's drunk as hell." Undoubtedly, Catherine was a considerable success.

Some colored boys who worked in the kitchen and had been attracted by the increasing noise, echoed the melody of the Marseillaise while they laughingly aped Catherine's bold and dramatic pose. I suddenly noticed a variety of new faces in the motley crowd: a little Chinese girl, two old men with long grizzly beards, a stout heavy woman talking very loud in Russian to a chubby little boy, several American soldiers arm in arm with a bunch of British mariners, a young lady in a gorgeous evening gown - conspicuously handsome, jealously guarded by an aging cavalier sweating in his tuxedo. I had no time to wonder whether all these people had joined our group from outside or had been sitting in this restaurant -- hidden in secret niches. However, here they were as by magic -- filling, overcrowding the scene, as does the chorus when it invades the stage in the pompous finale of an opera. But the noise they produced was not precisely what one may expect from a well-trained operatic ensemble. The magnificent and familiar tune of the Marseillaise was paraphrased, transformed, distorted in the most arbitrary fashion. Some of the singers improvised an absurd English text. Others just screamed and whistled, while again others shouted different songs - God Bless America or Old Man River or God Save the King.

It was an amazing scene -- a grand spectacle of sweeping drunkenness, crazy joy and savage fraternization. The men and women laid their arms around each other's shoulders; they trampled and brayed and swung - shaken and winged by a sort of Dionysiac rapture. One of the soldiers kissed the Russian matron while a British sailor began to dance with the

Lieber Klaus:

Die Zeichnung war bei:

Engure (Carand),

Baran,

Mademoiselle,

Ladies' H. J.

Wucai, H. C.

Foray

Conco.

Stay. -

Erstreck: alles Gute!

Mein HK

2/5/42