

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Speed. A Story.

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Speed

I must not be so nervous. Mr. Prokoff
says my position is not as grave as
all that. ~~and Mr. P. certainly knows~~
That ~~Summons~~ is probably forged,
Mr. P. thinks. How could those filthy
kids get an authentic ~~Summons~~ ~~against~~
him? he said. But, of course, he
doesn't know what has really happened.
How could he believe that Speed has
any serious claims against a disreputable
man like my self? For my ~~own~~ still am
rather disreputable, in Mr. P.'s opinion,
in spite of everything that happened.
I read books, and I pay my rent
without under delay, and once
my room took Mr. P. to the movies.
Mr. P. to said to me, time and
again: You are a gentleman, Mr.
Knoll. That's why I like to have
you in our house. - He has an
~~very~~ ~~statement~~ ~~some what~~ ~~unpleasant~~
way of ~~emphasizing~~ the word "g."
~~in~~ ~~though~~ ~~it~~ ~~gave~~ ~~enjoying~~ ~~very~~
syllable of it as though it were
a piece of candy ~~slow~~ that slowly
melted in his mouth

- with long ^{minutes} ~~hours~~ of ~~anxious~~ waiting
in some dark hiding place - in a room
body came, and ~~you~~ ^{my} ~~here~~

Y.A. he advised me ~~not~~ ^{to} ~~enter~~ ^{my own room as long}
as the ~~high~~ ^{low} as ~~possible~~ ^{with}
~~these~~ ^{Summons} keep lying in
wait for me, ~~near Mr. P.~~ the
house in the street, or perhaps even
somewhere hidden in the house
itself... For the queer thing about
this Summons is (as Mr. P.
was kind enough to teach me)
that they assume the dignity
of legal documents and oblige
you to follow their order to
the next police station, or by
it and when the person who wants
you to catch you, succeeds
in handing the paper over to
you ~~personally~~. So Mr. P. said
I should hide in this little
room till the boys get tired of
waiting... Mr. P. thinks I should
take no chance, though he feels
pretty sure...

Do I still look like a gentleman?
But tomorrow I may be in jail,
or expelled from this country. And
where, then, should I go? They
will keep me in Ellis Island. I shall
be treated like an ~~immigrant~~ ^{alien} ~~foreigner~~ ^{stranger}
I will never see you again.

... I must pull myself together, concentrate my ~~and~~ thoughts. There is plenty of time to do so, and this noon is quiet enough — only too quiet, indeed — empty ~~and~~ ^{quietly} and peaceful as a prison cell, ~~and~~ and dark as a grave ... I have to examine the whole affair, closely and soberly. It got me down because I am not accustomed to that kind of thing. I lost the grip on the situation. It's not only that I was traced — though I was traced, of course —; above all I am ~~traced~~ ^{surprised} — deeply, terribly surprised. For ~~my~~ ^{my} ~~did not~~ ^{believe} that I could ever get involved in such an affair like this ... I must lead a tranquil, orderly life. I was a good husband,

It is not so much the actual
danger that makes me shudder,
~~it is the contact with~~
a but the fact that I

~~from~~ The contact with the
murder would make me
shudder - it frightens, paralyzes
me. I was always afraid of
the underworld; that is
why I left my country
and came here. I am
fearful no more -

He takes the whole affair not
quite seriously, and keeps telling
me: ~~What kind of claims could~~
~~After all, Dr. K.~~ Don't let
~~let~~ those filthy kids scare
you, Dr. K.! They are all
for you, and that's what
you want to happen.

2/ and I would have been a good
father if Anna had wanted a child.
Spud often told me, with that bland,
innocent smile he could sometimes
have: "You should have a son,
Clarence. Why don't you have a
son?" He always called me Clarence,
for some shady reason of his own —
though I think he had a more, simple
name. But he preferred Clarence: this
is one of his mysterious peculiarities
... Everything would be easier if
I had a son: Anna would not have
abandoned me, would have joined
me when I went to this country...
Oh, perhaps, things would be even
worse, more complicated, if we had
a child. What a proportion thing —
what a crime to have children, in
this rotten world! Why should we multiply
the amount of suffering ^{childless} human beings
— tormented ^{childless} exposed to the
hardships of a chaotic time...

My ~~permanence~~ life I want to prosper...
to feel light, the gay, ^{detached} aloof as
I did when I had smoked one of
those magic cigars. My Spud used to

Sh. betrayed me, dated me,
humiliated me. Sh. ~~brought~~
~~me to the 2nd~~ ~~It's all the~~
Sh. is responsible for my ruin,
~~my shame~~

I can hardly believe that he
is ~~really~~ bad, from whom I
will believe in his heart
He did not mean to hurt me,
in doubt. ~~He is~~ ~~He~~ The
my wife ~~from~~ his companion who
made up the whole dirty
plot. I now liked him,
now I hated him. ~~And, maybe,~~
~~My friend's sister is involved -~~
~~Larry~~ / ~~My only friend~~
if Larry, too, is involved
Pawati is full, the wise
from the background, and the
whole gang follows her
want order. Sh. can
make people do what he wants.
I wonder how he ... He now read
a book in his life. It's 20 m.

5
I knew that blood would flow in
Vienna — and I did not want to see it...
I believe in co-existence. I knew myself. I
~~wasn't disturbed~~ ~~embarrassed~~ in Germany,
went to prison in G., and was already
crawling in Angleson, and undomped all
over Europe. But I refused to believe that
as much as a principle could be, ~~for these~~ ^{unhappy} ~~unhappy~~
no wait, or now could be, ~~for these~~ ^{unhappy} ~~unhappy~~
sincerely. That is why I left my home,
and Egypt. I said to Anna:
"You can stay if you want to."

Nobody forces you to come along
with me. She had a ~~happy~~ ^{happy} little lamp
as he said: "For Anna" what they
force me. For Anna, given her a
call a few days. The beginning,
rock of pride... I could hardly understand that she
preferred to stay in Arabia, ~~the~~ But
~~the~~ gradually ^{and} ~~my~~ ^{my} strength, it's maybe
the idea, and ^{the} way — she may give me
better this way — I have a job can offer her
later when I am there, in N. Y.
a urgent life, now there, I could have her some
~~to~~ ~~old~~ ~~was~~ ~~V~~ ~~Vienna~~ ~~for~~ ~~she~~ ~~has~~ ~~enough~~
money in ~~Vienna~~ ~~has~~ ~~great~~ ~~years~~ — and
to live on, has great years — and

She was very smart when it
came to the financial arrangements,
and kept quite a nice little
house, but also managed
to transfer a ~~number~~ ^{sum} of money
something out of the country,
so that I would have enough
to live on, abroad, for a
year or so ...

'I'll work very hard', I said
to her as I kissed her goodby.
'I'll make my way, and then
you will join me...' she
said. Yes, and with a
kind smile, and I really thought
she intended to follow me ...

Her voice, too, had a faint
resemblance with A.'s —
if Lucy had ~~the same way~~
spoke the same way —
he whispered with an indescribable
grace.

6/ I was managed to get some money
out of America — ~~not very much~~ of it,
~~but enough~~ so that I did not have to
travel in America till I found a
job. I hoped to find something to do
in a book shop, or as a ^{copy} librarian,
or any other kind of a job. I
don't mind what it is, I am not
fastidious.

Everything was fairly well arranged.
Of course I was very lonely but
did not mind it, really, as I
trusted Anna would join me, soon
or later. ~~That~~ Matter had developed
now there in America, as I had
known. People with me from Vienna
that life is very gloomy there, and
Hilary. Everybody complains about the
food and all sorts of unpleasant
things. I wonder how Anna can
take it — bring a delicate as the
is and no spoiled. But apparently
she puts all right. People are exaggerating
the matter, we have still plenty to
eat. This does not quite tally with
other information I got. & I
implied just didn't want me to
be worried about her. But this was

What a pity that I had never
visited the pastur ~~Brick~~ back and
to answer! Society ladies appeared
in person for ~~the~~ first time.
— K. M. M. —

and had ~~not~~ had to accept
thankfully the offer of a much
delatious to manage this, however
as a sort of prison
function. It's hard work, of
course. But A. has to adapt
himself to her new position.

He asked me to forgive
him for the ugly words he
had used. ||

and from that day on it
was Mr. Prokoff who changed
my room, entering early in the
morning, manipulating brandishing
with an ungainly unwieldy
a large broom and a heavy

bucket. ~~Every~~ Each morning he
had prepared a new job for me
~~and~~ room fitted.

14
not the reason that made her ~~think~~
~~everything~~ ~~was~~ with me all those
nice things about Hitler, and how much
America has gained by the American.
I took quite a while before to
~~express~~ the feeling why she always

She had decided to stay there. She knew
me had a disease. She knew, of course she
could not be the wife of a man with a
Jewish mother. ~~That is~~ what she knew me:
Of course I cannot blame your wife...

Anna is responsible for everything that
happened. A. is guilty. It is all
my fault...

I must not ~~miss~~ how silly of me
to ~~not~~ like a little boy looked up
in the darkness... I should not lose
my grip on the situation. I should
try to forget ~~me~~ to forget Anna, ~~and~~
and Vienna, and my political ~~views~~
How charming it would be to feel dis-
tinguished, gay, detached - as I ~~used to be~~
when I had smoked one of those magic
cigarettes. I had said used to offer me.
How are they called? Marijuana...

Ms. J. is many more efficient
than I thought her to be; more
conscientious, too. What an odd little
man! Rather imposing, for all
his ugliness and poor manner.

How unhappy I was when I had
moved from into this dreary place.
I thought it still more depressing
than the hotel where I had lived
before.

About the disease and the treatment
in Vienna. I had to find
a new place for my self, so I
would have become mad.

Bought the Sunday Y. I ~~even~~
~~walked around~~ ~~the~~ ~~section~~ ~~where~~
looked through the section
they advertise apartment
one room apart and place I
walked around. When I came

there to go to the St. ~~East~~
between Lexington and Third,
I had ~~there~~ a formerly believed
that people needed a certain
minimum of security to
be able to live. This had, however,
swollen, easily, more ~~than~~ a continent.

[" Squad" is beginning.]

I have no friends at all in New York. I am
very lonely. ... I guess I have lost the
confidence. The good faith one and in
order to make friends — since I have
lost me. She promised me she would join
me when I find a better job. ... But I
don't believe her.

I am getting music notes in that
big box, and I am playing piano.
I feel ~~lost~~ kind of at home in that
small hotel on the West side. But
then this embarrassing story happened. It
will ruin my life. I know it. ...
A fellow who works with me at that place
recommended me the room. A fellow does not
know my real name. ... "hang on to his own place"
me. I could save money. ...
It was a nice room all right, but
expensive. Too much more so than
that narrow hole I used to have in
the hotel. ...
Mr. Lidovsky was a Russian, as a
Polish man. ...
which came from the East. ...
was he came from the East. ...
after the war, and then he lived next
to me. He always spoke German with me.
He was exceedingly ugly — with long
arms. ... He had the most definite
resemblance with a big ape. I have now
noticed. ... Mr. Lidovsky was a German.

~~My mother's~~
~~My friend~~ the
I hated the idea of parking another
room; on the other hand, I was
only too happy to get out of
this squalid place. My ~~room~~
~~room~~ had a feeling that it
would be a little less
to play with the Pro. I
with that

He had left behind with only
a few hundred marks.

... And then, with a pathetic
pide.

Amata was a hostess just as
she should be. My goodness,
what gay evening we had
in our apartment ...

My Tr. P. did not make it quite
clear whether he left Tr. only
when H. came to power, and
because of this fact, or already
before, in connection with some
business transaction, ~~at which~~

she was ~~quite~~ handsome, though somewhat plump.
The Libowsky told me "She hates
me. She thinks I am his done." "hates
When she married him, he was fairly
wealthy. (You the good business.)
But he didn't get any money out of
Germany. Of course, she hated him.
Sometimes she reminded me of Trasia.
Then I was happy that had me as
go with me. She would have Trasia.
— She told a great deal. Her eyes were
always were red with inflammation.
Sometimes she went out, then she looked
L., all dressed up. She disliked me
a little a machine. She disliked me
as I did not flirt with her.
I think Mr. L. was right this, and
that I liked him too, a little bit
me. He embarrassed me when he came and
talked. He spoke about the past. Good
old days in Berlin. He had contacts
with brilliant people and more actors,
well known people in the Reichstag
you? — His fashion ...
made under ... women ...
my drinking like to imagine and
didn't she out of boots ...
drinking around with German ...
fooling ... He told me that Mr. L.
girls ...

to a sort of hysterical outburst:
it was rather disgusting, indeed.
His lack of taste and
demeanor was appalling. At
~~the same time~~ And the
was the most shocking thing
I have ever met. And
yet I could not help
being his ~~disparaging~~
bitterly inimitable — for
I am sure that ~~he~~
~~was~~ there was nothing
even in his shoes —
~~was~~ mysteriously a distraction
announced a mysterious, alluring
through these exonerations
vulgarity.

So I ~~know~~ I listened patiently
to his tactless lament
about his ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~life~~ ^{life} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~family~~ ^{family} ~~own~~ ^{own}
with his ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~way~~ ^{way} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~my~~ ^{my} ~~own~~ ^{own}
knowing too well his
understood in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~way~~ ^{way} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~my~~ ^{my} ~~own~~ ^{own}
drama.

more to be the necessity of one of
his business friends ... He introduced them
to the small society ... "Count
cheated me. Had an affair with 'Count
Princess' — She thinks I am ugly." —
"Princess!" — "That is a question of
taste!" — "She prefers the athletic
type." — "Count" P. was very tall. — He
looked badly at his long
arms ...

It was most depressing. The small was
depressing too. And that black cat.
I am not superstitious, but ...

... I felt more lonely than ever.
I went out more frequently with
the same idiotic friends.
To the same place, a drink.

a fellow Times Square.
... It was freezing cold.

... I felt sorry for him; he
called me Speed ...

"They and smiled at me.
"said, something in the
There was something too young,
which ... He was more than
could have been my son.
I don't have any son.
didn't want children ...

[The Night scene.
He flung himself on the divan ... "My
be sick in a moment ... " — "Go the bath room!"
"I can't ... I can hold it ..."
"My effort. This was kind of the drunk ...

✓ Sometimes he had a host of
~~half-dressed~~ disaffected beauty,
a narrow dangerous charm, a
~~half-dressed~~ wicked kind of attraction
— a lush fragrance —

It was so incredible that he received
nothing — he was so very different
from any one of the known before.

The death of the
blond, elegant woman seemed
to me a little a follow-
up — a monstrous
old brother.

"Spread." bait

..... He was by no means what most people may
call handsome but he had got a certain
something about him when I saw that photo of
his sister by realising what it was ---
..... Those things that he had --- very womanly, but
of a sort of manly yellow, very faint. When
he bought them, years ago, he probably considered
them very attractive ---

..... I got a kick out of that! {
A bomb kick! It was this way
the day I found the mother, the 80
years old father. (Father abandoned her.
Mother be a well gay.
Sister,
would like to meet her. She is a
working woman. You know --- Har known
personally. [Mother: "My
sister's boy friend" --- The letter to
me. "Don't forget! It is for
my sister's boy friend, and he is a
big gangster. If you don't mail it,
he'll kill you ---"]

He never could concentrate for a minute
on a newspaper. --- His allowance of
the printed word. --- His loss for the moment,
but only with "big action." --- Took me

I recall all the tail of
my life with the P's — of
my drum life on this board,
in this city — because they
explained it to a certain
degree, why I became poor
20 years, and spent 20
many hours working in the
streets. My was it simply
was because I couldn't stand
my room any more, and the
P's face and the board,
and the board — I
just couldn't stand it.

That's why the Vanderwood
I was an easy prey for the
Vanderwood. My capacity of
rest was all gone.
was exhausting. My float
through this current one city
like a bullet with no
by the board. I was
dazed — actually dazed, when
I swollen on Union Square,
at night. It's not that the big
city around around me. I
couldn't even say that it
at all no comfort, no joy.

to a "Western." "Incredibly" dull. But
he got "a bomb kick."
Of course, I believe in heaven, as in...
I "have learned" it in school. There is going
to be a last judgment... and the angels
will blow his long trumpet - I have
learned it in school...
[But - this amazing amount of moral
freedom... The 5 dollars he owed to his
friend, the waiter, spends them for whisky;
found that waiter doesn't like it.]
The fantastic element. The call from
Alamy, 60 in the morning. The young
couple who gave him 10 bucks: "You
may need it, kid..." He bought "champagne"
(Thought it was moon. No feeling for
time...)

The manana. His lantern.
The cousin. [Did he play the drunk
follow - country - boy, inspired by city
lights...]
(My name is ~~by his own~~ ^{Charles} ~~some~~ ^{for me} ~~Charles~~...)
The big room... Snow storm.
That horrible month, full of blood...
This mad whispering: "Speed's"
cousin...

In a way I was terribly bored
all this time: this perpetual noise
is monotonous. And yet there
is something in the ~~emptiness~~ ^{emptiness}.

all this noise from empty men,
some billow-like boys, some
grand... something that says
you know you are...

Since my ear was ^{now} ~~stunned~~ ^{stunned} by
the constant ~~noise~~ ^{clamor} of boys
and new-fangled boys, and my
eyes were blinded by the
glaring, glittering lights —

how could I recognize the
voice of the wild, and
the fatal features of the
Underworld? — ~~But~~ The
looked so very innocent
when he talked to me.

I have never known any body
with who was ~~called~~ ^{called} ~~Sp. "I"~~ ^{Sp. "I"} by
the name of Sp. "I" ~~and~~
said, slightly disturbed.
Whispering to you have
done fully: "I" ~~made~~ ^{made} know any body
like me, any how."

"William had no noble you Clarence ...
"We must ... " And a laugh, not so
very pleasant ...

[The political conversation. — " So now it
was in Europe. — His amazing ignorance.
Suddenly he remembered something:
" Oh, I know — Taxation and no
representation ... " Sounded very odd.]

[I don't find my way through this
jungle of lies ... I am sure that his
disturbingly is the hidden under of this
suspicious world. — The underworld,
that's what it is ... So they have
got me. — Probably I am lost.]

[He realized that the sheer fact of
being acquainted with him meant
a disgrace, and would endanger
my position. He knew what he was —
an outcast. I could say
This is my most pathetic.]

His way of talking. Rude N.Y. slang —
and sometimes say impressively,
those words, ancient expressions, which
I hardly could understand.
About his courage:
" Does he favour me? "

H. looked slowly and dispassionately
at them then goes.
Then show - that he was every day
using the ~~same~~ ^{same} pattern of

and a ~~main~~ ^{main} ~~character~~ ^{character} ~~for~~ ^{for} his whole life.
We had moved to a little bar, and

he told us kept telling us that

it was a "nice guy" as it

had his ~~dog~~ ^{dog} bought him

hot dogs, coffee and drink.

~~He gave me a~~

His father was highly - then -

Spent ~~time~~ not only depressed

but imitated his ~~smile~~ ^{smile} ~~gesture~~ ^{gesture}

way of behaving. Laughing?

in addition.

He had ~~tried~~ ^{tried} ~~himself~~ ^{himself}

~~He had led an ad He~~

~~had started out with~~

had ~~come~~ ^{come} ~~to~~ ^{to} He was

that was right when he ~~was~~ ^{was}

that he had ~~now~~ ^{now} ~~at~~ ^{at} could not

be ~~advised~~ ^{advised} ~~by~~ ^{by} ~~him~~ ^{him} ~~being~~ ^{being} ~~dynamic~~ ^{dynamic} ~~character~~ ^{character}

"It was lots of fun" he concluded
his colonial report. "I ~~can't~~ got
a bone kick out of it."
Then he chuckled at the numerous
the ~~most~~ another referred to his
life - the most glamorous one in
the world. That he had experienced.
MA was the time when he ~~thru~~
and off with his right hand a
in Fifty-Second St. Lucy had a
"Will you" then, in one
Alon swanky night club "where
they drink champagne."

On the little flat in Lucy's room, light
colonial and gay, was ~~amused~~
according to ~~her~~ solo known,
report. ~~The most reliable~~ ~~and~~ ~~giving~~
was frequent guest among Lucy's
frequent visitors. ~~Baron~~ Will-to-
do gentlemen from Wall Street
had enjoyed themselves with
the most ~~attractive~~ chosen girls.
- the ~~most~~ ~~attractive~~ "I got a
bone kick out of it" ~~disturb~~
St. 1 and then produced a

popular host of Broadway's gay
"Luey Wilkins" and his radio 2020
brother Speed moved in all these
glory from 54th St. to
a Southampton apartment at
Park Ave.

Once "Luey's" boy friend, at the
time, was a guy who had known
another guy that was a
journalist, he decided.
"That's how you get the stuff
printed. I got a bomb
kick out of it."

..... The doorman, of course, couldn't
take it; fell down, all bleeding
all over, looked ~~rather~~ funny
like hell, ~~that~~ I got a
kick out of it; but
Luey had plenty of trouble,
because that doorman then
died in a hospital. It was
quite a mess altogether.
~~Damn it~~ ~~was~~ ~~of~~ ~~a~~ ~~kind~~ ~~to~~
~~was~~ I didn't care for Park
Ave; any how. People always
stared at you.

He noticed that M was not so
very amused by this story. He
began to remark on how
much his right's quietude. This was
the first time M saw it. He
watched me with a good slightly
contemptuous smile, as if M
was a fool led by his dangerous
dreams. "You should meet her, C."
he said. (I had just told him
that my name was H.)

He suggested we should take the
subway up town, and visit L.
in a bar, 89 St. St. where
the new was working. It was about
half-past two in the morning. He
said he would be there till four.
We could have a drink with him,
and then should may take him
to home to his apartment. I
so he would have a place where
to spend the night. M agreed,
fastly because M was curious
to meet Lucy. Fastly because
I didn't want to leave him
on the street.

So we went; but when we
arrived at the place he had
indicated, the barmen told
us that this L. hadn't been
there for several nights. The new
barmaid ~~was~~ served a very
off lunch, greenish brown. She
knew Spier, and had little
jokes with him, and he
asked me if I wanted a
date with her. "You could
make her, easily, if you
want to," he whistled.
"It's a break." But
I did not like her gray,

glimmering face.
I began to feel very tired, which
Spier grew increasingly lively
and talkative. The barmen
gave him ~~two cigarettes~~ him
something that I was not
supposed to see. I noticed,
however, that it was a small
packet of cigarettes, and
I wondered why she made so
much fuss about it.

How can I explain why I
 did not send him away, the
 next morning? - (Or, rather,
 the next afternoon, for he
 slept until two) without ~~answering~~
 at all. There are many reasons,
 and none of them is sufficient.
 I don't want to be hypothetical
 and pretend that it chiefly was
 pity that prevented me from get-
 ting rid of him (though ~~some~~ feeling
 of this kind may have influenced
 my decision, as my wife's
 in making any decision...)
 Besides, I considered him a stimulating
 companion and thought it may be
~~quite~~ ^{rather} to ~~that~~ ^{English} with him
 I was interested in him to as I
 had never known an American
 he was the first admitted by
 had made. Also, I hoped I
 would ~~be~~ ^{begin} to find more
 of him in the country
 if I had a young A.
 friend -

The real drama started when I
met his room. How distinctly I
remember the moment as he entered
my room! — his broad rickety
looming in that everlasting twilight
of Cansondy night. I remember
my features much more exactly
than those of Sped — although I
dislike you, and don't dislike
Sped. And yet, I in Sped's
face when I try to imagine it,
very thing then blunder, discolored,
~~veiled by a certain radiant~~
~~darkness~~ shady and at the same
time too bright, like the surface
of a gilded mirror. ~~constantly~~
moved by a constant flurry
— which I see would easily increase
in making your portrait.
He is not only filled, but devoid
of any expression: heavy,
but a little later you notice a
certain cunning twinkle in his
eyes — a shadow and wicked re-
flection which ^{is} dangerous only with
his emphatic simplicity, that
country boy — like a British
gentleman.

breaking with a black against
relation: if you refuse to go on
pretending like to spirit or him?
if he, Sp. was supposed to look
at his conduct, to know if you
was not old enough to stay by
himself for a night, — and
no one in a way suggesting style.
— However, didn't you offend
at all, but only murmured apologetically

I did not not this explanation
to "fascinating" in the sense of
"deceitful" — and probably more
a quite silly face. Yet Sp. had
~~one and~~ which seemed very cunning
to Sp. was only amused. There
He laughed heartily; then explained
to his companion:

I hoped I would not see him again
before again next moon, when he
came back from the coast,
and everything was settled.
I felt something like a sharp
pang in my stomach, and didn't
I had known only realized how bad
it was when I finally went down
in my dressing gown, to look find
out what was going on.

The boat on the ground
changed into a wilderness,
a white land ^{among} ~~of~~ ~~the~~
~~morning~~ ~~sky~~, number
with cold and the sun time
violently moved — a North Pole
landscape, horribly extensive,
dradly, vast and magnificent.
Against this violent background,
slanted the two black pillars
of squid and ~~from~~ ~~from~~ ~~from~~
~~slanted~~ the ~~both~~ leaning against the
wall, both on the point of
cracking. The

to the lonely wild
ghost. An old man, 3
feet, suddenly came
by a great city. A very
old man — haunted...

gazed inarticulately

blood
to an abject
There he stood, saying his head back
and he like a madman, and he shook
his arms he spit blood, he gave a
lot of it, and he came in such
one from his mad
madness and
madness of his
madness of his
madness of his

For me
wisdomly
was a night man, no viability.
~~I was~~ Had he kill some body? Did
~~he come.~~ Had he ever created death
himself? Was he going to
it within the next hour?

I had no time to appreciate this
hounding as ~~foot~~ ^{of} effort ~~to~~ ^{to} short
self-comfort in which I still tried
to be, he had on a pillow,
Sped, for his part, was following
my bed, in various undecidable
manners at once. It was dreadful
and yet fascinating to watch
him ~~the~~ ^{black}, clumsy ^{like a child} ~~on~~ ^{in my opinion}
tailorily moving on a sticky
liquid of blood and glower. I
~~was~~ ^{was} afraid ^{shuddered with the}
think this disfigured ^{you're} ~~you're~~ ^{con- in}
found my head as he ^{with insane} ~~with~~ ^{integral}
I am Sped's companion
"Yes, yes, Elaine" - his companion
- here the ~~horrid~~ ^{is} ~~is~~ ^{frustrating} feature
Two thousand feet of Elaine - and
they are capable of degrading a
city... Two million, and they
may destroy a continent...
Then two, however, did a thorough
job in the transforming my
room into a madhouse, and

He ~~an~~ Sped had been released, after
having given his word of honor that
he would attend before a jury
tomorrow morning. They want to
~~make~~ ~~more~~ investigation the whole
business. He declared, with
a certain no humanity which was
to show his full understanding
of the necessity of ~~being~~ ~~ready~~ ~~was~~
thorough-going spirit. They
want to find out every thing upon
motion and law, and at
last of day and who, being
it. — But I want to tell them
you won't like you down, it.
"No, Not me. And if
they just pick me to die; I
wouldn't."

They send all them to an island —
and for the if they catch
foreigners among them, it's like
work, you
He had to present himself to the
court at nine o'clock the next
morning. I saw him one of my
best men and a necktie.

He smiled ^{plaintively with tragic modesty} ~~tragically~~, and ~~to~~ asked
my for a glass of milk.
His story was moving, though a
little muddled. There had been a
raid at the place where he normally
bought the "tea." He had tried
to reach the bank in vain. They
had caught him. They pushed
they took him to the next
police station. ~~It was~~ The
examination lasted five hours.
without any family. They slapped
him ~~into~~ ~~the~~ face, and
laughed as he begged them to
let him sleep. They he was
questioned, again and again, if
he was in the habit of ~~no~~ taking
drugs, or if he bought it for
another person. They promised
him cigarettes and liquor if
he would only ~~give~~
them for ~~who~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~giving~~
the had put him to buy it.
"See - I don't want you to
get into much a mess. - For
it might be pretty dangerous for you.
If the police would know
that it was for you that
I was giving it to you."

Macomaga in common with a sort of
contemptuous benevolence to the joy
the food. "You may have some ice
cream as well, Jim," he explained to
himself, all included, and
he went to have a good
time - at your first night in N.Y.
The taciturn companion murmured, "O.K.",
and ordered a Scotch - which had
gained me a little bit. It was also
amused me that he was so little
impressed by the big city which he
ostensibly has the first time. His
face remained absolutely blank and
vacant while we strolled through
the city, to T. Square.

~~While Jim~~ ~~Spent~~ ~~was very~~ ~~affi-~~
We went to a First Square Show, and
Jim turned somewhat more lively as
the street light-glass, thrilled the
and danced with these rank partners
to Mark was his laugh rounded
thunderstorm. - After half-an-hour
as so. Spent great my wish in
his seat, and finally whispered to
me that he had had to wait some
body in the garden. To get some
tea " Give me two packs of this &
you know what to put in
for ...

He was very anxious ^{about} ~~that~~ ^{for} ~~himself~~
~~should not~~ ^{to} ~~could~~ ^{conceal} ~~discovering~~ ^{and} ~~him~~
conspiring. "My heart first" to I.M.
him "I have some business" for
whispered, which the his cousin
replied "I'll be bound by a glittering
parade of money on the stage."
"And some" Then you ~~is~~ "I
meet you then at your place, and
he takes his own room - you
have given him the money, haven't
you?" "Speed," ~~with~~ ^{right} ~~rounded~~
silently in the ~~multitude~~ ^{dark} ~~dark~~ ^{dark} ~~times~~
the ~~malice~~ ^{malice} ~~and~~ ^{small} ~~times~~
like the ^{voice} of a little bird.
Every thing ~~marked~~ went according to
his ~~strategic~~ plan. Jim hardly noticed
him going, and only gave me a
watery glance when I informed
him about my plan to visit.
"Don't they excite you?"
"Oh, a little," he asked me with a
hollow chuckle, and ~~I was shocked~~
by the pointed with his thumb
at the ~~marked~~ exhibition of ~~breath~~
flesh on the stage.

diarrhea on the most violent
events, with a dash of despatch
lowly. My own described
when I married the last man
that which had really shocked
me, was that of Anna's business
being married again. This ~~disgrace~~
I got just 20 days after my
~~re-marriage~~ talk. I had at
the request of Mr. B. after the
character of that same rigorous
Anna it was the only day -
the day when I got the
letter from Vienna - that I
married...

I had 1 who had already contracted
for 6 or 7 of them, almost
died with lung as he watched
me for something. "You are
a funny little man!" he
repeated again and again,
capturing a bunch like a
madman.

He ~~in~~ ~~was~~ ~~always~~ usually
was a ~~bomb~~ ^{on a} ~~ride~~ ^{latter}
Then P. came ^{to make his} ~~at the~~ ^{own} ~~house~~ ^{place} - ~~home~~

- He is always gay! He observed
with a certain ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{by} ~~the~~ ^{tendency}
while he remained near the
door, my dog and cogn. ~~with~~
"Always laughing! Happy
Youth!"

- Give me a couple ^{of} books
- for some ^{that} he would ask
me with an ^{obscure} ~~given~~
And M gave him the
good money, that M
could not afford it. / M
gave him much more
~~nothing~~ ~~indeed~~ ~~than~~
M spent much more ^{and} ~~than~~ that
time. ^{than} M could afford.
M had ~~And~~ rather ~~brother~~ ^{and}
in financial ~~para~~ ~~M~~ ~~was~~ ^{only}
~~other~~

As it was made an impatient
gesture - a loud "no" -
he concluded, with a melancholy
like bow: "Yes, none of
my business to know."

I couldn't say that he turned
unfriendly ^{on my account} after this conversation,
but he turned still more
distant than before. Mrs.
P. on the other hand, showed
great surprise at the result of
a ~~very~~ ^{very} mention. She sometimes asked
my room and asked me
if I ~~was~~ had any wish for
a sandwich or a cup of
tea. Acacia tree! Spent ^{my} giggles!
for with an indication giggles.

He also thinks no more
distant when he was
fitting any noon a
wouldn't that now both unusually
place in the afternoon a
spend was in the back
month

They send people to a deserted
island when they catch them
smoking or carrying that stuff.
And with that as too.

It's dangerous stuff. I can tell
— a ^{big} ^{way} ^{any} ^{no} ^{or} ^{any}
other drug. People ~~has~~ Don't
you know my no mean
cancer as ~~going~~ ^{consider}
out there in Harlem? I mean
all those colored people as
suffer about it. — actually
suffer for you ^{even} ^{mad}
once you have got the habit.

— Don't get mixed up
with filthy affairs, like that.
He warned me with ^{condol}
previous — I don't like
the way you look these days.
You look rather pale, Tim.
Look. I don't want to
meddle with your affairs,
but that young fellow who
comes ^{to} ^{see} ^{you} ^{so} ^{often}
if you allow me to

M was more and more inclined
to confound A. and L.
in my muddled, bewildered thought
— whom I knew not.

What an odd time a week
through! M lived, indeed,
as in haze of fear and pain,
thoroughly intoxicated by the rosy
romanticism of the underworld.
M the ... Underworld — ~~about~~
the new world makes me shiver.
It is connected in my memory
with a certain fragrance,
tender and intense; a poisonous
flavour, wafted from a dangerous
 concoction of herbs and dubious
ingredients — ~~the~~ with and
morbid, and entirely ~~non-distinct~~
At first, I did not want to ~~test~~ ^{taste} it.
~~that it was first~~ I ~~at~~ ^{at} refused
~~obstinately to taste~~ felt it was
dangerous still, although that
and then grew rather angry

although he may not have got
hardly opened how poor I really
am. He now asked me about
my position, ~~or how much~~ if
I had. He took it over for
granted that I had enough
money to spare ^{about} a quarter
of a dollar, and he now
asked me for more.

He referred to them as to
a great organization of
influential people 20 or 25
incalculable men. "Lucy"
boy finds as a family
gang — he would
say, with a cunning
smile.

I kept ~~the~~ ~~brooding~~ thinking
of Lucy, and wondering about
her, and if she really had any
troubles. ~~and if~~ if she
was fond of strong perfume —
as Anna was — if she also had
a weakness for glowing colors,
and if she was able to of
course. But she has more — as people
Anna had 1400.

That there was no Larry. Only
~~the gray girl who had giggled~~
~~the gray girl who giggled than~~
other girl, the gray one.
She giggled and shrugged.
and finally said that L.
was now working at some
other place. We went there,
but in vain. L. was dismissed
the mysterious figure — incredible
in human, ~~affected~~ ~~with~~
a ~~hard~~ ~~an~~ ~~affected~~ ~~mouth~~
that ~~find~~ ~~with~~ ~~discovery~~ ~~the~~
~~from~~ ~~the~~ ~~heart~~ ~~meeting~~
and ~~exciting~~ ~~the~~ ~~heart~~
~~from~~ ~~when~~ ~~it~~ ~~swiftly~~
re-appeared.

Squad pointed out "Will"
went to — tomorrow.
That no Larry showed up.
— "She went to + probably
with her boy friend."
"She said in the women
at Aunt Helen's house."

though in an odd and puzzling
way. ~~He spoke~~

- and buty and did not just say
I was often affected by a certain
mildness kindness in his attitude,
by the ~~front~~ gentle proximity
of his smile. At other moments
he ~~tried to show off and to~~
~~express himself~~ however, he answered and
in reply by his manner -
fascinating when ~~we~~ in
public places when he ~~was~~ (

showed off to impress a girl
at the neighborhood table.
How often I had decided to
tell him that I did not
want to see him any more
under the finally pulled himself
together! But then, of course,
he conquered me again, with
a smile or a word - perhaps
with a word reminding
his sister L.

Even without having her, I
felt as though I was in love
with her and on just separation
from her a while and had lived
with her for years. He and my
sister for the time for
the rest of my marriage in the
most obvious manner, saying

When I gave her the picture
he gave me the one he had
shown me before
and which I found in the
mansion and he had
a rather manly gift as
he said "I'll give you a
diamond ring" by the way
he would suggest when he

felt that I was on the point
of getting rather tired of
him! He would suggest
with the most handsome
manner as

He bought himself two ^{more} bottles
of champagne. I ^{didn't} ~~didn't~~ ^{didn't} know
then ~~at~~ with two glasses of champagne
in a dark garage. It was about
11 p.m. so he should not
disturb me at that time of
the night — whereupon he slammed
that it ~~was~~ didn't know what
I said he should be ashamed
of himself and should go to
bed. "No kidding," he said.
"Why should I go to bed
at 11 p.m.?" ~~I had~~ ^{he} said.
~~When I got a bomb~~
~~knock out of~~ ^{that damn}

There was a talk for quite a
while. I ~~was~~ ^{was} only two
days in forward ~~when~~ ^{when} I ~~was~~
he showed me.

H. always wanted me to like the
thing he was fond of, and to
have his fun. This was one of
his features, which was his
me that he was. I told him

For his former room maid was
still mad at him, and even
went as far as holding Spud, his
few belongings - an overcoat
overcoat, a few, and some
shirt - as a compensation
for the money Spud had failed
to repay. As to Lucy, the
flat was too
small for more guests than
a few. The flat of his
to just spacious enough to
receive one guest: "and for
boy from " around a guest
dead, Spud declared.

My former, however, that he
spent most of the night
My new

Sometimes he disapp. for a
day or two - with a beam
he has " some business to do
with his sister, boy friend,
or the beam of other ad-
ventures. Remarkable things
happened to him, a tragedy
to his wife.

M said shortly that H did not
~~know~~ what he ~~was~~ tried to
 say, and that the boy was
 the son of American friends
 of mine - whom he
 visited occasionally.

~~Months~~ I don't know when it
 was that Mrs. P. saw my
 new friend for the first time.
 Occasionally, however, when I
~~occasionally~~ went out on errands
 home with him, the father,
 to be busy in the lobby,
 and gave me a swift
~~as suspicious~~ glance
 at me, intently and thought
 suspiciously. One day I thought
 I'd noticed a vague corner
 of a smile around my mouth
 as he looked at Sp. However,
 as he has been mistaken, that
 it was the same day
 Sp. told me.

Pickens with one ~~loss~~ or
historical or sentimental outgrowth
were just beneath his dignity —
stuffed stuff for money. If
He ~~was~~ ^{did} wanted "big
action", gamblers, row boys,
and gamblers — and of whom the
an ^{red} ^{was} ^{delinquent} of blood
and ^{with} ^{delinquent} men, ^{gluey} ^{murders}
~~and~~ ~~murders~~ ^{he} got a
"bomb kick" out of it."

When I ^{of} ^{landed} ^{often} ^{maroon}
of him: he annoyed me
through his ^{disturbance} ^{his}
lack in manners and modesty.
But then, again and again, I
quailed before his disarming
presence.

I now quite understood what it
really ~~was~~ ^{was} that made him
stick to me as he did.
He ^{and} ^{did} ^{pick} ^{me} ^{up} ^{and} ^{bring} ^{me} ^{to} ^{the} ^{city}
and ^{took} ^{him} ^{to} ^a ^{place}
show. This meant ^{something} ^{very} ^{to} ^{him} —
My ^{supper} ^{Also} ^{he} ^{could} ^{skip}
on my sofa with ^{his} ^{legs} ^{spread} ^{to} ^{the} ^{ceiling}

shortly that I did not grasp, really, what he tried to say, and that the young man was the son of friends who lived out of town. - whereupon he retired discreetly. - I don't remember when it was that Mrs. Prokoff saw my new friend for the first time. Occasionally, however, when I went out or came home in his company, she happened to be busy in the lobby and glimpsed at us, swiftly and suspiciously. Once I thought I'd noticed a vague crease of a smile as she looked at Speed; but I may have been mistaken. However, it was the same day that Speed ^{asked} me, with a sort of casual curiosity, if I knew Mrs. Prokoff, and how old she was. "She isn't so ugly," he said, and added, laughingly; "Not ugly enough for the old ape." This was the name we used to give to Mr. Prokoff. We had lots of fun together. We had a good time, indeed.

He was capable of committing
admirable, out of pure fun and
want to know. Mark H. was
gentle and manner. He was
up the most awkwardly playing
and sometimes even arranged
himself by playing a role
as an actor don't to make
I am the good boy, in the
But at the same time, however,
he was frank and straightforward
his reactions always with spontaneity
and

When M M on the first time of our
acquaintance M tried to tell
him things about ~~the~~ books
~~and~~ foreign countries and books
that it said, in hard, pompous
tone: "Cute it out, I don't
give a damn for all that
modern business."

He yawned and made faces as if
wanted him to look into a
magazine as a paper. ~~He was~~
The printed word not only bored
but actually disgusted him.
The only "reading" he was able to
bear, were the ~~series~~ ^{series} of funny which
he sketched rapidly in the afternoon
papers. He ~~always~~ ^{never} ~~was~~ ^{off}
tender to make me participate
in his ~~reference~~ ^{reference} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same}
but did not succeed.

M never was capable of grasping
the ~~work~~ ^{work} of those childish cartoons.
The only entertainment he liked
better than was the funny papers,
was the movies - as the W. W.
the ~~thriller~~ ^{thriller} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~most~~ ^{most} ~~precious~~ ^{precious}

shortly that I did not grasp, really, what he tried to say, and that the young man was the son of friends who lived out of town - whereupon he retired discreetly. - I don't remember when it was that Mrs. Prokoff ~~ff~~ saw my new friend for the first time. ~~My friend, however, told me that he was~~ Occasionally, however, when I went out or came home in his company, she happened to be busy in the lobby and glimpsed at us, swiftly and suspiciously. Once I thought I'd noticed a vague crease of a smile as she looked at Speed; but I may have been mistaken. However, it was the same day that Speed ~~said~~ asked me, with a sort of casual curiosity, if I knew Mrs. Prokoff, and how old she was. "She isn't so ugly," he said, and added, laughingly; "Not ugly enough for the old ape." This was the name we used to give to Mr. Prokoff. We had lots of fun together. We had a good time, indeed.

I now presented Sp. formally to
Mr. P., and I don't remember
the moment when the 2nd Gen.
the way we are.
This was ~~and~~ ~~my~~ ~~way~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~
~~nick name~~ ~~the~~ ~~nick name~~ ~~with~~
~~which~~ ~~for~~ ~~we~~ ~~and~~ ~~had~~ ~~with~~
~~which~~ ~~we~~ ~~usually~~ ~~gave~~ ~~with~~
~~which~~ ~~we~~ ~~usually~~ ~~gave~~ ~~to~~
~~my~~ ~~unfortunate~~ ~~landlord~~.
in my pedagogic career
I had probably been a failure &
I would have admitted my
experience with Sp.

He is fierce and violent and
emphatic.

20 very different from my old
M had ^{known} life. He was fierce and
orderly like a woman, and
impulsive like a man, but
yet without any effeminate
qualities. He was a
natural leader, and a
natural follower.

The abyss, under the placid
surface of civilization. We
have oversteered the 20th century
of civilization. All of us have

— Speed, smooth and eddies...
— The jungle...

✓ This is the time of great tribulation
again and of great triumph;
of gigantic eddies and whirlpools.

..... gully and his dubious dishes,
Speed, Plum of the Underworld, Lays
smooth and eddies, a plum
immense — and extensive in
all tricks and tricks; the tricks
faint with the anglic tricks
depressed and disturb staggering
capricious, climbing on highways,
big tidy tricks tricks tricks tricks
tricks tricks tricks tricks tricks tricks
in path, pointed tricks — tricks tricks
fancifully the tricks tricks tricks tricks
of the tricks, the tricks tricks tricks tricks

Poor Hilda! I may be in jail
when she finally arrives, - ~~and~~
there will be nobody to pick her
- which means that she will be
sent to Ellis Island, ~~at once~~

~~Next~~

That personal drama of affluence,
transit - Nizao, ... : what a nightmare
too! However, I managed to come
home, while she had to stay in the

... Those moments when everything
Every thing ^{Edmund} ^{the} ^{father} ^{that} ^{the} ^{things}
disappearing ... The great bombardment
would start, Gladly would enter the world,

I would miss you for again ...
And then I asked my self if I still
loved her, still needed her ... She
wasn't giving any longer - her
face, haggard, worn out ... We
should have children.

— A man must not be alone.
I driven him mad. Lombard
driven him mad.

Speed, in all his
glory ...

Heavy stuff —

my friend Ladislav.
He comes to tell
me that I am
taken. ~~See~~ His
wife is busy taking
care of Speed.

S P E E D .

I must not be so nervous. Mr. Prokoff says my position is not as grave as all that. That Summons the boys presented is probably forged, Mr. Prokoff says. Yet he advised me not to enter my own room as long as they keep lying in wait for me, out there, in the street, or maybe even inside the house, somewhere hidden... I have to wait in the darkness till they get finally tired of loitering around. For the queer thing about those Summons is that they assume legal value only if and when the person who wants to catch you succeeds in handing the paper over to you personally. If they manage to touch me on my sleeve and cry out, Here is a Summons for you, Mr. Kroll - then I am lost and must follow them to the police station. It's like one of those dreadful games we used to play as children - with endless minutes of anxious waiting in some dark hiding place, until somebody came and caught you... ~~But now, of course, it's infinitely worse.~~ Mr. Prokoff doesn't know how bad it really is. He takes the whole affair not quite seriously and keeps telling me: 'Don't let those filthy kids scare you, Mr. Kroll! I am all for you and shall protect you whatever happens.' I guess he is going to raise my rent. ~~But what's the difference? I don't care...~~ ~~and~~ I may really need his help - pretty soon, maybe. I am a foreigner here, I have no influence, no connections. If they send me to jail, or want to expel me from this country - who would ~~be there to~~ testify ~~for me~~, if not Mr. Prokoff? Not a very imposing witness, I must say... Yet ~~he~~ ^{he} is ~~rather~~ ^{truly} fond of me, I suppose - in his strange way... He really thinks I am a gentleman, and ~~will~~ ^{would} say so - even to a judge, if necessary... "You are a gentleman, Mr. Kroll. That's why I like having you in my house..." He has an unctuous way of emphasizing the word "gentleman", enjoying every syllable of it as though it was a piece of candy that slowly melts in

his mouth.

A gentleman... It sounds so odd now - since I was touched and tainted by the underworld. I was always afraid of the underworld: that is why I left my country and came here. Anna did not believe me when I told her, Austria is doomed, we must leave. She thought Austria was quite safe, and I was suffering from persecution mania. Besides, she had no particular reason for being afraid of Hitler, - unless she was afraid for my sake. She knew, of course, that I am Jewish from my mother's side - and also that I would not be able to stand that bloody business which is Hitlerism. I cannot bear to see blood: its smell makes me sick, I just loathe it. I knew that blood was going to flow in the streets of Vienna, but Anna said, 'You're crazy, nothing will happen, what a fool you are to give up your nice job...' - It was a nice job, all right - and I was proud to work as a librarian of the State Library. But I renounced the job and everything I loved, and prepared my emigration. As Anna went on grumbling and taunting, I finally said to her, "You may stay ^{love} if you want to..." I didn't mean it seriously, really, and neither would she, I hoped. But she did take it seriously. "All right," she said, "if that's the way you are feeling about it..." So I left alone. She was very smart when it came to the financial arrangements, and kept a nice sum for herself, but also managed to smuggle something out ^{for me} ~~of the country~~, so that I would have enough to live on, for a year or so... 'I'll work very hard,' I promised ~~her~~ as I kissed her goodbye. 'I'll make my way, and you will join me, one day...' She said, Yes, and wept, and kissed me, and looked sweeter than ever - much younger, ^(indeed) than she is: like a weeping little girl of twenty - , and I was very much in love with her, and really thought she meant what she said, and would follow me when I had a job.

It was this idea - that she would follow me - which gave me the

strength and courage to stand those horrible first months in New York. Otherwise the loneliness may have killed me - this ghastly loneliness, filling my room like a cloud, following me in the streets, lying on my shoulders, my forehead as a tremendous weight... Sometimes I thought, I must die - destroyed by loneliness like by a mortal disease; but then I remembered, Anna... she keeps waiting for you, over there, in Vienna. She goes to the churches and prays that you find a job, so that she could come, and live with you, and be your wife again... And I made new desperate efforts to learn the language - I hardly understood a word when I arrived - , and to meet people who could be of any help. I hoped for a job in a book store, or as a college librarian; but I would have done any other sort of work as well, and happily, too; I was not fastidious, not fussy. All I wanted was something to do, and Anna. All I wanted was Anna.

I was almost pleased, therefore, when I read in the papers that my gloomy prophecies had been fulfilled, and Hitler had taken Vienna, and the German Gestapo was raging in our beautiful city and among our friends. I felt sorry, of course, for many people I liked; but, on the other hand, I presumed that Anna would come even sooner, with all those dreadful things going on. I got letters from Vienna, complaining in an indirect, careful way, about the terror, and the poverty, and how poor the food had become. But Anna's letters, strangely enough, ^{didn't} ~~didn't~~ quite tally with the other informations I received. 'People exaggerat; she wrote. 'We still have plenty to eat...' In the beginning I thought she just didn't want me to worry. But finally I found out that she actually believed in all those nice things she had to tell about Hitler, and that Austria has gained by the Anschluss. She had decided to stay there. She asked me for a divorce. She wrote, of course she could not remain the wife of a man with a Jewish mother. That is what she wrote me: Of course, I cannot be your wife any more...

She betrayed me,cheated me,humiliated me. She alone is responsible for my ruin. Anna is guilty. It is all her fault...

How silly of me to weep like a little boy forsaken in the darkness. I must pull myself together. I should try to forget... To forget Anna, and Vienna, and the Summons, and all gloomy things... Ah, I'd give anything if I ~~could~~ could only feel, once again, ^{the} light and gay and detached as I used to do after having smoked those magic cigarettes... How are they called? Marivana... It sounds like the name of a bewitched princess in an oriental fairy tale. I still hear Speed's voice - how bland and seductive it was when he said, Marivana... 'Why don't you try it once, Clarence? You'll get a kick out of it...' He always called me Clarence, for some shady reason of his own - though I think Karl is a nice, simple name... ~~How innocent was his smile when he begged me: 'Just one cigarette, Clarence! - just one puff!' I can hardly believe that he is bad, fundamentally.~~ He did not mean to get me into trouble. It was his cousin who made up the whole dirty plot. I never liked Jim, never trusted him. If I only knew if Lucy, too, is involved. Perhaps she is the real boss of the gang, pulling the wires secretly from the background. I am sure she is quite dynamic. How much Speed admires her! - 'My sister is swell,' she told me, again and gain. 'She certainly knows how to make friends and to influence people...' ... I wonder where on earth he caught up this title. His ignorance was something that never ceased to amaze me. I never thought it possible that a ~~modern~~ human being could be so completely - so thoroughly ignorant. He had no idea that a war is going on in Europe, ^{or} and who George Washington was. But sometimes, all of a sudden, he would remember certain slogans, or a historical date he had learned in school. 'Sure, I know,' he'd say, with a cunning twinkle. 'Taxation without Representation... That's what made them cross...' I was fascinated, of course - as if a savage little monkey would have recited Dante.

I was enthralled by his wit and his innocence, and by that gleam in his eyes when he mentioned his sister. 'Lucy is grand. You should meet her, Clarence!' But I never met her. Her picture was all I was allowed to see. Her lovely picture!...: what a pity that I had to burn it. There was something in her eyes and in her attitude that reminded me of Anna. Those fleshy shoulders, the rich, heavy hair - and that smile, drowsy, sweet, and clever... Speed had the same sort of smile, particularly when he was very tired or when he asked me for money. 'Just two bucks, Clarence... I want to get my blue suit fixed...' ~~a little hoarse and yet melodious~~ His voice, too, had a faint resemblance with Anna's - a little hoarse and yet melodious. I wonder if Lucy speaks the same way - with that blandishing sort of harshness...

...I ^{ought to} ~~should really~~ be ashamed of myself! - to dream here of Anna's voice, and Marivana cigarettes, and ~~Speed's~~ ^{the} innocent smile. of Speed and his sister Lucy. Anna is going to marry some Nazi official; I shall never see her again. Marivana is sordid stuff and has brought me into this dreadful mess. Lucy is some petty adventuress whom I never saw - and as to Speed... he is a filthy kid, Mr. Prokoff says.

I must concentrate my thoughts; there is plenty of time to do so, and this room is quiet enough - only too quiet, indeed - empty and ~~solid~~ and peaceful as a prison cell, sultry and dark as a grave... I have to examine the whole affair, clearly and soberly.

This is the door bell... My Lord, how it makes me jump! It may be Jim again, and that other fellow whom I do not know. They show the Summons again: 'We want to see Mr. Kroll. Our cousin Speed is in jail, and Mr. Kroll is responsible. He has to appear as a witness. Here is the Summons, Where is Mr. Kroll?' Mr. Prokoff says, 'I've already told you that he isn't here. I don't know where he is. And I don't want you to ring this door again - d'you understand? People here are asleep.'

This is a decent house - if you know what I mean. And now, get out of here and don't dare come again - or I will call the police!'

He is pretty tough, Mr. Prokoff; he impresses them, they don't say a word. They leave - without even slamming the door. Perhaps they have left for good. It is raining outside - fortunately for me. They must get tired, eventually, of waiting out there, in the street. Mr. Prokoff is really much more efficient than I thought him to be; more courageous, too. What an odd little man! Rather imposing, for all his ugliness and poor manners.

In the beginning, I didn't like him at all. How unhappy I was when I had moved into this dreary place! I thought it still more depressing than the hotel where I had lived before. But I couldn't bear that hotel room any more, after having received there Anna's letter, I had to find a new place for myself, or I would have become mad. So I bought the Sunday Times, and looked through the section where they advertise one room-apartments, and then walked around... What a gloomy Sunday it was! Everything seemed so dingy, ~~so squalid and~~ - all those squalid dwellings, and the wretched, greedy people who wanted to hire them out. When I came here, to 38 th. Street, between Lexington and Third, I was already exhausted and my feet ached. This place here struck me as comparatively cosy, and Mrs. Prokoff made a nice impression on me. She looked almost pretty that evening, all dressed up to go out. We discussed the price, and she smiled and said, 'I'm sure you'll feel at home here, Mister.' I moved in the next morning, and was somewhat terrified when I saw Mr. Prokoff. I really think he is one of the most hideous fellows I ever saw - with his much-too-long arms, and his grey, crooked face. I don't think he actually has a humpback, but he looks as if he had one: the movements of his arms are that way, and even the expression of his eyes and his flat,

tinny voice. He is more ugly, indeed, than a human being should be. There is something nightmarish about him. He has the most definite resemblance with a big ape I have ever noticed.

I hated the house, though my room is all right - rather ~~bright and~~ spacious and comfortable. What makes it so depressing is this lack of light, I suppose; this dingy twilight, even on beautiful days - and after three in the afternoon it becomes dark - almost as dark as it ^{now} ~~is~~ ^{here} ~~now~~, in ~~Mr. Prokoff's private little studio...~~ ^{this unused cell} Yes, I guess it was that ever-lasting darkness that got me gradually down - the darkness and the smell - that evil, sickening smell in the ~~stair~~ lobby, the staircase, even in my own room. It does not help that I keep my door always closed. The smell is stronger. I don't know if it comes from the kitchen, or from Mr. Prokoff's bed room - (I am afraid that he never opens a window...) -, or if it's just a part of the house. It is a sweetish smell, dusty, heavy, very penetrating. ^{It's everywhere,} ~~It makes me sick when even~~ ^{to, even here...} ~~I think of it...~~

I was rather pleased when I had that row with Mrs. Prokoff; perhaps I even provoked the quarrel as I sought a pretext to give up the room. Besides, she annoyed me to madness, every morning when she entered my room, all bleak dignity in her blue, dirty apron, plump and sullen, her features numbed with self-pity. For she suffers incessantly from her being so poor and wretched, and ~~she~~ considers it quite an offense that she has no maid, and nothing, and must do all this work. Of course, I feel sorry for her. Anna would also hate it to make other people's bed and to clean floors, and all that kind of thing. But it's not my fault, after all; she shouldn't scowl at me. First, she wanted me to take the room, and smiled at me, and giggled. And then, she came and declared rather bluntly that she had made a mistake, and the room was more expensive than she had told me, only some days before. I ~~felt~~ didn't think this was fair, ~~whereupon and told her so - where-~~ ^{and as I told her so,}

she worked up herself to a sort of hysterical outburst: it was rather disgusting, indeed. Her plump body was shaken by ragged sobs, and she told me, always bitterly crying, that I did not treat her like one should treat a lady, and that she knew nothing about business - only that I didn't pay enough: 'You want to exploit me!' she lamented in a nasty, sibilant voice. I said, 'That's enough,' and that I was going to leave. Then she shouted at me that she was ^{happy} ~~very~~ pleased to get rid of me; ^{hysterical} ~~and~~ the sooner I'd move the better. Later I heard her shrill, ^{furiously} ~~loud~~ voice in the lobby: 'Mr. Kroll's room is free - hang out the poster again! What are you waiting for, Ladislaus? Hang out the poster, I tell you!' - It was only then that I learned Mr. Prokoff's first name was Ladislaus. I am not quite sure if he is Russian or Polish by origin, or from which other part of Eastern Europe he may come. He speaks usually German with me - a queer kind of German it is, with a singing, heavy accent - while she prefers to speak English.

I hated the idea of ^{looking for} ~~making~~ another room; at the same time, however, I was only too pleased to get out of this dreary place. I had a definite feeling that it would bring me ill luck to stay here, with the Prokoffs. But there was no escape.

I realized there was no escape as Mr. Prokoff entered my room, looking very sad and more ape-like than ever. He told me how sorry he was, how embarrassed. His wife was so very nervous: 'Almost a pathological case,' he whispered while he covered his mouth with his skinny hand and then ^{gazed} ~~gave~~ me a ^{slightly} ~~markish~~ glance as if he had confided to me a sweet, though ^{slightly} ~~some~~ shocking secret. 'You know how women are,' he continued, ^{grinning as a man who knows what he is talking about} ~~with an obscene little grin~~. 'They are crazy, all of them. And as to ^{my} ~~my~~ wife,' he ^{concluded} ~~said~~, almost cheerfully, 'she is even more crazy than the rest of them.'

I was rather nonplussed as he went on telling me everything about himself and Mrs. Prokoff, and how unhappy she was. 'She is actually mangled by bitterness and frustration,' he stated, with a certain sinister satisfaction. And then he said, with his crooked face very close to me - I could feel his malodorous breath -: 'She hates me - this is the truth. Anita loathes me: she thinks me hideous...' ~~He~~ As he made a dramatic pause, I felt I should say something. It was pretty hard, however, to find the right words, and my lips were numbed with disgust. I finally mumbled: 'Why, Mr. Prokoff... that's all a question of taste, isn't it. No intelligent man can be hideous...' He chuckled; ~~and said~~ 'It's a question of taste - there you are. But her taste is different. She prefers those athletic types - tall, vigorous fellows, ~~you know~~. In Berlin she had an affair with a certain Baron von Windeblitz - do you happen to know ^{him?}' I said, no, I had not the pleasure. Mr. Prokoff smirked: 'A good looking chap, all right. His father was a general in the Imperial army. The Windeblitz, as you may ^{or remember} know, belong to the finest Prussian aristocracy. Unfortunately, they ~~have~~ lost all their money. Anita was madly in love with the Baron.'

'You are not very jealous,' I remarked - whereupon Mr. Prokoff shrugged his shoulders: 'What would it help?' A melancholy smile altered his features, then died. 'I am no Adonis,' he sighed, and then told me that Mrs. Prokoff had never loved him - 'not for a single day,' he insisted with a sad obstinacy -: but she began to hate him only when he had become poor. He had been a wealthy man when he married her - a well-to-do broker in Berlin. 'And she?' He grinned contemptuously. 'Well, I met her in some dubious bar on the Kurfürstendamm. She was incredibly attractive then.' He was silent for a few moments, then added: 'She is still kind of pretty, isn't she.' I said hastily, that

I thought her still extremely goodlooking, very attractive indeed. 'Yes,' he said, 'she is still a lady. That's why she suffers so much.' And then, with a pathetic pride: 'I have educated her - she should grateful to me. I have made her lady. We had contact with the finest people in Berlin. We used to see film stars and bankers and even gentlemen of the Diplomatic Corps. Anita was a hostess just as she should be. My goodness, what gay evenings we had in our apartment! One night, Baron von Windeblitz was absolutely drunk. He insisted on drinking champagne out of Anita's slippers. You know how those noblemen are... What a grand time we had!'

Mr. Prokoff did not make it quite clear whether he had left Berlin only when Hitler came to power, and because of this fact, or already before, in connection with a business scandal which he mentioned casually. In any case, he was penniless when he left, and had to accept thankfully the offer of a remote relative to manage this house as a sort of private pension. 'It's hard work, of course. But Anita has to adapt herself to her new position...'

He begged me to forgive her for the ugly words she had used. 'We really want you to stay.' He looked very honest and kind as he assured me: 'I am fond of you, Mr. Kroll. This may sound kind of funny as I know you so little. But I can look through a man at the first glimpse. I know you are a gentleman, Mr. Kroll... And if you pay \$9,50 a week, instead of 8, it's all right with me. \$11,50 is absurd, of course. This was Anita's idea. She is almost pathological, you know...'

So I stayed, and from that day on it was Mr. Prokoff who cleaned my room, invading it at eight o'clock in the morning, brandishing with an ungainly energy a huge broom and a heavy bucket. Each morning he had a new joke or some peppered ~~at~~ anecdote in store for me. 'Do you know this one?' he would say, pacing the room cheerfully in his dirty shirt

sleeves - whereupon he ventured on a lengthy story on Mr. Göring, an elderly Jew and an Archbishop. Or else he would ask me if I knew the famous lawyer Dr. Bückebach in Berlin. What a pity that I had never visited the parties Bückebach used to give! The most amazing things went on in the lawyer's villa, according to Prokoff's inspired accounts. Society ladies appeared there in precious fur coats - 'finest ermine!' Mr. Prokoff exclaimed as if he wanted to sell those beautiful coats by auction, on a public market. Below the glamorous wrappers, however, the ladies were naked -, 'absolutely naked,' he whispered with an indescribable grin.

It was most depressing. The loneliness had been hard to bear; but how much more agonizing was Mr. Prokoff's garrulous company. His lack of taste and decency was appalling. He was the most dreary bore I have ever met. And yet I could not help being somehow amused, even excited, by his sordid chat. His filthy inventions - for I am sure there was nothing true in his stories - assumed an irritating attraction through their exorbitant vulgarity. Besides, I felt sorry for the wretched creature, and was touched by his true devotion to me. Soon I became so familiar with his suffering as if it were my own. At certain moments I was even inclined to confound his squalid drama with the sad story I had experienced myself. If Anna ~~would have~~^{now} followed me to this country - I thought - wouldn't she have ~~abominated~~^{abominated} me as Anita Prokoff abominates her husband? ~~The cheated husband of the blond, faithless woman seemed to me - wasn't he a martyr as I was, - my monstrous older brother?~~ And I shuddered.

I recall all these details ~~because~~^{as} of my life with the Prokoffs - of my lurid life in this house, in this city - ~~because~~^{may} they explain, up to a certain degree, why I grew so restless, and spent so many hours loitering in the streets. It simply was because I couldn't stand my room any longer, and Mr. Prokoff's face, and the smell - I

just could not stand it...

That's why I was an easy prey for the Underworld. My capacity of resistance had crumbled. I floated through this tremendous city ~~like~~ as a helpless wreck. I was dazed - actually dazed when I strolled on Times Square at night, or wandered about in Harlem. It's not that the big city amused me. I couldn't even say that it excited me. It offered not comfort, no joy. In a way, I was terribly bored during all this time. The perpetual noise ^{becomes} ~~is~~ monotonous; it's ^{mud} ~~even~~ duller and more depressing, ^{on the long run,} ~~than~~ ^{even} silence. And yet there is something fascinating, enthralling in all this vociferous emptiness; something billow-like, boisterous, something very grand... It dazes you, knocks you out.

Since my ears were deafened by the constant clamour of busses and newspaper boys, and my eyes were blinded by the glaring, glittering lights - how could I recognise the voice of the evil and the fatal features of the Underworld?

He looked so very innocent when he talked to me.

"Do you have a cigarette for me, Minter?"
^(It was only a whisper) ~~He whispered~~; I could hardly hear what he said. ~~When I looked at him~~ The first thing I noticed when I looked at him was his wan, helpless smile. He stood there - near the corner of Eighth Avenue and Forty Second Street - , ankle deep in snow, shivering with cold. It was about one o'clock in the morning. I had seen a show and then had had a whiskey in a bar. It was very chilly, with that cruel, biting storm blowing around the corners. There were heaps of new snow.

The lad who had asked me for a cigarette wore overcoat and was bare-headed. His hair was all messed up, and he had a nervous way of pushing back a ^{vestive} ~~refractory~~ lock with the palm of his hand. He had nice hair, though, - ~~like~~ fair and silky. He gave the impression of restlessness as he shifted his weight constantly from one foot to another. His shoulders jerked nervously. Somehow he reminded me of a well-bred

Breeder

race-horse that hates to stand still, of only for a few minutes. He was lean and well-built; not very tall, even somewhat shorter than I am. I thought he could hardly be older than seventeen. He was twenty one.

"A cigarette...?" he repeated, and gave me a plaintive glance; then he lowered his eyes. I lingered for a second before I answered. But I felt it would be cruel to disappoint him: he looked so pathetic as he stood there, shivering. I gave him a cigarette and a light, and I asked him if he wasn't freezing, and didn't he want a drink. There was a momentary sparkle in his eyes - a flashing gleam of hope as I mentioned the drink. Yet I noticed that he slightly faltered as we entered the bar.

I ordered two Scotchs and soda, but the bar tender declared with a rather hostile abruptness: "I won't serve nothing to this boy." I said - not too much surprised -: "Why? What is wrong with him?" - while my young companion locked his arms across his chest in a pugnacious way. - "There is nothing wrong with him," the bar tender said. "I just don't want to serve him anything. That's all."

The boy remarked, with a sort of superior nonchalance: "He thinks I'm drunk. I had a few drinks before."

His bright, narrow eyes were watery and fixed. I realized, only now, that he was actually drunk. This was the moment, of course, when I should have left him. For some reason, however, I felt angry at the severe bar tender rather than at the youngster. So I shrugged my shoulders, and said that there were other places where we could get a drink. "Let's go, then!" The boy glided down from the high stool; he looked proud and elate. The barman gave us a last glimpse - askance and full of unconcealed suspicion. He mumbled something which I did not understand. The boy spit out on the threshold while we left the bar. There was something horrifying about this vulgar gesture - his spitting in-

stead of saying goodbye. It was as if he wanted to curse the bar, its owner and all costumers.

"You're really drunk," I said when we were outside.

"Of course I am," he said, with a short laugh that sounded almost triumphant.

"You ~~should~~ ^{ought to} eat something," I suggested. "What's your name, by the way?"

"They call me Speed," he declared; and added, half-proudly, half-apologetically: "I ~~suppose~~ always am in a hurry. That's why they call me Speed, I suppose."

"I have never known anybody by the name of Speed," I remarked, slightly disturbed. Whereupon he assured me, cheerfully: "You've never known anybody like me, anyhow."

We had hot dogs and coffee in a little cafeteria. I watched Speed while he was eating and drinking with an astounding greed. The swift movements with which he manipulated knife, spoon and fork, were frightening rather than ugly. When he had finished he said, with a certain solemnity as if it was ~~heavenly~~ a thanksgiving for the meal: "Damned son of a bitch."

"Whom do you mean?" I was rather terrified. - "That lousy barman," he explained, with a contemptuous turn of his head. "He'll pay for this, I can tell you!" His bright, childish eyes were filled with an ominous darkness. I felt again that there was something frightening about him.

"I suppose ^{both} of us ought to go to bed," I said, with an desperate effort to look uncle-like and determined, - just to cover my irritation. But even while I was speaking I realized that I lied. I did not want to go home at all. I was afraid of my room, and of the loneliness and the smell. And Speed, too, knew that I didn't really mean what I said. He smiled casually, and then remarked - serious, but without any bitterness: "I have no place where to go."

He looked slovenly and depraved rather than poor. ~~His~~ His grey suit was so worn-out that its colour had already turned slightly greenish, it had kept, however, a rather elegant shape. The most conspicuous items of his clothing were a large pink handkerchief in his pocket - a very ugly thing of cheap, shining silk - , and his shoes which were particularly ~~pi~~ pointed and made of a strangely pale yellow leather. These wan, coquettish shoes - which he wore during the entire period of our acquaintance - were somehow characteristic for his whole appearance.

He was by no means what one may call handsome or goodlooking. But his was a pallid, distracted charm - a puzzling quality somehow akin to a great, breath-taking beauty. It was the same disquieting attraction - but intensified, more sensual and much more conscious - that struck me when I saw the picture of his sister.

He had turned very talkative after we had had two or three more whiskeys. We had moved to a calm little bar, and he kept telling me what a "swell guy" I was as I bought him hot dogs, coffee, and drinks. To watch him drinking was an even more singular spectacle than to see him swallowing food. He enjoyed the liquor tremendously, and I hardly needed his repeated assurance to know that he "got a kick out of it." It was upon this occasion that I heard him using, for the first time, this favourite expression that was to become so familiar to me. "I get a bomb kick out of that stuff!" he announced, and his eyes were dreamy, unfocussed, but sparkling with alarming little flashes.

He told me that he had no room where to sleep because his room maid was ~~cross~~ mad at him. His room maid was a waiter and lived in the Bronx. He was mad as Speed owed him seven dollars, and had promised him to pawn his radio in order to pay him back. He had pawned the radio and got \$8.50 - "but I spent it for liquor," he declared with a radiant smile. He seemed deeply surprised that the waiter didn't like this behaviour.

I asked me why he didn't give at least 5 to his creditor, ~~thus he~~
- which would have left him still \$3.50 for drinks. His naiveté was
absolutely disarming as he explained: "But I wanted more liquor than
you can get for \$3.50. I had some girls around, ~~you see...~~" He made a
grand, pasha-like gesture.

It was at this moment that I realized for the first time that he
was thoroughly immoral. He actually ignored what morale means. He was
as truculent and as perfect as a wild animal in the jungle.

He told me that he and his sister came from the South and that
their mother had a little farm somewhere in North Carolina. His step
father was eighty-two; Speed not only described drastically but also
imitated ~~with grotesque gestures~~ his senile way of behaving. "Some-
times mother makes him jump - just to give us a laugh. 'Jump, Teddie -
there is a snake!' - she'd say - and then the old fellow jumps -
like this..." And he made the most grotesque capers in the middle of
the bar. "Oh, how terribly funny he is!" he said, shaken by childish
delight, and then added - as though this would explain why he was
so funny - "He has money, of course - even plenty of it. But mother
wouldn't give us a cent. She is stingy." The last statement he made
in a lowered voice that expressed admiration rather than disapproval.

He had been in California and Alaska, hitch-hiking all over the
country. He spoke of the Chinatown in Frisco with the same familiarity
he proved when discussing New Orleans or Chicago. He was right when
he presumed that I had never met a person like him. I could not help
being depressed by his dynamic recklessness. I had believed that people
needed a certain minimum of ~~cent~~ security to bear life. This lad,
however - an erratic barbarian - roved through a continent, without a
penny, and without friends, expect those whom he met on the highways
and who were in the same position.

"It was lots of fun," he concluded. "I got a bomb kick out of it."

Then he chuckled as he remembered another episod of his life - the most glamorous one, indeed, that he had experienced. It was the time when he shared an apartment with his sister, ~~in~~ Fifty-Second Street. Lucy had a "swell job" then, in one of those swanky nightclubs, "where they drink champagne." Life ~~was colourful and gay, even voluptuous~~ in Lucy's cozy little flat was colourful and gay, even voluptuous, according to Speed's voluble report. The most celebrated comedians and prize fighters were among the frequent visitors. Well-to-do gentlemen from Wall Street enjoyed themselves with charming chorus girls - , "real Umpf-girls," Speed said knowingly, and laughed heartily because I did not know what an Umpf-girl is. Finally he produced a yellowed newspaper clipping - a tiny little dispatch published months ago ^{good it column of the} in the Daily News. He kept it as a relic in his pocket book, and now read it aloud to me in a soft, solemn voice. "Lucy Willkins, popular hostess of Broadway's gayest café society, and her gifted brother Speed moved in all their glory from 52 th. Street to a sumptuous penthouse apartment Park Avenue."

- "Lucy's boy friend, at the time, was a guy ~~was~~ that knew another guy that was a newspaper man," he explained. "That's how we got the stuff printed. I got a bomb kick out of it."

I was even more interested in finding out what kind of life it was Lucy and Speed had been leading at the Park Avenue penthouse. ~~But~~ Speed, however, became rather evasive. "I don't know," he said musingly, and his smile grew very absent-minded. "It was too expensive, I guess." ~~And then, we had a row with the doorman - damned son-of-a-bitch he was...~~ Lucy's boy friend, at the time, was a prize fighter, a coloured fellow - very good-looking; very powerful, too... Drank a little too much, I suppose... What's the difference... The doorman, lousy son-of-a-bitch, didn't want him to visit my sister: the other parties in the house wouldn't like it, he said - to hell with him... So my sister's boy friend,

of course, started a fight - powerful fellow he was: so the doorman, of course, couldn't take it, fell down, bleeding all over; it looked funny like hell: I sure got a kick out of it; but Lucy had plenty of trouble. B'cause that doorman died in a hospital, and the doctor said it was b'cause that coloured guy had hit him so hard, and he couldn't take it. So he died, I sure was a mess, altogether..."

He suddenly changed the subject and showed
~~He noticed that I was not really amused by this story. In order to~~
me
~~reconcile me he showed me his sister's picture. This was the first time~~
my absorption
I saw it. He watched me, with a satisfied and slightly contemptuous smile, ~~as~~ "You should meet her, Clarence," he said. (I had just told him that my name was Karl.)

He suggested we should take the Subway uptown, and visit a bar, 89 th. Street, where Lucy now was working. It was about half-past-two in the morning. He said she would be there till four. We could have a drink with her, and then she was to take him home, to her apartment, so he would have a place where to spend the night. I agreed, partly because I was eager to meet his sister, partly because I didn't like the idea of ~~abandoning~~ leaving him on the street, in a cold night like this.

So we went; but when we arrived at the place he had indicated, the barman told us that Miss Lucy hadn't been there for several nights. The new barmaid served us a very sweet, greenish liquor. She seemed a great friend of Speed's, and kept giggling with him, and he asked me if I cared to make a date with her. "She isn't fussy," he whispered. "For five bucks you can have her." But I didn't like ~~his~~ her greasy, grinning face.

I began to feel very tired, while Speed grew increasingly lively and talkative. The barmaid gave him something that I was not supposed to see. I noticed, however, that it was a small package of cigarettes, and I wondered why she made so much fuss about it. Speed went to the men's

room and remained there for ten minutes or so. When he came back, he seemed even gayer and more excited than he had been before. His eyes gleamed in an almost alarming way, and he talked at such violent pace that I could hardly follow his words. I guess, however, that it was a great deal of fantastic nonsense that gushed from his restless lips. I remember that he insisted with a certain rhapsodic obstinacy on his sister's being "dynamic like hell" - which made the greasy barmaid almost suffocate with laugh. Finally I couldn't stand the sultry, perfumed atmosphere in the bar any more, and told Speed that I had to leave. ~~He~~ "Don't you want me to come along?" He gave me a strange, hasty glance as he asked this question - a cunning glance, I thought, and yet rather shy and anxious. I lingered for a few seconds, and perhaps I would have refused had he said one word more at this moment. But he just said there, pale and thin, waiting for my decision, with a terrible fear in his eyes. All his hectic hilarity had suddenly disappeared. I realized how very lonely he was - as lonely, indeed, as I was - , and that he was afraid he would have to sleep in some waiting room, and the police could catch him. I simply did not have the nerve to disappoint him.

Before he went to sleep on my sofa, he kept on talking for quite a while. He smoked two more of the cigarettes the barmaid had given him, and I thought they had a curious smell. When I asked him, however, if what sort of cigarettes they were, he shrieked with laugh, and capered about like a madman, and giggled: "Just ordinary cigarettes, Clarence - believe me! - just regular tobacco!" A few minutes afterwards, he declared he was very hungry - , "I'm starving to death!" he exclaimed, and then ransacked my room for bread and butter and cheese. He ate everything he found, and then grew suddenly very sleepy. "I got a kick out of it," he said in a drowsy voice. But even when he finally lay on the sofa, he did not stop chattering.

He grew surprisingly meditative and philosophic. "I wonder what you may think about me, Clarence," he said in a hypnotizing, singing little voice. "I suppose you think I'm a scamp, altogether.... Well, maybe I am." He made an impressive little pause, then continued: "It's only that I like to get a kick out of things - sure I do. But that's no sin, I can tell you." He shook his head, with cheerful determination. "A bomb kick is no sin," he insisted. "No, sir. It isn't."

"What do you know about sin?" I asked him.

He smiled ~~knowingly~~, confidently. "I know everything about sin. ~~I~~ I've learned it in school. I didn't like to listen when they talked about books and figures and how to spell long silly words. But when they spoke about Sin and Heaven and Hell and the Last Judgement - then I listened all right. Yes, sir - I know perfectly well what's going to happen - when the archangels blow their trumpets - like this..." And he imitated the grand gesture and the hollow noise the angels were to produce. "It's going to be quite a show," he said, with his shining eyes looking straight upward as if he could see ^(on the ceiling) all splendor and horror of that tremendous ceremony. "All the corpses will jump around, rattling with their bones, and the angels will shout at them, and most of them will be sent to hell. They'll scream and beg, all those sons-of-a-bitch - the barman who didn't want to ~~gave~~ me another drink, and the guy who made off with all my money in Frisco, and that other guy who beat me up, in Chicago - all of them will whine for mercy, but there won't be no mercy, and there will be a great big voice, shouting from behind the clouds like thunder - and the voice will say: Go to Hell! - nothing else, just this - , and then the Devils show up, millions of them, with their glowing horns and their funny tales, and all sins will be punished. They'll pay for all their filthy sins. And I watch them ^{how they get} ~~who~~ pinched and tortured, down there, in Hell - and I get a kick out of it... Yes, sir - a bomb kick..."

He lay motionless and silent, with his eyes closed. Perhaps he already was asleep, but I am not quite sure ~~as~~ if he really slept. I could see his face, though only ~~rather~~ faintly in the dim light of the morning. It was the most relaxed face I've ever seen. I daresay it was the most innocent face I can imagine. ~~It exhaled perfect peace.~~ His forehead, his delicate temples and his half-opened lips were embellished by a waft of solemn peace as we may find it on the faces of sleeping children or of saints absorbed in ecstatic prayers.

How can I explain why I did not send him away the next morning?-(or, rather, the next afternoon, for he slept until two.) There are many reasons, and none of them is sufficient. I don't want to be hypocritical and pretend that it was chiefly pity that prevented me from getting rid of him; (though feelings of this kind may have influenced my decision, or rather my reluctance in making up my mind...) Besides, I considered him a stimulating companion and thought it may be a useful practice to speak English with him. (He rarely failed to correct me, quite pedantically, when I made a mistake, and had a rather patronizing way of praising my progress.) Also, I hoped I might succeed in feeling more at home in this country if I had a young American friend. I realized, of course, that a little adventurer such as Speed was not "typically American" in any respect. Yet he possessed a certain puerile vitality and savage elegance that I regarded as somehow characteristic for this wide, mysterious country - a reckless cruelty, a grandiose imagination and natural generosity that I missed painfully in the sticky atmosphere surrounding Mr. and Mrs. Prokoff and the malodorous cosiness of their home.

As to Mr. Prokoff, he seemed only slightly surprised when he found a sleeping lad in my room. He had an understanding grin and mumbled that he had seen many things in his long and eventful life - at Dr. Bückeback's gorgeous parties and upon other occasions of a similar kind. I said

somewhat nervously that I did not grasp, really, what he tried to say, and that the young man was the son of friends who lived out of town - whereupon Mr. Prokoff retired discreetly.

I never presented Speed formally to Mrs. Prokoff, and I don't remember the moment when she saw him for the first time. Occasionally, however, when I went out or came home in his company, she happened to be busy in the lobby and glimpsed at us, swiftly and suspiciously. Once I thought I'd noticed a faint crease of a smile around her bright, drowsy eyes as she looked at Speed; but this may have been a mistake. It occurred the same day, however, that Speed asked me, with a sort of casual curiosity, if I knew Mrs. Prokoff, and how old she was. "She isn't so ugly, after all," he observed, and added with a wicked little laugh: "Much too pretty, anyway, for that hideous old ape." - This was the nickname with which we usually referred to my unfortunate landlord.

We had lots of fun together, Speed and I.

I had always wanted a son, but Anna had been warned by her doctor that it would be dangerous for her to have children. I am sure our marriage would have been more successful if we had had a son. It ~~was~~ must be a wonderful thing to watch one's own boy growing up, and to supervise his education. I always was interested in pedagogy, and originally intended to become a teacher. I would have probably been a failure in my pedagogic career - as I must admit after my experiences with Speed.

In the beginning, however, I was still inclined to fool myself as to the possibility of "saving" him. ~~Yet, my~~ I thought that he was not bad, fundamentally, and I still believe that this was no mistake altogether. Yet, my naive attempts of taming that savage being were doomed to the most embarrassing frustration.

The truth is that I was more interested in observing, studying his character than in changing and improving it. He fascinated me just because he seemed so utterly unintelligible - so very different from

anyone I had known, in my former orderly life. He was fickle and impulsive like a woman, and yet without any effeminate features: rather a ruffian, active, ruthless and piratical. He was capable of committing crimes, out of sheer fun and wantonness. But he was without guile and meanness. He was an amazing liar and amused himself by making up the most astounding stories; at the same time, however, he was frank and straightforward: his reactions always were genuine and spontaneous.

In the first time of our acquaintance I tried to tell him things about foreign countries and books. But he said, in a harsh, peremptory tone: "I don't give a dam for all that monkeybusiness. You'd better cut it out."

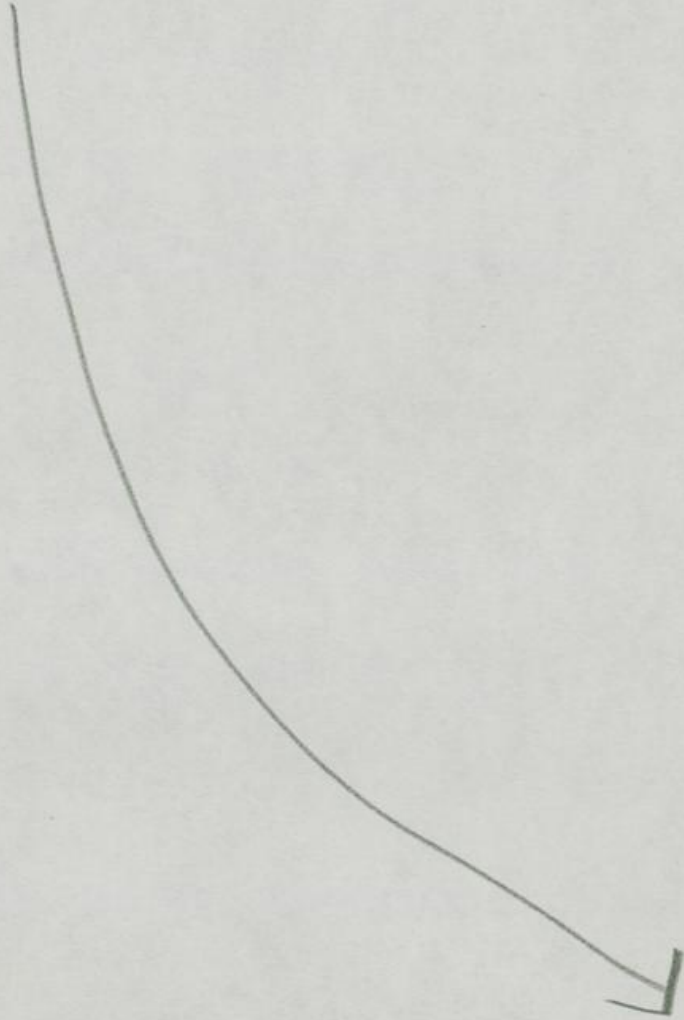
He yawned and made faces as I wanted him to look into a magazine or a paper. The printed word not only bored but actually disgusted him. The only "reading" he was able to bear, were the series of funnies which he studied eagerly in the afternoon sheets. He often tried to make me participate in his effusive pleasure, but never really succeeded: I proved incapable of grasping the sense of those childish cartoons.

The only entertainment he liked even better than the funny papers, were the movies - or, to be more precise, a certain type of Wild West thrillers. Pictures on historical or sentimental subjects were beneath his dignity - silly stuff for sissies. He wanted "big action", gangsters, cowboys and guns - and when the screen was full of blood and horror, relentless G-men, panting horses, plucky murderers, he got his beloved kick out of it.

I often turned rather nervous of him: he annoyed me through his perpetual restlessness, his provocative lack in ^{both} morals and manners. I wanted him half to go. But he kept tagging behind me like a little dog. And finally I quailed before his disarming persistence.

I never quite understood what it really was that made him stick to

me as he actually did. He must have realized that I am not wealthy - although he hardly guessed how poor I really am... He never asked me about my position, from which country I came, what I was doing here. He took it for granted that I had enough money to give him sometimes a quarter or a dollar, and he never asked me for more.



~~me as he actually did.~~ I bought him meals and drinks and ~~sometimes~~ took him to ^{the movie.} ~~know~~. This meant something to him, I suppose. Also, he could sleep on my sofa when he had no other place where to go - which occurred rather frequently, about twice or three times a week. For his former room maid was still mad at him, and even went as far as holding his few belongings - an overcoat and some shirts - as a compensation for the money Speed had failed to repay. The flat of his sister Lucy was just spacious enough to receive one guest, - "and her boy friend usually hangs around," Speed declared.

I never asked him where he spent the nights when he was not with me. Occasionally he mentioned, however, that he had been with his sister, or was having drinks with her boy friend, or he would mumble something about a girl he took him to her apartment: "You should have seen her, Clarence! She had a face like Greta Garbo - honest, she had. I sure got a kick out of it..."

Sometimes he disappeared for a day or to - either because he had "some business to do" with his sister's boy friend, or else because of other adventurous incidents. Remarkable things often happened to him, according to his eloquent reports. A young English couple ~~made~~ made friends with him in a bar on Times Square: "A sweet bab she was, plenty of sex appeal - and he wasn't bad either, a pretty smart guy, I suppose..." They took him along in their car - "a large Buik, 1940!" - , they had some drinks on their way, and all of a sudden were at Baltimore. There they left him, after having presented him with 20. He bought himself three bottles of champagne and emptied them with two other fellows in a dark garage. It was about three o'clock in the morning when he called me up. I did not realize that he was speaking from Baltimore, but only noticed how drunk he was. ~~It was about three o'~~ I said to him he should ~~not~~ disturb me at this time of the night - whereupon he giggled and asked me

if I was nuts: "It's noon," he stammered. "The sun is shining... Don't you see the sun?" - ~~"No kidding!" he said.~~ "Why I said that there was no sun, and he should go to bed. - "No kidding!" he said, and seemed rather angry. "Why should I go to bed at noon? I feel fine. I sure got a kick out of that f.....g champagne..." - Thus we talked over the phone for quite a while, and it was only two days afterwards that he showed up again and told me that his call had come from Baltimore. It had cost 3,50. - "I ~~was~~ must have been drunk like hell," he admitted cheerfully. And then described me once more all the charms of the English girl and her Buik car. "You should have seen her, Clarence..."

He always wanted me to share his fun and to like the things he was fond of. This was one of his features that made me believe that he really regarded me as a friend. I was often affected by a certain natural kindness in his attitude, by the gentle serenity of his smile. At other moments, however, he angered me by his rudness - particularly in bars ~~and~~ or restaurants when he showed off to impress a girl at the next table. How often I had decided to tell him, once ~~and~~ for all, that I did not want to see him any more, unless he finally pulled himself together. But then, of course, he conquered me again, with a smile or a word - perhaps with a word concerning his sister Lucy...

For I was still eager to meet her. Even without having met her, I somehow felt as though I was in love with her and had lived with her for years. He kept exploiting my weakness and curiosity in the most obvious manner, using his invisible sister as an alluring bait. He gave me her picture - the one he had shown me before, and which I have burned since - , and his grin was rather mawkish as he said: "Keep it as a souvenir, Clarence! It's the dearest thing I possess..." - When he felt that I was on the point of getting rather tired of him, he would suggest with the most harmless nonchalance: "Let's say hello to Lucy. She still works in that joint uptown." - But there was no Lucy, only that other girl - the greasy one

whom I didn't like. She giggled and shrugged, and finally told us that Lucy was now working at some other place. We went there, but in vain. Lucy remained invisible - a mysterious figure, puzzling, inaccessible, inhuman - an effulgent monster, receding with magic swiftness, hoaxing and tantalizing the hunter.

Speed promised me: "We'll meet her - tomorrow." But no Lucy showed up. - "She's with her boy friend, I guess," Speed declared in a cheerful tone as if this idea would be purest balm to my heart. - Lucy's boy friends played a predominant role in his conversation. He referred to them as to a secret organization of influential, though somewhat incalculable men. "They are a funny gang - Lucy's boy friends," he would say with a cunning smile. Once he asked me to mail a letter he had written while he sat waiting for me. "But don't forget it!" he admonished me. "It's a letter to Lucy's boy friend, and he'll raise hell if he doesn't get this information from me. He is dangerous gangster, you know..." I ^{first} took it for a joke ~~and laughed politely~~, but stopped laughing as I noticed that Speed remained strangely serious. -

I kept wondering about Lucy; if she was fond of strong perfumes as Anna was; if she also had that weakness for glaring colours - and whether she was capable of betraying her man, as Anna had proved to be. I was more and more inclined to confound Anna and Lucy in my muddled, bewildered mind; both amalgamated to one prodigious and seductive figure - Anna whom I had lost, and Lucy whom I knew not...

~~What an odd time it was I went through!~~ I lived, indeed, as in a constant haze of lies and ~~lies~~ ^{odd chimeras}, thoroughly intoxicated by the sordid romanticism of the underworld... Underworld - the mere word makes me shiver. It is connected in my memory with a certain fragrance, tender and intense; a poisoned perfume, wafted from a concoction of herbs and dubious ingredients - sweet and penetrating, and entirely irresistible.

At first I did not want to taste it. I felt it was dangerous stuff, and even grew rather angry when Speed confided to me ~~of~~ what peculiar sort of tobacco it was the greasy girl in the bar used to sell him. "Marivana!" I said. "Why, it's a narcotic, if I am not mistaken. It's against the law..." Speed made a grand, savage gesture: "What does the law mean to me? I don't give a dam. I've smoked that stuff when I was a kid, down there in the South. All the other kids used to smoke it too. It's fun, all right. You should try it, Clarence..."

I was always touched when he tried to let me into the little mysteries of his own life. This time, however, I refused obstinately to participate in his evil practices. I had asked Mr. Prokoff what he knew about Marivana. He frowned and shook gravely his head, while a cloud of paternal sorrow darkened his ~~hideous~~ grisly features. "So it really is against the law?" I felt pretty apprehensive, indeed. "Sure it is," he confirmed with a gloomy nod. "They send people to a deserted island if they catch them smoking that stuff, or just carrying it around. And right they are, too. The devil has invented that poison - it's as rotten, in its way, as morphine or any other of those damned drogues. Don't you know why so many crimes are being committed, out there in Harlem? Because those coloured people are crazy about Marivana - and I mean crazy; for it drives you mad once you have got the habit." And he warned me with cordial solicitude: "Don't get yourself mixed up in filthy affairs like that, Mr. Kroll! I don't like the way you are looking these days, Mr. Kroll. I don't want to meddle with your affairs. But as to that young fellow who comes so often to see you..." As I made an impatient gesture - almost unwittingly - he concluded his sermon with a melancholy little bow: "It's none of my business, of course." -

I couldn't say that he turned unfriendly or disagreeable after this conversation; but he seemed still more depressed than he had been before. There were no dirty jokes any more when he was fixing my room - a procedure which now took usually place in the afternoon, as Speed

rarely got up before twelve. At the same time, however, Mrs. Prokoff gave me surprising marks of a new attention. She sometimes knocked at my door and asked me ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ a cooing little voice if I had any wishes: a sandwich - she suggested tenderly - , or a cup of tea... "A cup of tea!" Speed repeated with an idiotic giggle. He usually was about, incidentally, when Mrs. Prokoff dropped in to make those charminh proposals in her flute-like voice. "He is always gay!" she observed with a certain motherly tenderness. "Happy youth! Always laughing..."

He actually brayed with laugh when she had finally left, - ~~partly~~ amused to madness partly by Mrs. Prokoff's comic behavior in general, partly by her referrence to tea. For Speed, for some mysterious reason, was in the habit of calling his beloved Marivana - tea. "Give me a couple of bucks," he would say with an obscene grin. "I'll buy some tea..." - And I gave him the money, though I could not afford it. I spent much more, during all that time, than I could afford. I had turned rather heedless - not only concerning financial matters. & I reacted on the gravest events with a sort of desperate levity. The last event which had somewhat shocked me, was that of Anna's being married again. This dreary information ~~I received~~ reached me just some days after I had inquired of Mr. Prokoff after the character of Marivana cigarettes. And it happened this very day - the day when I got the depressing letter from Vienna - that I smoked the first of those intoxicating stalks myself.

Speed, who had already consumed five or six of them, almost died with laugh as he watched my clumsy way of smoking. "You are a funny little number!" he screamed, capering about like a madman. And, again and again, ~~with~~ in an actual frenzy of joy: "What a funny little number you are, Clarence! What a funny number..." Then he turned suddenly rather angry, and said to me that I was wasting the precious stuff: I should inhale it - deeply! like this! - ; I should purse up the lips... He ~~smoked~~ a new

lighted himself

cigarette, just to show me how to purse the lips and to inhale aromatic smoke. "I want you to get a kick out of it," he said to me, and then chuckled again as he thought of the "funny little number" I was.

He certainly was a master in the art of smoking. The expression of his face grew ~~very~~ serious, even solemn, as he sucked the cigarette. He looked very depraved, indeed, and yet so childish, almost baby-like, his face chubby with blown-up cheeks. - I tried my best to imitate him, and was fairly successful. The cigarette gave me a drunk feeling which was not yet very ~~pi~~ strong but already nicely noticeable. After the third cigarette, however, that I smoked with the proper technique, I was entirely intoxicated and only too ready to join my friend Speed in his frantic outbursts of gaiety. All problems had lost their weight as though by magic spell: sorrows vanished, things became transparent and light, I felt as if I could fly - hovering somewhere, very remote, in azure skies. I was certainly having a most wonderful time.

(It was hell I went through.)
~~I was certainly going through hell.~~ For ~~this~~ whole tribulation that ^{now} ~~has~~ now reached its climax, began with that one first cigarette.

I felt sick the next morning, and started smoking again at night. I enjoyed it tremendously, and yet felt slightly disturbed as Speed informed me that "the tea" had grown more expensive: "They've arrested that girl - you know whom I mean: the fat one who used to give me the stuff..." - He didn't seem very excited about what had happened. My heart smote me. "Arrested?" I asked. "Why was that?" He shrugged and glanced at me in a detached, somehow ominous way: "They've found out she was selling tea. Well, all of us have to take a chance..." Then he told me that he knew a man in Harlem - "a pretty filthy guy he is, too," - who offered excellent stuff: "but it costs a little more, I suppose."

We smoked, and talked, and giggled about nonsense, and I forgot everything; I forgot all about Anna and Lucy and Hitler and the threatening war and my own precarious situation. I forgot Mr. Prokoff. I am sure, though,

that Mr. Prokoff had to notice the exotic smell now nestling in the plush covers of the furnitures in my room. He recognised, I presume, the sweetish flavour of Marivana which proved stronger, indeed, than even the characteristic smell of the house. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why I was so fond of that Mexican stuff: it killed the gloomy smell of this house...

What happened next - after I had started smoking the devilish stuff? I must try to remember correctly - to put things straight: as straight, indeed, as I want the Judge to get them...

~~Everything developed so swiftly... The catastrophe approached with a breath-taking speed... That catastrophic lad who brought me into that appalling mess, certainly deserves his odd nickname. He lost no time, sure enough. He acted rapidly - a winged instrument of the Evil: all inspired wickedness, all disastrous hurry, all speed...~~

The real drama started ~~as~~ when I met his cousin. How distinctly I recall the moment as he entered my room! - his broad silhouette looming in that ever-lasting twilight... Curiously enough, I remember Jim's features much more exactly than those of Speed - although I dislike Jim, and don't dislike Speed. And yet, in Speed's face when I try to imagine it, all forms seem blurred and dissolved, shady and at the same time blinding, restless, mysteriously moved like the surface of a pallid little lake ruffled by a constant flurry... I would be incapable of drawing a picture of Speed, even if I knew how to draw - while I would succeed, and very easily too, in making Jim's portrait. It would hardly be worth while, to be sure. He is no ugly fellow, but devoid of any attraction: heavy, ^{and} rather tall - definitely taller than Speed - , broad shouldered, but rather stooping, with a knobby, stupid face. He looks like a good-natured fellow, at the first glimpse. But a little later you notice a certain cunning twinkle in his eyes - a shrewd and wicked expression that contrasts dangerously with his emphasized

simplicity, that country boy-like attitude he keeps showing. He has the ungainly gestures of a bear - which makes him seem very harmless. I am told, however, that a bear ^{can prove} ~~is~~ even more relentless and blood-thirsty than a tiger...

"This is Jim," Speed explained, and his smile was half-apologetic, half-reassuring: precisely the sort of smile with which society ladies ~~inter-~~ introduce a provincial relative to one of their elegant friends. "He's my cousin: just comes from North Carolina. It's the first time he sees New York. Feels kind of lost, of course. So I have to look after him." He patted Jim's mighty shoulder, with an encouraging little laugh. Speed seemed very smooth and glib in comparison with his rustic cousin. "We'll take care of you, all right," he promised Jim who nodded idiotically. "Clarence is a swell guy, I can tell you. My best friend he is, too. He'll take you to a show. Do you like the movies, Jim?"

" 'f course I like the movies," the cousin barked. His voice was even more frightening than his face; a hollow voice, harsh and braying; absolutely inhuman, like the voice of those learned dogs one sometimes sees in the circus.

He had no money to take a room for himself, and Speed suggested he may sleep on my sofa: "I can always find another place, somewhere...", he declared, all serene generosity. But I didn't feel this to be a pertinent arrangement. So I gave him five dollars and told him to take a room. He should pay ~~it~~ for the rent for a week in advance, and meanwhile should look for a job. He was very grateful and humble. When he had left to douse his dirty face in the bathroom, Speed whispered to me: "He is quite a nuisance; not a bad fellow, though. Pretty thick here, if you knew what I mean..." And he touched his brow with a fingertip, while he pursed his mouth and ~~looked~~ gave me a roguish glance. Finally he warned me not to mention anything to Jim concerning our "tea parties." Jim never touched any dope: "He has no idea what it is all about..."

I took the two boys out for supper; Speed, more gluttonous and talkative than ever, encouraged his cousin with a sort of contemptuous benevolence to enjoy the meal. "You may have some ice cream as well, Jim," he explained to him. "It's all included, and Clarence wants you to have a good time - at your first night in New York!" The taciturn cousin mumbled, "Ocidoc", and ordered a double Scotch - which surprised me a little bit. It also slightly annoyed me that he seemed so very little impressed by the big city which he saw ostensibly for the first time. His face remained absolutely blank and vacant as we strolled through Forty-Second Street, to Times Square.

We went to a Burlesque Show, and Jim turned somewhat more lively as the strip-tease girls thrilled the audience with their rank gestures and frozen smiles. But even his laugh sounded sinister, like the ominous mutter of remote thunderstorm.

After half-an-hour or so, Speed grew very restless on his seat, and finally whispered to me that he had to meet somebody in Harlem: "Give me two bucks or three - you know what I need it for..." He was very anxious about concealing our little conspiracy to Jim. "I'll tell him I have some business to do," he whispered, while the cousin seemed spellbound by a glittering parade of nudity on the stage. "And then, a little later, you say that you are tired and feel like going to bed. I meet you then at your place. He wouldn't like to leave, anyhow, before the show is over. And then he'll find his way. He has got the cash for his room, hasn't he. O.k., then, he'll be all right." Speed's giggle sounded silvery in the sultry darkness, sweet and malicious, like the noise of a little bell.

Everything went according to his strategic plan. Jim, entirely absorbed in the show, hardly noticed him going, and when I informed him about my being so tired, he only gave me a watery glance and chuckled, while his spatular thumb pointed at the radiant exhibition of female flesh: "Don't

they excite you, Clarence?" -

It was good to be by myself for a while. For the first time since I had moved into Mr. Prokoff's house, I didn't mind the dreary solitude of my room; on the contrary, I enjoyed it. It was only when midnight had passed, that I began to become slightly nervous. Speed did not show up. What had happened to him? - One o'clock - two, half-past, two - and no Speed. I wondered, of course, what might have happened to him; but it would be an exaggeration to say that I was very alarmed. A had become familiar, after all, with his eccentric habits, his incalculable whims. He was probably getting tight with some pals, or had met his sister. I thought of Lucy as I went to sleep. Would I ever see her? Was she really so intoxicatingly attractive as I figured her?....

Speed came only late in the following afternoon. He looked pale and serious, rather worn-out, and particularly handsome. The paleness of his face gleamed almost nacreous, and his bright, narrow eyes were surrounded by a multitude of coloured shadows - violet, faint blue, silvery grey and black. He smiled plaintively, and asked with tragic modesty for a glass of milk.

His story was moving, though a trifle muddled. There had been a raid at the place where he usually bought the "tea." He had tried to escape, but in vain. They caught him at the very moment when he wanted to swallow the cigarettes. They took him to the next police station: the examination lasted five hours, without any pause. He was having a hell of a time. They slapped his face, and their relentless laugh was the only answer as he whimpered for mercy. He was questioned, again again, if he was a dope fiend himself or bought the stuff for another person. They promised him cigarettes and liquor, even Marivana, if he would only tell them who was the

fellow who sent him to get the "tea". - "But I'd rather die than telling them," he assured me proudly. "I wouldn't do this to you, Clarence - , honest, I never would. You're my friend, and have been good to me, and to my cousin too. I don't want you do get involved. It's quite a mess, I can tell you. I don't want you to get mixed up. It would be too bad, for you as a foreigner. It would be very bad, I suppose..."

I didn't like the ominous accent of these last remarks, and I may have seemed rather irritated when I mumbled that I didn't understand what he was talking about; for, after all, I had nothing to do with the whole affair and had never bought the stuff. - "It's bad enough that you smoked it," he said with a nasty grin, and then continued telling me how his sister - "~~was~~ isn't she swell?" - had liberated him by paying a bail, or rather, by making her boy friend pay it. Speed had been released after having given his word of honor that he was to appear before a special jury, tomorrow morning. "They want to investigate the whole racket," he declared with a certain solemnity which proved his full understanding for the necessity of such thorough-going measures. "They are after all those guys who use dope, or are selling it - Morphine, or Heroine, or however they call that stuff. They send all of them to an island, and if they catch foreigners among them, it's still worse, I guess..." And he added hastily: "But I won't tell them your name. I won't let you down, Clarence. No, sir. Not me. And if they beat me to death. I don't tell them nothing."

He had to present himself to the court at nine o'clock the next morning. I gave him one of my shirts and a necktie to make him look decent. He shaved in my bathroom, and I told him, again and again: "Don't be worried, Speed. Everything will be all right." - He nodded and smiled gravely: "Sure, Clarence... I hope so..." Then he said that I intended to go to bed very early tonight, in his sister's apartment. And at noon, when everything was over, we would have a nice luncheon, the whole gang together - Lucy, and Jim, and he, and myself - : "unless all of us are in jail, by that

time," he concluded with a rather sinister witticism.

Just as he was on the point of leaving, Jim arrived, heavy and morose. He asked angrily where Speed had been all this time -: "leaving me alone, in that f.....g big city, all by myself, among all those crooks!" His hollow, inhuman voice was barking with self-pity. Speed reminded me, with a very conspicuous blink, of his cousin's complete ~~ing~~ ignorance in all matters concerning "tea" - whereupon he launched out into a lengthy, ~~rather insulting~~ speech, bristling with insidious questions -: if Jim intended to go on spying on him? - if he, Speed, was supposed to act as his cousin's nurse? - if Jim was not old enough to look after himself? - and so on, in a rather insulting style. Jim, however, didn't seem offended at all, but only muttered apologetically. Before they left together, Speed suddenly asked me, with a strangely malicious grin: "One should^{my} think he's my cousin - huh? Looks kind of different, I suppose. Do you think he favours me, Clarence?"

I did not know this expression - "favouring", in the sense of "resembling", - and probably made a rather silly face. Speed seemed very amused. He had a long, hearty laugh, then explained to his cousin: "He doesn't understand what I mean. He's a foreigner, you see, and there are plenty of words he doesn't know. There are plenty of things I've taught him, but there are plenty of others he doesn't know about. What a funny little number he is! I sure get a kick out of this..." Still laughing, he left, arm in arm with his cousin who did not favour him at all. -

I hoped I would not see him again before next noon, when he was to come back from the court, and everything was settled. But it was half-past-three in the morning, and I was soundly asleep, when the shrill noise of the door bell awaked me. I felt something like a sharp pang in my stomach, and my heart skipped a beat. ~~For, at the bottom of~~ I knew it was Speed who kept ringing there, louder and louder - and I felt that ~~some horrid thing~~ something horrible was to happen. Yet

I didn't move, remained motionless, paralysed by fear, as though I could banish the approaching disaster by not reacting, hiding, keeping quiet...

But then I heard ~~who~~ how the house door flew open, and I heard the storm... What a night it was! - freezing cold, gusty, with heavy snowfall. I ~~notice~~ had noticed, of course, that it was nasty weather when I went to bed, about midnight. But how bad it actually was, I ~~only~~ realized only now, as I finally rushed down, in my dressing gown, to find out what was going on.

The house door stood widely open: a relentless storm carried heaps of snow into the lobby. The street seemed changed into a snowy wilderness, numbed with cold - a North Pole landscape, horribly bewitched, incredibly estranged, deadly, savage and enthralling by a new violent beauty. And against this astounding background of blowing white, slanted the two black silhouettes of Speed and Jim, clinging to each other as in a fit of desperate tenderness, both tottering, stooping, leaning against the wall, both on the point of sinking. A few feet remote from them stood Mr. Prokoff, in worn-out purple pyjamas - the oddest pyjamas, indeed, I've ever seen - , with his arms spread in ^{that} a gesture of classic ~~despair~~, extreme despair, chiding, shouting, lamenting: "Woe is me! My decent house! my home! All unsettled, messed up, devastated by these rascals, these damned good-for-nothing! What a nerve they have got to come here, in this disgraceful state! Ah, the snow...! Ah, my carpets! my house!" he whimpered, and then repeated, weepingly: "What a nerve! what a nerve!" He looked ~~most pathetic as he shook his ugly head and moved his long arms like the wings~~ like a monstrous bird ⁿ as he ~~shook~~ stood there, furiously shaking his head and fluttering with his long, wing-like arms.

I begged him to calm down, to go back to his room; but he went on lamenting. It was only when I had shut the door that he finally began to retire, still muttering and mumbling angry words, still staring aghast at the two invaders. He looked terribly old as he slowly staggered away, making ~~hasty~~ little gestures against Speed and Jim, like somebody who panic

tries to exorcize evil ghosts.

When I asked the two boys what to hell was the matter with them, the only answer I got was an inarticulate stammer. Both were absolutely unconscious with drunkenness. I had seen Speed in a state of accute intoxication plenty of times before. But his eyes had never been as glassy, his nor his gestures as fumbling as found them now. My horror, however, increased as I looked at Jim. His face was streaming with blood and disfigured by a nasty wound dividing his upper lip. The blood ran copiously from a deep gash in the back of his head; it coloured his temple and left broad stripes on his cheeks. His overcoat was polluted with big spots of blood, and on his heavy shoes snow, blood and mud were caked to an abject pap. There he stood, swaying his head backward and forward like a madman, and as I touched his arm he spit blood, quite a lot of it, and I could see that one of his teeth was missing.

For several moments I believed quite seriously that this grisly scene was a nightmare, no reality. I made desperate efforts to wake up, but in vain: this was Speed, fumbling at me as an idiot, making abhorrent faces, pulling his features all ways - and that bloody monster was Jim, filthy incarnation of felony. Had he just committed a murder? Were his hands

still wet with the marks of his crime? Was he going to die within the next hour himself? How dangerous were his wounds? Was the police after him? Would they find him here? ... I thought of everything, and nothing.

I wondered how I could manage to bring them up to my room. I forgot if I carried them, if they were able to walk. All I remember is that we somehow arrived at my room; that Speed flung himself on my bed, while

Jim sank groaningly down on my sofa. ... I begged him to clean his face, to put off at least his dirty shoes. He stammered restively:

"I can't... I can't... I feel lousy... I'll be sick in a minute..."

- "Go to the bath room!" I shouted into his ear. But he mumbled, with an idiotically complecent grin: "I can hold it... I think I can

Then he sat, and let his head sag forward like a dead thing...

Speedy
Jim
now
more
faint
on
hand

He
- and
I didn't
part of
body
hand

Stain
They
looked
on
day
00p
out
with
in
dirty
finger
partly
night
to
now
in
this
lobby
I
would
be
suspected
of
having
killed
him
I
didn't
think
of
calling
the
police
taking
them
to
a
hospital
Only
thought
of
taking
them
to
my
room
I
forgot
if
I
carried
them
if
they
were
able
to
walk
All
I
remember
is
that
we
somehow
arrived
at
my
room
that
Speed
flung
himself
on
my
bed
while
Jim
sank
groaningly
down
on
my
sofa
I
begged
him
to
clean
his
face
to
put
off
at
least
his
dirty
shoes
He
stammered
restively
I
can't
I
can't
I
feel
lousy
I'll
be
sick
in
a
minute
Go
to
the
bath
room
I
shouted
into
his
ear
But
he
mumbled
with
an
idiotically
complecent
grin
I
can
hold
it
I
think
I
can
Then
he
sat
and
let
his
head
sag
forward
like
a
dead
thing

A glimpse at Speed's terrifying
 face was ~~the~~ sufficient to
 Speed — his face damp with sweat,
 haggard and unshaven — looked
 more terrible than now:
 half like a madman; half
 like a Jewish gangster in
 a cheap mythological picture
 film —, and Jim as to
 Jim's ~~after~~ the picture Jim,
 his appearance was even more
~~alarming~~ alarming.

they would find him here,
 ... What a scandal! what
 a ~~tribulation~~ a disaster,
 situation! to ~~get~~ away from that lobby.
 M. ~~some~~ wanted to reach
 my room — as ~~he~~ desperately
 as a shipwrecked swimmer
 in ~~the~~ may try to
 reach the island. ~~Spanish~~
 Every thing would be ~~done~~ —
 the work ~~done~~ ~~only~~ avoided

hold it all right..." I had no time to appreciate this touching effort
to prove self-control: while I still tried to bed his bleeding head
on a pillow, Speed, for his part, was polluting my bed, in various in-
describable manners at once. I wanted to rush to the bed, but Jim's
hand, moist and massy, held me back like a clutch. He forced me to stoop
down, till my ear was in a most unpleasant proximity to his stammering
mouth filled with blood. It was dreadful and yet fascinating to watch
his thick, clumsy tongue like a helpless, ugly animal toilsomely moving
in a sticky liquid of blood and slaver. I shuddered with the idea that
this disfigured mouth could touch my temple as he whispered with
frantic zeal: "I am Speed's cousin... Yes yes, Clarence - you must be-
lieve me... Speed's cousin, that's what I really am..."

At the same time, another whispering voice came from my dirtied bed:
"A kick!... what I kick!... I got a bomb kick... sure I did..."

This was the inferno. These two insane voices, vying with each other
in murmuring a ghastly little dialogue of nonsense; this sickening
smell, the filth, the groaning, the distorted faces of these two pain-
stricken sinners - the inferno could not be different, could certainly
not be worth... The Underworld, here it was - thus was its appalling
face. The abyss, below the placid surface of civilization... the revolting
outburst of flames, blood and mud... Under the brittle polishing of
convention - the grinning grimace of the jungle... These two lads,
snoring now in their own filth, have its frightening features. Two
thousand of the same kind, and they are capable of devastating a city:

two millions, and they may destroy a continent... These two, however, did
a thorough job in transforming my room into a malodorous chaos...

No escape. I am their prisoner. I can't leave this room by dread
that these two infantil monsters might wake up and continue their
disastrous work... I spent the rest of the night in a chair near the

Was this a Vesuvius - or a Pagan? The focal point
with of two brutal young men, or
the result of a bloody crime to be it want

I ~~will~~ shall never forget
it - never. I am doomed
to remember the ghastly
scene, with all its macabre
details - as long as I may
live. ^{my hands} the ^{dark} ^{awfully} ^{with blood}
and the blood; - And ^{daily} of
blood on the floor - growing,
irradiating the ^{the} room
... This was my inferno -
the horrid mutilation of
my nightmarish.

I had always been afraid
of the outbreak. Now I
recognized its appalling
features in the faces of
these two disordered lads,
in their agonizing hisses.

How long I tried to clean the floor, the bed and the sofa with a rag and some pieces of paper. The two sleepers were immobile like sacks. Jim was still leaning in the corner of the sofa. I hoisted his heavy feet, put off his shoes... This was humble work; it somehow satisfied and calmed me as a deserved atonement. - At Speed's bed it was still worse, because of the indescribable incidents that had taken place... He rested peacefully, like a wicked child exhausted and satisfied after so many outrages. For the first time, I was horrified by the tender innocence of his smile. ... I spent the rest of the night in a chair, near the open window. It was freezing cold; but when I closed the window, the smell became quite unbearable... I gazed out of the window - watching the wan light gradually displacing the black and violet shadows. The narrow courtyard, covered with snow... filled with profound shadows, dark blue, almost black. Gradually the day dawned the wan light of the dawn displaced the finer tints of the waning night...

I must have slept a little, despite the biting cold and the inconvenience of my position. The whispering voices that waked me up were those of two conspirators. Together they sat, Jim and Speed, on the unsettled bed. J. had washed his face. His wound was less dangerous than I had thought it had seemed to me, in midst of the nocturnal horror scene. So the whole set-up was less nightmarish now, but still most unpleasant... Speed's white face seemed hardened and contracted as he said to me, rather briefly, that they had been "kind of tight", last night, "We've had a game with some fellows, and as we went on winning, they got mad at us... jumped at us, in the darkness... Jim got most of it..."

- "I sure did," barked the lackadaisical giant... Speed had changed his mind: he did not want present himself to the jury... "I'm scared stiff: that's why I drank all that f.....g liquor.. And they would ask me about you, sure they would, and I don't want to let me down..." - In short, he had decided to leave town. He and his

The air was quiet. I watched with a rush of dreamy

~~I~~ always,

~~I~~ am no hero. Wild animals

~~mean~~ ~~My~~ ~~for~~ ~~my~~ ~~used~~ ~~to~~

tear me - a violent

~~opponent~~ a ^{wood} ~~Devil~~ ~~am~~, the

gesture of fighting men,

the view of bloody wounds,

is sufficient to make me

run away as fast as

possibly can.

that howled over the snow,

tinging it dark blue, almost

black, and finally then

turned

that filled with their wails,

changeable tints the holes

of the air and little narrow

of the ~~draying~~ snow.

Gradually ↓ that nocturnal symptom

of displaced ^{over the} that nocturnal

blue and ~~an~~ ~~unduly~~ purple

~~blackish~~

Cousin - back to North Carolina... He made several telephone calls - very business-like: to the bus line; to his sister... I was surprised how short and sober his farewell sounded... "So long, Lucy... I guess it's better that way..." He would not see her for a long time. Besides, she might come into trouble because of his escape... I lingered to give him the money: should I help him to act against the law? But I was weary... 20 bucks... I just had enough cash...

Jim was brushing off his clothes. Lamented about his overcoat. Speed said, very with his most impudent nonchalance: "Clarence gives you his own... He can afford a new one. Am I right, Clarence?" - it was a nice, warm overcoat: Anna had bought it for me, years ago... I hesitated again, then gave him the coat... Jim grinned: "Fancy stuff - huh?"

Speed's face remained sullen: "So long, Clarence, Be godd."

At the door, however, he stopped and turned his head... "And don't be cross... I told you, right in the beginning, that you've never known somebody like me... Thanks, Clarence! You are all right, I suppose! - funny little number..."

Naively enough, I believed, really, that I would never see him again. My heart smote me when the door closed behind his graceful and slovenly figure... At the same time, however, I felt strongly relieved: for Jim, too, had disappeared...

It was Jim's hollow organ I should hear again, very shortly...

The next day: telephone call. Jim: "I'm speaking from Washington..."

The bus didn't go, because of the heavy snow. So they travelled by train - which is more expensive. Money only took them to W. - There, a wire from Lucy was expecting them: She was in a mess as Sp. had cheated the court. Bail she had paid would fall due, unless he presented himself to authorities... Speed - in prison... Jim, without a cent, in W.

✓ Speed - with matches between his feet. NW corner. I have noticed a fox. Looked like a fox...

I asked, where to send the money... He said I should give it to Lucy: she would forward it to him... which sounded utterly senseless. Then suddenly changed his mind: he would hitch-hike his way back to N.Y.

It only took him one hour and a half. Called me again. It was only that I saw realized he had never been at W. : a swindle a insulting obviousness... I lost my temper.... 20 minutes later: the house door - Jim; (in a new overcoat...) - Looked definitely less awkward and un-
gainly as though he had taken off a disguise...

Only his voice had not changed; sounded still like that of a trained dog as he informed me shortly that Speed was in prison...

"They keep ~~investi~~ inquiring him because of that dope he had bought for you." So he knew everything. Finally I grasped the cheap little conspiracy.

Jim went on: "Sp.'s sister L. had good relations to the police. Knew whom to bribe. a hundred bucks, and everything will be settled. Otherwise..." And an ominous glance ...

I said I was sorry to learn that Sp. was in trouble, but that I had nothing to do with it, and could not afford a loo...

The embarrassing conversation dragged, until Mr. Prokoff appeared. "Telephone for you, Mr. Kroll..." - Then whispered to me: "Don't like his behavior..."

I considered a little trip to Philadelphia... Wanted to hide until then... Prokoff acted most efficiently. Received Jim - who arrived the next time with a second men - whom P. described as a "greasy pimp." Wanted me to pay the loo without delay, or to follow them to the jail, as a witness for Speed's innocence. Jim: "I've heard myself how he persuaded that kid to get the dope for him. He is a dope fiend..."

whereupon P. urgend them, with scathing politeness, to leave his

He had been from the 1400's to 1500's or 1600's + not from 1700's. I hardly recognized him at first. He had changed - not only in appearance - a transformation that was not exclusively brought about by a man going head over heels in love. By some thing...

He ~~remained~~ ^{very} ~~stagnantly~~ quiet,
 in a ~~stagnantly~~ cool and
 superior way. — "What
 a warm ~~in~~ ^{W.} — of
 common ~~me~~. Did I ~~use~~
 say I was? I must
 have ~~told~~ ^{told} ~~that~~ ^{all}.
 But Speed is another,
 if you believe in ~~it~~
 not. And I really think
 you should look after
 him. ~~Mr.~~ ^{Ms.} ~~Rs.~~ ^{Ms.}
~~after~~ ^{For} your own
 sake. ~~He added~~
 with a ~~gesture~~
 emphasis. ~~His information~~
 about Speed ~~is~~ ^{being} ~~unreliable~~
~~I was~~ ^{rather} ~~in~~ ^{to} ~~believe~~
~~that~~ ^{the} ~~Speed~~ ^{was} ~~was~~ ^{rather} ~~rather~~ ^{fuddled}.
~~He~~ ^{was} ~~was~~ ^{actually} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ
~~the~~ ^{the} ~~distraction~~ ^{distraction}
~~had~~ ^{had} ~~permeated~~ ^{permeated} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~water~~ ^{water}

I know at least
 of a fiction of
 a friend of
 you has
 a black
 and white
 kind of
 thing

When they came back - Jim and his unknown helper - they were equipped armed with the Summons: they showed it to Mr.P. - if only for one short moment. The document may be forged. What for? Do they intend to kidnap me? Is Speed really in jail? Will he tell my name? How long will Prokoff be able to protect me against them? How long can I hide in this room? Who has more endurance - that gang or I? -

It is clear: they never went to W., never intended to do so. They fooled me, lied at me, from the beginning to the end. Jim knew more about

"tea" than I would want to know in all my life... He was no provincial newcomer but a hardboiled New Yorker... But the fight was authentic. His streaming blood, dirtying his face and the floor, was the right thing, no forgery. You cannot forge blood. Or can you?... Was he really Sp.'s cousin? Probably not. That's why they had laughed so much when Sp. asked me if he "favoured" him. Perhaps Jim was Lucy's boy friend? The one, maybe, to whom Sp. had addressed the letter that I ~~should not~~ was to mail? Jim - a big gangster? And Lucy? Was she too, in the plot? ~~Was she~~ Maybe she even was the boss of that sordid gang... pulling the wires from background... Perhaps she was even not Sp.'s sister?

Was his mistress, or had promised him to become it when he followed her orders?... What a jungle of lies! What a ~~lurid~~ ghastly confusion!...

I go astray, hopelessly, in this labyrinth of obvious tricks and mysterious traps... I stagger on this tricky ground... ice and snow...

I see Speed and Lucy, arm in arm, an incestuous couple, skating at a furious pace over a shining ice sheet - in raptures by their own triumphant elegance, their effulgent skill of their feats and capers... whispering and lying to each other, animated by mysterious drogues; fluttering, hovering, flying in an icy, colourless sky... Continuing their

took things for granted which now stood muddled and negative... I labeled human behaviour as inevitable... I am losing my mind

His screaming in pain made me
get worried and I made me
be slow with anger. I am sure to know
what a foolish thing I did.

airy promenade, crossing over a city transformed into a wilderness of snow, ^{palaces of dancing snow} two frozen birds, their relentless giggle whirring over Times Square, horrifying and enthralling in their criminal innocence, their cunning naiveté, child-like cruelty...

This is madness... I am haunted by hallucinations...

But this is reality... the door bell. - Here they are again, with the Summons. No murderous birds, but petty gangsters... They'll get me, I am lost... What will Anna say when she hears I am in prison?.....

Prokoff must save me... My friend Ladislaus - hideous but trustworthy - a human being...

Someone opens the door. I open my door. Someone has opened downstairs... I get a glimpse... this is Speed - Speed, "in all his glory" - with his pointed worn-out shoes, a match between his lips like a flower...

slender and elastic, bar-headed, without an overcoat, the cold doesn't disturb him, he walks through the snow, heated by the dubious flames of his youth.... And this - Mrs. Prokoff... No harsh words: a chuckle, soft and rank... They talk, with a shocking zeal... She takes his arm... They disappear - into her room...

So she is the one I have to praise as my saver... Beyond any doubt, Sp. will forget all about me since he has found a new victim... Or will will she prove stronger as he?... Poor Ladislaus... I am free... Must organize my life, anew... I must face that sordid, inspiring mess... One gets accustomed to it, I suppose... Eventually, one may even learn how to like it.... This is the beginning.

Many things
I shall have
hard to take
granted...

A vague light
twisting my con-
ception

Marianna, the
great artist!

I shall wander and great with some
lost and fight Anna and Vira
and my fear of the unknown

My dear, transformed into
palaces of dancing snow
two frozen birds, their
relentless giggle whirring
over Times Square, horrifying
and enthralling in their
criminal innocence, their
cunning naiveté, child-like
cruelty...
This is madness... I am
haunted by hallucinations...
But this is reality... the
door bell. - Here they are
again, with the Summons.
No murderous birds, but
petty gangsters... They'll
get me, I am lost... What
will Anna say when she
hears I am in prison?.....
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this is Speed - Speed,
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overcoat, the cold doesn't
disturb him, he walks
through the snow, heated
by the dubious flames of
his youth.... And this -
Mrs. Prokoff... No harsh
words: a chuckle, soft
and rank... They talk,
with a shocking zeal...
She takes his arm... They
disappear - into her
room...
So she is the one I have
to praise as my saver...
Beyond any doubt, Sp.
will forget all about me
since he has found a new
victim... Or will will
she prove stronger as he?...
Poor Ladislaus... I am
free... Must organize my
life, anew... I must face
that sordid, inspiring
mess... One gets
accustomed to it, I
suppose... Eventually,
one may even learn
how to like it....
This is the beginning.

I didn't need explain I
very much. He knew that
I was in London - had known
it all along, even before that
nocturnal incident in the lobby.

He was ~~very~~ indulgent and
standing. "All of me make
mistakes" he concluded.

I remember only too well
when the T. de Silva had
forgotten my signature ~~was~~ on
the check, and Anita didn't
~~want me to~~ had an hysterical
fit because I wanted away to catch
the police. What a mess!

It was the duckling +
misunderstanding ~~and~~ so animated
and moved by ~~such~~ ~~just~~
~~an~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~moment~~ ~~in~~ ~~motion~~ ~~then~~
be found again, and
promised me I would take
care of her when the "bird"

to show me ~~and~~ most
We didn't have to wait very long.
When my car came again, I was

was accompanied by a stranger -
"a kind of a queer pint"
across my face.

S P E E D .

the whole affair is
~~I must not be so nervous.~~ Mr. Prokoff says my position is not as
grave as all that. That ~~Summons~~ the boys presented is probably
~~forged~~, Mr. Prokoff says. Yet he advised me not to enter my own room
as long as they keep lying in wait for me, out there, in the street,
~~or maybe even inside the house, somewhere hidden...~~ I have to wait
(of this narrow closet)
in the darkness till they get finally tired of loitering around.
How sticky the air is here! It could hardly be worse in jail...
For the queer thing about those Summons is that they assume legal
value only if and when the person who wants to catch you succeeds
in handing the paper over to you personally. If they manage to touch
me on my sleeve and cry out, Here is a Summons for you, Mr. Kroll -
then I am lost and must follow them to the police station. It's
like one of those ~~dreadful~~ *thrilling* games we used to play as children - with
endless minutes of anxious waiting in some ~~dark~~ *dingy* hiding place, until
till the enemy came on somebody came and caught you... ~~But now, of course, it's infinitely~~
worse. Mr. Prokoff doesn't know how bad it really is. He takes the
whole affair not quite seriously and keeps telling me: 'Don't let
those filthy kids scare you, Mr. Kroll! I am all for you and shall pro-
tect you whatever happens.' I guess he is going to raise my rent.
~~But what's the difference? I don't care...~~ *and I may really need his*
help - pretty soon, maybe. I am a foreigner here, I have no influence,
of about on which I could rely no connections. If they send me to jail, or want to expel me from this
country - who would ~~be there to testify for me~~ *for me*, if not Mr. Prokoff?
Not a very imposing witness, I must say... Yet ~~he is~~ *truly* fond of
me, I suppose - in his strange way... He really thinks I am a gentleman,
would and ~~will~~ say so - even to a judge, if necessary... "You are a gentleman,
Mr. Kroll. That's why I like having you in my house..." He has an
in given to the public unctuous way of emphasizing the word "gentleman", enjoying every
syllable of it as though it was a piece of candy that slowly melts in

My life was clean, though dull.
My boy my home - now, my
balance. This is the end.

Now it's
so did,
ok named
up.

Mr. P. felt very sorry for
me. He thinks I am a
little a fool — but he
actually did not say so, but
felt dirty "silly".

Mr. Prokoff looks at me with
that gloomy expression. I told you before —
all night. He has warmed me,
warming? We must make our
own mistakes — all of us, I
suppose ... "I am all for you",
Mr. Prokoff says. "I shall
protect you, whatever may
happen to you ..."

What kind of a help
can it ^{bring} when the
earth trembles and
every thing falls in trouble
upside down.
with every thing breaking a mass,
falling down.

I gaze at ^{myself} ~~my picture~~ in
the mirror: my eyes begin
to accommodate themselves to
the darkness. I can
recognize my features —
at once blurred and sharp —
I look older than ~~my~~ ^{my} ~~age~~ —
definitely older than formerly —
then. ~~How~~ ~~well~~ What a
dreary fellow you are, K.K.!

But ~~I~~ ~~think~~ ~~the~~ ~~to~~
give me up, that means
nothing to me.

~~I~~ ~~am~~ The more wood ~~seems~~ ~~me~~
~~near~~ ~~me~~, ~~as~~ ~~if~~ ~~light~~ ~~me~~ ~~:~~
Blood ... It marks me, I think
of the underworld, with
lucid shadows flitting above,
and drinking eagerly
who are having their ghastly
fun ^{sipping} blood, ~~bathe~~
paddling, swimming,

M strength and courage to stand those horrible first months in New York. *Anna had written to me saying that it*
was a hard first month - to get alone,
that Otherwise the loneliness may have killed me - this ghastly loneliness,
that filling my room like a cloud, following me in the streets, lying on my
that shoulders, my forehead as a tremendous weight... Sometimes I thought,

I must die - destroyed by loneliness like by a mortal disease; but then

I remembered, Anna... she keeps waiting for you, over there, in Vienna.

Flora She goes to the churches and prays that you find a job, so that she
could come, and live with you, and be your wife again... And I made new
desperate efforts to learn the language - I hardly understood a word
when I arrived - , and to meet people who could be of any help. I hoped
for a job in a book store, or as a college librarian; but I would have
done any other sort of work as well, and happily, too; I was not fasti-
dious, not fussy. All I wanted was something to do, and Anna. All I
wanted was Anna.

I was almost pleased, therefore, when I read in the papers that my
gloomy prophecies had been fulfilled, and Hitler had taken Vienna,
and the German Gestapo was raging in our beautiful city and among
our friends. I felt sorry, of course, for many people I liked; but, on
the other hand, I presumed that Anna would come even sooner, with all
those dreadful things going on. I got letters from Vienna, complaining
in an indirect, careful way, about the terror, and the poverty, and how
poor the food had become. But Anna's letters, strangely enough, *did not*
match quite tally with the other informations I received. 'People exaggerate!',
she wrote. 'We still have plenty to eat...' In the beginning I thought
she just didn't want me to worry. But finally I found out that she
actually believed in all those nice things she had to tell about
Hitler, and that Austria has gained by the Anschluss. She had decided
to stay there. She asked me for a divorce. She wrote, of course she
could not remain the wife of a man with a Jewish mother. That is what
she wrote me: Of course, I cannot be your wife any more...

~~Notes~~
understanding the language conception
- But ~~to~~ I had no adequate
of what ~~limited~~ can be seen
how agonizing, numbing, murderous.

It fills your room
No, I would not have stand
There hardly passed an hour

~~There was no day - there hardly~~
~~was one hour when I~~
~~there was no time for~~

The money I had managed to
manage but at last, would
only last for a year or so.

There was no time to lose.
~~And I had no time~~

I had to go with me
And to my mother - I
to my father - I
And my very best - I
very hard - I

She betrayed me, cheated me, humiliated me. She alone is responsible for my ruin. Anna is guilty. It is all her fault...

How silly of me to weep like a little boy forsaken in the darkness. I must pull myself together. I should try to forget... To forget Anna, and Vienne, and the Summons, and all gloomy things... Ah, I'd give anything if I ~~en~~ could only feel, once again, ^{so} light and gay and detached as I used to do after having smoked those magic cigarettes... How are they called? Marivana... It sounds like the name of a bewitched princess in an oriental fairy tale. I still hear Speed's voice - how bland and seductive it was when he said, Marivana... 'Why don't you try it once, Clarence? You'll get a kick out of it...' He always called me Clarence, for some shady reason of his own - though I think Karl is a nice, simple name... ~~How innocent was his smile when he begged me: 'Just one cigarette, Clarence! - just one puff!' I can hardly believe that he is bad, fundamentally. He did not mean to get me into trouble. It was his cousin who made up the whole dirty plot. I never liked Jim, never trusted him. If I only knew if Lucy, too, is involved. Perhaps she is the real boss of the gang, pulling the wires secretly from the background. I am sure she is quite dynamic. How much Speed admires her! - 'My sister is swell,' she told me, again and gain. 'She certainly knows how to make friends and to influence people...' ... I wonder where on earth he caught up this title. His ignorance was something that never ceased to amaze me. I never thought it possible that a modern human being could be so completely - so thoroughly ignorant. He had no idea that a war is going on in Europe, ^{or} and who George Washington was. But sometimes, all of a sudden, he would remember certain slogans, or a historical date he had learned in school. 'Sure, I know,' he'd say, with a cunning twinkle. 'Taxation without Representation... That's what made them cross...' I was fascinated, of course - as if a savage little monkey would have recited Dante.~~

~~The time we just reaped~~

~~Watch out, Speed~~

~~You'll be surprised, Speed, when you
see me again. There are things in
life that will make him kind of tough.
Now you see how much money enough
to make money for Anna, to make~~

~~for the luxury of the day, face
on, for all his little things, the big
captives...~~

~~For that matter, a passion of love,
all this - that kind of love,
little created, for the things that
you want a few things that~~

~~not only to be more careful,
and not to take things
for granted that are in fact~~

~~to face life in all
its conditions and make it -
and how to get a kick~~

~~each of these functions, the
The great tribulation~~

~~violence for - he has
given me a first taste of
of what they are~~

~~of what they are~~

I was enthralled by his wit and his innocence, and by that gleam in his eyes when he mentioned his sister. 'Lucy is grand. You should meet her, Clarence!' But I never met her. Her picture was all I was allowed to see. Her lovely picture!...: what a pity that I had to burn it. There was something in her eyes and in her attitude that reminded me of Anna. Those fleshy shoulders, the rich, heavy hair - and that smile, drowsy, sweet, and clever... Speed had the same sort of smile, particularly when he was very tired or when he asked me for money. 'Just two bucks, Clarence... I want to get my blue suit fixed...' ~~a little hoarse and yet melodious~~ His voice, too, had a faint resemblance with Anna's - a little hoarse and yet melodious. I wonder if Lucy speaks the same way - with that blandishing sort of harshness...

...I ~~ought to~~ ^{ought to} be ashamed of myself! - to dream here of Anna's voice, and Marivana cigarettes, and ~~Speed's~~ ^{the} innocent smile of Speed and his sister Lucy. Anna is going to marry some Nazi official; I shall never see her again. Marivana is sordid stuff and has brought me into this dreadful mess. Lucy is some petty adventuress whom I never saw - and as to Speed... he is a filthy kid, Mr. Prokoff says.

I must concentrate my thoughts; there is plenty of time to do so, and this room is quiet enough - only too quiet, indeed - empty and ~~calm~~ and peaceful as a prison cell, sultry and dark as a grave... I have to examine the whole affair, clearly and soberly. ~~No d~~

This is the door bell... My Lord, how it makes me jump! ~~It may~~ ^{It may} be Jim again, and that other fellow whom I do not know. They show the Summons again: 'We want to see Mr. Kroll. Our cousin Speed is in jail, and Mr. Kroll is responsible. He has to appear as a witness. Here is the Summons, Where is Mr. Kroll?' Mr. Prokoff says, 'I've already told you that he isn't here. I don't know where he is. And I don't want you to ring this door again - d'you understand? ~~People here are asleep~~

~~It~~ Who the hell do you think you are? -
distracting, doesn't people at this time of
the morning!

Don't try to put that Saranman, ⁻⁶⁻ trick on me!

~~This is a decent house - if you know what I mean!~~ And now, get out of here, and don't dare come again! ^{you} ~~or I will call the police!~~ ^{that}

~~Try to be a bit braver, don't be - and, really, he is pretty tough.~~ Mr. Prokoff, ^{he} ~~he~~ impresses them, they don't say a word. They leave - without even slamming the door. Perhaps they have left for good. It is ^{3:11} raining outside - fortunately for me. They must get tired, eventually, of waiting out there, in the street. Mr. Prokoff is really much more efficient than I thought him to be; more courageous, too. What an odd little man! Rather imposing, for all his ugliness and poor manners. ~~The man falls so rapidly, and so quickly, and so easily, that it seems impossible.~~

In the beginning, I didn't like him at all. How unhappy I was when I had moved into this dreary place! I thought it still more depressing than the hotel where I had lived before. But I couldn't bear that hotel room any more, after having received there Anna's letter, I had to find a new place for myself, or I would have become mad. So I bought the Sunday Times, and looked through the section where they advertise one room-apartments, and then walked around... What a gloomy Sunday it was! Everything seemed so dingy, so squalid and - all those squalid dwellings, and the wretched, greedy people who wanted to hire them out. When I came here, to 38 th. Street, between Lexington and Third, I was already exhausted and my feet ached. This place here struck me as comparatively cosy, and Mrs. Prokoff made a nice impression on me. She looked almost pretty that evening, all dressed up to go out. We discussed the price, ^{had a small, friendly, as she} and she smiled and said, 'I'm sure you'll feel at home here, Mister.' I moved in the next morning, and was somewhat terrified when I saw Mr. Prokoff. I really think he is one of the most hideous fellows I ever saw - with his much-too-long arms, and his grey, crooked face. I don't think he actually has a humpback, but he looks as if he had one: the movements of his arms are that way, and even the expression of his eyes and his flat,

How good my little summer too for me certain it
next to - and some days - which I did not
require

I actually thought that I was
on the point of losing my
mind ...

tinny voice. ~~He is more ugly, indeed, than a human being should be.~~
There is something nightmarish about him. He has the most definite
resemblance with a ^{baboon} ~~big ape~~ I have ever noticed.

I hated the house, though my room is all right - rather bright and
~~The window opens on a narrow courtyard.~~
spacious and comfortable. What makes it so depressing is this lack of
light, I suppose; this dingy twilight, even on beautiful days - and
after three in the afternoon it becomes dark ~~almost as dark as it is~~ ^{now}
~~here, this rammed cell...~~
~~now, in Prokoff's private little studio...~~ Yes, I guess it was that
ever-lasting darkness that got me gradually down - the darkness and
the smell - that evil, sickening smell in the ~~stair~~ lobby, the stair=
case, even in my own room. It does not help that I keep my door al=
ways closed. The smell is stronger. I don't know if it comes from the
kitchen, or from Mr. Prokoff's bed room - (I am afraid that he never
opens a window...) -, or if it's just a part of the house. It is a
sweetish smell, dusty, heavy, very penetrating. ~~It makes me sick when I~~
~~am here, in this sticky box, it's more~~
~~I think of it...~~ ^{at me. How radiant her face became}
I was rather pleased when I had that row with Mrs. Prokoff; perhaps
I even provoked the quarrel as I sought a pretext to give up the
room. Besides, she annoyed me to madness, every morning when she entered
my room, all bleak dignity in her blue, dirty apron, plump and sullen,
her features numbed with self-pity. For she suffers incessantly from
her being so poor and wretched, and she considers it quite an offense
that she has no maid, and nothing, and must do all this work. Of course,
I feel sorry for her. Anna would also hate it to make other people's
bed and to clean floors, and all that kind of thing. But it's not my
fault, after all; she shouldn't scowl at me. First, she wanted me to
take the room, and smiled at me, and giggled. And then, she came and
declared rather bluntly that she had made a mistake, and the room
was more expensive than she had told me, only some days before. I
felt didn't think this was fair, ~~whereupon and told her so - where~~
~~and as I told her so~~

I am suffocating.

Then

I am overcome, stunned
tormented by this ^{affliction} ~~misery~~
multitude of agonies and
sadness and delay....

The P. of face... flow is
changed when the material
that it was previously in
in the following order.

she worked up herself to a sort of hysterical outburst: it was rather disgusting, indeed. Her plump body was shaken by ragged sobs, and she told me, always bitterly crying, that I did not treat her like one should treat a lady, and that she knew nothing about business - only that I didn't pay enough: 'You want to exploit me!' she lamented in a nasty, sibilant voice. I said, 'That's enough,' and that I was going to leave. Then she shouted at me that she was ~~very pleased~~ ^{happy} to get rid of me; ~~and~~ the sooner I'd move the better. Later I heard her shrill, ~~hysterical~~ ^{hysterical} voice in the lobby: 'Mr. Kroll's room is free - hang out the poster again! What are you waiting for, Ladislaus? Hang out the poster, I tell you!' - It was only then that I learned Mr. Prokoff's first name was Ladislaus. I am not quite sure if he is Russian or Polish by origin, or from which other part of Eastern Europe he may come. He speaks usually German with me - a queer kind of German it is, with a singing, heavy accent - while she prefers to speak English.

I hated the idea of ~~looking for~~ ^{looking for} another room; at the same time, however, I was only too pleased to get out of this dreary place. I had a definite feeling that it would bring me ill luck to stay here, with the Prokoffs. But there was no escape.

I realized there was no escape as Mr. Prokoff entered my room, looking very sad and more ape-like than ever. He told me how sorry he was, how embarrassed. His wife was so very nervous: 'Almost a pathological case,' he whispered while he covered his mouth with his skinny hand and then ~~looked at me with a~~ ^{smirked} ~~glance~~ as if he had confided to me a sweet, though ~~slightly~~ ^{slightly} ~~indecent~~ ^{indecent} shocking secret. 'You know how women are,' ~~he continued, with an obscene little grin.~~ ^{signifying as a man who knows what he is talking about.} 'They are crazy, all of them. And as to ^{my} wife,' he ~~spoke~~ ^{concluded}, almost cheerfully, 'she is even more crazy than the rest of them.'

I was rather nonplussed as he went on telling me everything about himself and Mrs. Prokoff, and how unhappy ^{they both of them were} she was. 'She is ~~is~~ ^{an} actually ^{look how mind with} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~engaged~~ by bitterness and frustration,' he stated, with a certain ^{bad} ~~minister~~ satisfaction. And then he said, with his crooked face very

close to me - I could feel his malodorous breath -; 'She hates me - this is the truth. Anita loathes me: she thinks me hideous...' ~~As~~ As he made a dramatic pause, I felt I should say something, ^{But} it was pretty hard, however, to find the ^{right} ~~right~~ words, ~~and my lips were numbed with disgust.~~ I finally mumbled: 'Why, Mr. Prokoff... that's all a question of taste, isn't it. No intelligent man can be hideous...' He chuckled; ~~he said:~~ 'It's a question of taste - there you are. But her taste is

different. She prefers those athletic types - tall, vigorous fellows,...

~~you know~~, In Berlin she had an affair with a certain ~~Baron von~~
Winkelblitz - ^{him?} do you happen to know? I said, no, I had not the pleasure.

Mr. Prokoff smirked; 'A good looking ~~man~~, all right. His father was ~~a general in the Imperial army. The Windeubles, as you may know,~~ ^{act for the man. They didn't go him anywhere} ~~long to the finest Prussian aristocracy. Unfortunately, they have lost~~ ^{are, I suppose. He was actually was kind of}

~~all their money; Anita was madly in love with the Baron.~~

'You are not very jealous,' I remarked - whereupon Mr. Prokoff shrugged his shoulders. 'What would it help?' A melancholy smile altered

his features, then died. 'I am no Adonis,' he sighed, and then told me

that Mrs. Prokoff had never loved him - 'not for a single day,' he

insisted with a sad obstinacy -: but she began to hate him only when

he had become poor. He had been a wealthy man when he married her -

a well-to-do broker in ~~Berlin~~. 'And she?' He grinned contemptuously.

'Well, I met her in some dubious bar on the Kurfürstendamm. She was

~~Incredibly attractive then.~~ He was silent for a few moments, then

added: 'She is still kind of pretty, isn't she.' I said hastily, that

on Monday, at that time. ~~A~~ ^{He} knew me as not

from all the boys. They thought

Alah! what she was. You see: how
much she has got to. You see: how
a beauty...

"M" now understood what
he picked a book then,
he concluded with a
melancholy quiver.

"M" ... he stated with resigned
disquiet.
tried to get hold of the ...
Mark it was me when ...
(Cook ...

I thought her still extremely goodlooking, very attractive indeed.

He never had a word for her.
'Yes,' he said, 'she is still a lady. That's why she suffers so much.'

After 15 years, you are a bit of a lady. - C. K. -
And then, with a pathetic pride: 'I have educated her - she should grate-
ful to me. I have made her lady.' He had contact with the finest people
in Berlin. We used to see film stars and bankers and even gentlemen
of the Diplomatic Corps. Anita was a hostess just as she should be.
My goodness, what gay evenings we had in our apartment! One night, Baron
von Windeblitz was absolutely drunk. He insisted on drinking champagne
out of Anita's slippers. You know how those noblemen are... What a
grand time we had!'

Mr. Prokoff did not make it quite clear whether he had left Berlin
only when Hitler came to power, and because of this fact, or already
before, in connection with a business scandal which he mentioned casually.
In any case, he was penniless when he left, and had to accept thankfully
the offer of a remote relative to manage this house as a sort of private
pension. 'It's hard work, of course. But Anita has to adapt herself
to her new position...'

She is very selfish now, very hateful. Sit in the kitchen and wait.
He begged me to forgive her for the ugly words she had used.
'We really want you to stay.' He looked very honest and kind as he
assured me: 'I am fond of you, Mr. Kroll. This may sound kind of funny
as I know you so little. But I can look through a man at the first
glimpse. I know you are a gentleman, Mr. Kroll... And if you pay \$9,50
a week, instead of 8, it's well right with me. \$11,50 is absurd, of course.
This was Anita's idea. She is almost pathological, you know...'

So I stayed, and from that day on it was Mr. Prokoff who cleaned my
room, invading it at eight o'clock in the morning, brandishing with an
ungainly energy a huge broom and a heavy bucket. Each morning he had
that old
a new joke or some peppered anecdote in store for me. 'Do you know
this one?' he would say, pacing the room cheerfully in his dirty shirt

a neat lady

depth 14.

who - y

sleeves - whereupon he ventured on a lengthy story on Mr. Göring, an elderly Jew and an Archbishop. Or else he would ask me if I knew the famous lawyer Dr. Bückeback in Berlin. What a pity that I had never visited the parties Bückeback used to give! The most amazing things went on in the lawyer's villa, according to Prokoff's inspired accounts. Society ladies appeared there in precious fur coats - 'finest ermine!' Mr. Prokoff exclaimed as if he wanted to sell those beautiful coats by auction, on a public market. Below the glamorous wrappers, however, the ladies were naked -, 'absolutely naked,' he whispered with an indescribable grin.

It was most depressing. The loneliness had been hard to bear; but how much more agonizing was Mr. Prokoff's garrulous company. ~~His lack~~ of taste and decency was appalling. He was the most dreary bore I have ever met. And yet I could not help being somehow amused, even excited, by his sordid chat. His filthy inventions - for I am sure there was nothing true in his stories - assumed an irritating attraction through their exorbitant vulgarity. Besides, I felt sorry for the wretched creature, and was touched by his true devotion to me. Soon I became so familiar with his suffering as if it were my own. At certain moments I was even inclined to ^{mix up} ~~confound~~ his squalid drama with the sad story ^{my own sad experience} I had experienced myself. If Anna ~~was~~ ^{now} had followed me to this country - I thought - wouldn't she ~~have~~ ^{now} ~~abhorred~~ ^{abominated} me as Anita Prokoff abominates her husband? ~~the cheated husband of the blond, faithless woman - and he wasn't a martyr as I was, - my~~ ~~most beloved older brother.~~ And I shuddered.

I recall all these details ~~because~~ of my life with the Prokoffs - of my lurid life in this house, in this city - ^{as} ~~because~~ ^{may} they explain, up to a certain degree, why I grew so restless, and spent so many hours loitering in the streets. It simply was because I couldn't stand my room any longer, and Mr. Prokoff's face, and the smell - I

I knew it would be hard to live in a house where my own brother was a martyr.

I was so touched and puzzled
by this wonderful ~~experience~~
~~who~~ and

I There were plenty of confessions
I happened only too frequently
that I had to listen to
confessions.

just could not stand it...

That's why I was an easy prey for the Underworld. My capacity of

resistance had crumbled. I floated through this tremendous city like
 16 a cold drink, and a very long one, too. An accident
 as a helpless wreck. I was dazed - actually dazed when I strolled on

Times Square at night, or wandered about in Harlem. It's not that the big city amused me. I couldn't even say that it excited me. It offered not comfort, no joy. ~~In a way, I was terribly bored during all this time.~~

The perpetual noise ~~is~~ ^{is} monotonous: it's ~~even~~ ^{more} duller, and more depressing, then silence. And yet there is something fascinating, enthralling in all this vociferous ~~emptiness~~ ^{void}; something billow-like, boisterous, something very grand... It dazes you, knocks you out.

Since my ears were deafened by the constant clamour of busses and newspaper boys, and my eyes were blinded by the glaring, glittering lights - how could I recognise the voice of the evil and the fatal features of the Underworld?

He looked so very innocent when he talked to me.

"~~Do you have~~ ^A cigarette for me, Minter?"

(It was only a whisper)

~~He whispered~~; I could hardly hear what he said. ~~When I looked at~~

~~the~~ The first thing I noticed when I looked at him was his wan, help-
less smile. He stood there - near the corner of Eighth Avenue and
Forty Second Street - , ankle deep in snow, shivering with cold. It was
about one o'clock in the morning. I had seen a show ^{and did} and then had had
a whiskey in a bar. It was very chilly, with that cruel, biting storm
blowing around the corners. There were heaps of new snow.

The lad who had asked me for a cigarette wore overcoat and was
bare-headed. His hair was all messed up, and he had a nervous way of
pushing back a ~~nervous~~ ^{nervine} lock with the palm of his hand. He had nice
hair, though, ^{-dumbly} ~~but~~ fair and silky. He gave the impression of rest-
lessness as he shifted his weight constantly from one foot to another.
His shoulders jerked nervously. Somehow he reminded me of a well-~~used~~

Match between air & teeth $\rightarrow$ fire & a flower (breeded)

I wondered how far could be so
unusually pale ~~almost~~. The only
strong colour in this almost luminous
pale was the mouth. All colour seemed
concentrated in his ~~mouth~~ ^{shining} of his lip.

I couldn't stand. The whole
quivering ~~up~~ ^{up} became a
nightmare to me. Mr. P.,
~~was~~ exhibitionist in manner -
~~frank~~ and ~~in~~ the his ~~incomparable~~
volgarity, the quivering mixture
of madness, ~~from~~ tragic pathos
and a ~~long~~ common sense
in his ~~kind~~ eloquence -
Mrs. P.'s ~~fading~~ chasing
fading was flashy; Mr. P.,
the twilight, the ~~long~~ ~~in~~ -
~~who could~~ it was too much,
gave me down: my moral
resistance dwindled...

What a ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~wild~~ ^{wild} man! - there
habit of the unhappy ~~one~~ ^{one} to walk
through the ~~streets~~ ^{streets} for hours, days,
- ~~simply~~ ^{simply} ~~exhausted~~ ^{exhausted} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the}
with the ~~disparate~~ ^{disparate} ~~ways~~ ^{ways} of
filipine ~~darkening~~ ^{darkening} ~~down~~ ^{down} ~~the~~ ^{the}
towers ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~reminiscent~~ ^{reminiscent}
of these

race-horse that hates to stand still, of only for a few minutes. He was lean and well-built; not very tall, even somewhat shorter than I am. I thought he could hardly be older than seventeen. He was twenty one.

"A cigarette...?" he repeated, and gave me a plaintive glance; then he lowered his eyes. I lingered for a second before I answered. But I felt it would be cruel to disappoint him: he looked so pathetic as he stood there, shivering. I gave him a cigarette and a light, and I asked him if he wasn't freezing, and didn't he want a drink. There was a momentary sparkle in his eyes - a flashing gleam of hope as I mentioned the drink. Yet I noticed that he slightly faltered as we entered the bar. *As we were standing, a barmaid at the bar. But she was of a bar, my 20th. She was*

without looking at him in a dangerous
I ordered two Scotchs and soda, but the bar tender declared with a rather hostile abruptness: "I won't serve nothing to this boy." I said - not too much surprised - "Why? What's wrong with him?" - while my young companion locked his arms across his chest in a pugnacious way. - "There is nothing wrong with him," the bar tender said.

"I just don't want to serve him anything. That's all." *basman*
The boy remarked, with a sort of superior nonchalance: "He thinks I'm ~~drunk~~ *tight*. I had a few drinks before." *with a 20th of this*

His bright, narrow eyes were watery and fixed. I realized, only now, that he was actually drunk. This was the moment, of course, when I should have left him. For some reason, however, I felt angry at the severe bar tender rather than at the youngster. So I shrugged my shoulders, and said that there were other places where we could get a drink. "Let's go, then!" The boy glided down from the high stool; he looked proud and elate. The barman gave us a *desperate* last glimpse, ~~askance and full of un concealed suspicion~~ *and* He mumbled something which I did not understand. The boy spit out on the threshold while we left the bar. There was something horrifying about this vulgar gesture - his spitting in-

stead of saying goodbye. It was as if he wanted to curse the bar, its owner and all costumers.

"You're really drunk," I said when we were outside.

"Of course I am," he said, with a short laugh that sounded almost triumphant.

ought to
"You ~~should~~ eat something," I suggested. "What's your name, by the way?"

"They call me Speed," he declared; and added, half-proudly, half-apologetically: "I ~~suppose~~ always am in a hurry. That's why they call me Speed, I suppose."

"I have never known anybody by the name of Speed," I remarked, slightly disturbed. Whereupon he assured me, cheerfully: "You've never known anybody like me, anyhow."

We had hot dogs and coffee in a little cafeteria. I watched Speed while he was eating and drinking with an astounding greed. The swift movements with which he manipulated knife, spoon and fork, were frightening rather than ugly. When he had finished he said, with a certain solemnity as if it was ~~he~~ *was* a thanksgiving for the meal: "Damned son of a bitch."

"Whom do you mean?" I was rather terrified. - "That lousy barman," he explained, with a *handy* contemptuous turn of his head. "He'll pay for this, *filthy rat he is* I can tell you!" His bright, childish eyes were filled with an ominous darkness. I felt again that there was something frightening about him.

both
"I suppose of us ought to go to bed," I said, with an desperate effort to look uncle-like and determined, - just to cover my irritation. But even while I was speaking I realized that I lied. I did not want to go home at all. I was afraid of my room, and of the loneliness and the smell. And Speed, too, knew that I didn't really mean what I said. He smiled casually, and then remarked - serious, but without any bitterness: "I have no place where to go."

But he was to catch me - go to bed - I can tell you - I know

~~There was no~~

He walked

darker by a my shadow ^{body}

As he walked ~~in~~ ^{on} my ~~side~~ ^{right}

~~the~~ ^{thinner} ~~the~~ ^{dark}

~~the~~ ^{weight} ~~the~~ ^{almost} ~~the~~ ^{howling}

~~the~~ ^{weight} ~~the~~ ^{almost} ~~the~~ ^{howling}

~~the~~ ^{weight} ~~the~~ ^{almost} ~~the~~ ^{howling}

~~the~~ ^{weight} ~~the~~ ^{almost} ~~the~~ ^{howling}

~~the~~ ^{weight} ~~the~~ ^{almost} ~~the~~ ^{howling}

~~the~~ ^{weight} ~~the~~ ^{almost} ~~the~~ ^{howling}

~~the~~ ^{weight} ~~the~~ ^{almost} ~~the~~ ^{howling}

~~the~~ ^{weight} ~~the~~ ^{almost} ~~the~~ ^{howling}

He looked slovenly and depraved rather than poor. ~~His~~ His grey suit was so worn-out that its colour had already turned slightly greenish, ~~but~~ it had kept, however, a rather elegant shape. The most conspicuous items of his clothing were a large pink handkerchief in his pocket - a very ugly thing of cheap, shining silk - , and his shoes which were particularly ~~pointed~~ ^{pointed} and made of a strangely pale yellow leather. These wan, coquettish shoes - which he wore during the entire period of our acquaintance - were somehow characteristic for his whole appearance.

~~He was by no means what one may call handsome or good-looking. But his was a pallid, distracted charm - a puzzling quality somehow akin to a great, breath-taking beauty. It was the same disquieting attraction - but intensified, more sensual and much more conscious - that struck me when I saw the picture of his sister.~~

He had turned very talkative after we had had two or three more whiskeys. We had moved to a calm little bar, and he kept telling me what a "swell guy" I was ~~as I bought him hot dogs, coffee, and drinks.~~

~~to watch him drinking was an even more singular spectacle than to see him swallowing food.~~ He enjoyed the liquor tremendously, and I hardly needed his repeated assurance to know that he "got a kick out of it." It was upon this occasion that I heard him using, for the first time, this favourite expression that was to become so familiar to me. "I get a bomb kick out of that stuff!" he ~~announced~~ ^{exclaimed}, and his eyes were dreamy, unfocussed, but sparkling with alarming little flashes.

He told me that he had no room where to sleep because his room maid was ~~cross~~ mad at him. ~~His room maid was a waiter and lived in the Bronx. He was mad at Speed, owed him seven dollars, and had promised him to pawn his radio in order to pay him back. He had pawned the radio and got \$8.50 - "but I spent it for liquor," he declared with a radiant smile. He seemed deeply surprised that the waiter didn't like this behaviour.~~

"I've pawned his radio" said Speed. That's why he is ^{mad} mad with me." I asked him what he had needed the money for,

They had originally been yellow,
but had faded and become
a brown color.

He wore these sandals like
Somehow they gave the impression
of Greek sandals - winged slippers
that carried his slat-like body
over most and seen - the worn floor
But it was his radio which

was rather bewildered.

He nodded cheerfully. "Of course
it was, that's my big girl is mad
at me."

He ~~did~~ with it. I can make no
reputation for the conductor. He did
ignore the difference between
good and evil. He was a ~~immortal~~
as a wild animal in the jungle.

whereupon he declared with a dis-
arming smile: "I just wanted
to have some fun. And the radio
kind of bored me. Anyhow, my room
maid always wanted to have some
fun. Can you stand that stuff? I
don't. So I passed the radio on and
had a good time with my girl."

I asked me why he didn't give at least \$5 to his creditor; thus he - which would have left him still \$350 for drinks. His naivete was absolutely disarming as he explained: "But I wanted more liquor than you can get for \$3.50. I had some girls around, you see..." He made a grand, pasha-like gesture.

~~It was at this moment that I realized for the first time that he was thoroughly immoral. He actually ignored what morale means. He was as truculent and as perfect as a wild animal in the jungle.~~

He told me that he and his sister came from the South and that their mother had a little farm somewhere in North Carolina. His step father was eighty-two; Speed not only described drastically but also imitated ~~with grotesque gestures~~ his senile way of behaving. "Sometimes mother makes him jump - just to give us a laugh. 'Jump, Teddie - there is a snake!' - she'd say - and then the old fellow jumps - like this..." And he ~~made the most~~ ^{performed} grotesque capers in the middle of the bar. "Oh, how terribly funny he is!" he said, ~~shaken by~~ ^{chuckled with} childish delight, and then added - as though this would explain why he was so funny - ; "He has money, of course - even plenty of it. But mother ^{like A.U. And a powerful woman she is.} wouldn't give us a cent. She is stingy." The last statement he made ^{Used to, but not when I already was a kid} in a lowered voice that expressed admiration rather than disapproval.

He had been in California and Alaska, hitch-hiking all over the country. He spoke of the Chinatown in Frisco with the same familiarity he proved when discussing New Orleans or Chicago. He was right when he presumed that I had never met a person like him. I could not help being depressed by his dynamic recklessness. I had believed that people needed a certain minimum of ~~ent~~ security to bear life. This lad, however - an erratic barbarian - roved through a continent, without a penny, and without friends, expect those whom he met on the highways and who were in the same position.

✓ H. had seen many things and took
for an hour, gentle. Was very kind
and friendly, having read it with 4.

Thank not me. Not Speed. No ...
She got two champagne ...
night — and I forgot what to

wanted
He's at night, I guess, L. said
with a waver

Gee, what a swell
But she is ...
Then coming at it.

Gee, we had a hell of a good
time, by and by ...
— "At home"

So his sister they ran away,
Speed and his sister Lucy.

His sister left ... She
worked as a barmaid, first in
N. O., later in N. Y. Then

gambled by he admitted he!
She was wonderful, he admitted.

"a dynamite good", "a
"mild kind", "a real personality":

"You should meet her, Clarence."
"She certainly knows how to

make friends ..."
The most glorious episode of his memories

was connected with L. — —

"It was lots of fun," he concluded. "I got a bomb kick out of it."

Then he chuckled as he remembered another episod of his life - the most glamorous one, indeed, that he had experienced. It was the time when he shared an apartment with his sister, ~~in~~ Fifty-Second Street. Lucy had a "swell job" then, in one of those swanky nightclubs, "where they drink champagne." Life ~~was colourful and gay, even voluptuous~~ in Lucy's cozy little flat was colourful and gay, even voluptuous, according to Speed's voluble report. The most celebrated comedians and prize fighters ~~were among the frequent visitors. Well-to-do gentlemen from Wall Street enjoyed themselves with charming chorus girls - , "real Umpf-girls,"~~ Speed said knowingly, and laughed heartily because I did not know what an Umpf-girl is. Finally he produced a yellowed newspaper clipping - a tiny little dispatch published months ago ~~in the Daily News~~ ^{gossip column of the}. He kept it as a relic in his pocket book, and now read it aloud to me in a soft, solemn voice. "Lucy Willkins, popular hostess of Broadway's gayest café society, and her gifted brother Speed moved in all their glory from 52 th. Street to a sumptuous penthouse apartment Park Avenue."

- "Lucy's boy friend, at the time, was a guy ~~who~~ that knew another guy that was a newspaper man," he explained. "That's how we got the stuff printed. I got a bomb kick out of it."

I was even more interested in finding out what kind of life it was Lucy and Speed had been leading at the Park Avenue penthouse. ~~at~~ Speed, however, became rather evasive. "I don't know," he said musingly, and his smile grew very absent-minded. "It was too expensive, I guess. ~~And then, we had a row with the doorman - damned son-of-a-bitch he was...~~ Lucy's boy friend, at the time, was a prize fighter, a coloured fellow - very good-looking; very powerful, too... Drank a little too much, I suppose... What's the difference... The doorman, lousy son-of-a-bitch, didn't want him to visit my sister: the other parties in the house ~~wouldn't like it, he said - to hell with him...~~ So my sister's boy friend,

of course, started a fight - powerful fellow he was; so the doorman,
of course, couldn't take it, fell down, bleeding all over; it looked
funny like hell: I sure got a kick out of it; but Lucy had plenty of
trouble. B'cause that doorman died in a hospital, and the doctor said
it was b'cause that coloured guy had hit him so hard, and he couldn't
take it. So he died, ~~sure was a mess, altogether...~~
He suddenly changed the subject and
~~he noticed that I was not really amused by this story. In order to~~
~~reconcile me he~~ showed me his sister's picture. This was the first time
I saw it. He watched ~~me~~ *my absorption* with a satisfied and slightly contemptuous
smile, "You should meet her, Clarence," he said. (I had just told him
that my name was Karl.)

He suggested we should take the Subway uptown, and visit a bar,
89 th. Street, where Lucy now was working. It was about half-past-two
in the morning. He said she would be there till four. We could have
a drink with her, and then she was to take him home, to her apartment,
so he would have a place where to spend the night. I agreed, partly
because I was eager to meet his sister, partly because I didn't like
the idea of ~~leaving~~ leaving him on the street, in a cold night like
this. *He looked at Speed, took his hand, and said, "You're a good fellow, but you're a little bit of a fool."*

So we went; but when we arrived at the place he had indicated, the
barman told us that Miss Lucy hadn't been there for several nights.
The new barmaid served us a very sweet, greenish liquor. She seemed
a great friend of Speed's, and kept giggling with him, and he asked
me if I cared to make a date with her. "She isn't fussy," he whispered.
"For five bucks you can have her." But I didn't like ~~her~~ her greasy,
grinning face.

I began to feel very tired, while Speed grew increasingly lively and
talkative. The barmaid gave him something that I was not supposed to
see. I noticed, however, that it was a small package of cigarettes, and
I wondered why she made so much fuss about it. Speed went to the men's

He ~~watched~~ ^{checked} me

She has

" I ~~said~~ the
I asked him if she was at the
home he, and that

There was a certain vision of her
I admitted, but what
really happened was
the first that she had
picture reminded me
of someone else
of a very familiar
face the most familiar
one.

room and remained there for ten minutes or so. When he came back, he seemed even ^{quicker} gayer and more excited than he had been before. His eyes gleamed in an ^{rather disquieting} almost alarming way, and he talked at such violent pace that I could hardly follow his words. ^{He talked and chattered and giggled and made funny faces pulling his} I guess, however, that it was a great deal of fantastic nonsense that gushed from his restless lips.

^{features all ways.} I remember that he insisted with a certain rhapsodic obstinacy on his sister's being "dynamic like hell" - which made the greasy barmaid almost ^{close} suffocate with laugh. Finally I couldn't stand the sultry, perfumed atmosphere in the bar any more, and told Speed that I had to leave. "Don't you want me to come along?" He gave me a strange, hasty glance as he asked this question - a cunning glance, I thought, and yet ^{Newy} rather shy and anxious. I lingered for a few seconds, and perhaps I would have refused had he said one word more at this moment. But he just said there, pale and thin, waiting for my decision, ^{his eyes widening} with a terrible fear in his eyes. All his hectic hilarity had suddenly disappeared. I realized how very lonely he was - as lonely, indeed, as I was - , and that he was afraid he would have to sleep in some waiting room, and the police could catch him. I simply did not have the nerve to disappoint him.

Before he went to sleep on my sofa, he kept on talking for quite a while. He smoked two more of the cigarettes the barmaid had given him, and I thought they had a curious smell. When I asked him, however, if what sort of cigarettes they were, he shrieked with laugh, and capered about like a madman, and giggled: "Just ordinary cigarettes, Clarence - believe me! - just regular tobacco!" A few minutes afterwards, he declared he was very hungry - , "I'm starving to death!" he exclaimed, ^{almost frantic with} and then ransacked my room for bread and butter and cheese. He ate everything he found, and then grew suddenly very sleepy. "I got a kick out of it," he said in a drowsy voice. But even when he finally lay on the sofa, he did not stop chattering.

And this ^{silly, ~~in~~ inadequate} word — "fifty" —
seemed to increase mysteriously
his maddened gaiety and
he repeated it countless times,
~~and carrying it with~~ ^{on the lips}
~~of his~~ ^{of his}, ~~quivering~~ ^{quivering} laughter.

I felt ~~sorry~~ ^{at home} for him — I. O.
~~very~~ ^{very} sorry, indeed, that

I felt the party like a
madden party ~~a~~ in my
heart and my stomach.
It was such a long time
that M. hadn't felt sorry
for anyone — except for
myself. What an odd
confused thing, indeed, for
a well-bred man! —
to meet ~~and~~ another
fellow who is even more
wretched than he — and
at the same time

He grew surprisingly meditative and philosophic. "I wonder what you may think about me, Clarence," he said in a hypnotizing, singing little voice. "I suppose you think I'm a scamp, altogether.... Well, maybe I am." He made an impressive little pause, then continued: "It's only that I like to get a kick out of things - sure I do. But that's no sin, I can tell you." He shook his head, with cheerful determination. "A bomb kick is no sin," he insisted. "No, sir. It isn't."

"What do you know about sin?" I asked him.

He smiled ~~smilingly~~ ^{at me} confidently and ~~ominously~~ ^{confidently and ominously}. "I know everything about sin."

I've learned it in school. I didn't like to listen when they talked

about books and figures and how to spell long silly words. But when they spoke about Sin and Heaven and Hell and the Last Judgement - then I listened all right. Yes, sir - I know perfectly well what's going to

happen - when the archangels blow their trumpets - like this..." And

he imitated the grand gesture and the hollow noise the angels were to

produce. "It's going to be quite a show," he said, with his shining eyes looking straight upward as if he could see ^{on the ceiling} all splendor and horror of that tremendous ceremony. "All the ~~corpses~~ ^{skeletons} will jump around, rattling

with their bones, and the angels will shout at them, and most of them will be sent to hell. They'll scream and beg, all those ^{sinful} ~~sons of a bitch~~

~~the barman who didn't want to give me another drink, and the guy who made off with all my money in Frisco, and that other guy who beat me up,~~

~~and for the dick and the other who thought themselves way smarter than me,~~ in Chicago - all of them ^{and} will whine for mercy, but there won't be no mercy, and there will be a great big voice, shouting from behind the clouds like thunder - and the voice will say: Go to Hell! - nothing else, just

this - , and then the Devils show up, millions of them, with their glowing horns and their funny tales, and all sins will be punished. They'll pay for all their filthy sins. And I watch them ^{how they get} ~~shut~~ pinched and tortured, down there, in Hell - and I get a kick out of it... Yes, sir - a bomb kick..."

now get treated even worse
than the monom. ~~at~~ even more
make God ~~even~~ more happy i
than the ~~stupid~~

Wonderful

He lay motionless and silent, with his eyes closed. Perhaps he already was asleep, but I am not quite sure ~~if he really slept~~. I could see his face, ~~though only rather faintly~~ *in the dim light of the morning.* It was ~~the most relaxed face I've ever seen~~. *I daresay it was the most innocent face I can imagine.* ~~It exhaled perfect peace.~~ His forehead, his delicate temples and his half-opened lips were embellished by a waft of solemn peace as we may find it on the faces of sleeping children or of saints absorbed in ecstatic prayers.

How can I explain why I did not send him away the next morning? - (or, rather, the next afternoon, for he slept until two.) There are many reasons, and none of them is sufficient. I don't want to be hypocritical and pretend that it was chiefly pity that prevented me from getting rid of him; (though feelings of this kind may have influenced my decision, or rather my reluctance in making up my mind...) Besides, I considered him a stimulating companion and thought it may be a useful practice to speak English with him. *And then, the coming day* ~~he rarely failed to correct me, quite pedantically, when I made a mistake, and had a rather patronizing way of praising my progress.~~ Also, I hoped I might succeed in feeling more at home in this country if I had a young American friend. I realized, of course, that a little adventurer such as Speed was not "typically American" in any respect. *He possessed* ~~Yet~~ he possessed a certain puerile vitality and *savage* elegance that I regarded as somehow characteristic for this wide, mysterious country - a reckless cruelty, a grandiose imagination and natural generosity that I missed painfully in the sticky atmosphere surrounding Mr. and Mrs. Prokoff and the malodorous cosiness of their home.

As to Mr. Prokoff, he seemed *only slightly* surprised when he found a sleeping lad in my room. *He showed a broad grin* ~~he had an understanding grin and mumbled that he had seen many things in his long and eventful life - at Dr. Bückeback's gorgeous parties and upon other occasions of a similar kind.~~ I said

and made 20000 feet of music.

And exhaled that rush
of pin-point immensity that
~~made~~ the face of sheepy
did look so ~~moving~~ lovely.
and moving.

And was in fact, the
voice of a child half
asleep that said m-
~~that~~ that ~~whispered~~ produced
this melodious whisper:

That's why I ~~the~~ didn't
send him away. M- no
no fooling my self and
making hypocritical towards
a bank of fire and all that
kind of thing. ~~Pity~~ in the end
~~my attitude of~~ I didn't
send him away because
I enjoyed having him
around.

somewhat nervously that ~~I did not grasp, really, what he tried to say,~~
~~and that the young man was the son of friends who lived out of town -~~
whereupon Mr. Prokoff retired discreetly. *of mine*
happened

I never presented Speed formally to Mrs. Prokoff, and I don't remember the moment when she saw him for the first time. Occasionally, however, when I went out or came home in his company, she happened to be busy in the lobby and glimpsed at us, swiftly and suspiciously. Once I thought I'd noticed a faint crease of a smile *and a faint smile, but it was not a smile.* ~~around her bright, drowsy eyes~~ as she looked at Speed; but this may have been a mistake. It occurred the same day, however, that Speed asked me, with a sort of casual curiosity, if I knew Mrs. Prokoff, and how old she was. "She isn't so ugly, after all," he observed, and added with a wicked little laugh: "Much too pretty, anyway, for that hideous old ape." - This was the nickname with which we usually referred to my unfortunate landlord.

We had lots of fun together, Speed and I.

I had always wanted a son, but Anna had been warned by her doctor that it would be dangerous for her to have children. I am sure our marriage would have been more successful if we had had a son. It ~~must~~ be a wonderful thing to watch one's own boy growing up, and to supervise his education. I always was interested in pedagogy, and originally intended to *later, when I was married, I hoped and planned to* become a teacher. I would have probably been a failure in my pedagogic career - as I must admit after my experiences with Speed.

21 In the beginning, however, I was still inclined to fool myself as to the possibility of "saving" him. ~~Yet, I~~ I thought that he was not bad, fundamentally, and I still believe that this was no mistake altogether. Yet, my naive attempts of taming that savage being were doomed to the most embarrassing frustration.

The truth is that I was more interested in observing, studying his character than in changing and improving it. He fascinated me just because he seemed so utterly unintelligible - so very different from

He had been awfully right
when he said that I had
met nobody like him before

He was ~~not~~ entirely new to
me — a new ~~type~~ ^{kind} of human
being,

anyone I had known, in my former orderly life. He was fickle and impulsive like a woman, and yet ^{thoroughly male} without any effeminate features: rather a ruffian, active, ruthless and piratical. ^{Julian} He was capable of committing crimes, out of sheer fun and wantonness. But he was without guile and meanness. He was an amazing liar and amused himself by making up the most astounding stories; at the same time, however, he was frank and straightforward: his reactions always were genuine and spontaneous.

In the first time of our acquaintance I tried to tell him things about foreign countries and books. But he said, in a harsh, peremptory tone: "I don't ^{cut it out} give a dam for all that monkeybusiness. You'd better cut it out." ^{His ignorance was astounding. He didn't know that there was a war in Europe. He had no idea what a common war was.} He yawned and made faces as I wanted him to look into a magazine or a paper. The printed word not only bored but actually disgusted him. The only "reading" he was able to bear, were the series of funnies which he studied eagerly in the afternoon sheets. He often tried to make me participate in his effusive pleasure, but never really succeeded: I proved incapable of grasping the sense of those childish cartoons.

The only entertainment he liked even better than the funny papers, were the movies - or, to be more precise, a certain type of Wild West thrillers. Pictures on historical or sentimental subjects were beneath his dignity - silly stuff for sissies. He wanted "big action", gangsters, cowboys and guns - and when the screen was full of blood and horror, relentless G-men, penting horses, plucky murderers, he got his beloved kick out of it.

I often turned rather nervous of him: he annoyed me through his perpetual restlessness, his provocative lack in ^{both} morals and manners. I wanted him half to go. But he kept tagging behind me like a little dog, and finally I quailed before his disarming persistence.

I never quite understood what it really was that made him stick to

Nothing to do.
Imagination, no outlet

Something has always been to Galt - Snow, (He doesn't like it. But he likes it.)

No No

— and since everything had changed
26th of May — at distance
of my own life and of the
world altogether — why should it
accept a easy path of rom
if only for a notch, to bring
H. liked all kinds of things
that are absolutely beyond life and
my understanding: the hammer, no
base ball games, boxing ... into
He also reminded me expert on my
ears. Once, in the time of his
going, he had been the foreman to
M. first thought that he was refusing
to a girl friend when he
boasted: "A well thing she
was, my Sherry!" But he
meant a car which he had once
to run, in the time of his
glory. He was to use to
make a hundred miles an
hour on the highways: "that's
why they call me Speed", he
explained proudly.

His Speed was not particularly not at
M. had wanted my own to
be like Howard, but
he was — and
M. had my right to

me as he actually did. He must have realized that I am not wealthy - although he hardly guessed how poor I really am... He never asked me about my position, from which country I came, what I was doing here. He took it for granted that I had enough money to give him sometimes a quarter or ^{half} a dollar, and he never asked me for more.

It happened, time and again, that I had no cash except a ten-dollar bill when he had

He didn't know who Sha of which country was. He happened to be the capital and he would have believed me. I told him that W. J. was in the hospital. A

He begged me to give him a ten-dollar bill to change it in the drug store around the corner. He expected the commission of this kind of thing and I told him with that kind of commission I couldn't do it. I told him I couldn't do it for the children to whom I'm giving money.

I got no kick out of gangster fiction or wild life. I was bored by bare ball games. I didn't grasp the fascination of prize fighting, and I couldn't understand the difference between a boxing match and a Chinatown

~~he was actually~~ ^{the movie} ~~id.~~ I bought him meals and drinks and ~~sometimes~~ took him to ~~where~~. This meant something to him, I suppose. Also, he could sleep on my sofa when he had no other place where to go - which occurred rather frequently, about twice or three times a week. For his former room ^{maid} was still mad at him, and even went as far as holding his few belongings - an overcoat and some shirts - as a compensation for the money Speed had failed to repay. The flat of his sister Lucy was just spacious enough to ^{have an} receive one guest, - "and her boy friend usually hangs around," Speed declared.

I never asked him where he spent the nights when he was not with me. Occasionally he mentioned, however, that he had been with his sister, or was having drinks with her boy friend, or he would mumble something about a girl he took him to her apartment: "You should have seen her, Clarence! She had a face like Greta Garbo - honest, she had. I sure got a kick out of it..."

Sometimes he disappeared for a day or to - either because he had "some business to do" with his sister's boy friend, or else because of other adventurous incidents. Remarkable things often happened to him, according to his eloquent reports. A young English couple made friends with him in a bar on Times Square: "A sweet bab she was, plenty of sex appeal - and he wasn't bad either, a pretty smart guy, I suppose..." They took him along in their car - "a large Buick, 1940" - , they had some drinks on their way, and all of a sudden were at Baltimore. There they left him, after having presented him with 20. He bought himself three bottles of champagne and emptied them with two other fellows in a dark garage. It was about three o'clock in the morning when he called me up. I did not realize that he was speaking from Baltimore, but only noticed how drunk he was. ~~It was about three o'clock~~ I said to him he should not disturb me at this time of the night - whereupon he giggled and asked me

~~Ride and~~ Young Lady gave him a lift in her car, elegant and well-furnished with comfortable in this magnificent apartment.

he checked ~~front~~ with an
infantile satisfaction.

He always came back to me
I don't know why + but

he always did.

~~I guess that I~~

Perhaps it was certain minimum
of security that I offered

him in 1960. I offered
a place
where he could always get a

cup of coffee and a cigarette
and a and which he needed
in 1961. All his evidence
in dependence.

if I was nuts: "It's noon," he stammered. "The sun is shining... Don't you see the sun?" - ~~"No kidding!" he said.~~ I said that there was no sun, and he should go to bed. - "No kidding!" he said, and seemed rather angry. "Why should I go to bed at noon? I feel fine. I sure got a kick out of that f.....g champagne..." - Thus we talked over the phone for quite a while, and it was only two days afterwards that he showed up again and told me that his call had come from Baltimore. It had cost 3,50. - "I ~~was~~ must have been drunk like hell," he admitted cheerfully. And then described me once more all the charms of the English girl and her Buik car. "You should have seen her, Clarence..."

He always wanted me to share his fun and to like the things he was fond of. This was one of his features that made me believe that he really regarded me as a friend. *I was often affected by a certain natural kindness in his attitude, by the gentle serenity of his smile. At other moments, however, he angered me by his rudness - particularly in bars ~~and~~ or restaurants when he showed off, to impress a girl at the next table. How often I had decided to tell him, once ~~and~~ for all, that I did not want to see him any more, unless he finally pulled himself together. But then, of course, he conquered me again, with a smile or a word - perhaps with a word concerning his sister Lucy...*

For I was still eager to meet her. ~~Even without having met her, I somehow felt as though I was in love with her and had lived with her for years.~~ He kept exploiting my weakness and curiosity in the most obvious manner, using his invisible sister as an alluring bait. He gave me her picture - the one he had shown me before, ~~and which I have burned since~~ -, and his grin was rather mawkish as he said: "Keep it as a souvenir, Clarence! It's the dearest thing I possess..." - When he felt that I was on the point of getting rather tired of him, he would suggest, with the most harmless nonchalance: "Let's say hello to Lucy. She still works in that joint uptown." - But there was no Lucy, only that other girl - the greasy one

His unflinching great in explaining -
in the things he was

He always tried his best
to explain in the terms
he was really fond of. That
was something very comforting
for unflinching great.

For, he was very lonely and

He was a peculiar way to
was very helpful in many
lonely, for all his
with his vitality. He

had no "person", no
no great "person", no
on that. He was incredibly

good - of that extreme
about but poor which
seems incompatible with

the human way of life.
He was poor in deed, as
an animal in the woods.

The only good thing. Fortunately
he has never realized how
much he was

He was a very
lonely man in a very
unusual way. He was
a very lonely man in a
very unusual way.

whom I didn't like. She giggled and shrugged, and finally told us that Lucy was now working at some other place. We went there, but in vain. Lucy remained invisible - a mysterious figure, ^{memor} puzzling, inaccessible, inhuman - ^{an} an effulgent monster, receding with magic swiftness, hoaxing and tantalizing the hunter.

Speed promised me: "We'll meet her - tomorrow." But no Lucy showed up. - "She's with her boy friend, I guess," Speed declared in a cheerful tone as if this idea would be purest balm to my heart. - Lucy's boy friends played a predominant role in his conversation. He referred to them as to a secret organization of influential, ^{very powerful and} though somewhat incalculable men. "They are a funny gang - Lucy's boy friends," he would say with a cunning smile. Once he asked me to mail a letter he had written while he sat waiting for me. "But don't forget it!" he admonished me. "It's a letter to Lucy's boy friend, and he'll raise hell if he doesn't this information from me. He is dangerous gangster, you know..." I ^(first) took it for a joke and ~~laughed~~ ^{laughed}, but stopped laughing as I noticed that Speed remained strangely serious. - ^{I wondered about}

I kept wondering about Lucy; if she was fond of strong perfumes as Anna was; if she also had that weakness for glaring colours - and whether ^{the way} she was capable of betraying her man, as Anna had proved to be. I was more and more inclined to ^{identify} ~~confound~~ Anna and Lucy in my muddled, bewildered mind; ^{both} both amalgamated to one prodigious and seductive figure - Anna whom I had lost, and Lucy whom I knew not...

~~What an odd time it was I went through!~~ ^{What an odd time it was I went through!} I lived, indeed, as in a constant haze of lies and ~~lies~~ ^{lies}, thoroughly intoxicated by the sordid romanticism of the underworld... Underworld - the mere word makes me shiver. It is connected in my memory with a certain fragrance, tender and intense; a poisoned perfume, wafted from a concoction of herbs and dubious ingredients - sweet and penetrating, and entirely irresistible.

~~that was Anna's~~ ^{that was Anna's} ^{when not a abandoned man like this}

He always interested and
fascinated me and often affected
me by his

My state became more
alarming when I began
to know that devilish
stuff.

At first I did not want to taste it. I felt it was dangerous stuff, and even grew rather angry when Speed confided to me ~~of~~ what peculiar sort of tobacco it was the greasy girl in the bar used to sell him.

"Marivana!" I said. "Why, it's a narcotic, if I am not mistaken. It's against the law..." Speed made a grand, savage gesture: "What does the law mean to me? I don't give a dam. I've smoked that stuff when I was a kid, down there in the South. All the other kids used to smoke it too. It's fun, all right. You should try it, Clarence..."

I was always touched when he tried to let me into the little mysteries of his own life. This time, however, I refused obstinately to participate in his evil practices. I had asked Mr. Prokoff what he knew about Marivana. He frowned and shook gravely his head, while a cloud of paternal sorrow darkened his ~~honest~~ grisly features. "So it really is against the law?"

I felt pretty apprehensive, indeed. "Sure it is," he confirmed with a gloomy nod. "They send people to a deserted island if they catch them smoking that stuff, or just carrying it around. And right they are, too."

The devil has invented that poison - it's as rotten, in its way, as morphine or any other of those damned drogues. Don't you know why so many crimes are being committed, out there in Harlem? Because those coloured people are crazy about Marivana - and I mean crazy; for it drives you mad once you have got the habit." And he warned me with cordial solicitude: "Don't get yourself mixed up in filthy affairs like that, Mr. Kroll! I don't like the way you are looking these days, Mr. Kroll. I don't want to meddle with your affairs. But as to that young fellow who comes so often to see you..." As I made an impatient gesture - almost unwittingly - he concluded his sermon with a melancholy little bow: "It's none of my business, of course."

I couldn't say that he turned unfriendly or disagreeable after this conversation; but he seemed still more depressed than he had been before. There were no dirty jokes any more when he was fixing my room - a procedure which now took usually place in the afternoon, as Speed

look

I couldn't say that he turned unfriendly or disagreeable after this conversation; but he seemed still more depressed than he had been before. There were no dirty jokes any more when he was fixing my room -

a procedure which now took usually place in the afternoon, as Speed

as for broken - now, thinking
something in my mind -
rarely got up before twelve. At the same time, however, Mrs. Prokoff gave me surprising marks of a new attention. She sometimes knocked at my door and asked me ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ a cooing little voice if I had any wishes: a sandwich - she suggested tenderly - , or a cup of tea... "A cup of tea!" Speed repeated with an idiotic giggle. He usually was about, incidentally, when Mrs. Prokoff dropped in to ^{make} ~~make~~ those charminh proposals in her flute-like voice. "He is always gay!" she observed, with a certain motherly tenderness. "Happy youth! Always laughing..." ^{as Sp. went on drinking with laugh.}

He actually brayed with laugh when she had finally left, - ^{as, in fact} ~~partly~~ amused to madness partly by Mrs. Prokoff's comic behavior in general, partly by her reference to tea. For Speed, for some mysterious reason, was in the habit of calling his beloved Marivana - tea. "Give me a couple of bucks," he would say, ^{to my} ~~with an obscene grin.~~ "I'll buy some tea..." - And I gave him the money, though I could not afford it. I spent much more, during all that time, than I could afford. I had turned rather heedless - not only concerning financial matters. ^{Toward the end of the summer, when I was} I reacted on the gravest events with a sort of desperate levity. The last event which ^{to me} ~~had~~ somewhat shocked me, was that of Anna's being married again. This dreary information ^{of a} ~~reached~~ reached me just some days after I had inquired of Mr. Prokoff after the character of Marivana cigarettes. And it happened this very day - the day when I got the depressing letter from Vienna - that I smoked the first of those intoxicating stalks myself. ^{finally reached to} ~~at this time~~ ^{choked}

Speed, who had already consumed five or six of them, almost ~~died~~ ^{choked} with laugh as he watched my clumsy way of smoking. "You are a funny little number!" he screamed, ^{giggled} ~~capering about like a madman.~~ And, again and again, ^{on capturing about these childish and} ~~with~~ in an actual frenzy of joy: "What a funny little number you are, Clarence! What a funny number..." Then he turned suddenly rather angry, and said to me that I was wasting the precious stuff: I should inhale it - deeply! like this! - ; I should purse up the lips... He ^{had} ~~smoked~~ ^{lighted himself} a new

it was very easy
any child could do it.

Apr.

On the beginning of found
in the house for some
the ^{aromatic} cigar. Men in the
~~conducts~~ ~~at the~~ ~~house~~
~~in~~ ~~smoked~~ manner

cigarette, just to show me how to purse the lips and to inhale aromatic smoke. "I want you to get a kick out of it," he said to me, and then chuckled again as he thought of the "funny little number" I was.

He certainly was a master in the art of smoking. The expression of his face grew ~~very~~ serious, even solemn, as he sucked the cigarette. He looked very depraved, indeed, and yet so childish, almost baby-like, his face chubby with ~~blown-up~~ cheeks. - I tried my best to imitate him, and was fairly successful. The cigarette gave me a drunk feeling which was not yet very ~~al~~ strong but already nicely noticeable. After the third cigarette, however, that I smoked with the proper technique, I was entirely intoxicated and only too ready to join my friend Speed in his frantic outbursts of gaiety. All problems had lost their weight as though by magic spell: sorrows vanished, things became transparent and light, I felt as if I could fly - hovering somewhere, very remote, in azure skies.

I was certainly having a most wonderful time.

~~It was hell I went through.~~
~~I was certainly going through hell.~~ For this whole tribulation that ~~was~~ now reached its climax, began with that one first cigarette.

~~The next day, I was suffering from a violent hang-over -~~
~~I felt sick the next morning, and started smoking again at night.~~

I enjoyed it tremendously, and yet felt slightly disturbed as Speed informed me that "the tea" had grown more expensive: "They've arrested that girl - you know whom I mean: the fat one who used to give me the stuff..."

- He didn't seem very excited about what had happened. My heart smote me. "Arrested?" I asked. "Why was that?" He shrugged and glanced at me

in a detached, somehow ominous way: "They've found out she was selling tea. Well, all of us have to take a chance..." Then he told me that he

knew a man in Harlem - "a pretty filthy guy he is, too," - who offered excellent stuff: "but it costs a little more, I suppose."

We smoked, and talked, and giggled about nonsense, and I forgot everything; I forgot all about Anna and Lucy and Hitler and the threatening

war and my own precarious situation. I forgot Mr. Prokoff. I am sure, though,

Agitation.
Obsession.

Jimmy's Food

Am a
~~degraded~~ telling me, in an at
base. detached and colonial
style, all about the ^{top} and
humanizing matter which, the
N.Y. police had in place for those
who were ^{murdering} ^{swindling} with
dog traffic.

and this ~~start~~ ^{start} ^{talked} ⁱⁿ
room where the ^{my} had
overcome the ^{hang} over
and have ^{reached} ^{removing}

My enjoyed the ^{lead} of good ^{efficiency}
but the ^{elimination} ^{restarting}
I had first ^{affirmed}
new ^{degraded}

was an ^{anticlimax} the ^{misdeeds}
a ^{gradually} ^{degradation} to a ^{new}
the ^{vice} was on the point of
becoming a ^{habit}

Besides, there were ^{awful} ^{spending} ^{of}
and ^{actual} ^{living} from ^{the} ^{first}
of ^{Street}

There was a ^{special} ^{the} ^{prison} ^{particularly}
^{removal} ^{for} ^{that} ^{kind} ^{of} ^{living} — ^{Spied}
^{explained} — ^{it} ^{was} ^{situated} ^{on} ^a ^{small}
^{deserted} ^{island} ^{on} ^a ^{ghostly} ^{or} ^a ^{small}
^{island} ^{with} ^{it}

Instead of the black robin of a fairly - brownish
the dubious nature of African jungle
that Mr. Prokoff had to notice the exotic smell now nestling in the plush

covers of the furnitures in my room. He recognised, I presume, the sweetish
flavour of Marivana which proved stronger, indeed, than even the character-
istic smell of the house. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why I was
so fond of that Mexican stuff: it killed the gloomy smell of this house...

What happened next - after I had started smoking the devilish stuff?
I must try to remember correctly - to put things straight: as straight,
indeed, as I want the Judge to get them...

Everything developed so swiftly... The catastrophe approached with
a breath-taking speed... That catastrophic lad who brought me into that
appalling mess, certainly deserves his odd nickname. He lost no time, sure
enough. He acted rapidly - a winged instrument of the Evil: all inspired
wickedness, all disastrous hurry, all speed...

The real drama started as when I met his cousin. How distinctly I re=
call the moment as he entered my room! - his broad silhouette looming in
that ever-lasting twilight... Curiously enough, I remember Jim's features
much more exactly than those of Speed - although I dislike Jim, and don't
dislike Speed. And yet, in Speed's face when I try to imagine it, all forms
seem blurred and dissolved, shady and at the same time blinding, restless,
mysteriously moved like the surface of a pallid little lake ruffled by
a constant flurry... I would be incapable of drawing a picture of Speed,
even if I knew how to draw - while I would succeed, and very easily too, in
making Jim's portrait. It would hardly be worth while, to be sure. He is
no ugly fellow, but devoid of any attraction: heavy, rather tall - definite
taller than Speed - , broad shouldered, but rather stooping, with a knobby,
stupid face. He looks like a good-natured fellow, at the first glimpse.

But a little later you notice a certain cunning twinkle in his eyes - a
shrewd and wicked expression that contrasts dangerously with his emphasized

And instead of it I saw a...
and...
was a...
by

My dream is the vision of the

that condition and captured in
more than anything else.

"That's where they are going
to ~~keep~~ me!" he ended,
almost desperately, and then
asked me for another cough
of brandy. "Or he wanted to
go to Harlem."

How often I promised myself
not to touch any more
the "infernal" tea! But
I already was addicted,
helpless to its ~~powerful~~
~~pharmacological~~ effect, its aromatic
flavour - mint-like and aromatic &
But my vision of the good ground
deplorably faded; all my
fortitude admitted: I was

simplicity, that country boy-like attitude he keeps showing. He has the ungainly gestures of a bear - which makes him seem very harmless. I am told, however, that a bear ^{can prove} ~~is~~ even more relentless and blood-thirsty than a tiger...

"This is Jim," Speed explained, and his smile was half-apologetic, half-reassuring: precisely the sort of smile with which society ladies ~~introduce~~ & introduce a provincial relative to one of their elegant friends. "He's my cousin: just comes from North Carolina. It's the first time he sees New York. Feels kind of lost, of course. So I have to look after him." He patted Jim's mighty shoulder, with an encouraging little laugh. Speed seemed ~~very smooth and glib~~ ^{and daffy} in comparison ^{to} with his rustic cousin. "We'll take care of you, all right," he promised Jim who nodded idiotically. "Clarence is a swell guy, I can tell you. My best friend, he is, too. He'll take you to a show. Do you like the movies, Jim?"

"Of course I like the movies," the cousin barked. His voice was even more frightening than his face; a hollow voice, harsh and braying: absolute-
^{ly inhuman, like the voice of those learned dogs one sometimes sees in}
^a the circus.

He had no money to take a room for himself, and Speed suggested he may sleep on my sofa: "I can always find another place, somewhere...", he declared, all serene generosity. But I didn't feel this to be a pertinent arrangement. So I gave him five dollars and told him to take a room. He should pay ~~it~~ for the rent for a week in advance, and meanwhile should look for a job. He was very grateful and humble. When he had left to douse his dirty face in the bathroom, Speed whispered to me: "He is ^{kind} ~~quite~~ ^{of drunk} a nuisance; not a bad fellow, though. ~~Pretty thick here, if you know what I mean...~~" And he touched his brow with a fingertip, while he pursed his mouth and ~~looked~~ ^{then} gave me a roguish glance. Finally he warned me not to mention anything to Jim concerning our "tea parties." Jim never touched any dope: "He has no idea what it is all about..."

I took the two boys out for supper; Speed, more gluttonous and talkative than ever, encouraged his cousin with a sort of contemptuous benevolence to enjoy the meal. "You may have some ice cream as well, Jim," he explained to him. "It's all included, and Clarence wants you to have a good time - at your first night in New York!" The taciturn cousin mumbled, "Ocidoc", and ordered a double Scotch - which surprised me a little bit. It also slightly annoyed me that he seemed so very little impressed by the big city which he saw ostensibly for the first time. His face remained absolutely blank and vacant as we strolled through Forty-Second Street, to Times Square.

We went to a Burlesque Show, and Jim turned somewhat more lively as the strip-tease girls thrilled the audience with their rank gestures and frozen smiles. But even his laugh sounded sinister, like the ominous mutter of ^{at the City Hall} remote thunderstorm.

After half-an-hour or so, Speed ^{into me ear} ~~grey~~ ^{seemed to be} very restless on his seat, and finally whispered to me that he had to ^{to date} meet somebody in Harlem: "Give me two bucks or three - you know what I need it for..." ^{Then he showed at} ~~He was very anxious~~ ^{about concealing our little conspiracy} to Jim. "I'll tell him I have some business to do," he whispered, while the cousin seemed spellbound by a glittering parade of nudity, ~~on the stage~~. "And then, a little later, you say that you ^{about midnight} are tired and feel like going to bed. I meet you then at your place, ~~He wouldn't like to leave, anyhow, before the show is over.~~ And then he'll find his way. ~~He has got the cash for his room, hasn't he. O.k., then, he'll be all right.~~" Speed's giggle sounded silvery in the sultry darkness, sweet and ^{laughily} ~~malicious~~, like the noise of a little bell.

Everything ^{was} ~~went~~ according to his strategic plan. Jim, entirely absorbed in the show, hardly noticed him going, and when I informed him about my being so tired, he only gave me a watery glance and chuckled, while his spatular thumb pointed at the radiant exhibition of female flesh: "Don't

you like it
they excite you, Clarence?" -

It was good to be by myself for a while. For the first time since I had moved into Mr. Prokoff's house, I didn't mind the dreary solitude of my room; on the contrary, I enjoyed it. It was only when midnight had passed, that I began to become ^{feeling} slightly nervous. Speed did not show up. What had happened to him? - One o'clock - two, half-past, two - and no Speed. I wondered, of course, what might have happened to him; but it would be an exaggeration to say that I was very alarmed. ^{He} had become familiar, after all, with his eccentric habits, his incalculable whims. He was probably getting tight with some pals, or had met his sister. I thought of Lucy as I went to sleep. Would I ever see her? Was she really so intoxicatingly attractive as I figured her?....
appeared in my imagination

^{fastened my} Speed came only late in the following afternoon. He looked pale and serious, rather worn-out, and particularly handsome. The paleness of his face ^{had a} ~~gleamed~~ ^{glimmer} almost nacreous, and his bright, narrow eyes were surrounded by a multitude of coloured shadows - violet, faint ^{faint and} blue, silvery grey and black. He smiled plaintively, and asked with tragic modesty for a glass of milk.

His story was moving, though a trifle muddled. There had been a raid ^{in his} at the place where he usually bought the "tea." He had tried to escape, but in vain. They caught him at the very moment ^{as} when he wanted to swallow the cigarettes. ~~They took him to the next police station:~~ ^{at the police station} the examination lasted five hours, without any pause. He was having a hell of a time. They slapped his face, and their relentless laugh was the only answer as he whimpered for mercy. He was questioned, again again, if he was a dope fiend himself or bought the stuff for another person. They promised him cigarettes and liquor, even Marivana, if he would only tell them who was the

fellow who sent him to get the "tea". - "But I'd rather die than telling them," he assured me ^{with a large grin} proudly. "I wouldn't do this to you, Clarence - , honest, I never would. You're my friend, and have been ^{very} good to me, and to my cousin too. I don't want you do get involved. It's quite a mess, I can tell you. I don't want you to get mixed up. It would be too bad, for you ~~as a~~ foreigner. It would be very bad, I suppose..."

I didn't like the ominous accent of these last remarks, and I may have seemed rather irritated when I ^{said to him} ~~stumbled~~ that I didn't understand what he was talking about; for, after all, I had nothing to do with the whole affair and had never bought the stuff. - "It's bad enough that you smoked it," he ^{abused} said with a nasty grin, and then continued telling me how his sister ^{Alfie} ~~wasn't she swell?~~ had liberated him by paying a bail, or rather, by making her boy friend pay it. Speed had been released after having given his word of honor that he ^{would not fail to} ~~was to appear~~ before a special jury, tomorrow morning. ^{The whole racket with 'em investigating} ~~"They want to investigate the whole racket,"~~ he ^{in his voice was to} ~~declared with a~~ certain solemnity ~~which~~ proved his full understanding for the necessity of such thorough-going measures. "They are after all those guys who use dope, or are selling it - Morphine, or Heroine, or however they call that stuff. They send all of them to an island, and if they catch foreigners among them, it's still worse, I guess..." And he added hastily: "But I won't tell them your name. I won't let you down, Clarence. No, sir. Not me. And if they beat me to death. I don't tell them nothing."

He had to present himself to the court at nine o'clock the next morning. I gave him one of my shirts and a necktie to make him look ^{at the great occasion} ~~decent~~. He ~~shaved in my bathroom~~, and I told him, again and again: "Don't be worried, Speed. Everything will be all right." - He nodded and smiled gravely: "Sure, Clarence... I hope so..." Then ^{he explained his wonderful intention} ~~he said that I intended to~~ : ^{this night he wanted to go} ~~go to bed very early tonight~~, in his sister's apartment. And at noon, when ^{chapter 1 party} everything was over, we would have a nice luncheon, the whole gang together - Lucy, and Jim, and he, and myself - : "unless all of us are in jail, by that

time," he concluded with a rather sinister ~~militiam~~ ^{ignominity}.

Just as ^{just} he was on the point of leaving, Jim arrived, heavy and morose. He asked angrily where Speed had been all this time -: "leaving me alone, in that f.....g big city, all by myself, among all those crooks!" His ^{barking voice sounded} hollow, inhuman voice was barking with self-pity. Speed reminded me, with a very conspicuous blink, of his cousin's complete ~~ing~~ ignorance in all matters concerning "tea" - whereupon he launched out into a lengthy, ~~rather insulting~~ speech, bristling with insidious questions -: if Jim intended to go on spying on him? - if he, Speed, was supposed to act as his cousin's nurse? - if Jim was not old enough to look after himself? - and so on, in a rather insulting style. Jim, however, ^{apparently not} ~~didn't seem~~ offended at all, ~~but~~ only muttered apologetically. Before they left together, Speed suddenly asked me, with a strangely malicious grin: "One shouldn't think ^{he's a} ~~he's my~~ cousin? - huh? Looks kind of different, I suppose. Do you think he favours me, Clarence?"

I did not know this expression - "favouring", in the sense of "resembling", - and probably made a rather silly face. Speed seemed very amused. He had a long, hearty laugh, then explained to his cousin: "He doesn't understand what I mean. He's a foreigner, you see, and there are plenty of words he doesn't know. There are plenty of things I've taught him, but there are plenty of others he doesn't know about. What a funny little number he is! I sure get a kick out of this..." Still laughing, he left, arm in arm with his cousin who did not favour him at all. -

^{did not expect} I hoped I would not see him again before next noon, when he was to come back from the court, ~~and everything was settled~~. But it was half-past-three in the morning, and I was soundly asleep, when the shrill noise of the door bell awaked me. I felt something like a sharp pang in my stomach, and my heart skipped a beat. ~~For, at the bottom of~~ I knew it was Speed who kept ringing there, louder and louder - and I felt that ~~some horrid thing~~ something horrible was to happen. Yet

I didn't move, remained motionless, paralysed by fear, as though I could banish the approaching disaster by not reacting, hiding, keeping quiet...

But then I heard ~~who~~ ^{of the door opened} how the house door flew open, ^{and the howling} and I heard the storm... What a night it was! - freezing cold, gusty, with heavy snowfall. I ~~realise~~ had noticed, of course, ~~that~~ it was nasty weather when I went to bed, about ^{at} midnight. But how bad it actually was, I ~~only~~ realized only now, as I finally rushed down, in my dressing gown, to find out what was going on.

The house door stood widely open: a relentless storm carried heaps of snow into the lobby. The street seemed changed into a snowy wilderness, numbed with cold - a ^{polar} North-Pole landscape, horribly bewitched, incredibly estranged, deadly, savage and enthralling by a new violent beauty. And against this astounding background of blowing white, slanted the two black silhouettes of Speed and Jim, clinging to each other as in a fit of desperate tenderness, both tottering, stooping, leaning against the wall, both on the point of sinking. A few feet remote from them stood Mr. Prokoff, in worn-out purple pyjamas - the oddest pyjamas, indeed, I've ever seen - , with his arms spread in ^{the} gesture of classic despair, extreme despair, chiding, shouting, lamenting: "Woe is me! My decent house! my home! All unsettled, messed up, devastated by these rascals, these damned good-for-nothing! What a nerve they have got to come here, in this disgraceful state! Ah, the snow...! Ah, my carpets! my house!" he whimpered, and then repeated, weepingly: "What a nerve! what a nerve!" He looked ~~most pathetic as he shook his ugly head and moved his long arms like the wings~~ like a monstrous bird as he ~~stood~~ stood there, furiously shaking his head and fluttering with his long, wing-like arms.

I begged him to calm down, to go back to his room; but he went on lamenting. It was only when I had shut the door that he finally began to retire, still muttering ~~and mumbling~~ angry words, still staring aghast at the two invaders. He looked terribly old as he slowly staggered away, making ~~many~~ little gestures against Speed and Jim, like somebody who

Panic



SPEED

A STORY

by

KLAUS MANN.

To Christopher Isherwood

Brentwood-Los Angeles.

August, 1940.

This is the end.

There is no escape. I am ruined. No hope, any more. I am through.

I used to lead an orderly life. This was a long time ago... I was a respectable man - an Austrian citizen. Why did I leave my country? Why did I cross the ocean? How did I get into this sordid mess?... ~~Hiding like a thief in this hole! ...Staring at the~~ darkness, numb with fear; listening to these dismal little noises in the walls - this constant rustling and crackling ...There must be rats - thousands of them - undermining the house... Everything totters and trembles...

~~This is an earthquake.~~

~~I tried to escape the earthquake. That's why I left Vienna, and my home, and so many things I loved. But the earthquake followed me over the ocean. It is everywhere. The whole world is losing its balance. No ground under my feet ...~~

~~I am tumbling too...~~

Mr. Prokoff says it's not as bad as all that. They just try to scare me - says Mr. Prokoff. The summons probably is forged. If it were a legal warrant, the police would hardly send those fellows to fetch me. It might be a private summons, of course ... But Mr. Prokoff says they could obtain such a private summons only if I owed them money or if I had maltreated them. I - and maltreating Speed! What a preposterous idea!

Yet, they produced the document - or, in any case, they brandished a piece of paper that looked to Mr. Prokoff very much

like a summons. So he advised me not to enter my room as long as they keep lying in wait for me - out there, in the street. It was very nice of Mr. Prokoff to offer me this unused chamber as a hiding place. It's just a sort of a closet, really -: a squalid box, dark and narrow as a prison cell ...

The odd thing about those private summons is that they only assume legal validity if and when the person who wants to catch you, actually succeeds in handing over the paper to you personally. If they ever manage to touch my sleeve or my neck, and cry out, Here's a summons for you, Mr. Kroll!- then they have really got me and I must follow them. It's like one of those gruesome games we used to play as children - with agonizing minutes in some dingy hiding place - till the boogy-man found you, and touched your neck, and could do what he liked with you ...

Mr. Prokoff feels very sorry for me. He thinks I behaved like a fool - which is only too true - : yet, he feels really sorry. He gives me that gloomy "I -told you-so-before" look, and shakes his head, full of sorrow, "Everything will be o.k.", - he insists in a tragic tone as though predicting my end. ~~I am all for you, Mr. Kroll. You can count on me, whatever may happen to you.~~

~~I may need his help-: pretty soon, maybe. I am a foreigner in this country - without friends or influence. If they send me to jail - or to that deserted island of which Speed kept talking-: who would be there to testify for me, if not Mr. Prokoff? - Not a very imposing witness, I must admit ... However, even the most lustreless protector may be better than being absolutely forsaken- and Mr. Prokoff is truly fond of me, I suppose - in his strange,~~

of mine. But it wasn't poor old grandmamma's race that drove me out of the country - not at all. The fear that haunted me, day and night, was much stronger - more profound, more agonizing... Sometimes, in my dreams - or even in the daytime - I saw Vienna inundated with blood - all those familiar streets, the beautiful squares, the parks - my whole city overflowing with the sticky, nauseous liquid. - How I loathe the smell and color of blood! The mere word gives me the jitters-: Blood ...: it makes me think of a tremendous slaughter, lacerated human bodies, the revolting orgy of sadism...

Anna didn't understand.

She was not afraid of the Underworld. Not she.

Now I realize that she never meant it, really, when she said that she would later join me, in America. She just wanted me to keep quiet. So she said, 'I'll follow you, Karl! sweetheart...' And I was foolish enough to take it seriously.

If I hadn't believed her - how should I have survived those horrible first months in New York? *The loneliness, the poverty, the boredom...* That indescribable loneliness - how should I've been able to bear it? It kept growing, inside myself, that loneliness - exuberantly - like a virulent disease, like an obsession, a mania... The only idea that actually kept me alive was that of Anna's faithful love. Anna keeps waiting for you, over there, in Vienna; she will be with you - soon ...' Thus I lied to myself - every day, almost every hour. It was this chimera - the chimera of a loving wife, waiting fervently for the day of our ultimate re-union - that gave me the strength to make another effort. I wanted to find a job - some kind of a job; no

matter in which profession; as a waiter in a restaurant, as a salesman in a book store, or as a schoolmaster-: I just wanted to make money - plenty of money, for Anna ...There was no time to lose. The money I had managed to smuggle out of Austria would just last for ren months or so. I really tried pretty hard to be active and enterprising - until I was knocked out, paralyzed, almost killed by Anna's terrible letter.

It was not only that she asked for a divorce. It was the way she did it which was so horrifying - so disgusting. "You are no Arian", she wrote. "Now I know that it was my sound racial instinct which prevented me from having a child with you."

Her sound racial instinct...

She used to tell me that the doctor had warned her not to have a baby. ~~"You don't want me to jeopardize my life, Karli dear,"~~ she said, and then wept, and told me, again and again, how every depressing this was - to be doomed to sterility.

Sound racial instinct...

Ah, her voice! - her lying, entrancing voice! ~~Could I ever forget it! What a sweet voice it was!~~ - drowsy, and sometimes a little hoarse - just a tiny little bit ...I was crazy about her voice - particularly when it had that attractive little hoarseness. I was crazy about her. I still am, maybe ... It still makes me feel kind of hot inside when I imagine her face, and remember her puzzling smile. ~~This triumphant fleshliness - the rich-silky hair; the effulgent shoulders - and her gestures, slow, rank and majestic ...What an appalling charm! - what abominable attraction...~~

... This is the door bell -: how it makes me jump! ...I can hear the voices. This is Jim's, and this must be the other fellow whom I do not know. They seem rather persistent: "We want to see Mr. Kroll. He has to appear as a witness. Our cousin Speed is in jail - innocent -: Mr. Kroll is responsible. Where is Mr. Kroll?"

Mr. Prokoff sounds calm but determined: " I have told you before, even repeatedly so, that I don't know a thing about Mr. Kroll's whereabouts. " ~~He has left my house. - And now - it's~~ enough!" He shouts at them, quite surprisingly. What a brassy little creature he is! He tells them that he does not believe in their summons; that he is sick and tired of their ringing his door bell, and is going to call the police if they dare again to disturb the sleep of Mrs. Prokoff. "For this is a decent house, if you know what the word means!" he concludes in a thundering voice. He does his best to be scathing - and it works, sure enough: there is no back-talk - only a quiet withdrawal.

It is pretty cold outside - still snowing heavily. So steadily and lavishly the flakes fall that the city administration has apparently renounced all hope of ever clearing away the soft, chilly masses. The streets are covered with white...It may be inconvenient, but it's good for me. For it allows me to hope that Jim and his dubious pal may catch a nasty cold while standing out there in the street. They should get tired, eventually, of so tedious an occupation.

If I were in Jim's position - free and independent - I would certainly prefer any other place in New York to this gloomy neighborhood. How desolate I was first when I had moved into Mr. Pro-

koff's house! ~~I thought it more depressing even than the hotel room where I had lived before. What an absurd idea! - to believe that everything would be better if I only had a "place of my own" - something like a home ...~~

"I ^{do} ~~really~~ hope you'll feel at home here, Mr. Kroll..." How distinctly I remember Mrs. Prokoff's suave, promising smile when I saw her at first, and we had agreed upon the price. She looked almost pretty, that evening, all dressed up to go out. - "It's such a cozy room", she insisted...

What makes it so depressing is the perpetual lack of light. This dingy twilight, even on beautiful days ... And then, of course, the smell - that stale, sickening smell - receiving me in the lobby, following me to my room; nesting in the furniture, in the pillows of my bed, even in my clothes ... ~~It hardly helps to keep the window open and the door to the corridor always closed. The smell proves stronger - amazingly penetrating, indeed ... I don't know where it comes from: from the kitchen, or from the dust in the carpets, or from the fading perfumes in Mrs. Prokoff's garments ... It's everywhere - and in this sultry box it's more breath-taking than in any other place.~~

~~It chokes my throat: I am suffocating - overcome by this appalling mass of ugliness and sadness.~~

Mrs. Prokoff's face ... How it gradually changed its expression when she realized that I was scarcely interested in her flattering offers. The bleak dignity of her movements when she made my room ... She obviously hates her job: thinks it quite an offense that she play the servant to other people! ~~Well, I guess~~

anna would feel the same way if she'd have to clean bath-tubs, and floors, and dishes ... But Mrs. Prokoff went definitely too far. Not only was she constantly sullen and obstinate: she had sudden outbursts of fury, veritable fits of bitterness with plenty of tears and harsh, senseless words. ~~"You are exploiting me!"~~ she once shouted, and annoyed me by the absurd demand I should pay twice as much for my room ~~then she had claimed before.~~

In such cases it was Mr. Prokoff's delicate task to mollify my justified indignation. How rueful and apprehensive he looked as he sneaked into my room to apologize for ^{her} ~~the~~ hysterical violence. ~~of his wife.~~ Poor Anita was so exceedingly nervous - he assured me in an imploring voice: "An almost pathological case - that's what she really is," he whispered, covering his mouth with his skinny hand, and then smirked as if he had confided to me a sweet, though slightly indecent secret.

I was rather embarrassed as he went on telling me everything about himself and his wife - how profoundly unhappy both of them actually were, and what glamorous days they had seen when he still was a prosperous business man on the West Coast. "She loathes me because I lost my money," he stated with a ^{gloomy} ~~certain sinister~~ satisfaction. "She can't forgive me for being poor. Believe it or not," he said dramatically, "Anita has never loved me - never really-, if you know what I mean ... She thinks I am hideous," he whispered gravely as if he had thus revealed the most obvious and alarming symptoms of Mrs. Prokoff's deplorable mental decline.

I felt that he expected me to say something, but it was pretty hard to find the pertinent words. So I just shook my head as

though completely bewildered by so much feminine unreason. Finally I mumbled: "Why, Mr. Prokoff ... hideous...: What does it mean, after all? ... It's just a matter of individual taste, isn't it?" He agreed with a fervent nod as if I had just pronounced what he had been thinking himself during all these years of matrimonial martyrdom: "You're right!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "It's a question of taste - nothing else. But her taste happens to be quite peculiar; always was - even before I knew her. She has a morbid weakness for those athletic types - tall, husky fellows..." He described with a wide, expressive gesture the size and muscular beauty of those enviable males who attracted his fastidious wife.

He is unusually ugly, one of the ugliest men, indeed, I've ever seen. I don't think he actually has got a humpback, but he somehow looks that way. The rowing movements of his too-long arms are that way, and his flat tinny voice, even the features of his grey, crooked face - his whole appearance seems to be that of a cripple. ~~He looks intelligent, though - at once sad and witty; besides, he has the most striking resemblance to a baboon.~~

"Incidentally, do you know the Marquis de la Silvaplotta?" he asked me presently, with a cunning twinkle in his yellow eyes. I said that, unfortunately, I didn't - whereupon he chuckled and rubbed his hands: "A good looking chap, allright. Wanted to act in the movies, but they didn't give him a chance. No money, but always dressed like a prince - a real gentleman: one could easily see that he came from a noble stall...Anita was madly in love. Had an affair with him when we lived out there, in Los Angeles..."

He seemed absorbed in memories that were at once tickling and sad; then sighed as though he had guessed my thoughts: "No - I am not jealous. Why should I be?" A strange smile, almost lofty, altered his face, then died. "I am no Adonis," he admitted with resigned dignity. After a short silence he continued, in a voice that had turned very soft, almost melodious: "She was wonderful, in her time. A real sensation - if you know what I mean. All the boys were crazy about her. But it was me whom she took. - Don't you think she is a real lady, now?" - I murmured, of course, she was, and he ~~nodded with a dreary satisfaction.~~ *seemed very pleased.* "She wasn't at first, when I got her," he said. "No, sir. At that time, Anita wasn't yet the sophisticated personality whom you know. On the contrary: she was rather - simple ... But I educated her: yes sir, that's what I did. I used to know nice people when I still had money. It was through me she met the Marquis de la Silvaplotta." This statement he made with a particular pride: then added gloomily: "She should be grateful to me. But no. Instead of appreciating what I've done for her, she hates and despises me, treats me like a dog. That's all she does. Treats me like a dog." -

~~It happened only too frequently that I had to listen to such dreary confessions. Gradually I became familiar with Mr. Prokoff's suffering as if it were my own. It was most depressing. At certain moments I was even inclined to mix up his squalid drama with my own experiences. If Anna had followed me to this country to share my loneliness and poverty - wouldn't she abominate me as Anita Prokoff abominates her husband?~~

I just couldn't stand it. It became a nightmare to me -; Mr. Prokoff's exhibitionalistic eloquence; Mrs. Prokoff's fading and fleshing charm; the ever-lasting twilight, the smell, the loneliness - it was too much, got me down...

No wonder that I took to that endless, aimless walking - in fact, became addicted to it like to a drug, to a vice. Walking through the streets - always by myself. Up-town, down town, cross-town; Times Square, Harlem, Brooklyn, Central Park... Driven by an invincible force... Tired, exhausted, dazed. And completely alone.

I was hankering for some human being to talk with. But there was no chance. Nobody looked at me. I was boycotted - a pariah. As though tainted by a contagious disease...

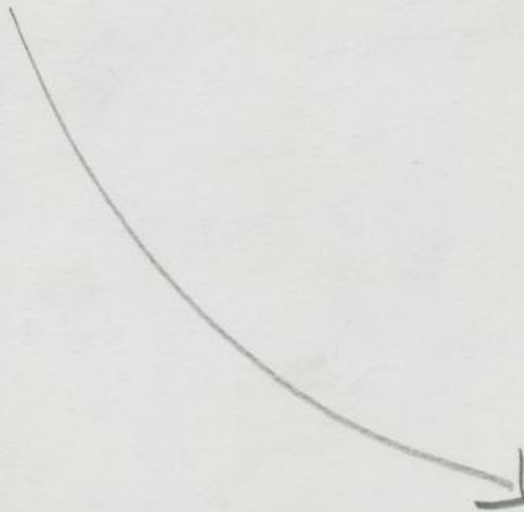
I was longing for a human voice.

That is how it happened. It was his voice that struck me. It sounded drowsy, very timid, and a little hoarse.

"Cigarette for me, Mister?"

He looked so innocent, so humble - with his faint, helpless smile.

There he stood - near the corner of Eighth Avenue and Forty —



Second Street -, ankle-deep in snow, shivering with cold. It was about one o'clock- a chilly night, with that cruel, biting storm blowing around the corners.

~~The lad who had asked me for a cigarette,~~ ^{He} wore no overcoat and was bare-headed. His hair was all messed up by the wind, and he had a nervous way of pushing back a restive lock with the palm of his hand. He had nice hair, though- scrubby, fair, and silky.

I wondered how his face could be so pale in spite of the severe cold. All color seemed concentrated in the shining redness of his ^{b-8} lips, somehow indecent in their inflamed nudity. He held two matches between his front-teeth - without chewing them: just letting them hang down, with a casual elegance, quite coquettish-like the chorus girls in Spanish operas who carry roses hanging from their mouth.

Somehow he reminded me of a well-bred race horse that hates to stand still, if only for a few minutes. He gave the impression of restlessness as he shifted his weight constantly from one foot to another. His shoulders jerked nervously. He was lean- obviously undernourished -, but elastic and fairly well-built; not very tall, though-somewhat shorter than I am. I thought he could hardly be older than seventeen. Later he told me that he was twenty one.

"A cigarette...?" he repeated, and gave me a plaintive glance; then lowered his eyes. I offered him a cigarette and a light, and asked him if he wasn't freezing, and didn't want a drink. He declared with a certain haughtiness that he didn't mind the cold,- " I don't even feel it," he boasted -; nevertheless,

he had nothing against a drink - on the contrary.

As we were standing almost at the entrance of a bar, I suggested we might as well go right in. He was all superior non-chalance as we entered the bar room.

I ordered two Scotchs with soda, but the mixer declared, with a rather offensive abruptness: "I won't serve nothing to this guy." "Why not?" said I. "What's wrong with him?" - The barman said there was nothing wrong with him; he just didn't want to serve him any drinks. My young companion locked his arms across his chest in a rather pugnacious way. "Trying to be tough- huh?" he asked with a sort of detached and yet aggressive curiosity - whereupon the barman, in a dangerously deadened voice: "You'd better get out of here."

"Let's go!" I suggested, rather irritated. The boy said, "O.k.", and glided down from the high stool. He looked strangely proud and elated as he favored the barman with a last withering glance, and then followed me to the door. On the threshold, however, he stopped for a moment and spat out, with a great swinging movement of the upper part of his body. There was something frightening and strangely grand about this gesture, for all its rude vulgarity - something of a scathing curse, a truculent, barbaric ceremony.

"You're really drunk", I said when we were outside.

He shrugged his shoulders with a derisive grin. "I had a few drinks, that's all. I can take it, all right." His eyes were watery and fixed, darkened by a mysterious fury. He walked rapidly: It was hard to keep pace with him. ~~How light he seemed~~

~~almost weightless, as he hastened across the snowy street-
staggering but erect, neglecting the tense traffic with fool-
hardy carelessness.~~

He looked slovenly and depraved rather than really poor. His grey suit was so worn that its color had already turned slightly greenish, but had kept a rather elegant shape. The most conspicuous feature of his clothing was a large pink handkerchief in his upper pocket - a particularly hideous thing of cheap, shining silk, adorned by ^amonstruous embroidery showing the face of a ~~grinning~~ girl. Even more characteristic of his whole appearance than this handkerchief, however, were his shoes: coquettish shoes, very pointed, made of a ~~very~~ soft material. They had originally been yellow, but had paled and turned almost colorless. Somehow they gave the impression of being Greek sandals - winged slippers that carried his elastic body over ice and snow. - He wore these remarkable shoes during the whole time of our acquaintance.

"You ought to eat something," I suggested, rather breathlessly. "What's your name, by the way?"

"They call me Speed," said he; and added - half-proudly, half apologetically: "Because I usually am in a hurry ..."

"I've never heard such a name," I remarked, slightly disturbed. Whereupon he grinned, cheerfully: "You've never known *anybody* like me, anyhow." -

We had hot dogs and coffee in a cafeteria. ~~I watched Speed eating and drinking with an astounding, almost frightful greed.~~ When he had finished he said - very clearly, with a certain solemnity

as if it were thanksgiving for the meal: " Damned son of a bitch."

"Whom do you mean?" - I was rather terrified.

"That lousy fellow, over there in the bar," he muttered.

"He'll pay for this - filthy rat he is ... I'll tell my sister's boy friend about him: that's what I'm going to do ..." - His bright, childish eyes were filled with that disquieting darkness again. I began to feel kind of uncomfortable.

"It's about bedtime", I observed, and tried to make my voice casual and yet determined. But even while I was speaking I felt

~~now forced and phoney it sounded - neither determined nor casual~~

that I was lying, and I knew that he knew I was. He ^{Knew} realized that I didn't want to go to bed, really; that I was afraid of my room, and of the loneliness and the smell. ~~But he was too tactful - or just too smart - to admit that he had seen through my clumsy swindle.~~ On the contrary, he felt the right thing to do was to give a lackadaisical little performance - smiling plaintively, bowing his saddened face. His voice was blandishing and pathetic as he whispered: " I have no place to go" ~~~~~

He turned talkative after a few more whiskeys. We had moved to a calm little bar, and he kept assuring me what a " swell guy" I was - buying him all that stuff: hot dogs, coffee, and drinks. He enjoyed the liquor tremendously. His eyes sparkled with pleasure as he announced: " I sure get a kick out of this!" It was upon this occasion that I heard him using, for the first time, this favorite expression that was to become so familiar to me. "A bomb kick!" he insisted, with a certain wild obstinacy as though I had contradicted him.

He told me that he had no place to sleep in because his room-mate was mad at him. "I've pawned his radio", he said, rather casually. "That's why he is so cross." - I asked him if he had had any right to pawn his room-mate's belongings, ~~and what he had needed the money for.~~ ^{whereupon} He stared at me, amused as well as bewildered, as if I had been saying an utterly absurd, rather shocking thing. "If I had any right..." [?] he repeated, his eyes widened with a derisive surprise. "What kind of a right should I have?...You're nuts, Clarence." (I had just told him that my name is Karl.) - "No kidding - something is wrong in your head." - It didn't sound offensive, on the contrary: rather polite, almost flattering, the way he uttered it - smilingly, with an elegant little bow. Then he explained that he had needed the money for drinks: "There was a girl around, and she wanted champagne. Just wanted to find out what it tastes like, I guess. A swell babe she was, too. So I said, O.K., I'll get that damned stuff for you. She didn't believe me, though; thought I just tried to show off. But not me. Not Speed! No, sir. She got her champagne, all right. Three bottles of it.- Gee, we had a hell of a good time together, she and I ..." - "At your room-mate's expense!" I reminded him, as reproachfully as I possibly could. But he didn't listen. -

All his stories were of a similar kind: shocking through a total lack of moral consciousness; colorful, rude, funny, and amazing. He told me about the farm, somewhere in North Carolina, where he had lived as a boy; and about his mother who had married an old fellow of seventy-five, just because of his money: "He's all right, I guess," he said, with a musing indulgence. "But I

didn't like watching my mother how she fooled around with him - making a whore of herself ..." So he ran away, hitchhiking all over the country, having adventures everywhere - on the West Coast and in New Orleans, in the big cities of the Middle West and the East, and up in the mountains, in Idaho, Utah, Nebraska. I couldn't help being impressed by his dynamic recklessness. I had always presumed that people depended on a certain minimum of security to bear life. But he didn't. He was erratic, thoroughly obsessed with an unflagging lust of adventure, activity, swift and constant movement. Was there nobody to whom he felt really attached? - Yes. There was his sister.

The expression of his face altered as he mentioned her. "Lucy..." he lingered on her name, tenderly, while a beaming smile gradually embellished his face. "There's nobody like her. Honest. No other girl."

I learned that she was a bar maid, but, above all, "a personality." - "No kidding! he insisted. ~~"She sure knows how to make friends and to influence people."~~ While I still wondered ~~where he might have caught up this fashionable slogan, he continued his rhapsodic description,~~ Lucy was grand, and swell, and incomparable. ~~She wore expensive gowns, was as lovely as Greta Garbo, sexy as Mae West, and an "Ooomph girl" altogether.~~ She had social contacts with famous prize fighters, newspaper men, movie stars, and even with certain big shots from the police. One of her many boy friends had presented Speed with the prodigious pink handkerchief. She sure was a smart kid - and ^(Gee!) what a figure she had! ~~Gee, what legs and shoulders, and what pretty little hands! - "She~~

~~could play in the movies - like that!" And he snapped his fingers to show how ridiculously easy it would be for his sister Lucy to make a career, out there, in Hollywood. "But she doesn't care."~~
~~he shrugged his shoulders, very scornfully. "Has plenty of fun, right here."~~ - "Want to see her picture?"

Of course I wanted to, and he produced the photo- a fairly large copy-: it seemed like a magic trick when he pulled it out of his tight greenish coat. "Here she is," he said proudly; then, with a tender jocularly: "An ugly old woman - isn't she?"

She was wildly attractive - a very striking looking person, indeed, for all the appalling vulgarity of her features. ~~Just the type of woman, in fact, that captivates and unsettles me, gets me down, makes me feel sort of helpless.~~

I asked Speed if she was older than he, and he said, yes, she was three years older; then he asked me: "Does she favor me?" At first, I didn't understand what he tried to say - which made him laugh, long and heartily. "You foreigners are funny," he said, patronizingly. "Don't understand the simplest words.- Do I resemble my sister -: that's all I wanted to know."

There was a certain resemblance, I admitted, rather absent-minded. What really puzzled me was the fact that Lucy's glamorous portrait reminded me of somebody else - of a familiar face: the most familiar one... It couldn't be Anna's, though. My former wife, after all, came from a nice family; was well-bred, fairly cultured- a professor's daughter. ~~True, her character was somewhat complex; not devoid of startling, even hideous features. Yet, what a preposterous thing to do! - comparing an Austrian lady with~~

~~this at once too-appetizing and revolting creature...~~

I heard Speed's drowsy, hoarse little voice: "Like to meet her, Clarence?"

She was now working in a bar, Eighty-ninth street. The place was open till four o'clock in the morning. At present it was half-past-two. Speed suggested we should take the subway uptown and have a drink with Lucy. Then she was to take him to her apartment where he could spend the night. I agreed - partly because I was eager to meet her; partly because I didn't like the idea of leaving him on the street, with no place to go - and the snowstorm blowing.

When we arrived at the place he had indicated, the barman informed us, -rather briefly, that he hadn't seen Miss Lucy for a couple of nights- whereupon Speed shook his head, smacked his tongue, and said, Gee, isn't it too bad: perhaps Lucy was being sick in a hospital, or had had an accident, or had suddenly married, or accepted an offer from the moving picture industry. "You never can tell, - with a wild kid like that," he concluded reflectively and then said Hello to the new bar maid. He seemed to know her quite intimately, and kept giggling with her while she served us very sweet, greenish liquor in tiny glasses. ~~"Kind of cute, isn't she?" he asked me. "Want a date with her? She isn't fussy - if you can spend five bucks..."~~ - But I didn't like her greasy, grinning face.

I began to feel pretty tired, while Speed grew increasingly lively and garrulous. The bar maid gave him something that I was not supposed to see. I noticed, incidentally, that it was a small package of cigarettes, and I wondered why so harmless a transaction

made them chuckle so much and was handled with such silly secrecy. Speed went to the men's room, and remained there for ten minutes or so. When he came back, he seemed even gayer and more excited than he had been before. His eyes gleamed in a rather ^{disquieting} ~~alarming~~ way, he jumped around, giggled, and made crazy faces pulling his features all ways. I was half-amused, half-frightened by this quivering hullabaloo. ~~He talked at such a violent pace that I could hardly follow his words.~~ Besides, he performed real feats as a whistler, imitating all sorts of birds and whistling old-fashioned, charming lilts with an astounding technique. His unflagging drolleries made the few customers stay in the bar until four o'clock. Then all of us had to leave.

"What's going to happen, now?" I asked him as we finally stood on the street.

"Why...", he said, lingeringly; and: "Well..."; then glanced at me, swiftly and sideways, ~~a very anxious glance, I felt - rather humble and begging.~~ All his hectic hilarity had suddenly disappeared. His voice sounded sober and sad as he murmured: "Don't you want me to come along with you? - I've no other place to go... since Lucy is sick in a hospital. - Already dead, maybe...", he added with a sigh.

it struck me I felt sorry for him -: so extremely sorry, indeed, that ~~it struck me~~ ~~felt it physically~~ like a sudden pang in my heart and stomach.

It was such a long time that I hadn't felt real pity for anyone - except myself. What an odd comfort that meant, for a wretched fellow! - to meet another fellow who seems even more wretched than he is ...

I simply didn't have the nerve to let him down. - "Come along, then!" I said. "There is room enough for both of us, where I live ..." -

....Before he went to sleep on my sofa, he kept on chattering for quite a while. He smoked two more of those mysterious cigarettes the ~~greasy~~ ^{unusual} bar maid had given him, and I thought they had a rather ~~extraordinary~~ smell. When I asked him, however, what kind of tobacco this was, he was shaken by a real spasm of merriment - shrieking with convulsive laughter. "Just ordinary tobacco!" he giggled, and capered in the middle of the room like a madman. "Honest, Clarence! Just regular cigarettes...There is nothing fishy about them...Really not...Nothing fishy..." - And that silly, inadequate word - "fishy" - seemed to increase mysteriously his nervous mirth: he repeated it dozens of times, under outbursts of shrill, quivering laughter.

A few minutes afterwards he declared he was very hungry: "I'm starving to death", he announced, almost furious with greed - and then ransacked my room for any kind of food. He swallowed whatever he found: cheese, bread, and some fruit. "Those cigarettes make you feel kind of empty inside- kind of hollow...", he explained. Then he grew very sleepy. But even when he finally lay on the sofa, he didn't stop talking.

He turned surprisingly meditative and philosophic. - "Are you mad at me, Clarence?" he began in a hypnotizing, singing little voice. I said, No, and, Why should I. But he insisted with a rueful obstinacy: "Oh, there always are plenty of reasons for being mad at a guy.- We are all filthy sinners, " he concluded gravely,

with a wide, theatrical gesture.

I asked him what he knew about sin- which made him smirk, at once confidently and ominously. "I've learned it in school," he declared. "Everything about Good and Evil, and Heaven and Hell and the Last Judgment - I know the whole stuff by heart. Yes, sir. No kidding, - I know what's going to happen ... My mother has told us, too. She could speak like a preacher, in her time - before she sold herself and married that stinking old rat... Oh, boy! - she knew how to scare you, all right! Lucy, too, was scared stiff

mad he can get when we do something wrong.
~~angry he was when Eve stole that apple, in that swanky park where she wasn't supposed to touch anything. And the story of that fellow Jonah who had done something wrong - I forgot what kind of a sin it was - just remember it was something pretty fishy ... So God had prepared a huge fish to swallow him up... Can you figure that, Clarence? Must have looked kind of funny - that huge big wale, opening his mouth, and swallowing the whole fellow- like this..." And he opened his own mouth, terribly wide. - "I sure get a kick out of it," he chuckled; then turned serious again.~~

~~"But the Last Judgment," he said, "that's worse than anything else." "Must be something like a huge big raid, I figure-: with all the arch-angels rushing around like the cops, and their golden trumpets making a hell of noise like emergency sirens... Gee, boy! - what a show! The archangels, hunting the skeletons- and the skeletons jumping around, rattling with their bones - sinful rats they are, all of them! And then, of course, they'll scream and beg and whine bitterly for mercy. But there won't be no mercy -~~

✓ *He paused, ~~for~~ musingly. When he spoke again, his voice trembled a little. "The Last Judgment..." he said, very slowly,*

no, sir! Not a bit of mercy for all those crooks and bigshots! ~~God sits behind his fiery cloud, and shouts at them in a voice like thunder: No mercy! To Hell with you!~~ And that's all. The skeletons still wait for another word, but there won't be no other word: only the Devils will come, thousands - millions of them: flying fast like hell - faster than even the angels; for the angels have only wings, but the devils are motorized, with powerful engines inside, in their bellies. So the rich and the poor, and the cops, and the barmen, and my stepfather, and the Jews, and the colored men, and the Japs, and the preachers, and all the presidents and kings and movie stars - all of them, the whole lousy crowd will have to pay for their sins, and I watch them how they get pinched and roasted, down there, in Hell - and I get a kick out of it ... Yes, sir - a bomb kick ..."

He lay motionless and silent, with his eyes closed and his mouth ajar. I could see his face, very pale and remote in the dim light of the early morning. It was perfectly relaxed and exhaled that sort of peaceful innocence that makes the faces of sleeping children so lovable and moving. And it was, in fact, the tender voice of a child half asleep that produced this melodious whisper:

"Good night, Clarence. Are you mad at me? - You must never be mad at me, Clarence... Promise me! - Never"

Mr. Prokoff showed a moderate surprise when he found a sleeping boy in my room, the following noon. He frowned and

shook his head several times. I explained, somewhat nervously, that the young man was the son of old friends of mine who happened to live out of town, and that he had missed his bus - whereupon Mr. Prokoff retired discreetly.

I never presented Speed formally to Mrs. Prokoff, and I don't remember the moment when she saw him for the first time. Occasionally, however, when I went out or came home in his company, she happened to be busy in the lobby and pierced us with a swift, suspicious glimpse. Once I thought I'd noticed a faint crease of a smile around her faded, but still voluptuous lips as she gazed at Speed. This may have been a mistake on my part. It occurred the same day, however, that Speed asked me, with a sort of casual curiosity, if I knew Mrs. Prokoff, and how old she was. "She isn't so bad, after all," he observed, and added with a naughty little laugh: "Much too pretty, anyway, for that hideous old ape." - That was the nickname with which we usually referred to my unfortunate landlord.

We had lots of fun together, Speed and I.

That's why I did not send him away. It's no use fooling myself with a lot of hypocritical twaddle, about pity and generosity and all that kind of thing. The truth is that I didn't send him away because I enjoyed having him around.

He had been perfectly right when he said that I had met nobody like him before. He was, indeed, entirely new to me - a new type of human being, with all his whims and lies, his smooth and truculent elegance, his heady vitality, grandiose imagination, his impish wit, ~~his stunning ignorance~~, his cruelty, his erratic

and stunning ignorance.

charm. He fascinated me just because I found him quite unintelligible: fickle and impulsive as a woman, ruthlessly brutal as a hard-boiled ruffian; capable of committing a crime out of sheer fun and wantonness, but without guile and meanness; an amazing liar who amused himself by making up the most terrific stories - but at the same time frank and straightforward. His reactions were incalculable and sometimes frightful, but always genuine and spontaneous.

In the beginning, I still made occasional efforts to educate and to "save" him. I have always been interested in pedagogy, and originally intended to become a teacher. Later, when I was married, I hoped and prayed for a son. Speed, of course, was not precisely the way I had wanted my son to be like. However, here he was - and since everything had turned sort of crazy - all matters in my life and in the world altogether - : why shouldn't I accept a crazy sort of a son, if only for a while?

His absolute ignorance was something that never ceased to startle and even to offend me. He didn't know of which country Paris happened to be the capital, and had I told him that William Shakespeare was an American industrialist, he would certainly have believed it. He thought that I tried to be funny when I referred, in some connection, to the fact that certain parts of this country had once belonged to certain foreign powers. - "Don't you know who George Washington was?" I asked him, absolutely stunned with surprise. "Never heard about a War of Independence?" - He had a cunning twinkle in his eyes, as he said in a strangely dead, drawling voice: "Sure, I know....: Taxation without Representation.... That's what they get mad about, those old guys in

Boston..." - It was very odd that he remembered just this one formula, senseless in itself, like a magic incantation.

I had to realize soon how utterly hopeless it was to tell him things about foreign countries or distant times. He just didn't give a damn. "Cut it out!" he said harshly. "It's none of my business what has happened, hundreds of years ago. We have plenty of trouble of our own, nowadays."

He yawned and made faces when I wanted him to look into a magazine or to read an article in a paper. The printed word not only bored but actually disgusted him. The only "reading" he was able to bear, were the series of funnies which he studied eagerly in the afternoon sheets. He shrieked with laughter and often tried to make me participate in his effusive pleasure: "This is a good one - look at him!" ~~And he pointed out one of his pet characters - an ungainly giant constantly teased and harassed by five nimble youngsters. "I sure get a kick out of this," Speed announced; but I couldn't see the point: "What's so funny about it?" I asked - and Speed muttered: "You try to be so smart, Clarence - but don't understand a simple joke like this ..."~~

He always tried to explain the things to me he was really fond of: there was something very touching in this unflagging zeal. I am afraid that I was so hopeless a pupil, in my own way, as Speed was in other respects. I got no adequate kick out of gangster pictures or Wild West thrillers; I was slightly bored by baseball games, and ~~not~~ ^{hardly ever laughed about the} ~~sort of scared of prize fighters.~~ ^{funnies.} Yet I appreciated ^{amusement.} Speed's persistent efforts to make me share his ~~fun~~. I still believe he must have regarded me as a friend, in some secret

corner of his heart. ~~Why should he have wanted me, otherwise, to participate in all these things that really are the essence of his life?~~

He kept tagging behind me like a dog: I never quite understood the reason. For he certainly knew that I wasn't wealthy - though he may not have guessed how poor I actually was... ~~He never asked me questions as to my profession or the country I came from.~~ Somehow he took it for granted that I had money enough to give him half-a-dollar occasionally, and he never asked for more. ~~It happened, time and again, that I'd give him a ten-dollar-bill to get it changed in the drugstore around the corner. Little commissions of this kind were executed by him with the swift and solemn conscientiousness characteristic for children to whom one entrusts minor business transactions.~~

~~I~~ I bought him meals and drinks, and took him to the movies. This meant something to him, I suppose. Also, he could sleep on my sofa when he had no other place where to spend the night - which occurred rather frequently, about twice or three times a week. For his former room-mate was still mad at him, and the flat of his sister Lucy was just spacious enough for one guest: "So her boy friend, of course, doesn't want me to hang around there when he has night off himself," Speed explained.

Sometimes he disappeared for a day or two - either because of "some business" he had to do with his sister's boy friend, or else because curious and adventurous incidents had taken up all his time. Extraordinary things often happened to him, according to his own dramatic reports. Young ladies in glamorous furcoats gave him

a lift in huge, elegant cars and entertained him in their sumptuous apartments. Sometimes he called me up at four or five in the morning and insisted with the unreasonable stubbornness of drunkards that it was noon and the sun was shining. The next day he seemed amused and flattered when I told him about his mistake: "I must have been tight!" he chuckled with an infantile satisfaction.

He always came back to me: I don't know why - but he always did. Perhaps it was a certain minimum of security - something akin to a home that I had to offer. Perhaps it was this little bit of coziness: and peace which he appreciated or even needed, in spite of all his erratic independence. ~~He had no possessions, no social function, no outlet. He was idle- constantly wasting the abundance of his energies.~~ ³⁰ - He was ^{so} incredibly poor- of that extreme, absolute poverty which seems incompatible with the human way of life. He was as poor, indeed, as an animal in the woods. Fortunately, he never realized how utterly wretched he was - though he may have felt it, sometimes, vaguely but intensely, with a short and horrifying intuition.

He always interested and puzzled me, and often affected me by his natural kindness, the gentle serenity of his smile. At other moments, he became quite a nuisance and annoyed me by the exaggerated rudeness of his manners. I often felt rather embarrassed when he played the "tough guy", in a restaurant or a bar, and showed off, to impress a girl at the next table. But then, of course, he reconciled and conquered me again, with a smile or a word- perhaps with a word concerning his sister Lucy ...

I still was eager to meet her. He kept exploiting my weakness and curiosity in the most obvious manner, using his invisible sister as an alluring bait. He presented me with her picture - the one he had shown me before-, and his grin was rather mawkish when he said: "Keep it as a souvenir, Clarence! It's all I have ... I'll feel kind of lonely without it ..."

Sometimes he would suggest, very casually: "Let's say hello to Lucy. She's still working in that joint, uptown." - But there was no Lucy; ~~only that other girl - the greasy one whom I didn't like. Lucy remained invisible - a mysterious figure: remote, inaccessible, inhuman...~~

What sort of life was she leading? How about those fabulous boy friends who played such a predominant role in Speed's conversation? He referred to them as to a secret organization of very powerful, rather frightening men. Once he asked me to mail a letter he had written while he sat waiting for me. "But don't forget!" he admonished me. "It's for Lucy's boy friend, and he'll raise hell if he doesn't get it. He's a dangerous gangster-: you'd better not make him mad ..." - I first took it for a joke, but stopped laughing as I noticed that Speed remained strangely serious.

Was Lucy as fond of strong perfumes as Anna happened to be? Did she also have that childish weakness for glaring colors? Was she capable of betraying her man, in that relentless manner that had been Anna's when she abandoned me, leaving me all alone in this huge, bewildering country? ... In fact, I was more and more inclined to identify Lucy and Anna in my muddled mind. Both gradually amalgamated into one prodigious and seductive character -:

Anna, whom I had lost, and Lucy whom I knew not ...I lived, indeed, as in a constant haze of lies and weird chimeras, thoroughly intoxicated by the sordid romanticism of the underworld. My state became even more alarming, of course, when I began to smoke that devilish stuff.

At first, I refused obstinately to taste it, and even turned rather angry as Speed confided to me what peculiar sort of "tobacco" it was which ^{his friend} the greasy bar maid, was selling. - "Marihuana," I said. "Why, it's a narcotic, if I am not mistaken. It's against the law..." - But Speed shrugged his shoulders: "I don't give a damn. I've smoked it when I was a kid, down there in the South - and all the other kids smoked it too. It's lots of fun -: makes you feel kind of light...You should try it, Clarence!"

But I still didn't want to.

I had interviewed Mr. Prokoff - "out of pure scientific curiosity." He frowned and shook his head gravely. "Marihuana?" he said, and made a sour face as if he had an evil taste in his mouth. "Hands off, Mr. Kroll! It stinks." - I felt pretty apprehensive, indeed. "So it is really against the law?" I asked. - "Sure it is", he confirmed with a gloomy nod. ~~"It's dope, and quite a dangerous sort of dope, too. Don't you know why they are having so many crimes, out there, in Harlem? Because those colored people are crazy about Marihuana - all of them. And I mean crazy. For it drives you mad, once you've got the habit."~~ And he warned me with fatherly solicitude: ~~"Don't you get messed up with that filthy dope-business, Mr. Kroll! A gentleman like you ..."~~ "Of course not", I assured him, rather hastily. "I just wanted to know what it is all about ..." -

I couldn't say that he turned unfriendly or reserved after this conversation. But I sometimes felt his sorrowful look piercing me with a mute and eloquent warning.

At the same time, Mrs. Prokoff gave me surprising marks of a new sympathy and attention. She suddenly knocked at my door and asked me in a cooing little voice if I had any wishes: A sandwich- she suggested, almost tenderly -, or a cup of tea ...- "~~A~~ cup of tea!" Speed repeated with an idiotic giggle. He usually was about, incidentally, when Mrs. Prokoff dropped in to utter those charming proposals in her flute-like voice. "Always gay!" she observed, as Speed went on shrieking with frantic laughter. "Happy youth! Always having fun ..."

He actually brayed with pleasure when she had finally left - exuberantly amused by Mrs. Prokoff's comic behavior in general as well as, in particular by her reference to tea. For in Speed's circles the usual designation for Marihuana was - tea, for some mysterious reason. - "Give me a couple of bucks," he'd say to me, "I'll buy some tea." - And I gave him the money, though I could not afford it.

I spent much more, during all that time, than I could afford. I had turned rather heedless - not only concerning my financial state. Even on grave events I reacted with a sort of desperate levity. ~~/Terror in Austria? A suicide wave among my former friends? The threat of a war in Europe? - I didn't give a damn - to use Speed's crude and cynical expression./~~ Something inside of me had broken - had been numbed and paralyzed when I learned, through a brief note from Anna, that she had married again, and

that her second husband was a high official in the Nazi party.

It was this revolting news that gave me the crucial shock. I received it just a few days after my conversation on Marihuana with Mr. Prokoff. And when Speed insisted again: " You should taste it, Clarence! Just one little puff...", I finally yielded to his blandishing eloquence. ~~"O.k." I said. "I'll taste it."~~

In the beginning, I found it rather hard to smoke the aromatic cigarettes with the right technique. I swallowed the smoke the wrong way: it tickled in my throat, made me cough, gave me a giddy feeling. Speed, who had already consumed five or six of them, was beside himself with amusement as he watched my clumsy way of smoking. "You are a funny little number!" he teased me, almost choking with giggling. And then repeated, again and again, in raptures about these senseless and childish words: "What a funny little number you are! What a funny number ..."

Finally he showed me how it should be done. I was to inhale the smoke - deeply! like this! - And I must purse up my lips-: this way; it was extremely easy. ~~he said; any child could do it.~~

He certainly was a master in the art of smoking. The expression of his face grew serious, even solemn, as he sucked his cigarette as a child its rubber sucker. He looked very depraved, indeed, and yet so ridiculously childish -: a corrupt infant, his face chubby with blown-up cheeks.

I tried my best to imitate him, and after a certain while began to be fairly successful. The second cigarette already made me feel sort of drunk, and after the third I was nicely intoxicated.

What an odd experience! - alarming and yet enchanting! All things, including myself, lost their weight, indeed, their very reality; the walls, the chairs, my hands, my feet, my head, the bed, the floor, the ceiling - all objects and thoughts, the air, the problems, the entire world seemed to dissolve into a silvery haze - remote, transfigured, indescribably lovely. ~~This was the magic alleviation I had sought, for so many months and years; the great oblivion - the balm of perfect, irresponsible serenity - here it was!~~ The laws of gravitation didn't exist any more.

I was a bird, an angel, an airplane, a jumping horse, a dancer. I was perfectly happy. Other birds, other angels were singing to me - an entrancing chorus. They giggled, and tickled me, and twittered.

"Now you've got your kick, all right," sang the angelic voices. And the chorus repeated: "What a funny little number you are ..."

I wept with joy. It was heaven.

It was hell. I suffered.

The miracle degenerated into a vice; the vice was on the point of becoming a habit. Besides, there were certain remarks and hints, dropped by Speed in a casual and yet ominous way, and definitely apt to increase my apprehension. He informed me that "the tea" had grown more expensive: "They've arrested that girl - you know whom I mean: the ~~greasy~~ one who used to sell us the stuff..." - My heart smote me. "Arrested?" I asked. "Why was that?" -

"How do I know?" He seemed scarcely interested in the whole affair. " They just caught her, I suppose. Found out that she was making business with tea, and all that kind of thing. - Well, all of us have to take a chance...", he observed with a sort of heroic indifference, and then went on telling me, in an at once detached and horrifying manner, all about the tortures and humiliating penalties which the New York police ostensibly had in store for those who were " messing around" with dope and were involved in dope traffic. There was a grisly old fortress- according to Speed's report-, situated on a deserted island and particularly reserved for dope-fiends. He went into appalling details as he described the vermin and hungry rats with which that ghastly building was swarming. "That's where they are going to keep us, for three years or so," he concluded with a rather sinister jocular-ity- and then demanded another " couple of bucks" as he wanted to go to Harlem. He had a new business-friend there: " a filthy old crook he is, too," - he declared in a cheerful tone as if this characterization could not but reassure me and dissipate all my sorrows.

How often I promised myself not to touch the infernal " tea", any more! But my virtuous intentions proved deplorably feeble. I was not strong enough to resist whenever Speed suggested, " Let's have a cup of tea.." ~~"/ To him, it just meant another playful diversion, " lots of fun", " a bomb kick." How could he have any conception as to the raptures and torments, the qualms and ecstasies which I owed to the Mexican drug? /~~

It was its exotic fragrance, that aromatic scent- faint and yet penetrating - which I liked best about Marihuana. It was the

only smell that proved stronger, indeed, than even the malodorous exhalation of Mr. Prokoff's house. When Speed appeared with new supplies of "tea" - when we were sitting together, smoking, giggling, chattering - the bleak coziness of a petty-bourgeois home vanished. Instead of it, there was a bewitched panorama, heaving in sight as if by magic - a dream-island, full of yells and songs and spicy perfumes; inhabited by droll giants and impish dwarfs, swarming with all sorts of humorous, seductive characters.

"I am a parrot," Speed crowed. "Look! - my beautiful colored feathers..."

I announced, for my part, that I was a huge fish - a gigantic whale, in fact -, and would swallow him, because of his many sins.

"And that big glittering snake, over there!" Speed jubilated, " - that's Lucy!... Don't you recognize her eyes, and the little gold chain around her neck?"

"I don't have the honor of being presented to the royal monster," I giggled.

And Speed, shaken with a convulsive laugh: "You should meet her, Clarence... No kidding! You really should."

The only member of his family I met was his cousin.

How distinctly I remember the moment when he entered my room! ~~his broad, massy silhouette looming in that ever-lasting twilight~~... Curiously enough, I keep a much more precise picture of Jim's appearance than of Speed's - although I dislike Jim and don't dislike Speed. And yet, when I try to recall the details of Speed's features, all forms seem blurred and muddled -

shady and at the same time immoderately bright - almost blinding; fluctuating, dissolved, mysteriously moved like the surface of a pallid little lake ruffled by a constant flurry ... ~~I would be incapable of drawing a portrait of Speed, even if I knew how to draw - while I may succeed in producing Jim's picture. He hardly is what one may call an attractive model, though.~~ He is tall - definitely taller than Speed -, but rather stooping, with a knobby, sodden face. It's an ugly face, I suppose - and, which is worse, there is something nasty, dishonest in that obtuse expression it has. This over-emphasized simplicity - the country boy-like attitude- clumsy and complacent -; these ungainly, fumbling gestures- the whole performance made me sort of nervous and even scared me a little.

"This is Jim", Speed explained, and his smile was half-apologetic, half-reassuring - precisely the sort of a smile with which society ladies introduce a provincial relative to one of their glamorous friends. - "He is my cousin - just came from North Carolina. It's the first time he's in a place that's real big - like New York. Feels kind of lost, I suppose -: don't you, Jim? - So we better look after him, for a while." - He patted Jim's mighty shoulder, with an encouraging little laugh.

How glib and dapper Speed seemed, in comparison with this rustic cousin! - "We 'll take care of you, all right," he promised Jim, whose answer was an imbecile grin. - "Clarence is a swell guy," Speed continued, and now it was my turn to get a cordial pat on the shoulder. "My best friend he is, too: the best one I ever had. He'll take us to a show if you want to see one."

* But with Jim it's different. He is broad and stolid and massy - made of a charmless and compact material.

" 'f course I'd like to see one", the cousin barked. His voice was even more appalling than his face -: a hollow voice, harsh and braying: absolutely inhuman, like the voices of those " speaking" dogs one sometimes sees in a circus.

Then he announced that he felt filthy all over - " like a big old swine". As he left to douse his face in my bathroom, Speed informed me, secretly and swiftly, that his cousin was " kind of dumb", but not a bad fellow, really. I was warned emphatically not to mention, in Jim's presence, anything concerning our " tea parties". Jim, of course, never touched any dope: "He has no idea what it's all about ..."

After supper I took the two boys to a burlesque show, and Jim turned somewhat more lively as the strip-tease girls thrilled the audience with their rank gestures and frozen smiles. "Swell-aren't they?" he grinned. But even his laugh sounded sinister like the mutter of an approaching thunderstorm.

Speed, meanwhile, seemed to grow very restless, and finally whispered into my ear that he had to rush - otherwise he would miss a date with his friend in Harlem. " Give me three bucks, or five - quickly! You know what I need it for ..." Then he glanced at Jim who was not supposed to notice our conspiracy. " I'll tell him that I have some business to do," he whispered, while his cousin kept gloating over the glittering parade of nudity. ~~And a few minutes later, you say to him that you're kind of tired and feel like going to bed,~~ " I'll meet you at your place, around midnight. " - And he sneaked out of the dark, sultry room.

~~Everything developed according to his strategic plan.~~ Jim,

entirely absorbed in the show, had hardly noticed his going, and when I told him, ten or fifteen minutes afterwards, that I was feeling sleepy and rather'd go to bed, he only gave me a watery glance and chuckled, while his spatular thumb pointed to the radiant exhibition of female flesh. "All naked, " he giggled idiotically. " No clothes on ...Don't you like them, Clarence?" -

/ It was good to be alone for a while. For the first time since I had moved into Mr. Prokoff's house, I didn't mind the solitude of my room. It was only when midnight had passed that I began to turn slightly nervous. What may have happened to Speed? - One o'clock - two- half-past-two- and no Speed.- Not that I was really alarmed. I had become familiar, after all, with his fancy habits. Probably he was getting tight with some pals, or had met his sister. I thought of Lucy as I finally went to bed. Would I ever see her? ~~Was she really so intoxicatingly attractive as she appeared in my imagination? ...~~

It was late in the following afternoon when Speed finally turned up. He looked pale and serious, and particularly handsome. The pallor of his face had a nacreous glimmer, and his bright, narrow eyes were surrounded by a multitude of colored shadows. He smiled plaintively, and was all melancholy humility as he asked for a glass of milk.

His story was moving, though a trifle muddled. There had been a sudden raid at the place in Harlem where he usually bought the " tea". He had tried to escape, but in vain. They caught him, as he was just on the point of swallowing the flagrant stuff. The meticulous examination at the police station lasted for more than

five hours. He was having a hell of a time, with all those cops and detectives shouting at him, relentlessly slapping his face and ~~harassing~~ ^{harassing} ~~confusing~~ him with all sorts of insidious questions. Was he a dope fiend himself? Who had sent him to buy the stuff? Was he in the habit of using cocaine and morphine as well? Was he a member of a secret organization? Who had given him the cash they had found in his pocket? - They promised him cigarettes and liquor, even Marihuana, if he would only tell the name of the Great Unknown - his mysterious employer. - "And that's you, Clarence!" He pointed at me with a sudden outburst of laughter. "You are the great mystery man!"

Then he turned ^{grave} ~~serious~~, even solemn again. "But I wouldn't tell them," he assured me with a cordial firmness. "I wouldn't let you down, Clarence -, honest, I never would. You're my friend, and I don't want you to get mixed up with a filthy mess like that. It would be kind of bad, for a foreigner - that's what Lucy told me. It would be very bad, Lucy says ..."

I didn't like the ominous tone in which he had emphasized these last remarks. It may have sounded rather irritated when I said to him that I didn't quite understand, really, what he was talking about; for, after all, I had nothing to do with the whole affair and had never bought the stuff. - "It's bad enough that you ever smoked it," he observed with a ~~neaky~~ ^{WRY} grin, and then continued telling me how his efficient sister had liberated him by paying a bail - or rather, by making her boy friend pay. Speed had been released after having given his word of honor that he was going to present himself to a special jury, tomorrow morning. ~~They~~

~~want to investigate the whole racket, I guess." - A certain gravity in his voice proved his reasonable understanding for the necessity of such thoroughgoing measures. "And so they need my informations, of course," he concluded proudly.~~

I gave him one of my nicest shirts and a necktie and a pair of socks, to make him look decent for the great occasion. "Don't be worried," I said rather helplessly. "Everything will be all right." - He had only a smile- faint and dreary: "Sure, Clarence...I hope so..." - He was full of self-pity and virtuous intentions. This night he would go to bed early, in his sister's apartment. She was to accompany him to the court where his case was scheduled for 9 A.M. And at noon, when everything was over, we should have a charming luncheon party, the whole gang together - Lucy, and Jim, and he and myself.

He was just on the point of leaving, when Jim arrived - heavy and morose. Where Speed had been, all that time? - he asked angrily. "Leaving me all alone, in that f.....g big city!" - His hollow, lamenting voice sounded more inhuman than ever. - "Helpless like a baby - isn't he?" Speed stated, with a sort of tender satisfaction; then plunged into an absurd narrative about "some lousy guy" who had promised him a job, and then kept him waiting all night, just out of sheer meanness -: "You know what they are like, those rich bastards..."

Before they left, arm in arm, Speed asked me, with a strangely malicious grin: "One shouldn't think we are cousins - huh? Look kind of different, I suppose, - Jim and me. Do you think he favors me, Clarence?"

He had a long, hearty laugh, then explained to his cousin:

"Some weeks ago he didn't get what I meant when I asked him the same question, about Lucy. He's just a foreigner, you see - and there are plenty of words he doesn't know. I've taught him quite a few things, but there are plenty of others he never heard about, What a funny little number he is! I sure get a kick out of this ..."

I did not expect to see him again before the next noon when he was to come back from the court. But it was half-past-three in the morning, and I was sound asleep, when the shrill noise of the door bell awakened me. I felt something like a sharp pang in my stomach, and my heart skipped a beat. I knew, of course, it was Speed who kept ringing, louder and louder - and I felt that something dreadful was about to happen. Yet I didn't move - as though I could banish the approaching disaster by not reacting, hiding, keeping quiet.

Finally I heard the house door fly open - and the howl of the storm from outside ...What a night it was! - freezing cold, sinister and gusty, with heavy snowfall. I had noticed, of course, some hours before, that it was nasty weather, when I went to bed. But I realized only now how bad it actually was, as I rushed down, in my dressing- gown, to find out what was going on.

The house door stood wide open: the raging storm carried heaps of snow into the lobby. The street seemed transformed into an icy wilderness - a polar landscape, numbed and at the same time pompously embellished by those tremendous masses of wan, fluffy stuff. Against this astounding background of blowing white slanted

the two black silhouettes of Speed and Jim, clinging to each other as if in desperate tenderness - both tottering, leaning against the wall: both on the point of sinking. A few feet away from them, in the middle of the lobby, stood Mr. Prokoff, in worn, ^{brocade} ~~purple~~ pyjamas - the oddest pyjamas, indeed, I've ever seen -, his arms spread in a theatrical gesture of exorbitant despair - , chiding, cursing, lamenting: "Ah, my carpets, my curtains, my house! All upset, messed up! - My decent house! - devastated by these dirty rascals! - ~~these ignominious creeps!~~ What a nerve they have to come here - at this time of the night, in such a disgraceful state! What a nerve!...Ah, the snow! ... My carpets! my polished floor! - What will Anita say? ..." He looked most pathetic - somehow like a monstrous bird as he stood there - furiously shaking his head and fluttering with his long, wing-like arms.

I implored him to calm down, to go back to his room. But he went on lamenting and shaking his powerless fists. It was only when I had shut the door that he finally began to retire. He looked terribly old as he slowly staggered away, making panicky little gestures against the two invaders, as though they were evil ghosts whom he tried to exorcize.

Both were in the most appalling state of drunkenness. Speed- ^{depraved and} his face damp with sweat, haggard and unshaven - looked more truculent than ever, ~~half like a madman, half like the juvenile villain in a cheap gangster film~~ - and as for Jim, his appearance seemed even more alarming. His face was streaming with blood and disfigured by a nasty wound dividing his upper lip. The blood ran lavishly from a deep gash in the back of his head; it colored his

temple with a dingy purple and left broad stripes on his cheeks. His overcoat was polluted with large spots of blood, and on his heavy shoes melting snow, blood and mud were caked to a nauseous pap. As I shook his shoulders he spat blood, quite a lot of it, and I could see that one of his teeth was missing.

~~For several minutes I believed quite seriously that this ghastly scene was a nightmare, - not reality. I made desperate efforts to wake up, but in vain: This was Speed, fumbling at me like an idiot - and that bloody monster was his cousin, Jim, the innocent country boy.~~ Had he just committed a murder? ~~Were his hands still wet with the anominable marks of a crime?~~ Was he dangerously wounded himself? He might die - right now, in this house, in this lobby - and I would be suspected of having killed him ... Undoubtedly the police were after him: they would find him here... What a scandal! what a catastrophe!

I thought of everything - and nothing. I wondered how I could manage to bring the two staggering drunkards up to the second floor. I wanted to reach my room - as desperately as a shipwrecked swimmer is hankering for a floating piece of wood. Everything would be better - I thought -, the worst could still be avoided, if I only succeeded in carrying my two abhorrent visitors upstairs.

I don't remember in what way I managed the appalling transport; all I know is that the scene grew even more revolting when we had finally arrived in my apartment. Speed flung himself on my bed, while Jim sank groaningly down on the sofa, stretching his legs and letting the upper part of his body sag forward like a dead, heavy mass. I begged him to clean his wounds, to take off his dirty

shoes. But he kept swaying his head back and forth like a madman. ^{move} "I can't ... I can't ...", he stammered. "I feel rotten... Rotten - that's how I feel ... ~~I'll be sick in a minute,~~" he prophesied with a gloomy satisfaction. - "Go to the bath room, then!" I shouted in- to his ear. But he mumbled, with an idiotically complacent grin: "Perhaps I can hold it ... I suppose I can - for a while ... I can hold it, all right ..." /

~~I had no time to appreciate this touching proof of desperate self-control.~~ While I still tried to bed his swaying head on a pillow- wondering where to find some cotton-wool to mop up his blood as it oozed out-, Speed, for his part, was sullyng my bed, in various indescribable manners at once. I wanted to rush to his aid; but Jim's fist, damp and massy, held me back, mercilessly, like a heavy clutch. He forced me to stoop down, till my ear was in the most uncomfortable proximity to his mouth - that stammering mouth filled with blood. It was pretty sickening to watch his thick, clumsy tongue like an helpless, ugly animal, moving toilsomely in a sticky liquid of blood and saliva. I shuddered at the idea that this disfigured mouth could touch my forehead or temple as he buzzed fervently into my ear: "I'm Speed's cousin... ^{honest} that's what I ~~really~~ am ... Don't you believe me, Clarence?" he asked with a sudden expression of ^{distrust} ~~anger as if I had contradicted him~~; then he insisted, once more, with a sort of whining emphasis: "Speed's ^{from back home} cousin - that's what I am ... ~~Honest - I am~~ Speed's cousin." - At the same time, another whispering voice came from my stained bed: it was Speed who giggled and stammered: "A kick! ... I got a bomb kick... Sure I did ... the best kick I ever had ..."

I shall never forget it - never. It's all alive in my memory, and always will remain -; that ragged dialogue of the two stammering voices - those few imbecile words, endlessly repeated with a frantic monotony-; the sickening smell, the groaning, the distorted grimaces of the two pain-stricken sinners - and the blood...My hands, my clothes, the furniture, the carpet - everything sullied with blood; a sticky puddle of blood covering large parts of the floor - growing rapidly: almost on the point of inundating the room ...~~this was my inferno: the horrid realization of my nightmares - here it was. The Underworld - the abyss below the placid surface of civilization; the hidden realm of blood, mud and flames - sordid and devastating -~~ I had always been afraid of its ultimate outburst. I am no hero. I was deathly afraid of those two savage lads, snoring now in their own filth. I didn't think them funny. Two thousand of the same type - I figured - and they are capable of destroying a city: two millions - and they may ruin a continent ... These two - Speed and Jim had shown a fiendish efficiency in transforming my room into a stinking chaos.

I was their prisoner - fettered by my dread of those two infantile monsters, who might wake up and continue their catastrophic work.- How agonizingly long was that night! It seemed endless...I tried to clean the floor, the bed and the sofa with a rag and some shreds of paper. The two sleepers were immobile as sacks-: Jim still leaning in the corner of the sofa - his mouth ajar, his bloody hands crossed on his stomach, in a strangely pious fashion; Speed- reposing peacefully in the midst of his revolting mire.

After having performed the humble task of mopping up the most obvious traces of a vandalic frenzy, I sank onto a chair near the open window - utterly exhausted. It was freezing cold; but when I closed the window the smell became quite unbearable. So I sat and shivered - staring at the narrow courtyard. Snowfall and storm had ceased. The air was perfectly calm. I watched, with a dream-like attention, the mysterious play of the shadows that filled the holes and little ravines of the decaying snow with their rich, changeable tints. Gradually the wan gleam of the dawn displaced that nocturnal symphony of profound blue, purple black and melancholy grey.

I must have dozed a little, despite the biting cold and the inconvenience of my position. The whispering voices that awakened me were those of two cunning conspirators. Together they sat, Speed and Jim, on my unsettled bed. Jim had washed his face. His wound looked less dangerous now than it had seemed to me a few hours before. His lips were still badly swollen, and there was an ugly scratch across his cheek.- Speed's white face seemed hardened and contracted as though he had grown older and more experienced in many evil practices, during that terrible night. His voice was strangely dull and dried out - the voice of a liar who is bored, if not disgusted by his own fabrications - as he told me, rapidly and vaguely, a complicated and fantastic story of a "lousy joint" where they had been playing cards with some guys. They had had good luck and made quite a bit of money, but were promptly robbed of it - by the same gang, in fact, that had formerly lost

it to them. It was pretty bad - four powerful brutes jumping at them at a dark street corner. A terrific fight - that's what ~~it~~ *it* really was. - "And the cops took part in it too," Speed ended his report, somewhat mysteriously.

"And why did we get into that bloody mess?" he asked me, after a dramatic pause. "It's all because of you, Clarence! - Sure," he insisted as I made a gesture of astonishment and protest, - "It's your fault that I got tight, and fooled around with those bastards, and all that monkey business. I couldn't sleep - honest, I couldn't-, because I kept thinking of you. What will happen to you, Clarence, when I tell the judges who it was I bought the tea for? - And if I don't tell them - what will happen to me?- Gee, I know the tricks they use to make a fellow talk. They'll beat me up, day and night, and won't let me sleep, and they'll ask me questions, for hours and hours - till I lose my mind, and break down altogether, and finally tell them whatever they want to hear."

This sounded dreadful, indeed. I didn't know what to say. But something had to be said as Speed kept a merciless silence. So I finally mumbled: "What are you going to do, then?"

Speed shrugged his shoulders, pursed up his lips as if he wanted to whistle, and then declared, *casualy and yet firmly:* ~~with a grim determination:~~ "There is just one thing to do. I have to leave town. That's all."

To leave town? - I was rather bewildered. Wouldn't they catch him in another state as well? And how about that bail his sister Lucy had paid?

He explained - always in that oddly detached, business-like

manner - that everything was considered and well arranged. He had decided to go back to North Carolina, with his cousin Jim. Lucy had agreed that this was the only sensible solution. She would lose no money - not Lucy! Her excellent connections with certain big shots in the police headquarters protected her against any loss or danger. - " We just have to disappear, Jim and I - and everything will be o.k.," he concluded, looking composed and bitter.

All he needed was fifty bucks - for the bus fare and varied other expenses. I happened to have the cash as we were at the end of a month and the rent was due. I still see Speed's face - pale and concentrated - as he counted the money. He was holding two matches between his teeth, moving them nervously from one side of his mouth to the other- odorless, tiny flowers, withered and shrunk by the heat of his greedy lips.

He called up the bus line - the bus was to leave in about an hour-; then his sister Lucy. The farewell was surprisingly brief and sober. " So long, honey. Be good. I'll write you a post card, ~~from back home ...~~"

When he had finished his odd conversation I suddenly asked him- and at once wondered what I did it for -: "Aren't you afraid of the Last Judgment, Speed?"

His face turned terribly pale - as if lightened, for a few breath-taking moments, by the swift reflex of a mighty white flame. At the same time, he smiled - a painful, distorted smile. Then he said, very briefly, without looking at me: "You don't know what you're talking about."

All three of us were silent, for quite a while. Finally

Speed made an impatient gesture as though he wanted to push away something - a shadow or an idea that he found disturbing.- " I guess I should pack my things," he said, walking through the room-aimlessly.

But there was nothing to pack.

Jim, meanwhile, was busy brushing off his clothes. When he discovered how dirty his overcoat was, he broke out into a bellowing lament: "How do you want me to travel in a filthy thing like this?" - Speed seemed rather irked by this noisy performance. - "Cut it out!" he shouted, jerking with a sudden violent nervousness; and then- calm again, with an offensive nonchalance: "He'll give you his overcoat - won't you, Clarence?" - As I hesitated, he continued, with a rather terrifying sweetness: " Of course you will, ~~Clarence~~ You can afford a new one, can't you. Besides, you wouldn't want my cousin to catch a cold ..."

I took my overcoat out of the closet. It was a nice, solid thing, all lined with silk, most comfortable and warm. Anna had bought it for me, in Vienna, many years ago.- " Here it is", I said. Jim fingered the fine material with a satisfied grin: " Fancy stuff - isn't it?"

"It's all right, I guess", said Speed, with the same momentary expression of tormented impatience.

Finally they left. "So long, Clarence", murmured Speed-hastily as if he were ashamed. " Be good."

At the door, he stopped, lingering for a moment. Then he turned his head, with a shy and graceful gesture, and said quickly:

"Don't be mad at me, Karl."

It was the first time that he addressed me by my real name. It sounded odd and touching, the way he pronounced it - slowly and carefully as though it were a precious thing he didn't want to hurt.

Outside it was snowing again. I thought of Speed, and that he had no overcoat. I'd rather have given my overcoat to him - since I had to give it away... But Speed needs no coat, I suppose.

~~There it was again - the cloud of loneliness, filling my terrible room. No foolish chat, any more ; no quivering restlessness, no alleviation of dubious "tea parties" ... A worn overcoat, smeared with blood, and the effulgent vulgarity of Miss Lucy's portrait - these are the squalid trophies of my adventure.~~

I felt a sort of void inside, - saddening, and at the same time relieving. The strange interlude was over ...

....So I thought. But I realized my mistake when the phone rang two days later, and I heard Jim's barking voice. "I'm speaking from Washington, D.C.," he announced, solemnly as if he had to deliver a secret message from the White House. There had been no bus traffic the day they left New York- he explained in his awkward, pedantic manner -: the busses didn't run, because of the heavy snow. So they travelled by train - which was more expensive. The money I had given them just lasted for the trip to Washington - according to Jim's lengthy account. However, there had been a delightful surprise in store for them on their arrival in the

✓ Alone. So I was alone again. Alone with the smell, the twilight, the familiar memories...

in all her beauty

capital. Miss Lucy ~~she~~ ^{she} had rushed by plane to Washington, firmly resolved to take her naughty brother back to New York. For her clever intrigue with the big shots of the police had ~~proved an~~ ^{completely} ~~absolute failure~~ ^{failed}; the bail her boy friend had paid would be lost, unless Speed presented himself to the authorities without further delay. Speed followed his sister, and was now locked up in a New York prison - while Jim, in Washington, didn't know what to do, penniless and inexperienced as he was. Twenty-five bucks, he said, would be about enough to finance the rest of his journey.

I asked him to what address he wanted me to send the money - whereupon he seemed rather ~~muddled~~ ^{elusive}. I should give it to Lucy, he said; then suddenly changed his mind and declared he'd rather hitch-hike his way back to New York. - "You'll hear from me ~~soon~~ ^{tomorrow}," he promised, before ending the conversation.

It took just two hours till he called me again. "Here I am", he said cheerfully. "Safely back in New York." It was only then that I saw through his obvious swindle. The phone communication had been from Brooklyn or the Bronx - not from Washington. Neither he nor Speed had ever left New York. The whole story of the snow, the busses, Lucy's surprising action, Speed's arrest, was the most brassy fabrication from beginning to end. - This definitely went too far: for the first time I lost my temper, shouted at Jim over the phone, and told him to go to hell. He remained very calm, in a strangely cool and superior way. - "What are you getting excited about? I wasn't in Washington - of course not. Did I ever pretend that I was? I must have been tight, that's all. But Speed is really arrested - whether you believe it or not. And I think you

should look after him. I really think you should - for your own sake, Mr. Kroll," he concluded with an ominous emphasis .

He spoke more fluently than he had before: his voice sounded more intelligent and convincing. I was rather puzzled. Perhaps it was true, after all, that they had caught Speed- here, or in Washington, or wherever. He was persecuted, maybe, not only because of the Marihuana scandal, but also, or mainly, in connection with the bloody incident that had taken place before they came to my house. It was not impossible - was even likely that I was more dangerously involved in the sordid affair than I had first realized.. I already considered calling up a lawyer; but before I had made a decision the front door-bell rang: it was Jim.

I hardly recognized him at first. He had changed amazingly- a total transformation that was caused, not only by a new grey hat and fine tan overcoat he wore, but by something much more personal and mysterious. His new attitude was of a certain slack elegance - at once suave and aggressive. It was rather disquieting, indeed - as though he had finally taken off a cumbersome disguise.

"Hello, Mr. Kroll, " he grinned, with a casual wave of his huge, gloved hand. " Glad to see you again."

I said: "What do you want?"

"Speed is in jail", he observed, in a discreetly lowered voice.

"So you told me before. I'm afraid there is nothing I could do about it."

"Is that so?" - He seemed sincerely surprised; then watched me for several moments, looking out from under heavy lids. I began

to feel rather uneasy.

"It's too bad." He lit a cigarette while shaking his head in the most cordial regret. "Too bad for you, Mr. Kroll. You realize, I presume, that you are bound to get involved in this embarrassing story. After all, it's for you that poor little Speed had to buy the dope ..."

~~I felt more nonplussed than ever. So Speed's cousin knew - probably always had ... How impudently they had cheated me! What a feel I had been!~~ "What do you want me to do?" *I asked, hoarse with fear and fury.*

"It's very easy", he said, as suavely as he possibly could. "Three hundred dollars - that's all."

"I don't quite understand, really ..."

"You're kind of slow, Mr. Kroll." He smiled at me with the most offensive politeness. "I need the money to bribe some of my friends among the officers. What remains will be just enough to pay our trip to Cuba."

"I haven't got the money."

He shrugged his shoulders. "That means prison for you, Mr. Kroll. I'm awfully sorry."

"Blackmail", I panted. "Now I know at least what kind of a fellow you are. This is an obvious attempt at blackmail. A most flagrant attempt ..."

"You'd better calm down, Mr. Kroll," he suggested, ~~always with the same horrifying friendliness.~~ "You're talking rubbish, and you know it. - Blackmail! It's too silly for words!" He gave a brief, nasal laugh, then turned very urgent, like a well-meaning man who

makes a last desperate effort to prevent his friend from committing a fatal blunder. "Three hundred bucks! It's nothing, Mr. Kroll - considering the seriousness of your position. You don't quite realize, I suppose, how strict they are in this country if it comes to illegal dope traffic. And if the person involved happens to be a foreigner! - Gee - that makes it still worse! - On top of everything, " he added with a terrible mildness as if he wanted to tell me the worst in a tender, considerate way, " - Speed is only a kid: just nineteen- a minor, according to our laws. I heard with my own ears how you persuaded him to go to Harlem and buy that stuff for you there. Do you think I did not listen when you whispered to him, during the show, that other evening? 'Go to Harlem!' you said, and I could see how very eager you were to get your dope as soon as possible. 'Go to Harlem, Speed!' But he didn't want to, in the beginning. Poor kid! - he enjoyed the show. So you insisted, Go, go! - till he finally went. It's a plain case of seduction..."

His ^{stunning} ~~stunning~~ impertinence first petrified me, then made me bellow with anger. I am sure my voice must have sounded rather terrifying when I shouted at him, Dirty liar! - and, Get out of here! - There was no resistance, ~~no back-talk~~ only an insidious grin, a murmured "Ocidoc" - and then, out he was, leaving behind an air poisoned with his flagitious lies and the cheap perfume he used in his new pimp-like appearance.

I called up a lawyer whom I had met on the boat when I came from Europe. He was out of town. They always are out of town when

you happen to need them. When Mr. Prokoff entered my room- slowly, reluctantly, with an apologetic grin - he found me in a state of accute despair, lying on my bed, weep~~ing~~ing like a forsaken child.

I didn't need to explain him very much. He knew that I was in trouble - : had known it, indeed, all along. He was indulgent and understanding. "All of us make mistakes, " he conceded. "I certainly know what it means - to be in a crazy mess! When the Marquis de la Silvaplotta had forged my signature on the checks, and Anita had a hysterical fit because I wanted to call the police ...". He chuckled, animated by his memories; then turned serious again and promised me that he would " take care" of those damned fellows when they dared to show up again.

We didn't have to wait long. This time Jim appeared in the company of a stranger - " a sort of greasy pimp": according to Mr. Prokoff's description-, and it was then that they presented - if only for a short moment - that mysterious warrant. I was supposed to present myself to the judges, as a witness for Speed. He had tried to commit suicide in his cell, they reported. I was the only person who had the possibility and duty to save him. But Mr. Prokoff remained unmoved by their dramatic account. He insisted that I had left his house, just an hour before - and that he had no idea where I might have gone or when I would be back.

This happened about nine o'clock. Since that time I keep hiding in this hole. I don't think that Speed's cell could be any worse ... He he really tried to kill himself? ...I wonder... If it's true - and why should it not be true, after all? -, then it's me who is responsible - who is guilty; then I am the murderer...

This is madness... I am on the point of becoming mad...

Speed is not in jail - of course not. Jim is a hard-boiled crook: my friend Prokoff was perfectly right to treat him the way he did. It's all a pack of thick, brassy lies - nothing else. The so-called warrant is a forgery. They just wanted to scare me - or to kidnap me. Probably they think I have wealthy friends, well-to-do relatives who would pay a fortune in order to save my life. / Whom do they expect to pay a cent for my liberation? Anna, maybe? - my beloved wife? Ha ha ha - what a funny idea! how exceedingly ridiculous!... They have wasted their evil wit: my case is hopeless. In vain they have invented all those enormities. The whole pack of lies - wasted, wasted... /

✓ Jim is no cousin of Speed: that's why he doesn't favor him... What a fool I was not to notice it right away! And Lucy? Perhaps she is Jim's mistress... Jim - the famous boy friend of Speed's sister...: another joke - and a good one, too! The question remains whether Lucy really is Speed's sister. Was he lying, even when he told me how much he loved her, and that she was all he had? ... It can't be. No no - he wasn't lying then. He was not always lying. Sometimes he told the truth. Sometimes his voice was such that it proved the truthfulness of his words.

He is not entirely bad. Jim - maybe; but not Speed. Savage and infantile - yes; but not fundamentally evil. ~~He seemed a decent boy, for all his truculent features, when I first knew him. Didn't I wish, sometimes, that he might be my son?~~ ... It was only when Jim appeared that he began to turn nasty. There must have

been a whole gang who influenced him, used him as a tool. There was Jim, of course - and Lucy ... Perhaps she is something like the secret boss of the gang - pulling the wires from the background; giving orders to the boys - who do whatever she wants: for, of course, they are in love with her - all of them: even Speed...

I go astray, hopelessly, in this maze of sordid mysteries.

The earthquake...: Everything tottering, trembling, crumbling.

And I - tumbling too; staggering on this tricky ground...

...Speed and Lucy - arm in arm, an incestuous couple - skating at a breath-taking pace over a shining ice sheet - in raptures by their own triumphant skill, the juggling verve of their feats and capers... What an amazing vision! How shocking! how enchanting!... the corrupt infant and his sordid princess - united in a quivering pose of stagy bewitchment, like two trapeze artists playing in incredible height; by turns caressed and abandoned by the long luminous fingers of tremendous spot-lights; nimble and alert, droll and lofty; giggling, squabbling, whispering and lying at each other; animated by mysterious drugs and the wicked merriment of their inaudible conversation...Of what disastrous nature are the intrigues and childish crimes which they keep discussing, up there, on their airy promenade? And where are the hunting-grounds to which they now withdraw? - hovering, ascending into a limpid sky ... Could I only follow their sacrilegious cruising over the metropolitan streets looking like snowy gorges - over skyscrapers transformed into ice palaces!...Were I only as weightless, as blissfully winged as they are!

I used to be that way - so bird-like, so detached -, when I

still was in the good graces of that capricious fairy, Marihuana... That was a long time ago. I became heavy again - heavy like a stone - like a human body ...No chance, any more, to keep pace with the bewitched couple. Their slender figures already begin to be faint. Another minute - and they will have vanished - dissolved in this pallid haze ...Those blank and vacant spots - already far removed; featureless, wanly shining - is what remains of their faces.

Oh, Anna's face! Lucy's face! Speed's face! - Which one is it I lost? Who is it that left me alone? Is it my wife? my son? my son's sister? Is it a woman I loved without knowing her? The girl my son called 'honey'? A stranger who wanted to rob me? - ~~my faceless~~ ^{Oh, my faithless wife,} my never-seen mistress, my depraved son - intermingled, all three of them, to an indistinguishable identity...

But this is real. The house door!

Is it Jim, again?

A silence - how long it lasts! - And now - steps...

But these are not Mr. Prokoff's ...Nor is this the voice of Speed's cousin Jim.

It is Speed himself. And the person who has opened the door is Anita Prokoff.

"Oh, it's you, Mrs. Prokoff! Nice to see you..."

Speed's voice - blandishing and a trifle hoarse; cooing with irresponsible, aimless sensuality.

"I really meant to look after Clarence -: he wanted me to drop in ..."

So he is not in jail; never thought of committing suicide...

"But it's much more fun to have a chat with you, Mrs. Prokoff..."

And she - reluctant, and yet so feverishly eager to continue this conversation-: "Why, Mr. Speed - it's kind of late, I suppose..."

Speed- all reckless gallantry -: "What's the difference, Mrs. Prokoff!"

And a silence. They seem to linger - staring at one another; wondering what to say next. It's Speed who begins to talk again.

"Kind of chilly outside, isn't it."

She agrees, and adds, with tender consideration: "Aren't you freezing, Mr. Speed? - bare-headed, without an overcoat..."

No, he doesn't mind the cold - in fact, doesn't even feel it.

Yet, he doesn't object to a cup of tea - on the contrary:

"Thank you, Mrs. Prokoff - that's real nice of you! I was kind of afraid you might be mad at me - for intruding on you, at this hour... I sure appreciate your kindness, Mrs. Prokoff..."

And they both chuckle again.

It is as if I could see them - could watch them through the wall-: how they grin and purr at each other like two prodigious cats. What a queer couple they are! - the ageing belle and the corrupt infant...What a weird sort of pantomime they perform! She - coquettishly tripping, despite her considerable plumpness; luring him to the kitchen with a great deal of blinking and smirking; he - very slim in his worn suit, with the huge pink handkerchief in his upper pocket - following her, winged and elastic as ever in

his pale, pointed shoes - those Greek sandals in a state of charming decay. The matches, those withered flowers, seem to bloom again between his greedy lips.

"You ought to eat something, Mr. Speed..." This is her whispering voice; then she giggles: "It's a crazy name if one thinks of it! Speed... I've never known anyone called like that."

And he - in his hoarse, caressing voice, as though it were a declaration of love -: "You've never known ^{a guy} ~~anyone~~ like me, anyhow..."

How grotesque this is! how sordid! how absurd!

How tremendously funny!

It tickles me: I must laugh - a great, hilarious laugh effluent from my innermost being.

I can breathe again. What a relief! - indescribable ... I am saved - saved, at this very moment, from disgrace and catastrophe. And it is to Mrs. Prokoff - insatiable old thing! - that I owe my ultimate liberation!

Mrs. Prokoff - my saviour! - What a scream!

Capricious The former mistress of the Marquis de la Silvaplotta - poor Prokoff's ^{capricious} ~~fastidious~~ wife -, captivated, cheated, entranced by Miss Lucy's depraved little brother - my prodigal son!

He'll forget all about me and his dangerously playful intrigues - the summons, the "tea", the jail, the suicide, and his sister's boy friends. There are plenty of other things, now, he has to do and to think of.

Their voices - that extraordinary dialogue between my landlady and a blackmailing youngster - gradually die away. They must have reached the kitchen. Now, she pours the hot tea into his cup;

offers him a slice of cake; "it's home-made," she remarks proudly. And he eats - chewing greedily; smiling at her while he swallows.

I sure get a kick out of this. A bomb kick!

A billow of savage merriment sweeps all my fears away, the shadows of a fixed idea, a long apprehension, great nostalgia, the familiar assembly of ghost-like memories. I feel as though I were recuperating from a virulent malady: finally released from a numbing bondage; - worn-out but also refreshed and mysteriously strengthened.

What is it that makes me feel so effusively happy? Is it because I have known Speed? Or because I got rid of him?

How incalculable we are! how inscrutable! - one man to another, and each of us to himself. You never can tell what may cause the great tribulation in a human life, nor can you ever explain the reason of an overwhelming joy. It just happens. And it's very grand.

It's grand that I shall leave this house, with all its dreary smells and depressing noises. I shall say goodbye to my good friend Prokoff. I may ask him to give Mrs. Prokoff my nicest regards - and my thanks.

I'll begin a new life. I'll wander and work, ~~and forget my~~
~~fear of the Underworld. I'll forget, Vienna and all I left behind.~~ *and shed, at last, what* *forget*
I won't think of Anna, any more. ~~I'll try to become lighter - at~~
~~once more detached and more open to many things, beautiful or ugly.~~
I shall find a woman, and love her. I may have a son, eventually.

He won't be like Speed, for God's sake! But if he " favors" him a tiny little bit - I wouldn't mind it so much ...

You'll be surprised, Speed, if you ever see me again. Where will that be? And when? Under what circumstances?

I hope that you, too, will have improved, at that time - and the impish 'little good-for-nothing may ~~at last~~ ^{finally} have matured and become a man. It won't be easy, Speed - either for you/or for me. Both of us will have to face a great deal of trouble - some suffering, some fun, some frustration, and a perpetual uncertainty.

We'll get a bomb kick out of it, won't we?

This is the beginning.

Brentwood, Los Angeles
August/September 1940.