For the last four or five years the literary world has been eagerly awaiting publication of Saul Bellow's new novel, Herzog. When Viking publishes the book this autumn, Saul Bellow will undoubtedly be granted his rightful place as foremost of the generation of American writers succeeding Faulkner, Fitzgerald and Hemingway. "Herzog Visits Chicago" is a self-contained section adapted from this book, presented to Post readers in advance of publication. Bellow was born of Russian parents in Lachine, Quebec, in 1915, and grew up in Chicago. He attended the University of Chicago, and was graduated with honors in anthropology from Northwestern University in 1937. He attended the University of Wisconsin graduate school and then returned to Chicago, where he worked on a WPA writing project for a short time. He has lectured and taught at the University of Minnesota, Princeton, New York University, Bard College and the University of Puerto Rico, and in 1948 he had a Guggenheim Fellowship to live and write in Paris. Mr. Bellow has written criticism for leading magazines and reviews, and has contributed fiction to Partisan Review, Harper's Bazaar, The New Yorker and Esquire. He was the founding editor of an influential "little magazine," The Noble Savage, and has been an active patron of young writers. He is, at present, a member of the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. Bellow's work, although widely discussed, does not readily lend itself to critical analysis; he himself does his best to discourage formal criticism of his work, preferring that it be regarded as "entertainment." His first two novels, Dangling Man (1944) and The Victim (1947), were carefully wrought, introspective works, which gave no hint of the explosive, rich force that was to come to light in The Adventures of Augie March, the National Book Award winner for 1956. In this flamboyant, adventurous, extremely imaginative book, his characters blazed alive through extraordinary dialogue and vivid descriptions. He then wrote Seize the Day (1956), a short novel many think to be his finest work since the war, and Henderson the Rain King in 1959 continued the Bellow tradition of the unexpected: It was another wildly inventive novel demonstrating a great virtuosity of style, but always carefully under control. As he himself says, "There are critics who assume that you must begin with order if you are to end with it. Not so. A novelist begins with disorder and disharmony and goes toward order by an unknown process of the imagination."

HERZOG VISITS CHICAGO

Once you're in it, trouble is like quicksand:
Taking arms against it rapidly makes matters worse; but just standing there and sinking doesn't have much to recommend it either.

By Saul Bellow

Before he received Geraldine Portnoy's letter, Moses Herzog had been thinking of his house in Ludewigville, Mass., of the green Berkshires, and had wondered whether he might not, after all, take refuge there from the heat and noise of New York before he went to visit his son by his first marriage, Marco, who was at camp. But the house held problems of its own (there were problems and perplexities on all sides). Perhaps he was too excited and distracted to solve any of them. To many, his behavior seemed somewhat mad. It was not simply his inexplicable abandonment of an academic career, his divorce from Daisy, his remarriage and second divorce; not simply the fact that he had settled for good in the Berk-
shores in order to write the historical work which would overwhelm all other 20th-century efforts but had taken off again, with wife and child, for Chicago; it was that everything was done so impulsively, so oddly, with such an expenditure of money and emotions that cast doubts on his sanity. To him, the oddest part of it was that he should have thought so intensely about everything and seen so little of what was about him. To take the most striking instance, he had failed to see that his wife Madeleine, was in love (if love was the word for it) with his friend (if friend he had been) Valentine Gersbach.

It was not enough that Madeleine could not endure the country any more and had to continue her
on her vision like snow and masked the message. You probably never noticed me, but I liked you, and as a friend of Lucas Asphalt— he just adores you, he says you are just a feast of the most human quali- ties. I have been growing up in Lucas’s old neighborhood, and how you played basketball in the Boys’ Brotherhood of the Republic, in the good old Chicago days on Division Street. An uncle of mine even coached you in basketball, a Jules Hankin. I think I do recall Hankin. He wore a blue cardigan, and parted his hair in the middle. I don’t want you to get me wrong. I don’t want to med- dle in your affairs. And I am not an enemy. And I could have been going by you, but I decided not to. She is so vivacious, intelligent, and such a charmer, and has been so warm and frank with me. For quite a while, I admired her and as a younger woman was very pleased by her confidence. Herzog flushed. Her- zig and I have a few little matters to dis- cuss. And as a former student, I was of- course intrigued to hear of your private life, but was also surprised by her freedom and willingness to talk, and soon saw she was doing over, for some reason. Lucas warned me to look out for something fishy but then any intense feeling between mem- bers of the same sex is often, and unjustly, under suspicion. My scientific background has taught me to make more cautious gen- eralizations but I was interested in her chauvenistic conduct. But she did not want me to her side, although far too subtle to pour it on, as they say. She told me that you had very fine human and inquiring mind, and would be, with an intolerable temper which cast her, frightened her. However she added you could be great, and after two bad, loveless marriages perhaps you would devote your- self to the work you were meant to do, and fruitfully produce. You were quite rea- lly good at it. It was soon obvious that she would never have given herself to a man who lacked distinction of intelligence or being. Madeleine said that for the first time in her life she was really clear headed. Until now it was all confusion and there were even gaps of time she couldn’t account for. In marrying you, she was in this mixup and might have remained so but for a certain break. It is extremely easy, she added, for us to find ourselves in a significant encounter— with life—a beautiful, brilliant person with a fate of her own. Her experiences are rich, or preg- nant. What is this? Herzog thought. Is she going to tell me that Madeleine is go- ing to have a baby with me? How wonderful—what luck for me. If she has a kid out of wedlock, I can petition for Junie’s custody. Eagerly he devoured the rest of the page, turned over. No, Madeleine was not pregnant. She’d be far too happy with her new life and her survival to intelligence. It was part of her sickness to be shrewed. She was not pregnant, then. I was not merely a gradu- ate student who helped with the child, but a confidante. Your little girl is greatly af- fected, and needs to find her own extraordinaire child. Exceptional, really. I love Junie with more than the usual affection, far more, than one has for the children one meets in this way. I understand the Italians are truly passionate in their painting culture in the West (judge by the figures the Christ child in Italian painting), but obviously Americans have their own craziest about child psychology. Everything is done for children, ostensibly. To be fair, I think Madeleine is not bad with little June, but then she’s Magdalene Verdon. Mr. Gersbach, who has an ambiguous posi- tion in this household, is very amusing to the child, on the whole. She calls him Uncle Val, and I often see him giving her a piggy- back, or tossing her in the air. Here Herz- zog set his teeth, angry, scented danger. But I have to report one disagreeable thing, and then I have to get to sleep. I have just yet to find out what, that, coming to Harper Avenue the other night. I heard the child crying. She was in- side Gersbach’s car, and couldn’t get out, and the poor little thing was shaking and weeping. I thought she had herself in white playing, but it was after dark, and I didn’t understand why she would be outside, alone, at bedtime. Herzog’s heart pounded with dangerous thick beats at these words. I had to calm her, and then I found out that Mr. Gersbach had taken her to the car, and the quarter inside, and Uncle Val had taken her by the hand and led her out to the car, and told her to play a while. He shut her up and went back in the house. I can see him mount the stairs while Junie screams in fright from the other end. There were tears in my eyes! I don’t know! He reread the concluding lines. Luke says you have a right to know such things. He was going to phone, but I felt it would be upsetting and harmful to hear this over the phone. A letter gives one a chance to consider—think matters over, and reach a more balanced view. I don’t think Made- leine is a bad mother, actually.

New York could not hold him now. He had to go to Chicago to see his daughter, confront Madeleine and Gersbach. The decision was not reached; it simply ar- rived. He went home and changed from the new clothes in which he had been di- verting himself, into an old seersucker suit. He went hunting for the last time, then he came back from the Vineyard. He checked the valise quickly and left the apartment. Characteristically, he was de- termined to act without clearly knowing what to do, and even recognizing that he had no clear purpose. He hoped that on the plane, in the clearer atmo-sphere, he would understand why he was flying.

The superjet carried him to Chicago ninety minutes later, moving the whole rotation of the planet and giving him an extension of afternoon and sun- light. Beneath, the white clouds were foaming. And the sun, like the spot that was calcuated us against the whole of dis- integration and the sense of empty blue vacancy and at the sharp glitter of wing-borne engines. When the plane bucked, he held his lip with his teeth. Not that he feared flying, but it occurred to him that if the ship were to crash, or simply fall, it would make little difference. Over Maryland recently, when human figures were seen to spill and fall like shelléd peas), Gersbach would become Junie’s guardian. Unless Simkin tore up the will. He would also be two insurance policies. He sat with his arms crossed over his son Moshe. The stewardess offered him a drink, which he refused with a shake of the head. He felt incapable of looking into the girl’s pretty, healthful face.

The plane jet landed, Herzog turned back his watch, his hat, and followed the down the long corridor to the auto-rental of- fice. To identify himself, he had an American Express card, his Massachusetts driver’s license, his university cre- dentials. If he would have been sus- picious of such diversions, he would have said nothing of the oilies, wrinkled seersucker suit worn by this applicant, Moses El- kanah Herzog; but the official who took his application, a sweet-mannered, bos- omy, curly, fat-nosed little woman (even in glasses), smiled so winningly (slight smile faintly) only whether he

Dear Mr. Herzog, I am Geraldine Portnoy, Lucas Asphalt’s friend. You may re- member... May remember? Moses read faster (the script was feminine—progres- sive-school printing turned cursive and the ’t’s dotted with hearts and circles), trying to swallow the whole letter at once, turning the pages to see whether the gist of the thing was underscored any- where. Actually I took your course in Ro- mantics as Sophomore, as you remember, in Mr. Rousseau and Karl Marx. You have come to your account, that Marx expressed metaphysical hopes for the fu- ture of mankind. I took what he said about materialism far too literally. My view! It’s common. And I’ll tell you the truth, I think like this—why doesn’t she get on it? He tried again to find the point, but all those circular open dots fell
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Cooked with fingers that did not grip firmly but was an excellent cook. She won at cards, poaking along, but worked all questions she asked two or three times, and repeated the answers half to herself. With the same slowness she bribed her hair, she brushed her exposed teeth, or chewed figs, dates, and senna leaves for her digestion. Her lip grew pendulous as she aged and her neck gradually thickened at the shoulders so that she had to hold her head forward somewhat. Oh, she was very old now, in her eighties, and far from...
Herzog Visits Chicago

well. She was aristocratic; one eye had a cat-
arat. But she had a clear mind. No doubt her troubles with Father Herzog, stormier and more hot-headed and fractious as he aged, had strengthened her brain.

The house was empty. The old man, but Moshe would have gone away, assuming there was no one at home. He, however, waited, knowing she would presently open. In his youth he had watched her take five minutes to open the bottle of soda—an hour to spread the dough over the table when she baked. Her strudel was like jewelers’ work, and filled with red and green gems of preserves. At last he heard her at the door. Links of brass chain rose in the narrow opening. He saw old Taube’s dark eyes, more somber now, and more extruded. The glass winter door still separ-
ated her from Moses. He knew it would also be locked. The old people had been guarded and suspicion in their own house.

Moreover, Moses knew the light was next to him; he might be unrecognized.

But, although she studied him like a stran-
ger, she had already identified him. Her intellect was not slow, whatever else.

"Who is it?"

"It’s Moses. . . ."

"I don’t know you. I alone am Moses. . . ."

"Tante Taube—Moses Herzog. Moshe."

"Ah—Moshe."

Slow-lane fingers released the catch. The door was shut so free from the links from strain, and then with a loud clank the door was opened. "God!—what a face he saw, how grooved with woe and age, lined downward at the mouth. As he came in she raised feebly hands to embrace him. "Moshe! . . ."

"Come in, I’ll make a light. Shut the door, Moshe."

He found the switch and turned on the very dim bulb of the entry hall. It shed a pinkish color; the old-fashioned glass of the fixture reminded him of the vigil light in the synagogue. He shut the door. The watered fragrance of lavans as he entered. The house was cold and faintly sour with furniture polish. The remembered luster was there in the faint twirl parlor—calen-
der, with the old Hanky, in the living room. The faded sofa in its gleaming protective plast-
ic, the Oriental rug, the drapes perfect and rigid on the windows with laterally rigid venetian blinds. A lamp went on be-
hind him.

"Let me look at you, she said, coming before him. Her eyes were puffy, but steady enough. He stared at her, and tried to prevent the horror from coming into his face. He guessed that it was putting in her plates that had delayed her. She had new ones, poorly made—no arch but a straight line of teeth. Like a woodchuck, he thought. Her fingers were disfigured, with loose skin that had worked forward over her nails. But those fingers were painted. And what changes did she see in him? "Ah, Moshe, you changed."

He limited his answer to a nod. "And how are you?"

"You see. The living dead."

"You live alone?"

"I had a woman—Bella Ockinoff from the fish store. You know her. But she was not clean."

"Come, Tante, sit down."

"Oh, Moshe," she said, "I can’t sit. I can’t stand, can’t lay. Better, already, next to Pa. Pa is better off than me."

"Is it so bad?" Herzog must have been

that his feeling was for her and tried to find the real source of it. Or was it the catara-
th that gave her that expression? He guided her to a chair, holding her arm, and sat on the plastic-covered sofa. Under the tapestry, Pierrot, Clau de Lune. Venetian moonlight. All that phony ba-

nality that oppressed him in his student days. It had no special power over him now. He was another man and had differ-
ent purposes. The old woman, he saw, was trying to find what he had come for. She sensed that he was strongly agitated and missed his habitual vagueness, the proud air of abstraction in which M. E. Herzog, Ph.D., had once been clothed. They had been gone. A tenement.

"You working hard, Moshe?"

"Yes."

"Making a living?"

"Oh, yes."

The old woman bowed her head a mo-

ment. He saw the scalp, her thin gray hair. Exigent. The organism had done all it could.

He clearly understood that she was communicating her right to live in this Herzog property, even though by staying alive she was depriving him of this remaining part of the estate.

He sat near the very spot where Father Herzog, the year before his death, had threatened to shoot him. The cause of his rage was money. Herzog was broke, and his wife had underwrite a loan. The old man questioned him narrowly, about his job, his expenses, his child. He had no patience with Moses. At that time I was living in Philadelphia, alone, making my chow (it was no choice!) between Madele-
ine and Sono, my other girl friend. Per-
haps he even heard I was about to be converted to Catholicism. In the course he didn’t know. At one time, he’d be telephoned and I’d have to come right away. I’d sit up all night on the train. And he’d take me into a corner and say, "I want you to hear, once and for all. Your brother Willie is an honest man. When I die, he’ll do as we agreed." "I believe it, Moshe."

But he lost his temper every time, and when he wanted to shoot me it was be-

cause he could no longer bear the sight of me, that look of mine, the look of conceit or proud trouble. The elite look. I don’t blame him, thought Moses as Taube slowly and lengthily described her ailments. Papa couldn’t bear such an expres-

sion on the face of his youngest son. I aged. I wasted myself in stupid schemes, lifting my spirit. His heart ached an-
grily because of me. And Papa was not like some old men who become blunted toward their own death. His despair was keen and continual. And Herzog again was pierced with pain for his father.

They had had lunch on the back porch that day, and that was where the quarrel began. It had seemed to Moses, perhaps, that he was here as a prodigal son, admit-
ning the worst and asking for the old man’s mercy, and so Father Herzog saw nothing except a stupid appeal in his son’s face—incomprehensible. "Idiot!" was what the old man had shouted. "Caji!" Then he saw the angry demand underly-

ing Moses’ look of patience. "Get out! I leave you nothing! Everything to Willie and Helen! You! . . . Croak in a flop-
house." Moses rising, Father Herzog shouted, "Go. And don’t come to my funeral."

"All right, maybe I won’t."

Too late, Tante Taube had warned him to keep silent, raising her brows—she had still had brows then. Father Herzog rose stammering from the table, his face disfor-
ted, and ran to get his pistol.

"Go, go! Come back later. I’ll call you," Taube had whispered to Moses, and, he, confused, reluctant, burning, stung because his misery was not recognized in his father’s house (his monstrous egoism making its peculiar demands)—he reluc-
tantly got up from the table. "Quick! Quick!

"Taube tried to get him to the front door, but old Herzog overtook them with the pistol.

He cried out, "I’ll kill you!" And Her-

zog was startled not so much by this threat, which he did not believe, as by the return of his father’s strength. In his rage he recovered it briefly, though it might cost him his life. The strained neck, the grinding of his teeth, his frightening color, even the military Russian strut with which he lifted the gun—these were better, thought Herzog, than his sinking down during a walk to the store. Father Herzog was not made to be pitiful.

"Go, go," said Tante Taube. Moses was weeping then.

"Maybe you’ll die first," Father Her-

zog shouted. "Papa!"

Half-hearing Tante Taube’s slow de-
scription of Cousin Mordecai’s approach-

ing retirement, Herzog grimly recovered the note that cry. Papa—Papa. You lost! The old man in his near-demented way was trying to act the manhood you should have had. Coming to his house with that Christianized smirk of the gentleman had been a duty. He should have pulled the trigger. Those looks were ag-
ony to him. He deserved to be spared, in his old age.

And there was then Moses with puffy weeping eyes, in the street, waiting for his cab, while Father Herzog had gone up and back before these windows, star-

ning at him in agony of spirit—yes, you got that out of him. Walking quickly there, back and forth in his hasty style, dropping most of his weight on the one heel. The pistol thrown down. Who knows whether Moses shortened his life by the grief he gave him? Perhaps the stimulus of anger lengthened it. He could not die and leave this half-burdened.

They were reconciled the following year. And then more of the same. And then . . .

"Should I make a cup of tea?" said Tante Taube.

"Yes, please, I’d like that if you feel up to it. And I also want to look in Papa’s desk."

"Pa’s desk? It’s locked. You want to look in the desk? Everything belongs to your children. You could take the desk when I die."

"No, no!" he said. "I don’t need the desk itself, but I was passing from the air-
port and thought I’d see how you were. And now I’d like to look, while you may still have a look in the desk. I know you don’t mind.

"You want something, Moshe? You took your Mamma’s silver coin case the last time."

"He gave it to Madeleine."

"Is Papa’s watch chain still in there?"

"I think Willie took it."

He frowned with concentration. "Then what about the rubies?" he asked. "I’d like them for Marco."

"Rubies?"

"My grandfather Isaac bought Carat rubies during the Revolution, and they’ve always been in the desk."

"In the desk? I sure never seen them."

"I’d like to look, while you made a make-up of tea, Tante Taube. Give me the key."

"The key . . .?" Questioning him be-

fore, she had spoken more quickly, but now she receded again into slowness, rais-
ing her eyebrows still higher in her way.

"Where do you keep it?"

"Where? Where did I put it? Is it in Pa’s dresser? Or somewhere else? Let me remember. That’s how I am now, it’s hard to remember."

"I know where it is," he said, suddenly rising.

"You know where it is? So where is it?"

"In the music box, where you always used to keep it."

"In the music . . .? Pa took it from there. He locked up my social-security checks when they came. He said all the money he should have. . . ."

Moses nodded. He was dressed right. "Don’t bother, I’ll get it," he said. "If
Nel momento
Della mia cerimonia
Io rileva di me
Senza saperlo.

His fingers recognized the key.
Old Taube in the dark outside the bedroom said, "Did you find it?"
He answered, "It's here," and spoke in a low and confidential tone of voice, before he walked around the bed.

"Do you want me to put the kettle on?"
"No, a cup of tea I can still make."

He heard her slow steps in the passage.
She was going to the kitchen. Herzog quickly made for the small sitting room. The lamp beside the desk. She was on the landing.

"Hans, is this a bit of a screwdriver?"

He guzzled his motor at the stoplight, trying to decide which was the faster route to Harper Avenue. The new Ryan Expressway was very quick but it had him in the thick of the traffic on West 51st Street, where people promenaded, or cruised in their cars. There was Garfield Boulevard, much better; however, he was not sure he could find his way and there was the fender. He decided to follow Edens to Congress Street and Congress to the Outer Drive.

"Yes, that would be fastest. What would he do when he got to Harper Avenue he would have decided. He had entered with it as much as showed his face near the house. The people to his picture, but that was sheer bung, bung and paranoia, the imperiousness of imaginary powers that had once impressing the child and the mystery between him and Madeleine, a child, a reality—June. Out of cowardice, sickness, fraud, by a bungling father out of a plotting bitch, something genuine! He was not sure of himself as he raced up the ramp of the expressway that nobody would harm him.

He accelerated, moving in his lane with the rest of the traffic. The thread of life was stretched tight in him. It quivered and grew with his desire to be with Madeleine, and the failure of his love. The little Falcon was storming. He thought his speed was terrible until a huge trailer truck passed him on the right, when he realized that this was not the time to risk a collision. He stuck his head out of the window and—it was in his pocket—and lifted his foot from the pedal. Peering left and right, he recognized that the new expressway had been cut through old streets, streets he knew. He saw the street signs, crowned with lights, from a new perspective. When he entered the Episcopal church with a Christ in brocades exhibited in a lighted window, like a show case. The long curve eastbound passed over the freight yards, burning with sunset, then peeled out westward; next, the tunnel under the mammouth post office; next, the State Street honky-tomks. From the last slope of Congress Street the distortions of dusk raised up the lake like a mild wall crossed by bands, amethyst, murky blue, silver regular silver; and a slate color at the horizon, boats hanging rock inside the breakwater, and helicopters and small aircraft whose lights teetered in the distant familiar odor of the fresh water, bland but exhilarating.
Herzog Visits Chicago

He had looked his Madeleine. It was his daughter who wanted to see now. The dining room was unoccupied—after dinner emptiness. Coke bottles, paper napkins. Next was the bathroom window, and the bedroom. The bathroom window, he had thought, when he stepped out of the house, that she was not looking. However, that he had used a cement block to stand on, trying to take out the bathroom screen until he had discovered that there was no storm window to replace it.

The screen was still in, therefore. And the bedroom. It was exactly what he had seen among the lilies of the valley on the left side of the path. He moved it into place, the scraping covered by the sound of water in the tub, and stood on it, his side pressed to the building. He tried to muffle the sound of his breathing, so faint, it was known to her mouth. In the rushing water with floating toys his daughter's little body shone. Her hair! Madeleine had let her black hair grow longer, and now it was tied up to the bath for rubber belt. He met her there, and saw a shower of water, over which his mind to cover some sound emotion might cause him, she raised her face to speak to someone he could not see. She raised her face to look at something up the street. The flow of water he heard something, but could not make out the sounds from. The image of her eyes, the nose of her father's, Tante Zipporah's, his brother Willie's face, and the mouth of his own. On the wall of a mirror, her image was reflected, as was his own.

Even the bit of melancholy in her beauty—that was his father. It was as slightly haunting her face as she considered the life about her. Moved, he watched her, breathing with open mouth, his face half covered by his hand. Flying beetles passed him. Their hair bodies struck the screen but did not attract her notice.

Then a hand reached forward and shut off the water—a man's hand. It was hers. The water was going to her daughter! Gersbach! It was very hot now, and he came into view, side of the fashionable round tub, bowing, straightening, bowing—his Venetian hobbie, and then, with great trouble, he began to kneel, and Herzog saw his chest, his head, as he arranged himself. Flattening the words, her face was Herzog saw Gersbach roll up the sleeves of his paisley sport shirt, put back his thick glowing hair, take the soap, heard him say, not unkindly, "Okay, cut out the monkeyshines," for Junie was giggling, twisting, splashing, jumping, showing her tiny white teeth, wrinkling her nose, teasing. "Now hold still," said Gersbach. He got into her ears with the washrag as she screamed, cleaned off her face, the nostrils, wiped her mouth. He spoke with authority, but affectionately and with great skill, he turned with laughter he bathed her—soaped, rinsed, dipped water in her toy boats to raise her back as she squealed and twisted. The man washed tenderly. His look, perhaps, was false. But he had a look of tenderness and thought. His face was all heaviness, sexual meat. Looking down his open shirt front, Herzog saw the hair-covered heavy soft flesh of Gersbach's breast. His chin was thick, and like a stone, a brown beard grew on. And the chins on the chins, the chins on the chins, the chins on the chins, his head, and with peculiar fraudulencia, and grossness, the hatred traits were all there. But see how he was with Junie, scooping the water on her playfully, kindly. He let her be her mother, never caring for the rubber petals spreading on the child's head. Gersbach ran fresh water on her.

But he was not yet willing to call it a day. He had to have a talk with Phoebe Gersbach. It was essential. And he decided not to phone her and give her an opportunity to prepare herself, or even refuse to see him. He drove directly to Woodlawn Avenue—a dreary part of Hyde Park, but characteristic, his Chicago; massive, clumsy, amorphous, smelling of mud and decay and dogs; sotsy façades, slabs of structural nothing, senselessly ornamented triple porches with huge cement urns for flowers that contained only rotting cigarette butts and other stained filth; sun parlors under tiled gables, rank areaways, gray backstairs, seeded and ruptured concrete from which sprang grass; ponderous fences that sheltered growing weeds. Among these spacious, comfortable, dowdy apartments where liberal, benevolent people lived (this was the university neighborhood) Herzog did in fact feel at home. He was perhaps as midwestern and unfocused as these same streets. (Not so much determination, he thought, as a lack of determining elements—the absence of a formative power.) But it was all typical, and nothing was lacking, not even the sound of roller skates awkwardly grinding on the pavement beneath new summer leaves. Two poke little girls under the green transparency of street lamps, skating in short skirts, and with ribbons in their hair.

A nervous qualm went through him now that he was at Gersbach's gate, but he mastered it and went up the walk, rang the bell. Phoebe approached quickly. She called, "Who is it?" and seeing Herzog through the glass was silent. Was she scared?

"It's an old friend," said Herzog. A moment passed, Phoebe, despite the firmness of her mouth, hesitating, eyes large-lidded beneath her bangs, "Won't you let me in?" Moses asked. His tone made refusal unthinkable, "I won't take much of your time," he said as he was entering. "We do have a few matters to discuss, though.

"Come in the kitchen, will you?"

"Sure..." She didn't want to be surprised talking to him in the front room or overhead by little Ephraim, who was in his bedroom. In the kitchen she shut the door and asked Herzog to sit. The chair her eyes were looking at was beside the chair that was seen from the kitchen window. With a faint smile he sat down. From the extreme composure of her slender face he knew that her heart must be pounding, working, even more violently than his. An old friend, self-centered, in a degree, clean—she was trying to maintain a businesslike look. Herzog buttoned up his jacket to make sure the butt of his gun did not show. The sight of a weapon would certainly frighten her too.

"Well, how are you, Phoebe?"

"We're all right."

"Comfortably settled? Liking Chicago? Little Ephraim still in the Lab School?"

"Yes."

"And the Temple? I see that Val taped a program with Rabbi Itzkowitz—what did he call it? "Hasidic Judaism, Martin, Baber, and Thou". Still this Bubber kid! He's very thick with these rabbis, maybe he wants to swap wives with a rabbi.

"Not by any means. I'm not interested in a rabbi. "I Have Thou" to 'Me and You'—and 'You and Me'!"

"But I suppose you'd draw the line there. You wouldn't go along with everything."

Phoebe made no answer and remained silent.

"Maybe you think I'll leave sooner if you don't sit. Come, Phoebe, sit down. I promise you I haven't come to make scenes. I've only one purpose here, in addition to having one old friend."

"We're not really old friends."

"Not by calendar years. But we were close in Ludvige. That is true. You have to think of duration—Bergson duration. We have known each other in duration. We've been interested in certain relationships. Maybe everyone is related is either a joy or a sentence."

"You earned your own sentence, if that's how you want to think about it."

"I had a quiet life till you and Madeleine described me and all that."

"I'm a plain woman. Valentine is from a different family. She's a different person."

"Just a rude. Yes. Knows nothing about fancy vices from the big city. Didn't even know how to dial a number. Had to be led step by step into degeneracy by me—Moses E. Herzog."

"You turned her body aside in her abrupt way. Then she came to a decision and turned to him again with the same abruptness. She was a pretty woman, but stiff, very stiff, bound, without sensibilities. "You never understood how about him. He fell for you. Adored you. Tried to become an intellectual because he wanted to help you to see what a terrible thing you had done in giving up your respectable university position. We were running out to the country with Madeleine. He thought she was running you and tried to set you on the right track again. He read all those books so you'd have some body to talk to, out in the sticks. Moses B. needed help, praise, flattery, support, affection—"

"You wore him out. It nearly killed him trying to back you up."

"Psst! Didn't I meet you at the San Francisco earthquake? Pass it on!

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"Yes . . . ? What else? Go on," said Herzog.

"I still can't understand. What do you want from him now? What are you here for? More excitement? Are you still greedy for excitement?"

Herzog no longer smiled. "Some of what you say is right enough. Ludlowville. But you take the wind out of me when you say you were leading a perfectly ordinary life up there in Barrington. Until Mady and I came along with the bells, you were high on high level mental life, scattering big-shot ideas, squandering and blowing whole ages of history. You were scared by us because we—Mady especially—gave him confidence. As long as he was only a small-time cheap radio announcer, he might bluff at being a big shot, but you had him where you wanted him. Because he is a bluffer and a screwball, a kind of freak, but yours. Then he got bolder. He gave his exhibitionism scope. Quite right. I'm an idiot not to dislike me, only because I wouldn't see what was happening and in that way put another burden on you. But why didn't you say something? You watched the whole thing. Even worse, you didn't say nothing. I wouldn't have been so indifferent if I saw the same thing happening to you.

Phoebe hesitated to speak of this and turned even paler. She said, at last, "It's just a matter of you refusing to understand the system other people live by. Your ideas get in the way. Maybe a weak person like me has no choice. I couldn't do anything for you. Especially last year. I was seeing a psychiatrist, and he advised me to stay away from you, most of all from you and all your trouble. I said I wasn't strong enough, and you know it's true— I'm not strong enough.

Herzog considered this—Phoebe was weak, that was certainly the truth. He decided to get to the point. "Why don't you divorce Valentine?" he said.

"I see no reason why I should."

Her voice immediately recovered strength.

"How can you expect me to divorce you, hasn't he?

"Val? I don't know why you say that! I'm not deserted."

"Where is he now—this evening? This minute?"

"Downtown. On business."

"Oh, come on, don't pull that stuff on me. Phoebe. He's living with Madeleine. Do you deny it?"

"I most certainly do. I can't imagine how you ever got such a fanciful idea."

Moses leaned on one elbow and made a face against the wall. He imagined himself in his chair and took out a handkerchief—the scrap of kitchen towel from his New York apartment. He wiped his face.

"If you would sue for divorce, he exclaimed, "you could have every right to do, you could name Madeleine for adultery. I'd help raise the money. I'd underwrite the whole cost. I want Junie. Don't you see? Together we could nail them. You've let Madeleine drive you here and there. As though you were a nancy goat."

"That's the old devil in you talking again, Moses."

"Nanny goat was a mistake; he was making her more obstinate. But, anyway, she was going to follow her own line. She'd never share any plan of his. "Don't you want me to have custody of June?"

"I'm indifferent to that."

"You have your own wish with Madeleine, I suppose," he said. "Fighting over the man. A cat fight—a female sex fight. But that's not your game. You were raised a psychopath. I know you've got reserve strength. But she's a nut, and nuts win. Besides, Valentine doesn't want you to get him."

"I really don't understand what you're saying."

"He'll lose his value to Madeleine as soon as you withdraw. After the victory, she'll have to throw him out."

"Valentine comes home every night. He's in the city. Stb he be here soon . . . When I'm even a little delayed somewhere, why, he gets frantic with worry. He phones all over the city."

"Perhaps that's hope," said Moses.

"Hope disguised as concern. Don't you know human beings are most skilled in an accident, he cries and packs up and moves in with Madeleine for good."

"That's your devil speaking again. My child is going to keep his father. You still want Madeleine, don't you? But perhaps the whole historical stuff is finished. No, I'm glad to be rid of her. I don't even leathe her much anymore. And she's welcome to all she chiseled from me. She must have been banking my money day by day. Lor, keep it with my blessing. Bless the witch!" Good luck and good-bye. I bless you. I wish her a busy, useful, pleasant, dramatic life. In cluding love. The best people fall in love, and she's one of the best, therefore she can stand the usual little. But love is not good enough to bring up the kid, though . . ."

If he was a wild pig, and those hogs of hers a protective hedge—Phoebe's brown eyes were as vigilant as that. And it was more than that—she could keep hers—Gersbach and Madeleine through Gersbach. But Phoebe herself meant to win this contest. It must be inconceivable to her that one should set such modest, upon-the-table, market, laundry, child— and still keep her strength. Life couldn't be as indecent as that, could it? Another hypothesis: sexlessness was her strength; she wielded the authority of the superego. Still another: she acknowledged the future, her own the real sugar, degeneracy, all the luxuriant vices of the office, the swingers, and thus accepted her situation as a poor, neurotic, dry, unfortunate mud-stuck, middle-class woman. To her, Gersbach was no ordinary man, and he knew it. After all, her spiritual-erotic drive, or God knows that foot-smelling metaphysics, he required two wives or more. These two women lent this piece of orange-tufed flesh to each other for widely different needs."

"Phoebe," he said. "Admitting you're weak—but how weak are you? Excuse me, . . . I find this pretty funny. You have to deny everything, and keep up a perfect appearance. Can't you admit even a tiny bit?"

"What good would that do you?" she asked sharply. "And also, what are you prepared to do for me?"

"If I'd help . . . he began. But he clammed his mouth. It was true. He could offer much, but not enough. He didn't want her. With Gersbach she could still be a wife. He came home. She cooked, ironed, shopped, signed checks. Without him, she could not exist, cook, make beds. The truce would break. Then what?

"Why do you not want custody of your daughter? Either do some thing by yourself, or forget it. Let me alone, now, Moses."
"Well, thank you for this talk, Phoebe. I'm going." He stood up. There was a softer kindness in Herzog's manner that day. He rather awkwardly took Phoebe's hand, and she could not move fast enough to avoid his lips. He drew her closer and kissed her on the head. "You're right. This was an unnecessary visit." She made a small sound of protest.

"Good-bye, Moses." She spoke without looking at him. He would not get more from her than she was able to spare. ... You've been treated like dirt. That's true. But it's all over. You should get away. Just get away from this now." The door was shut.

He went to spend the night with Lucas Ashphaler, telephoning from a sidewalk booth to invite himself over. "I won't be in the way, will I? Have you got anybody with you? No? I want you to do me a special favor. I can't phone Madeleine to ask the child. She hangs up on me as soon as she recognizes my voice. Will you call and arrange for me to pick up the child tomorrow?"

"Why, of course," said Ashphaler. "I'll do it now and have the answer for you when you get here. Did you just blow in, on impulse? Unplanned?"

"Thank you, Luke. Please do it now."

He had been so sure that he really must rest tonight, try to get some sleep. At the same time, he hesitated somewhat to lie down and shut his eyes; tomorrow he might not be able to recover his state of simple, free, intense realization. He slowly stopped, turning at Walgreen's, where he bought a bottle of Cutty Sark for Luke and playthings for June—a toy periscope through which she could look over the sofa, around corners, a beach ball you inflated with your breath.

In front of Ashphaler's house he locked the Falcon for the night, leaving Junie's gifts in the trunk. He felt certain she would love the periscope. There was a light in the window on Harper Avenue. Let the child find life. The planer the better, perhaps.

He was met on the staircase by Ashphaler.

"I've been waiting for you."

"Is something wrong?" said Herzog.

"No, no, don't worry. I'm picking June up at noon tomorrow. She goes to school, half-days."

"Wonderful," Herzog said. "No trouble at all."

"With Madeleine? None at all. She doesn't want you to see her. Otherwise, you can visit with your little girl to your heart's content."

"She doesn't want me to come with a court order. Legally, she's in a dubious position with that crook in the house. Well, let's have a look at you. They entered the apartment where the light was better. You've a bit of a beard, Luke." He nervously and shyly Ashphaler touched his chin, looking away. He said, "I'm brazening it out."

"Compensation for the sudden unfortunate baldness," said Herzog. "Fighting a depression," said Ashphaler. "Thought a change of image might be good... Excuse my pad."

Ashphaler had always lived in such graduate-student filth. Herzog looked about. "If I ever have another windfall I'll buy you some bookshelves, Luke. About time you got rid of these old crates. This scientific literature is heavy stuff. But look, you've got clean sheets on the stairs for me. This is very kind of you, Luke."

"You're an old friend." "Thanks," said Herzog. To his surprise he found difficulty in speaking. A swift rush of heat, out of nowhere, caught his throat. His eyes filled up. The potato love, he announced to himself. It's here. To advert to his temperament, call things by the correct name, restored his control. Still, he rather feared him.

He said suddenly, "What happened to that bottle of Cutty Sark I brought? I need a shot."

"You need to go to sleep. You look ready to cave in."

"I have to see this at all," said Herzog. "I've got some things to do, anyway. Go to sleep. I haven't finished grading all my exams."

"I guess I am folding," Moses said. "The beds look good."

"I'll let you sleep late. Plenty of time," said Ashphaler. "Good night, Moses." They shook hands.

As he last embraced his daughter, and she pressed both cheeks with her small hands and kissed him. Hungry to feel her, to breathe in her childish fragrance, to look in her face, her black eyes, touch her skin, the under dress, her hair, he pressed her little fingers. "Junie, I've missed you." His happiness was painful. And she with all her innocence and childhoodness and with the pure, or amorous, instinct of tiny girls, kissed him on the lips, her careworn, bared, guttering father.

Ashphaler stood by, smiling but feeling somewhat awkward, his bald scalp perspiring, his new part-colored beard looking hot. They were on the long gray staircase of the Museum of Science in Jackson Park, and hundreds of children were entering, black and white flocks, herded by teachers and parents. The bronze-trimmed glass doors flashed in and out, and all these little bodies, blessed heads of all hues, shapes, the house of the world to come, in the ebb and flow of benevolent Herzog, its future good and evil, hurried in and out.

"My sweet June. Papa missed you."

"Poppin' Pop!"

"I can meet you right at this spot at four," said Ashphaler.

"Only three and a half hours? When does she get off? Well all right, I won't quarrel. I don't want any conflict. There's another day tomorrow, Luke. Thank you. I'll be here at four."

He took his daughter into the museum to see the chickens hatching. "Did Marco send you a postcard, baby?"

"Yes. From the camp."

"You know who Marco is?"

"He's my best friend."

So Madeleine was not trying to estrange her from the Herzogs, whatever course of madness she was running.

"Have you gone down in the coal mine, here in the museum?"

"I didn't." "Do you want to see the chickies?"

"I seen them."

"Don't you want to see them more?"

"Oh, yes. I like them. Uncle Val took me last week."

"I know Uncle Val?"

"Oh, Papa! You fooler." She hugged his neck, snickering.

"Who is he?"

"He's my stepfather. Papa, you know it?"

"Is that what Mama tells you?"

"He's my stepfather."

"Was he the one who locked you up in the cell?"

"Yes."

"And what did you do?"

"I was crying. But not long."

"And do you like Uncle Val?"

"Oh, yes, he's fun. He makes faces."

"Some," he said. "I have too much dignity to make good faces."

"You tell better stories."

"I expect I do, sweetheart."

"About the boy with the stars."

"You've got the best inventions. Herzog nodded his head, wondering at her, proud of her, thankful. "The boy with all the freekles?"

"They were like the sky." He just so much above a star, and he had them all. The Big Dipper, Little Dipper, Orion, the Bear, the Twins, Betelgeuse, the Milky Way. His face had each and every star on it, in the right position."

"Only one star nobody knew."

"I taught him to all the astronomers."

"I saw astronomers on television."

"And the astronomers said, 'Poooh, poooh, an interesting coincidence. A little freak."

"More. More."

"At last he went to see Hiram Shipstnik, who was an old old old man, very tiny, with a long beard down to his feet. He lived in a hatbox. And he said, 'You must be examined by my grandfather.'"

"I knew the man pretty well."

"Exactly. And all his friends were bees. The busy bee has no time for sorrow.

Great-grandfather Shipstnik came out of the shell with a telescope, and looked at Rupert's face.

"His name was Rupert."

"Old Shipstnik had the bees lift him into position, and he looked and said it was a real star, a new discovery. He had been watching for that star. ... Now, here and now he held the child on the railing, to his left, so that we would never press against the pistol, wrapped in her great-grandfather's rubes. These were in his right breast pocket still.

"They're yellow," she said.

"Yes, isn't it how much brighter there. See that egg wobble? The chick is trying to get out. Soon his bill will go through the shell. Watch.

"Papa, you don't shave at our house anymore, why not?"

He must stiffen his resistance to heartache now. A kind of necessary hardness was demanded. Otherwise it was as the savage described the piano, "You fight 'em or cry." In measured words he answered in a strange, hushed voice in another place. What does Madeleine say?" She says you didn't want to live with us anymore."

He kept his anger from the child. "Did she? Well, I always want to be with you, just how why?"

"Why?"

"Because I'm a man, and men have to work, and be in the world."

"Uncle Val works. He writes poems and stories."

Herzog's sober face brightened. "Splendid! She had to listen to his trash. Bad art and vice hand in hand. 'I'm glad to hear it.'"

"He looks ooky when he says them."

"Ah well why cry?"

"Oh, yes."

Sentiment and brutality—never one without the other, like fossils and oil. This news is priceless. It's sheer happiness to hear it."
Herzog Visits Chicago

June had bent her head, and held her wrists to her eyes.

"What's the matter, darling?"

"Mama said I shouldn't talk about Uncle Val."

"But I'm not. I'm not. I'm not laughing my head off, All right. We won't talk about it. I promise. Not one word."

An experienced father, he prudently waited until they reached the balcony before he said, "I have presents for you in the trunk!"

"Oh, Papa—what did you bring!"

Against the clumsy, gray, gaping Museum of Science she looked so fresh and new (her milk teeth and sparse freckles and big expectant eyes, her fragile neck) and he thought he would inherit this world of great instrument, principles of physics and applied science. She had an interest in it. He was already intrigued with pride, seeing another Madame Curie in her. She loved the periscope. She spied on each other from the sides of the car, behind tree trunks and the shadows of the comfort station. Crossing the bridge on the Outer Drive they walked by the lake. He let her take off her shoes and wade, drying her feet afterward in his shirttail, carefully brushing out the sand between her toes. He bought her a box of Cracker Jack which she nibbled on the grass. The dandelions had bloomed their fuses and were all loose silk; the turf was spry, neither damp nor dry and hard as in August, when the sun would scorch it.

The mechanical mower was riding in circles, bartering the slopes, raising a spray of chippings. Lighted from the south the water was a marvelous, fresh, heavy day, blue; the sky rested on the mild horizon, clear except toward Gary, where the dark thin pillars of the steel heaps puffed out russen and sulphur streams of smoke. By now the lawns at Lakeside, uncut for two years, must be simply hayfields, and local hunters and lovers were breaking in again, most likely, shuttering windows, lighting fires.

"I want to go to the aquarium, Papa," said June. "Mama said you should take me."

"Oh, did she? Well, come on then.

The Falcon had grown hot in the sun. He opened the windows to cool it. He had an extraordinary number of keys by now and must organize them better in his pockets. There were his New York house keys, the Faculty Men's Lounge key from the university, and the key to Asphodel's apartment, as well as several Ledgeville keys. "You must sit on your back seat, honey. Creep in, now, and pull down your dress because the plastic is very hot."

The air from the west was drier than the east air. Herzog's sharp senses detected the difference. It was days of near-delirium and wide-ranging disordered thought, deeper currents of feeling had heightened his perceptions, or made him instill something of his own into those surroundings.

"Papa, you must turn here. This is where Uncle Val always turns."

"Okay," he observed in the mirror that the slip had distressed her. She had mentioned Gersbach again. "Hey, Pussy-brakes," he said. "If you say anything about Uncle Val to me, I'll never tell. I'll never ask you any questions about him. Now don't you ever worry about it. It's all silliness. There's nothing wrong with a few secrets."

"Fine, thank you. And how is your liver today?"
Herzog Visits Chicago

he waited for the answer, brushing the small bristles of his moustache upward with his fingernail. The other policeman spoke with the driver of the Volkswagen truck: "You’re a little wild, aren’t you?" he shouted, and held the gun in his hand, Saying, "You’re going to take that man’s license away, aren’t you?" The officer, a young man, was not very tall, but he had a strong build, and his eyes were clear. "I’m sure it’s not legal, but I have to do it," he said. "You’re going to take this Falcon, aren’t you?" he asked the policeman. He was not sure, but he had heard of a policeman who had taken a car with a stolen license. "I don’t know," the policeman said. "I’m not sure. But I think it’s legal."

Well, now, Harold," the older Negro said, "what was your speed?"

"Why, Jesus! I was way below the limit."

"A lot of these company drivers like to drive private cars for business."

Herzog shook his head. "First he cut in front, then he slammed his brake."

"You pushed him pretty hard. That means you were crowding him."

"That’s right. Looks like me."

The senior policeman pointed to the two, three, five times with the rubber tip of his pencil before he spoke another word; he made you consider the road, "You look, you push him, Harold. He couldn’t get in the next lane so he thought he’d slow and give you a chance to pass. Hit the brake too hard, and you clobbered him. I see from the staple marks on your license you already got two moving violations."

"That’s right, and that’s why I’ve been extra careful."

God keep this anger from burning up your scalp, Harold. A very unbecoming red, color, and all ridges, like a dog’s palate.

"Looks like me. If you hadn’t been on top of him, you wouldn’t have hit him so flush. You’d a tried to turn, and got him on the right. Got to write you a ticket, Harold."

Then, to Moses, he said, "I got to take you in. You gotta be booked for misconduct."

"This old gun?"

"Loaded."

"Why, it’s nothing. I have no record—never been booked."

They walked for him to get to his feet. Sharp-nosed, the Volkswagen-truck driver knitted his finger brows at him and, under his red, angry stare, Herzog stood there and picked up his daughter. She lost her barrette as he lifted her. Her hair came free beside her cheeks, quite long. He could not bend again to hunt for the tortoise-shell clip. The door of the squad car, parked on a slope, opened wide for him. He could now feel for himself what it was like to be in custody. No one was robbed, no one had died. Still he felt the heavy, deadly shadow lying on him. And this is just like you, Herzog, he said to himself. He could not escape self-accusation. For this big, nickel-plated pistol, whatever he had vaguely intended yesterday to do with the other car, he shot himself out today in the flight backing under Ascotia sofa. When he had put on his jacket in the morning and felt the awkward weight on his chest, then there and then he might have stopped being querous."

"Are you going to do about this Falcon?" he asked the police. He stopped. But they pushed him on, saying, "Don’t worry about that. We’ll take care of it."

He saw the tow truck coming up with its crane and hook. It too had the blue light flashing above its cab."

"Listen," he said, "I have to get this kid home."

"She’ll get home. She ain’t in no danger."

"But I’m supposed to turn her over at four."

"You got almost three hours."

"But isn’t this going to take longer than an hour? I’d certainly appreciate it if you’d let me look after her first."

"Get on with you."

"I am on with you."

"Get on with you." The senior policeman moved along him.

"She hasn’t eaten lunch."

"You in worse shape than she is. Come on, now."

He dragged and crouched the stained necktie, jetting it up at the roadside. The cut was not serious; it had stopped bleeding. He handed June in, and when he was seated in the fiery heat of the blue plastic rear, he took her on his lap and explained. "We’re going for a ride, darling."

She nodded, and was silent. He felt his face was tearless, clouded, and this was far worse. It hurt him. It tore his heart. As if Madeleine and Gershkoven weren’t enough, he had to come running with his father for an excitement, hugging, kissing, periscopes, incredible sensations. She had to see him bleeding from the head. His eyes smarted, and he shut them with a thumb and forefinger. The doors slammed. The motor gave a raw snore, and then it was quite loud. The cool, rich summer air began to flow in. Flavored with exhaust gas. It aggravated his nausea like a forced draft. When the car left the lake front he opened his eyes on the yellow underbrush of 22nd Street. He recognized the familiar smell of the car wash in Chicago. He smelled the hot reek of chemicals and mks coming from the Donnelly plant. And here was South State Street; here movie distributors used to hang their garish posters: Tom Mix plunger over a cliff; now it’s only a smooth empty street where they sell glassware to bars. The car finally stopped. As if he had come to police headquarters in a rocking boat, over the water, he waved when he went out on the sidewalk.

They handed his daughter out to him and escorted them to the elevator, which seemed roomy enough for a squadron. Two men who had been pinched—two other men in custody—went up with him. This was 11th and State. He remembered it. 11th and State. And men came in. June got out. As he was ordered, he followed the stout Negro policeman with the huge, heavy, deadly shadow lying on him. And this is just like you, Herzog, he said to himself. He could not escape self-accusation. For this big, nickel-plated pistol, whatever he had vaguely intended yesterday to do with the other car, he shot himself out today in the flight backing under Ascotia sofa. When he had put on his jacket in the morning and felt the awkward weight on his chest, then there and then he might have stopped being querous."

"Of course you may invite a friend to lunch. Bring him in."

"The Saturday Evening Post"
“Okay, boy,” he then said to Moses. He put on his Ben Franklin spectacles, two colonial tables in thin gold frames. He took up his pen.

“Name?”

“Herzog—Moses.”

“Middle initial?”

“E. Elkanaah.”

“Address?”

“Not living in Chicago.”

The sergeant, fairly patient, said again, “Address.”

“Ludlowville, Mass., and New York City. Well, all right, Ludlowville, Massachusetts. No street number.”

“This your child?”

“Yes, sir, my little daughter June.”

“Where does she live?”

“Here in the city, with her mother, on Harper Avenue.”

“You divorced?”

“Yes, sir. I came to see the child.”

“I see. You want to put her down?”

“No, officer—sergeant,” he corrected himself, smiling agreeably.

“You’re bein’ booked, Moses. Why you weren’t drunk were you? Did you have a drink today?”

“I had one last night, before I went to sleep. Nothing today. Do you want me to take an alcohol test?”

“It won’t be necessary. There’s no traffic charge against you. We’re booking you on account of this gun.”

Herzog pulled down his daughter’s dress.

“It’s just a souvenir. Like the money.”

“What kind of dough is this?”

“It’s Russian, from World War I.”

“Just empty your pockets, Moses. Put your stuff down so’s I can check it over.”

Without protest, he laid down his money, his notebooks, pens, the handkerchief, his pocket comb, and his keys.

“Seems to me you’ve got a mess of keys, Moses.”

“Yes, sir, but I can identify them all.”

“That’s okay. There’s no law against keys, exceptin’ if you’re a burglar.”

“The only Chicago key is this one with the red mark on it. It’s the key to my friend Asphalt’s apartment. He’s supposed to meet me at four o’clock by the Rosenwald Museum. I’ve got to get her to him.”

“Well, it ain’t four, and you ain’t goin’ anywhere yet.”

“I’d like to phone and head him off. Otherwise, he’ll stand waiting.”

“Well, now, Moses, why ain’t you bringing the kid straight back to her mother?”

“You see . . . we’re not on speaking terms. We’ve had too many scraps.”

“Appears to me you might be scared of her.”

Herzog was briefly resentful. The remark was calculated to provoke him, but he couldn’t afford to be angry now. “No, sir, not exactly.”

“Then maybe she’s scared of you.”

“This is how we arranged it, with a friend to go between. I haven’t seen the woman since last autumn.”

“Okay, well you call your buddy and the kid’s mama, too.”

Herzog exclaimed, “Oh, don’t call her!”

“No?” The sergeant gave him an odd smile, and rested for a moment in his chair as if he had gotten from him what he wanted. “Sure, well bring her down here and see what she’s got to say. If she’s got a complaint against you, why, it’s worse than just illegal possession of firearms. We’ll have you on a bad charge then.”

“There isn’t any complaint, sergeant. You can check that in the files without making her come all this way. I’m the support of this child, and never miss a check. That’s all Mrs. Herzog can tell you.”

“Who’d you buy this revolver from?”

“There it was again, the natural insolence of the cops. He was being goaded. But he kept himself steady.

“I didn’t buy it. It belonged to my father. That and the Russian rubles.”

“You’re just sentimental?”

“That’s right. I’m a sentimental s.o.b. Call it that.”

“You sentimental about these here, too?” He tapped each of the bullets, one, two. “All right, we’ll make those phone calls. Here, Jim, write the names and numbers.”

He spoke to the copper who had brought Herzog in. He had been standing by, fat-cheeked, teasing the bristles of his moustache with his nail, pursing his lips.

“You may as well take my address book, the red one there. Bring it back, please. My friend’s name is Asphalt.”

“The other name’s Herzog,” said the sergeant. “On Harper Avenue, ain’t it?”

Moses nodded. He watched the heavy fingers turning the pages of his Persian leather address book with its scribbles and blots.

“If I’ll put me in bad if you notify the child’s mother,” he said, making a last attempt to persuade the sergeant. “Why wouldn’t it be the same to you if my friend Asphalt came here?”

“Go on, Jim.”

The Negro placed the boxes with red pencil, and went. Moses made a special effort to keep a neutral look—no defiance.

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Herzog Visits Chicago

no special pleading, nothing of the slightest personal color. He remembered that he once believed in the appeal of a direct glance, driving aside differences of opinion, accident, one man being silently opposing his heart to the other. The recognition of essence by essence. He smiled inwardly at this. Sweet dreams, those! If he tried looking into his eyes, the sergeant would throw the book at him. So Madeleine was right. Well, let her come. Perhaps that was what he wanted after all, a chance to confront her. Straight-nosed and pale, he looked intently at the floor. June changed her position in his arms, stirring the pain in his ribs. "Papa's coming to take us home," she said. "We'll come and see the dolphins. Maybe the sharks were bad luck."

"You can sit down if you want," said the sergeant. "You look a little weak in the legs, Moses."

"I'd like to phone my brother to send his lawyer. Unless I don't need a lawyer. If I have to post a bond..."

"You'll have to post one, but I can't say how big, yet. Plenty of bondsmen are here. He motioned with the back of the hand, and turned to walk down the room. The realization, and Moses turned and saw all sorts of people ranged behind him, among the walls. In fact, there were two men, he now noticed, loitering near, bondsmen by their long, loose, dark coats. He recognized that they were sizing him up for some risk. They had already seen his plane ticket, his keys, pens, rubles, and his wallet. His own car, wrecked on the Drive, would have secured a small bond. But a bond? A heart, he said. "What's state, in a dirty seersucker, no necktie? He didn't look good for a few hundred bucks. If it's no more than that, he reflected, I can probably swing it without bothering Will, or Shara. Some fellows always make a big song and dance about it. I never had that ability. Due to my feelings, a passionate heart, a big credit risk. Asked to make this practical judgment on myself, I wouldn't make it any differently.

"What's the matter? Were they classed about his daughter's heart, which was beating quickly and lightly.

"Now, Moses, why you been carryin' a loaded gun? To shoot somebody?"

"Of course not. And, please, sergeant, I don't like the kid to hear such things.

"You the one that brought it along, not me. Maybe you just be around to scare somebody. You sorr at somebody?"

"No, sergeant, I was only going to make a paperweight of it. I forgot to take out the bullets, but that's because I don't know much about guns so it didn't occur to me. Will you let me make a phone call?"

"By and by, I ain't ready to. Sit down while I take care of other business. You sit and wait for the kid's mama to come."

"Could I get a container of milk for her?"

"Give Jim, here, two bits. He'll fetch it."

"With a straw, eh, June? You'd like to drink it with a straw." She nodded and Herzog said, "Please, a straw with it, if you don't mind."

"Papa?"

"Yes, June."

"You didn't tell me about the most-most."

"For an instant he did not remember. "Ah," he said, "you mean that club in New York where people are the most of everything."

"That's the story."

"She sat between his knees on the chair.

"I thought you had this timed to the second."

"It thought he could make out a certain thickening in her face—incipient coarse ness. He thought it was only right that some of Gershbach's guns should fall off on her. Why shouldn't it? He observed that she was definitely broader behind.

"Is this the girl's daddy, lady?"

"Madeleine still refused to grant him a look. "You're the one that said it," she said. "I divorced him. Not long ago."

"Does he live in Massachusetts?"

"I don't know where he lives. It's none of my business."

"Herzog marvelled at her. He could not help admiring the perfection of her self-control. She never hesitated. When she took the milk from Junie she knew precisely where to drop the container, though she had no more than a second in the room. By now, however, it had certainly made an inventory of all the objects on the table, including the rubles, and gun, of course. She had never seen it, but she could identify the Ludvige key by the round magnetic clasp of the ring, and she would realize the robustness of the ring. She knew her ways well, all her airs, her homely style, the tic of her nose. The crazy clear hauteur of the eyes. As the sergeant questioned her, Moses, in his slightly dazed but intense way, was unable to rest his hand on his leg. His is that smile, that look, that sweet-and-sour fragrance of her, and her fire-blue eyes, her spiky glances and her small mouth ready with any wickeds that would never again have the same power of enchantment. Still, it gave him a headache to look at her. Her skull were quick and regular, like the tappets of an engine beating in their film of dark oil. She had seen him with vividness—the smoothness of her breast, the smoothness of her legs, the smoothness of her hair. Especially the forehead, was altogether too smooth, too glabrous for his taste. The whole burden of her severity was carried there. She had what the French called le front humain, in other words, a pedonemic forehead. Ultimate power, in her case, was largely behind. See, Moses? We don't know one another. Even that Gershbach, call him any name you like—charlatan, psychopath, with his hot phony eyes and his cold two-fisted, he was unknowable. And I myself, the same. But hard ruthless action taken against a man is the assertion by evidences that he is fully knowable. They put me down, ergo they claimed final knowledge of Herzog. They knew me! And I hold with Spinoza (I hope he won't mind) that to assert what is impossible for any human being, to exercise power where it can't be exercised, is tyranny. Excuse me, therefore, sir and madame, but I reject your definition of me. Ah, this Madeleine is a strange person, to be so proud and be so not quite clean—so beautiful but distorted by rage—such a mixed mind of pure diamond and Woolworth glass. And Gershbach who sucked up to me. For the symbols of apparatus and trash. And she, as sweet as cheap candy, as bland as a remiscent of poison as chemical sweet acids. But I make no last judgment. That's for them, not me. I come to do harm, I admit. But the first bloodshed was mine, and so I'm out of this now. Count me out. Except in what concerns June. But for the rest, I withdraw from the whole scene as soon as I can. Good-bye to all.

"Well, he give you hard time?"

"Herzog who had been listening subliminally heard the sergeant say.

He said tersely to Madeleine, "Watch it, if you please. Let's not have unnecessary trouble."
Herzog Visits Chicago

She ignored this. "He bothered me, yes."

"He make any threats?"

Herzog waited, tense for her reply. She would have to go back to that money—the rent. She was can- py, a superly cunning, very canny woman. But there was also the violence of her hatred, and that hatred had a fringe of insanity.

"Yes, of course. I haven’t seen him since last October."

Madeleine’s color was very high, her throat flushed, like pink—like rose quartz, and the curious tinge had come into her eyes. For a long moment this was to her—happiness!

"Do you recognize this gun?" the sergeant held it in his yellow palm, turning it over with delicate fingers like a fish—a perch.

The radiance of her look as it rested on the gun was deeper than any sexual ex- pression he had ever seen on her face. "It’s his, isn’t it?" she said. "The bullets, too?" He recognized the hard clear look in her eyes. Her lips were pressed shut.

"He had it on him. Do you know it?"

"No, but I’m not surprised."

Moses was watching June now. Her face was clouded again; she seemed to be frowning.

"Did you ever file a complaint against Moses, here?"

"No," said Mady. "I didn’t actually do that, but I saw a sharp trench. She was about to plunge into something."

"Sergeant," said Herzog. "I told you there was no complaint. Ask her if I’ve ever missed a single support check."

Madeleine said, "I did give his photo- graph to the Hyde Park police."

He warned her that she was going far too far. "Madeleine!" he said.

"Shut up, Moses," said the sergeant. "What’s this for, lady?"

"In case he prowled around the house, to alert them."

Herzog shook his head, partly at himself. He had made the kind of mistake that led only to an earlier period. As of today it was no longer characteris- tic. But he had to pay an earlier reckoning. When will you catch up with your- self, he asked himself. When will that day come?

"Did he ever prowl?"

"He was never seen, but I know damn well he did. He’s a jealous man and a troubleshooter. He has a terrible temper, there never signed a complaint, though?"

"No. But I expect to be protected from any sort of violence."

Her voice went up sharply, and as she spoke, Herzog saw the sergeant take a few steps back as if he were beginning to make out her haughty peculiarities at last. He picked up the Ben Franklin glasses with the tablet-shaped lenses. There ain’t going to be any violence, lad, joy.

Yes, Moses thought, he’s beginning to see how it is. "I never intended to use that gun except to hold papers down," he said.

Madeleine now spoke to Herzog for the first time, pointing with a rigid finger to the two bullets and looking him in the eyes. "One of those was for me, wasn’t it?"

"You think so? I wonder where you get such ideas? And who was the other one for?" He was quite cool as he said this, too much level. He was doing all he could to bring out the hidden Made- liene, the Madeleine he knew. As she stared at him her color receded and her noise began to move very slightly. She seemed to realize that she must control her eye and the violence of her stare. But by noticeable degrees her face became very white, her eyes smaller, stony. He believed he could interpret them. They contain a mental purd that I have overlooked. This was infinitely more than ordinary hatred. It was a vote for his nonexistence, he thought. He wondered whether the ser- geant was able to see this. "Well, who do you think that second imaginary shot was for?"

She said no more to him, only continued to stare in the same way.

"That’ll be all now, lady. You can take your own case."

"Good-bye, June," said Moses. "You go home now. Papa’ll see you soon. Give us a kiss, now, on the cheek." He felt the child’s lips. Over her mother’s shoulder, June reached out and touched him. "God bless you," he added, as Made- liene strode away, "I’ll be back."

"I’ll finish bookin’ you now. Moses."

"I’ve got to post bond? How much?"

"Two hundred. American, not this stuff."

"I wish you’d let me make a call."

As the sergeant silently directed him to take one of his own dimes, Moses still had to suffer through what a powerful police-face he had. He must have Indian blood—Cherokee, perhaps, or Osage; an Irish ancestor or two. His sallow gold skin with heavy seams descending, the downward slanting, deep-set eyes for im- passivity, and the many separate, infini- tesimal gray curls on his scalp for dignity. His rugged fingers pointed to the phone booth.

Moses was tired, dragged out, as he dialed his brother, but far down from. For some reason he believed he had done well. He was running true to form, yes; more mischievous; and Will would have to tell him. He thought the circle was not at all heavyhearted but, on the contrary, rather free. Perhaps he was too tired to be glum. That may have been it, after all— the metabolic wastes of fatigue (he was for the time being, physiological explanations: this one came from his book on Mourning and Melancholia) made him temporarily lighthearted, even gay.

"Yes?"

"Will Herzog in?"

Each instantly recognized the other’s voice.

"Mose?" said Will. Herzog could do nothing about the feelings stirred by hearing Will. They came back added to, or the same, the old tone, the old name. He loved Will, he thought. He was even Shura, though his millions had made him remote. In the confinement of the metal booth the sweat burst out instantly on his face.

"Where’ve you been, Mose? The old woman called last night, I couldn’t sleep afterward. Where are you?"

"Elya," said Herzog, using his brother’s family name, "don’t worry. I haven’t done anything bad, but I’m down at Eleventh and State."

"At Police Headquarters?"

"Just a minor traffic accident. No one hurt. But they’re holding me for three hundred and forty bucks bond, and I haven’t got the money."

"For heaven’s sake, Mose. Nobody’s seen you since last summer. We’ve been worried sick. I’ll be right down."

He waited in the cell with two other men. One was drunk and sleeping in his shoes and clothes. The other was a Negro boy, not old enough to shave. He wore a
Two men behind the man in the air-conditioned coveralls

His brother observed, as they were leaving police headquarters, "You don't seem too upset."

"No, Will."

Above the sidewalk and the warm evening gloom the sky carried the long gilt trails of jets, and the jumbled lights of honky-tonks, just north of 12th Street, were already heaving up and down, a pale mass in which the street seemed to end.

"How do you feel?"

"I feel fine," said Herzog. "How do I look?"

His brother said discreetly, "You could do with a little rest. Why don't we stop and have you looked at by my doctor?"

"I don't think that's necessary. This small cut on my head stopped bleeding almost immediately."

"But you've been holding your side. Don't be a fool, Moses."

Will was an undemonstrative man, substantial, shrewd, quiet, shorter than his brother but with thicker, darker hair. In a family of passionately expressive people like Father Herzog and Aunt Zipporah, Will had developed a quieter, observant, reticent style.

"How's the family, Will—the kids?"

"Fine. What have you been doing, Moses?"

"Don't go by appearances. There's less to worry about than meets the eye. I'm really in very good shape. Do you remember when we got lost at Lay, Waukegan? Floundering in the slime, cutting our feet on those reeds? That was really dangerous. But this is nothing."

"What were you doing with that gun?"

"You know I'm no more capable of firing at someone than Papa was. You took his watch chain, didn't you? I remembered those old rubies in his drawer and then I took the revolver too. I shouldn't have. At least I ought to have emptied it. It was just one of those dumb impulses. Let's forget it."

"All right," said Will. "I don't mean to embarrass you. That's not the point."

"I know what it is," Herzog said. "You're worried. He had to lower his voice to control it. "I love you too, Will."

"Yes, I know that."

"But I haven't behaved very sensibly. From your standpoint . . . Well, from any reasonable standpoint. I brought Madeleine to your office so you could see her before I married her. I could tell you didn't approve. I didn't approve of her myself. And she didn't approve of me."

"Why did you marry her?"

"God ties all kinds of loose ends together. Who knows why? He couldn't care less about my welfare, or my ego, that thing of value. All you can say is, 'There's a red thread spliced with a green, or blue, and I wonder why.' And then I put all that money into the house in Ludeville. That was simply crazy."

"Perhaps not," said Will. "It is real estate, after all. Have you tried to sell it?"

"Will had great faith in real estate.

"To whom? How?"

"List it with an agent. Maybe I'll come and look it over."

"I'd be grateful," said Herzog. "I don't think any buyer in his right mind would touch it."

"But let me call Doctor Ramsberg, Moses, and have him examine you. Then come home and have some dinner with us. It would be a treat for the family."

"When could you come to Ludeville?"

"I've got to go to Boston next week."

Then Murriel and I were going out to the Cape."

"Come by way of Ludeville. It's close to the turnpike. I'd consider it a tremendous favor. I have to sell that house."

"Have dinner with us, and we can talk about it."

"Will—no. I'm not up to it. Just look at me. I'm stinking dirty, and I'd upset everyone. Like a lousy lost sheep."

He laughed. "No, some other time when I'm feeling a little more normal. I look as if I'd just arrived in this country. A D.P.
Herzog Visits Chicago

Just as we arrived from Canada at the old Baltimore and Ohio Station on the Michigan Central, God, we were fitly with the seed.

William did not share his brother's plans. He was an engineer and technologist, a contractor and builder; a balanced, reasonable person, he was pruned to see Moses in such a state. His lined face was hot, uneasy; he took a handkerchief from the inner pocket of his well-tailored suit and pressed it to his forehead, his cheeks, under the large Herzog eyes.

"I'm sorry, Eya," said Moses, more quietly.

"Let me straighten myself up a bit. I know you're concerned about me. But that's just it. I'm sorry to worry you. I really am all right." 

"Are you?" Will sadly looked at him, standing in the awful disadvantage here—dirty, foolish, just bailed out. It's just ridiculous. Everything will look a lot different in the East, next week. I'll meet you in Boston, if you like. When I've got myself in better shape. The things we can do now but treat me like a jerk— a child. And that's not right.

"I'm not making any judgments on you. You don't have to come home with me, if that embarrasses you. Although we're your own family. But the enemy's ear, across the street." He gestured toward his dark-blue Cadillac. "Just come along to the doctor so I can be sure you weren't hurt in the accident. Then you can do what you think best.

"All right. Fair enough. There's nothing wrong. I'm sure of it.

He was not entirely surprised, however, to learn that he had a broken rib. "No lung puncture," the doctor said. "Six weeks, at least. No stitches in or on your body. That's the whole story. No heavy lifting, straining, shopping, or other violent exercise. Will tell you's a country gentleman. You won't get a farm in the Berkshires? An estate?"

The doctor with grizzled beetwist hair and small keen eyes looked at him with thin-lipped amusement.

It's not far. Miles from a synagogue," said Herzog.

"Ha, your brother likes to kid," Dr. Ramsberg said. Will faintly smiled. Standing with folded arms he favored one heel, somewhat like Father Herzog, and had a bit of the old man's elegance but not his eccentricities. He had no time for such stuff, thought Herzog, running a big business. No great interest in it. Other things absorb. He's a good man, a very good man. But there's a strange division of his life, a line in his character that he stems to in specialist in... in spiritual self-awareness— or emotionalism; or ideas; or nonsense. Perhaps of no real use or relevance except to keep alive primal feelings of a certain sort. He moves gruit to pump into these new high-rises... all over town. Has to be political, and deal, and wangle and pay off and figure tax angles all. That was Pasha was in but dreamt he was born to do. Will is a quiet man of duty routine, with his money, position, influence, and is just as glad to be rid of his private or "personal" side. Sees me spluttering fire in the wilderness of this world, and pities me no doubt for my temperament. Under the old dispensation, as the Scottish run, "burling Moses"... heart without guile, in need of protection, a morbid phenomenon, a modern remnant of otherworldliness—under that former dispensation I would need protection. And it would be gladly offered by him—the person who "knows-the-world-for-what-it-is." Whereas a man like me has shown the arbitrary withdrawal of profound subjectivity from the collective and historical progress of mankind. And that is true of lower-class emotional boys and girls who adopt the aesthetic mode, the mode of rich sensibility. Seeking to sustain their own version of existence under the crushing weight of mass. What Marx described as that "material weight." Turning this thing, "my personal life," into a circus, into gladiatorial combat. Or tamer forms of entertainment. To make a joke of your shame, your ephemeral dimness, and show why you deserve your pain. The white modern lights of the small room were going round, wheeling. Herzog himself felt that he was rotating with them as the doctor wound the medicinal-smelling tapes tightly about his chest. Now, to get rid of all such falsehoods...

"I have an idea my brother could do with some rest," said Will. "What's your opinion, doctor?"

"He looks as if he's been going pretty hard... that's true."

"I'm going to spend a week at Ludeyville," Moses said.

"What I mean is complete rest—bed rest."

"Yes, I know I seem to be in a state. But it's not a bad state."

"Still," said Herzog's brother, "you worry me."

A loving brute—a subtitle, spoiled, loving man. Who can make use of him? He craves use. Where is he needed? Show him the way to make his sacrifice to truth, to order, to peace. Oh, that mysterious creature, that Herzog! Awkwardly taped, helped into his wrinkled shirt by brother Will.

He reached his country place the following afternoon, after taking a plane to Albany, from there the bus to Pittsfield, and then a cab to Ludeyville. Ashpalt had given him some Tumain the night before. He slept deeply and was feeling perfectly fine, despite his taped sides. The house was two miles beyond the village, in the hills. Beautiful, sparkling summer weather in the Berkshires, the air light, the streams quick, the woods dense, the green new. As for birds, Herzog's acres seemed to have become a sanctuary. Wrens nestled under the ornamental scroops of the porches. The giant elm was not quite dead, and the orioles lived in it still. Herzog had the driver stop in the mossy roadway, boulder-lined. He couldn't be sure the house was approachable. But no fallen trees blocked the path, and although much of the gravel had washed down in thaws and storms, the cab might easily have gotten through. Moses, however, didn't mind the short climb. His chest was securely armored in tape and his legs were light. He had bought some groceries in Ludeyville. If hunters and prowlers had not eaten it, there was a supply of canned goods in the cellar. Two years ago he had put up tomatoes and beans and had always preserved and canned them, and before leaving for Chicago he had hidden his wine and whisky. The electricity of course was turned off, but perhaps the old hand pump could be made to work. There was always cistern water to fall back on. He could cook in the fireplace; there were old hocks and trivets—and here (his heart trembled) the house rose out of weeds, vines, trees, and blossoms. Herzog's folly! Monument to his sincere and loving idleness. To the unrecognized evils of his character, symbol of his Jewish struggle for a solid footing in White Anglo-Saxon Protestant America, I too have done my share of social climbing, he thought, with hauteur to spare, defying the Wasps, who, because the Government gave much of this continent away to the railroads, stopped boiling their own soap circa 1880, took European tours, and began to complain of the Micks and the Spicks and the Sheenies. What a struggle I uplifted—left-handed but fierce. But enough of that—here I am. How marvelously beautiful it is today. He stopped in the overgrown yard, shut his eyes in the sun, against flashes of crimson, and drew in the odors of catalpa bulbs, soil, honeysuckle, wild onions, and herbs. Either deer or lovers had lain in this grass near the elm, for it was flattened. He circled the house to see whether it was much damaged. There were no broken windows. All the shutters, hooked from within, were undisturbed. Only a few of the posters he had put up warning that this property was under police protection had been torn down. The garden was a thick mass of thorny canes, roses and berries twisted together. It looked too hopeless—premature regretting. He would never have the strength to throw himself into such tasks again, to hammer, paint, patch, sprinkle, prune, sprout. He was here only to look at things over.

The house was as musty as he had expected. He opened a few windows and moved the shaker in the kitchen. The debris of leaves, grasses, straws, webbs, cocoons, and insect corpses he bruised and burned. As was needed, immediately, was a fire. He had brought matches. One of the benefits of a riper age was that you became cleverer about such things—foresightful. Of course he had not brought matches. He would buy the village to buy what he had forgotten. He had even been smart enough to set the bike on its saddle, to spare the tires. There was not much air in them, but they'd get him round the grounds. He carried it in a few pine logs, kindling, and had a small blaze first, to make sure of the draft. Birds or squirrels might have nested in the flies. But then he remembered that he had flinted out on the roof to fasten wire mesh over the windows. The chimney had a zen of efficient slot. He laid on more wood. The old bark dropped away and disclosed the world of insects underneath—grubs, ants, long-legged spiders ran away. He gave them a good pop with a stick and then the cape. The black, dry branches began to burn with yellow flames. He heaped on more logs, secured them with the andirons, and continued his examination of the house.

The canned food had not been touched. There were fancy goods bought by Madeleine (always the best of everything). S. S. Pierce terrapin soup, Indian pudding, trifles, olives, and then grimmer, toilet, arranged by Moses himself at Army-surplus sales—a big bag of bread, and the like. He made his inventory with a sort of dreamy curiosity about his onetime plan for solitary self-sufficiency, a kitchen, a washer, dryer, the hot-water unit, punch bowl, the forms into which he had put his dead father's dollars, ugly green, laboriously made, tediously counted, divided in agony among the heirs.

"The present condition of the house didn't seem to count because it was so consciously cheerful. It was odd, the tour he made through his property. In his own room he found the runs of his scholarly enterprise sprawled over the desk and the shelves. The windows were closed, as to seem stained with iodine, and the honeysuckles outside had almost pulled the screens through. The books, manuscript-covered, were undisturbed. He lifted the lid and glanced at them with no special interest. Visiting the little bath, he was entertained to see the lavish fittings Madeleine had bought at Sloan's, scalloped silver soap dishes and flashing towel racks too heavy for the plaster, ever after they were fashioned with toggle bolts. They were drooping now. The sorrow and distress of this, for Gershbach's—convenience—the Gershbachs had had no shower in Barrington—was thoughtfully equipped with a towel. "If we're going to put it in, let's make it so it's there can't we?" Mady had said. Ah, well—Moses shrugged. A strange odor in the toilet bowl attracted his notice next, and raising the wooden lid he found the small beaked skulls and the remains of birds which had nested there after the water was drained, and then had been entombed by the falling lid. He looked grimly in, his heart aching somewhat at this accident. There must be a broken window in the attic, he inferred from this, and other
birds nesting in the house. Indeed, he found owls in his bedroom, perched on the red valances, which they had streaked with droppings. He gave the opportunity to escape, and, when they were gone, looked for a nest. He found the young owls in the large light fixture over the bed. Unwilling to disturb these flat-faced little creatures, Herzog pulled the mattress of his marriage bed into June’s room.

He opened more windows, and the sun and country air at once entered. He was surprised to feel such contentment. What was he thinking, this was joy! For perhaps the first time he felt what it was to be free from Madeleine. Joy! His servitude was ended, and his heart released from its gristly heaviness and encrustation. Nothing more than the fact of her absence was simply sweetness and lightness of spirit.

To her, at 11th and State, it had been happiness to see him in trouble, and to him, in Ludeyville, it was a delicious joy to have her removed from his flesh, like something that had stabbed his shoulders, his groin, made his arms and his neck lame and cumbersome. Those strange lights, Herzog’s brown eyes, so often overlaid with the film or protective chin of melancholy, the by-product of his laboring brain, gone alone.

It cost him some effort to turn over the mattress on the floor of June’s old room. He had to move aside some of her cast-off toys and kidde furniture, a great stuffed blue-eyed tiger, the potty chair, a red snowsuit, perfectly good. Herzog, lying under the open window with the sun in his face, rested on the mattress. Over him the great trees, the spruces in the front yard, shaded their beautiful juggedness and sent down the odor of heated needles and gum.

Despite the hours he spent in the open he believed he still looked pale. Perhaps this was because the mirror of the bathroom door into which he stared in the morning reflected the mused green of the trees. No, he did not look well. His excitement must be a great drain on his strength, he thought. And then there was the persistently medicinal smell of the tapes on his chest to remind him that he was not quite well. After the second or third day he stopped sleeping on the second floor. He didn’t want to drive the owls out of the house and leave a brood to die in the old fixture with the triple brass chain. It was bad enough to have those tiny skeletons in the toilet bowl. He moved downstairs, taking him a few useful articles, an old trench coat and rain hat, his boots made to order at Gokey’s in St. Paul—marvelous, flexible, handsome snakeproof boots; he had forgotten that he had them. In the store-room he made other interesting discoveries, photographs of the “happy days,” boxes of clothing, Madeleine’s letters, bundles of canceled checks, elaborately engraved wedding announcements, and a recipe book belonging to Phoebe Gersbach. The photographs were all of him. Madeleine had left those behind, taking the others. Interesting—her attitude. Among the abandoned dresses were her expensive maternity outfits. The checks were for large sums, and many of these were paid to cash. Had she secretly been saving? He wouldn’t put it past her. The announcements made him laugh: Mr and Mrs Pontritter were giving their daughter in marriage to Mr Moses E. Herzog Ph D.

In one of the closets he found a dozen or so Russian books under a painter’s dropcloth. He read a few pages of Rozanov’s Solatitude. Then he looked over the paint situation—old brushes, thinner, evaporated, crusted buckets. There were several cans of enamel, and Herzog thought, What if I should paint up the little piano? I could send it out to Chicago, to Junie. The kid is really highly musical. As for Madeleine, she’ll have to take it in, the bitch, when it’s delivered, paid for. She can’t send it back. The green enamel seemed to him exactly right, and he wasted no time but found the most usable brushes and set himself to work, full of eagerness, in the parlor.

He painted the lid of the piano with absorption; the green was light, beautiful, like summer apples.

The enamel covered well but it would probably need a second coat, and he might not have enough paint for that. Putting down the brush, he gave the piano lid time to dry, considering how to get the instrument out of here. He couldn’t expect one of the giant inter-state vans to climb this hill. He would have to hire Tuttle from the village to come in his pick-up truck. The cost would amount to something like a hundred dollars, but he must do everything possible for the child, and he had no serious problems about money. Will had offered him as much as he needed to get through the summer. This was just what she needed, just what he should send her, he thought, a piano, a green piano, the green of Ludeyville, a piano from the Berkshires.

THE END

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