



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 maga-

zine," *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 1953. 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. *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 Ludenville, 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-

shires 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

Herzog Visits Chicago

graduate studies at the University of Chicago; no, she insisted that the Gersbachs move to Chicago, too, and that Moses must find a job for Valentine. You couldn't leave people like the Gersbachs to rot in provincial Massachusetts. And Herzog, preoccupied, brooding Herzog, had said "Yes, of course," to all her demands, and had made all the arrangements, found a job in radio for Gersbach, who was an announcer, found a house for Phoebe Gersbach, who was a particular and fastidious housekeeper, found a school for the Gersbach boy and a kindergarten for his own little daughter, Junie. The house in Ludeyville with thousands of dollars' worth of dishes, furnishings and modern equipment was abandoned to the field mice and the moles, and Herzog, for perhaps the twentieth time, made a new start in life, teaching in Chicago. Only, when everything was settled to Madeleine's satisfaction, she put her husband out. She told him to leave. She sent him packing. It was not for several months clear to him that there was another man involved, and that that man was Valentine Gersbach, Gersbach the radio announcer, his friend, and, during the worst of his troubles, his only comforter. "Well," thought Herzog, now in New York, "if any man knew exactly what I needed to be comforted about, it was Valentine. After all, he organized the whole disaster for me." Thus everyone was settled in Chicago except Herzog. He, the only Chicagoan in the lot, was living in a cheap apartment in New York, thinking matters over, his work abandoned, his career in pieces. There are times when a man cannot defend himself from his own peculiarities. Such a time had come in the life of Moses E. Herzog.

No, he felt, he couldn't go to Ludeyville to confront what he had done there, the visible signs of his ingratitude, his squandered legacy, the money poor Papa had worked and suffered so much for, spent idly by Madeleine (with Herzog's consent). And then there was his library, damaged by mice, no doubt; they chewed the bindings of books. They loved the taste of glue.

But evidently he hadn't yet had enough of desperate impulsiveness. He was trying to calm himself; he had had enough, he thought, of heartache and sleeplessness and of frenzied confrontations when the letter from Geraldine Portnoy came and set him off again.

He kept Geraldine Portnoy's letter always on his bed table, and he picked it up now and reread it before he fell asleep. He tried to remember how he had felt when he had first read it, in Chicago, after some delay.

Dear Mr. Herzog, I am Geraldine Portnoy, Lucas Asphalter's friend. You may remember. . . . May remember? Moses read faster (the script was feminine—progressive-school printing turned cursive and the i's dotted with curious little open circles), trying to swallow the whole letter at once, turning the pages to see whether the gist of the thing was underscored anywhere. Actually I took your course in Romantics as Social Philosophers. We differed about Rousseau and Karl Marx. I have come around to your view, that Marx expressed metaphysical hopes for the future of mankind. I took what he said about materialism far too literally. My view! It's common, and why does she want to make me dangle like this—why doesn't she get on with it? He tried again to find the point, but all those circular open dots fell

on his vision like snow and masked the message. You probably never noticed me, but I liked you, and as a friend of Lucas Asphalter—he just adores you, he says you are just a feast of the most human qualities—I have of course heard a lot about you growing up in Lucas' 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 by marriage was one of the coaches—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 meddle in your affairs. And I am not an enemy of Madeleine's. I sympathize with her, too. 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 confidences. Herzog flushed. Her confidences would include intimate details. 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 wanted to win me over, for some reason. Lucas warned me to look out for something fishy but then any intense feeling between members of the same sex is often, and unjustly, under suspicion. My scientific background has taught me to make more cautious generalizations, and resist this creeping psychoanalysis of ordinary conduct. But she did want to win 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 intellectual qualities, though neurotic and with an intolerable temper which often frightened her. However she added you could be great, and after two bad, loveless marriages perhaps you would devote yourself to the work you were meant to do. Emotional relationships you were not really good at. It was soon obvious that she would never have given herself to a man who lacked distinction of intelligence or feeling. Madeleine said that for the first time in her life she knew clearly what she was doing. 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 exciting to talk with her, she gives a sense of a significant encounter—with life—a beautiful, brilliant person with a fate of her own. Her experiences are rich, or pregnant. . . . What is this? Herzog thought. Is she going to tell me that Madeleine is going to have a child? Gersbach's child! No! 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 clever to let that happen. She owed her survival to intelligence. It was part of her sickness to be shrewd. She was not pregnant, then. I was not merely a graduate student who helped with the child, but a confidante. Your little girl is greatly attached to me, and I find her a most extraordinary 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 supposed to be the most child-oriented culture in the West (judge by the figure of the Christ child in Italian painting), but obviously Americans have their own craze about child psychology. Everything is done for children, ostensibly. To be fair, I think Madeleine is not bad with little June, basically. She tends to be authoritarian. Mr. Gersbach, who has an ambiguous position 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 piggyback, or tossing her in the air. Here Herzog set his teeth, angry, scenting danger. But I have to report one disagreeable thing, and I talked this over with Lucas. This is that, coming to Harper Avenue the other night, I heard the child crying. She was inside Gersbach's car, and couldn't get out, and the poor little thing was shaking and weeping. I thought she had shut herself in while 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 her Mama and Uncle Val were having a quarrel 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. I'll kill him for that—so help me, if I don't! 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 Madeleine 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 arrived. He went home and changed from the new clothes in which he had been diverting himself, into an old seersucker suit. Luckily, he had not unpacked when he came back from the Vineyard. He checked the valise quickly and left the apartment. Characteristically, he was determined to act without clearly knowing what to do, and even recognizing that he had no power over his impulses. He hoped that on the plane, in the clearer atmosphere, he would understand why he was flying.

The superjet carried him to Chicago in ninety minutes, due west, almost counteracting the rotation of the planet and giving him an extension of afternoon and sunlight. Beneath, the white clouds were foaming. And the sun, like the spot that inoculated us against the whole of disintegrating space. He looked into the 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 explode (as had happened over Maryland recently, when human figures were seen to spill and fall like shelled peas), Gersbach would become June's guardian. Unless Simkin tore up the will. There would also be two insurance policies, one bought by Father Herzog for 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.

As the jet landed, Herzog turned back his watch. He hurried from gate 38 and down the long corridor to the auto-rental office. To identify himself, he had an American Express card, his Massachusetts driver's license, his university credentials. He himself would have been suspicious of such diverse addresses, to say nothing of the soiled, wrinkled seersucker suit worn by this applicant, Moses Elkanah Herzog; but the official who took his application, a sweet-mannered, bosomy, curly, fat-nosed little woman (even in his present stage Herzog felt moved to smile faintly) only asked whether he

wanted a convertible or a hard-top. He chose the hard-top, teal blue, and drove off, trying to find his way under the greenish glare of the lamps and dusty sunlight amid unfamiliar signs. He followed the winding cloverleaf into the expressway and then joined the speeding traffic—in this zone, 60 mph. He did not know these new sections of Chicago. Clumsy, stinking, tender Chicago dumped on its ancient lake bottom; and this murky orange west, and the hoarseness of factories and trains, spilling gases and soot on the newborn summer. Traffic was heavy coming from the city, not on Herzog's side of the road, and he held the right lane looking for familiar street names. After Howard Street he was in the city proper and knew his way. Leaving the expressway at Montrose, he turned east and drove to his late father's house, a small two-story brick building, one of a row built from a single blueprint—the pitched roof, the cement staircase inset on the right side, the window boxes the length of the front-room windows, the lawn a fat mound of grass between the sidewalk and the foundation; along the curb, elms and those shabby cottonwoods with blackened, dusty, wrinkled bark, and leaves that turned very tough by midsummer. There were also certain flowers, peculiar to Chicago, crude, waxy things like red and purple crayon bits, in a special class of false-looking natural objects. These foolish plants touched Herzog because they were so graceless, so corny. He was reminded of his father's devotion to his garden, when old Herzog became a property owner toward the end of his life—how he squirted his flowers at evening with the hose and how rapt he looked, his lips quietly pleased and his straight nose relishing the odor of the soil. To right and left, as Herzog emerged from the rented hard-top, the sprinklers turned and danced, scattering bright drops, fizzing out iridescent veils. And this was the house in which Father Herzog had died a few years ago, on a summer night.

In any case, here was his late father's house in which the widow lived, Moses' very ancient stepmother, quite alone in this small museum of the Herzogs. The bungalow belonged to Moses and his brothers and sister. No one wanted it now. Shura was a multimillionaire, he made that obvious enough. Willie had gone far in his father's construction-materials business—owned a fleet of those trucks with tremendous cylinder bodies that mixed cement en route to the job where it was funneled, pumped (Moses was vague about it) into the rising skyscrapers. Helen, if her husband was not in Willie's class, was at least well off. She rarely spoke of money any more. And he himself? He had about six hundred dollars in the bank. Still, for his purposes, he had what he needed. Poverty was not his portion; unemployment, slums, the perverts, thieves, victims in court, the horror of cheap hotels and housekeeping rooms, smelling of decay and deadly bug juice—these were not for him. He could still take the superjet to Chicago when he had the impulse, could rent a teal-blue Falcon, drive to the old house. Thus he realized with peculiar clarity his position in the scale of prerogatives—of affluence, of insolence, of untruth, if you like. And not only his position, but when lovers quarreled they had a Lincoln Continental to shut a weeping child up in.

Face white, mouth grim, he mounted the stairs in the shadow of approaching sunset, and pressed the button. It had a

crescent moon in the middle which lighted up at night.

The chimes rang inside, those chromium tubes above the door, xylophone metal, that played *Merrily We Roll Along*, all but the last two notes. He had long to wait. The old woman, Taube, always had been slow, even in her fifties, thorough, deliberate, totally unlike the dexterous Herzogs—they had all inherited their father's preposterous quickness and elegance, something of the assertiveness of that one-man march with which old Her-

zog had defiantly paraded through the world. Moses was rather fond of Taube, he told himself; perhaps to feel differently toward her would have been too troubling. The unsteady gaze of her round prominent eyes was possibly caused by a radical resolve to be slow, a lifelong program of delay and stasis. Creeping, she accomplished every last goal she set herself. She ate, or sipped, slowly. She did not bring the cup to her mouth but moved her lips out toward it. And she spoke very slowly, to give her shrewdness scope.

Cooked with fingers that did not grip firmly but was an excellent cook. She won at cards, poking along, but won. All questions she asked two or three times, and repeated the answers half to herself. With the same slowness she braided her hair, she brushed her exposed teeth, or chopped 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

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Herzog Visits Chicago

well. She was arthritic; one eye had a cataract. 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 dark, and anyone but Moses 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 a 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 separated her from Moses. He knew it would also be locked. The old people had been guarded and suspicious in their own house. Moreover, Moses knew the light was behind him; he might not be recognized. And he was not the same Moses, anyway. But, although she studied him like a stranger, she had already identified him. Her intellect was not slow, whatever else.

"Who is it?"

"It's Moses. . . ."

"I don't know you. I'm alone. Moses?"

"Tante Taube—Moses Herzog. Moshe."

"Ah—Moshe."

Slow lame fingers released the catch. The door was shut to free the links from strain, and then opened, and—merciful God!—what a face he saw, how grooved with woe and age, lined downward at the mouth. As he came in she raised feeble 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 on the watered fragrance of lawns as he entered. The house was close and faintly sour with furniture polish. The remembered luster was there in the faint twilight parlor—cabinets and tables, with inlaid tops, the brocaded sofa in its gleaming protective plastic, the Oriental rug, the drapes perfect and rigid on the windows with laterally rigid venetian blinds. A lamp went on behind 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 the nails. But those fingertips were painted. And what changes did she see in him? "Ach, 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 knowed 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 betrayed more emotion than he knew, for he now found her eyes examining him rather sharply, as if she did not believe

that his feeling was for her and tried to find the real source of it. Or was it the cataract 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. Clair de Lune. Venetian moonlight. All that phoney banality that oppressed him in his student days. It had no special power over him now. He was another man and had different purposes. The old woman, he saw, was trying to find what he had come for. She sensed that he was strongly agitated, missed his habitual vagueness, the proud air of abstraction in which M. E. Herzog, Ph.D., had once been clothed. *Them days is gone forever.*

"You working hard, Moshe?"

"Yes."

"Making a living?"

"Oh, yes."

The old woman bowed her head a moment. He saw the scalp, her thin gray hair. Exiguous. 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 asked his father to 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 choice (it was no choice!) between Madeleine and Sono, my other girl friend. Perhaps he had even heard I was about to be converted to Catholicism. Someone started such a rumor. I was in Chicago then because Papa had sent for me. He wanted to tell me about the changes in his will. Day and night, he thought how he would divide his estate, and thought accordingly of each of us, what we deserved, how we would use it. At odd times, he'd telephone and tell me I had 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, Papa."

But he lost his temper every time, and when he wanted to shoot me it was because 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 expression on the face of his youngest son. I aged. I wasted myself in stupid schemes, *liberating* my spirit. His heart ached angrily because of me. And Papa was not like some old men who become blunted toward their own death. No, 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, admitting 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. "Calf!" Then he saw the angry demand underlying 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 stumbling from the table, his face distorted, 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 egotism making its peculiar demands)—he reluctantly 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 Herzog 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 Herzog shouted.

"Papa!"

Half-hearing Tante Taube's slow description of Cousin Mordecai's approaching retirement, Herzog grimly recovered the note of that cry. *Papa—Papa.* You lout! The old man in his near-demented way was trying to act out the manhood you should have had. Coming to his house with that Christianized smirk of the long-suffering son. He should have pulled the trigger. Those looks were agony to him. He deserved to be spared, in his old age.

And then there was Moses with puffy weeping eyes, in the street, waiting for his cab, while Father Herzog hastily walked up and back before these windows, staring at him in agony of spirit—yes, you got that out of him. Walking quickly there, back and forth in his hasty style, dropping 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-made Moses yet.

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

"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 you 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 airport and thought I'd see how you were. And now that I'm here, I'd like to 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 had given it to Madeleine.

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

"I think Willie took it."

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

"Rubles?"

"My grandfather Isaac bought Czarist rubles during the Revolution, and they've always been in the desk."

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

"I'd like to look, while you make a cup of tea, Tante Taube. Give me the key."

"The key . . . ?" Questioning him before, she had spoken more quickly, but now she receded again into slowness, raising a mountain of dilatory will in his 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 knew he had guessed right. "Don't bother, I'll get it," he said. "If



THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Herzog Visits Chicago

you'll put the kettle on. I'm very thirsty. It's been a hot, long day."

He helped her to rise, holding her flaccid arm. He was having his way—a poor sort of victory and filled with dangerous consequences. Going forward without her, he entered the bedroom. His father's bed had been removed. Hers stood alone with its ugly bedspread—some material that reminded him of a coated tongue. He breathed the old spice, the dark, heavy air, and lifted the lid of the music box. In this house he had only to consult his memory to find what he wanted. The mechanism released its little notes as the cylinder turned within, the small spines picking out the aria from *Figaro*. Moses was able to supply the words:

*Nel momento
Della mia cerimonia
Io rideva 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, mild voice, not to make matters worse. The house was hers, after all. It was rude to invade it. He was not ashamed of this, he only recognized with full objectivity that it was not right. But it had to be done.

"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 drapes were drawn. He turned on the lamp beside the desk. In seeking the switch he tore the ancient silk of the shade, releasing a fine dust. The name of this color was old rose—he felt certain of it. He opened the cherry-wood secretary, braced the wide leaf on its runners, drawing them out from either side. Then he went back and shut the door, first making sure Taube had reached the kitchen. In the drawers he recognized each article—leather, paper, gold. Swift and tense, veins standing out on his head, and tendons on the hands, he groped, and found what he was looking for—Father Herzog's pistol. An old pistol, the barrel nickel-plated. Papa had bought it to keep on Cherry Street, in the railroad yards. Moses flipped the gun open. There were two bullets. This was it, then. He rapidly clicked it shut and put it in his pocket. There it made too large a bulge. He took out his wallet and replaced it with the gun. The wallet he buttoned in his hip pocket.

Now he began to search for those rubles. Those he found in a small compartment with old passports, ribbons sealed in wax, like gobs of dried blood. They were in a large billfold—his playthings of forty years ago. Peter the Great in a rich coat of armor, and a splendid imperial Catherine. Lamplight revealed the watermarks. Recalling how he and Willie used to play casino for these stakes, Herzog uttered one of his short laughs, then made a nest of these large bills in his pocket for the pistol. He thought it must be less conspicuous now.

"You got what you want?" Taube asked him in the kitchen.

"Yes." He put the key on the enameled metal table.

He knew it was not proper that he should think her expression sheeplike. This figurative habit of his mind crippled his judgment, and was likely to ruin him some day. Perhaps the day was near; per-

haps this night his soul would be required of him. The gun weighed on his chest. But the protuberant lips, great eyes, and pleated mouth were sheeplike, and they warned him he was taking too many chances with destruction. Taube, a veteran survivor, to be heeded, had fought the grave to a standstill, balking death itself by her slowness. All had decayed but her shrewdness and her incredible patience; and in Moses she saw Father Herzog again, nervy and hasty, impulsive, suffering. His eye twitched as he bent toward her in the kitchen. She muttered, "You got a lot of trouble? Don't make it worse, Moshe."

"There's no trouble, Tante. I have business to take care of. . . . I don't think I can wait for tea, after all."

"I put out Pa's cup for you."

Moses drank tap water from his father's teacup.

"Good-by, Tante Taube, keep well." He kissed her forehead.

"Remember I helped you?" she said. "You shouldn't forget. Take care, Moshe."

He left by the back door; it made departure simpler. Honeysuckle grew along the rainspout, as in his father's time, and fragrant in the evening—almost too rich. Could any heart become quite petrified?

He gunned 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 would land 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 through Washington Park after dark. He decided to follow Edens to Congress Street and Congress to the Outer Drive. Yes, that would be fastest. What he would do when he got to Harper Avenue he hadn't yet decided. Madeleine had threatened him with arrest if he so much as showed his face near the house. The police had his picture, but that was sheer bunk, bunk and paranoia, the imperiousness of imaginary powers that had once impressed him. But there was now a real matter 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! This little daughter of his! He cried out to himself as he raced up the ramp of the expressway that nobody would harm *her*. He accelerated, moving in his lane with the rest of the traffic. The thread of life was stretched tight in him. It quivered crazily. He did not fear its breaking so much as his failing to do what he should. 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 traffic ticket—not with a pistol 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 vast gas tanks, crowned with lights, from a new perspective, and the rear of a Polish church with a Christ in brocades exhibited in a lighted window, like a showcase. The long curve eastbound passed over the freight yards, burning with sunset dust, rails streaking westward; next, the tunnel under the mammoth post office; next, the State Street honky-tonks. 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, irregular silver, and a slate

color at the horizon, boats hanging rocking inside the breakwater, and helicopters and small aircraft whose lights teetered overhead. The familiar odor of the fresh water, bland but also raw, reached him as he sped south. It did not seem illogical that he should claim the privilege of insanity, violence, having been made to carry the rest of it—name-calling and gossip, railroading, pain, even exile in Ludeyville. That property was to have been his madhouse. Finally, his mausoleum. But they had done something else to Herzog—unpredictable. It's not every one who gets the opportunity to kill with a clear conscience. They had opened the way to justifiable murder. They deserved to die. He had a right to kill them. They would even know why they were dying; no explanation necessary. When he stood before them they would have to submit. Gersbach would only hang his head, with tears for himself. Madeleine would shriek and curse. Out of hatred, the most powerful element in her life, stronger by far than any other power or motive. In spirit she was his murderess, and therefore he was turned loose, he could shoot or choke without remorse. He felt in his arms and in his fingers, and to the core of his heart, the sweet exertion of strangling—horrible and sweet, an orgasmic rapture of inflicting death. He was sweating violently, his shirt wet and cold under his arms. Into his mouth came a taste of copper, a metabolic poison, a flat but deadly flavor.

When he reached Harper Avenue he parked around the corner, and entered the alley that passed behind the house. Grit spilled on the concrete; broken glass and gravelly ashes made his steps loud. He went carefully. The back fences were old here. Garden soil spilled under the slats, and shrubs and vines came over their tops. Once more he saw open honeysuckle. Even rambler roses, dark red in the dusk. He had to cover his face when he passed the garage because of the loops of briar that swung over the path from the sloping roof. When he stole into the yard he stood still until he could see his way. He must not stumble over a toy, or a tool. A fluid had come into his eyes—very clear, only somewhat distorting. He wiped it away with fingertips, and blotted, too, with the lapel of his coat. Stars had come out, violet points framed in roof shapes, leaves, strut wires. The yard was visible to him now. He saw the clothesline—Madeleine's underpants and his daughter's little shirts and dresses, tiny stockings. By the light of the kitchen window he made out a sandbox in the grass, a new red sandbox with broad ledges to sit on. Stepping nearer, he looked into the kitchen. Madeleine was there! He stopped breathing as he watched her. She was wearing slacks and a blouse fastened with a broad red-leather-and-brass belt he had given her. Her smooth hair hung loose as she moved between the table and the sink, cleaning up after dinner, scraping dishes in her own style of abrupt efficiency. He studied her straight profile as she stood at the sink, the flesh under her chin as she concentrated on the foam in the sink, tempering the water. He could see the color in her cheeks, and almost the blue of her eyes. Watching, he fed his rage, to keep it steady, up to full strength. She was not likely to hear him in the yard because the storm windows had not been taken down—not, at least, those he had put up last fall at the back of the house.

He moved into the passageway. Luckily the neighbors were not at home, and he did not have to worry about their

Herzog Visits Chicago

lights. He had had his look at Madeleine. It was his daughter he wanted to see now. The dining room was unoccupied—after-dinner emptiness, Coke bottles, paper napkins. Next was the bathroom window, set higher than the rest. He remembered, 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 block? It was exactly where he had left it, 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, opening his mouth. In the rushing water with floating toys his daughter's little body shone. His child! Madeleine had let her black hair grow longer, and now it was tied up for the bath with a rubber band. He melted with tenderness for her, putting his hand over his mouth to cover any sound emotion might cause him to make. She raised her face to speak to someone he could not see. Above the flow of water he heard her say something but could not understand the words. Her face was the Herzog face, the large dark eyes his eyes, the nose his father's, Tante Zipporah's, his brother Willie's nose, and the mouth his own. Even the bit of melancholy in her beauty—that was his mother. It was Sarah Herzog, pensive, slightly averting 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 heavy 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 Gersbach. He was going to bathe Herzog's daughter! Gersbach! His waist was now in sight. He came into view stalking beside the old-fashioned round tub, bowing, straightening, bowing—his Venetian hobble, and then, with great trouble, he began to kneel, and Herzog saw his chest, his head, as he arranged himself. Flattened to the wall, his chin on his shoulder, 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, dimpling, 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 grumbling smiles and occasionally with laughter he bathed her—soaped, rinsed, dipping water in her toy boats to rinse her back as she squealed and twisted. The man washed her tenderly. His look, perhaps, was false. But he had no true expressions, Herzog 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 ax, a brutal weapon. And then there were his sentimental eyes, the thick crest of hair, and that hearty voice with its peculiar fraudulence and grossness. The hated traits were all there. But see how he was with June, scooping the water on her playfully, kindly. He let her wear her mother's flowered shower cap, the rubber petals spreading on the child's head. Gersbach ran fresh water on her,

cumbersomely rose and opened the bath towel. Steady and thorough, he dried her, and then with a large puff he powdered her. The child jumped up and down with delight. "Okay, enough of this wild stuff," said Gersbach. "Put on those p-j's now."

She ran out. Herzog still saw faint wisps of powder, that floated over Gersbach's stooping head. His red hair worked up and down. He was scouring the tub. Moses might have killed him now. His left hand touched the gun, enclosed in the roll of rubles. He might have shot Gersbach as he methodically salted the yellow sponge rectangle with cleansing powder. There were two bullets in the chamber. . . . But they would stay there. Herzog clearly recognized that. Very softly he stepped down from his perch, and passed without sound through the yard again. He saw his child in the kitchen, looking up at Mady, asking for something, and he edged through the gate into the alley. Firing this pistol was nothing but a thought.

I seem to think because June looks like a Herzog, she is nearer to me than to them. But how is she near to me if I have no share in her life? Those two grotesque love-actors have it all. And I apparently believe that if the child does not have a life resembling mine, educated according to the Herzog standards of "heart," and all the rest of it, she will fail to become a human being. This is sheer irrationality, and yet some part of my mind takes it as self-evident. But what in fact can she learn from them? From Gersbach, when he looks so sugary, repulsive, poisonous, not an individual but a fragment, a piece broken off from the mob. To shoot him!—an absurd thought. As soon as Herzog saw the actual person giving an actual bath, the reality of it, the tenderness of such a buffoon to a little child, his intended violence turned into theater, into something ludicrous. He was not ready to make such a complete fool of himself. Only self-hatred could lead him to ruin himself because his heart was "broken." How could it be broken by such a pair? Linger in the alley awhile, he congratulated himself on his luck. His breath came back to him; and how good it felt to breathe! It was worth the trip.

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; sooty 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, seamed and ruptured concrete from which sprang grass; ponderous 4x4 fences that sheltered growing weeds. And 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 determinism, 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 gritting on the pavement beneath new summer leaves. Two poky 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 overheard 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 refrigerator. There he would not be seen from the kitchen window. With a faint smile he sat down. From the extreme composure of her slender face he knew how her heart must be pounding, working, even more violently than his. An orderly person, self-controlled in high degree, clean—the head nurse—she tried 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 to death.

"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 Buber, I and Thou.' Still this Buber kick! He's very thick with these rabbis. Maybe he wants to swap wives with a rabbi. He'll work his way round from 'I and Thou' to 'Me and You'—'You and Me, Kid!' But I suppose you'd draw the line there. You wouldn't go along with everything."

Phoebe made no answer and remained standing.

"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 have only one purpose here, in addition to wanting to see an old friend. . . ."

"We're not really old friends."

"Not by calendar years. But we were so close out in Ludeyville. That is true. You have to think of duration—Bergsonian duration. We have known each other in duration. Some people are sentenced to certain relationships. Maybe every relationship is either a joy or a sentence."

"You earned your own sentence, if that's how you want to think about it. We had a quiet life till you and Madeleine descended on Ludeyville and forced yourself on me." Phoebe, her face thin but hot, eyelids unmoving, sat down on the edge of the chair Herzog had drawn forward for her.

"Good. Say what you think, Phoebe. That's what I want. Sit back. Don't be afraid. I'm not looking for trouble. We've got a problem in common."

Phoebe denied this. She shook her head, with a stubborn look, all too vigorously. "I'm a plain woman. Valentine is from upstate New York."

"Just a rube. 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."

Stiff and hesitant, she 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, bony, without self-confidence. "You never understood a thing about him. He fell for you. Adored you. Tried to become an intellectual because he wanted to help you—saw what a terrible thing you had done in giving up your respectable university position and how reckless you were, rushing out to the country with Madeleine. He thought she was ruining you and tried to set you on the right track again. He read all those books so you'd have somebody to talk to, out in the sticks, Moses. Because you needed help, praise, flattery, support, affection. It was never enough. 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!"

Herzog Visits Chicago

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

"It's still not enough. 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, Phoebe. I was certainly floundering in Ludeyville. 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 books and the theatrical glamour, 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 gimpy 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. You were even right to dislike me, if 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 going on. It went on for years, and you said 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 not my fault that you refuse 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 keep away. To keep away from you, most of all from you and all your trouble. He 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.

"He's deserted 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 fantastic idea."

Moses leaned with one arm against the refrigerator as he shifted 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 explained, "as you 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 if you were a nanny 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 war with Madeleine, I suppose," he said. "Fighting over the man. A cat fight—a female sex fight. But she'll beat you. Because she's 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 never out late. He should 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 how that is? If you get killed 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!"

"Me? Never! All that hysterical stuff is finished. No, I'm glad to be rid of her. I don't even loathe her much anymore. And she's welcome to all she chiseled from me. She must have been banking my money all along. Okay! Let her keep it with my blessing. Bless the bitch! Good luck and good-bye. I bless her. I wish her a busy, useful, pleasant, dramatic life. Including *love*. The best people fall in love, and she's one of the best, therefore she loves this fellow. They both *love*. She's not good enough to bring up the kid, though. . . ."

If he were a wild pig, and those bangs of hers a protective hedge—Phoebe's brown eyes were as vigilant as that. And yet Moses was sorry for her. They bullied her—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, such minimal goals—table, market, laundry, child—and still lose the struggle. 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 creative depth of modern degeneracy, all the luxuriant vices of emancipated 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 because of his richness of character, his spiritual-erotic drive, or God knows what foot-smelling metaphysics, he required two wives or more. Maybe these two women lent this piece of orange-tufted flesh to each other for widely different needs. For domestic peace.

"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?"

"I? I'd help . . ." he began. But he checked himself. It was true, he couldn't offer much. He really was useless to 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 trance would break. Then what?

"Why do you come to me, if you want custody of your daughter? Either do something by yourself, or forget it. Let me alone, now, Moses."

This, too, was perfectly just. Silent, he stared hard at her. The early and native tendency of his mind, lately acting without inhibitions, found significance in small bloodless marks on her face. As if death had tried her with his teeth and found her still unripe.

"Well, thank you for this talk, Phoebe. I'm going." He stood up. There was a softer kindness in Herzog's expression, not often seen. Rather awkwardly he 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 freed her fingers.

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

"Why, of course," said Asphalter. "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 left the booth, reflecting 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 therefore drove slowly, stopping 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 Asphalter'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 much to be seen in that house on Harper Avenue. Let the child find life. The plainer the better, perhaps.

He was met on the staircase by Asphalter.

"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 a play school, half-days."

"Wonderful," Herzog said. "No trouble?"

"With Madeleine? None at all. She doesn't want to see you. 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."

Nervously and shyly Asphalter touched his chin, looking away. He said, "I'm brazening it out."

"Compensation for the sudden unfortunate baldness?" said Herzog.

"Fighting a depression," said Asphalter. "Thought a change of image might be good . . . Excuse my pad."

Asphalter 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 studio couch 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 feeling, 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. Self-correction refreshed 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 don't feel bad 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 bed looks good."

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

At last he embraced his daughter, and she pressed his 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 hair, the skin under her dress, he pressed her little bones, stammering, "Junie, sweetie, I've missed you." His happiness was painful. And she with all her innocence and childishness and with the pure, or amorous, instinct of tiny girls, kissed him on the lips, her careworn, busted, germ-carrying father.

Asphalter stood by, smiling but feeling somewhat awkward, his bald scalp perspiring, his new parti-colored beard looking hot. They were on the long gray staircase of the Museum of Science in Jackson Park. Busloads 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 promise of the world to come, in the eyes of benevolent Herzog, its future good and evil, hurried in and out.

"My sweet June. Papa missed you."

"Poppy!"

"I can meet you right at this spot at four P.M.," Asphalter said.

"Only three and a half hours? Where 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."

Moses carried 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?"

"My big brother."

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?"

"It scared me."

"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."

"Do 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 car?"

"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. Can you make good 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."

So she remembered his best inventions. Herzog nodded his head, wondering at her, proud of her, thankful. "The boy with all the freckles?"

"They were like the sky."

"Each freckle was just like 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."

"They took him to all the astronomers."

"I saw astronomers on television."

"And the astronomers said, 'Pooh, pooh, an interesting coincidence. A little freak.'"

"More. More."

"At last he went to see Hiram Shpitalnik, 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.'"

"He lived in a walnut shell."

"Exactly. And all his friends were bees. The busy bee has no time for sorrow. Great-grandfather Shpitalnik came out of the shell with a telescope, and looked at Rupert's face."

"The boy's name was Rupert."

"Old Shpitalnik 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 are the chicks." He held the child on the railing, to his left, so that she would not press against the pistol, wrapped in her great-grandfather's rubles. These were in his right breast pocket still.

"They're yellow," she said.

"They keep it hot and bright in 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 'im 'e cry." In measured words he answered. "I have my razor 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. I just can't."

"Why?"

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

"Uncle Val works. He writes poems and reads them to Mama."

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."

"And does he 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."

"Why?"

"She said you'd be very very angry."

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

An experienced father, he prudently waited until they reached the Falcon 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, so new (her milk teeth and sparse freckles and big expectant eyes, her fragile neck). And he thought how she would inherit this world of great instruments, principles of physics and applied science. She had the brains for it. He was already intoxicated with pride, seeing another Madame Curie in her. She loved the periscope. They spied on each other from the sides of the car, hiding behind tree trunks and in the arches 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 blown their fuses and were all loose silk; the turf was springy, neither damp as in May nor dry and hard as in August, when the sun would scorch it. The mechanical mower was riding in circles, barbering the slopes, raising a spray of clippings. Lighted from the south the water was a marvelous, fresh, heavy daylight blue; the sky rested on the mild burning horizon, clear except toward Gary, where the dark thin pillars of the steel hearths puffed out russet and sulphur streams of smoke. By now the lawns at Ludeyville, uncut for two years, must be simply hayfields, and local hunters and lovers were breaking in again, most likely, shattering 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 Asphalter's apartment, as well as several Ludeyville keys. "You must sit in the 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. In these 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 his 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-cat," 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."

"I know lots of them." She stood directly behind him in the back seat and stroked his head. "Uncle Val is very nice."

"Why of course he is."

"But I don't like him. He doesn't smell good."

"Ha, ha! Well, we'll get him a bottle of perfume and make him smell terrific."

He held her hand as they mounted the aquarium staircase, feeling himself to be the father whose strength and calm judgment she could trust. The center court of the building, whitened by the skylight, was very warm. The splashing pool and luxuriant plants and soft tropical fishy air forced Moses to take a grip on himself, to keep up his energy.

"What do you want to see first?"

"The big turtles."

They went up and down the obscure gold and green alleys.

"This fast little fish is called the humu-humu-elee-elee, from Hawaii. This slithering beast is the stingray and has teeth and venom in its tail. And these are lampreys, related to hagfish, they fasten their sucker mouths on other fish and drink until they kill them. Over there you see the rainbow fish. No turtles in this aisle, but look at those great things at the end. Sharks?"

"I saw the dolphins at Brookfield," said June. "They wear sailor hats, ring a bell. They can dance on their tails and play basketball."

Herzog picked her up and carried her. These children's outings, perhaps because they were pervaded with so much emotion, were always exhausting. Often, after a day with Marco, Moses had to put a cold compress on his eyes and lie down. It seemed his fate to be the visiting father, an apparition who faded in and out of the children's lives. But this peculiar sensitivity about meeting and parting had to be tamed. Such trembling sorrow—he tried to think what term Freud had for it: partial return of repressed traumatic material, ultimately traceable to the death instinct?—should not be imparted to children, not that tremulous lifelong swoon of death. This same emotion, as Herzog the student was aware, was held

to be the womb of cities, heavenly as well as earthly, mankind being unable to part with its beloved or its dead in this world or the next. But to Moses E. Herzog as he held his daughter in his arms, looking through aqueous green at the lampreys and smooth sharks with their fanged bellies, this emotion was nothing but tyranny.

"There is the turtle!" June shouted. The thing rose from the depths of the tank in its horny breastplate, the beaked head lazy, the eyes with aeons of indifference, the flippers slowly striving, pushing at the glass, the great scales pinkish yellow, or on the back, bearing beautiful lines, black curved plates mimicking the surface tension of water. It trailed a fuzz of parasitic green.

For comparison they went back to the Mississippi River turtles in the pool at the center; their sides were red-straked; they dozed on their logs and paddled in company with catfish over a bottom shaded by ferns, strewn with pennies.

The child had now had enough, and so had her father. "I think we'll go and get you a sandwich. It's lunchtime," he said.

They left the parking lot carefully enough, Herzog later thought. He was a circumspect driver. But getting his Falcon into the main stream of traffic he should perhaps have reckoned with the long curve from the north on which the cars picked up speed. A little Volkswagen truck was on his tail. He touched the brakes, meaning to slow up and let the other driver pass. But the brakes were all too new and responsive. The Falcon stopped short and the small truck struck it from behind and rammed it into a utility pole. June screamed and clutched at his shoulders as he was thrown forward, against the steering wheel. The kid! he thought; but it was not the kid he had to worry about. He knew from her scream that she was not hurt, only frightened. He lay over the wheel, feeling weak, radically weak; his eyes grew dark; he felt that he was losing ground to nausea and numbness. He listened to June's screams but could not turn to her. He notified himself that he was passing out, and he fainted away.

They spread him out on the grass.

He heard a locomotive very close—the Illinois Central. And then it seemed somewhat farther off, blundering in the weeds across the Drive. His vision at first was bothered by large blots, but these dwindled presently to iridescent specks. His pants had worked themselves up. He felt a chill in his legs.

"Where's June? Where's my daughter?" He raised himself and saw her between two Negro policemen, looking at him. They had his wallet, the Czarist rubles, and the pistol, of course. There it was. He closed his eyes again. He felt the nausea return as he considered what he had gotten himself into. "Is she all right?"

"She's okay."

"Come here, Junie." He leaned forward and she walked into his arms. As he felt her, kissed her scared face, he had a sharp pain in his ribs. "Papa lay down for a minute. It's nothing." But she had seen him lying on this grass. Stretched limp, looking dead, probably, while the cops went through his pockets. His face felt bloodless, hollow, stiff, its sensations intensely reduced, and this frightened him. From the pricking of his hair at the roots he thought it must be turning white all at once. The police were giving him a few minutes to come to himself. The blue light of the squad car flashed, revolving. The driver of the small truck was staring at him, angry. A little beyond, the grackles were walking, feeding, the usual circle of lights working flexibly back and forth about their black necks. Over his shoulder Herzog was aware of the Field Museum. If only I were a mummy in that cellar! he thought.

The cops had him. Their silent looks gave him this information. Because he was holding Junie they waited; they might not be too rough with him just yet. Already stalling for time, he acted more dazed than he really felt. The cops could be very bad, he had seen them at work. But that was in the old days. Perhaps times had changed. There was a new Commissioner. He had sat close to Orlando Wilson at a Narcotics Conference last year. They had shaken hands. Of course it wasn't worth mentioning; anyway, nothing would antagonize these two big Negro cops more than hints of influence. For them, he was part of today's haul, and with his rubles, the gun, he couldn't hope that they would simply let him go. And there was the teal-blue Falcon crumpled against the utility pole. The traffic rushing by, the road with its blazing cars.

"You Moses?" the older of the two Negroes asked. There it was—that note of deadly familiarity that you heard only when immunity was lost.

"Yes, I'm Moses."

"This your chile?"

"Yes—my little girl."

"You better put your handkercher to your head. You got a little cut, Moses."

"Is that so?" This explained the pricking under his hair. Unable to locate his handkerchief, he unknotted his silk tie and folded it, pressed the broad end to his scalp. "Nothing to it," he said. The child had hidden her head in his shoulder. "Sit down by Papa, sweetheart. Sit on the grass right next to me. Papa's head hurts a little." She obeyed. Her docility, her feeling for him, what seemed to him the wise, tender sense of the child, her sympathy, moved him, pressed his guts. He put a protective, wide, eager hand on her back. Sitting forward, he held the tie to his scalp.

"You got the permit for this gun, Moses?" The cop pursed his large lips as



THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

"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, who was wildly angry. Sharp-faced, his nose sharp and red, he was glaring at Moses, saying, "You're going to take that guy's license away, aren't you?" Moses thought, I'm in bad because of the pistol, and this fellow wants to pour it on. Warned by this indignation, Herzog held his own feelings in.

"I asked you once, I ask you again, Moses, you got a permit?"

"No sir, I haven't."

"Two bullets in here. Loaded weapon, Moses."

"Officer, it was my father's gun. He died, and I was taking it back to Massachusetts." His answers were as brief and patient as he could make them. He knew he would have to repeat his story, over and over.

"What's this money here?"

"Worthless, officer. Like Russian Confederate money. Stage money. Another souvenir."

Not devoid of sympathy, the policeman's face also expressed a fatigued skepticism. He was heavy-lidded, and on his silent, thick mouth there was a sort of smile. Well—the variety of oddities, alibis, inventions, fantasies the police ran into every day. . . . Herzog, making his reckonings as intelligently as he could, though he had a heavy weight of responsibility and dread inside him, believed it might not be so easy for this cop to type him. There were labels to fit him, naturally, but a harness cop like this would not be familiar with them. Even now there was possibly some tinge of pride in this reflection, so tenacious was human foolishness. "Lord, let the angels praise thy name. Man is a foolish thing, a foolish thing. Folly and sin play all his game. . . ."

Herzog's head ached and he could remember no more verses. He lifted the tie from his scalp. No sense in letting it stick; it would pull away the clot. June had put her head in his lap. He covered her eyes from the sun.

"We have to diagram this accident." The copper in his shiny pants squatted beside Herzog. From his fat, bulging hips his own gun hung low. Its brown butt of cross-hatched metal and the cartridge belt looked very different from Father Herzog's big, clumsy Cherry Street revolver. "I don't see the title of this Falcon, here."

The small car was staved in at both ends, the hood gaping like a mussel shell. The engine itself could not be damaged much; no fluids had trickled out. "It's rented. I picked it up at O'Hare. The papers are in the glove compartment," said Herzog.

"We got to get these facts, here." The policeman opened a folder and began to mark the thick paper of a printed form with his yellow pencil. "You come out of this parking lot—what speed?"

"I was creeping. Five, eight miles an hour—I just nosed out."

"You didn't see this fellow coming?"

"No. The curve was hiding him, I suppose. I don't know. But he was right on my bumper when I got into the lane." He bent forward, trying to change his position and ease the pain in his side. He had already arranged with his mind to disregard it. He stroked June's cheek. "At least she wasn't hurt," he said.

"I just lifted her out the back window."

The door got jammed. I looked her over. She's okay." The moustached Negro frowned, as if to make plain that he did not owe Herzog—a man with a loaded gun—any explanations whatever. For it was the possession of this clumsy horse pistol with two cartridges, not the accident, that would be the main charge against him.

"I'd have blown my brains out if anything happened to her."

The squatting cop, to judge by his silence, had no concern with what Moses might have done. To speak of any use of the revolver, even against himself, was not very smart. But he was still somewhat stunned and dizzy, brought down, as he pictured it, from his strange, spiraling flight of the last few days; and the shock, not to say desperation of this sudden drop. His head still swam. He decided that this foolishness must stop, or things would go even worse. Running to Chicago to protect his daughter, he almost killed her. Coming to offset the influence of Gersbach, and to give her the benefit of his own self—man and father, et cetera—what did he do but bang into a pole. And then the child saw him dragged out fainting, cut on the head, the revolver and the rubles sliding from his pocket. No, weakness, or sickness, with which he had copped a plea all his life (alternating with arrogance), his method of preserving equilibrium—the Herzog gyroscope—had no further utility. He seemed to have come to the end of that.

The driver of the Volkswagen utilities truck, in a green jumper, was giving his account of the accident. Moses tried to make out the letters stitched in yellow thread over his pocket. Was he from the gas company? No telling. He was laying the whole guilt on him, of course. It was very inventive—creative. The story deepened every moment. Oh, the grandeur of self-justification, thought Herzog. What genius it brought out in these mortals, even the most red-nosed. The ripples in this fellow's scalp followed a different pattern from the furrows in his forehead. You could make out his former hairline by this means. A certain number of skimpy hairs remained.

"He just cut out in front of me. No signal, nothing. Whyn't you give him the drunk test? That's drunken driving."

"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 give private cars the business," said Herzog.

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

"You mashed him pretty hard. That means you were crowdin' him."

"That's right. Looks like to me . . ." The senior policeman pointed two, three, five times with the rubber tip of his pencil before he spoke another word; he made you consider the road. "Looks to me, you were pushin' 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 to 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 gonna be booked for misdemeanor."

"This old gun?"

"Loaded. . . ."

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

They waited for him to get to his feet. Sharp-nosed, the Volkswagen-truck driver knitted his ginger brows at him and, under his red, angry stare, Herzog stood and then 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-accusa-

tion. For this big, nickel-plated pistol, whatever he had vaguely intended yesterday to do with it, he should have left today in the flight bag under Asphalter's sofa. When he had put on his jacket in the morning and felt the awkward weight on his chest, then and there he might have stopped being quixotic.

"What are we 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 spinning 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 two 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 goin', Moses. . . ." Grimly kind, the senior patrolman moved him along.

"She hasn't eaten lunch."

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

He shrugged and crumpled the stained necktie, letting it drop 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. Her face was tearless, clouded, and this was far worse. It hurt him. It tore his heart. As if Madeleine and Gersbach weren't enough, he had to come running with his eager love and excitement, hugging, kissing, periscopes, anxious emotions. She had to see him bleeding from the head. His eyes smarted, and he shut them with thumb and forefinger. The doors slammed. The motor gave a raw snort and raced smoothly, and the dry, 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 ugliness of 22nd Street. He recognized the familiar look of summer damnation. Chicago! He smelled the hot reek of chemicals and inks coming from the Donnelly plant. And here was South State Street; here movie distributors used to hang their garish posters: Tom Mix plunging 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 wavered when he got 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. Dreadful here. Armed men came in, got out. As he was ordered, he followed the stout Negro policeman with the huge hands and wide hips down the corridor. Others walked behind him.

He and June were taken into a big but close room, and he was being booked by another Negro policeman, a sergeant. He was well along in years, smoothly wrinkled. His creases were extruded, not internal. His color was dark yellow, Negro gold. He conferred with the arresting policeman and then looked at the gun, took out the two bullets, whispered more questions to the cop in shiny pants who bent down to whisper secretly.



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

"Okay, you," he then said to Moses. He put on his Ben Franklin spectacles, two colonial tablets in thin gold frames. He took up his pen.

"Name?"

"Herzog—Moses."

"Middle initial?"

"E. Elkanah."

"Address?"

"Not living in Chicago."

The sergeant, fairly patient, said again, "Address?"

"Ludenville, Mass., and New York City. Well, all right, Ludenville, Massachusetts. No street number."

"This your chile?"

"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. 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 Asphalter'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 bringin' 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, we'll 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, we'll bring her down here and see what she's got to say. If she's got a complaint in 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 Asphalter."

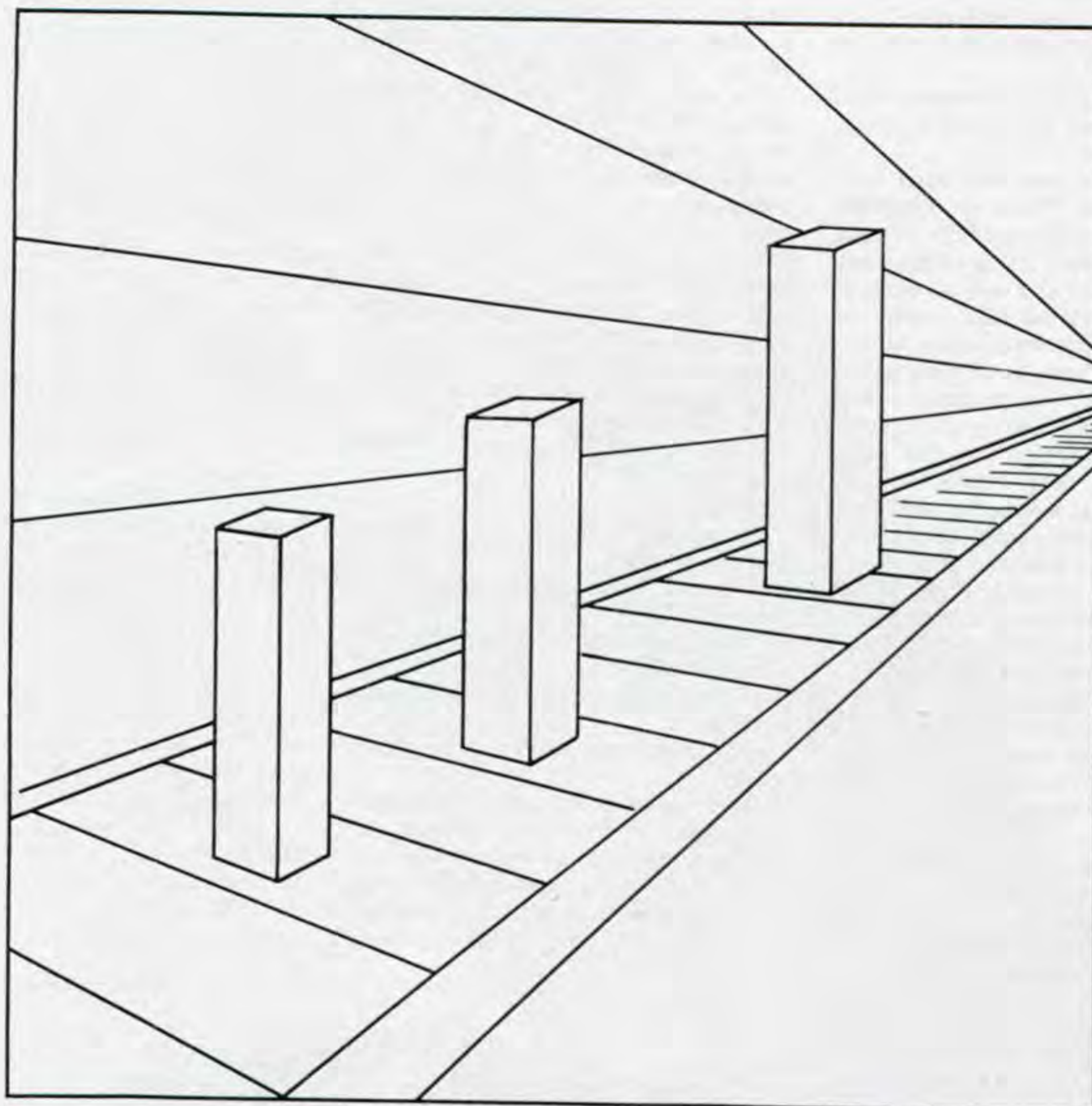
"The other name's Herzog," said the sergeant. "On Harper Avenue, ain't it?"

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

"It'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 Asphalter came here?"

"Go on, Jim."

The Negro marked the places 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 position, accident, one human being silently opening his heart to another. 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 coming. 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 sorry, sweetheart," he said. "Next time we'll go 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 settin' here." He motioned with the back of the hand, or with a wag of his wrist, and Moses turned and saw all sorts of people ranged behind him, along the walls. In fact, there were two men, he now noticed, loitering near, bondsmen by their natty appearance. He neutrally recognized that they were sizing him up as a 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 rented car? A man from out of 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 Shura. Some fellows always make a nice impression. I never had that ability. Due to my feelings. A passionate heart, a bad credit risk. Asked to make this practical judgment on myself, I wouldn't make it any differently.

His hands were clasped 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 wanted to scare somebody. You sore 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.

He tried to make more room for her. "There's this association that people belong to. They're the most of every type. There's the hairiest bald man, and the baldest hairy man."

"The fattest thin lady."

"And the thinnest fat woman. The tallest dwarf and the smallest giant. They're all in it. The weakest strong man, and the strongest weak man. The stupidest wise man and the smartest blockhead. Then they have things like crippled acrobats, and ugly beauties."

"And what do they do, Papa?"

"On Saturday night they have a dinner-dance. They have a contest."

"To tell each other apart."

"Yes, sweetheart. And if you can tell the hairiest bald man from the baldest hairy man, you get a prize."

Bless her, she enjoyed her father's nonsense, and he must amuse her. She leaned her head on his shoulder and smiled, drowsy, with small teeth.

The room was hot and close. Herzog, sitting off to one side, took in the case of the two men who had come up in the elevator with him. A pair of plainclothesmen giving testimony—the Vice Squad, he soon realized. They had brought a woman too. He hadn't noticed her before. A prostitute? Yes, obviously, for all her respectable middle-class airs. In spite of his own troubles, Herzog looked on and found himself listening keenly. The plainclothesman was saying, "They were having a hassle in this woman's room."

"Sip your milk, June dear," said Herzog. "Is it cold? Drink it nice and easy, darling."

"You heard them from the corridor?" said the sergeant. "What's it about?"

"This fellow was yelling about a pair of earrings."

"What about earrings? The ones she's wearing? Where'd you get them?"

"I bought them. From him. It was just business."

"On payments, which you didn't make."

Moses watched with interest, whispering occasionally to the child to divert her attention. The woman looked oddly familiar, despite her smeary makeup, emerald eye shadow, dyed hair, the thickening pride of her nose. He wanted very much

to ask her a question. Had she attended McKinley High School? Did she sing in the Glee Club? Me too! Don't you remember? Herzog? Herzog who gave the class oration—who spoke on Emerson?

"Papa, the milk won't come."

"Because you've chewed the straw. Let's get the kinks out of it."

"We got to get out of here, sergeant," said the jewel salesman. "We got people waiting for us."

The wives! thought Herzog. The wives were waiting!

"You two fellows related?"

The jewel salesman said, "He's my brother-in-law, just visiting from Louisville."

The wives, one of them a sister, were waiting. And he, too, Herzog, was waiting, light-headed with anticipation. Could this really be Carlotta from the Glee Club who sang the contralto solo in *Once More with Joy* (from Wagner)? It was not impossible.

At this moment Madeleine arrived. She came in, saying, "Where is my child!" Then she saw June on Herzog's lap and crossed the room quickly. "Come here to me, baby!" She lifted the milk container and put it aside, and took up the girl in her arms. Herzog felt the blood beating in his eardrums, and a great pressure at the back of the head. It was necessary that Madeleine should see him, but her look was devoid of intimate recognition. Coldly she turned away, her brow twitching. "Is the child all right?" she said.

The sergeant motioned to the Vice Squad to make way. "She's fine. If she had even a scratch on her we'd have taken her to Michael Reese." Madeleine examined June's arms, her legs, felt her with nervous hands. The sergeant beckoned to Moses. He came forward, and he and Mady faced each other across the desk.

She wore a light-blue linen suit and her hair fell loose behind her. The word to describe her conduct was *masterful*. Her heels had made a commanding noise clearly audible in this buzzing room. Herzog took a long look at her blue-eyed, straight, Byzantine profile, the small lips, the chin that pressed on the flesh beneath. Her color was deep, a sign with her that consciousness was running high. He

thought he could make out a certain thickening in her face—incipient coarseness. He hoped so. It was only right that some of Gersbach's grossness should rub 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 of recognition. "Yes," 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 marveled at her. He could not help admiring the perfection of her self-control. She never hesitated. When she took the milk from June she knew precisely where to drop the container, though she had been only an instant in the room. By now she had certainly made an inventory of all the objects on the desk, including the rubles, and gun, of course. She had never seen it, but she could identify the Ludeyville keys by the round magnetic clasp of the ring, and she would realize the pistol belonged to him. He knew her ways so well, all her airs, her patrician 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 restrain associations. That personal sweet-and-sour fragrance of hers, and her fire-blue eyes, her spiky glances and her small mouth ready with any wickedness would never again have the same power over him. Still, it gave him a headache merely to look at her. The pulses in his skull were quick and regular, like the tappets of an engine beating in their film of dark oil. He saw her with great vividness—the smoothness of her breast, bared by the square-cut dress, the smoothness of her legs, Indian brown. Her face, 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 bombé*; in other terms, a pedomorphic forehead. Ultimately unknowable, the processes behind it. See, Moses? We don't know one another. Even that Gersbach, call him any name you like—charlatan, psychopath, with his hot phony eyes and his clumsy cheeks, with the folds. He was unknowable. And I myself, the same. But hard ruthless action taken against a man is the assertion by evildoers 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 demand 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 definitions of me. Ah, this Madeleine is a strange person, to be so proud but somehow not quite clean—so beautiful but distorted by rage—such a mixed mind of pure diamond and Woolworth glass. And Gersbach who sucked up to me. For the symbiosis of it. Symbiosis and trash. And she, as sweet as cheap candy, and just as reminiscent of poison as chemical sweet acids. But I make no last judgment. That's for them, not me. I came 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 put this question.

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



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

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Herzog Visits Chicago

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

"He make any threats?"

Herzog waited, tense, for her reply. She would consider the support money—the rent. She was canny, a superbly cunning, very canny woman. But there was also the violence of her hatred, and that hatred had a fringe of insanity.

"No, not directly to me. 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. He knew what this moment 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 expression he had ever seen on her face. "It's his, isn't it?" she said. "The bullets, too?" He recognized the hard clear look of joy 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 frown.

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

"No," said Mady. "I didn't actually do that." She took a sharp breath. 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 photograph to the Hyde Park police."

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

"Shut up, Moses," said the sergeant. "What was that 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 today that belonged to an earlier period. As of today it was no longer characteristic. But he had to pay an earlier reckoning. When will you catch up with yourself! 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 troublemaker. He has a terrible temper."

"You 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 new look at her, 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, lady."

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, his tone was level. He was doing all he could to bring out the hidden Madeleine, the Madeleine he knew. As she

stared at him her color receded and her nose began to move very slightly. She seemed to realize that she must control her tic 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 expressed a total will that he should die. This was infinitely more than ordinary hatred. It was a vote for his nonexistence, he thought. He wondered whether the sergeant 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 child and go."

"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 Madeleine strode away, "I'll be back."

"I'll finish bookin' you now, Moses."

"I've got to post bond? How much?"

"Three 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 the time to note 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 austere nose and prominent lips for impassivity, and the many separate, infinitesimal gray curls on his scalp for dignity. His rugged fingers pointed to the phone booth.

Herzog was tired, dragged out, as he dialed his brother, but far from downcast. For some reason he believed he had done well. He was running true to form, yes; more mischief; and Will would have to bail him out. Still, he was not at all heavyhearted but, on the contrary, felt rather free. Perhaps he was too tired to be glum. That may have been it, after all—the metabolic wastes of fatigue (he was fond of these physiological explanations; this one came from Freud's essay 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 to life suddenly at hearing the old tone, the old name. He loved Will, Helen, even Shura, though his millions had made him remote. In the confinement of the metal booth the sweat burst out instantly on his neck.

"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 serious, 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 bucks bond, and I haven't got the money on me."

"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 soiled skivvies. The other was a Negro boy, not old enough to shave. He wore a

fawn-colored expensive suit and brown alligator shoes. Herzog said hello, but the boy chose not to answer. He stuck to his own misery, and looked away. Moses was sorry for him. He leaned against the bars, waiting. The wrong side of the bars—he felt it with his cheek. And here were the toilet bowl, the bare metal bunk, and the flies on the ceiling. This, Herzog realized, was not the sphere of *his* sins. He was merely passing through. Out in the streets, in American society, that was where he did his time. He sat down calmly on the bunk. Of course, he thought, he'd leave Chicago immediately, and he'd come back only when he was ready to do June good, genuine good. No more of this hectic, heart-rent, theatrical window-peering; no more collision, fainting, you-fight-'im-'e-cry encounters, confrontations. The drone of trouble coming from the cells and corridors, the bad smell of headquarters, the wretchedness of faces, the hand that turned the key of no better hope than the hand of this stuporous sleeper in his urine-stained underpants—the man who has eyes, nostrils, ears, let him hear, smell, see. The man who has intellect, heart, let him consider.

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, Mose."

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 Lake Wanda-wega? 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 it at someone than Papa was. You took his watch chain, didn't you? I remembered those old rubles 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 Ludeyville. 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, Mose, 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 Ludeyville?"

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

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

"Come by way of Ludeyville. 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.

Two men behind the man in the air-conditioned coveralls



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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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 them every 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 . . . contentment? Whom was he kidding, 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 grisly 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 chitin of melancholy, the by-product of his laboring brain, shone again.

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 kiddie 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, showed their beautiful jaggedness 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 massed 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 with 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 *Solitaria*. Then he looked over the paint situation—old brushes, thinners, 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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