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A SATYR'S ROMANCE

W.F.

Gerrald W. Miller



THE
TRAVELLER'S COMPANION
SERIES

FOR ADULT READERS

A Satyr's Romance

Gerrold Watkins

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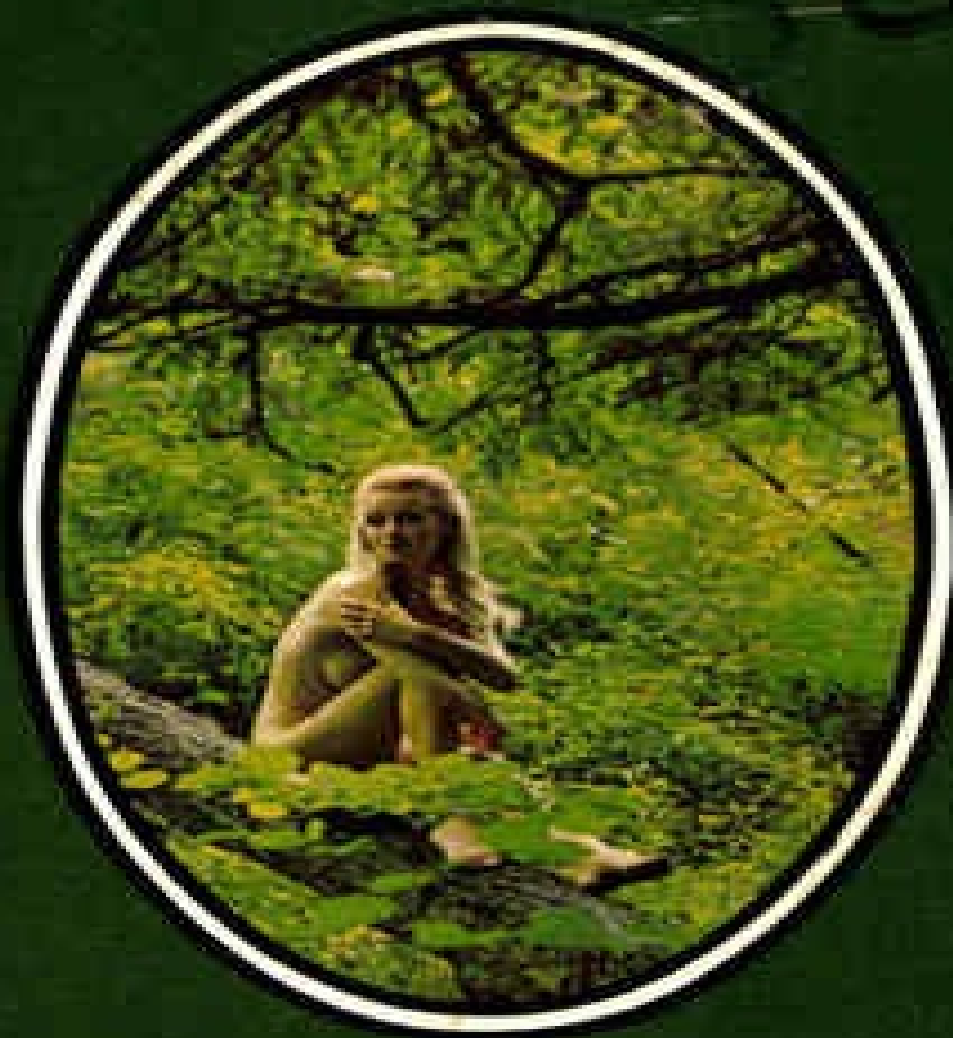
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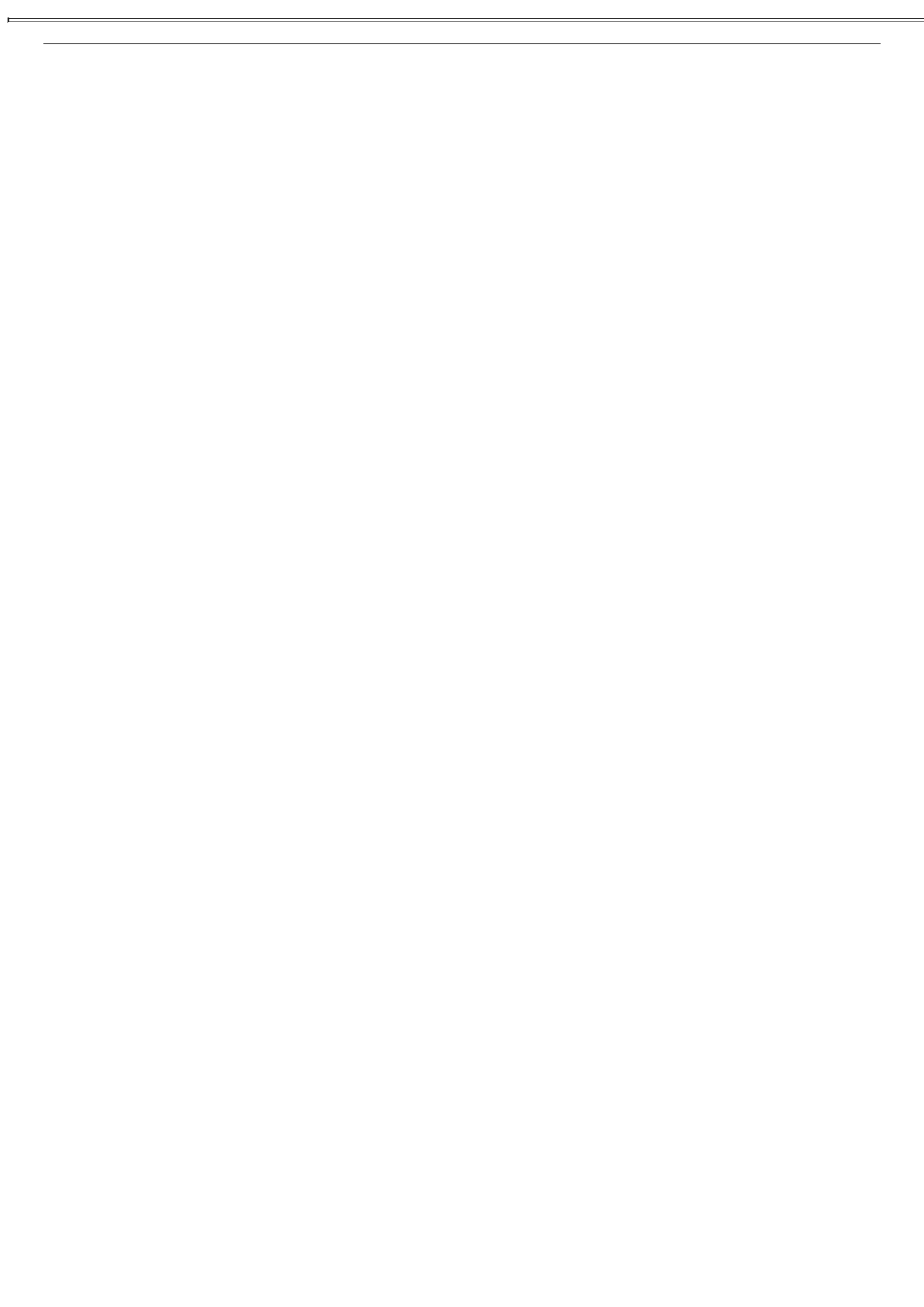
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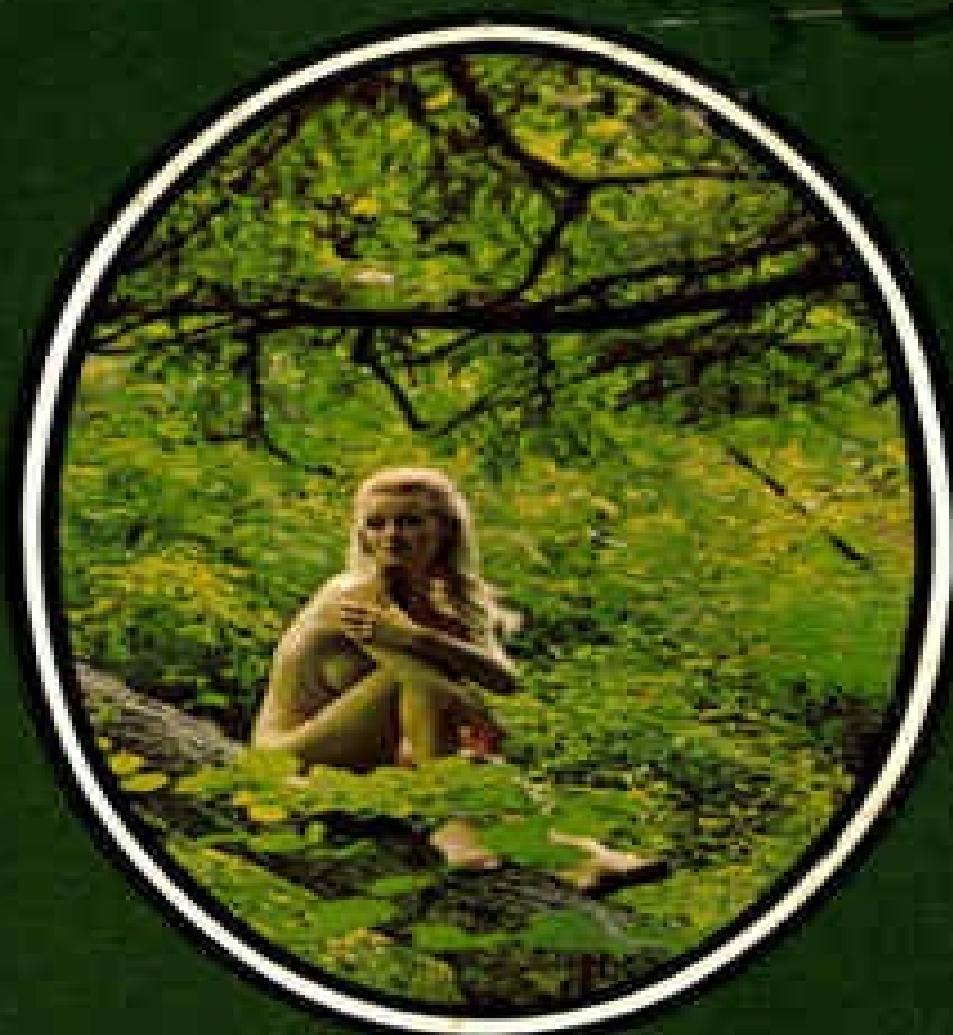


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This novel is for Stephanie

Jill: the good parts

January 2

A new year. Tra-la for the new year! Ring a bellow or two. Slam a knocker for the new decade while we are at it! Of course it is all the same: one year, ten years, the important thing is growth, nourishment, the extension of old habits, old methods into new terrain, an expanded sense of function. Superbly fulfilled as always—my groin literally sings of fulfillment—I look forward to the 1970s with no trepidation, knowing as always that my own destiny will move in solemn pace with the expanding decade: everything is in ascendance. Of course, there is always the possibility that so much fucking will make my prick fall off or become coated with a cheesy substance—I am thinking here of various horrifying medical texts I picked up recently at the library, masquerading as a graduate botanist looking for some “allied readings”—or cause the prostate to leak embarrassingly. This would be difficult to come to terms with if true; nevertheless, co-existent with all alternatives I shall certainly co-exist with this one—thank you, sir—it being a strange life after all. Highly in flux, almost impenetrable: we might all be snuffed out tomorrow or, for that matter, find that the steady inhalation of smog fumes in this city will render us wholesale without sexual powers or given only the ability to procreate monsters. Politicians! One must, nevertheless, take chances. The angle of the dangle is a matter that truly matters; to it, all thought, all action, all consideration must be subservient. This and little else is worth stating as truism; to engage in a bit of that small pedanticism to which I find myself gravely inclined during terminal dates in history.

History! The sweep of it overtakes us; we are all swimmers in the flotsam! A new year, a new decade, a new life style... and therefore a fresh diary. I have decided to continue my journal-keeping straight through the 1970's; the 1960 notes have been placed in a large, brown manila envelope and sent on their way to a publisher, surely they will sell and demand a sequel. I believe passionately in journals anyway; there is so little patience, so little knowledge, so little history seemingly available in these difficult times that one must do all that one can to hold off the welling flood of nihilism which would, in a rush, destroy all institutions, all accretion of culture, all sense of common respect for the past. By piling up these notes carefully, one by one, against the on-rushing tide of the century, I will perform my little gesture (or so I like to think) for a sense of perpetuation. Someday some historian will look back upon all of this from his shelter, breathing evenly through a gas mask and realize what a truly strange time it was. On the other hand, perhaps it is only vanity that drives me to these exercises: vanity and too much free time. I have been out of work too long, for instance, and my sexual accomplishments even to the contrary, there are long dull patches—color them blue and green subjectively—during which the rooms of this apartment seem somehow oppressive, the air strangely dense, the sound of the streets particularly clinical and the mind—then moving within toward its own channels—finds itself confronting in its corridors a small shrieking beast—color it brown with red spots—which in its peculiar jawings and ravings seems to signal, however faintly, the onrush of perversity. One would want to bugger the beast or at least to engage it in a long, slow squirming dialogue; something like this, of course, cannot possibly be, it having grim inferences for the mental health. It is better, far better, to try to systematize neurasthenia than to accede to it; and it is in this mild and gentle spirit with which I begin my new volume, a careful document on which I can float slowly this raft of purpose, navigating all of those difficult channels to a roseate conclusion. I expound

a bit.

Yes, a bit I do expound: I can see already the slow rise of rhetoric, the dangerous, circling wand of pun and metaphor. And I mean this to be a conservative work, a documentary tool, nothing more, coldly organized prologue to an auspicious decade. I must tone things down. I must be reasonable and precise. I must not allow impulse to desert virtue. I must keep an even course. I must pass strange beggars on the street without complaint. I must be wary of clap. I must massage my genitals at least twice daily so that they do not shrivel and desert me. I must nod briskly to old ladies. I must cut down my drinking and smoking. And so on. And on.

I was talking about New Year's Eve.

Well, of course I was talking about New Year's Eve; it was only some twenty-four hours ago or a little more and as was the case so many times before, I found myself once again in Times Square, the crossroads of the world, surrounded to the right and left, bottom and center, up and down by perhaps some 200,000 companions: some of them drunk, some of them sober, some of them old, most of them young, a few attractive, not a few of them repulsive, all of us bound together in the cold by the common apprehension—not to say human warmth of clustering and in the clutter of lights, the screams of the sirens, the slow whining drone of the overhead lights, television equipment, clubs of cops and the whinny of horse we stood to let the New Year in, a golden ball at a far range our guide, the clutch of our bottles the symbol, and the ball began to fall slowly, slowly, then with increasing speed, moving down toward that apocalyptic moment of connection which more than anything else both warns and reassures us of our mortality and, at that precise moment, some son of a bitch set off a firecracker behind me. I was most deafened and confused, and found myself instantly sweating warmly within my grey tweed overcoat, my tight hat, my silken scarf that I had cast on so idly only hours before around the various chiseled delicacies of throat and feature. “You bastard,” I said without turning and found, as if in response, a lovely young blonde girl tossed to my arms, stretching, as a matter of fact, almost perpendicular to my body, her eyes closed, her features expanding evenly, a slow flush moving up and down almost idly on her cheeks. She had fainted, it would seem.

“I'm sorry,” a voice to my rear was saying, “it just kind of got away from me, the little son of a bitch,” and I bent my neck in order to see this dangerous idiot, unable to confront him full-face of course because of the lovely burden now slowly collapsing her full weight against me. “I didn't mean to excite anyone; I didn't want to hurt—“And then there was the sound of impact, something like a firecracker meeting features and I heard no more. A hearty madman disengaged himself from some hubbub behind me, came past me briskly, flexing his knuckles and regarding his hand with some satisfaction. “You've got to watch these college kids,” he said absently and adding some more generalized curse thus pranced from my life forever, taking with him, no doubt, any possibility of explanation for my good fortune, this sudden explosion of luck which had been so abruptly visited upon me, almost as if the heavens and the populace itself had collaborated in a sudden joint decision to recognize my gifts and potential to their fullest worth and had thus passed on to me, if rather crudely, a contribution to my general well-being in light of my well-performed past services to the cause of mankind.

For it was good fortune; there is no question about that whatsoever, the kind of fortune I have had very rarely in my life and then always brought about by a kind of accident—as if I had intercepted a piece of luck duly assigned to someone else. The girl ground herself absently against me, stirred, rubbed her eyes with small, well-formed hands ungloved for all the cold and then looked up at me with a certain poignance and wistfulness which would have been moving if they had not been so quickly wiped out by confusion and the kind of slow, roiling shock which is always so disturbing to see in them; they can only have aplomb when they have it but when it is lost the loss is complete. As if I could ever do the

any harm. As if it were not only love's first load that I carry for them, forever, forever! As if I did not depend upon them, all of them, for my very sustenance and sense of purpose.

"Oh," she said in a low, modulated voice. "Oh, my God, I think I've fainted. What happened? What was that terrible noise?"

"It was a firecracker, I think," I said. "Don't move. Just stay there. I'm a graduate botanist with some very extensive medical background and a good knowledge of fainting. I've seen some terrible cases where if people fainting. I've seen some terrible cases where if people tried something like that dreadful things happen. Pardon my syntax, I seem to be a bit excited. Usually I parse."

"Parse?"

"Parse. Just relax now and let me hold onto you. I think you'll be fine." My efforts, even at the early stage of our relationship, were already dedicated toward a sense of retention then: one thing that I have never done—granting the fact that good luck finds me by accident and always with a kind of sullen overcast, as if having found itself cheated of recipient it will make itself as difficult as possible—is to forsake opportunities.

"Where are my girl friends?"

"Your what?"

"I came here with my girl friends. They were just here a minute ago when that sound went off. Where did they go, anyway?"

"I don't know," I said and to my pleasure was able to say this with a certain honesty, a certain sense of rising conviction which added pleasure to my insistence; in a stroke she had already denied what was, for me, the only element which could have instantly aborted our eventual connection: that is, the presence of an escort. I had already pictured him, a dull blond man chewing gum wearily, the light of intelligence slowly sinking like a ship behind his stunned and fluttering eyes, one hand outstretched to pull her from my grasp and out of her faint, but if she had none... if indeed, this startlingly attractive girl had come to Times Square alone on New Year's Eve or better yet, in the company of girl friends similarly bored and lonely, then there could be nothing to lay between me and the eventual accomplishment other than my own bumbblings and haste which I knew I would be able to control. This was, after all, the start of a new decade. "I honestly don't know where your girl friends are," I had said meanwhile. "It's a big crowd, you see, and people move around quite a bit in it."

"But they were just here a moment ago," she said and seemed upon the verge of commencing a serious series of efforts to locate them; at that precise moment, however—oh accident of collaborative biology!—she swooned again and fell into my arms with a heaviness even more fervent than the first time, collapsing against me indeed in such an extremity of weight that if the soporific could be classified as the enthusiastic she certainly would have fucked me on the spot. At that moment, most instinctively, I clasped my arms around her and drew the full heaviness of her within me, feeling for the first time the faint perception of the outlines of her body, smooth and soft; heavy and with a peculiar lushness it was as if I was feeling them here at that moment, apart from clothing, apart from the scene, even separated from any question of context. Oh, the joys of frottage! Would that we would commit frottage upon the most unspeakable of our ambitions and be done with it! Context, context, the enemy of the natural being!

It is difficult to communicate any true sense of my responses at that time. Oh, my excitement, my trepidation, my glee, my unease! Oh, if it were only possible to use this pen to make—instead of words—certain figures, perhaps I would sketch in a series of representations: circles, stick pictures, spheres invaded by pointed objects, all of this doing far better than the poor medium of rhetoric even could to arrive at some conviction of what sped through me so recently. But one must use the word;

is, of course, the only means available to me at the present time. I make no apologies for what I did then. I made hasty efforts to leave the vicinity while not losing possession of the girl, all the time holding onto a certain muffled dignity and sense of aplomb which, I have been assured, is almost always superb and the secret of whatever moderate—and I do not underrate them—successes I have had. Unfortunately, under the conditions of the density of the crowd, the weight of the package, the pressures of the moment, it amounted almost immediately toward a kind of excruciating waddle which was my primary means of navigation out of there, a waddle not unwitnessed, of course, by the beaming eyes of thousands of spectators, almost all of them as drunk as I but not a one of them nearly so involved. I found the sweat to which I have already referred increasing and becoming somehow rhythmic, a slow, gleaming sense of pallor moving up and down my cheeks... but all the time I was moving, moving, my humble object and I speeding toward the subway, my destination my home, my considerations even at this hour strictly of the most concrete kind. How she stirred in my arms! How her little eyes blinked! How I feared she would desert me! Oh, all of this, it is almost too difficult to communicate; the anguish of the moment, the uncertainty of the outcome, the scream of horns, wick of flight, drum of traffic, patter of wind. Nevertheless, I did it. Yes, I did it. I led her all the way down the steps of the subway station and, having tokens already in hand—these were of the old type, the presumed strike not having yet been called or settled—was able to escort her through by the subterfuge of nodding at the clerk in such a way as to indicate that she was drunk and I, her drunk faithful escort, was merely taking her on her way home. At the second flight of stairs, approaching the trains themselves, there was something approaching a minor crisis when her eyes opened with a lolling roll and it seemed that she would, for one instant, attempt to resist my gentle probe and push but then, with a moan, she collapsed against me again and juggling her in my arms like heavy swelling fruit, I was able to negotiate this second flight as well and come onto the nearly deserted platform where, shortly, a train appeared and onto which train we proceeded. I mean, we got. The transit strike, incidentally, was avoided by last-minute negotiations.

It was then, in the empty train itself, roaring and rattling comfortably uptown that the true circumstances of my feat began to assault me for the first time; what I had done unquestionably—what I was still doing as a matter of fact—was nothing less than the act of abduction of a strange girl, abduction being a crime punishable in this state by not less than five nor more than twenty years. Yet my criminality could not have been further from my thoughts; my only interests were succor, release, assistance, possibly communication. On this declaration I now repose. My intentions, although not strictly honorable, had been formed only in the instancy of a moment which had occurred coincidentally and had it not occurred it is certainly against the grain of my nature to abduct strange girls from familiar surroundings. Gentlemen, my whole record speaks this! My entire sexual biography! Every element of psychology, cell of heredity within me shrieks a wistful song of gentility; a horror of the ungracious, forcible act. Surely I do not need to further justify myself, even when the hilarious consequences of my evening's work now lie spread before me, a virtual blank over the decade, and compel me to walk carefully amidst this rubble lest, by a false step, I bring upon myself a certain attitude which would be the very obverse of what I now seek... calm, tranquillity, that is.

No: no abduction, no rape, no forcible entry, no assault, nothing at all, merely the simple peasant's desire to take advantage of a piece of good luck lest, by the ignoring of it, luck should desert me for all time. Had I seen the girl's friends, had the girl not swooned for a second time, had she not swooned the first time, had a ruddy-cheeked escort, in ascot, muffler and top hat intervened to take her off my hands... Had any or all of these things happened, I certainly would not have worked myself into the

position. Nevertheless, what could I have done? How could it have been otherwise? How could things to any different pass arrive? I understand, of course, that these are questions often raised in more dreadful historic circumstances.

The train moved with gathering speed past 50th street, past 59th, heading like a bird or an arrow for 72nd, my very stop, two blocks from which these simple rooms are presently located. As it did so, some feat of engineering or possibly only the lapse of time, caused the girl to awaken for the third time that day and, as she did so, as she turned towards me for the first time with a kind of full knowledge in her eyes, with the first flush of implication guiding her mouth toward her cheeks in a high, pursed concentration which might, for all I know, have been preliminary to a rant, I faced myself on the instant with one of the few truly crucial decisions of my strange and lamentable career—that is to say, the necessity to keep the girl with me while at the same time doing nothing so forceful as to lead to flight. “What's going on?” she said. “I don't know where I am. Is this the subway?”

“Yes; yes; we're on the subway. I thought it would be best to get you out of that crowd. You see—”

“Well,” she said, “well, what right did you have doing something like that?” And sat up with a jerk so abrupt it took all of my energies, indeed, all of my concentration, to keep the pose from falling fully askew to disastrous outcome. “You could have been severely injured,” I said. “Even hurt, for that matter. That's an enormous crowd in Times Square; every lunatic in the city comes out looking for trouble and if you do get separated—”

“Where's the firecracker?”

“I don't know,” I said and risked a small caressing gesture on the nape of her exposed and adorable neck; a fine white surface it was indeed, gleaming with far more purpose than her muddled features could yet assume. “It went off somewhere behind us.”

“And now you're taking me home on the subway.”

“That's right.”

“To your home.”

“It seemed the nearest and the safest place to go. After all, I don't know where you live. You had a dangerous medical shock and—”

“Will you try to fuck me?” she asked and blinked and the cars wept to a halt and we were at 72nd street, the groaning and gasping of air infusing the empty space around us as the doors sighed back and the motorman, giving us a pointless glare, shuffled from a crouch in the corner to create certain banging noises in a hidden sector of the car.

“No,” I said. “Now, come on; that has nothing to do with it at all. Actually, I have this very strange condition, I wouldn't call it a disease but it limits my function; well, it's all too embarrassing, so another time I'll tell you,” and pulled her unresistingly to her feet. “You've got to understand that I'm only thinking of you,” I added, and guided her from the car, her weight somehow cooperating with rather than working against, me and that is how we became disgorged upon the scant platform at 72nd street on the IRT West Side subway. The uptown side. The train hissed away, the motorman having deserted his cubicle to fix us with a mighty wink as he pushed and pulled handles, having somewhat the aspect of a man tugging hugely on lavatory chains as the train moved slowly away. “A seduction not for me,” I said sadly. “I just wanted to make sure that you wouldn't get hurt in that crowd; it's really a fantastic—”

“Why weren't you with someone there?” she said with engaging clarity. “How come you were alone? Are you one of those nuts that people are always talking about? The New York ones that go to strange places and feel up girl's asses?”

“Asses?”

“And the other parts too. The breasts and the thighs. I read all about it in this series report in the New York Post. It warned—”

“I should say not,” I said. “I happen to have had a lovely date prepared but my girl friend—she practically my fiancée as a matter of fact—my girl friend, I said, came down with a miserable cold and couldn't make it. She invited me over but I didn't want to be contagious; that's when a cold is—the first days, you know. So all I had to look forward to was spending an evening on my novel and on New Year's Eve I hardly think that's an appropriate gesture; the whole decade is changing, you know, and besides the novel has hit something of a snag. I'm a writer, you see? It's a western, this novel, I'm something of a pulp writer in my spare time, I supplement my income from botany that way and until my real novel sells I want to write only junk for the fast buck.” I must say that I have something of a tendency to rant under pressure, an affliction that I share with most American politicians although hardly to such advantages and long-term benefit. “But that's neither here nor there; the thing is that I thought I'd go down and see the New Year in at Times Square because you can get your best insights in crowds and get first-hand material and that's why I happened to be there. And then there was the accident with the firecracker and you fainted in my arms and we couldn't find any of your girl friends so the safest thing to do was to get you out of there, out of that crush, because they get pretty wild down there after midnight on New Year, there's a lot of looting and so on. And then we came up here and here we are.”

“Ah,” she said with a slow, gathering poise, and began to fumble in the large grey pockets of her overcoat; what she took out, to my surprise, was a mirror and she opened it in front of her, inspected herself carefully and then, with one of those absent, pondering, lip-curling nods which women seem to give themselves when they are under investigation, shrugged and flipped the case away. “And now you want me to go to your apartment,” she said. “Just like that.”

“Just like what?”

“I don't know why not. Are you going to come on strong though the minute you close the door?”

“We already went through that,” I said. “I explained all of it to you. Now look,” I said with that affected jauntiness which is one of my very best faces, a combination of irony and whimsy which, in the proper circumstances, is as close as I can come to a true gradation of mood, swinging through to a high, clear space now because I began to see an end to it. “Do I look like a rapist?” And took her by the arm without further ado, half-led, half-prompted her from the subway platform, up the flight of stairs and into the cold, stinging air of the New Year itself, all of it coming down with humidity and a blankness, wrapping us into the chill in a sudden intimacy as she gasped and folded herself against me, moving into my coat. “Oh, it's cold,” she said. “It's terribly terribly cold.” And I said, “Yes, it is, but it's only a little walk to my apartment now,” and took her west, along 72nd Street, toward the river; and the whole un-resistant weight of her, stunned by the cold, stunned by my briskness, began to fold around me with such a certain submissiveness, such a great suggestion of softness that I could feel an emotion close to love rising within me, love for her vulnerability if nothing else, all of it heightened by sex, the smell of her, the perception of the planes of her cheek tilted toward the moon. “Oh, it's cold, Goddamn it,” she muttered, “it's so terribly cold.” And I mumbled something abstractly comforting and so we came into my apartment building, all seventeen floors of it, shaking off the weather as we came into the lobby, her hand still dangling in mine; and I led her down the stairs toward the basement as for the first time, however subtly, she balked. “Where do you live?” she said. “In here?”

“Of course.”

“In the basement?”

“Right... this way. Right near the boiler: you can hear it shuddering like a big heart in the night. Except when it freezes up.”

“I never heard of anyone living in the basement of one of these buildings before.”

“The superintendent used to live here,” I said. “He lived here until October but then he demanded the penthouse because he said he and his wife needed more room. It was either that or he quits so they gave the tenant up there a summary eviction and moved him. That meant the basement was open again—that's how I got it. I just moved right on down from the second floor to save sixty dollars a month rent. It isn't too bad and the boiler keeps things so hot down there that there's no roach problem. You'd be surprised at the degree of—”

“God,” she said, “it's loud!” And so indeed it was because it is necessary to pass the boiler in order to reach my two-room apartment at the rear of the cellar—this is where I lay out the floor plan, so I speak of this little memorial—and the sound of heating water, rushing steam, leaping figures, compressed oil was almost unbearable as we scurried by, the flames from the apparatus moving on with such speed and force—it has a defective gauge—that a stray wisp of clothing or girl would have been in danger if it had happened into an intricate but predictable kind of luck. She moaned, putting her hands over her ears and ran ahead of me; I followed her at a slight remove, observing with some delight the convulsions of her ass, the sedentary twitch of her buttocks as they receded from me; even clad in thick winter's grey this was apparently a girl for the ages, or at least for the evening; certain subtleties of construction which had evaded me to now seemed to emblazon themselves like moving ticker tapes across my brain as I followed her, keys extended, one hand moving caressingly to touch the notch as I pursued her to my door, blocked her deftly against the panels and then eased her in with a swift, careless clout of belly, following her to slam, bolt and double-chain the door. One cannot be too safe in these New York apartment houses, particularly on the West Side and in such close proximity to the boiler room. One of these days a disgruntled ex-tenant is going to come down here, I am sure, with several shimmering packets of nitroglycerin and succeed in sending not only the residents of the building but that aged boiler itself to a destiny so deserved and so lurking as to make any of this overdue.

“It's quieter in here,” she said unnecessarily as I stamped feet, flicked lights, mumbled greetings, gave the parakeet cage a brisk returning nudge, went into the kitchen to make sure that all of my notes, jottings and cryptograms were still in order. You never can tell. “You wouldn't think from the outside that there would be any peace in here but—”

“They put up double-proofed walls,” I said, moving gracefully behind her and taking off her coat with a whisk, all of this rendered facile by the fact that she had somehow opened the buttons already. “The superintendent insisted on it and you know the truth about those New York superintendents.”

“No, I don't,” she said with a sudden, rather charming poignance which all at once moved me, not in the way I had already been struck by her (which, when you come right down to it had been rather banal and conventional—excellent impulses, strongly crystallized of course, but still very much of the ordinary, nothing to differentiate this from a hundred other such instances) but toward a kind of need to envelop without holding, so to speak. “I've only been in New York about three weeks, you see, and I was living at a hotel. So I couldn't tell you.”

“Really? Just three weeks?”

“That's all. I mean, I'm not ashamed of it or anything like that; it's just the way that things work out.”

“I've been in New York for thirty-five years,” I said. “I don't think I know much more than you do. Oh, then you're thirty-five years old?”

“Well, close enough to it. Actually, I came here when I was a couple of years. Before then, my parents lived on the continent in a rather disastrous way. But that really isn't very important and besides they haven't been around for quite a while now.”

“Oh,” she said vaguely. “I'm sorry I'm sure.”

“I don't mean death. They live in Brooklyn now as a matter of fact—in a very old hotel. I mean that there simply isn't much contact among us, that's all. We never got along too terribly well.”

“I'm sorry about that, too.”

“But forget it,” I said and put on, with a feeling of quick weariness, the faithful mantle of cheerfulness, briskness, purpose; that vital, cherished compound which must always precede even the most modest of my successes. “That has nothing to do with the holiday. The spirit of the season! The necessity of the loss! The flight of time and the adventure of mortality! A drink! What can I get you to drink? I have the usual—

“Oh, I don't really drink. I mean, not seriously or anything like that. I mean, I can only stay a few minutes, really; it was awfully nice of you to pick me up the way you did and save me from the noise or something but my girl friends will be really worried about me if they don't hear and I will have to go back to the hotel and—”

“What's your name?”

“Huh?”

“I said, what's your name? My name is Harry Walters and I'm kind of a civil servant aside from the botany and the novel writing. I just do that for the money. Shouldn't we know who we are, already?”

“Oh,” she said. “I'm Rona. Rona—uh—Smith. I'm not really anything just now, but I'm an actress who worked in stock and upstate and—”

“I'm delighted to meet you, Rona,” I said and extended a hand, grazed her palm, winked at her, then, on vagrant memory, impulse—color it red—drew her against me with an even pressure and pushed my lips against the cool plane of her forehead, dropping them down then to make conjunction with her nose and moving past her mouth by surprise, took the point of her chin in my teeth, nipped it once and then moved her away. “Hello.”

“Listen,” she said. “My girl friends. My girl friends will be—”

“Rona Smith,” I said, “let us begin our relationship at this time of the new year, the new decade, with that spirit of honesty, frankness and meaningful communication which made this country great before it capered onto the wrong path not so many years ago when it neglected to leave its troops in Europe at the end of World War II and exterminate Stalin and the rising brute horde of stinking communists. You have no girl friends.

“There are no girl friends.”

“What?”

“There are no girl friends,” I said. “None at all, Rona,” and took the graceful, spare slackness of her upper arms in my hands, began to knead them slowly, a delightful gesture which has in the past given me almost as much pleasure as I obtained from her then. I have neglected to mention—how could I have neglected to mention?—that she was wearing a black sleeveless dress, high at the collar, simple strand of pearls, the dead whiteness of her skin contrasting most meaningfully, albeit bleakly, with the silk and, as is often the case in such dresses, witchery of construction, making the breasts seem higher, firmer and fuller than they often turn out to be, even a suspicion of nipple winking at me under the cloth. The dress was very short, falling somewhere above the knee. An extraordinary looking girl, so I must remember to include such details earlier on in the future; this diary is, after all, intended as a document of inclusiveness.

It must be disciplined!

It must be concrete!

It must be objectified!

It must speak to the point!

It is not subjective; oh, no, gentlemen, there is no such thing as psychopathology. Clear lucidity, reason: the light of understanding, the clear, swinging dawn of the decade. Better fucks, clearer mind, calm genitals, sweet breasts, antiseptic cunts! Reasonable, gentlemen, reasonable! Pain! Pleasure! Sweetness! Amelioration!

I see where I had best pause and have a drink or two before I continue this. Things are starting to come somewhat less coherently than I had hoped. I will have a seven and seven on the rocks and prepare myself then to describe how I fucked her. She was a splendid fuck and

Somewhat later

Considerably better and back to this now. It is possible that my rather agitated state of a few hours past was merely a consequence of events which have recently occurred rather than tracing back to any deeply sequestered and long-held fault of personality. I am not of inferior stock but on the contrary have a certain psychic sturdiness which allows me to resist almost all those temptations toward a breakdown which would be the dissolution of a lesser man. At any rate.

Seven and sevens are, of course, a drink for juveniles but nothing, taken to excess, can be said to be against maturity and I have had a good many—say, seven or eight. There is something about the nature of the seven and seven, a sensual stickiness—color it limpid—perhaps it is only the nostalgia which I am referring, the strange nostalgia of the associations which this exciting mixture brings back to me. One thinks of fraternity rushes, cautious expeditions to a bar while still in one's middle teens, the taste of stolen sweets in the back seat of a car with a girl too young, a car too old, an evening too late, a drink too mild... I wander.

I was going to speak of the fucking of her.

Well, ho! And right to it; there is no point in attempting discretion—this is, after all, a private document circulated privately for modest personal reasons—nor in attempting that kind of careful structure and ordering found in the “socially redeeming” novel, that kind of book in which both protagonists can come to the matching of genitals only if they have “reasons,” an “identity,” “history,” a set of explicit rationalizations for this otherwise amazing conduct. Enough of these! Enough of this poison and pollution! Enough of these frail, wandering books, some long, some short, all of which would further propound the illusion that fucking is any more meaningful, prolonged, sacramental than a random meal or the retchings of the fervid drunk over an incautious counter. I do not believe that these “serious” and “socially important” works have done us more damage than any other given item in the popular culture; how many pretty girls, otherwise perfectly suited to the possibilities and function, have been led to loss and total misdirection of purpose simply by junk like this, junk turned out by mindless writers and ignorant publishers in search not only of “the fast buck” but of “reviews” in which these girls, perfectly valid material from the start, found themselves

coached to neuroses, obstruction and disentanglement by a point of view propitiated in which the simple act of glands was raised to the holy altar of Relationship—to enormous loss for all the parties involved. No, enough of this, enough of this indeed: this work, being private, need be by no means “socially redeeming” or “carefully structured” but can, in fact, concentrate on things more important and useful: that is to say, it can tell the truth. I am very high on the truth, gentlemen. I wish that there were a little bit more of it in our world or at least a little less of its obstruction. I do not mean to get into politics here.

So, I fucked her.

Our clothes came off with a tumble and a wink; one moment I was solemnly coaching her to an admission and the next, with almost no sense of transition whatsoever, all the clothing had fallen away and we were on the bed, naked, pumping heavily, mouth to mouth, joint to joint, trying to join one another in that oldest and most necessary of all acts while, due to some strange power failure, the lights in my apartment flickered and tumbled and the refrigerator went on with a mechanical click which encouraged the immediate and further insertion of my prick into her delicious and quivering cunt. Ah, yes. Ah, yes!

“This is incredible,” she said, and “I don't even know you,” and “I can't understand what we're doing,” and all the time I was assisting her with the removal of clothing (all right, all right, it didn't quite fold away; I helped her with it; there is no great shame in this; besides she wanted me to) and I did this I talked to her, soothingly and at great length, all the time flipping a breast, squeezing a thigh, encouraging her with my eyes to respond to my feelings of ardor with all the shallow requisites of which she was capable. “Oh, Rona,” I said to her, “let's stop this, let's stop this simple dissemblance; it means nothing, there's no future in it; it isn't fair to either of us. Here we are, just the two of us, alone in my apartment on a New Year's Eve and a very comfortable and eloquent apartment it is indeed, almost as comfortable and eloquent as its speaker although a damned sight more temperate, and there is no point, simply no point, in letting social circumstances or lies get between the two of us and the magic we can make with our limbs on this very bed. We have within us, you see, this gift: the gift is the ability to create ecstasy for, being human, we carry within ourselves both the best and worst of all potentials and can realize either, are driven so often to the worst because that seems the only ability which we are allowed to bring into play but there is another part, a world of wonder, terror, beauty and excitement in which, cleaving nipple to nipple, heart to joint, navel to pubis we can rise far beyond the simple and pointless obligations of the social circumstance and by their joining obliterate them. Oh, you have wonderful breasts, really wonderful, I've never seen anything like them; they seem to come up rather than out, you must have done exercises to make them that way or perhaps I am only imagining that and cannot believe their reality; you must have a darling cunt to oh, let me take a look at it, there, just let's get these down now, oh, look at it, look at it,” and at that point or shortly thereafter interrupted my speech by burying myself to a point somewhat slightly beyond the lips in her cunt which was indeed of a certain majesty although not nearly as small as I would have wanted to think or as she might have permitted me to convince her. Because of my effort at this time to jam both tongue and teeth all the way up her hole, my speech was cut off and my hearing as well seemed to suffer because I could hear her only dimly and as if from a great distance murmuring things like “Oh, don't, and “This is impossible,” and again, “I don't even know who you are,” and in some attempt to bring matters to a kind of fruition I desisted from my vigorous eating of her just long enough to pick her up, sprawl her over my shoulder and carry her to the cot where I put her down heavily and then divested myself of my own clothes in a flash, rushing down to meet her as she rose, either to meet me or in search of her own garments. In any event, our contact, shocking and

with a slightly corporeal bump was so harsh as to forestall any efforts she might have made to leave the couch and, without much further thought, I took my tool in my hands—which had grown enormous proportions—not my hands, of course, the tool; my hands are delicate and white, neatly shaped and even at the fingernails, and in no way whatsoever are the hands of a compulsive masturbator and showed it to her with a flourish—the tool I mean, catching certain absent dazzles and twinkles of light in its uncircumcised folds which glittered in a way I hoped she would find as enticing as I always did myself and then bobbed it a few inches above her open and busily speaking mouth indicating with a series of flourishes what I suppose might be called in one of those novels of social redemption my “perverse” desires. “Oh, no,” she said with a moan and thrashed against me. “I don’t do anything like that, not on the first date anyway,” and I brandished a finger at the calendar on the wall, indicating with my motion that this was no ordinary first date but was as a matter of fact the inaugural encounter of a decade, to be inevitably marked by such dramas and convulsions as we could but dimly apperceive and said, “Yes, yes, you want to, you know you do and besides that, it’s a very rare girl, a very rare girl, mind you, who I will permit to do this until I know her very well,” and with no further comment, slid it down her mouth caught in mid of and shoved it down the slick warmth of her throat to its full and majestic penetration of some five and three-quarter inches in the erect state and when she gathered around me instinctively began to pump mildly, encouraging not so much the flow of semen as the rise of some procreative substance special to the esophagus and other digestive organs, a much milder concoction to be sure—one specially prepared for the act of generation done out of its normal orifice. I am a man to fit to all occasions.

I have, as a matter of fact, have had for a long time, the fantasy that I have not one breed of seminal fluid as is the case with “normal” males but indeed five or six, a different brand for each occasion: there is the usual acrid blend of course for the usual, spontaneous occasions, there is a sweet and lightly-scented kind, bereft of actual sperm, for the act of fellatio, there is a hard, winy substance smelling faintly of oak and old cellars for buggery, and then, for various notions like ears, armpits or breasts there is a thin, roseate substance with the consistency of skimmed milk, only lightly perfumed which is meant to reside with the female flesh and indeed brighten it and render it more wholesome and desirable in the morning’s light. I realize, of course, that this is nothing other than “wild imaginings” and that actually, no more gifted than other men, I can slip into them only the same ordinary banal substance, firm at the beginning and loose at the end; but if the mind is allowed to control the actions of the involuntary nervous systems as we all know that someday it will do—modern physical sciences are performing wonders—then surely my idea must be an inevitability. In any event, no wine, no champagne, no firm, glowing foreign beer could have had the brightness and irresistibility of the substance which I allowed myself to think was bubbling merrily in my veins as I slid my cock gently up and down her throat, bumping her a little bit with my knees as I did so, to encourage her toward reciprocal action.

Reciprocity, gentlemen, reciprocity! The giving back unto the giver as it is given with its own interest! It is this which is needed more desperately than any other quality in this sad, ruined old world today and so I encouraged her to replace my offering with one of her own, put my hands gently around her wrists, drew them up, her hands that is, to the pendant charm of my wavering balls and then she cupped them for me, cupped them with a gentle gesture which belied any lack of experience which she might later protest and—as she was doing this—encircling them, squeezing them, bringing them up with a gentle swinging gesture until they seemed to conjoin their congestion with the very implosion of prick which was central to my being, she was saying, “But I don’t even know you, I don’t even know you at all, I never do this with people that I can’t say I know.” And I said to her with considerable

pedanticism, at least in relationship to the rather exciting juxtaposition of hands-and-cock. “But why worry about that, my dear sweet, I mean, Rona, where did you ever read or hear that it was necessary for people to know each other in order to enjoy fucking?” And she said in a dim flat wee voice so small that it might have been miles and miles away from me and perhaps indeed it was, “But the movies, that's what they say in the movies.” And at this gentle admission tenderness filled my heart, semen my prick, love and remorse my chest, convulsions my scrotum and I ejaculated into the swoon of her hands an unusual agglomeration of semen, tears, joy, remorse, the frail white slave containing these gifts dripping thinly to her wrists and then to the smooth, flat sheen of her belly where it lay, congeal against her seat. Oh, my shame, gentlemen, my embarrassment, my almost sophomore disrapture as she looked upon me then with a glance both condescending and pitying and—removing her hands to run them down the strange pool on her belly—said, “Oh, for God's sake,” in the most moving tone imaginable; it was as Elizabeth Taylor or perhaps Sophia Loren might have said it to a strange masher in a bar making obscene gestures in the presence of husband and cameramen alike. “Oh, dear God, I never knew of anything like this! Say it couldn't happen!” And I said, “Oh, my dear, there is so, so much more in this world and time as well than could be imagined in all the stars and bars of your philosophy!” and fell upon her, there to join her lips against mine and sealed in the ancient compact comprised of woe, mystery and excitation I began to work on her in the conventional way, urging with happy slap and gather my prick to a new erection while my hands danced in and out of the disappointed cup of her cunt. Oh, strange, strange! But soon enough I fucked her and a random burst it was.

I waver, I wander, I fail to chronologize. But this is logical enough; I have always felt during fucking as at no other time as to the co-existence of being at several levels of time: time present, future and past seem to mingle as with the single cleaver of the prick I work out the various pulsations of internal time, there is no sense of development as such, no sense of structure: the whole peculiar western sense of plot is obliterated and I am able to fuck at all levels in many ways, am able to join the tentative caresses of the foreplay with the rousing bounds of the Act itself, the gentle turgid suck of nipple in the preparation with the heavy gasping drooling sighs around that nipple of the post-coitus; thus it is possible for me, during the act of sex I am trying to say, to physically leap out of time, meaning that working through me is not one experience but several and I am able thus to fuck most pleasingly, in many ways, and with that utter fusion of purpose which is so foreign to the way and limited cunning of most Americans, limited creatures that they are and always will be. But before I can carry the message to them (I am a missionary creature after all, humble out of all relation to my potentials, my gifts, my glory, my accomplishments, my irresistible ability to seduce girls of any gender or age to my purposes) I must carry it to you, through the medium of these notes.

Aha.

Yes.

And thus—

And thus I wrapped the coil of my prick around her breast, literally catching it in that strange pulpy state midway between turgidity and flatulence which can be the most exciting of all because you can feel the semen literally forming in the coils of the testes, wherever that is and bent it into a half-bow, framing the nipple, winding it around her in a half-state of suspension while she regarded me with moderate whimsy and interest; then I wiped that whimsy off the bitch's face, wiped it right off, yes indeed, by dodging my fingers into her cunt and entering her with enormous speed and force spreading out lips, inner lips, membranous sheath, and going to the very heart of her organs, above the clitoris, above the tunnel, right into the womb itself (or what I took to be the womb; one must

understand the constant necessity to confuse fantasy and image in the act of sex. What is otherwise?) and there I tweaked and pulled on that long distended stem, imagining that I was the occupant or perhaps only a practitioner attempting to dislodge the occupant or better yet I was both giving birth to myself so to speak, pulling myself out of the vortex of burial and my prick uncoiled moved to its fullest hardness, extended toward her pretty and pouting mouth and as if to lend the obstetrician courage she began to suck on his tool, knead it with her lips, apply to it her tongue, hint of teeth, suspicion of molar, echo of bite and the obstetrician was quite pinned in her, quite helpless and at her mercy but, at the same time, with his tweaks and jerks controlling her motions just as she controlled his and then the obstetrician began to pant, began in his customary manner to announce the onset of the Nativity itself in his incomparable way as only he could.

“Oh, it's coming!” he moaned, referring to the Child, of course. “It's coming, it's coming right now it's going to come out all the way, I can't stand it any more,” referring of course to the enormous pressures of his obstetrical practice. “Your breasts, your breasts, oh, God, your breasts!” referring to the patient's need to prepare her breasts for the act of nursing the Child, to be sure, and dropped the scalpel from the patient's anterior orifice, taking it on its strange, wending journey to the Delivery Table itself where he removed his pincers and forceps quickly and inserted the scalpel then to ease the patient's way toward a fast birth. “Oh, it's coming, it's coming!” the obstetrician, referring to the child again, screamed and then began with his scalpel to work in his most effective surgical manner bringing about the act of delivery with all the speed and skill at his command, using his scalpel to open up the passage and at the same time murmuring those wicked roguish encouragements which have made the obstetrician famous in all of the continents, which have made him at least the occasional toast of several cities within and without the continental states. “Your breasts, your breasts!” alluding again to the lactational function and then, to test the breasts so to speak for their resilience and ability to perform the wonderful act of suckling which is so pivotal to the health of the neonate in the important early months of his development, seized them in his two investigatory hands and began to press and knead, plead and suck, turning the nipples ever darker through his efforts until the very veins seemed to congest around the aureolar area and the very appearance of maternity was given them; then inserted his scalpel to its deepest penetration and with a deep hush and medicinal swoop the obstetrician brought forth from within himself the equipment and materials to perform his ancient and necessary act while the patient writhed and kicked under him, the consummative pains of labor wracking her of course and then the obstetrician, uttering a dim, final diagnosis, “Oh, it's finished, it's finished,” poured into her with all the emphasis at his command the sum of his skills and — in a series of quicks and shudders which might have been less medically detached than, strictly speaking was necessary under the circumstances—the surgeon with a final moan laid down his knife, laid down his tools, took off his mask and lay beside the patient steaming coldly in the after-ardor of love. I mean the delivery. They are the same thing.

“Oh, Good Lord,” murmured the obstetrician. “Oh, Good Lord, I've never known anything like it.”

“I don't understand you,” the patient said, “I mean, I never met anyone quite like you. I've never known anything like this before,” and for a moment the obstetrician does not know whether it is love or bemusement or cunning or whimsy which leads her to this statement, nor does he care; he is circling darkly, settling dimly, moving forward slowly, falling inexorably into a hollow pit of purpose congested with slumber and dreams in which he places himself for just a little while as the patient sighs and settles against him, the panels of her flesh hard as boards, soft as cloth as he runs his hands over them, feeling that if for all the world her body was the only thing in it, it would be time and enough, and drawing slow familiar comfort from her skin and odors it could be said that the

obstetrician sleeps or, at least, his mental state is at a lower level of activity, awareness, dedication and song than it is customarily, breathing slowly, breathing evenly, moistening to sleep as it were a the boiler in some far-off place hums for him. And for her. The conjugal boiler.

Somewhat later

In his sleep the obstetrician or perhaps now it is the patient, has a dream: it is hard for him to tell exactly who he is, shedding and switching roles progressively as is his wont. In his dream he is lying in another room next to a girl, a girl not entirely different from the one next to whom he is sleeping except that her face is somewhat younger, her eyes brighter, her breasts a shade smaller...but the dreamer is not thinking of breasts now; his mood can be said to be one compounded now of fatigue and shame intermingled as he dreams he sits with covers wound around him, in a semi-fetal posture smoking and looking out the window. The girl is talking to him and as is so dismayingly often the case in dreams her voice seems to alternate in levels of communicability: first harsh, first soft, cutting in and out of his consciousness like a scalpel so that the act of gradual attunement to her words is made only slowly and then with a series of efforts that the dreamer does not truly want to make, so immersed is he in the simple biological act of smoking, the consideration of glass, the attunement to various noises in the landscape so to speak which function as an excellent objective-correlative to his own sense of exhaustion which has come over him somewhat in the aftermath of fucking. He does not mean to be ungrateful but fucking puts him at a disadvantage at least temporarily; it drains him and leaves him somewhat out of rhetorical form. "Look, Harry," the girl is saying to him. "Harry, I tell you it won't work. I wanted to tell you that before but I didn't have the heart. But I have to now, Harry. It can't go on. I won't be seeing you any more."

"Uh," says the dreamer. He is perhaps replying to her, more likely he is trying to frame his lips into a perfect O around the ridge of the cigarette which ever so gently he is inserting in and out of his mouth, perhaps trying to ascertain the true qualities of the tobacco.

"No, I mean it, Harry, we've got to talk now. Because I just can't go away and leave you, that wouldn't be fair; I have to tell you why I'm doing something, I know that. But you've got to give me a chance. Now look—"

"Why talk?" the dreamer says. "I mean, who told you that you had to give explanations? Do what you want to do, that's all."

"But I'm leaving you, Harry. Didn't you hear me say that? I mean—"

The words leaving you seem to elongate themselves like snakes in the dreamer's consciousness torpid as it is and somewhat smoke-obsessed to say nothing of drained by sex. Lee-vee-ing yoo-hoo-lee-vee-ing yoo-hoo, he finds himself murmuring and the words have the not entirely unpleasant aspect of the conclusion to the chorus of a popular song; the dreamer has always been interested in popular music although lacking both compositional and performing ability. Nevertheless, as great as his desire is to vacate the subject of discussion as such, as it were close up the doors of the rhetorical apartment in which he now seems to be rattling, turn the lease over to the landlord—a small, square man with a beard and orator's mustache—he is willing, for the sake of simple dignity if nothing else, to try to continue. Leave it never be said that the dreamer is discourteous; he is, as a matter of fact, well-known for his good manners as to have received the International Courtesy Award of a minor private foundation in the year 196- in a presentation held on the steps of the Foundation's offices which were, of course, located in a rather cluttered building somewhat north of the dreamer's regular haunts.

"Go on," he says. "If you feel better that is. I mean, I don't care."

But the girl is, in fact, already speaking. "It isn't just the lies, Harry," she is saying, "because everybody lies a little bit and I only know that you do it because you want those things to be true..."

desperately that you actually frame them that way in your own mind; it's like a gift that you're giving me because you don't think that you're worthy of me as what you are. I've worked the whole thing out and I understand this now, past the defensive hostility. You don't really mean anything by it because each lie is a confession of love. So it's not that.”

The dreamer, still meditating on his cigarette—it seems to have lost a little bit of its fine color and taste; perhaps he needs a switch of brand but there is in this room no hearty co-fatalist to pass on one of his own Relaxing Brand and thus he has to make do with what he has, lights another. The dreamer has had the feeling for some months now—color it grey—that each cigarette may be his last, not so much because he is on the verge of quitting smoking—he knows he never will, it is too easy a distraction—as that the inhalation of fumes may result in his “sudden death through heart exhaustion.” The dreamer has been watching a series of public service commercials on the television network which fascinate him morbidly: the idea that almost as much money is being spent to persuade him to stop smoking as was spent to get him started and keep him going, fills him once again with that gloomy knowledge of the duality of human motive which America—oh, America!—has heightened and deepened past national chasm into a mood as bright and glorious as any of the great principles on which this magnificent Republic was co-founded. “You really should get out of analysis,” he sees fit to say. “It just fucks you up worse than you were before. A little knowledge. Fools rush in. Bolt all the doors.”

“Oh, stop that, Harry. You know perfectly well that that's only defensive hostility. It was the best day of my life, I finally understood, that I had to face up to my problems and stop avoiding them and come to terms with myself. Before that I was in a fog, just in a fog. Watch your ashes, they're dropping all over the sheet, you'll burn us alive. It isn't the lies, Harry. It's just that you won't even seem to face yourself in any way whatsoever. You won't make admissions. You won't come face to face with yourself. You lack a sense of identity.”

“Says who?” the dreamer murmurs in a civilized accent and, reaching for an ashtray, cautiously dumps in the remainder of his cigarette. “I have a compelling sense of identity and anyway, who has the right to assign values? What I'm doing is fine.”

“No, it isn't, Harry,” the girl says to the dreamer and seems on the verge of hurling an irritated pillow at him, thinks better of it, checks herself, settles back on the sheets with a languorous gesture believed by the scurrying motion of her fingers as she reaches against her will for a cigarette from the dreamer's pack, then thinks better of it and sits up abruptly. “Oh, this is getting us nowhere, Harry,” she says. “Absolutely nowhere; you won't face what you are and I can't make you face it and besides I'm just beginning to find out who I am. I can't let you hold me back. I've got to think of myself now. The doctor said I should think of myself and try to be good to myself and that's why it can't be any more. Harry, I'm not coming back.”

The dreamer sits up himself, folds his hands around his knees, looks at the girl. She is really a very pretty girl although her breasts are both too small and a bit sagging but otherwise her body has richness which he takes at this moment to be unfelt and he permits himself a flicker of gloom, one knife-trace of woe coming at him as if from a far distance and then sliding by, past bone into the visceral organs. It occurs to him that the girl is serious and this fills him with the greatest pain of all because he has always believed that the major problem with women is that they cannot resist fumbling attempts to see themselves as serious creatures, creatures with rational motives, definable histories, occupiable roles and so on. Perhaps it is the media which are the sole culprits for this but the dreamer does not really think so; all through recorded history they have had this feeling, it is only that the modern media have tried to convert it—along with just about everything else—into coin. “You really ought to

stop this psychiatry mess," he finds himself saying. "It's a terrible thing, it's just leading you into the wrong paths and besides that I know the major reason you went into it is to try and get at me. Go in behind my back to spill my secrets."

"Oh, Harry, you're so damned defensive. We've discussed this though and we think we know why it is. The reason that you're defensive is that—"

"Stop it!" the dreamer cries with somewhat more emotion than he had perhaps intended; the girl looks at him with shock and then subsides, against the bed-sheet, not at the same time making any efforts to find her clothing; the dreamer wonders abstractedly whether it was the vehemence or the simple truth of his reaction which has so disconcerted her. "Stop it, it's a pack of goddamned nonsense!" he goes on, fumbling for his cigarettes again—oh, the dreamer is a very heavy smoker although he does not believe at this time that standard conceptions of mortality are relevant to him; rather he is to be considered somewhat extrinsic to them at least until he dies. "You know perfectly well that it's an evasion, psychiatry, the real evasion, you see some guy who only got there because of his own projective fantasies and fumbling inept curiosity but now shielded by degrees, shielded by his role, and you fall into a situation where you can be told that nothing you did is your responsibility. It's the absolute removal of culpability, that's all it is; for the bloodstain of guilt, responsibility, causation, the cause-and-effect structure of human action which has controlled all deeds for thousands of years has substituted a dim set of sentimentalities in which the flesh and circumstances are heirs to what has been imposed on them. I tell you," the dreamer shouts, half-rising from the bed in the excitement of his insight. "I tell you, that wasn't the solution! Why didn't you listen to me! Why didn't you get involved in the occult or Scientology or mysticism! There are your answers! They can tell you what you want to hear at one-tenth the price and beside that they can give you an education too. Oh, terrible, terrible," the dreamer mutters and subsides. He seems to be thinking, not an uncommon trait. A bit of sunshine bounces through the window, cleaves the hair of his companion, seems to turn it into a sliver of golden in a momentary illusion; then the light metaphorically winks out and so does the dreamer settling back on the cushions, sighing, brushing some cigarette ashes from his frame. "Of course I could be wrong," he says. "Suit yourself."

"I mean each to his own and so on," he adds.

"That is to say that if it gives you pleasure you can do it, what the hell," he pursues.

But the girl is not listening to him or if she is, she is not responding; rather, she is crying now or perhaps this is only some phenomenon of set and actually she is laughing; in any event, head cradled in arms, shoulders shaking, she seems to have departed into some maze of her own and the dreamer caught by certain waves of sympathy which under other circumstances he might find suspect, puts his hand on her shoulder and draws her to him. She comes, sliding, easily, her eyes glistening with an emotion which might be fright or desire and she says, "Oh, Harry, it could have worked out but you're just so hostile, so hostile, Harry, you know what I mean? I mean I wish that things were so simple that they could be resolved that way," and it occurs to the dreamer then, for the very first time—and the dreamer is thirty years old at this moment, it is to be understood that he is not a Young Dreamer, at least not as young as he might have once taken himself to be although he is not, as he has been assured by certain random bartenders, taxi-drivers, employers and so on, exactly senescent—that the girl literally cannot help herself, that she is not saying what she is saying, doing what she is doing out of any misdirected efforts to be nasty, that there is nothing personal in this series of gestures but instead in her attitudes, in her immersion, in her very life-style this girl is only being what she can—and the psychiatric jargon, such as it is, is as close as she can come to the rhetoric of love: the sound of love so unfamiliar to this girl, so unfamiliar to all of the people and all of the ways she has known that she

can only approach it through “emotional attachments” and “close relationships” and “deep needs” and “defensive hostility” and “compensatory withdrawal” and the dreamer feels a rush of sympathy for her so profound that he feels himself moved to the core of his being. It is not her fault after all that it has turned out this way but can only be blamed on Society or perhaps on himself, the agglomerate of people like himself who also have only enacted their own necessities and he huddles over her then in an anguish of longing, his impish prick uncoiling in contrapuntal response to this profound metaphysical insight and he feels his prick restored as it were to its fullest potential, charging and snorting, moving and growing underneath him, the lash of his prick somehow comforting to him as he rides it home, guiding it up her thighs and into her hole and he buries his head in her breasts then and murmurs strange words, words which the dreamer could not believe himself to be uttering were not the circumstances so corporeal, his prick so necessitous, the girl so fleshly. “Oh, God,” he is saying. “Oh, God, I don't want to be this way, can't you understand that; I'd give anything if it could be different but it simply can't, I can't help myself, I can't, I can't,” and perhaps he is sobbing although this is impossible—the dreamer is not known for his sobbing—and he gathers her to him loosely like a heap of clothing and putting himself into its deeps begins to screw her. It seems to be the only appropriate response.

The dreamer on his bed shifts. He dozes, he dreams, he twitches, he convulses. Perhaps it is only a random itch that is bothering him, nothing so profound as recollection, perhaps it is only some malfunction of limbs in juxtaposition to Rona's which have introduced his restlessness but he feels now as if he were sliding up from the cave of sleep, moving up that lightening pipe rapidly, all space and wind around him, all event waiting outside and he mutters “No, no, not yet, not yet,” and tries to retreat where he was; tries to bring himself back to the sense of the girl that he was screwing and Rona beside him murmurs something which sounds like “Goof!”, two flies batter the window pane, a strain of music from the boiler aborts his consciousness, he moans and flexes his limbs, somehow returns to sleep again but the context has changed, the very dream itself has shifted and now he is not fucking the girl, no, something else is happening, he is standing with his hands on his hips and she is eating away at his cock, crowding it, bobbling it. In this strange illumination he cannot tell whether the girl eating him is the same one who was undergoing psychotherapy; perhaps it is, perhaps it is not but in any event it is no great technique of insight for him to understand that both are the same, all of the girls are the same and in any event she is doing a superb job of sucking his tool, really ramming it all the way up her mouth, biting and teasing and licking and sucking, drawing him into her with strange plopping sounds which seem to be more echoes of his own pulsations than sucking and he bends his hands down, touches her shoulder, feels glide and sheen of skin and murmurs “More, more,” and perhaps he too is only saying “Oof!”—a strange phrase which seems to cover all necessary contingencies, and “Oof!” again and “Oof!, oof!,” and he dodges his hands down to her breasts, squeezes them, holds on with prayer and for life as she draws his semen deep into her cheeks and begins to rattle it around, huffing. Yes, this is a different girl. The breasts, among other things, are considerably larger and the nipples of somewhat less delicacy than those of the other: coarse and roughened they seem to rise in his palms as he skirts them in the throes of orgasm, muttering to himself. The girl drinks all of it down and then with grace and precision stands and walks to the basin in the room, giving him a proprietary tug on weakened prick as she leaves him, and spits everything out, then runs water, sighs, dashes it over her body, checks the cleft of her buttock, touches her breasts, winks in the mirror, comes back to him. “Did you like it?” she asks the dreamer.

“Yes,” he says. “Oh, yes, yes,” and touches her weakly, feeling the very essence of him having been torn out by the act of fellatio and she huddles for an instant, then breaks and heads toward the bed.

which is a very pleasing modern double job in the corner of the room, all sheet and glare, lying there all primed for screwing, the ornament and centerpiece of her apartment and what a shame! it has not been used yet, easy distractions having diverted them from those purposes. The girl straddles on the bed, holds her breasts, smiles for the dreamer and he smiles back more out of courtesy than feeling because what facial expression he seems to have retained is more suited for moans than for jollity. Nevertheless, the dreamer will do the best he can. He is always courteous, always willing to please, always willing to go along with a situation to the best of his ability. This as a matter of fact may be why he is a Dreamer rather than a practitioner. He is not yet ready however for such difficult thoughts. He falls against the girl, feeling her flesh rise like steaming cake against him, fastens mouth to mouth, begins to work on her with his hands while meanwhile she toys with his so-recently imploded penis, urging it into certain reactions and actions of its own so that once again he finds himself rising. Oh fortunate dreamer! Oh, strange biology! Oh, marvelous circumstance that presents this omnipresent renewal! The dreamer would certainly shriek his gratitude to nature if he were capable of words.

But he is not capable of words, no words for him, only touch and sobbing, slow animalistic movements in the darkness and he darts his hand to her cunt, feels it heave and open underneath him, inserts a hand and fist then into the most voluminous cunt he has ever felt in his life or so he tells himself: he is not inexperienced with cunts, this dreamer, has petted and sucked and banged a few in his life but of all of them the one at issue is certainly the most exceptional; to reach into it is to be absorbed by a most dark cave full of specters and longing, opening and retreating against his hand and incautiously he closes his fist and pokes it up further, still the cunt accommodates him, his whole hand so to speak and the dreamer thrills although whether it is with the size of the cunt or only with the accommodation he does not know, now he is sighing and lurching, easing his arm up there; he engages, the dreamer does, in the fantasy that he will be able to sink himself up to his shoulder, to the very shoulder and then create an ornament of her that he can dangle from upraised fist; well, the dreamer's somewhat excited mental state is to be forgiven, he has not had much screwing for a long time now and has built up in his mind a reservoir of dreams, longing, morbid insanity which fucking meant to purge, all of it hammering at the gates of the cerebrum and he stretches, moans, implodes, offers, lunges and puts his lips against hers, concentrating on that welding contact—and at that moment something disconcerting happens, the girl slides from him and tosses her head free, leans back with a gasp, squeezes her thighs, looks up at him and says, “The money.”

“The money?” the dreamer says. He is quite lost, quite stunned. This is after all quite a jolt, a certain declension and he is not sure for a moment who he is or where he has gone; he feels as if he might be insane. “What money? I don't know what you're talking about,” and tries once again to enter in that absorbed state but the girl says, somewhat more loudly, “The money, you promised me the money, the fifty bucks, remember?” and then it all comes back to the dreamer although too rapidly to have any achieved sense of discovery and he says, “Oh, the money,” relief and disconcertment mingling in his tone. “You mean, the money!”

“The money,” the whore says and the dreamer staggers away from her, several extrinsic flourishes in his movements and wanders over to his pants which appear to be somewhere in the middle of the floor, leans over gasping, extracts his wallet and begins to fumble idly with bills, drops the wallet, bends to pick it up, loses his balance and, arms flapping, falls to the center of the room which accommodates him with a lurch and only with some difficulty does he regain his feet. His cock seems to hurt, the balls of his feet make inaccurate contact with the floor, his breath is irregular, he has pain in his eyes. He brings the wallet over to the girl, hands it to her. “You take it,” he says. “You take it, I can't seem to get it.”

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