

RENE

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"I have to go out, too" she said, "I must go down to Mrs. Lavois, and the streets are so dark. I get frightened when I am out all alone. Would you walk down with me and see that I get there? It's only four or five blocks away."

Rene said he would, and she went upstairs to get ready. When she came down five minutes later she already had her coat and hat on. Rene put his coat on in the hall, and they went out.

It was very dark, but the street lights lit up the sidewalks well. The streets were not crowded, but they met people coming toward them, and occasionally some one passed them from behind. Rene couldn't see how Claire could be frightened. They walked in silence.

"Let's cut across the park" Claire said, it's much shorter that way." They turned in to the park entrance and walked along the path. It was very dark here and they met no one. She walked very close to him, and they stumbled against each other. He took her arm to guide her. The feel of the warm movement of her body beneath the cloth of her coat disturbed him strangely. She didn't draw away, and they walked on arm in arm. He felt himself trembling. Suddenly she swayed. She seemed to turn her ankle. At any rate she fell, dragging him with her . . .

The world and the park vanished. He felt himself lifted out of himself, remote from time and place. The sea was blue and warm and lapped him around with a soft smoothness. Gently he rose and fell, floating on its depths like a bird on blue air. Suddenly the sea retreated, gathered intensity with the pull of a whirlwind. For an interminable second he hung suspended, and then the sea changed. It was a tugging, searing violet flame and he a white moth plunging recklessly, plunging with a fierce ecstasy toward the cataclysmic annihilation of the burning core . . .

A light wind rippled over his face. Her voice spoke, near him in the darkness.

"How about a cigarette?"

He fumbled in his pocket, found a packet, drew one out. She took it from the packet, struck a match, holding it in cupped hands as she bent forward to light her cigarette.

She was sitting, half leaning, back against a park bench. Her hat was off and her coat unbuttoned. Rene could see the white skin through her blue dress open at the throat. But it was her face that smote him as it shone in the match-light. For gone was the expression of youthful petulance. Her features were now relaxed and tender, her eyes soft and misty. And as she looked at him thus, her whole expression transformed, Rene felt his blood turning into the white ice of unbelievable horror. Her face was the image of the face of the Virgin in his mother's picture, the picture that hung in his room at the boardinghouse.

"What's the matter, honey?" her immature voice was edged with petulance, "I was good enough for you in the dark, wasn't I?" Her eyes widened with fear. She dropped the match and tried to scream, as his hands tightened about her throat.

In the grass, the burnt match flickered and went out.

The Fat Man

Continued from Page 3

"I hate you" she said, almost calmly, drawing herself up proudly. She shook her head to clear her hair from her face. "You are my father, but I hate you! I hate you for trying to dominate me as you dominate my mother, your servants, your business, this town. Everything is yours, nothing has a life, or rights, of its own. Your family, your car, your house, your this, your that. Your chattels and slaves." Her body was rigid, her shoulders trembling, her hands clenched at her sides. She was very near to tears. "Here's one person that you can't make your chattel, your slave. I refuse to be bound down to you. If you don't like it I will go and work somewhere."

"You think I don't know what is back of this. You think that your plans and schemes are so deep and unfathomable! You are the kind of person one reads about in Victorian novels, and you are out of date, though you don't know it! You are so pleased with your domination you don't want me to go out with boys, and enjoy myself, and be a normal girl along with the others! You are afraid I will get married and so get out of your tyranny! I hate you! If I had to marry a man tomorrow from out of the gutter to get away from you I would." She was desperately tired and overwrought.

The fat man let her tire herself out.

"Sit down" he said, indicating a chair, and automatically she slumped into it. She felt drained, and her shoulders sagged.

Her father's look softened, but he kept his tone cold. "You are a silly emotional girl, just out of school and you are talking nonsense. I am only acting for your own good and my own reputation. Do you think that I am going to let you go gallivanting around having your head turned by a bunch of worthless young shrimps who are loafing their way through college at their fathers' expense? You are much too young to think of marriage, and when you do marry, you will marry someone who fought for and keeps his job on his own merits, someone who makes his own way in the world. Someone who does not need to be pushed by his father, and by me, into some soft job somewhere. None of those puny, cocky little squirts are half good enough for you. Don't you see, Eleanor? I started fresh out of grade school and fought my way to the top, and it was a tough fight. I want somebody for you who you yourself want, but he has got to have what it takes, and he has got to prove it."

Eleanor leant back against her chair, and her eyes were red. The wisp of a handkerchief clenched in her hand was wet. She felt, and looked, limp.

The fat man regarded her.

"But father, Tom . . ."

"I'm not discussing Tom, or Dick, or Harry, or any other young pup at college. You are a stubborn young brat, but you're my daughter, and I love you, but you will do as you are told, at least until you are of age. It is much too late tonight to go into the matter of your various boy friends. Just remember what I told you. Pick an honest boy who can do an honest day's work on his own hook, and the guts to fight his own way through the world and I'll say nothing. Now go to bed, and remember my warning. Another occasion like this and I will send you away."

The domestic difficulties of the fat man resolved themselves and Eleanor's behavior was everything that he could wish, which made him somewhat suspicious, being of a suspicious nature, but with the coming on of Spring the pressure of business gradually made him forget Eleanor's unusually submissive behaviour.

One fine morning just before the University had closed for the year real trouble developed. It began when two men burst into his office.

The fat man was behind his desk and he looked up startled. "What the hell do you mean by breaking in here?" he said. "Get out!"

The slight man sauntered forward and draped himself on the edge of the fat man's desk, and his companion pushed the protesting secretary out and shut the door firmly, placing himself with his back to it. Neither said a word.

The fat man rose to his feet, and his bulk towered ominously over the dapper intruder. "I said get out, and I mean get out" he said, his grey eyes narrow with anger, "before I have you thrown out."

The dapper man smiled. "Don't bother. We are going in a minute. I only came to give you a warning."

The other looked at him keenly, summing him up. He relaxed slightly.

"Well?"

The slight man pulled up his trouser leg and the fat man glimpsed a silk sock. Having eased himself into a more comfortable position on the other's desk, he pulled out an obviously expensive gold cigarette case initialed in diamonds, carefully selected a smoke, and proffered the case to the fat man. He refused it and automatically produced a light. "Don't use them," he said briefly.

(Continued on Page Five)



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Rev. W. H. Elgee
Addresses SCM

"What Men Live By", was the theme of a discussion led by Rev. W. H. Elgee at a meeting of the Student Christian Movement held in the Community "Y" Sunday evening. Mr. Elgee stressed the four aspects of man's life, - work, worship, study and play. He encouraged those present to consider the most important of these, work, as affecting all of us; to recognize the demand from within man for worship; to remember that we must continue to be students (in a broad sense) all through life; and to realize the importance of play-as "recreation of body, soul, and spirit". He emphasized the need to consider the work of the Christian ministry, in caring for the spirits of men, as being important as well as those dealing with the mind and body, and to remember that there is a place in this work for the highest type of mind.

A very spirited discussion ensued on these points, relating them particularly to our educational system and its inadequacies, and to the idea of Christian vocation.

A short business meeting preceded the discussion. During this period, Frances Morissey was appointed chairman of the lunch committee, and Bob Cadman was asked to look into the matter of publishing the S. C. M. News Letter.

Next Sunday evening, the guest speaker will be Miss Alice McElveny who spent the summer as an ISS student in Germany.



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