

A Short Story

Feature Page

BRUNSWICKAN
CREATIVE WRITING
CONTEST POSTPONED
(See Notes.)

One day in early September, during the first week of school, me and Vance jiggled and made plans to go fishing out Rosedale Road. We were supposed to meet at Harry Palmeter's drug store. I arrived first, as usual, and Vance showed up late, also as usual.

Vance is the latest guy I know. Late for school, late for work when he was at the pulp mill, late for meals, late for everything. I used to say to Vance that his birthday should be in August instead of September, because probably he was a month late being born.

Finally he breezes in and walks down by the soda fountain. He gets big smiles from the girls behind the fountain, because they all think Vance is cute. Right away I can see that Vance doesn't intend to go fishing, as we planned, because he has his suit coat on and his hair combed.

"Hey, Vance," I says, "where are we going?"
"Listen," he says, "I want to tell you something." He sits down beside me in the rear stall.

"Give me a cigarette first," I says.
"Why don't you give up smoking? You'll turn into a regular bum?"

"Who was bummin' last Saturday?"
We light up and Dorothy comes down to see what we want, although we hardly ever want anything except to sit there and smoke and listen to the records in case any is playing on the machine.

"Hello, Vance," Dorothy says. "What can I do for you?"
"Well," he says, looking at her, "you can't do much for me here."

Dorothy laughs at that and reaches out and musses his hair and runs back to the fountain.

"What's the score, Vance?"
"I guess you know about the war," he says.

I told him of course I know about the war. England and Poland against the Germans, and the French siding with us too. Everybody knew about the war, because the papers were full of it and you couldn't get nothing else on the radio.

"They're signing up at the Armouries," Vance says.
"They're going overseas right away as soon as they get enough signed up."

"Vance, you can't go. You're mother won't let you."
"She isn't going to know. I'm not going to tell her until I've signed up."

"We'll catch hell," I says.
Vance give a snort. "Whoever heard tell of soldiers catching hell from their mothers. We're old enough to sign up."

I says, "You're not even seventeen yet."
"Well, I could pass for eighteen easy enough. I shave, don't I?"

"They won't take us, Vance. They turned down Arthur Tracey, and he's older than you and me both."

"Sure," says Vance, "because he has a crooked arm, that's why. You can't have anything wrong with you in the Army. You got to be one hundred percent fit. You can't have a thing wrong with you."

"I got hay-fever, you know, Vance."
"That don't matter, hayfever."

"I thought you said—"
"Listen, Harry Taylor got in and he takes fits. You remember him taking the fit in that theatre that time, and everybody saying it was because he got so excited because it was a horror picture? He takes fits, but they got him signed."

"I thought you said—"
"For Pete's sake, will you listen? They'll take you if you look fit, see? If you got a leg off and they notice it, they wouldn't take you. But if you look O. K., you're in."

"Mean to say the doctors won't know I got hay-fever?"
"Not unless you tell 'em they won't," says Vance.

"Doc Crombie knows I got hay-fever," I says.
"Nuts," says Vance. "He won't be there, and if he was he wouldn't be sober."

"I still don't think we should."
"Well, who asked you? I only said what I was going to do. You don't have to if you don't want to. I only said I was."

"Wait Vance," I says, "if you go, I'll go. We're fast friends, aren't we? Always chum around together? Well, if you got to sign up that means I got to. But I only said I thought—"

Vance puts his finger under my nose. "Listen, Billy," he says, waving it, "we never been any further from home than Morristown. We never would of got that far only for hitching. In the army you always travel on the railroads, and you travel free. We'll get to Ontario and Montreal and Nova Scotia, and get a trip to Europe. We'll see the whole world, Billy."

"And maybe get ourselves killed, Vance."
"Don't worry," Vance says. "I can shoot faster and better than anybody you'll ever see. I'll look out for us, Billy. Just let them give me a rifle and I'll look after us."

I guess there isn't a better shot in the county than Vance. He used to win all the prizes at the shooting galleries when they had the exhibitions, until they finally wouldn't let Vance shoot anymore because he won too much. We used to go out to Kilmarnock and jack deer, and I never seen Vance miss once.

"I suppose we'll have machine-guns, too," I says, beginning to get excited about it.

NOTES

This week the feature page intended to carry the winning short story or informal essay and the winning poem of the Brunswickan Literary Contest — instead it carries a short story done by one of the ineligible Brunswickan Staff.

The contest has been postponed . . . Frankly, the Brunswickan staff feels that the amount of time given from the first announcement to the deadline, was insufficient considering the time of year, the great amount of work to be done by all students for the encroaching exams and the fact that with the release of the Christmas holidays there comes an opportunity for all to investigate themselves and become aware of the syntheses of their ideas and thereof write.

This postponement is not entirely of the voice of the opinions of the senior editors of the Brunswickan. It has been nourished by popular expression in the student body. Many people with whom we are acquainted have said, "I want to write something for this contest, but I haven't time before the exams. I wish there was more time . . ."

Well, under the flow of all these bubbles of disappointment and dashed creative desire, we considered how many more entries might be submitted if more time were given. We considered the fact that the original thoughts that condensed to produce the idea behind the contest were generated over the promotion of creative writing on the campus and with an objective concerned with gaining some knowledge of the quality and quantity of the aspirant writers at U. N. B.

It has been decided, then, to advance the contest deadline to January seventh. Entries may be mailed to, The Brunswickan, U. N. B., Fredericton, N. B.

It's Me I Hate

(By Kaaper Phogey, Class of 42, and Overdue.)

"Ole Puddleridge U. hasn't changed much! Still sits on the hilltop, casting a long shadow over the city of Sney, known as the city of the Weeping Willows!"

Thus spake Fossdick Fossdick, graduate of the class of '19. Fossdick may be right, but all I can say is, it must have been grim in '19.

Don't get me wrong. I love it here. I love the work, love the girls, love the nightclubs, love the football games, love the other games, love the campus, love the professors . . . but Puddleridge U. — peeyou!

We have a big batch of supermen here, and a big batch of superpapermen trying to cram a little theory into their big, fat heads. Every one a superman! They're so good at football, the coaches refused to let them play . . . you know, hardly sporting to use real supermen; fellows that could play BOTH games of football, Canadian and Parlor . . . Golly, we were just lucky they were here though. They attended a couple of dirty old rugby games and our boys were sort of inexperienced you might say. But the coaches Straiston and Stryan really got a lot of helpful advice from these 195 pound, real grown up men who knew BOTH games.

Now, take the co-eds, for instance. You might as well, nobody else has. Well, the co-eds have a special sort of residence of their own (No, I don't mean that one), and nobody really knows how many co-eds we have here. Fellow who sleeps next to me in History says he saw five one day, all in a bunch. Anyway, these co-eds are all here in disguise. Nobody knows who they really are, except most of them have Hollywood contracts, and you know how hard up Hollywood is for character actresses. Some of them are better than others, or so they like to tell each other before a dance, or something.

The dances here are pretty good. There was a move afoot not to have

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"Probably they'll give you a machine-gun because you can't shoot so good," says Vance.

"Vance, I think I should tell the old man first."

He shakes his head. "No, because he'll only tell you not to. I'm going to sign up now. If you're coming, come on."

Vance and me been chumming around together since we was five years old, and even when my mother wouldn't let me play with Vance, we still stuck together until she gave up. I remember we used to sit out in front of my house on Elm Street and catch toads out of the sewer. That was a long time ago, and we had grew up together. I don't know what I'd do without Vance to chum around with.

"I'll come with you," I says, "only I don't mind letting on I'm scared."

"Let's go," he says, "soldiers are never scared."

We walked down past the fountain again and the girl start to giggle at Vance.

"Where are you going?" says Dorothy.

"None of your business," Vance tells her, "But you won't know us when we come back."

When I was about nine years old my mother said I couldn't play with Vance anymore. She said Vance wasn't a nice boy, and I said she didn't know Vance enough to say that.

"Well," she said, "his father was never any good."

I guess when Vance was a baby his father ran out on him and his mother, although he was drunk most of the time and they was probably glad to get rid of him. Anyway, that was why my mother didn't want me to play with Vance.

It didn't stop me though, because I liked Vance and we had a lot of fun together. Vance was always fun, and he could stay out late and do lots of things that nobody else could do. Whenever my mother would catch me playing with Vance she would wait until my father came home at night and then tell him to give me a licking. I got about ten lickings for playing with Vance, until finally my father got tired of licking me and he told mother to let me and Vance alone.

"One thing about Vance," father said, "he's got lots of brass."

"That's one reason I don't like him," mother said.

"As long as they keep out of trouble, let them alone," my father told her. "Vance has had a hard life for a kid. And at least he's not spoiled."

From then on I knew why I liked Vance so much. He wasn't a sissy or mother's little boy, and he had lots of brass. He wasn't afraid of anybody or anything. I remember the day Vance jumped off our garage roof, because I said he was scared to.

When we got to the Armouries a soldier was standing out front, with a rifle over his shoulder. He stopped us on the step.

"What do you want?" he says.

"We want to join up," says Vance.

He looks at me and Vance and at first I was afraid he wouldn't let us in because we looked so young. Finally he said, "Okay, lad."

The last time I was in the Armouries was for a basketball game, but it had been changed since. There were signs on all the doors, and arrows, and lots of people walking around, carrying papers, and I seen Mr. Pandley and Mr. Connell walking around wearing a uniform, and they were officers. Mr. Pandley was sweating and it was probably because he wasn't used to wearing a necktie, because he used to be a garage mechanic. Mr. Connell was a lawyer, and he looked warm too. He kept running by us all the time, and he was sweating more than Mr. Pandley.

Finally Mr. Pandley sees us. "Well, what are you doing here for mercy sake," he says.

"We want to sign up," Vance tells him.

Mr. Pandley looks at us and shakes his head. "Too young."

"What do ya mean, too young," says Vance. "Eighteen's old enough isn't it?"

Mr. Pandley looked at me. "Are you eighteen, Billy?"

I says, "If we wasn't we shouldn't be here."

"Well," says Mr. Pandley, "tell you what we do. You boys go in this room here and get documented and I'll call your father, Billy, and we'll see. We need men, all right, but we can't take you if you're too young. You'll just have to wait."

I figured then the jig was up. I knew what my old man would of said to Mr. Pandley when he called him. Vance went in and so did I, and we signed a paper and answered some questions, and then they told us to go in the next room. We went in and there were about ten other men in there, standing around naked.

Somebody told us to get undressed for the inspection, so we did.

"I wish I'd washed my feet last night," I says.

"Don't make any difference," says Vance, "they aren't looking for dirt."

It was hot in the room, and it smelled to high heaven. Somebody said to open a window and when Vance did a soldier came over and told him to close it.

"What fer?" says Vance.

"Because the people in the house next door can see in, that's what fer," the soldier says.

"I'd a lot rather put on a peep show that roast alive in here," says Vance and everybody chips in to agree with him.

"Put down that window," the soldier says. "That's an order."

"Put it down yourself," says Vance. "But it still ain't you're hide anybody's going to see."

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Fifty years! day we decor Room with fl Freshmen's re hay fern touc sweet in our t exhaled the m of burning le associated w classes.

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